

THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF RICHARD SIBBES, D.D.
VOL IV.

THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
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VOL. IV.

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Volume 4

A Christian's Portion (or, The Christian's Charter)

The Epistle to the Reader

Good Reader! didst thou ever yet read over thy own heart and life, and mend in some degree what was amiss in both? If not, what comfort can this treatise afford thee? If so, what comfort can it not? This short discourse lays open a great matter. It is a counterpane of a Christian's charter. The author himself styles it 'The Christian's Charter.'

If thy life be good, thy tenure is large; yea, larger than that of the Corinthians. The apostles, as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas were theirs; so they are thine. And besides them, all that have succeeded them, the faithful ministers of the gospel, and all their studies and writings. The reverend author of this treatise is thine, and this hook is thine; thine to show thee how much is thine. Let me be thine also to commend this work to thee, and to pray for thee, that as the Lord opened the eyes of Elisha's man to see the mountain full of horses and chariots, and more with them than against them, 2 Kings vi. 17, so he would open thine, to see thy great riches and privileges in Jesus Christ. The want of sight makes us think we want. Post over the two great volumes of heaven and earth, and thou shalt find thyself wealthy.

Man hath this excellency above all inferior creatures, to know what he is and what he hath above others. The brute beasts are better than plants, but they know it not; and so plants are more excellent than the elements, &c. They have worth, but understand it not. Man hath this added to his dignity, to know it. And this is given him, as a schoolman saith, that he may rejoice in that he hath, and him that gave it. The sun rejoices not in its own beauty, because it knows it not. As there is *ignoti nulla cupido*, so *nulla delectatio*. We can as little delight in what we know' not, as desire it.

He therefore must needs be rich that hath the 'blood of Christ,' which purchased the world. When all losses, either in goods or children, befall such a man, yet he hath enough besides. When man says all is gone, Christ says all is his. This should make him hold up his head, but not too high. It should make him cheerful, but not withal scornful.

Men are still apt to run into extremes. Tell men of the heinous nature of sin, and for the most part they either stop short and do not bewail it, or step beyond and quite despair. Obstinacy is the low extreme like the earth, hard also and rocky as it is. Despair is as much too high, as it were in the element of fire, which scorches up the spirit. The middle region of air and water, of sighs and tears, is the best. Thus when we treat of a godly man's privileges, some will overween them as fast as others undervalue them. Christian virtues are in medio as well as moral; but generally men seem to promise to themselves, as Jonathan to David, 1 Sam. xx. 36, either to shoot short or beyond. Men will either overdo or do nothing. The Mediator teaches us a middle way. St Paul, when the viper hung upon his hand, was thought some notorious malefactor; when he shook it off without harm, was a god, Acts xxviii. 3, seq. The first was too bad, and the last too good. The middle had been best: if they had said, he is some good man.

This causes many differences in religion. Men run so far one from another, some to one side and others to the other side of the circumference, that whilst they stand *è diametro oppositi*, they leave the truth behind them in the centre. Some will give too much to this or that ordinance, because others give too little; and some will give too little, because others give too much. It is a spirit of opposition that causes divisions. Two spheres will but touch in a point; and so when men are swollen with pride and anger, they gather up one from another, and resolve not to adhere so much as in one point.

The apostles were given to the church to rejoice in, but neither to despise nor deify; they might neither glory over them, nor glory in them. It is the sin of these times; look it, reader, that it be not thine. Some men fall out with the whole tribe, and thereupon begin to lay aside the principles of sobriety. But should I tell thee what is said by Baronius and some others, and what might be said of the honour of that calling, this discourse would rather want an epistle than be one, for the length. Indeed, some have gone too far, and made the priesthood more than it is. A Latin postiller upon that in Exod. xxx. 31, where it is said, 'Thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons,' &c., because it is said, ver. 32, 'upon man's flesh it shall not be poured,' thence infers, in an hyperbolical sense, that priests are angels, not having human flesh. Some kind of postils and glosses are like antique flourishings about a great capital letter, which is not so much adorned by them as darkened. Such is this. We have a dignity indeed, but no deity. Therefore in the words following the text here handled, chapter the fourth, verse the first, says the apostle, 'Let men so

account of us, as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.' As the ministers of Christ, we are not to be abased, and as but ministers, not to be adored; as stewards, not to be magnified, and as stewards of the mysteries of God, not to be vilified. Consider the Lord's messengers both as 'earthen vessels' and as having a treasure in them. But there are those that set some too high, and depress others too low. This partiality hath brought many miseries upon the church, and diverted many men from the church. It hath sent many a relicgado bound for Borne. Discontent is a dangerous thing, when the occasion is just.

In a word, I desire thee to weigh well one passage, and not to misdeem it, which the worthy author hath, page 16, concerning the right of wicked men to earthly things. He says it is a mistake to think they have no right to them. And so it is indeed, Ps. xvii. 14. They have their portion in this life. A man must needs have some right to his position. What Ananias had, Acts v. 4, was his own, whilst he had it, as Peter tells him; and yet Satan had filled his heart. We are to do good to all, but especially the household of faith, Gal. vi. 10. Therefore we may do good, and distribute to those that are not of the household of faith. But what needs this, if earthly things belong not to them? If in giving them we shall make them usurpers, we had better not give to them. If a covetous man hath no title to his goods, when sentence of condemnation is passed upon him, he may say, Why am I condemned for not giving, when I had nothing to give? Besides it will follow, that no man shall be condemned for want of liberality in not giving, but only for want of justice in not restoring. The earth was to bring forth to Adam fallen, or for Adam, though thorns and thistles. The sons of Adam have the earth, though the curse with it. A title therefore they have, though not the same title with the righteous. The godly have them as from a loving Father, the wicked as from a liberal Lord, -who out of goodness makes the 'sun to shine both upon the just and unjust,' Mat. v. 45. Therefore a Christian's right doth not exclude, but excel theirs.

Let not therefore a godly man trouble himself to argue them out of their good things here received; they are all they shall have. Let the wicked make much of what they have, for they shall have no more. The servant of the Lord must seek his portion in another life. The greatest part of the things he hath here is the least part of the things he shall have hereafter.

But then take the right course, and first make God thine, and then all shall be thine. But before God can be thine, Christ must be thine; and before

him, faith must be thine; and before faith, the word must be thine. Therefore so order thy affairs as to hear, and so order thy hearing as to believe, and so thy faith as to find Christ in thy heart; and then thou shalt find God in Christ, and all in God.

But I entreat thee for the mercies of Christ, if thou undertakest a Christian profession, walk answerably to it; and to a good profession, add a good confession. ‘Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men,’ Ps. cvii. 8. Bless God for all thou hast and shalt have; yea, for this work, &c., the man that indited it: a man, for matter always full, for notions sublime, for expression clear, for style concise; a man spirituality rational, and rationally spiritual; one that seemed to see the insides of nature and grace, and the world and heaven, by those perfect anatomies he hath made of them all. But his work needs no letter of commendation from any, much less from one so unworthy as I am. Therefore pardon me, and read him, and try thyself, and glorify God. Farewell. J. B.

A Christian’s Portion;

Or, A Christian’s Charter

Therefore let no man glory in men: for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.—1 Cor. III. 21-23.

One man is prone to idolise and set up another man in his soul higher than is fit, which is never without great danger and derogation from Christ. Men, for the love of that good that is in others, whom they reverence overmuch, take in ill, and all. We are very prone to this fault when we look too much to persons who are subject to like infirmities with ourselves. That is the reason why the apostle is so careful in this chapter to abase man in the beginning of this 21st verse. ‘Let no man glory in men;’ that is, so far as to depend upon them in matters of faith. This, therefore, is the principal scope of the apostle, in this place, to cut off faction and overmuch dependence upon men. There were some vainglorious teachers that had crept into the consciences of people (as it is their use), and drew factions, and so set up themselves instead of Christ. The apostle, to prevent this, saith, ‘Let no man glory in men.’ Do not glory in your teachers; they are but your servants and Christ’s servants; ‘for all things are yours.’ By means of those vain-glorious

teachers the people grew divided, and began to set up one and cry down another. To redress this, the apostle saith, 'All things are yours;' whether Paul, meaning himself, or Apollos, another excellent man; yea, Cephas, Peter himself. Paul with all his learning, Apollos with his eloquence, Peter with his vehemency of spirit; what he is, and what he hath, all his endowments are for the good of the church.

So that here we have, first, a deportation: 'Let no man glory in man.' Then a reason of it; 'For all things are yours.'

He sets down the reason, first, in gross in the whole, 'All things are yours.'

And then parcels it out, as it were, by retail: 'whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come.' And so by induction of particulars he lays open and unfolds this tapestry, that they may see the riches of this 'all,' and then he wraps up all again, 'all are yours.' Those things that I have named are yours, nay, things that are most unlike, 'life and death are yours.' What need we doubt of other things, when death is ours? He that hath the power of death, the devil, is not excluded; 'he is ours.'

Here is also a gradation: 'All is ours.' Is there a full point there? No. 'We are Christ's, and Christ is God's. The gradation is upwards and downwards. God descends to us. 'All' is from the Father, and from Christ mediator, to man, and for man's sake to the creature. The gradation up again is, 'We are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Which makes a blessed concatenation, or chaining and linking of things from the wise and great God. All things hang on him, and are carried to him again; and as they come from one, so they end in one. As a circle begins and ends in one point, so all comes from God and ends in God.

In the reason we have the 'Charter of a Christian,' the dowry that the church hath by her marriage with Christ. He is the greatest king that ever was, and she is the greatest queen; for Christ, he is Lord of heaven and earth, and of all things; and her estate is as large as his. 'All things are yours,' &c., even from God to the poorest thing in the world. God passeth over himself to his children; he is theirs, Christ is theirs. Therefore angels are theirs; for angels ascend and descend upon Jacob's ladder, that is, Christ.

Having set down this general, ‘all things are yours,’ to discourage them from glorying in men, he parcels that general into particulars: ‘Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death,’ &c.

1. All persons are yours.
2. All things are yours.
3. All events are yours.

Persons: ‘Paul, Apollos, Cephas.’

Things: ‘The world, or life, or death.’

Events: Whatsoever can come, for the present, or for time to come, ‘all is yours.’

For persons: ‘Paul, Apollos, Cephas are yours.’ Therefore Peter is not the head of the church. He is named here in the third place, among the rest, and after the rest: ‘Whether it be Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, he is yours.’ You know who ground all their religion on this. Peter is the head of the church, and they are the successors of Peter. But Peter is the church’s, and therefore cannot be the head and commander. The pope pretends that he is Peter’s successor, and yet he will be head of the church. But you see Cephas is a servant of the church’s, as well as Paul and Apollos. You see the hypocrisy of him, by the way. He will call himself *servus servorum Dei*, the servant of the servants of God, as if he would justify this blessed speech. Cephas and Paul are servants of the church, and I, that am Peter’s successor, am so; but yet he stamps in his coin, ‘That nation and country that will not serve thee, shall be rooted out’. And so, while he pretends to be servant of servants, he will be lord of lords; he tyranniseth over the church, and overthroweth this text that saith, ‘All things are for the church, and we must glory in no man,’ so as to let him be the author of our faith in anything. That man of sin and his adherents, the faction of Borne, wrong the church two ways especially.

1. First of all, in that they have of their own brain, without Christ, the head of the church, ordained a world of idle ceremonies, which they will have to have supernatural effects, and to confer grace.

2. And then, secondly, in that they make laws to bind the conscience, without reference to Christ, and their traditions must have the same authority with the word of God; so they sit in the temple of God; and that is the reason why popery prevaleth so. Whereas, indeed, no man is lord of the faith of another man. The chiefest men in the world are but servants of the church: Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas. 'The woman must not usurp authority over the man,' 1 Tim. ii. 12, nor must the church be above Christ.

To go on; not only all persons, but the whole world, is the church's.

The world natural, the civil world, and the ecclesiastical world.

(1.) First, the world natural is the church's; that is, the frame of heaven and earth. All things are made for man, and he is made for God. As a wise philosopher could say, that man is the end of all things in a semicircle; that is, all things in the world are made for him, and he is made for God. The world is ours, all things in the world are our servants; for they mourn in black, as it were, for our miseries since the fall, and in our restoring again they shall be restored. They wait for the day, as it is Rom. viii. 21, 'For the glorious liberty of the Son of God.' They have their happiness and misery together with men. The world stands for the elect. If all the elect were gathered out of the world, there would be an end of all things; all would be in confusion presently.

(2.) And so for the civil world, all states are for the church. The commonwealth is for the church. Therefore St Paul bids us 'pray for kings and princes,' &c. Why? That under them we may live a godly and peaceable life,' 1 Tim. ii. 2. If it were not for the gathering of the church, God would take little care for commonwealths. They stand because the church is mingled with them. Take church from the commonwealth, and what is it but a company of men that make the world their god? Kingdoms and commonwealths are but hospitals and harbours for the church. Though they despise the church, and account of it as Christ was accounted, a stranger that they will not acknowledge, yet notwithstanding, those few despised ones are the substance of the kingdom. God intends the church as the considerable part of the world, though men think not so. The rest that are not the church, they are for the church. As we say of a field of wheat, the ploughing, the rain, the stalk, the ear, the husk, all is for the wheat; so the standing of the world, the government of it, the parts and gifts of men, all are for the church, to do good to it. Were it not for the service they owe to the church, they should not continue.

(3.) And in the church all that ever is good is for the elect's sake. As we stand under Christ in great terms, ambassadors, &c., so we stand to the church as servants. 'We preach ourselves servants for Christ's sake,' 2 Cor. iv. 5. 'Let a man esteem of us as of the ministers of Christ,' 1 Cor. iv. 1. No greater nor no loss, but as the ministers of Christ. Persons and ministry, calling and gifts, all are for the church, as it is, Eph. iv. 11, seq., at large; when he ascended up on high, he 'gave some to be apostles, some pastors,' &c., all for the good of the church. 'I suffer all for the elect's sake,' saith St Paul, 2 Tim. ii. 10. Therefore it forceth very well; we should not glory in the ministers, nor in any creature. They are for us. But if a man will glory, let him glory in him who hath made all things his, that is, in Christ.

(4.) Further, the world is ours, take it in the worst sense; the world of wicked men, all their plots, and the 'prince of the world' are the church's.

How is this? He and all his instruments are under the command of him that turns all his designs contrary to his own intention. This is a hell to Satan, and one of the chief torments that he hath; that as his malice is above his power, so God overpowers him in his power. God overshoots him in his own bow. Whatever he designs against the head Christ, and against his members the church, it is overturned for the good of the church. In the apostles' times some were 'given over to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme,' 1 Tim. i. 20. It is a strange thing that Satan should teach not to blaspheme, who is the author of blasphemy; yet by consequence, he afflicting their bodies, thereupon they came to be wise, and learned to be moderate and sober, and to be Christianly minded, and not to blaspheme. So the prince of the world is ours in this by an over-commanding power, that turns all to good against his intentions. For there is but one grand monarch in the world; every kingdom is under a higher kingdom. There is but one to whom all are subject. There is one grand wheel that turns all the others. And therefore Satan himself is serviceable to God's end, whether he will or no.

And then for the world of wicked men, all their designs, though for the present they seem to be against the church, yet they are serviceable to the church. For wicked men are but the launderers of the church, to wash the church, to purge it, to do base services that God intends for the refining of the church. And all their hatred is for the good of the church. For God suffers the world to hate his children, that his children might not love the world, because it would be a dangerous love. The church is a strange corporation; it is such a corporation as hath greatest benefit by enemies. The

enemies of the church are the promoters of the greatest good of the church. The very world is the church's, take it in the worst sense, for the 'wicked world that lies in mischief.' But I will not dwell upon that. To go on.

As all things in general, so life especially is the church's. Why doth God prolong the life of good pastors and good people, but that they may be blessed instruments to convey truth to posterity? As St Paul saith, Phil. i. 23, 24, 'It is for your sake that I am not with Christ. It were best for me to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' a great deal; but for your sake, for your good, I must remain still. So, for the life of pastors and good Christians, by communion with whom we have benefit. For their particular it were best for them to be in heaven, to be gathered to the triumphant church, to their friends, to Christ, to the saints, the souls of just men made perfect, there is no question of it; but for the church's sake they are made to want their glory for a time. Paul was content to be without the joys of heaven for a while, to want his crown of glory, to live in the church, to do good. So the life of other able -worthy men it is for the church, and it is the calamity of the church when God takes them away.

And so the life of good magistrates, it is for the benefit of the church. It were better for them to be in heaven. But as it is said of David, Acts xiii. 36, 'He served God in his own generation.' So every magistrate hath his generation, time, allotted, a generation to stand up in the church and state, and to serve God in, and then God takes him away.

And then our own life is ours, while we have in order to a better life (for all must be understood in order to happiness), which is the only life. This present life is nothing but a shadow', yet we have a world of advantage in this life, to get assurance of a better. This life, indeed, is but a little spot of time between two eternities, before and after, but it is of great consequence, and it is given us to get a better life in, that glory may be begun in grace, and that we may have a further and 'further entrance into the kingdom of heaven here,' as Peter saith, 2 Peter i. 11.

Again, life is ours, because the time we live here is a seed time. This life is given us to do a great many of good things in, the crop and harvest of which is reserved for the world to come; and when we have done the work that God hath given us to do, we are gathered to our fathers.

And life is a special benefit, because by the advantage of life we further our reckonings after death. A good Christian, the longer he lives, the larger

good accounts he hath, the more he soweth to the Spirit. It is therefore a blessed thing for a godly man to live long, for a good man to be an old man. All his sins are wiped away; they shall never be laid to his charge. He may say, he hath lived long, and sinned a long time, yet his sins are forgiven, and all his good deeds shall be upon the file, and be set on the score, even to 'a cup of cold water,' Mat. x. 42, and he shall be rewarded. There is not a sigh, not a tear but it is registered. The longer a man liveth, if he should live Methuselah his days, the richer he should be in good works; and the richer he is in good works, the more he shall have his part and share in glory after. The longer he lives, the happier the times are in which he lives; for a good man makes the times happy, and it is happier for himself. The more rich he is in good works, the more rich he shall be in glory after, the heavier his crown, and his reward shall be in heaven. The richer shall be his harvest, the larger his seed-time hath been.

Use. These things being so, we should bless God, and be very thankful that he yields to us this life; for besides an advantage of doing good, it is a preparative to a better. This life is, as it were, the seminary of heaven. Heaven indeed is the true paradise of all the plants of God, but they must have a seminary to be planted in first; and therefore the church is called the kingdom of heaven, because we are first planted hero. Therefore we should bless God for this life, and not wish ourselves dead out of murmuring, but in subjection yield ourselves when God will. Oh, this life is a blessed time. It is our seed time. The longer we live the more opportunity we have to do good, to grow in grace, and to do good to others, and to enlarge our own accounts and reckonings to the end. The next thing to speak of is death.

'Or death.'

He doth well to join these two together, for if life be not ours for good, death will never be ours. He that doth not make a good use of life, never hath death to be his comfort; but instead of an entrance into heaven, it shall be a trap-door to hell. But if life be ours, and we have made a blessed improvement of it, then death also shall be ours. And 'blessed are they that die in the Lord,' Rev. xiv. 13.

It is a strange thing that death should be ours, that is a destroying hostile thing to nature; the king of fear as the Scripture calls it, Job xviii. 14; and that terrible of all terribles, as the philosopher saith, 'the last enemy,' as Paul saith, 1 Cor. xv. 20. Death is ours many ways. It is a piece of our jointure, for these words contain the jointure of the church. The church is Christ's spouse. 'All

things are Christ's,' and therefore all things are the spouse's; and among other particular gifts given to the church, death is one.

But this death in the gospel is turned to another thing. It is a harmless death. The sting is pulled out. It hath lost all his venom in Christ. That which is malignant and hurtful in death is taken away. What is the poison and sting of death? It is sin. Now that is forgiven in Christ. But that is not enough for God's bounty, that death should not hurt us. No; it is ours, it tends to our benefit many ways.

First, It unclothes us of these rags, these sick, weak, and untoward bodies of ours, that occasion so much disquiet to our souls; these mud walls. It takes down the tabernacle, it puts off our old rags, and puts on a new robe of immortality, and garments of glory. It ends all that is ill. All is determined in death. It is the last evil. It puts an end to all our labours, to all our troubles, and sorrows. Then the cursed labour of all our sins (that are the cause of sorrow) shall have an end. 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours,' Rev. xiv. 13. There is no rest till we be dead. Death is the accomplishment of our mortification.

And there is an end of the labour and toil in our callings, and the miseries and afflictions that accompany them. It frees us from all labours whatsoever. For death is a sleep, and all labours end in sleep. And as after sleep the spirits are refreshed; so after death we are more refreshed than we can conceive now. Death is ours because it is our resting-place. After our bodies are weary and worn out in toiling, then comes death, and then we rest in our graves.

It frees us from wicked men, and sets us clear out of Satan's reach. This world is the kingdom of Satan, but when we are gone hence, he hath nothing to do with us. Sin brought in death, and now death puts an end to sin; we shall be no more annoyed with Satan or his temptations, which is a great privilege.

And then death is a passage to another world. It is the gate of glory and everlasting happiness. It is the beginning of all that is good, that is everlastingly and eternally good. Our death is our birthday. Indeed, death is the death of itself; death is the death of death. For when we die, we begin to live, and we never live indeed till we die. For what is this life? Alas! it is a dying. Every day we live, a part of our life is taken away. We die every day, 1 Cor. xv. 31. The more we have lived, the less of our life we have to live.

The life in heaven begins at death. Death is the birthday of that life of immortality, and that is the life which can only truly be called life. When Christ came by dying to purchase life, it was not this sorry life on earth, but the life in the world to come, that life of immortal glory; and death's day is the birthday of this life. And for our bodies, they are but refined by death, and fitted, as vessels cast into the fire, to be moulded, to be most glorious vessels after.

Death is ours every way. It is our greatest friend under the mask of an enemy. So that, whatsoever Satan may suggest to the contrary, death is ours; our friend that was our enemy; a good thing that was an ill. Our fancy in a temptation may make us apprehend those things that are useful and good to be terrible and ill, and those things that are truly dangerous to us as if they were the only good. Satan abuseth our imagination, by amplifying the good of evil, and the evil of good. But, indeed, death, and all that makes way unto it, sickness, and misery, they are ours; they do us good, they fit us for heaven. Sickness, it fits us for death; it unlooseth the soul from the body. As for the profits, and pleasures, and honours of the world, what do they? They nail us faster to the world, and do us hurt. Therefore, death is ours. It is a good messenger; it brings good tidings when it comes. Hereupon it is that the wise man saith, 'The day of death is better than the day of birth,' Eccles. vii. 1.

When we are born, we come into misery; when we die, we go out of misery to happiness. It is better to go out of misery than to come into it. If the day of death be better than the day of birth to a Christian, certainly then death is theirs. It makes a short end of all that is miserable, and it is a terminus from whence all good begins. There is nothing in the world that doth us so much good as death. It ends all that is ill both of body and soul, and it begins that happiness that never shall have an end. Therefore, 'blessed are they that die in the Lord, saith the Spirit,' Rev. xiv. 18, 'A voice from heaven' saith so, and therefore, 'Write,' saith he. It may be written if the Spirit saith it: it is testimony and argument enough.

'Blessed are those that die in the Lord: they rest from their labours; and their reward follows them.' For they rest from all that is evil, and from that only. All that is good, 'their works follow them.' So that if all evil cease, and all good follows, I hope death may well be said to be ours, and for our good.

Use. If death be ours, and all that makes way to death, sickness, &c., the curse of them being taken away, and in the room a blessing hid in them, then why should we startle and be affrighted too much at the message of death, as

if it were such a terrible thing? Why should we be afraid of that which is a part of our portion? Why should we be afraid of that which is friendly to us and doth us so much good? What, to be a Christian that lives in the household and family of faith, and to want faith so far as not to believe the glorious estate after death, or that it is not his, or that death lets him not into it!

Nature will be nature, and death is a dissolution, and so the enemy of nature, the last enemy. Therefore nature cannot but in some measure be affrighted with death; but then grace and the Spirit of God in his children should be above nature, and cause them to look beyond death to that happy condition which death puts them in possession of. Death is like Jordan. We go through the waters and waves of it to Canaan, the land of promise and happiness. Faith would let us see this; and so grace would subdue nature, though nature will have a bout with the best, death being the terrible of terribles, and the king of fear, as I said before. Therefore I speak not this that we should be senseless, but that we may see how far the meditation of these things, of this blessed prerogative, and this one part of our charter, should strengthen us.

I beseech you, therefore, let us lay up this against those dark times wherein death will be presented unto us an ugly and grim thing. It is so to nature indeed, but to faith, death is become amiable. Indeed, as I said, there is nothing in the world that doth us so much good as death, for it is the best physician. It cures all diseases whatsoever of soul and body. And indeed—for to shut up this point—death is the death and destruction of itself; for after death there is no more death. It consumes itself. By death we overcome death. ‘We can never die more,’ Rom. vi. 9. We are freed from all death. Therefore, to be afraid of death, is to be afraid of life, to be afraid of victory; for we never overcome death till we die. Lay up these considerations against the time of need. When death comes, there will be a confluence of a world of grief, when conscience, being guilty of sin, shall be arraigned before God; when there will be sickness, and diseases of body, and a deprivation of all the comforts and employments of the world. They will all meet in a centre, in a point, at death; but a man had need to gather the greater comfort against that hour; and what shall comfort us then? There is a sweet comfort in Rom. viii. 38, 39, that neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ. It is a sweet comfort, that nothing shall separate us; but this is a greater comfort, that death is ours.

It shall not only not separate us from God and from happiness, but it shall bring us to nearer communion with God and Christ, for it is a separation that causeth a nearer conjunction; the separation of soul and body causeth the conjunction of the soul to Christ for the present, and afterwards an eternal conjunction of soul and body in this blessed fruition of him. Now, blessed be God for Jesus Christ, that hath made in him even death, the bitterest thing of all, to be sweet unto us.

‘Or things present.’

Whatsoever is present, good or ill. The good things present are ours, for our comfort in our pilgrimage and passage towards heaven. God is so good unto his children, as that he doth not only reserve for them happiness in another world, but the very gallery and passage to heaven by the way is comfortable. Things present are theirs. They may enjoy them with comfort; they have a liberty to all things, for refreshings, &c. ‘All things are pure to the pure,’ Titus i. 15. ‘Every creature of God is good, so it be received with thanksgiving and prayer,’ 1 Tim. iv. 4. We have a liberty to use them, but it must be with prayer and thanksgiving. Though a man hath a liberty and right to any thing, yet there must be a suing it out, there must be some passage in law to put him in possession. So, though we have a freedom to ‘present things,’ there must be somewhat to make a sanctified use of them. We must go to God by grace to use them well; all must be sanctified by prayer and thanksgiving.

And as good things, so ill things present are ours. Afflictions are ours, because they fit us for a happier state; they exercise what is good in us, and mortify what is ill. They are sanctified to subdue that which is ill, and to increase that which is good, and to make us more capable of glory. Who is so capable of glory as he that hath been afflicted in this world? To whom is heaven heaven indeed but to the man that hath led an afflicting life, a conflicting course with the world and his own corruptions? Heaven is a place of happiness indeed to him. Therefore, evil things are ours, because they sweeten happiness to come, and make us more capable and more desirous of it. So both good and evil things present are ours. God governing the world, and all things coming from him as a father, nothing shall come to us for the present but what he means to guide for our good.

Use. Therefore we should take them thankfully at God’s hands. ‘In all things be thankful,’ 1 Thes. v. 18. ‘In all things rejoice,’ Phil. iv. 4.

Because evil, though it be grievous for the time, yet it hath 'the quiet fruit of righteousness,' Heb. xii. 11. It quiets the soul after in that good we have by it. There are divers good things that we never have but by evil. There was never man yet could say he had patience but by suffering. So things present, whether they are good or ill, they are ours, to help us in the state of grace, and to fit us for the state of glory. But the most difficulty is in 'Things to come.'

For what assurance have we of things to come? Yet 'things to come are ours,' whether they be good or evil.

For good. The remainder of our life, that is ours to do good in. Death is to come, and that is ours. And judgment, that is ours; for our Brother, our Head, our Saviour, and our Husband, he shall be our judge, 1 Cor. vi. 2; and at the day of judgment, 'we shall judge the world.' And then after judgment heaven is ours; immortality and eternity is ours; communion with the blessed company in heaven is ours. 'All is ours' then.

Indeed, the best is to come; for if we had nothing but what we have in this world, 'we were of all men most miserable,' 1 Cor. xv. 19. Alas! what have we, if things present only are ours? But the best is behind. That for which Christ came into the world is behind. That which he enjoys in heaven is ours. He will take his spouse where himself is, into his own house, and he will finish the marriage, which is begun in contract, and then 'we shall be for ever with the Lord,' 1 Thes. iv. 17. 'The things to come' are the main things, that which our faith lays hold on. That which we raise ourselves and comfort ourselves by, are especially the things to come, especially the promises of happiness and glory, and exemption and freedom from all ill. Whatsoever is to come is ours, and ours for eternity. Indeed, here I am swallowed up; I cannot unfold to you what is ours in that sense. For 'if neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for his children in this world,' 1 Cor. ii. 9, that peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, how can we conceive here of that glory that is to come? Indeed, it is to be in heaven to conceive of it. It is a part of heaven to know them; and therefore the full knowledge of them it is deferred for that time till we come there.

And evil things to come are ours also. They cannot do us harm, they cannot 'separate us from Christ,' Rom. viii. 35. Nothing for the time to come shall be prejudicial, to unloose that blessed union that is between our soul and Christ; as St Paul, Rom. viii., in that heavenly discourse of his, towards

the latter end of the chapter, Rom. viii. 38, 39, saith triumphantly and divinely, 'Nothing shall separate us from Christ; neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come.' We have the word of God for it, 'that nothing to come shall hinder us.' Whatsoever is to come, be it never so ill, it shall further us, as the apostle saith in the same chapter: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for the best to them that love God.' Therefore, if nothing to come can hinder us, and all things that are to come shall further us, then all things to come must be ours. In 1 Pet. i. 5, 'We are kept by the power of God, through faith, to salvation.' Salvation is laid up for us, and we are kept through faith, by the power of God, to salvation. Therefore all things to come are ours.

It is a great comfort that nothing shall separate us; no, not death itself. But this text affords an exuberancy of comfort above that, that death is ours; and in being so, it shall not only not separate us from Christ, though it separate soul and body, but join us to him.

I beseech you, take it as a notion that may help against the terror of that doleful separation of soul and body. It parts two old friends, but it joins better friends together, the soul and Christ.

Farther, all things to come are ours; even all things in the largest sense, the bitterest of all things.

The very judgment of the wicked, and the eternal sentencing of them, is the church's. Why? It adds a lustre to God's mercy in advancing his own, as it is Rom. ix. 23. God magnifies his mercy to 'the vessels of mercy,' by punishing a company of reprobates, in whom he hath no delight, by reason of their sins. His mercy appears much by that, even by the eternal sentence and punishment of wicked men. So all serves to set out the glory and excellency of God's people.

Use. The use that the apostle mainly intends is, that a Christian is as sure of the time to come as of the time past or present. We are sure of what we have had, and what we have; but a Christian is in so firm a condition and state that he may be sure of what is to come: because God and Christ are not only 'Alpha, but Omega' also; Christ is not only he 'was, and is,' but 'is to come,' Rev. i. 8. He is 'Jehovah, the same for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. And therefore, as things past could not hinder us from being elected and called; and things present cannot hurt, but they are ours: so are things to come; because God, and Christ, who is the mediator under God, hath the

command of all things to come. And therefore we may be as sure of things to come as of things present. What a comfort is this to a Christian, when he is casting what should become of him, if times of trouble and public calamity should come! Presently he satisfieth himself with this, come what will come, all shall be for the best, 'all things to come are ours,' even all things whatsoever.

'All things are yours.'

But yet we must understand this with some limits. We therefore unloose some knots, and answer some cases.

Case 1. First, it may seem there is no distinction of propriety, if all he a Christian's.

Obj. And if every Christian may say, 'All is mine,' then what is one man's is another's, and there will be no propriety.

An. I answer, undoubtedly there is a distinction of properties in the things of this life. 'All is ours,' but it is in another sense. 'All is ours,' to help us to heaven; 'all is ours' in an order to comfort and happiness; but for propriety, so all things are not ours. For you know the distinction: some things are common jure nature, by the law of nature, as the sun and air, and many such like things; and some jure gentium, by the law of nations. It is but some things are thus common. But then there are some that by particular municipal laws are proper.

The distinction is established both by the law of God and the law of man. Therefore, not to stand long in answering this question, the Scripture stablisheth the distinction of master and servant; and therefore it established distinction of goods. The Scripture establisheth bounty and alms. If there be not a distinction of property, where were alms? Solomon saith, 'The rich and the poor meet together: God is the maker of both,' Prov. xxii. 2. He means, not as men only, but as poor and rich.

If riches be of God, then distinction of properties is of God; for what is riches but a distinction of properties? If God make poor and rich, then there must be poor and rich. 'The poor you have always with you,' Mat. xxvi. 11. Therefore the meaning is, 'All is yours that is, all that we possess, and all that we need to help us, is ours in that order and carriage of things that may help us to heaven. And so the want of things is ours, as well as the having of

them. The very things which a Christian wants are his; not only the grace of contentment to want, but when God takes away those things that are hurtful for him, that may hinder him in his course to heaven, that is his. It is a part of this portion, not to have things, if God see it good. The want of things is a part of this 'all.'

Obj. That which is so commonly alleged to the contrary, in Acts ii. 44, 'All things were common,' will easily receive answer.

Ans. 1. For, first, it was partly upon necessity. If all things then had not been common, they had all been taken from them.

2. And then, secondly, it was arbitrary also. 'Was it not thine own?' saith Peter, Acts v. 4. Thou mightst not have parted with it, if thou wouldst. It was arbitrary, though it was common.

3. And then, thirdly, all things were not common. Some good men kept their houses. Mary had her house, Acts xii. 12.

4. And then, fourthly, all things were common, but how? To distribute as they needed; not to catch who would and who can. But they were so common as they had a care to distribute to every one that which they needed.

Case 2. Obj. Another case is this; all is the church's, all is good people's, and therefore if a man be naught, nothing is his. There is a great point of popery grounded upon this mistake. For therefore say the Jesuited papists, the pope may excommunicate ill princes, in order to spiritual things, in online ad spiritualia. He is the lord and monarch of all. They are evil governors; nothing is theirs, all is the church's.

Ans. But we must know that political government is not founded upon religion; that if a prince be not religious, he is no king; but it is founded upon nature and free election, so that the heathen that have no religion, yet they may have a lawful government and governors, because it is not so built upon religion; but where that is not, yet this may be, and God's appointment to uphold the world. So that, let the king be anything or nothing for religion, he is a lawful king.

Obj. But it is further objected, that they succeed Christ, &c., and he was the Lord of the world, and they are the vicars of Christ; and therefore they may dispossess and invest whom they will.

Ans. But you must know, Christ as man had no government at all: but Christ as God-man, mediator; and so he hath no successor. That is incommunicable to the creature. Christ as man had no kingdom at all, for he saith, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' John xviii. 30. And St Austin saith well, 'Surely he was no king, that feared he should be a king'. For when they came to make him king, 'he withdrew himself and went away,' John vi. 15. And now Christ governs all things in the church. How? As God, as mediator, as God-man; not as man, but as God-man; and so he hath no substitute. They are all vain, impudent allegations, as if all were theirs, because all is the church's to dispose; and the pope takes himself virtually to be the whole church.

'All things are ours.'

Case 3. Both not this hinder bounty? It is mine, and therefore I do not owe any bounty unto others; as Nabal said, 'Shall I give my bread, and my water, and refreshing,' &c., 1 Sam. xxv. 11. He was too much upon the pronoun 'mine.'

Ans. However all that we possess is ours in law, yet in mercy many times it is the poor's, and not ours. The bonds of duty, both of humanity and religion, are larger than the bonds of law. Put case, in law thou art not bound to do so, yet in humanity, much more in Christianity, thou art. That that thou hast is the church's, and the poor's, and not thine. It will be no plea at the day of judgment to say, it was mine own. Thou mayest go to hell for all that, if thou relieve not Christ in his members. Therefore 'all things are ours' now, not to possess all we have, but to use them as he will have them used, that gives them. And when Christ calls for anything that is ours, we must give it. And though we be not liable to human laws, if we do not, yet we are liable to God's law; and alms and works of mercy, is justice in God's account; for we ought to be merciful to Christ's. And in the royal law, the works of love and mercy are justice, and we withhold good from the owners, if we be not merciful. For in religion, the poor, that by God's providence are cast on us to be provided for, have a right, and that which we detain from them is theirs. And therefore, as St Ambrose saith very well, 'If thou hast not nourished one, howsoever in the law thou art not a murderer, yet before God thou art'. It is a breach of that law, 'Thou shall not steal,' not to relieve. The very denial of comfortable alms is stealth in God's esteem; and therefore, though 'all be ours,' yet it is so ours, as that we must be ready to part with it when Christ in his members calls for it; for then it is not ours.

Case 4. Again, here is another question; if all be ours, we may use a liberty in all things, what, and how we list, because all is ours.

Ans. I answer: The following are good consecretaries hence. ‘All is ours;’ and therefore with thankfulness we may use any good creature of God. ‘All is ours;’ and therefore we should not be scrupulous in the creatures, we should not superstitiously single out one creature from another, as if one were holier than another. ‘All is ours;’ and therefore with a good conscience we may use God’s bounty. But hereupon we must not take upon us to use things as we list, because ‘all is ours.’ There is difference between right, and the use of that right. God’s children have right to that which God gives them, but they have not the use of that right at all times, at least it may be suspended. As for example, in case the laws forbid the use of this or that, for the public good of the nation. Also in case of scandal. A man hath right to eat, or not to eat; but if this eating ‘offend his brother,’ he must suspend the use of his right. ‘Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat,’ saith St Paul, ‘asking no question,’ 1 Cor. x. 25; that is, freely take all the creatures of God, without scruple. ‘For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof,’ Ps. xxiv. 1. God, out of his bounty, spreads a table for all creatures, for men especially.

‘The eyes of all things look up unto thee, and thou givest them meat in due season,’ Ps. cxlv. 15, 16. ‘The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.’ Make no scruple therefore. But mark, in verse 28, he restrains the use of that liberty upon the same text of Scripture: ‘But if any man say, This is offered to an idol,’ and take offence, ‘eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake;’ till he be better satisfied. ‘For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.’

Quest. Can the same reason be for contraries?

Ans. Yes. That is, for tin’s elf, when thou art alone, take all things (boldly. God envies not thy liberty. Take any refreshment, yet needest thou not to eat ‘to offend thy brother;’ God having given thee variety of creatures, even in abundance, and hath not limited thee to this or that creature; so that the same reason answereth both. ‘The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.’ Use it then alone, and not to the scandal of thy brother. ‘For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.’ Why shouldst thou use this creature, as if there were no more but this?

And therefore in case of scandal and offence, we should suspend our liberty, though all be ours.

Again, though all be ours, yet notwithstanding we have not a sanctified use, but by the word and prayer. 'Every creature of God is good, if it be received with prayer and thanksgiving,' 1 Tim. iv. 4. His meaning is, though we have a right to all things to our comfort, to help us to heaven, to cheer us in our way, to be as it were chariots to carry us; yet in the use of that right, we must do it in faith, that we may apprehend our right, that we do not use them with a scrupulous conscience, and sanctify them by prayer. We must take them with God's leave. A father gives all to his son that he needs, and promiseth his son that he shall want nothing; but he will have his son seek to him, and acknowledge him. You shall have all, but I will hear from you first; you shall have all, but I will reach it to you from my hand. So God deals with his children. They have a right to all, but he reacheth it to them in the use of means. We must have a civil right by labour, or by contract, &c., and then we must have a religious right by prayer. We must not pull God's blessings out of his hands. For though he give us a right in the thing, yet, in the use of that right, he will have us holy men.

Case 5. If you ask, What is the reason that good men oft fall to decay, and have a great many crosses in the world?

Why surely (not to enter into God's mysteries), when they have God's blessings they sanctify them not with prayer; they venture upon their right with scandal and offence to others.

Case G. Again, 'all things are ours.' Therefore truth, wheresoever we find it, is ours. We may read [a] heathen author. Truth comes from God, wheresoever we find it, and it is ours, it is the church's. We may take it from them as a just possession. Those truths that they have, there may be good use of those truths; but we must not use them for ostentation. For that is to do as the Israelites; when they had gotten treasure out of Egypt, they made a calf, an idol of them. So we must not make an idol of these things. But truth, wheresoever we find it, is the church's. Therefore with a good conscience we may make use of any human author. I thought good to touch this, because some make a scruple of it.

'All things are ours.'

Use 1. Now to make some use of this point, 'all things are ours.' We see then that a Christian is a great man, a rich man indeed; and only he is great and rich. It is but imagination and opinion that makes any worldly man great. Can we say that all is his? No. A spot of earth is his, and not his neither; for

it is his but to use for a time. He shall be turned naked into the grave ere long, and then he shall be stripped of all. But a Christian is a great man; though he be as poor as Lazarus, 'all is his.'

Obj. But you will say these are great words, 'all is his.' Perhaps he hath not a penny in his purse.

Ans. It is no great matter. God carries the purse for him; he is in his non-age, and not fit for possession. He hath much in promises; he is rich in bills and evidences. Again, let a Christian be never so poor, others are rich for him. Solomon saith there are some kind of oppressing rich men, 'that gather for those that will be good to the poor,' Prov. xxviii. 8. God hath given gifts to wicked men for the good of the church. They themselves are not the better for them. They want love and humility to make use of them. But all things are ours, as well what we want as what we have. For it is good for us that we should want them. A man hath riches when he hath a spirit to want riches. Is not he richer that hath a heart subdued by grace to be content to want, than he that hath riches in the world? For outward things make not a man a whit the better. But he that hath the Spirit of God to support him, that he can submit to God, he is truly rich. It is the mind of a man that makes him rich, and not his purse. Now there is no child of God, but he is master of all things. Though he be poor, he is master of riches, because he can want them, and be without them. Grace teacheth him to want and to abound, as St Paul saith of himself, 'through Christ that strengtheneth him,' Phil. iv. 13. He hath grace to master poverty and whatsoever is ill, and to be content to be what God will have him to be. In want he hath contentment, and in suffering patience. I appeal to the conscience of any man that hath a conscience, is it not better to want temporal things, when we have supply in grace, in faith, &c., than to have great possessions as snares, for so they are to a carnal heart? Is not a Christian better in his wants, than another in his possessions. Who would be as many great ones are and have been away, though they be invested into much greatness, both of authority and riches? Who would not rather choose the state of a Christian? Though he be poor, yet he hath grace. [Who would choose] rather to be great without grace and to be left of God to their corruptions, to abuse that greatness and riches to their own destruction, and the destruction of many others?

Therefore a Christian is a happy man, a great man, take him as you will; greater than the greatest man in the world without grace; for -what he hath, he hath with a curse, as God gave Israel a king in his rage, Hosea xiii. 11. You

know what Moses saith, Deut. xxviii. 17, 'Cursed shalt thou be in thy blessings.' A man may have a great many things, and be cursed in them. He doth not say he will curse them in the want of riches, that they should be poor, but he will curse them in their good things; they should have the vengeance of God with them. A Christian may want these things, but he hath the grace of God to want them, and he hath comfort here and assurance of better hereafter. Therefore all things are his, even the worst, because all things have a command to do him good. All things have a prohibition that they do him no harm. As David said of Absalom, 'Do the young man no harm,' 2 Sam. xviii. 5, so God gives all things a prohibition that they do his children no harm, nay, they have a command on the contrary to do them good. If they do them not good in one order, they do it in another; if they do it not in their outward man, they do it in their inward; and God's children by experience find him drawing them nearer to himself, both by having and wanting these things. So though they be not in possession theirs, yet in use, or, as we say, by way of reduction. The worst things are God's children's. For God brings all things about to their good. And when God's children shall be on the shore hereafter, and shall be past all and shall set their foot in heaven once, then they shall see by what a sweet providence God guided it, 'that all things wrought for their good,' Rom. viii. 28.

Quest. But you will say this or that particular is not mine, nor possessed by any of the saints.

Ans. All things are not ours by possession, but by some kind of use or other. We see and behold and meditate upon such things as are possessed by others, and exercise our thoughts profitably about God's providence in disposing these things as he pleaseth; as also we hereby stir up within us the graces of patience, contentedness, and thankfulness for what we have. Thus what we possess not may be ours, and in a better and more profitable use of it to us than to them that possess it.

A Christian therefore, I say again, is a groat man, above other men. And this is the reason that carnal men, that have the spirit of the world in them, do so bitterly envy and malign them. Certainly, they secretly think, this man is greater than I am; there is that in him that I have not. A Christian is above other men, and is able to judge them; and knoweth what they are, even miserable in their greatest heights. 'The spiritual man is judged of none,' 1 Cor. ii. 15. Men judge him poor and wretched, but it is false judgment, for he is ever truly rich and noble and happy. He fixeth a true judgment on them,

but they cannot of him; for he is in a rank of creatures above them. 'The saints shall judge the world,' 1 Cor. vi. 2. Those, that are despised now shall judge others ere long; they shall be assessories in judging the world. No marvel wicked men secretly malign God's people. The wicked cannot but judge them better and happier than themselves. As the life of grace is a higher thing, in the nature of the thing, than the life of reason, so those that have a gracious spiritual life, they are in a rank of creatures above all other men in the world whatsoever.

We see then what a great man a Christian is. He is master of what he hath, and of what he hath not. And is not this a wonderful prerogative that a Christian hath, that turn him to what condition you will, raise him or cast him down, kill him or spare his life, you cannot harm him? If you spare his life, this life is his; if you kill him, 'death is his.' Kill him, save him, enrich him, beggar him, his happiness is not at your command. There is a commanding power to rule all things for the good of God's people. It is not at the devotion of any creature in the world, either devils or men. God overturns and overpowers all, and all is and shall be theirs.

The state of grace is higher than any earthly condition, therefore it cannot be tainted or blemished by earthly things. Nothing that sense suffers hath power over reason, for it is above sense. If a man be sick he hath the use of reason; if health, reason also manageth it. No inferior thing can manage a superior. Let a man's estate be what it will, grace will master it, because it is a condition above, a ruling commanding condition.

Use 2. [1.] What a comfort is this in all troubles, that God will sanctify all conditions to us, and us to them. Who would be disconsolate in any condition whatsoever? Who would be disconsolate to live, when he knows that life is his? If God had not good to do by his life, he would take him away. Who would grieve when death comes, when he knows that death is his? So that a Christian may say, if poverty, if disgrace be good; if the order of evil things will help me; if cross winds will blow me to heaven, I shall have them. For the world and the miseries of the world, the persecutions and afflictions, 'all are ours.' The worst things are commanded to serve for our main good. Therefore let us comfort ourselves. We cannot be at loss in becoming religious and true Christians, for then 'all things are ours.' He loseth nothing that, by losing anything, gaineth all things.

[2.] For grace: for seeing 'all things are ours,' this should teach us to use all things to the honour of him that hath given us all things, not to be

servants to anything, not to be subject to any creature, as St Paul saith of himself, 'I will not be in bondage to anything,' 1 Cor. vi. 12. Why? A Christian is master and lord over all. What a base thing is it for a man to be enthralled to such poor things? As you have some in bondage to a weed. Some are in bondage to this affection and some to that, some to an idle custom. For a man to be as Rachel, 'Give me my children, or I die,' Gen. xxx. 1; I must have wealth, I must have pleasure, or else I cannot live; as you know that wretched man Amnon, he pined away to have his will; and so Ahab, who pined away himself because he had not that he would have—are these men masters? No. They bring themselves in slavery and subjection to the creature. Can they say as Paul, 'All things are ours; things present or to come?' when they put themselves in subjection, and those blessed souls of theirs, they make slaves to their servants, to things worse than themselves, that they trample on. If all things be ours, let us bring ourselves in subjection to nothing; but labour rather to have grace to subdue and use all things to right ends.

Use 3. Again, this should increase in us the grace of thankfulness. Hath God thus enriched us? Hath he made all things ours to serve our turn (in such a way as he accounts service); that is, that whatsoever we have shall help us to heaven and hath a blessing in it? Though it be sickness, or want, it is ours, and for our benefit. Lord, do what thou wilt, so thou bring me to heaven. If thou wilt have me poor, if it will do me good, let me be so; if thou wilt have me abased, I am content, only sanctify it to bring me to heaven. How thankful should we be to God, that hath placed us in this rank, that he hath put all things under us, and made all things our servants! It was at his liberty to have made us men or not, and when we were men, to make us Christians or not. But being made, we are made lords over all; all things are put under our feet, being one with Christ, as Ps. viii. 6. In the thoughts hereof our hearts should rise up to the Lord thankfully, and say, as he doth there, 'Lord, how wonderful is thy name in all the world.'

Use 4. And fourthly, it should teach us, for matter of judgment, though it be a shame for us to be taught it, that there is a God and a wise God. There are a company, yea, a world of things in the world of different ranks and natures, as evil and good, &c., and yet you see how one thing is disposed for another. The sun shines upon the earth; the earth is fruitful for the beasts; the beasts serve man; and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Where there are many things, and things that understand not themselves, and yet there is subordination, there must needs be a wise God that made all things,

and sets all in this frame and order. And as it shows there is a God, so that this God is one, because all tend to one. There are a world of things, but all are for man. There are a world of Christians, but all are for Christ, and Christ is for God. Where there are variety of things, and all ordered to one, there must needs be one eternal, wise God. It helps and stablisheth our faith in that grand point, to know that there is a wise, understanding, gracious, powerful God, that rules and marshals all the creatures, otherwise than themselves can do. If there be order in things that have no understanding, surely the ordering of them must come from an understanding. The work of nature, as we say, is a work of intelligence: as in bees, there is planted a wonderful instinct, and in other things, but they understand it not themselves. Therefore the work of the creature, being a work of understanding, it must needs come from him that is a higher understanding, that orders these things. If all these things, good and evil, creatures, states, and conditions, serve God's children, and they are for God, then certainly there is a wise God that orders these things out of goodness to us. And we finding all things ordered to us, should order ourselves to God. If there be a God that hath ordained variety of things, and of his goodness hath placed us in this rank of things, that all should be our servants, we ought to refer all our endeavours, what we are, and what we can do, to the glory of this God. And this indeed is the disposition of all those that can speak these words with any comfort, 'All things are ours, Paul, and Apollos, magistrates, ministers, life, and death, things present or to come; all are ours.' Those that can speak these words with comfort, are thus disposed; finding all things theirs, they refer all to the glory of him who hath made all things serviceable to them. But to proceed.

I come now to the next branch.

'Ye are Christ's.'

It pleaseth us well to hear that 'all things are ours.' Aye, but we must know further, that there is one above to whom we owe homage, and of whom we have and hold all that we have. 'Ye are Christ's.' This is the tenure we hold all things by, because 'we are Christ's.' Whatsoever the tenure in capite be amongst men (which you are better acquainted with than myself), I am sure it is the best tenure in religion, 'All is ours,' because 'we are Christ's.' We hold all in that tenure. If we be not Christ's, nothing is ours comfortably. 'We are Christ's,' and therefore 'all is ours.'

Quest. But what say you then of those that are not Christ's? Are not the things theirs that they have, because they are not Christ's; or have wicked men nothing that may be called theirs?

Ans. I answer, they have. And it is rigour in some that say otherwise, as that wicked men are usurpers of what they have. They have a title, both a civil title and a title before God. God gave Nebuchadnezzar Tyrus as a reward for his service; and God gives wicked men a title of that they have. And they shall never be called to account at the day of judgment for possessing of what they had, but for abusing that possession. And therefore properly they are not usurpers, in regard of possession; but they shall render an account of the abuse of God's good bounty.

It is in this as it is in the king's carriage to a traitor. When a king gives a traitor his life, he gives him meat and drink that may maintain his life, by the same right that he gives him his life. God will have wicked men to live so long, to do so much good to the church; for all are not extremely wicked that are not Christ's members, that go to hell. But there are many of excellent parts and endowments, that God hath appointed to do him great service. Though they have an evil eye, and intend not his service, but to raise themselves in the world, yet God intends their service for much purpose, and he gives them encouragement in the world, as he will not be behind with the worst men. If they do him service, they shall have their reward in that kind, Ps. lxxii. 12. If it be in policy of state, they shall have it in that; and they shall have commendations and applause of men, if they look for that; and if he give them not heaven, they cannot complain, for they care not for that; they did it not with an eye for that. Now if God use the labour and the industry and the parts and endowments of wicked men for excellent purposes, he will give them their reward for outward things: 'Verily, you have your reward,' saith Christ, Mat. vi.

Obj. But the apostle saith, 'All things are yours,' because 'ye are Christ's;' as if those that have not Christ have nothing.

Ans. It is true, howsoever, in some sense, men that are out of Christ, that have not his Spirit, have title by virtue of a general providence to what they have; yet they have not a title so good and so full as a godly man, as a Christian hath. They have not this tenure to hold all things in Christ. Therefore their tenure is not so good, nor so comfortable, in three respects.

[1.] First, they have them not from the love of God in Christ. They have it from God and Christ, as the governor and ruler of the world, and making all things serviceable to the church. Therefore he gives these gifts even to wicked men; for the good of others, as the governor of the world; but he bestows them on his children out of love.

[2.] And then, secondly, they have them not from God, as a father in covenant. They have no title as children of God; for so a Christian is the heir of the world. The first-born was to have a double portion. A true Christian hath a double portion. 'All things are his' here; and heaven is his when he dies. 'Things present are his' while he lives; and 'things to come are his,' when he goes hence.

[3.] And then, thirdly, in regard to the end, to wicked men they do not further their salvation. They have them not from God with grace to use them well. But God's children, as they have them from his love, and from God as a Father in covenant, so it is for their good. Wicked men they have *donum Dei sine Deo*, they have the gifts of God without God; without the love and favour of God, as Bernard saith well. But God's children have the gifts of God with God too. Together with the gifts and good things from him, they have his favour, that is better than his gift. For all the good things we enjoy in this world, they are but conduits to convey his favour. God's love and mercy in Christ is conveyed in worldly things; and the same love that moved God to us in heaven, and happiness in the world to come, it moves him to give us daily bread. There is no difference in the love, as the same love that moves a hither to give his son his inheritance, moves him to give him breeding and necessaries in the time of his non-age. We are here in our non-age, and God shares out such a state to us; and from the same love that he gives us these things, he gives us heaven afterwards. Now wicked men have not this full degree of title. Yet they have a title, as I said before; and they shall never answer for the possession of what they have, but for the wicked use of that possession.

Case 4. Again, a little further to clear one case I touched before. If all things be ours because we are Christ's, may we as are Christians use all things as we list?

Ans. There is a fourfold restraint in regard of the use.

[1.] There is a restraint, first, of religion. Though all things be ours in regard of conscience: we may eat and drink, and use any creature of God

without scruple; yet there is a restraint put upon it sometimes in religion: that it be no prejudice to the worship of God. In the Lord's day we may refresh ourselves, but not so as to hinder the worship of God: here is a higher restraint put upon our liberty.

[2.] And then, secondly, sobriety, it puts a restraint upon our liberty.

'All things are ours' in Christ. We must not take liberty, therefore, to exceed sobriety. *Licetis perimus omnes*, it is an ordinary speech, we all perish by lawful things. Howsoever, 'all things are ours,' for our use; yet we must use them soberly, and not exceed.

[3.] And then, thirdly, charity puts another restraint! It must be without offence to others. We must not think to have a free use of that may offend others. In that case there is a restraint. Therefore St Paul saith, 'I will never eat flesh whilst I live, rather than I will offend my brother,' 1 Cor. viii. 18.

[4.] And in the last place, in case of obedience. There is a restraint upon 'all things' we have; that is, in outward things. Howsoever no man may meddle with the conscience; yet the magistrate may restrain this or that creature. 'All things are ours,' because we are Christ's. This may satisfy in some doubts.

Now to come more directly to this branch, to show how 'we are Christ's.'

We are Christ's in all the sweet terms and relations that can be. Name what you will, 'we are Christ's.' We are his subjects, as he is a king; we are his servants, as he is a lord; we are his scholars, as he is a prophet. If we take Christ as a head, we are his members; if we take Christ as a husband, we are his spouse; if we take Christ as a foundation, we are the building; if we take Christ as food, he incorporates us to himself; if we be temples, he dwells in us. There is no relation, nor any degree of subjection and subordination, but it sets forth this sweet union and agreement between Christ and us. So that 'Christ is ours,' and 'we are Christ's' in all the sweet relations that can be. We are his members, his spouse, his children: for he is the 'everlasting Father,' Isa. ix. 6. He is all that can be to us, and we are all that can be to him, that is lovely and good.

But yet all relations are short. They reach not to set out the excellency and the truth and reality of this, that 'we are Christ's.' For what is a head to

the body (which is one of the nearest)? Can the head quicken the dead body? No. But Christ can, agere in non membrum; he can work in a dead member, that that is not a member, to make it one. Can a husband change his spouse? Moses could not. He married a blackamore. He could not alter her disposition or her hue. But Christ can alter his spouse. He is such a foundation as makes all 'living stones.' Therefore, in St John xvii. 21, because there is no manner of union in the world, that can serve to set out the nearness we have to Christ, saith Christ, 'Father, I will that they may be one, as thou and I am one.' He sets it out by that incomprehensible union. He goes divinely above earthly things, to set out the reality of this, how we are Christ's and Christ ours. We are Christ's in the most intimate nearness that can be; we are so Christ's, as nothing in the world else is, when we believe once. Though all things are Christ's, yet the church is Christ's in a more peculiar manner. There is a peculiarity in this that we are Christ's; that is, we are in the nearest bonds, nearer to Christ than the very angels. For they are not the 'spouse' of Christ; they are not the 'members' of Christ. They are ministering spirits to Christ, and so to us. There is no creature under heaven, no, nor in heaven, that is Christ's, as we are. We are his 'portion,' his 'jewels,' his 'beloved.' We are Christ's in all the terms of nearness and dearness that can be.

And this nearness is mutual. We are Christ's, and Christ is ours. He dwells in us and we in him. He abides in us, and we in him. He is in us as the vine is in the branches, and we are in him as the branches in the vine. And as it is intimate and mutual, so it is eternal; we are Christ's for ever.

But to come more particularly: By what title are we Christ's?

(1.) The first title that Christ hath to us is the same that he hath to all things else. All things are God's and Christ's by creation and preservation: all things consist in Christ.

(2.) But, secondly, there is a more near title than by creation; namely, by gift. For the Father hath given us to him. For all that are God's by election, he gave them to Christ, to purchase for them 'by his blood.'

(3.) And, thirdly, he hath title to us 'by redemption.' We cost him dear. We are a spouse of blood to him, the price of his blood, Exod. iv. 25. He died for us. We could not be Christ's, but he must redeem us out of the hands of our enemies. And God would have his justice satisfied, that grace and justice might meet and kiss one another. God's justice must be satisfied

before Christ would have us: for however there was amor benevolentiac, a love of good will, that gave us to Christ, yet till Christ redeemed us, and made us his own, there was not amor amicitia, a love of friendship between God and us. So all friendship comes upon title of redemption.

(4.) Then, fourthly, upon redemption, there is a title of marriage that Christ hath to us. God, that brought Adam to Eve in paradise, he brings Christ and us together. And (5.) We give consent on our part, as it is in marriage, to Christ. He is our husband, and we give our consent to take Christ to be so, that he shall rule and govern us, and we take him for better for worse in all conditions. Thus we see how Christ comes to be ours, and we to be Christ's. Now, the points that arise from this branch, 'And ye are Christ's,' are these,—

First, That 'all things are Christ's.'

Secondly, That 'we are Christ's.'

Thirdly, That 'all are ours, because we are Christ's.'

The connection of the text is this: 'All things are yours.' Why? Because 'you are Christ's.' How follows that? Because all things are Christ's. If all things were not Christ's and we Christ's, the argument would not hold. So that all are Christ's first. All the promises are made to Christ first, and all good things are his first. All the 'promises are yea in him,' 2 Cor. i. 20; they are made in him, and they are 'amen,' they are performed in him. I need not stand much upon this. All things in the world are Christ's, for he made all, as it is Col. i. 16, and he hath reconciled all. All things are Christ's, especially by the title of redemption, as he redeemed man. And indeed we could not be Christ's unless Christ had subdued all things to himself. Unless he had possessed all good and subdued all that is ill, how could he have brought us out of the hands of our enemies? Therefore, in St John xvii. 2, our Saviour Christ speaks there of the 'power that his Father had given him over all things.' But this was upon consideration of his resurrection. After his resurrection, he saith, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth,' Mat. xxviii. 18. Christ, as mediator, had title to all things by virtue of the union. As soon as the human nature was knit to the divinity, there was a thorough title to all things. But it was not discovered, especially till the resurrection was past, when he had accomplished the work of redemption.

He was also to ask. 'Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thy possession,' Ps. ii. 8. God would not let his Son have anything (though he redeemed the church, and all things, in some sort) without asking. Shall any man then think to have anything without prayer, when all things were conveyed to the Son of God by asking?

Further, Christ is 'the heir of the world,' Heb. i. 2. Therefore, all things must be his as the heir. This is a clear point, and I do but name it, because it hath a connection with the truths I am now to speak of.

Hereupon it comes, that 'all things are ours, because Christ is ours.' Christ is said 'to be the first-born of many brethren,' Rom. viii. 29; and the 'first-begotten of every creature,' Col. i. 15; and 'the first-begotten from the dead,' Col. i. 18. All these show the priority of Christ, that Christ is first, that he should have the pre-eminence in all things. For Christ is the prime creature of all; he is God's masterpiece. That is the reason why nothing can be ours but it must be Christ's first. He is the first-begotten of every creature, both as God and man. He is the 'first-begotten,' because he is more excellent in order and dignity than any other whatsoever. So he is the 'first-begotten from the dead,' 'the first fruits' of them that sleep, because all that rose rose by virtue of him. Hereupon it is that we can have nothing good but we must have it in Christ first.

Use 1. Therefore we must know this to make a right use of it, whatsoever privilege we consider of as ours, we ought to see it in Christ first. Our election is in Christ first. He is chosen to be our head. Our justification is in Christ first. He is justified and freed from our sins being laid to his charge as our surety, and therefore we are freed. Our resurrection is in Christ first. We rise, because he is the 'first-begotten from the dead.' Our ascension is in Christ, and our sitting at the right hand of God in him first. All things that are ours, they are first his; what he hath by nature we have by grace. Why do the angels attend upon us, and are ministering spirits to us? We are Christ's, and he is the Jacob's ladder upon whom the angels ascend and descend. All the communion those blessed spirits have with mankind is because we are Christ's. They are ministering spirits to Christ first, and then to us, because we are Christ's.

Therefore it is a good meditation, fitting the gospel, never to think of ourselves in the first place, when we think of any prerogative, but to think of it in our blessed Saviour, who began to us in all. He was the first in

everything that is good. As the elder brother, it was fit it should be so. And he must have the prerogative in all things. Therefore,

Use 2. Let us glorify Christ in everything. When we think of our title to anything, think, this I have by Christ: be it of our justification or glorification, this I had by Christ and in Christ.

This is another use we are to make of it, the rather because it sweetens all things we have. If all things should come immediately from God, they were comfortable, but whereas all shall be derived from God by Christ, we have God's and Christ's love together. There is not the least good thing we have, but we must think, This I have by Christ, this victory over ill, and this conversion of ill to good. The thing is sweet, but the love of Christ is sweeter. The thing itself is not so good as the spring whence it comes. It pleaseth God we have a triple comfort at once in every good thing: comfort in God the Father, that we have it from his love, and comfort in the Son of God, and comfort in the creature. Therefore, let us not be swallowed up in the creature, but reason thus: This is a sweet comfort, but whence have I it? Oh! it is from Christ, and the love of Christ, and I have Christ from the Father. There is Christ, and God the Father, and the thing, and the love of Christ, and the Father, which is sweeter than the thing itself. As in the gifts from friends, the gift is not so sweet as the love it comes from. The love and favour of God is better than the thing itself. This is indeed a comfortable observation to know, that 'all things are ours, because we are Christ's.' For why is Paul, and Cephas, and the ministers ours? They are the ministers of Christ first. 'We are the ministers of Christ, and your servants, for his sake,' saith the apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 5.

Why is life and death ours? Because Christ hath conquered death first; and it was the passage of Christ to his glory. He conquered the ill of it. He took away 'the sting of it;' and thereupon it is so good and useful to us. He hath the 'key of hell and death;' that is, he hath the government of it, having overcome it. And 'things present and to come.' Heaven, which he now possesseth, it is his, and thereupon it comes to be ours. Therefore, let us think of Christ in all things, and think of the sweetness of all things from this, that they come from Christ.

To enlarge this point a little further. We have all from Christ, and in Christ, yea, and by Christ, and through him.

[1.] First, We have all we have in Christ, as a head, as the first, as our ‘elder brother,’ as a root, as the ‘second Adam.’ We have all in him, by confidence in him. We have whatsoever is good in him.

[2.] And, secondly, we have all by and through him, as a mediator, for his sake. We have title to all, because Christ, by redemption, hath purchased a right to all, in and through him.

[3.] Thirdly, We have all by him, by a kind of working as the efficient cause, because we have the Spirit of God to extract good out of all. For, being reasonable creatures, God will make all ours, as becomes understanding creatures; that is, by sanctifying our understanding to extract the quintessence out of every thing. For a Christian hath the Spirit to let him see that God is leading him by his Spirit to good in all. And whence comes the Spirit? From Christ. Christ hath satisfied the wrath of God the Father. And now the Father and Christ, both as reconciled, send the Spirit as the fruit of both their loves. So Christ, as the efficient cause, makes all ours, because the Spirit is his, by which Spirit we make all ours.

[4.] And, fourthly, Christ is an exemplary cause. We have all in him, and through him, and by him, as an exemplary pattern. The same Spirit that subdued all to him subdues all things to us. To make this clear a little. There was in Christ *regnum patientiae*, a kingdom of patience, as well as *regnum potential*, a kingdom of power and glory. There was a kingdom of patience; that is, such a kingdom as Christ exercised in his greatest abasement, whereby he made all things, even the worst, to be serviceable to his own turn and the church’s. So in every member of his, there is a kingdom of patience set up, whereby he subjects all things to him. To make it yet clearer.

When Christ died, which was the lowest degree of abasement, there was a kingdom of patience then. What! When he was subdued by death and Satan, was there a kingdom then? Yes, a kingdom. For though visibly, he was overcome and nailed to the cross; yet invisibly, he triumphed over principalities and powers. For by death he satisfied his Father; and he being satisfied, Satan is but a jailor. What hath he to do when God is satisfied by death? Christ never conquered more than on the cross. When he died he killed death, and Satan, and all. And [did] not Christ reign on the cross when he converted the thief? when the sun was astonished, and the earth shook and moved, and the light was eclipsed? Who cares for Caesar when he is dead? But what more efficacious than Christ when he died? He was most practical when he seemed to do nothing. In patience he reigned and

triumphed; he subjected the greatest enemies to himself, Satan, and death, and the wrath of God, and all. In the same manner all things are ours, the worst things that befell God's children, death, and afflictions, and persecutions. There is a kingdom of patience set up in them. The Spirit of God subdues all base fears in us, and a child of God never more triumphs than in his greatest troubles. This is that that the apostle saith, Rom. viii. 37, 'In all these things we are more than conquerors.' How is that, that in those great troubles we should be 'conquerors and more'? Thus the spirit of a Christian, take him as a Christian, reigns and triumphs at that time. For the devil and the world labour to subdue the spirits of God's children and their cause. Now to take them at the worst, the cause they stand for, and will stand for it; and the spirit that they are led with is undaunted. So that the Spirit of Christ is victorious and conquering in them, and most of all at such times.

It is true of a Christian indeed that one speaks of a natural man—but he speaks too vaingloriously—he subdues hope and fear, and is more sublime than all others. A Christian is so *dam patitur vincit, &c.*; when he suffers he conquers, nay, more then than at other times; for the spirit gets strength, and the cause gets strength by suffering, and answerable to his suffering is his comfort and strength. So that all things are his. The Spirit that subdued all things to Christ, subdues them to him. Nay, he makes all advantageous for the time to come; as St Paul saith, 'These light afflictions that we suffer, work unto us an exceeding weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17; because they lit and prepare our desires for glory. And answerable to that measure that we glorify God, shall our reward be in heaven; and the more we suffer, the more 'entrance' we have into heaven in this world; we enter further into the kingdom of grace, and by consequent into the kingdom of glory. So that there is a kingdom set up in a Christian, as there was in Christ, in patience in suffering. So we see that 'all things are ours,' because 'we are Christ's,' and what we may observe from thence.

To shut up this point with some use.

Use 1. Let us be stirred up to study Christ, and in Christ to study our own excellency. St Paul accounted all 'dross and dung, in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ,' Phil. iii. 8. And indeed we cannot study Christ but there will be a reflection upon the soul presently; it is a transforming study. The study of the love of Christ must needs make us love him again. The study of the choice that Christ hath made of us, it will make us choose him again, and to say, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' Ps.

Lxxiii. 25. If we study the grace and mercy of Christ, we cannot but be transformed in marvellous respect to him again. Therefore let us raise up our thoughts more to think of Christ, and the excellencies of Christ, with appropriation to ourselves, 'All things are yours, and you are Christ's.' We should not study Christ and any excellency in him, but we should also think, 'This is mine, this is for me. The more the spouse hears of the riches and advancement of her husband, the more she blesses herself, and saith, 'This is for me. And the more we think of Christ, the more we think of our own advancement and excellency. Therefore we should be willing to hear 'the unsearchable riches of Christ' unfolded to us; for these serve to kindle the love of the spouse to Christ.

The ministers are paranimphy, friends of the bridegroom, that come between the spouse and Christ, to make up the match between them; and one blessed way whereby they do it, is to unfold to the church her own beggary, and the riches she hath by Christ; her own necessity, and the excellency that she hath in Christ. The main scope of the ministry is to show us our beggary in ourselves, and our danger: that we are more indebted than we are worth; that we are indebted to God's justice for body, and soul, and all; and as we are indebted, so we must have supply from the riches of another of necessity, or else we go to prison and perish eternally.

Now Christ doth not only pay our debts—for that we may look for out of self-love—but he is 'the chief of ten thousand,' Cant. v. 10, he is an excellent person in himself. Now the unfolding of the excellencies in Christ is a means to procure the contract and marriage between the church and Christ. And let us labour by all means to be one with Christ, to study further union and communion with Christ, because upon this term and tenure 'all things are ours,' if we be Christ's; if not, nothing is ours but damnation. And considering that the more union we have with him, the more we shall know our own prerogative, that 'all things present and to come are ours,' therefore we should labour to know him more. There are three graces tending to union: Knowledge, faith, and love.

The more we know him, the more we shall trust him. 'They that know thy name will trust in thee,' Ps. ix. 10. And the more we trust in him, the more we shall love him. Knowledge breeds trust, and trust breeds love. Therefore let us labour to grow in our knowledge, and trust, and love to Christ.

And to that end, as I said, to take all occasions to hear of the excellencies of Christ, to study them ourselves, and to hear of them from others, especially in the ministry. In Cant. v. 9, those that were not converted, the daughters of Jerusalem, they ask the church, 'What is thy beloved more than another's beloved?' 'My beloved,' saith the church, 'is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand;' and thereupon she sets him out from top to toe, in all his excellencies, and saith, 'This is my beloved;' and thereupon she that before asked in slighting, 'What is thy beloved more than another's beloved?' in the 6th chapter saith, 'Where is thy beloved, that we may seek him with thee?' So when we know Christ and his excellencies, the next query will be, 'Where is thy beloved?' Of all arguments in divinity we can study, we hear of nothing more comfortable than of Christ and the benefits we have by him; for God will be glorified in nothing so much as in that great mystery of Christ. Therefore let these things be more and more sought after.

Quest. But how shall I know that Christ is mine, or that I am in Christ, or no? For all depends upon this tenure, that we are in Christ.

Ans. Ask thine own heart. (1.) Hast thou given thy consent, and contracted thyself to Christ, or no? This is one way, as I said, whereby we are Christ's, by giving our consent. Our own hearts will tell us whether we have given our consent to take Christ to be a head, a governor, and a king to rule us, as well as for a priest to die for us. If thou be content to come under the government of Christ, to be ruled by his Spirit, thou mayest say, I am Christ's; I have given up myself to him; I am content to take him. We know what hath proceeded from our own will, and there are none that have given up themselves to Christ, but they may know it. Therefore let us consider whether we have passed our consent to Christ, or no. I fear it is yet to do with many; for instead of contracting themselves to Christ, they have yielded to their own lusts.

(2.) Again, secondly, consider by what spirit thou art, guided, whether by the Spirit of Christ or no. 'He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his,' Rom. v. 8. Christ is a husband that will rule his spouse. He will rule in his own temple and house. He is a head that will rule his own members. Consider what spirit guides and actuates thee, whether the Spirit of Christ or the spirit of the world. If the Spirit of Christ rule in us, it will work as it did in Christ, that judgment of things that Christ had, heavenly things to be the most excellent, and the same judgment of persons to esteem of those that Christ esteems of. It will work the same carriage to God, to men, to enemies,

to Satan. If we have the Spirit of Christ, it will transform us to be like Christ in our judgment and dispositions and affections every way, in some degree, according to our capacity and measure. Therefore let us not deceive ourselves; if we be led by the spirit of the world, and not by the Spirit of Christ, we cannot say with comfort, I am Christ's. When every one shall come to challenge their own, the devil will say, Thou art mine, thou wert led by my spirit. But if we yield ourselves to be guided by the blessed truth of God, when that challenge shall come, 'Who is on my side. Who?' Christ will own us for his in evil times.

(3.) Thirdly, He that is Christ's will stand for Christ upon all occasions, and stand for religion. He will not be a lukewarm neuter. If we be Christ's, it is impossible but we should have a word to speak for him and for religion. If we be Christ's, we will be strong for Christ; we will be true to him; we will not betray Christ and the cause of religion that is put into our hands. But, by the way, let us take heed of making this a name of faction, as the Corinthians did, to say 'I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I am of Christ;' as some that say they are neither papists nor protestants, but Christians. But in times wherein profession is required, a man must show his religion here. Not to say, I am Christ's, is to be an atheist. In case of confession and profession of religion, we must own the side of Christ and say we are Christ's indeed.

It is said in the Revelation, that so many hundreds and thousands were sealed with a 'seal in their foreheads,' Rev. vii., throughout. For even as the slaves of antichrist are sealed in the hand, they have a mark in their hand; that is, they are hold for antichrist; so all God's children are sealed in their foreheads. That is the place of confession and profession, the forehead being an open place. Christ carries God's broad seal. He seals all that come to heaven in the forehead. He seals them first in their hearts to believe the truth, and then he seals them in the forehead, openly to confess. 'With the heart we believe, and with the mouth we confess to salvation,' Rom. x. 10. Therefore those that are not hold to confess and profess religion when they are called to it, they are none of Christ's 'sealed ones,' for he seals them to make them hold in the profession of religion. Let this be one evidence whether thou art Christ's or no; if the question be, 'Who is on my side?' to own Christ's side, to stand for Christ and the religion reformed and established. If a man do not this, he cannot say I am Christ's; but his heart will give his tongue the lie, if he stand not boldly for the cause of Christ. 'He that is ashamed of me before men, I will be ashamed of him before my heavenly Father,' Mark iii. 38.

It is a comfortable consideration, if upon trial we find ourselves Christ's, that we own the cause of Christ and his side. It is the best side, and we shall find it so in the hour of death and the day of judgment. If we find ourselves to be Christ's, what a comfort will this be? Of all conditions in the world, it is the sweetest and the safest condition to be in Christ. It is to have all below us ours, and all above us too to be ours; to have God the Father ours, and God the Holy Ghost; to have all in heaven and earth to be ours, 'things present and things to come.' What a comfortable consideration is this in all storms, to be housed in Christ, to dwell in Christ, to be clothed with Christ! When the storm of God's anger shall come upon a nation, and at the day of judgment to be found in Christ, 'not having our own righteousness,' Philip, iii. 9, and in the hour of death to die in Christ! If we be Christ's, we live in him and die in him, and shall be found in him at the day of judgment. If we be Christ's, we are in heaven already in Christ our head. We sit in heavenly places together with him. In all the vicissitude and interchanging of things in the world, which are many, 'life and death, and things present, and things to come,' there is a world of vicissitudes; but in all, in life and death, look backward, or forward, or upward, or downward, if a man be in Christ, he is upon a rock. He may overlook all things as his servants. All things shall be commanded by God to serve for his good, and to bring him to heaven, to yield him safe conduct. We study evidences and other things. This is worth our study more and more, to make this sure, that we are Christ's, and Christ is ours. The more we grow in knowledge, and faith, and love, the more we shall grow in assurance of this.

Use 2. Again, if we be Christ's, why then should we fear want, when all things are ours, and we are Christ's? Can a man want at the fountain? Can a man want light that is in the sun? Can a Christian that hath all things his; and in this tenure his, all things are his, because Christ is his, —can anything he wanting to him? It should comfort us against the time to come, if we be stripped of all, yet we have the Fountain of all. We must be stripped of all at the hour of death, whether we will or no; but if we be Christ's, and Christ be ours, all things are in him in an eminent manner. It is a wonderful comfort for the present, against all fears and wants; and it is a comfort for the time to come, that when all things shall be taken from us, yet he that is better than all things, that is better than the world itself, will remain to us. Therefore let us think of these things. It is wondrous comfortable to be Christ's, and to be his in such a peculiar manner.

Use 3. And, thirdly, let us learn, as we are advised, Ps. xlv. 10, 'to forget our father's house,' to forget all former base acquaintance, and to be contented with Christ. What saith our blessed Saviour in the Gospel? 'Those that hear my words, they are my brother, and sister, and mother,' Mark iii. 35. Are they so? And shall not we, for Christ's sake, that is nearer than any in the world, 'hate father and mother,' Ac., Luke xiv. 20, that is, not regard them for Christ. If we be so near Christ, and he will stick to us when all will leave us, then let us answer Christ's love. He is to us instead of all kindred; let him be so, if we cannot have their love upon other terms than to forsake Christ. Thus we see what we may observe from this, that 'we are Christ's.' How it is said here besides, that 'Christ is God's.'

Here is a sacred circle that ends where it begins; for all things come out from God at the first, and all things go back again to God and end in him. 'All are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Man is, as it were, the horizon of all things; that hath one half of the heavens below, divided and terminated, and the other above. A holy man is between all things, above him and under him. All things are his below him. They serve his turn and use, to help him to heaven, as a viaticum. And all things above him are his; that is the cause that all things below are his. Now to come to this last branch.

'And Christ is God's.'

In what sense is Christ God's? Was he not the Son of God? Yes! That is true. He was the eternal Son of God. But that is not here meant. Christ is God's, as Mediator. The Father, the first person of the Deity, is the fountain; and the Mediator comes from him in a double sense.

First, Because the Father, the first person, was offended; therefore he must appoint a mediator. Now, by what bonds is Christ God's? By all the strong terms that can be devised. God sent him into the world: 'He sent his Son,' Rom. iii. 25. God set him forth as a propitiation: 'Him hath the Father sealed,' John vi. 27. He came forth with God's broad seal. God sealed him to be Mediator in his baptism, and by his working of miracles, and raising him from the dead. God the Father sealed him, and set his stamp upon him to be his. He sent him, and set him forth, and sealed him: 'He was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows,' Ps. xlv. 7. He was anointed to show his authority. Kings, and priests, and prophets were anointed. So God the Father hath appointed him to be king, priest, and prophet of his church. He is anointed in all these terms: 'It pleased the Father that in him should all

fulness dwell,' Col. i. 19. And Mat. xi. 27, 'All power is given to me of my Father, in heaven and earth.' So when he was to ascend, saith he, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth,' Mat. xxviii. 18. He came out from the Father with all authority. The Scripture is marvellous pregnant in this point, to show with what authority Christ came from the Father. The points here considerable are, first of all, that all things are Christ's, and therefore we are Christ's; so All things are the Father's.

This is the highest degree. We can go no further. There is the centre wherein we must rest: 'All things are the Father's.' All things are of God, that made all of nothing, and can turn all to dust at his pleasure.

'All things are of him, and by him, and through him,' as it is Romans xi. 1, seq., divinely set forth. There is no question of this. It were to add light to the sun to show that all things are the Father's; and hereupon Christ is the Father's in the first place. And then 'all things are ours,' because 'Christ is ours,' and 'Christ is the Father's.' The point that is more material, and worth standing on, is this, that Though all things come from the Father, yet not from the Father immediately, but they come from Christ.

Christ is the Father's, and we are the Father's in Christ; and all things are ours in Christ. There is no immediate communion between us and the Father, but Christ comes between God and us.

Why is this needful?

For many undeniable reasons.

Reason 1. First, Because there is no proportion between God the Father and us, but a vast disproportion. He is holiness and purity, and a 'consuming fire' of himself. What are we without a mediator, a middle person, without Christ coming between? Nothing but stubble, fit fuel for his wrath. So that all love and good that comes from the first Person, it must come to us through a middle person: 'You are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' We cannot endure the brightness of the majesty of the Father. It is too great a presence: 'He dwells in that height that no man can attain unto,' as the apostle saith, 1 Tim. vi. 16. Therefore there must come a person between, invested in our nature. God in our nature comes between the Father and us, and all things come from God to us in him. As the salt waters of the sea, when they are strained through the earth, they are sweet in the rivers, so the waters of majesty and justice in God, though they be terrible, and there be a

disproportion between them and us, yet being strained and derived through Christ, they are sweet and delightful; but out of Christ there is no communion with God. He is a friend to both sides: to us as man, to him as God. All things come originally from the fountain of all, God. They are God's; and you know the three persons meet, in one nature, in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Ay; but, as I said, the holy God doth not convey immediately good things to us, but by the mediation of Christ. For God would have it thus since the fall, that having lost all, we should recover all again by the 'second Adam,' that should be a public person, a mediator between him and us; and so through Christ we should have access and entrance to the Father, and that by him we should have boldness. And that God again downward might do all things with due satisfaction to his justice; because, as I said, we are as stubble, and God 'a consuming fire.' Were not Christ in the middle, what intercourse could there be between the Lord and us? No other than between the fire and the stubble: majesty on his side, and misery and sin on ours. There must be a mediator to bring these two contraries together. So all comes downward through Christ from God to us. God doth all in Christ to us. He chooseth us in Christ, and sanctifies us in Christ; he bestows all spiritual blessings on us in Christ, as members of Christ. To Christ first, and through him, he conveys it to us. He hath put fulness in him, and of his fulness 'we receive grace for grace,' John i. 16; for Christ is complete, and in him we are complete.

Reason 2. Then again, secondly, God will have it thus, as it is fit it should be so, because Christ is fitted for it. He is the Son by nature; and it is fit that we, that are sons by adoption, should have communion with the Father in the Son by nature. He is beloved of the Father first: 'In him I am well pleased,' Mat. iii. 17. We come to have communion with God in him in whom he is well pleased. Christ is primurn amabile, the first beloved of all; for God looks on Christ as the first begotten of him. He is the first Son by nature, and beloved of God. Hereupon God comes to delight in us that are sons by adoption, that are heirs, because we are 'fellow heirs with Christ.' He delights in us, because we are one with Christ, in whom he beholds us.

Reason 3. Again, thirdly, God doth this, not only to keep his state in remoteness from us, and his greatness, but he doth it in mercy. He hath appointed Christ to come between, that now we might not be afraid to go to God by the middle person, appointed by himself, 'who is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.' Now, we go to God, who is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; God not simply and barely considered, but God incarnate.

There is no going to him in ourselves, but God being bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; as Bernard saith, I go willingly to a Mediator made bone of my bone, my brother. It was a comfort to Joseph's brethren, that they had Joseph their brother the second man in the kingdom. And is it not a sweet comfort to Christians that they have one that is the second person in the Trinity, that is their brother, that is the high steward of heaven and earth? Is it not a comfort to the spouse that her husband is advanced over all, and is nearest to the king? Is it not a comfort to every one that is in relation to another to have one that may stand for them, that is both able and willing? Now, Christ is able as God, and willing as our brother; and therefore is a fit person to come between God and us. He can do us good, because he is God; and he will do us good, because he is 'bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.' So we see that Christ is God's, and why there must be a third person come between God and us; and Christ is fitted to be the middle person.

Now, to confirm it by a place of Scripture or two. The Scripture is everywhere full of this argument: 'It pleased God to reconcile all to himself in Christ, in whom we have obtained the inheritance, that in the fulness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ,' Eph. i. 10, seq. It is a recapitulation, a bringing all to one again. God the Father, in Christ, brought all to a head again; he brought all to himself again; for without Christ we are scattered, and severed, and distracted from God. But in Christ God brought in all one head again, both that are in heaven and in earth. And so in Col. i. 19, 'It pleased God that in Christ all fulness should dwell, and in him to reconcile all things in heaven and earth.'

The use of this is manifold, and very comfortable.

Use 1. First of all, do all things come from God the Father to us in Christ, a middle person? As all things below us are ours in Christ, so all things above us: God the Father is ours in Christ. Then it should teach us to direct our devotion upward to God, as God comes downward to us. All things come down from God in Christ. God is the Father of Christ, and Christ is the Father of us. As nothing comes immediately from the Father down to us, so let us not go mediately up but in Christ to the Father; that is, let us offer all our prayers to God in the mediation of his beloved Son, the Son of his own appointing, Jesus Christ. We must ask all in his name. 'Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name,' Ac., John xiv. 13, 14. 'Do all in the name of Christ,' Col. iii. 17. It is ignorant presumption, arrogant, and fruitless, in any of our devotions and prayers to God, to go to God in our

own name, to think of God without a relation of a Father in Christ. Though we do not alway name Christ, yet we must think of God in the relation of a Father, in which Christ is implied; for how comes he to be a Father but in Christ? He is Christ's first, and ours in him. Let us not consider of a bare naked God, but of God invested with a sweet relation of a Father in Christ, by whom he is become our Father. Therefore, Lord, we come not to thee in our own name, and in our own worth and desert, which is none at all; but we come to thee in the merits of Christ, in the mediation of Christ, in that love thou bearest to him, and that for his sake thou bearest to us that are his members. This is the way of intercourse between God and us. To think of God out of Christ, out of the mediator, it is a terrible thought, nothing more terrible: but to think of God in Christ, nothing more sweet; for now the nature of God is lovely, coming to us in Christ, and the majesty and justice of God are lovely. When it comes through Christ to be satisfied, it is sweet; for, Lord, thou wilt not punish the same sin twice. And the majesty and greatness of God is comfortable. Whatsoever is God's is ours, because Christ is ours. God in his greatness, in his justice, in his power. All things being derived and passing through Christ, are sweet and comfortable to us. Therefore, seeing 'Christ is God's,' and all things come from God in Christ, let it direct us to perform all to God in Christ.

Use 2. Again, secondly, if so be that God be ours, and all things ours in Christ, then, when we are to deal with God the Father, or to deal with Satan, or to deal with others solliciting us, then let us make use of this, Christ is God's, and I am God's through Christ. When we have to deal with God the Father, that seems angry for our sins, and our consciences are wakened and terrified, say, Lord, Christ is thine; I have nothing to bring thee myself but a mediator of thy own setting and sending forth; of thine own anointing and sealing; and thou wilt not refuse the righteousness and obedience of a mediator of thine own. Christ is God's. Let us carry our elder brother with us whensoever we would have anything of God. When we have offended him, come not alone, but bring our Benjamin with us; come clothed with our elder brother's garments. God will not refuse the very name of his Son; it is a prevailing name with his Father. It is thine own Son; he is a mediator of thine own: though I have nothing of my own to bring thee, yet I bring thee thine own Son. I beseech you, let us think of this when we have offended God, and our consciences are troubled; let us go to God in the sweet name of his Son.

Use 3. Again, thirdly, if so be that Christ is God's, and nothing comes from God but through Christ, let us give Christ the greatest pre-eminence. Christ is of God's own appointment, and all things are ours because Christ is ours; nay, God is ours, because Christ is ours. Therefore let no man set up themselves in our consciences but Christ and God. The conscience is for Christ, for our husband. Christ is ordained of God to be our head, and to be all in all to "s of God the Father. Therefore, in the solicitations of our judgment, to judge thus and thus, let us think what saith Christ my husband, who is God's. God will have us hear him: 'This is my beloved Son, hear him,' Mat. iii. 17. He comes with authority from God the Father; what saith he? If it be not the judgment of Christ, who shall sit in my conscience but Christ? Shall the pope? Shall any man usurp by an infallibility of judgment to say it is so; you must, upon pain of damnation, believe it? I cannot but speak a little of it by the way. The modestest and learnedest Jesuit of late times, speaking of this argument of Christ: bringing an objection that some may make against the pope's authority: saith he, If the pope say otherwise, his authority were more to me than the definition of all the holy fathers; nay, saith he, I say with Paul, 'If an angel from heaven should come and say it,' and the pope should say otherwise, I would believe the pope before I would believe an angel from heaven. Such a place hath that 'man of sin' in the conscience of those great learned men. This is intolerable. We are Christ's; he is our husband. Christ comes with authority from the Father. We must hear him; he is God's. Therefore let no man prevail in our consciences that brings not the word of God and of Christ.

Use 4. Again, fourthly, if Christ be God's, and all things come to us from God by Christ, then we see a rest for our souls. We can go no farther than God, and in God to the first person in trinity. The Christian religion pitcheth down a centre for the soul to rest in, a safe pitching place, a safe foundation. It shows our reconciliation with the great God now. Christian religion shows that all is ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's; and there it sets down a rest for our souls. In Mat. xi. 28, Christ, after he had said, 'All things are given me of my Father,' saith he, 'Come unto me,' therefore, 'all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you.'

What encouragement have we to come to him? 'All things are given me of the Father.' 'Christ is God's.' Therefore ye may boldly come unto me. 'Ye shall find rest to your souls in me.' Ay, but is Christ the last rest? No; the Father is the last rest: for in Christ I know the Father is well pleased. Ye shall find rest in Christ, because he hath satisfied the Father. So all solid comfort

must be terminated in God, in the first person in the Trinity. We can go no further than God, the first person, the fountain of the Trinity. So you see in that we are Christ's, and Christ is God's, there the soul hath footing for itself in God the Father.

Quest. But may we not rest in Christ?

Ans. Yes. Because he is authorized of God the Father; and we can go no further; for the party offended first of all by our sins is God the Father, and he hath found out this remedy, this mediator. And therefore why should we suspect anything, to trouble our souls, to run in a maze, but go to God in the name of Christ upon this very ground? Lord, thou that art the party offended, and out of the bowels of mercy hast found out this mediator, I rest in him, because he came out from thee. And therefore here is a solid rest for the soul, when the soul goes back to God the Father, and rests in him. We say of a circle, it is the strongest of all figures, because it is a round figure: it strengthened itself; whereas a straight line is weak. As we see those round bodies that are made arches, &c., they are the strongest figures, because every stone strengthens another; so this is the strongest reflection of all, that as all things come from God the Father, so when we go to him and rest there, who can make a rupture? It is the strongest of all. The soul stays not in the way in this and that thing: all are false rests; but it goes to Christ. And to satisfy the soul the more, when it rests in Christ, it rests in the Father. Therefore when I deal with Christ, and think of Christ, I must think I have to deal with the Father. Christ was incarnate; it was as much as if the Father had been incarnate; for it was by his authority. Christ suffered, but God 'gave him to death for us all.' See the Father in all, and there the soul will rest.

We see herein the wondrous strong salvation of a Christian. It is not only founded in the good will of the Son, or of the Father, but it is founded in the love of both, and upon the authority of Christ coming from the Father. For 'God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself,' 2 Cor. v. 19. So our salvation is founded and built upon the mutual love of the Father and of the Son to us. The Son loves us as from the Father, and the Father in the Son, so strong is our salvation built.

Use 5. Then again, fifthly, for comfort. If Christ be God's, appointed by God a Saviour, and to make all things ours, to bring us back again, shall not we reason with the apostle, Rom. viii. 32, 'If he hath not spared his own Son, but given him to death for us all, how shall he not with him give us all things else?' That place is a proof of the text in hand. How shall we prove that 'all

things are ours' for our good? Because 'God hath not spared his own Son,' that is better than the world. Therefore God will rather create another world, than we shall want anything that is for our good. If he have 'given his Son for us all, how shall he not with him give us all things?' as much as shall be conduceable for our good.

Use 6. Now for an use of duty. Since God hath ordained and anointed Christ for our good, let us thank God for Christ, as the apostle doth: 'Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Eph. i. 3. We forget it. We see it is the beginning of every epistle almost of Paul and Peter. 'Blessed be the Lord and Father of Christ,' 1 Peter i. 3. Alas! how had he been our Father if he had not been the Father of Christ first? And where had been our anointing, if Christ had not been anointed first? Where had been our inheritance, if he had not been the heir first? And where had been his love to us, if he had not loved him first? For there could be no communion between the holy God and us without that middle person. Therefore 'blessed be God, the Father of Christ.'

We bless God for our meat and drink, for the comforts of this world, for everything; but do we remember to bless God for Christ? We bless God for petty things, as indeed we cannot be too much in thanksgiving; it is the employment of heaven. Oh! but let us bless God especially for him, in whom we have all in this world and in another world. Blessed be God for anointing Christ. So 'God loved the world, that he gave his Son,' John iii. 16. He could not express how much. 'Christ is God's.' Therefore bless God for Christ above all other things whatsoever.

Use 7. And now, seventhly, to go boldly upon all occasions to the throne of grace. Now in Christ there is good terms between heaven and us. So long as we have our flesh sitting at the right hand of God to plead for us, to be an intercessor and advocate for us, let us go boldly in all our necessities to the throne of grace in the mediation of Christ. 'Christ is God's,' and with God at his right hand in all glory and majesty making request for us, nothing can be thought of more comfortable. Indeed, without these considerations, what is our religion? What is all mortality without knowing God in Christ? 'This is eternal life, to know thee, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ,' John xvii. 3. It is the beginning of heaven, as Christ saith. It is not only the way to bring us to heaven, but it is initial salvation. The knowledge of God the Father, and the knowledge of Christ coming from the Father with a commission to work all for our good, it is eternal life.

Thus we see what we may observe out of this, that Christ is God's. We can go no further. We cannot take up our rest better than in this. 'All is ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Therefore let us end with that in Rom. xi. 36, 'Of him, and by him, and through him are all things: therefore to him be glory for ever, and for ever.' If all things come from the Father, by and through the Father in Christ, to the Father therefore be all glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The Spiritual Man's Aim

It remaineth, brethren, the time is short: let those that have wives be as if they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.—1 Cor. VII. 29—31.

The blessed apostle, in the former part of this chapter, had given direction in cases of conscience, being a man that had the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to the weary, Isa. 1. 4; whereupon, having in his eye greater matters, as his use is almost in every epistle, he calls them from particular cases, that they should not overmuch trouble themselves about them, but mind the main, 'The time is short: let those that are married be as if they were not,' &c. But yet; notwithstanding, He gives satisfaction to the particular cases. For as, in travelling, it is not enough to know that a man's way lies east, or west, or north, or south, but he must know the turnings and windings, the particularities of the way; so in religion it is not enough to know that we must serve God above all, and love our neighbour as ourself, &c. Those generalities atheists will embrace, and in pretence of them shake off all further study of religion. Our knowledge must stand in clearing particular cases also, which, being cleared, the way is smoother to heavenward. Yet, notwithstanding, we must not dwell too much upon particulars, for here you see the apostle calls them off, 'Finally, my brethren, the time is short;' it remains that we look to the main, &c. 'For the fashion of this world passeth away;' wherein we considered two points in general, which I will only name, and hasten to that which followeth.

The first was this, that,

Doct. 1. A very good way to satisfy cases of conscience in particular, is to have in our mind the main.

For there be many that puzzle themselves all their life about this and that particular, and forget the main in the mean time. Let a man look to the main, and he will soon resolve in such particulars as these whether it be good to redeem time to hear a sermon now and then. He will do the thing, and not stand making a case of it; for when he considers how it helps to the main, the

saving of his soul, &c., for which he came into the world, he will easily be resolved.

And so for sanctifying the Lord's day entirely; many have scruples and keep ado, but if they had the love of God in their souls, and did look to the main, they would see it to be an idle question. For how much conduceth it to the main?

And so for conversing with company, are they such as are comfortable and cheerful? Are they such as we may profit by? Why do I entangle myself and hinder the main? So we see Paul, in resolving the particulars, he calls them to the main: 'Brethren, the time is short,' and therefore be in these things as if ye were not (as we shall see anon in the particulars), 'for the fashion of this world passeth away.' This is the reason why none but a true Christian can carry himself moderately in the things of this world. Why? Because none but a sound Christian hath a main, and a chief end that sways the stern of his whole life; he looks to heaven and happiness, and how it shall be with him afterwards, and he considers particulars thereafter; when another man of necessity must err in particular cases, because he hath not a gracious aim. You have no man but a Christian, but he loseth himself in the things of this world.

The second thing is this; you see that,

Doct. 2. Religion meddles with all matters.

With the world, with marriage, with buying, and possessing, as we shall see afterwards. Saith an atheist that stomachs if, that his ways should be hindered from that commanding skill of religion which hath to do in all things, What hath the minister to do with our callings, with lawyers, with tradesmen, or statesmen? What hath the minister to do with these things?

It is true, not with the materials, with the particular matters of those callings. That is left to those that are artists, and that have skill in the particulars of their professions in each kind. But a minister and a Christian, and religion in any man, hath to deal with these things, as they help to further the main. For religion is a skill that fits a man for a further end, for his last end, for heaven.

Now, being such a skill, it must direct everything so far as it helps or hinders that. State knowledge, we say, is a commanding knowledge. Why?

Because it meddles with all trades. How? Hath a statesman skill in this or that trade? No; not in the particular mystery, but he hath skill so far as he sees what may serve for the public good. Let the safety of the commonwealth be the law of all trades. The state knowledge is the supreme knowledge, which is for the good of the whole; therefore he cuts off particulars if they be mischievous to the whole. So all trades must be told of their faults, as they are blemishes to religion, for we must not be so in this or that trade, as that we forget we are Christians, and therefore we must hear meekly the word of God when it meets with our particular callings. We see Paul meddleth with buying and selling, with marriage, &c. How? As far as they might hinder the main: 'Finally, my brethren, the time is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away.' Therefore be not overmuch in these things.

It is the *suprema ratio*, &c., it is the main reason that makes for religion: as I said before of state knowledge, it is *suprema lex*. Yet though that be supreme in regard of inferiors, yet there is one above that, the chief reason of all that makes for religion; there be many particular reasons that make for this and that. Ay, but religion saith the contrary, and then that must rule, that is the *suprema ratio*. Now I come to unfold the particulars. The apostle here stands upon five directions and bounds. Those five directions with three reasons:—

'Let those that are married be as if they were not.'

'Those that weep, as if they wept not.'

'Those that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not.'

'And they that buy, as though they possessed not.'

'And they that use this world, as not abusing it.'

How are these five directions enforced?

They are enforced from three reasons:—

The first is in the front of the text: 'The time is short.' Therefore be moderate in all things here.

The second is in the shutting up of the text: 'For the fashion of this world passeth away.'

The third reason is a main reason too, that is, from their state and condition in Christ: 'Why, brethren,' saith he, 'partakers of the heavenly calling,' Heb. iii. 1, as he saith in another place, 'Partakers of better things,' 2 Cor. i. 7, and by being 'brethren,' 'brethren in Christ,' 'members of Christ.' He is the knot of the brotherhood, being born again 'sons of God;' 'brethren of Christ,' not brethren only among yourselves, but 'brethren in Christ,' and so sons of God and heirs of heaven. What! for you to be immoderate in the things of the world. Paul wraps up a moving reason, not only to insinuate to gain their affections, 'Oh! my brethren,' but to add a force of reason likewise. 'Brethren, the time is short.' And, brethren, 'the fashion of this world passeth away.' So add these three reasons to the five directions, and see how strongly Paul backs his directions. Indeed, it was needful for Paul so to do. We are so desperately set on the things of this world, we are so hardly taken off, that there must be reason upon reason; for the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit of God, loves not waste of reasons, to spend them where there is no use. And therefore we must think it is a weighty point, and of great equity, that we give ear to these directions.

We must remember that every one of these reasons has a force in every direction. You that have wives, be as if you had none, for the 'time is short,' and 'the fashion of the world passeth away.' And so you that 'weep, as if you wept not,' 'for the time is short, and the fashion of the world passeth away.' And you are 'brethren,' you that 'use the world, as not abusing it,' for 'the time is short, and the fashion of the world passeth away.' So that all these reasons must be thought on in every particular direction that I speak of, only in general. I will speak a little of the first reason, 'The time is short.'

. What time?

(1.) The time of the world. There is but a little time before the day of judgment. Christ is at hand to judge the quick and the dead. The time between this and that is short. It was short then, it is shorter now. 'The time is short.' We are fallen into the latter end of the world. But that is not all.

(2.) The time is short of our little world; our particular judgment is near at hand. It shall be with us at the latter day as it is when we die. Our time is short; the time of our particular life is short, and that is more forcible to persuade us 'the time is short.'

(3.) The season of the time, which is the prime time. The season and opportunity of time is shorter than the time of life; for we have not opportunity of time all our life. ‘The time is short;’ that is,

[1.] The advantage of doing good and of taking good is short. All the year is not harvest or seed-time. It is not always tide; it is not always sunshine. And as it is in nature, so it is in the spiritual state of things; we have not always advantages and opportunities; we have not always gales. Opportunity therefore is shorter than time, as our time is shorter than the time of the world. ‘The time is short;’ the opportunity and season of time is shorter.

[2.] Ay, and uncertain; we cannot tell how short. If it were told any of us here that within two days he shall die, it would startle us, the best of us all; it would make us look about us: but who of us all knows certainly that he shall live two hours? The time, as it is short, so it is uncertain, and here is the wondrous folly of our nature, that we will take so much time to come in trust, as though we should live so long, and make a covenant with death. But one party cannot make a covenant. God and the time to come make no covenant with us. Therefore it is extremity of folly to say, I will live so long, and so long. ‘Thou fool,’ saith God, when he projected for a long time and had treasure laid up for many years, ‘Thou fool, this night they shall take thy soul,’ Luke xii. 20. A man is a fool when he makes account of continuing that he hath no promise of. And therefore the time being short, and uncertain too, take it while we may catch hold of it, especially the opportunity of time.

[3.] And in the third place, it is irrecoverable when it is gone. There is no recalling back of time when it is past. In all these respects we must be good husbands; we must be thrifty of our time, and not take care how to drive away that, that Hies away of itself so fast. It is a precious thing, precious for great purposes. What is this little time given us for? To provide for eternity, world without end. And we trifle it away about this thing and that thing to no purpose; we fill it up with vanity, and with sin, which is worse. In this little time we do that, that in a long time we cannot undo again. That is our madness and folly. Therefore ‘the time being short,’ let us take heed what we do in it. We may do that in a little time that we may rue for eternity. We may do that good, and get that good in a little time, that may stand by us world without end. Those that have but a little plot of ground, they will husband it so, as not to lose a handful of it; so those that have but a little time, let them husband it well, sow to the Spirit, that our harvest may be eternal life; that we

may say, Oh! it was a great blessing, that God gave me a little time to get into Christ, to repent of my sins, &c. Beloved, there are three main parts of this little time: Past, present, to come.

(1.) The time that is gone; Jet us repent of it, if it have not been spent well. That is the best use we can make of the time past; for there is nothing to be done in the time that is past. But if things have been done ill, repent.

(2.) The time present is to do good in; and for the time to come, it is out of our power; and therefore even for the present we must work. The time past; the best use we can make of it, is to comfort ourselves, as Hezekiah, in our sincerity, Isa. xxxviii. 3, or to repent if anything have been done amiss. But look to the present, put not off, do the work for which we came into the world, presently. 'The time is short,' the journey is long, the business is great. It is a groat journey from earth to heaven; it is a great matter to get from earth to heaven.

(3.) Now having such business as to go to heaven, let us, I beseech you, consider the weight of the business, and give our eyes no sleep, nor our eyelids slumber, till we are gotten into such a state and condition as is not liable to time; let us make this special use of precious time. Those that are young, let them be advised to take time along with them, which is to be esteemed far above gold, and consecrate the prime and the flower of their time to God and to the best things; especially considering, that we have no assurance of this time. And those that are old, that through age are going into the grave, let them not neglect their time. A young man, as we say, may die soon; an old man cannot live long. And therefore let those that are stricken in years be put in mind to think that their time is shorter than others'. All men's times are short, old men's shortest. Let those therefore think of this, 'The time is short.' Our folly is this, we make it shorter than it is by our 'Vanity, vanity.' It were well if it were only vanity. By sinful and intemperate courses many shorten their days, and so are felons upon themselves; or by their wickedness, they give God occasion to shorten them. 'A bloodthirsty and cruel man shall not live out half his days,' Ps. lv. 23. God meets with him. So 'the time is short,' and we make it shorter. We are guilty of the shortness of it. Let us take heed of that. But I have been over long in this point; only because it is the prime reason, set before all the particulars, I beseech you consider, 'the time is short.' If we do not make use of it we are worse than the devil himself; he makes use of the shortness of his time. What doth he? 'Because the time is short,' he doth all the mischief he can, Rev. xii.

12. He fills up his time to increase his kingdom; he doth all the mischief he can, for this reason; because his time is short. Let us learn somewhat of the worst of spirits. But that which it serves for in particular here, is this; we have many things to do, and the time being short, let us be sure we do the main thing that we come for, and other things as they help the main, and not hinder it. The time is short, and we have many businesses to do; let us be sure that we do our business, so as that we leave not the main undone. That is the thing he aims at here. 'The time is short.'

'It remains that those that have wives be as if they had none.'

1. That is the first particular; for before they had asked him cases of conscience about marriage, and that makes him speak of it. All the particulars have dependence one upon another. Those that marry will have occasion to weep, that is next, for there will be cause. There will be loss of husband, or wife, or child, and there is somewhat always; family crosses attend upon marriage. And therefore he adds weeping after marriage.

And then because there is joy. 'A woman brings forth in sorrow, but she joys when a man child is born,' as Christ speaks, John xvi. 21. There is joy in children, and there is a mutual joy in that sweet conjugal friendship, there is much joy; and therefore as there is weeping, so there is joy in marriage.

'And those that buy, as if they possessed not.' There must be buying where there is wife and children; there must be looking to posterity; and then all this enforceth, 'using of the world.' And men when they enter into that estate, they enter into the world; as we use to say, they begin the world anew. They enter into the world; for there are many things necessary to maintain that society. Therefore we see one thing depends upon another. He joins all together, aiming especially at one thing, at that kind of life especially.

Now in every one of these particulars, he gives a liberty to do the thing. You may marry, you may weep, you may joy, you may buy, you may use the world. But as there is a liberty, so there is a danger; you may, but you may not go too far. And therefore with a liberty he gives a restraint. Do them, but take heed you overdo them not. And this restraint is backed with reason; he hath reason for his restraint. 'The time is short;' and therefore there is danger, lest you shoot yourselves too far, lest you pass too deep into these things. 'And the fashion of this world passeth away;' all things here pass away. Therefore it is in vain for you to be overmuch in those things that are passing things.

And then you are, brethren, called to greater matters; so there is a liberty, a danger, and a restraint upon the danger; and likewise a reason to back it in every particular.

(1.) The liberty: We may marry. It is not questioned. There is not only a liberty, but it is an honourable estate, and necessary; honoured in paradise, honoured by Christ's presence; a liberty by which the church is upheld, heaven is increased. It was the devil that brought in a base esteem of that honourable condition. In popery, they rather will be the members of an harlot, than the head of a wife. It was the devil that brought in those abominable opinions and writings to disparage that honourable condition, and so it must be thought.

(2.) But there is a danger; and that is the main thing. You that have wives, 'be as if you had none.' There is a great danger in a double respect. A danger in the things, and a peril if we go too far in them. That is, there is a great hazard, and we shall go overfar in that condition, and a danger that it tends to.

For instance, those that have wives, have they not been drawn away by their wives, as Solomon was, to idolatry? 1 Kings xi. 4. Is there not a danger of being drawn away? And in being drawn away is there not a hazard to our souls? Did not sin come in that way? Was not Adam led away by his wife? And how many men perish by being too uxorious by being too flexible in that kind? If they had remembered the apostle's precept to many as if they had not, they would not have been so drawn away. Because there is a danger, there is a restraint: 'Let those that have wives be as though they had none.' What! to use them as if they had none? To care for them as if they had none? No; that is not the meaning; 'but to be as if they had none.' That is, let them be as resolute for God's truth, as if they had no wives to hinder them; let them be as willing to suffer crosses, if God call them, as if they had none; let them be as ready to good duties, if it fall within their calling, as if they had none; let them avoid distracting cares, and worldly encumbrances, as if they had none; let them not pretend their marriage for baseness and worldliness, and for avoiding of crosses and afflictions when God is pleased to call them unto them; let them not pretend marriage for their doubling in religion and dissembling, 'I shall undo my wife and children,' 'Let them be as if they had none,' for Christ hath given us direction to hate all for Christ. A man is not worthy of Christ and of religion, that undervalues not wife and children and all, for the gospel. If things stand in question, whether shall I stick to them or

to Christ, my chief husband; I must stick to Christ. The reason is, the bond of religion is above all bonds. And the bond that binds us to Christ it abides when all bonds cease; for all bonds between husband and wife, between father and children, they end in death; but the bond of Christ is eternal. Every bond must serve the main bond; and therefore we must not pretend this and that to wrong Christ and religion, which is the main bond. We must so labour to please others, that we displease not our chief husband. For the time will be, when we shall neither marry, nor be given in marriage, but we shall be as the angels, Mat. xxii. 30; and that time shall he without bounds and limits, for eternity; and we must look to that. And therefore those that marry, 'lot them be as if they were not married.' Yon know how it fared with them in the gospel, that pretended this, for his not coming to Christ; he that was married saith, 'I cannot come.' His excuse was more peremptory than the rest, 'he could not.' Could not this excuse him And will pretending this excuse men when they are called to duties? There is that disproportion so much between Christ, our chief husband, and any other, though it be the wife of our bosom, or the children of our loins (the one having redeemed us, and is our best husband, a husband for eternity in heaven), that no excuse will serve the turn for a man to wrong the bond of religion for any bond whatsoever. And therefore you know the peremptory answer to him that pretended that excuse, 'You shall never taste of my feast,' Luke xiv. 24.

'And those that weep, as though they wept not.'

2. It is lawful to weep, not only for sin—that should be the main—but likewise to weep for the miseries of the time and state we live in. There is a liberty here, 'Oh that my head were a fountain of tears,' saith Jeremiah, ix. 1. He thought he could not weep enough; and therefore he wished that his head were 'a fountain.' He thought his tears would soon be dry. 'Oh that my head were a fountain,' so that there is a liberty to weep. For men are bound to weep. There are tears of sympathy for the misery of the state and time we live in. And so for family losses and crosses. We are flesh, and not spirit; and God hath made us men, and hath given us sensible apprehensions of grief; and it is a cursed temper to be without natural affection. We may weep, and we may grieve; nay, we ought to grieve.

Now grief is as it were a cloud from whence the shower of tears comes, and weeping is but a distillation of that vapour.

If we may grieve and ought to grieve for the times; and it is a stupid temper not to apprehend the miseries of the state and times we live in; if we

may grieve, we may weep. That is put for the spring whence weeping comes. For grief itself, there is a liberty, no question of that; we may weep, but we must weep as if we wept not: for there is a danger in weeping over-much for any crosses. Here is a danger, for we may flatter our grief too much for wives and children. God takes it ill; he takes it unkindly; that when Christ himself is a perpetual husband, and God is an everlasting Father, that we should weep and grieve too much for the loss of father, or of -wife, or of child. For is not God worth all? So there is a danger that naturally we are prone to over-grieve, when we do grieve, as we are to over-joy when we do joy. For our nature can hardly keep bounds; and God takes it unkindly when we do so, when we over-grieve; for it is a sign we fetch not that comfort from him that is the spring and fountain, that we should do. And therefore let those that weep be as if they wept not. That is, not over-much. 'For the time is short.' Dost thou lose any friend, or any thing? 'The time is short,' we shall meet again. There is but little time between this and the latter judgment, 'and the fashion of this world passeth away.' There will be a new world, a new heaven, and a new earth. And then we shall 'live for ever with the Lord.'

And then, my 'brethren.' Why? 'Brethren' should not be without hope of the resurrection, as the Gentiles are. They may weep that never think to see one another again. But a Christian, a brother, that hath hope of meeting again, let not him weep as without hope; 'so let us weep, as if we wept not.' So he lays a restraint upon that; nay, though our weeping be for sin, there must be a moderation in that, for we may over-grieve. We are bound to joy in the Lord, and alway to rejoice. And therefore we must weep for sin, so as we must remember to joy. We must with one eye look upon our sins to humble us, and to look upon our hearts to grieve; but with the other eye we must look upon God's mercy in Christ to comfort us again. The best grief of all, that must be moderate; much more, grief for any earthly thing.

Now, when we are tempted to over-grieve for any earthly thing, the best way is diversion. Do I grieve for these? Ay, but is my soul as it should be? Let me weep over my dead soul, as Christ wept over Lazarus when he was dead. Let me weep over my dull soul, let me weep over that.

As physicians, when the blood runs too much one way, they give an issue another way; so let us turn our grief the right way. How is it with us? Is the life of grace there? Is reckonings even between God and my soul? Am I fit to end my days? Am I in a state fit for heaven? Then we shall weep for something. It is pity such pearls as tears should be lost. God hath no bottles

for tears that are shed over-much for the things of the world. But if they be for our sins, and the sins of the time we live in, and for the ills and miseries of the state that are on us, and hang over our heads, then let us weep to purpose; turn our grief the right way; and then let us grieve amain, if we will, so our grief run in that channel.

‘Those that joy, as if they did not.’

3. Joy we may and we ought; for God envies not our joy. He hath given us wherewith in this life to joy, abundance of comforts of all sorts for all our senses, flowers and colours, &c. We have nothing in soul or body but it hath objects to delight in. God hath made himself for the soul to delight in, and there is somewhat to delight us in every creature. So sweet is God, we may and ought to rejoice. God gives us wife and children to rejoice in: ‘Rejoice in the wife of thy youth,’ Prov. v. 18. There is no question of a liberty in these things.

But then there is a danger, especially in sweet affections. There is danger, because we are like to over-joy. And poison is the subtlest conveyed in sweet things. We are prone to over-joy. There is a danger; therefore there must be a restraint. ‘We must joy as if we rejoiced not;’ that is, so joy, in any thing here, as considering that ‘the time is short,’ I cannot enjoy it long. Shall I joy in that I cannot enjoy? ‘The time is short.’ I cannot enjoy them. If a man cannot enjoy a thing long, he cannot joy. ‘The time is short;’ you must go. The things must go, and both must go. ‘And the fashion of this world passeth away.’ All the frame of things pass away; marriage passeth away; callings and friends pass away; and all pass away. I beseech you, let us learn to joy as if we rejoiced not. The prophet calls Nineveh a rejoicing city, Jonah iii. 3, and we live in a jovial age. Men eat and drink as they did in the days of the old world, in Noah’s time; they marry and give in marriage, Mat. xxiv. 37; and therefore we had need to lay some restraint upon our joy: especially when God calls us to mourning as well as joy, as he doth if we look round about us. If we look upon the time, we shall see cause to joy as if we did not. We must not always be on the merry pin, as we say, but we must temper and qualify our joy.

Now, considering that the apostle adds, weeping, grieving, and joy, you see that Religion is especially in moderating the affections.

Religion is purging the affections from the evil that is in them, and moderating them, if they be lawful and good; and therefore think not that you are religious enough if you know a great deal, as many Christians are very

greedy of knowing, and yet if you look to their lives, their grief and joy is intemperate; they have not learned to bridle and to school their affections. You see that religion is in moderating of grief and joy in earthly things. Let us see men show the power of religion in bearing of crosses, so that 'they weep as if they wept not and in bearing prosperity so as they can learn to abound, to joy as if they rejoiced not. That man hath learned religion to purpose; for religion is especially about the affections. For we are good if we joy well and grieve well, but not if we know much. The devil knoweth more than we. Therefore, especially labour, that God would vouchsafe grace to govern the affections, that we may know how to grieve and how to joy; as naturally indeed we do not.

And then we see here another point, which now I add, that The affections of God's people are mixed.

They so weep as that it is mingled with joy, and their joy is mingled with weeping. 'They weep as if they wept not,' 'they joy as if they joyed not.'

A carnal man is in simples altogether. If he joy, he thrusts the house out of the window, as we say. If he be merry, he is mad; he hath no bounds. If he be sorrowful, if somewhat restrain him not, he sinks like a beast under his sorrow, as Nabal did, 1 Sam. xxv. 37, 38, for he hath no grace to temper his sorrow and to temper his joy; and, therefore, he is over-sorrowful or over-jocund. Ah! but grace, considering that we have objects of both, doth temper the affections. A Christian, when he joys, he doth not over-joy, for he hath cause at that time to mourn for somewhat; and when he grieves, he doth not over-grieve, for he hath somewhat then to joy in; for Christ is his, and heaven is his, and the providence of God to direct all for good is his still; he hath somewhat to joy in at the worst. And therefore all his affections are tempered and qualified. So much for that point.

'And they that buy, as if they possessed not.'

4. It is lawful to buy. It is lawful to make contracts; and propriety is lawful. Every man ought to have his own. There were no theft if there were no propriety, nor there could be no works of mercy. Now, if propriety and dominion of things be lawful, that we may possess things as our own, then buying is lawful. That is one way of contract of making things our own; there is no danger in that. But there is a danger in the manner of buying. Men buy to perpetuate themselves: 'They call their lands after their names,' Ps. xlix. 11, and they think to continue for ever. God makes fools of them; for how few

have you that go beyond the third generation? How few houses have you that the child, or the grandchild, can say, 'This was my grandfather's and my great-grandfather's?' How few houses have you, that those that are now in them can say, 'My ancestor dwelt here, and these were his lands?' Go over a whole country, few can say so.

Men when they build, together with building in the earth, they build castles in the air; they have conceits. Now I build for my child, and for my child's child. God crosses them. Either they have no posterity, or by a thousand things that fall out in the world, it falls out otherwise. 'The time is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away that is, the buildings pass away, the owning passeth away, all things here pass away: and therefore buy as if you possessed not, buy so as we neglect not the best possession in heaven, and so possess these things, as being not possessed] and commanded of them.

In Lev. xxv. 8, there you see the year of Jubilee was that all possessions might return again, if men would. God trained them up by this, to teach them that they should not think of inheriting things long that they bought, for it returned in the year of Jubilee, in the fiftieth year. So we must learn that we cannot possess things long. Though we possess them ourselves, we may be thrust out by fraud or tyranny. Therefore 'let those that buy be as though they did not possess.' Jer. xxii. 23 he saith, 'Thou makest thy nest in the cedars,' and thinkest it shall be thus and thus with thee. Oh! beloved, let us not build and dwell in our hopes and assurance upon that which will yield no certain hope and assurance in this world. 'For the fashion of this world,' as we shall see hereafter, 'passeth away.'

And then for 'brethren' that have an inheritance in heaven; for them to buy as if they should live here for ever! 'Brethren,' that is a reason to take them off. 'Brethren, buy as if you possessed not.' Thus much of the four directions.

'They that use the world, as not abusing it.'

5. We may use the world, while we are here in it, for we cannot want the things of this life. We are members of two worlds while we are here. We are members of this world, and we are heirs of a better; we have relation to two worlds.

Now while we live in this world we must use the things of this world. How many things doth this poor life need while we are in this world! While we are passengers we must have things to help us in the way to heaven. Passengers must have necessities; there is no question of that. And therefore we must use the world many ways.

‘As not abusing it.’

There is danger in using the world; there is a danger of cleaving in your affections to the things of this world, so much as that we forget a better world; and therefore we should use it as not abusing it.

How should we use it?

Why, use this world as laying a foundation for a better world. While we live here, use the world as we may further our reckonings for a better. Use the things of the world as we may express some grace in the using of it. Use the world as that the using of it may comfort us when the thing passeth. The ‘world passeth.’ But let us use the world, as that the grace that we express in the use of it may continue. Use the world to the honour of God, to the good of others, to the increase of our reckoning; abuse it not to the dishonour of God; fight not against God with his own blessings. That is to abuse the world. Forget not God the giver. Were it not an unkind thing if a man should invite strangers, if they should turn their kind friend that had invited them out of doors? And so it is to use the things of the world so as to turn God out of our hearts that gives all.

Turn not the things of this world against God, or against others, to make them weapons of injustice, to be great to ruin others. Abuse them not to wrong, and to pierce our own souls, as the apostle saith, ‘with cares and the like,’ 1 Tim. vi. 10. This is to abuse the world, when we dishonour God and wrong others, or to pierce our own souls. God hath not given us the things of this world for this end, to hurt ourselves with them. And therefore together with the things, let us desire a gracious use of them, for it is better than the thing itself. Labour to use them as not abusing them, as we shall if we have not grace to use them well. Many have the gifts of God without God, because they have not his grace. When we have the gifts of God, desire grace to manage them well. To his children God gives this with the other; he never gives them anything, but he gives them grace to make a sanctified use of it. They are sanctified to all things, and all things are sanctified unto them. ‘Use the world as not abusing it.’ The reason is strong, ‘The time is short.’

Why should we be overmuch in using the things of this world; for that is one way of abusing the things of this world. 'The time is short.' We must be pulled from them whether we will or no. And therefore let us wean ourselves. And then, 'the fashion of this world passeth away.' Why should we dote, upon a perishing fashion? All things here pass away, and a new fashion comes after. You, 'brethren,' that are heirs of a better world, use this 'world as not abusing it.' 'Brethren,' he puts them in mind of a higher calling. And so I come to the last.

'For the fashion of this world passeth away.'

6. That is the second reason. The schema, that is, the apparition of this world, the outward fashion, the outward view and hue of the things of this world, pass away. It is a notable diminishing word in the original, as if the world were not a substance, but a fashion, schema. As we say in philosophy, in the air there are apparitions and substances; as there are flying horses sometimes and fighting men in the air. These are not substances, but apparitions of things. It is but phasis, but an apparition, or shape. The substance and true reality of those things is another matter. So whatsoever is in the world, it is but an apparition. When the devil showed Christ all the kingdoms of the world, he showed him but an apparition, but a show of things. There is a diminishing in the word 'show'.

And then in the word 'fadeth away.'

'The fashion of this world passeth away;' or, as some translate it, 'deceives, and turns us aside'. And so it doth indeed from better things.

'The fashion of this world passeth away.' That translation is fit enough.

'It passeth away.' Now shall we be immoderate in anything that passeth away? It is but an apparition, but a show, but a pageant. The word is partly taken from a pageant, or a show that hath a resemblance of this and that. But there is no reality or substance in a pageant. From this,

Use 1. Learn to conceive aright of the things of this life, that there is no reality in them to speak of. They have a kind of reality. Riches are in some sort riches, and beauty is in some sort beauty, and nobility is in some sort nobility, and so possessions are in some sort possessions. But all this is but a pageant as it were, as a man that acts in a pageant, or in a play; he is in some sort a king, or a beggar for the time. But we value him not as he is then, but

as he is when he is off the stage. And while we live here, we act the part, some of a rich man, some of a nobleman, some of a beggar or poor man; all is but an acting of a part. And there is a less proportion between the acting of a part in this life, than there is between our life and eternity. All is but the acting of a part. We are not rich in the grave more than others. The king is as poor in the grave as the base peasant; his riches follow him not. The worm and the grave know no difference. When we go to that house there is no difference; all acting and all differences end in the grave. And therefore, considering that this world is but an apparition, but the acting of a part, why should we think ourselves the better for anything here? Doth he that acts the part of a nobleman upon the stage think himself better than another that acts the part of a poor man? No. He knows he shall go off in a short time, and then he shall be as he was before. Why are we not thus wise in better things? It is not he that acts the greatest part, but he that acts any part best. He that acts the part of a poor man may do better than he that acts the part of a rich man. It is not the greatness of the part, but the well acting of it. All is but an apparition. If a mean man honour God in his condition, and be faithful in a mean estate, he is a thousand times better than a great man that makes his greatness an instrument of injustice, as if all the world were to serve his turn, and to make men idolise him; such a man is a wretched man, and will be when he is turned off the stage. It is no matter how long he hath lived, or how great a part he hath acted, but how well. We value not men as they are when they are acting, but as they are after. If they were bad before, they are bad after; and they are praised after if they do it well. So it is no matter what a man acts. If he do it well, he is for ever happy; if he do it ill, he is for ever miserable; all here is but a pageant. If you talk of reality, it is in the things of religion. If you talk of true nobility, it is to be the child of God. If you talk of true riches, they are those that we carry to our deathbed; those that we carry to heaven; those that comfort the soul; those that enrich the soul with grace and comfort and peace; that is true riches. If you talk of true beauty, it is to have the image of God stamped upon our souls, to be like Christ, to be new creatures. If we talk of true strength, it is to stand against temptations, to be able to serve God, and to go through the world without polluting our souls, to bear crosses as we should; that is the true reality. The things of this life are all but apparitions and pageants. The greatest man in the world will say so when he lies a-dying, as that great emperor said, 'I have run through all things, and now nothing doth me good.' The reality was gone that he thought of, and now there was nothing but a show and apparition; when the reality was gone, nothing doth me good. Come to a man that is gasping out his life, and ask him, What doth honours do you good? What doth riches do

you good? What doth possessions do you good? Solomon, a wise man, wise by the Spirit of God; wise by experience, because he was a king; wise by a special gift of God, a gift of wisdom; he had all to enable him to give a true sentence; he that had run through the variety of all good things, what doth he pronounce, but ‘vanity of vanities?’ He cannot express himself. ‘Vanity of vanities,’ saith wise, holy, experienced Solomon. He that had all abilities, that no man was able to say it so well as he, yet he saith, ‘Vanity of vanities;’ and that which is worse, ‘vexation of spirit,’ if a man have not especial grace to manage them aright. And therefore I beseech you, ‘brethren,’ do but represent the things of this life, even under the notion here; they are but apparitions, they are but pageants. If we go to buy anything in this world, we first pull off the trappings; we pull off the mask, or else we may be cozened in the thing. So if we would judge of the things of this world as they are: what is within riches? Is there not a great deal of care? What is within government? What is within the things of this life? There is a goodly show and apparition. What is within? Pull off the mask, and then you shall see the things of this world. The more you pierce into them, and the more you know them, the worse you like them. There is emptiness, and not only so, but vexation. But in the things of heaven, the nearer you are the more you will love them, the more you will admire them. The more a man knows God, the more he may know him. The more a man knows Christ, and loves Christ, the more he may. There is a height, and breadth, and depth there, all dimensions in the love of God in Christ, and in the joys of heaven; they are beyond comprehension. The things that we have in Christ, they are larger than the soul; we cannot comprehend them. There is nothing here but we may compass it; it is inferior to our knowledge and affections. Our affections and our knowledge are larger than anything here; the things of a better life are beyond all. Shall we be taken with apparitions, that the more we know them the more we shall undervalue them?

‘And the fashion of this world passeth away.’

It is a fashion, it is but a fashion; and then it ‘passeth away.’ Indeed, they do pass away; experience showeth that they pass even like a river. The water passeth away; it goes, and goes along, but it never comes. So the things of this world; they pass away, but they never come again. They vanish away, and we pass away with them too. Even as men in a ship, whether they eat, or drink, or sleep, or walk, the ship goeth, and they go in it. So it is in this world, whether we eat, or drink, or sleep, we pass away to death. Every day takes a part of our life away; and every day we live, we live a day less. It is

gone and past, and never returns again, as water when it is gone; and whether we walk or do anything, the time passeth. While you hear, and while I speak, the time passeth, and never returns again. So 'the fashion of this world passeth away.' All things are passing here.

We say they are moveables, and indeed those things that we call immoveables are moveables. All pass away; heaven and earth will pass away ere long, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth, Rev. xxi. 1. Kingdoms pass away, and kings pass away, and states pass away. What is become of Rome? What is become of Jerusalem? What is become of Babylon, and all those goodly cities? All are 'passed away;' they are all gone. This experience speaks as well as divinity.

Reason 1. Now, the ground of all this is, not only the nature of things — all things that are [are] made of nothing. Being therefore subject to fall to their first principles again, that is the fundamental reason why things may be moveable 'and pass away.' But that they are so, it is not a sufficient reason, for God might have suspended the mutability of things if he would; as, the heavenly angels are mutable, because they are created, but God hath suspended their mutability world without end; and therefore it is not sufficient that all things are of nothing. It shows that of themselves they may turn to nothing indeed.

Reason 2. But there is another reason; since the fall of man there is a curse upon all things. There is a sentence of mutability and change, and a sentence of 'passing' is passed upon all. All things that have a beginning shall have an end, and that this world shall be a stage of changes and alteration. There is a sentence of vanity upon the creature: 'The creature is subject to vanity; not of his own will, but because God hath subdued it to vanity,' Rom. viii. 20. Man committed treason, and therefore the creatures, which are man's servants, all mourn for their master's fall; they all mourn in black, as it were. All the creatures are subject to vanity, all the creatures under the sun are subject to mutability and change; but we may thank ourselves, we are the grand traitors that brought this misery upon the creature. That is the true reason why all things 'pass away,' and so why ourselves have the sentence of death upon us. 'We pass away,' and the things 'pass away;' and we in the use of them. Thus you see the ground of this, why things pass away in the sentence of mutability and vanity that God hath passed upon them.

Use 2. If this be so, beloved, let us learn not to pass much for things that will 'pass away.' Not to pass for them, learn all the former directions: 'The

fashion of this world passeth away.’ Shall we grieve much for the loss of that that we cannot hold? If a glass be broke, is a man much angry? We say it is but brittle metal, and nothing lasteth always. If a friend be dead, shall a man be therefore angry? ‘The fashion of this world passeth away.’ A sentence is passed upon them. Shall I be moved at that that God hath set down a law for, that one generation shall go and another shall follow after, and there is a succession as in the streams of water? Shall I oppose God’s sentence? God hath made all things frail, and it is but the common condition of all since the fall.

Use 8. So it should be a use of comfort and contentment with anything in this world. Place, or riches, or honour, I must leave them, I know not how soon; and this will breed a disposition of contentment. It is enough for him that must leave all, I know not how soon; have I little or much, I must leave all. Here is enough for him that must leave all. And therefore leave worldly things to worldly men; leave all these vain things to vain men. Shall I build a fixed hope on vain things? Oh, no! that should not be so.

Use 4. As we must learn contentment, so it should take us off from the hopes of this world, and from promising ourselves that which we have no promise in the world for, nor experience. Who promised thee thou shouldst enjoy thy wife long? that thou shouldst enjoy thy children long? thy place long? Hast thou a promise for this? The nature of things fight against thee. The things of the world are variable. Have we not experience of former times? And have we not scriptures to show that all is ‘vanity’? Why should we promise ourselves that which the word doth not promise us, or that we cannot see experience of in the world? Why would we have a condition severed from all men? The seeing of things in a condition of fading, as it should teach us contentment in the use of all things, so it should teach us moderation and wisdom, that we should not promise ourselves anything in this world.

Use 5. And it should teach us to provide for stable, for certain things in changes and alterations. Look to somewhat that may stand by us when all things are gone. Will all these things leave me, and must I leave them? How is it with me for the world without end? Shall I not therefore look for those comforts, and those graces, and for that condition that will abide when I am gone hence? What desperate folly were it! Let us labour for a sanctified use of the ‘passing away’ of these things, that we may provide for that which is not subject to alteration and change. The favour of God in Christ is for

everlasting. The graces of God's Spirit are for everlasting. The condition of God's children is for everlasting. And therefore why should we look after perishing things, and neglect better? For a Christian hath the reality of things: he hath a husband for ever, he hath matter of joy for ever, he hath a possession for ever; and then there will be a new world. All these things are but shows. The Christian hath the reality of all, that never 'passes away.' And therefore, considering that all things else 'pass away' but the things that belong to a Christian as a Christian, let Christians learn to- make most of their best calling, and value themselves as they are Christians, and value others as they are Christians, not as they are rich, or as they are poor, as they are noble, or as they are great: 'The fashion of this world passeth away.' Value them by that they have of eternity. What of the Spirit is in them? What of the image of God is in them? What grace is in them? Are they new born? Are they truly noble? Are they new creatures? Value them by that, and labour to get that stamped upon our children, and upon our friends. Labour to have communion so with those that we love, that we may have eternal communion in heaven with them. Labour so to enjoy our friends that our friendship may continue in heaven, considering that 'the fashion of this world passeth away.' All friendship, all bonds, all possessions, and all that we dote of and are desperately mad on, all passeth away: 'The fashion of this world passeth away.'

It is a strange thing, beloved, that a man capable of high thoughts, of excellent thoughts, should spend the marrow of his soul, and the strength of his spirits, about these things; that he should tire his spirits, that he should crack his conscience, that he should wear out his life, about things which he cannot tell how long he shall enjoy them, and neglect these things that abide for ever. For a man this is ill; but for 'brethren,' as he saith, for 'brethren' to do so, that have an inheritance immortal; for them to be cast off the hooks for every cross, for every loss, that are the children of God and heirs of heaven; what a shame is this, that Christians are so much in joy, and so much in sorrow, for these things! It comes from these grounds:

[1.] First, They do not consider and look upon things as passed. They look not with the eye of faith upon things; these things will pass. But they look upon things in passing, and they see no alteration for the present. They should consider; ay, but what sentence is upon them? These are as good as passed; they will be gone ere long. Look upon them therefore as things passed. We are dead; our friends are dead; and the world is gone. Faith saith this. We consider not this 'ay,' and so we are carried away with them. We

look upon things passing, and there we see little alteration. A man that looks upon the shadow passing, he cannot see it; but if he come two or three hours after, he shall see it past. Let us look upon things as gone. Though they be not for the present gone, see them in the eye of faith, and that will make us consider them as 'passing away.'

[2.] Again, we are deceived hence in the passing of the things of this life, that we compare them not with eternity. We think it a great matter to enjoy things twenty or forty years. What is this point of time to eternity? Compare this short time here, of health and strength, of honour and place and friends; what is this to eternity? What desperate folly is it to venture the loss of eternity for the enjoying of these things! Compare these things with world without end, Eph. iii. 21, and that will keep us from being deceived with these passing things. We are deceived, because we lay them not in the balance with things that are for ever.

[3.] And then the third ground is, we are forgetful, we are not mindful of our best condition, we make not that use of our knowledge that we might.

When a Christian is all in passion, all in joy, all in fears, or in grief; why, what is the matter at that time? What thoughts hath he of his eternal estate? of the fading condition of these things? He is forgetful and mindless. And therefore let us labour oft to keep our souls in a heavenly frame. And to draw to- a conclusion, let us learn to value ourselves. If we be Christians, as we all profess ourselves to be, value ourselves. It is a poorness of spirit for a Christian to over-joy, or to over-grieve for anything that is worse than himself. Are not all things so, that are here, if we be Christians indeed? If we be not Christians, the very toads and serpents are better than blaspheming and filthy creatures, that are opposers of God's ordinances; they are better than such wretches, as many among us. The devil is almost as good as they; such are next the devil. The earth they tread on is better than they. But if a man have grace in him, all the world is inferior to him. What weakness of spirit is it therefore, and emptiness, to be put off with over-much cause of grief and sorrow for anything below that is meaner than ourselves, for anything that is fading, when we have a condition that is not subject to fade? And therefore oft think of our dignity in Christ; think of the motive here; 'brethren,' think of that as well as of the fading condition here. If we would wean ourselves from these things, oft think of the eternal estate of a Christian, that our thoughts may run upon that much; and then upon the frail

condition of all things below, that we may be taken off from them, for two things mortify a man.

The taking off of his affections from that they are set on, and to set them upon that that will fill them and satisfy them to the full; if a man do that, he doth that that a mortified man should do, who is in this world, passing to a better.

To conclude all with this.

All things here in this world are subordinate to a further end. And let us consider therefore that we use them as that we lose not the main.

All the contentments of a traveller are subordinate in the way to his journey's end. If things come amiss in his inn, will he quarrel with his host that he hath not a soft bed? He will think, I am going, I shall have better at home; and these load me homeward. So all things below are subordinate helps to better. Shall we make them the main? Shall we make all things subordinate to them as worldlings do? subordinate religion to worldly things, and make all things contrary? They do not 'grieve as if they grieved not but they hear as if they heard not. They receive the sacrament as if they received it not. They pray as if they prayed not. They speak of holy things, and do them, as if they did them not. But for other things they are drowned in them. This is the policy of Satan, that labours to bring religion to be subordinate. So that if men can be religious and have the favour of such a one, if he can be religious and be great in the world, he will; but if religion itself, and the standing for it, hinder then—aims, away with it; they will rather be hollow than stand for a good cause, because they have not learned to subordinate things to the main end. And the reason is, because they have not grace and heavenly wisdom to teach them in what place things should be valued; what is the main, and what attends upon the main; and therefore they take by-things for the main, and the main for the by. Indeed no man is wise but a sound Christian, and he is wise for his soul, and he is wise for eternity. But what is this for the sacrament? To cut off other things, it is this.

Are these things perishing food, such as we must leave—vain and empty things? Will not this therefore make us seek the main—the food that endures to everlasting life; and labour to be in Christ more and more, labour to cherish communion with Christ, that everlasting bond? What is the sacrament but the food of our souls, our everlasting manna, that will continue for ever, and make us continue for ever? Christ, if we have him, he

continues for ever, and he makes us continue for ever too. And therefore considering that all things else are vain, I beseech you let the consideration of that that hath been spoken be as 'sour herbs' to make the passover, to make Christ relish the better. Oh! Are all things vain, and shall I not labour to have my part in that that shall never die, in him that is my husband for ever, and my Lord for ever? Shall I not labour to strengthen mine interest in him that hath all good things in him? What if all the earth should fail? If I have communion with Christ, I have all. If I marry Christ, I have all with him. All is my jointure, if I have Christ once: 'All things are yours, if you are Christ's,' 1 Cor. iii. 21-23. If I have Christ, what can I want? Let this strengthen my desire to come to the sacrament. Christ is the food of the soul; all other food the sweetness of it is gone within a quarter of an hour. The sweetness is gone presently, and the strength within a day or two, of all other food that we take. But this food, Christ, the food of the soul, Christ offering himself unto death, and shedding out his blood, and giving his body to be crucified for us, this food feeds our souls to everlasting life. We cherish our faith in the assurance of the favour of God to everlasting; the sweetness, the strength, and the comfort of this food endures for ever. And therefore, considering that all other things are food that perisheth, labour for that that will feed us to everlasting life. And then we shall make a right use of the alteration and change of all things.

A heathen man can say this text, set 'brethren' aside; a heathen man could tell you, *Transit gloria mendi* (d), and 'The fashion of things pass away.' He sees them, and thereupon could infer the negative part. Therefore we should not be worldly. By the light of nature, a man that hath no religion may be sound in that, and therefore not to care much for earthly things, considering that we must be gone.

A heathen man could speak very sweetly this way, as Plutarch, and Seneca, and the rest. What fine speeches had they this way. Oh, but the positive part, that is, when we see all things here are vain and fading, to know what we must cleave to, that is proper to religion, to know Christ, and the good we have by Christ. When we have him we have all. He is the food of our souls. These things are proper to religion. And therefore let us arise from the consideration of the vanity of all things to the positive part, to interest ourselves in that that is better than all things. Which if we have, we have all; and then we shall make a right use of this.

The Right Receiving

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.—1 Cor. XI. 28, 29.

In the former words the apostle had propounded to the Corinthians the first institution of the Lord's Supper, declaring the causes why our blessed Saviour appointed these ordinances, the especial end whereof was the remembrance of the Lord's death until he came; and not only a bare remembrance thereof, but likewise the communion of the virtues of that death—for the comfort of all Christians—until his coming. And from the same the apostle in the verse going before draweth his conclusion: that seeing this holy supper is instituted by our blessed Saviour for such an end as this, so excellent, to be a lively representation of the crucifying of the Son of God, of the breaking of his body, and the pouring forth of his blood for our salvation; therefore he inferreth that all men should come with a reverent regard thereunto, not as to a common table. Seeing the matter is thus, saith the apostle, that this is not an ordinary supper, it behoveth us not to come thither as unto an ordinary feast. We may not make any small difference betwixt this and our common banquets; but if a man cometh unworthily, that is, unbeseeingly, such a man as this, instead of comfort, reapeth unto himself judgment. If we come hand over head, without preparation; if we so eat, we shall be 'guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' It showeth that we make no reverend account of it when we will come so unreverently unto the same, making no difference betwixt this heavenly manna and our ordinary food; and therefore, eating unworthily,— coming to partake of the body and blood here set, without due preparation, —shall be culpable of judgment.

Quest. But here some will say, How doth a man come unto the Lord's table unworthily? Is any man worthy? Seeing under these veils is signified, and, more than that, exhibited unto us, the body and blood of Christ Jesus, is any man worthy? It was a great thing, that the ancient people of the Jews were fed with manna. John vi. 81, 'They ate manna in the wilderness, he gave them bread from heaven to eat, and yet they died. But he that eateth the flesh of the Son of man, and drinketh his blood, hath eternal life.' Now, howsoever it be true that the body of Christ is in heaven and we upon earth,

yet here is the conveyance, whereby we have interest in his body and blood; here is the seal of the great indenture.

God giveth us not only the great draught, which we are in possession of; not only his word, that we have an interest in his Son; but also unto his deed made unto us in his word he giveth a more propriety, even these holy sacraments, wherein he clappeth this broad seal, thus tendered unto us.

Ans. I answer, then, that no man is worthy to be a guest; but worthiness here is taken in another sense. A man is not said to be worthy in regard of any worthiness in himself, but in respect of his affection and preparation, and in regard of his fit and seemly receiving. As we use to say, the king received worthy entertainment in such a gentleman's house, not for that he was worthy to receive him, but because he omitted no compliments and service in his power fit to entertain him: even so I say, we are not worthy of Christ, that he should enter into our houses, that he should come under our roof. But, notwithstanding, we are said to be worthy when we do all things which are in our power, fit for the entertainment of him. If we come not in pride and in our rags, but with repentance, joy, comfort, and humility, then are we worthy.

This therefore being the ground of the exhortation, let us come to the words, 'Let a man therefore examine himself.' He that eateth unworthily procureth great hurt unto himself, therefore examine yourselves; as if he should say, Wouldst thou know how to come worthily? Examine thine own heart, and see whether all things are well within; whether thou mayest put God's seal to the grace that thou findest in thyself.

I will open it as plain as I can, 'Let a man therefore examine himself;' &c. The question is here, How a man cometh to the Lord's table worthily? The apostle saith he cometh worthily if he examineth himself; whence, in the first place, we observe this doctrine, that the Lord hath appointed the sacrament of the supper, not as the sacrament of baptism, once to be administered, and never after, but he hath appointed it to be received often.

The reason is apparent: it is sufficient for a man once to be born. Now baptism is the sacrament of our spiritual regeneration; therefore but once to be administered. But it is not sufficient for a man to make one dinner and no more, but we must daily eat and get strength. Now this sacrament of the supper, signifying not our new' birth, but our proceeding, our strength, and obedience, is therefore, as a means to increase strength, often to be received.

As he that hath a weak stomach will eat his meat often, and little at once; so we, having found our great want and weakness, must often receive this sacrament. Well! so often as we come, the apostle biddeth us to examine ourselves, if we would be good guests. Examine! Why? Saith the apostle to these Corinthians in another place, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Try yourselves, whether ye be in the faith or not,' &c. Thou comest to have God's seal put unto the communion thou hast with him. Well! then God contenteth not himself with once examination for all; but he calleth Christians unto this duty often. This is worthy to be considered. There are many who in the beginning of their conversion can take some pains to sift and ransack their own hearts, to bring them unto the sight of sin. They can consider the fearful estate of sinners when they go out of the world. It may be also that they find some beginnings of repentance. Now, because this goeth against their hearts, this often examination, they would therefore post off' all thus, to their first conversion. Once I have found the grace of repentance; God is unchangeable; whom he loveth once, those he loveth for ever. Now the Lord, knowing it to be dangerous for us to pitch upon this ground, doth therefore call upon us to try our title. There are many corners in the heart of man; it is hardly sounded; it is full of hypocrisy; and he is -wonderful ready to deceive his own heart. In regard whereof, seeing it is so deceitful, we must not content ourselves with once humiliation and repentance, nor suppose every light motion to be God's Spirit, but we must, as often as we eat of this bread and drink of this wine (and as any occasion is given us), try and examine ourselves, and labour to make our election sure. And if we consider the flattering of our own hearts, together with the delusion of Satan, this will be found needful. The greatest hypocrite will have a good conceit of himself, and will be ready to say with the proud Pharisee, 'I thank God I am not as other men are, an adulterer, extortioner,' &c., Luke xviii. 11. Thus he blesteth himself in his heart; and if then there be but any light motion, any common gift of God's Spirit in his heart, the devil is ready to persuade him that he is in heaven, and that all things are well with him. Now for a man to content himself with being once enlightened (with having once some tokens of God's favour come towards him) it is very dangerous. Consider this. God's children in the beginning of their conversion, their faith is weak,—small as a grain of mustard seed, which, though small, yet in time groweth great,—like the flax not always smoking. The hypocrite will show a greater measure of profession in the sight of man than a true Christian, insomuch as a man would think he should never come to that perfection which they seem to have attained who perish with their holiness; for he groweth fast, and is quickly down again; soon ripe, soon rotten, like unto the corn which groweth upon the house-

top; whereas the child of God goeth on fair and softly, soft and sure, and doth constantly proceed, in renewing the work of faith and repentance.

Use. Let this move us unto this duty, that we often examine ourselves. because, besides our old debts (those sins we committed before our calling), we multiply new sins, and do every day run upon a new score; for do we not know that sin is odious unto almighty God? Why? Consider it is worse for thee to continue in rebellion against God, than for a stranger who knoweth him not. A man that is dead, what works can be expected from him but dead works? But the Lord having translated thee from that death, looks to have new fruit; and for thee to bring forth sour grapes, this should trouble and grieve thee exceedingly. And this is especially to be observed of them who come unto the Lord's table. It becometh them to examine themselves, whereby they may be rightly entertained. It is much to be bewailed that this sacrament is in such small account, that men come unto it they know not how, so unpreparedly, that I am persuaded if they were to sit at the king's table, they would come with more preparation, Haman boasted of Ahasuerus his honour he had done unto him, and what was that? He accounted it a great honour that he was called to the banquet of a king, Esther v. O; and shall we not account it a greater favour that the King of kings doth invite us to his table? Shall we come with such unwashed hands hither? Remember that the ground is holy; put off thy shoes when thou comest to this sacrament. You shall see therefore how the Lord was angry with his people when they did not respect but disgraced his sacrament, Exod. iv. 24. Moses was sent to redeem the Israelites. He being employed in this service, and being great in the favour of God, it came to pass by the way in the inn, the Lord met him, and would have killed him. A man would think that he with whom God was but even now so familiar had committed some great offence, that God should kill him. And what was it? But because he did neglect the Lord's sacrament. Ay, though Zipporah called him a bloody husband, because of the circumcision, yet the Lord would have killed him if he had not done it. And so they that receive unworthily, you may see are guilty, as 2 Chron. xxx. 3, seq.: the sacrament there was not wholly omitted; but because they came to it without due preparation, as the Lord required, he smote the people; for a multitude of Ephraim and Manasseh had not cleansed themselves. Yet did they eat the passover, but not as it was written. The Lord also, you see, would have killed Moses, because he administered not circumcision to his son. Many other come unto this sacrament, but they come not according unto God's ordinance.

Well, Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, ‘The good Lord be merciful unto them, who prepare their whole heart to seek the Lord God, the God of their fathers, though they be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.’ So that here you have a plain token, that God is displeased when a man prosumeth to come with unwashed hands. Now, when a good man prayeth for men, for whom doth he pray? What! for him who never respecteth God, but will be constant in a wicked course? If all the hands in heaven and earth were lifted up for such a one, all possibly could do him no good. When Hezekiah prayed, the Lord, notwithstanding his ordinance was broken, was moved to be merciful. For whom? for them that had an upright heart; for them who prepared their hearts to seek him. So that here is an evidence, what a fearful thing it is for a man to come to the sacrament without this preparation. And to go no further for proof than where my text is now, ver. 23, ‘He that eateth unworthily’—he that will come to this table without preparation, not addressing of his heart to entertain the Lord,—‘he eateth judgment to himself.’ We see, therefore, what a fearful thing it is. Now that the law, which was prepared and ordained for life, is now become unto us as death, what is the cause of this? The rebellion of thy heart hath turned the course of the law; so that that which was appointed for life is now become death. Ay, but is not this also a heavy thing, that the same is said also of the gospel? that the gospel, which was ordained for life, is now by thy negligence proved to be thy death? It is so: ‘He that eateth unworthily, he eateth destruction, he eateth judgment to himself.’

Now, judgment we must not take in the terrible sense, that he that cometh unworthily shall eat judgment presently. But it is taken otherwise. Wilt thou, his enemy, eat unworthily? He will judge thee. If thou beest a child, he will whip thee; if thou beest a wicked man, he will for ever condemn thee; if his servant, he will inflict other outward judgments upon thee. So that I take it in another sense: if the child of God come unworthily, the Lord will make him smart; if the wicked man, who reviles him daily, intrude himself to the Lord’s table, he shall eat damnation; so that neither the children of God nor the wicked shall escape judgment: the one shall have sentence of damnation, the other of sharp punishment. That this is the meaning of the apostle, it appeareth by the words following: ‘for this cause,’ when he had said ‘many eat judgment,’ he addeth, ‘many are sick,’ where in particular he setteth down that judgment whereof he spake of before. God’s children, if they come without preparation, unreverently, they eat such judgment to themselves; God will send sickness upon them. For this cause it is that many of you are punished with death itself; and it followeth, ver. 31, ‘But when we

are punished, we are chastened of the Lord.’ Why? ‘Because we should not be condemned with the world.’ You see judgment is opposed to condemnation. God’s children eat judgment to themselves to avoid condemnation, which I stand upon, because many think that if they come unworthily, they shall be damned presently; as I have known some who have abstained seven years, because they were afraid they should eat unworthily. O! then be not damned. The apostle saith ‘that we are chastised of the Lord, that we may not be condemned.’

For the necessity of this duty then, seeing it is necessary for a man to examine himself, as hath been showed, it followeth now that we consider The properties wherein a man is to examine himself.

Wherein must he examine himself? I answer, this dependeth upon the knowledge of the institution of the sacrament. Let us then consider for what end it was instituted, and let us see what that is which is done in the sacrament.

The end of a sacrament, Rom. iv. 11—speaking of one sacrament—namely, of circumcision: Abraham received the sign of circumcision, as the seal of the righteousness of that faith which he had when he was uncircumcised. In those words you have a second use for a sacrament set down. It is appointed of God, first, to be ‘a sign of the righteousness of faith.’ A sign to inform the understanding, touching the benefits we have by the communion of Christ. And secondly, it is not only the bare sign, as words are, but it is also a seal, that is, a thing appointed of God, to confirm that there is a difference betwixt these two. As for instance: if a man hath the picture of a king, he hath a sign of the king; but if he have a deed, confirmed with a seal from the king, this showeth that he hath an interest in something which he receiveth from the king. Well then, the sacrament is a sign to inform the understanding of man, touching the benefits we have by Christ, and a seal to assure us of that there signified. The first use of the sacrament is, to open the mysteries of the gospel to all that have understanding; the second is, to seal the comforts which are there signified in the sacrament: for, as in the former use, it is not every one unto whom the gospel giveth knowledge, but to them that believe. So, doth this sacrament seal unto all? No; but to them who besides understanding have grace. So that then here is the point: the sacrament is a sign to declare the mysteries of the gospel unto all that have understanding; secondly, it is a seal to assure some of the comforts of Christ, and not to all, but unto them who have grace.

1. So that I must, first, examine myself, whether that I have understanding; and secondly, whether I have grace, whereby I must make use of it, for I must be knit to it, not by the brain, but by the affection. Otherwise, if I come to it as the Papists, to a dumb show, not bringing an understanding heart of the mysteries thereof, I shall come unworthily. Now for the first point. The matter to be considered is, whether thou art an ignorant body? whether thou knowest what is meant by these? That this is needful, it may appear by this: this is the Lord's table, and he inviteth hitherto his friends and acquaintance. And dost thou think that thou, which knowest neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost, mayest come? For thee to thrust in amongst his friends and familiars, is not this presumption? Therefore, first ye must examine yourselves. And besides this, they that are ignorant are not only strangers, but also enemies to God; yea, such as against whom the Lord will come, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 'in flaming fire, rendering vengeance unto them which know not God, nor obey unto the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Here you see the enemies of Christ, against whom he shall stand, are ranked into two kinds: first, they are such as know him not; secondly, they are such who have knowledge and understanding, but they have not grace, 'they obey not the gospel of Christ Jesus.'

Examine, then, yourselves.⁵ Doth the ignorance of God make you to be his enemies? Of this examine thyself; for dost thou think that ever God will endure his enemies shall come unto his table? Let all ignorant persons examine themselves; for howsoever they may come, yet it grieveth the Lord that they come. And this shall be a judgment unto them at the last, that they were so bold to come without examination. I speak not this to discourage a man from coming, for thou shalt pay for it if thou comest not; but know this, if thou come ignorantly, there standeth the angel of the Lord to keep thee, as Adam was, Gen. iii. 24, from this sacrament, or any comfort by it.

2. Another reason why the sacrament was instituted, is it not to strengthen faith? as Rom. v. 4. 'It was the seal of faith.' Well; and can there be faith without knowledge? No; Isa. liii. 11. 'By his knowledge' (speaking of his Son) 'shall my righteous servant justify many.' By faith; and this faith is expressed by knowledge, to show that where there is no knowledge, there is no faith. The sacrament is instituted for this end. And where there is no faith, there is no worthy receiving of the sacrament. As then thou lovest thine own salvation, inform thyself in this point; please not thyself in thine ignorance. For the informing then of our understanding, two things are here to be considered; first, we must not here have any dumb shows, but we must

understand that all these things are a gospel, preached unto our eyes. Now, the things presented to our eyes are two:

1. Outward elements.
2. Certain actions done by us.

For the outward elements, you see there are bread and wine, set apart for an holy use. The bread is broken, and the wine is poured out. All this is done before we partake. When we come to see these things done, we must bring with us looking hearts and affections to see what God hath done for us. The next thing is, we see not only bread and wine set apart, but it is given unto us, taken by us, drunk of us, and nourisheth us. It first shows us that accomplishment of our redemption by the Son of God. Dost thou see thee sanctified to this work? What, then, dost thou think is meant by the breaking? what by the pouring out of the wine? This is my body broken, this is my blood shed for many. It is the man Jesus Christ who is put before your eyes. When you come thither, there is a spectacle of Christ crucified. And it is set apart to show that, as it was in the paschal lamb, there was a lamb to be taken out of the flock, to be separated from the rest, to show that it was set apart for some extraordinary work. I say, what doth this show, but that our high priest, Christ Jesus, was separated from sinners? More; thou seest the bread broken, and the wine poured forth. This should stir thee up to be in the same estate, as if thou wert upon Golgotha, at the place whereupon he was crucified, crying with a loud voice, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me as if thou sawest him sweat water and blood. And our affections should be like that of the blessed virgin, to whom the sight of her son in his anguish could not but be a great vexation and grief. Consider that this is a property of God's Spirit, Zech. xii. 10: 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of compassion: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall lament and mourn for him, and be in bitterness,' &c. Such should be thine affections, when thou seest the bread broken and the wine poured forth. Thou must consider the circumstances of Christ's breaking, and his soul poured out for sin; that God had broken him, 'then shall they look upon him whom they have crucified.' It is not sufficient for thee to say that they, speaking of the Jews, would do thus. We are ready to spit in their faces. Ay, but saith the text, 'they shall look upon him.' It is I that crucified the Lord of glory; it is we that murdered him by our sins. And this should move us in a spiritual compassion, that we have imbrued our hands in his most innocent blood. That this might move the people in the old law, you see there was an innocent boast; but before it was slain, the man that was to offer the

sacrifice, was first to put his hand upon the head thereof, to signify that every one of our sins was the cause of this, Lev. i. 4, et alibi. This must be our mature consideration. We lay our hands upon the immaculate Lamb; we put our hands upon his head: we have murdered him. Let us then see whether this effecteth us.

You should all say, Is sin so deadly and dangerous as this, that it will seize upon the Son of God himself, rather than sin shall be unpunished? Is my sin a dart shot up into heaven to pull him down from thence? Is my sin such a thing as this? Is it so that it will make the Son of God to lie upon the ground? and have I such a hard heart that it will not make me to weep? These, and such like godly cogitations, we should make when we see the bread and wine broken and poured forth. And let us go further. Do you not esteem of an oath, of an idle word, or such like sin? This is that which made Christ to be crucified, and therefore is not to be dallied withal. There is the first thing to be considered. When thou seest the bread broken and the wine poured forth, it is a calling to mind of the sufferings of the Son of God.

The second point. What is meant by these actions performed by us? That is, what Christ did for us. But what is that to thee? All thy comfort standeth in the apprehending it unto thyself. Christ hath prepared a medicine in the apothecaries' shop, ministering no comfort unless we apply it to ourselves. This bread thus broken is given. Here God bringeth his Son bathed in his blood. The Father seeth him in his gore blood, and saith, Take him. What a wonderful comfort is this, that he should come and say, 'Take and eat.' So it that God once moveth thy heart to receive him, he meaneth as plainly as the minister doth, when he saith, take the bread; he offereth him plainly and freely. This is his offer, and will not this be a great condemnation to the -world? So often as it is administered, so often is condemnation read to a wicked man. Both God offer his Son, and will not thou take him? 1 Cor. ii. 4, seq. The apostle there speaketh in the ministry of the gospel, that we are not to think it a mean matter that God sendeth a minister to make an offer of his Son, but we must think that this is done by God himself. The apostle, 2 Cor. v. 20, saith, 'Now then are we ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you,' &c. Oh, say some, if I might hear Christ say thus much, or if I might hear but God say so, I would receive him. The case is alike; we are ambassadors for Christ, we pray you in Christ; as if God were present in person, we say, Receive him, God beseecheth you to be reconciled. It were fit for us to beseech him, but he cometh to our doors and offereth us pardon; and therefore this will be condemnation, that where mercy is

brought home, we notwithstanding reject it. Well! besides the offer, there is further the actual delivery of it. Take, eat. They take, eat, and drink. What is represented by this? It represented a further point, that we are not only in Christ, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, but that Christ is actually delivered; that we seize upon him. When we see the bread and wine taken, he meaneth that hereby we by faith do accept of Christ, and do lay hold of him. Here is the foundation of our comfort, that a Christian man may say of Christ, that he can be assured of nothing so much which he possesseth for his own, as he may be of him. His cloak upon his back, his house he dwells in, his lands, yea, the blood in his veins, and whatsoever he hath, is not so much his; he cannot be so assured thereof as of Christ. Take him. There is delivery and seizement of Christ—as by the ring of a door—we are interested into heaven, and if he be ours, with him, we have all things.

Nay, I will go further—for the Papists will go thus far—they will say Christ is to be delivered and received; ay, but how? After a gross caparnaicall opinion, eaten really and bodily with the mouth. But Christ is transferred into me, and I into him, by faith; we are made one with him, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; as it is John vi. 54, 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' I would not have him for a while, but for ever. Well, he is planted into thee, and dwelleth in thee; that as meat, by the wonderful work of nature, is turned into ourselves, so is Christ, by the supernatural work of grace, once being entertained, made one with us. We are one body, one flesh. He hath more assured hold of us than we have of him. We know the devil is strong, but he may not pull off a leg or an arm, or any of his members. He is stronger than all. We dwell in him, and he in us, and no man can take us out of his hands. And then that which is next, all comforts shall be ours when we have Christ. We cannot have the benefits of Christ unless we have Christ himself; and therefore, in the Lord's supper, Christ saith not, This is justification, or sanctification, but This is my body, &c. We may not look for the graces of sanctification, justification, or redemption before we have Christ. If we have him, we shall with him have all things else. The apostle, Heb. iii. 1, 14, saith, 'We are made partakers of Christ, if we keep sure unto the end, the beginning wherewith we are upholden.' The apostle useth the term of being partakers of Christ. We are made partakers of Christ if we constantly hold what we have begun unto the end. He saith not only we are made partakers of the benefits of Christ, but also of Christ himself, which is more than all the others. Now for the opening of this: will a man be nourished by bread if it be not eaten? No; but he must first eat and drink. So, faith, it is like unto an eagle that flieth up

unto heaven, and there seizeth upon the Son of God; and there having thus seized upon him, then cometh remission of sins, justification, sanctification, and redemption, many blessings, and a floodgate of all graces.

These are the points which we are to consider, they are the signs to which God giveth a voice unto us; as the Lord speaketh unto Moses, Exod. iv. 8, 'So shall it come to pass, that if they will not believe thee, neither obey the voice of the first sign, yet shall they believe for the voice of the second sign.' You see to the sign is given a voice. [You see] that the sacrament, when the bread is broken, and the wine poured out, it is a voice speaking unto thee. Thou must therefore be a man of understanding to discern the same.

The next point; the sacrament is not only a sign to signify that all things are to be had in Christ, for a wicked man may know thus much; but Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal: it is also a seal. We must therefore examine ourselves in our knowledge as whether we have faith and grace, otherwise God sealeth no comfort unto us. But how shall a man know this?

There is a general life. I will touch it as briefly as I can, and so make an end. The matter to be understood is this, whether we have grace in us, whether living and regenerate. No man spreads his table for dead men. We are dead by nature, and if we find that we are dead, this banquet is not for us. We must then be regenerate. I know many come when they are dead, and therefore they abuse God and their own souls, and they put his seal to a false deed. Well, the apostle's conclusion is, 1 John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life.' But the point of this examination is, namely, how a man may know whether he be dead or living, which must be the point of trial in the next place.

That matter and examination which concerneth the heart and affections.

For knowledge, with examination, is not enough to make a man a right receiver; but there must first be understanding, and then grace in the heart. For we must understand thus much of the sacrament of the supper, it never bringeth grace where it findeth none. It confirmeth that good grace which it findeth before. So that, as I have said, it always presupposeth some grace to be in the heart. When we come, we come not to receive life, but to have our strength increased. For if a man were to deal with the king, and would have him to confirm some estate unto him, it were to no end if his title and ground were not good; so, if the ground of our estate fail, if we have not

some grace, faith, and the like, the receiving of the sacrament will not give them, they will not make an ill matter good. Therefore we must labour for grace in our hearts if we would have comfort. Upon this we may expect a blessing. I will touch the heads of this briefly, because it is very large. The points wherein a man must examine himself are,

1. Whether he discerneth of the necessity of this new life: whether he discerneth that without this supply from heaven, without the body of Christ, his estate is most wretched and miserable.

This is the first thing in our examination, which may be thought a thing needless to examine our conscience upon: that our estate is miserable without Christ. But it is necessary, and that course which God taketh with his children. He first makes them discern in what a miserable estate they are. And it is not every one that can discern this; for it must be the work of God's Spirit to show a man the death of sin; because every man hath naturally pride in his heart. So the apostle Paul confesseth, Rom. vii 9, seq., before the Lord had showed him his misery by the law. Whilst he was left to natural direction, [he] thought himself a man of worth—by his own confession—a great man. Now, therefore, before the Lord would discover unto him the riches of his grace, he applieth the law unto him; the law that told him, 'Thou shalt not lust.' Then he perceiveth his misery, as soon as the commandment came, seeing himself to be full of concupiscence. Then, when the commandment came, sin revived and appeared to be sin, saith the apostle. A man must first, therefore, discern that he is in a miserable estate. Hereupon, John xvi. 8, seq., when the works of God's Spirit are set down, the first is this, 'to convince the world;' when the Spirit shall come and shall convince the world of sin. The ground of our sensible comfort in this action stands in the humiliation of our souls, when a man becometh out of love with his sin; when he, finding the body of sin about him, can say, 'Who shall deliver me from this bondage of corruption?' when this giveth him an edge to come unto Christ, for we must not think that we are thus ready to come, unless we be drawn by some scourge or other. The prodigal son, when he had wasted his goods riotously, if he might have had husks to keep his life and soul together, he would never have come home. So we, the sons of Adam, might we have but fig-leaves to cover our nakedness, we would never become suitors unto God for pardon. Here, then, examine; dost thou discern that without the receiving of his body and blood thou art like a man kept from meat and drink, and that thou art dead? If thou findest this, there is one step good; but if otherwise thou standest stoutly and thinkest that thou hast no need thereof, thou art an

unworthy receiver. These are for matter of grace. The second point wherein a man must examine himself is,

2. Whether upon the discerning of his wants, upon the discerning of that death which certainly belongeth unto him, he rely upon Christ; whether the Lord worketh upon his heart a true longing for that righteousness without himself.

When the Lord spreads his table to feast his friends, he calleth not them who have no kind of appetite, nor stomach; and therefore thou must examine thyself whether thou hast a stomach, an hungering after Christ Jesus. This is a special point, which certainly if a man find not, he may doubt whether he be sound or not. If a man have his victuals taken from him, he grows hungry and thirsty, is vexed and discontented. How then cometh it to pass that our bodily hunger is so sensible, when yet our soul's hunger is not felt of us? He that is in this estate, a-starving, and feels it, is not that man ready to die? Before we come therefore to the Lord's table, let us labour to get an appetite, for, I say, God thinketh such precious meat as this ill bestowed upon them that have no appetite unto it-We see worthy patterns in the Scriptures. David he says, 'As the hart panteth after the rivers of water, so my soul longeth after the living God,' Ps. xlii. 1. And, beloved, blessed is he that findeth this thirst, blessed are they, they shall be blessed. Contrary to this, whereas children play with their meat, it is time it should be taken from them. Their estate in this case is woful for the present. The third point whereupon a man must examine himself is,

3. Whether these two grounds being laid (that first he discerneth his misery, his death, that he is a dead man without he get Christ; and secondly, that he hungers and thirsts after him), he setteth himself about it.

For it is not sufficient for a man to hunger, and never go about the work; but as a hungry man is eager to feed, nothing should keep him from it. Here is the point, whether our hunger after righteousness putteth us so on that we will have it whatsoever it costs us. A man that is ready to die for hunger will give all that he hath rather than he will go without meat. Even so the soul, when it is once pinched and hunger-bit, and seeth bread in heaven, it presenteth itself before God, beggeth as for life that God would bestow his Son for cure. So that I may truly say, 'The kingdom of heaven suffers violence,' Mat. xi. 12, and nothing shall withhold the violent from taking it, when they come into the presence of God. The fourth point is,

4. Whether (upon this touch of conscience, upon this earnest hungering and thirsting after righteousness) we presently can set forward without delay, and go to the throne of grace.

That we consider our case is now like the case of him who had committed man-slaughter amongst the Jews, for whom there was appointed a city of refuge, unto which if he could fly before he was apprehended, he saved his life; if otherwise taken before he came thither, he was to die. Without question that man would make great haste thither. Examine then thyself whether thy hungering after righteousness worketh this effect, that without all delay thou wilt come after Christ Jesus thy refuge and defence. It is not sufficient for thee to say, I know that without Christ I shall die; I will do it to-morrow, when I have done other things, I will purchase his favour. Well; boast not of to-morrow; examine thyself whether thy hunger after righteousness be so great, that it will not suffer thee to rest or sleep till thou hast his favour. He that cometh thus affected, and that will make no delay, but be an earnest suitor unto God for his Son, that he may have Christ—though the request be great, the necessity yet is such a matter that we forget all good manners, and so presently do well; and what do we then? We take unto us words. Then a man cometh before the throne of grace; but standeth he there mute? No certainly. He that is partaker of Christ, and hath grace in his heart, standeth he there mute? No; but he can put up an elegant note in the ears of God, as it is said, Rom. viii. 26, ‘We know not how to pray as we ought; what shall we say then?’ Why, saith the apostle, ‘If you are the sons of grace, the Spirit helpeth your infirmities, and maketh request for you with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered.’ There is the point wherein we ought to examine our hearts, whether the Spirit of God hath made such an intercession in us? that is, whether he hath made us able when we come into the presence of God, upon the consideration of his mercy, to send up a volley of sighs unto him? whether we can fill heaven with our groans, and dart them upwards? He that can do this, that when he presents himself before God (that knoweth the heart, who knoweth what is the meaning of his groans, what he would say, and is accepted of him); he that can find in himself the Spirit of prayer, that he can come before him, unwrap and show his sores; desire the Lord to pity him, and will never give him over till he hath graciously answered, and hath invited him—the Lord loveth such a suitor. Perhaps he will not give him a ready answer and despatch at first, but will have him attend. But if like Israel he will still solicit him, till he have got the blessing, if he will take no denial; the Lord hath said, and his word shall

stand, 'Take my Son;' this man may have full consolation; this man hath grace. And then followeth,

5. A setting of the heart upon the promises of God.

That a man having discerned that God hath so compassed him with favour that he hath seen his misery; that he hath seen a way to get out, and hath found a way to approach unto the throne of God; he presently thereupon cometh unto God, looks whether or not he will hold forth unto him the golden sceptre. He seeth the Lord hath made him to beg Christ earnestly, and that he can confess his sins unto him; then presently there cometh a setting of the heart upon the promises. Hath not God said, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they shall be satisfied,' Mat. v. 6. He hath given me but a cold answer; but it is true, hath not he said, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you?' Mat. xi. 28. I find but little ease, but I know that I am in his favour. He hath given unto me feet, affection, and an heart to come unto him; and hereupon I will set mine affections. Howsoever he spurneth me, yet I know that he is just, and therefore will not be broken off. I know he is faithful, and therefore will forgive me. And hereupon the Christian setteth himself upon a settled resolution. Having considered the promise of God, he is persuaded 'that neither life nor death, principalities nor powers, things present nor things to come, shall separate him from the love of Christ,' Rom. viii. 35, 38. And that man who is thus persuaded and assured by faith, though not by sense, -whom God hath thus far carried, will thus reason the matter with himself. Well, I know that he that hath 'begun this good work will finish it,' Philip, i. G. And therefore with this conclusion, I will come looking for an increase of grace. Now I see some life, some health, some strength; I will look for an increase of these; more life, more health, and more strength. Therefore I will come unto the Lord's table; this is a worthy receiver. These concern our justification, wherein a man must examine himself.

And take this; he that cometh without faith, that man cometh without his wedding garment, whom the master of the feast (when he cometh to take notice of the guests that are come) shall single out from the rest, and say, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into everlasting torments,' Mat. xxii. 13. But a man will say, May not I read good books at home, the Bible or others? Ay, but thou shalt not have such a feast at home. He here provideth a feast; and when the feasters are set, he cometh and seeth them. Thus God is present here in these assemblies, and seeth of what disposition his guests

are. Now when a man comes without his wedding garment, that putteth to the seal, but wanteth the writing, will not this make God to single him out? There is a day when he shall be mute. Know therefore, that this table is provided for God's friends, and therefore unless thou by faith canst know that thou art friends with God, thou canst have no comfort; therefore examine thyself, for before that thou finds thy heart settled, before thy sins are forgiven, thou art not fit. A man will say, Alas! I would, if I had it, give all the world for it, but alas! all is in vain; I have often sought for it; often groaned and shed many tears for it before God; and yet things go not as I would. And what then? Shall I abstain? No; if thou discernest that thou art weak, thou must come. This table is provided for them that are weak. And if thy faith be weak, if thou hast but the least grain of faith, thou must come. As the church in the Canticles, when she began to be sick, desired to be stayed with flagons, Cant. ii. 5; so when our souls are ready to faint, we must desire him to come unto us, to comfort us, to stay us. 'The Lord quencheth not the smoking flax, nor breaketh the bruised reed, Mat. xii. 20, but will make it grow to a great tree; only he thou patient, and wait the Lord's leisure. And thus much shall suffice to have spoken of the first point, wherein the affections must be examined; that is, upon the point of justification. We come now to the next point and matter, which is the grace of sanctification.

We must examine ourselves next in the grace of sanctification.

And for this, they that come must especially look unto it; for let us ask the question, Why will God provide a table? Why will he feed them? Is it not that they may do him service? Especially then examine thine own heart, whether thou art minded to serve God thyself, or the devil. Is there a man who saith, I will serve mine own turn, by hook or crook. I will get this? Is the table of the Lord, think you, provided for him? to strengthen him to do service against him? Thou that wouldst come unto the table, thou must remember thou art to be one of his family; he will have thee sit down with him. And doth he not then require that thou shouldst do him service? If then thou art ready to serve against him, if thou runnest into the camp of the enemy, to join with Satan against thy Maker, dost thou think that thou art fit to come? Nay, let me speak unto them that are profane, who break his Sabbaths and blaspheme his name. I say, that man who thus cometh with a covetous heart, if it he with resolution, I will not be broke off from it; take what sin thou wilt, if thou come with a resolution that thou wilt not part from it; when a man shall say, I will follow my course, this is a great sin. And I say that man taketh a cup of poison in his hands; I say, he that cometh with

such a heart, proclaimeth war against him and killeth him, as Judas did. The Lord will not be mocked; and know this, that that man shall he be partaker of God's mercy? No; for he that partaketh of God's mercies cannot be profane. And it is as true, that that man who hath not holiness, whose heart is not set to please God, that that man shall never see God. The Papists cannot enforce this doctrine so much as we, because they be ignorant of the power and true life of holiness springing from the true ground thereof.

A wicked man, I say, shall have no benefit in the body and blood of Christ Jesus. This is a fearful saying, you will think. But it is true, that a man intending to live and die in his sin, and will not be broken off, shall have no portion in his body and blood. Was there ever any man who so much magnified the free mercy of God without works as the apostle Paul [did? yet he] saith, 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. If to the flesh, of the flesh he shall reap corruption; if to the Spirit, of the Spirit he shall reap life everlasting,' Gal. vi. 7. Mark, saith the apostle, look you to this, if there be a man who soweth nothing but tares in the seed-time, and yet in the harvest will look for good corn, will we not think him mad? If thou hast sown good corn, thou mayest then expect good fruit; if otherwise, bad; accordingly as thou hast sown thou shalt reap. And will you deceive yourselves, that when you have sown to the flesh, you think to reap of the Spirit? Deceive not yourselves thus. And, Gal. v. 19, seq., now, saith the apostle, 'The works of the flesh are manifest, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, debate, emulations, wrath, contentions, seditions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, gluttony,' and such like. There is a black guard of them. Well, then, saith the apostle, do you think to reap the harvest of God's children, whilst you sow such fruits? No; I tell you now as before, they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. This shall not be reversed, but shall stand as firm as the law of the Medes and Persians, not to be revoked, Esther i. 19. Such wicked persons, as it is Rev. xxii. 15, shall be thrust out amongst the dogs, 'enchanters, whoremongers, murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth or maketh lies.'

So now to come to the point: he that cometh unto the Lord's table, let him examine his heart, whether or not he be given unto these vices. Some will say, I am no Papist, no idolater; nay, I hate such; I am not envious. But the apostle here speaketh of all such things as are like them. Yea, he speaketh against such things as are accounted but petty matters, as envy, drunkenness. Oh! they say, some have not gentlemen's qualities, which cannot swear. But

the apostle's words stand firm, that such shall not see God; their gentlemen-like qualities shall bring their souls to hell. When they have so malicious and quarrelsome spirits, when they have such proud contentious spirits, that men cannot live quietly amongst them, what fruit is this? What doth it argue but certainly this, that there is no grace in them, whereas their hearts are thus sot against all men?

But you will say as in justification, so in this matter of sanctification, I thank God, I am not given to these gross Tyburn matters, though mine heart telleth me that I have a great sink of corruption in me.

I will then examine thee how dost thou stand affected towards sin? Hast thou shaken hands with it? hast thou shaken off familiarity with all sin, and not from some only? For so an hypocrite. But see whether there is not some sin remaining winch thou wilt and dost make reckoning of. If it be to thee as a right eye, or as a right hand, Mat. v. 30, as our Saviour saith, look unto that especially, which is so dear and profitable that it bringeth in great wealth; see how thou standest affected to that. Art thou content, though it be as profitable as thy right hand, to have it chopped off? If thou findest this resolution to be in thee, thou art in a good estate; thy case is happy. This showeth that there is good seed in thee. For it is impossible that there should be such a divorce betwixt thee and thy corruption, if grace were not in thy heart. A man then who cometh unto the Lord's table must consider and say, I have been wanting in the service of God; I have not been so careful in keeping of the Sabbath; I have not had that watchfulness over my corruptions. Well; I will now get me new strength; I will go to this table that I may be more strengthened in time to come, to fight afresh; that whereas I was weak and feeble before, I will now get strength. He that cometh with this resolution, if his heart can say, This I aim at, it is wonderful to think what profit the Lord will give unto him. If we say, we come to get strength to fight against Satan, and so forth, we shall prevail and obtain it. Would not a man think his meat ill bestowed on him whom it doth no good, who eateth and drinketh, and yet is never the better, whose meat is never seen by him. Even so he that cometh to the Lord's table, and yet thriveth not by that heavenly food there eaten, he discrediteth the same. It is with him as it was with the ill-favoured kine, Gen. xli. 1, seq., who albeit they ate up seven others, yet they themselves were still so ill-favoured and lean, that it could not be seen that they had eaten anything. It is so with many poor Christians, who often feast and yet are never the better, remaining as lean as ever.

We must therefore have a care in this case that we discredit not those heavenly commons, but we must find our strength increased. If before we could be able to beat down one sin, we must now be able to beat down three. Jonathan in the first of Samuel, when Saul was in the pursuit of his enemies, charging that they should taste no food till they had gotten the victory, hereupon saith he, 'My father hath troubled the people, because he hath forbidden them to eat, whereby their strength faileth,' 1 Sam. xiv. 19. So when God cometh to feed us, let us find strength, let us see, are not our eyes enlightened as were Jonathan's, being cleared after he had tasted a little honey? Have we not better hearts than before? Shall we not make a greater slaughter of our enemies? If we find this, what a hand shall we get over our enemies? Let us therefore eat, and so eat, that we labour to go 'forty days in the strength of this meat,' 1 Kings xix. 8, until we come to the full and final possession of Horeb, the mount of God; and so shall the Lord take delight to refresh us. We shall get new hearts, new courage, and we shall more and more tread down Satan under our feet; and, as the apostle speaketh, 'The God of peace shall at length tread him finally under our feet,' Rom. xvi. 20; when we shall have the blessed fruition of our dear Saviour, and the eternity of those unspeakable joys, to reign with him for ever. Which God grant, and that for Christ Jesus' sake! Amen.

Judgment's Reason

Sermon I

For this cause many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,' &c.—1 COR. xi. 30, 31.

I INTEND at this time especially to stand upon the duty of judging, as being fittest for the occasion. But yet, by God's assistance, we will take the words in order, because I desire to speak somewhat of the other which follow.

'For this cause many are sick,' &c. After the holy apostle, the seedsman of God, had sown the seed of heavenly doctrine, Satan also by his instruments had sown his cockle of abuses among the Corinthians, of which, amongst many, this was one, to come irreverently to the holy communion. Whereupon God was forced to take them into his own hands; and lest they should be ignorant of the cause, the blessed apostle points them here, as it were with the finger, to the cause of the visitation among them, for their irreverent and unprepared coming to the Lord's table, 'For this cause,' &c. In the words we will speak of,

1. The cause of the correction among them.

2. And then of the kinds of it: 'Many are sick, and weak, and sleep.'

3. And then of the care, if it had been used, that might have prevented those contagious sicknesses among them: 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.'

But lest God's children should despair when they are judged and sharply corrected of him, he adds, in the next place, the comfort; howsoever things fall out, our salvation is promoted. 'When we are judged,' and chastened of the Lord, 'it is that we should not be condemned with the world.'

First, of the cause.

I will speak briefly of the former verse, but dwell most upon the next, of self-judging. 'For this cause many are weak and sick, and many sleep.' Observe here in the cause.

Doct. (1.) First, when there is a cause, God will correct; and where there is this cause, he will correct, that is, irreverent coming to the communion.

Doct. (2.) Secondly, As there is a cause when God doth correct, so usually there is this or that particular cause.

For the first, where there is cause he will correct, and where there is this cause. Where there is no cause he will not correct. 'For this cause.' There is always a cause, and a particular cause, [and a particular cause of God's judgment is]

Quest. Why must there be alway a cause?

Ans. Because God is the judge of the world, and the judge of the world must needs do that which is right, Gen. xviii. 25. And therefore he will not judge without a cause. We have ill in us, before we suffer ill. God is forced to mortify sins by afflictions, because we mortify them not by the Spirit, and in the use of holy means. There is a cause always. God doth favours from his own bowels, and from his own nature; but he never correcteth without a cause from us. Corrections and judgments are always forced. It is a stranger work to him than favours that come from his own nature as a gracious God, and therefore the cause of his judgment is always in us. But when he is beneficial to us, it comes from himself, as water comes from a fountain.

Instruction. This should teach us in all visitations to justify God, and to take heed of that which our nature is prone to, of swelling and murmuring, and rising up against God. Just thou art, and righteous are thy judgments. 'I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned,' &c., as it is said, Micah vii. 9. Let us lay our hand upon our mouth, and justify God in all his visitations. There is a cause.

And not only a cause at random, but if we search ourselves there is this or that particular cause. So 2 Thes. ii. 10 it is said, 'For this cause God gave them up to strong delusions, because they entertained not the truth in the love of it.' There is a 'this;' for God shoots not his judgments, as children shoot their arrows, at random, light where they will; but he hath his aim.

Quest. How shall we find out that ‘this’?

Ans. 1. Our consciences will upbraid us. If we be well acquainted with our consciences, we shall know it by them, as Joseph’s brethren did. It was because they used their brother hardly many years before, Gen. xlii. 21.

2. Again, what the word meets most with when we hear it.

3. And what our friends tell us most of.

4. And what our enemies upbraid us most with.

5. That we may know the cause, we may know the sin by the contrary. God cures contraries with contraries. We may read oftentimes the cause in the judgment. Is the judgment shame? Then the cause was pride. Is the judgment want? Then our sin was in abundance. We did not learn to abound as we should when we had it. It is an ordinary rule, contraries are cured with contraries. Usually God meets with men, he pays them home in their own coin and kind. Those that have been unmerciful, they shall meet with those that shall shew them no mercy, &c. By searching into our own hearts, by considering these things, we may know what is the ‘this,’ the particular cause.

And, if we fail in the search, then go to God, that he would teach us, as well as he corrects us, as usually he doth his children: Ps. xciv. 12, ‘Blessed is the man that thou correctest and teachest.’ Desire God that unto correction he would add teaching, that we may know what the meaning of the rod and of the cross is. Whatsoever it is, if we join prayer with the other means, we may know the ‘this,’ the particular sin that God aims at. So you see these things clear, that there is a cause, and usually the ‘this,’ some particular cause.

Doct. (3.) The next point is that where there is a cause, God will correct first or last, and where there is this cause mentioned, irreverent coming to the communion, he will do it because he is just. If we prevent it not by repentance, and so afflict our souls, surely we must fall into God’s hands. He will lose the glory of none of his attributes. Where there is a cause he will correct. Sin is against his nature, against his truth, against his manner of dealing with us by favours and benefits, and therefore he will correct us.

For even as smoke goes before fire, and as conception goes before birth, and as seed-time goes before harvest; so sin goes before some correction or other universally, unless it be those daily infirmities that God’s children fall

into, those sins of daily incursion, as we call them. When we labour to knit our hearts fast and close to God, some infirmities slip from us that God overlooks; he takes not notice of every slip; he bears with our infirmities 'as a father bears with a son that serves him,' Mal. iii. 17. And yet if we allow ourselves in any infirmity, we shall not go unpunished. Infirmities are one thing, and allowance and defence of them is another. Therefore I beseech you make this use of it.

Use. Take heed of sinning upon this false conceit, We shall escape, we shall never hear of it again. No; it will be owing first or last. As we say of those that make bold with their bodies, to use them hardly, to rush upon this thing and that thing; in their youth, they may bear it out, but it will be owing them after; they shall find it in their bones when they are old. So a man may say of those that are venturous persons, that make no conscience of running into sin, these things will be owing to them another day; they shall hear of these in the time of sickness, or in the hour of death. And therefore never sin upon vain hope of concealing; for as there is a cause always, and 'this cause,' so where there is a cause, God will correct his own children.

Again, where there is this cause, God will visit. What was this cause? This cause was irreverent, unprofitable coming to the holy table of the Lord. Why, is this so great a matter as to provoke God's judgment? Oh, yes! Favours neglected provoke anger most of all.

Is it not a great favour for the great God to condescend to help our weakness in the sacrament? Is it not a special favour that he will stoop to strengthen our weak faith this way? And shall we, when he condescends to us, rise up in pride against him, and forget our distance, forget with whom we have to deal? No; God will be honoured of all that come near him; if not by them, yet in them. Those that come not to God now in Christ, a Father, they know not his goodness; and those that come irreverently, know not his greatness and majesty. Take heed, therefore, when we come before God, that we come not with strange fire, as Nadab and Abihu; that we come not irreverently and unpreparedly, with carnal affections; but that we converse in holy business with holy affections. Is it not a great pity that those things which God hath ordained for the comfort of our souls, and the help of our faith, that we by our carelessness should turn them to our hurt, as we do by an irreverent coming to the holy things of God? We procure our own judgments, and therefore we ought to help this irreverent demeanour and carriage of ourselves in the holy things of God by all means, with the

consideration of his majesty, and our dependence upon him; and such considerations, which I cannot now enter into, because I hasten. So you see these things clear, the cause, and the particular cause, this cause.

To go on to the kinds therefore. The kinds are set down in three degrees:

1. Some are weak.
2. And some sick.
3. And some sleep.

Nay, ‘many are sick and weak, and many sleep.’ Here are three degrees, like the three degrees of sin amongst them. Some are more presumptuous than other, and,

Doct. 4. God, who made all in number, weight, and measure, dispenseth all in number, weight, and measure. Some are weak, and some are sick, which is greater; and some sleep, that is, die. Even as in the commonwealth, those that are discreet governors have degrees of punishment, as the stocks, the prison, and the gibbet, violent death, and the like; so God, the great Governor of heaven and earth, according to the different degrees of sin, hath different degrees of correction.

A physician loves all his patients alike, but he doth not minister sharp potions alike to all; but out of the same love there is a different carriage of the same, according to the exigent of the party. So doth the wise God. ‘Some are weak, and some sick, and some sleep.’

Doct. 5. Again, we may observe here, that sickness and weakness of the body come from sin, and is a fruit of sin. Some are weak, and some are sick, ‘for this cause.’ I shall not need to be long in the proof of that, which you have whole chapters for, as Deut. xxviii. 27, seq.; and many psalms. cvii., and others. It is for the sickness of the soul that God visits with the sickness of the body. He aims at the cure of the soul in the touch of the body. And therefore in this case, when God visits with sickness, we should think our work is more in heaven with God than with men or physic. Begin first with the soul. So David, Ps. xxxii. 5, till he dealt roundly with God, without all kind of guile, and confessed his sins, he roared; his moisture was turned into the drought of summer. But when he dealt directly and plainly with God, and

confessed his sins, then God forgave him them, and healed his body too. And therefore the best method, when God visits us in this kind, is to think that we are to deal with God. Begin the cure there with the soul. When he visits the body, it is for the soul's sake: 'Many are weak and sick among you.' We see what tabernacles of dust we carry about us, that if we had no outward enemy, yet God can raise that in our own bodies that shall cast out the greatest giant, 'weakness and sickness,' that we may learn to fear God, in whose hand is both health and sickness. And it should teach us to make precious use of our health while we have it. It were a thousand times better for many persons to be cast on the bed of sickness, and to be God's prisoners, than so scandalously and unfruitfully to use the health that they have: 'many are weak and sick.'

Doct. 6. The sin was general, and God's visitation was as general. When sins grow general, corrections grow general. It is an idle and vain excuse that many think to make to themselves, 'The world doth thus; others do thus. Oh! there is the more danger of a spreading and general visitation! Do others so? Is it a spreading sin? Take heed of a spreading and contagious punishment. We must not follow a multitude to do evil, Exod. xxiii. 2. He is not a whit the less tormented that is tormented with company. The plea therefore that they make from many, that the world doth thus, it should rather, if they did wisely reason, move them to take heed. 'Many are sick and weak, and many sleep,' saith he; that is, many even die. God takes away the life of many for the irreverent coming to the holy things of God. So that sin brings with it death itself, not only at the last, but sin it shortens a man's days; and this kind of sin, irreverent coming to the holy things of God, shortens our days, and puts out our own candle, and pulls our own houses about our ears. They are felons upon themselves, soul-murderers and body-murderers, that wilfully commit sin; yea, if it be this sin in the holy things of God, not only if they commit gross sins, but if they commit this sin, if they be careless and unconscionable in the performance of this holy duty. If any other did us the thousand part of that harm we do ourselves by a careless life, a loose and lawless kind of course, we would not bear them. We see here what hurt we do ourselves [what injury, what wrong we do to our own souls and bodies also]; for 'for this cause many are weak and sick, and many sleep.'

We are the greatest enemies to ourselves. We cry out of Judas and Ahithophel that made away themselves, and we may well. Every stubborn man, that goes on in a course of sin, and forgets with whom he hath to deal, he is like Judas and Ahithophel; he is an enemy to himself, and a murderer of

himself. Oh! take heed therefore of the Devil's baits; meddle not with this pitch; touch it not; hate all shows and appearances of evil.

Doct. 7. Again, it is not to be forgotten here that he saith, 'Many of you,' that is, 'you, believing Corinthians;' whence learn, that God will correct sin wheresoever he finds it, even in his dearest children; nay, he will correct them more sharply in this world, because he will save their souls in another world, than he will others. The careless, brutish world, that are not worthy of correction, God lets them go on in smooth ways to hell; but 'many of you,' &c. Let none think to be exempt, and venture themselves from grace they have. No. God will look to those of his family, that are near him; he will have a special eye to them, he will have his family well ordered: 'You have I known of all the nations of the world,' saith he, 'and therefore I will be sure to punish and to correct you,' Amos iii. 2. Let none therefore bear themselves upon their profession, I do thus and thus, so many good things, therefore I may be bold; nay, therefore, you may be the less bold. Moses cannot so much as murmur at the waters of strife, but he must not come into Canaan, Num. xx. 2. David cannot have a proud thought of numbering the people, but he must smart for it, 1 Chron. xxi. 2. The Corinthians cannot come irreverently to the communion, 'but for this cause many are weak and sick.'

I beseech you, let us take it to heart, and let no profane person take encouragement because God so deals with his own: 'If God deal thus with the green tree, what will he do with the dry?' 'If judgment begin at the house of God, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?' 1 Pet. iv. 18. If the godly taste of the cup of God's anger, the wicked must drink off the dregs of his wrath. And therefore let no man take offence that God follows the church with crosses, that the cross follows the poor church in the world. Alas! they carry corruptions about them continually. We see here, 'you, many of you,' &c. Let us therefore labour to make an end of our salvation with fear and trembling, the best of us all.

Doct. 8. One thing more before I leave this; that is, how God in justice remembereth mercy. 'Many,' he saith not, 'all,' and 'many of you are weak;' he takes not all away with death. It is a mercy, then, that the correction is outward in the body, weak in body, and sick. There was not a spiritual giving up to hardness of heart. Beloved! if we consider what kind of judgments spiritual judgments are, to have a seared conscience, and a hard and desperate heart, which are forerunners of hell and of eternal judgment and damnation,

we would much prize mercy in judgment. Oh! it is not so with God's church. Their visitations are in the outward man; they are weak, and sick, and die, but God is merciful to their souls, as we shall see after. And it should be an art we should learn and labour to be expert in, to consider God's gracious dealing in the midst of his correction; that in the midst of corrections we might have thankful, and cheerful, and fruitful hearts, which we shall not have, except we have some matter of thankfulness. Consider, doth God make me weak? He might have struck me with death, or if not taken away my mortal life, he might have given me up to a spiritual death, to a hard heart, to desperation, &c. So let us search out in the visitations that we are in, always some matter of mitigation, and we shall always find that it might have been worse with us than it is. So much shall serve for that verse, that is, the cause and the kinds, 'For this cause many are weak and sick, and many sleep.' Now I come to the cure.

'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.'

This course, if it had been used by the Corinthians, they might have prevented their weakness, sickness, and over-timely death; and so we, if we take the course prescribed by the apostle here, may prevent the like; and perhaps God will not now, in this dispensation that he useth in the latter end of the world, outwardly visit us, for now usually his dispensation and government is more inward. And therefore we should take the more heed to what followeth; he may give us up, I say, to blindness, to deadness, to security. He doth not usually give men up to sickness, and to death, now, for such breaches, but his government is more spiritual. Indeed then, for the terror of all, his government was more outward in the primitive times of the church. To come therefore to that I mean to speak of: the cure of all is judging. There is a judge set up in our own hearts. 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord.' To open the words a little.

That which is translated here 'judging,' is by the best expositors, one and other, and according to the nature of the word, 'if we would discern of ourselves,' 'if we would try ourselves,' and have our senses exercised to distinguish what is good, and what is ill in us, and then to fall upon judging, trial, and discussing. The word signifieth primarily 'to discuss,' and 'to sift,' and then 'to censure' upon that; and then after, 'To sever ourselves from the ill we censure.' The word implies all these duties.

God hath so framed man, that he alone of all other creatures can work upon himself; he hath this reflexed act, as we call it, he can examine, judge,

try, and humble himself; other creatures look straight forwards. Man, I say, can discern and put a difference; he can discern of relations; this and that hath relation to such and such a thing. The beast cannot discern of relations: the beast goes to the water, and to the fodder, but knows not what relation that hath to spiritual things. But man, when he sees the sacrament, he can think of Christ; when he seeth one thing, he can think of this relation to more spiritual things. So he can discern of himself, and of the things he takes in hand, by a principle that God hath put into him peculiar to himself. Now God hath set up in a man a judgment-seat, wherein things should be judged, before they come to this scanning and judgment. We ourselves are the parties judged, and we should be the judges; we are the parties that examine, and the parties examined; we are the parties that condemn, and the parties condemned. This is the power of conscience, that God hath made his vicegerent and deputy in us. But to acquaint you with what things I mean to speak of, as the time will give leave.

Doct. 9. [1.] First of all, out of these words, the cure I will shew; that naturally we are very backward to this duty, because the Corinthians here were falling in the duty.

[2.] Secondly, I will shew you the necessity, profit, and use of this self-judging.

[3.] Then of the time when we should judge especially; when we are to deal with God in holy things.

[4.] And then, what to do after all, when we have judged ourselves; what course to take then. The unfolding of these things will help us to understand this great point that is so necessary.

[1.] First of all, naturally we are wondrous backward to this duty, as we see here in the Corinthians; they slubbered over this duty of examination and self-judging.

Quest. What is the reason?

Sol. The reason is, it is an inward act; and naturally we look to outward glorious things. There is no glory in it before the world; it is in God, and his own soul, and usually the life of careless persons, even of Christians sometimes, it is spent outwardly; they never enter into their own souls to see what is there.

Again, naturally we rest in the judgment of others. Others conceive well of us, and therefore we conceive well of ourselves. Remember they are but our fellow-prisoners. What can they excuse, if God accuse and condemn us? Those things that make us most odious to God are undiscernible of the eye of man, as a proud heart, a revengeful spirit, an earthly disposition, and the like; no man can see these things.

Again, usually we rest in this, that we have wit enough to judge others. The proud nature of man thinks itself somebody, when it can get up and judge others perhaps better than itself. This is a poor contentment, and an easy thing for a man to spend his censures upon others, and is done usually with some glory. It is necessary sometimes to those that are under us, to discover to them what we judge of their ways, but oftentimes, I say, it is done only of self-love and pride.

Again, we are backward to this duty. Hence that the heart of man is a proud piece of flesh; and therefore he is loath to be conceited of himself as there is cause. Man naturally would be in [a] fool's paradise. He knows if he enters deeply into himself, somewhat will be presented to the eye of his soul that will be an ungrateful object to him; and therefore, because he will not force upon himself other conceits of himself than he hath for the present, he is content never to examine his courses, but to go on still. As there are some creatures in the world deformed, that are loath to come to the water, because they will not see their deformity in it; so it is with the nature of man, he is loath to see his deformity, he is willing to be deceived. In other things we are loath to be mistaken, but in our state between God and us, we are willing to be deceived. We deceive ourselves, we are sophisters unto ourselves, in this great point. Thus we see that it is a duty to which we are very backward, and that it is something hard, because, I say, it reflects upon ourselves, and requires retiring; for naturally we are slothful and idle; and then sin it loves corners, which makes it harder.

Now, what is this sifting and searching of the heart, but a searching of all the corners of the soul by the light of God's word and Spirit? A searching of all the corners of the heart. This requires much pains. Naturally we are loath to take pains with our own souls, though indeed this be a preventing pains, to shun a worse misery hereafter; there is nothing gotten by favouring ourselves. What need I be large in this point? It is clear that naturally we are loath to judge ourselves, as we shall see hereafter. Oh! if the worst man had that judgment of himself, as he shall have ere long, when he shall not be

besotted, but be free from his spiritual drunkenness and madness that he is in, carried with the course of the world, then he shall judge truly of himself. Oh! that he could do it in time. But naturally, I say, what for negligence, and what for pride, and resting in the conceits that others have of us, we neglect so necessary a duty.

Well, then, to go to the second point: as we are prone to neglect it, so we must know,

Doct. 10. That it is a necessary and useful duty to judge ourselves: for it is the ground of all repentance, Jer. viii. 6. He complains that they rushed as 'a horse into the battle, and no man said, what have I done?'

Quest. What was the reason they rushed as a horse into the battle?

Sol. No man entered into himself and said, What have I done? I considered my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies, saith David, Ps. cix. 59. Consideration is the ground therefore of repentance and conversion. Thus in discussing of our ways, and trial of them, and of every good work, there must be this judging, this discerning, what is spirit and what is flesh. A man cannot do a good work without the use of this principle that God hath put into him, of judging himself, and judging his ways.

And then again, it is a duty that makes a man good in himself: for when we do outward good duties, they are good for others. If a man be bountiful, another hath the benefit; if he be merciful, another hath the profit; but when a man judgeth himself, and sets up a court in himself, his own soul is the better for it; he is the more holy man, the more watchful man, the more clear from his sins; he is the fitter framed for holy duties; it is the better for his own self; and therefore this duty it is the spring of all other good duties, and it is most beneficial to a man's own soul.

Again, this is such a duty as doth settle the judgment, and make us impregnable in temptation. When we have passed a judgment upon ourselves, let this or that judgment be, we care not; for we have judged ourselves as we should by the rule. We know what we have done, we know what we have said, we are able to justify it: it makes us ready and able to give an account to God, and to the world for what we do. But what, should I go further than the text? Here is a special good use it hath: if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord. This judging of ourselves, it prevents a further judgment.

Quest. How is that?

Ans. First of all, because we spare God a labour. When we judge ourselves, he need not take us in hand to judge us. His corrections and his statutes are often called judgments in the Psalms. Now upon the neglect of his judgments and statutes, we run into his judgments and corrections; yet if we were careful of our duty, we might prevent the judgments of correction.

Then again, things judged in one court cannot be judged in another by equity. Now the God of all justice and equity will surely strictly observe equity. When our sins are judged in an inferior court; when in the court of conscience we have cited, indicted ourselves before ourselves, and given sentence upon ourselves, before ourselves, then what is condemned in this lower court of conscience, it shall never be condemned for hereafter: and, therefore, the necessity of this duty issues hence; 'if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged.'

Quest. What is the ground that men are judged with the judgment of correction?

Sol. We may learn hence, that we may thank ourselves for not returning into our souls. I was careless of setting up a court in my own heart; careless in using those abilities that God hath given me to discern, to understand my own ways. I have been careless there; and because I did not judge myself, it is just with God to judge me. We see here the necessity from the text: when we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged; therefore, when we are judged, we have been negligent in this duty of judging ourselves.

Well, to hasten; if this be so, if it be a duty that we are backward to, and yet it is a holy and useful duty, then we come, in the next place, to some directions how to carry ourselves in it.

(1.) First, in judging ourselves, let us call and cite ourselves before ourselves, and fall to a reckoning both with our persons and the state wherein we stand, and likewise the actions that come from us; what is good in us, and what is ill; what omitted, and what committed; what corruption is mingled with our best performances, and such like, as we shall see after. First, call ourselves to a reckoning, and see whether we can give account to ourselves or no. And if we cannot give account to ourselves, much less can we to the all-seeing eye and justice of God. I would fain have a worldling give account to himself, why the elder he grows the more worldly he should be;

he cannot give an account to himself for it. I would have a profane swearer give account to himself, why he dallies with the great and terrible majesty of God, as if he were greater than he, when he pronounceth ‘that he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain,’ Exod. xx. 7. I would fain know of those that spend the prime of their time and years in the service of the devil, and bring their rotten old age to God, what account they can give to their own hearts. I would have any sinner, that lives in a course of sin, give account to his own heart: thou wretched man, canst thou not give an account to thyself? God is greater than thy heart; how dost thou think to stand before the judgment-seat of God ere long? The first thing, therefore, is to arraign ourselves at our own bar. I exclude not others that have calling to examine others, but especially present ourselves.

(2.) And when we find anything amiss, then besides this arraigning of ourselves, we must give sentence against ourselves. That is the second thing in discussing: as David, Ps. lxxiii. 22, ‘So foolish was I, and as a beast,’ when he had entertained a thought that God neglected his church, and regarded it no more; he had a dishonourable thought of God raised in his heart. ‘Oh,’ saith he, ‘I was ashamed, so foolish, and so like a beast was I.’ And so you have the prodigal; and Dan. ix. 4, seq., and Ezra ix. 6. seq., for examples how to pass a censure upon ourselves, when we find anything amiss; and labour that those affections that are in us towards ill, as grief, and shame, and sorrow, may be stirred up in us, by setting ourselves in grief, and shame, and sorrow, as we should, to turn the stream of our affections the right way.

When we find anything amiss in our own hearts, when we have given sentence and judgment upon ourselves;

(3.) Then proceed to execution: let them go together, judgment and execution. This the apostle calls an holy revenge, 2 Cor. vii. 11. If we have been proud, let us abase ourselves. If we have been base in the duties of charity and good works to others, let us now, as Zaccheus, labour for the contrary, Luke xix. 8. If we have misspent our precious time, let us labour now to redeem the time, to do the contrary good. This course we ought to take.

And for the things that we ought to sift, and to try, and to judge, they are not only our persons, but whatsoever comes from us: we are to judge all our actions, not only our ill actions, but our good actions. There is much dross mingled with our gold: let us examine our best actions. Nay, and not only our outward, but go to the very root. When we find a fault in any

outward action, follow it to the very corrupt spring. Those that have a plant, that bears venomous fruit, they dig it at the root; so when any bad fruit comes from us, go to the root, strike there at it; follow sin to its burrow, its first hatching place, to the very heart. Thus David doth, Ps. li. 5: he goes to his birth sin. What, should I speak, saith he, of the sins that I have committed? 'In sin was I conceived.' In all actual sins look to the corrupt root and puddle whence they come; as, Oh, what is this word that I have spoken? what is this action? I have a corrupt nature, that is ready to yield to an hundred such upon the like occasion; and thereupon go to the heart, and to the soul, and censure that; for that is worse than any particular act whatsoever.

Take heed of laying the fault upon this occasion, or that occasion, when we find ourselves faulty. No. Say it was thou, my proud heart! it was thou, mine angry heart! my base worldly heart! The occasion did but help; the principal was mine own heart. Let us labour, therefore, to be acquainted thoroughly with our heart, that is wondrous unfaithful. There is a mystery of deceit in it.

What is the reason that God's children sometimes fall into sins that they never thought of, and that naturally they are not prone to?

Sol. Because there is no man that sufficiently knows the depth of the falsehood of his own heart. For Moses to become an angry man, that was the meekest man on earth, it was strange, yet at the waters of strife he brake forth into passion, Num. xx. 10. For David, that had his heart touched for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment, it was strange to come to murder, 1 Sam. xxiv. 5, 2 Sam. xi. 15, seq. Now, who would have thought that murder had lodged in David's heart? For Peter, that loved Christ so much, to come to deny and to forswear his Master; who would have thought that forswearing had lurked in the heart of Peter? Mat. xxvi. 72. Beloved! we know not what corruption lurks in our hearts. Nay, sometimes we shall find, if we search our hearts narrowly, those corruptions therein that at other times we are not prone to, so deceitful is our heart. And therefore, in all breaches outwardly, in speech or carriage, be sure to run to the heart to condemn sin, and to strike at it there.

Well, thus we see some directions how to carry ourselves. It is not, beloved, the having of corruption that damns men, but the affections we carry towards our corruptions. The best of us have corruptions, but mark how we do carry ourselves towards them. A carnal man pleads for his

corruptions, he strengthens them; and another man hath corruption, but it is hardly used. Corruption is differently used in the heart of a carnal and of a gracious man, for in the one it is fostered, cherished, and pleaded for: in a civil, carnal man; in the other man it is indeed, but it is subdued and mortified, it is judged and condemned. As we say of a man, when judgment is passed upon him, he is a dead man, though he be not dead, because the sentence of death is passed upon him, who, when he comes to be executed, by little and little he dies, till he be perfectly dead; so it is when corruption is judged by us and condemned in our hearts, it is as it were dead, because we have passed the sentence on it, we have condemned it, and because we have begun the execution that shall end in death; and therefore, as we would difference ourselves from the world, let us labour more and more, that though we have corruption, yet to carry ourselves thus towards it, to make it more hateful by all means. We cannot make it too hateful to us; it doth us all the mischief in the world; it is the ill of ills. All other ills are but the fruits of it; it puts a fiery, venomous sting into all things; it makes things comfortable uncomfortable: as the hour of death, that should be thought on as our entrance into heaven; and the day of judgment, the consideration whereof should be our joy. What makes these things terrible? Oh! it is sin, the sin that we cherish and love better than our souls; it is that that makes things that are most comfortable uncomfortable. What a thing is that that makes us afraid to go to God! to think of a gracious God! that hinders us in our best performances! that makes us backward and dull! Labour, by all means, to make sin odious, I say. In the best commonwealth in the world there will be lurking rebels, base people. What! doth the commonwealth bear the blame? No. The laws are against them, and they are executed when they are found out. So in the best heart there will be rebellious thoughts, evil thoughts, but let it not be laid to the charge of God's people. There are laws against them; they labour to find them out and to execute them. Here is the comfort of God's children, that though they groan under many infirmities, yet they look upon them as enemies, and as objects of their mortification.

Well, to hasten: again, in judging ourselves, let us labour to judge ourselves for those things that the world takes no notice of; for spiritual, for inward things: as for stirring of pride, of worldliness, of revenge, of security, unthankfulness, and such like; unkindness towards God, barrenness in good duties, that the world cannot see. Oh, let these humble our hearts! For want of judging ourselves for these, God gives us up to outward breaches, and justly too. When we make not conscience of spiritual sins, God gives us up to open sins, that stain and blemish our profession.

Again, for the sins in good duties. Take heed in our best performances that we be not deceived in them. Poison is dangerously taken in sweet gloves, and in sweet things, because it is conveyed in sweetness; and so in holy duties there is conveyed pride and resting in them. Take heed, lest corruption mingle some deadly thing with our best performances.

The Corinthians came to the table of the Lord; but because they thought the duty a good duty, and that they might not sin in a good duty, they came hand over head, carelessly [unto it]. Oh, but we see how God deals with them. And therefore, let us examine, in good duties and performances, with what minds we come, with what preparation, with what aims and ends [we perform them]. Many thousands, we may fear, are damned even for good duties; for duties that are not ill in themselves, because they think they may be bold there, and put off the power of grace, and rest in common civil things, [even] in outward performances. When we regard not the manner, God regards not the matter of the things we do, but oftentimes punisheth for the performance of good duties, as we see here in the Corinthians. But to proceed.

Let us observe some helps to all this that we have spoken. To help us, let us get a good rule. Let the rule of our judging and discerning be digested into our hearts; let the word of God be engrafted into us; that is the word that we must judge by, that we must be saved or damned by ere long; [as] for false rules, the practice of the world, our own imaginations, away with them. We must not judge by those, but by the truth of God; and, therefore, be sure of this, that so the rule and our souls may be one, that we may have the rule as ready as any corruption and as any sin is; when anything ariseth in our hearts, that the word engrafted in our hearts may be ready to check it presently. An unlearned judge oftentimes may mar all, whatsoever the cause be, though never so good. So, when the judgment is not instructed, an ignorant person can never manage his own soul. Let us labour for knowledge, that we may be learned in this judicature and judgment of ourselves.

Quest. What is the reason that many good souls are ready to bear false witness against, and to condemn themselves for what they should not?

Sol. (1.) Sometimes they condemn their state, and think [that] they are not the children of God, when they are. They want judgment out of God's book. Because they have corruption in them, they conclude that they have no grace; because they have but little grace, therefore they have none at all; as if

God's glory were not to shew his strength in the midst of their weakness, and so, for want of judgment out of the Scriptures, they lay a plaster upon a sound place, and a true man is condemned for a traitor. Just persons condemn themselves in their courses that are gracious, for want of a sanctified and good judgment. Let us labour to have our judgment rightly instructed out of God's word, and in the use of all good means, grow in knowledge, that we may be discerning Christians, to judge between the flesh and the spirit, between good and bad, to have our senses exercised in this kind.

Sol. (2.) And not only to have the law, but to know the gospel too. To know in what estate Christians should be under the gospel, not to look to legal breaches altogether, but what the gospel requires; not only how short we are of the law (which we can never attain to), but of that which we might attain to in the gospel. Let us bring ourselves to that which we might be, and which others have attained to, to the view of others better than ourselves, and this will make us to judge ourselves. But, as I said before, let us labour to know the sins against the gospel; let us know what condition of life is required under the gospel: a fruitful life and a thankful. Our whole life should be nothing but thankfulness under the gospel, and fruitfulness; we should be inflamed with the love of Christ. Oh! take heed of turning that grace of God into wantonness. Oh! would we have fresh evidence of the love of God in Christ? Take heed of sins against the gospel; know what the conversation of a Christian should be, to walk worthy of the gospel, worthy of the high calling of a Christian. The state of the gospel requires that we should deny all ungodliness and worldly lust, and live righteously, and soberly, and godly, &c., Titus ii. 12; that we be earnest, and zealous of good works. When we find ourselves otherwise, think, Oh! this is not the life of a Christian under the gospel. The gospel requires a more fruitful, more zealous carriage, more love to Christ. 'Anathema maranatha' belongs to him that loves not the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. xvi. 22; and therefore, when we find any coldness to so gracious a God, and so blessed a Saviour, let us condemn ourselves.

Sol. (3.) And take the benefit likewise of the judgment of others, if we would learn to judge ourselves thoroughly; consider what others say; it is one branch of the communion of saints to regard the judgment of others. Oh, it is a blessed thing to have others tell us of our faults, and as it were to pull us out of the fire with violence, as Jude speaketh, 23; rather to pull us out with violence, with sharp rebukes, than we should perish and be damned in our sins. If a man be to weed his ground, he sees need of the benefit of others; if

a man be to demolish his house, he will be thankful to others for their help; so he that is to pull down his corruption, that old house, he should be thankful to others that will tell him, 'This is rotten, and this is to blame; who if he be not thankful for seasonable reproof, he knows not what self-judging means. If any man be so uncivil when a man shews him a spot on his garment, to grow choleric, will we not judge him to be an unreasonable man? And so when a man shall be told, 'This will hinder your comfort another day; if men were not spiritually besotted, would they swell and be angry against such a man? Therefore take the benefit of the judgment of others among whom you live. This was David's disposition, when he was told of the danger [in] going to kill Nabal and his household; when Abigail, a discreet woman, came and diverted him; Oh, saith he, 'Blessed be God, and blessed be thou, and blessed be thy counsel,' 1 Sam. xxv. 32; thou hast kept me from shedding of innocent blood this day. So we should bless God, and bless them that labour by their good counsel and advice to hinder us from any sinful course, whatsoever it is.

Sol. (4.) And then again, as a help to awaken thy conscience, go to the house of mourning. That will help us by awakening conscience. Consider the judgments of God abroad in the church, and consider our danger at home, and labour to have our hearts awakened; and then we will be ready to judge ourselves, when we keep our souls in a waking temper; take heed of spiritual security above all things.

Sol. (5.) For our conversion, let it not be with the world; for then we will justify ourselves, but converse with those that are better, and the light of their excellency will abase us, and make us to judge ourselves. I have reason to be as good as they, to be as forward as they; what a shame is it for me not to do as they do! To bring ourselves to the light of good examples, it doth much good to Christians, and makes them ashamed of their backwardness and dulness. Those that have false hearts they shun the company of those that are better than themselves; who because they would have all alike, they besmear and sully others in their reputation, because they shall not be thought to be better than they. A base and devilish course! Whereas a Christian labours to converse with those that are better, because he would grow better than himself; take heed of a false heart in this kind.

Sol. (6.) Again, because I cannot follow the argument so fully as I thought I should have done, when all these helps and directions perhaps are not sufficient, join with this a desire that God would help us by his own

Spirit to search our hearts and judge ourselves; and complain to him of our corruptions and weaknesses; as the virgin when she was forced, Deut. xxii. 26, if she complained, she saved her reputation and her life. So complain to God, Lord, I would serve thee, but corruption bears too great a sway in me; and desire God to help us with heavenly light and strength, so shall we escape eternal death. Corruption is his enemy. [It is] Christ's enemy as well as ours, and Christ, if we beg of him, will help us against his enemy and ours; this should be our daily course and practice.

Obj. Now some will object, Here is a troublesome course! what a deal of do is here. What kind of life would you have the life of a Christian to be, to be thus discussing and censuring?

Sol. I answer, it is the trouble of physic that prevents the trouble of sickness. Is it not better to be troubled with physic, than to be troubled with a long and tedious sickness? Is it not better to be troubled with the pain of a tent, than with the pain of a wound? All this is but preventing; by this course we prevent further trouble. For we must know that God hath put conscience into us, and this conscience must, and it shall have its work, either in this world or in the world to come; and therefore let us discharge it now by sifting, by examining and condemning ourselves, that it may not rise and stand against us, when we would have it our friend. Oh, carry things so that conscience may be a friend at the day of judgment, put it out of office now, let it say what it can, stifle it not, stop it not, divert it not, let it have its full scope to say what it can. For I beseech you do but consider the fearful estate of a man that hath neglected self-examination: when he comes to die, and is in any trouble, when he sees death before him, live he cannot, and to die he is unfit; for if he look back, he looks back to a world of sin not repented of; forwards he sees eternal damnation before him; if he look to God, he is offended for his rebellious course of life. Where is then the comfort of such a one, that in the glorious light of the gospel doth not practise this duty of judging himself?

Sin must be judged either in a repentant heart or [else] by God, [it] being against God's prerogative, for he hath made a law against it. Judged it must be: we must give account of every 'idle word,' either in a repentant heart, by afflicting our own souls for it, or at the day of judgment, Mat. xii. 36. Now what a fearful thing will this be, to have all to make account for then. Is it not a great mercy, beloved, that God hath pointed out such a course to set up a court of conscience to prevent shame? Were it not a shame for us to have

our faults written in our foreheads? And yet better so, than to have all to reckon for at the day of judgment. For if all our faults were laid open, our corrupt thoughts and vile affections here—there were hope of repentance in this world; but to have them laid open to our shame and confusion in the world to come, it is a matter of eternal despair. Now God, to prevent both these, hath set up a court of conscience, that we might judge ourselves, and prevent shame here, and damnation hereafter.

Quest. And how shall this torment [wretches] in hell, when a man shall think, God put conscience in me; if I had not put it off, but suffered it to have done what it would, I might have been thus and thus, but now I have wilfully cast myself into this [misery]. It will be the hell in hell, that shall torment us more than hell, when we shall think, I have brought myself carelessly and securely to that cursed estate such shall be then in; therefore, I beseech you, consider the misery of a man that neglects the practice of this duty, and consider withal how happy and how sweet the condition of that man is that hath and carefully doth daily perform this duty: he is afraid of no ill tidings; if anything come, he hath made his reckoning and account with God, there is no sin upon the file unrepented of, and unjudged, and unconfessed to God. If he looks back, he considers his sins, but he hath repented of them. If he look forward, he sees nothing but God reconciled, and he can think of death and judgment with comfort. Oh, the happiness, and the peace, and the inward paradise of such a man, about another careless man that puts off his estate, because he will not trouble and afflict his own soul, and torment himself before his time.

Here is the difference between a careless and a sound Christian; what the one thinks now, the other shall ere long. But only the one is mad now, and is not his own man, but besotted with ambition and covetousness; the other is sober, and in his right wits, able to judge and to censure himself. And therefore let holy persons that are careful, pass not a whit for the censures of vain persons; they speak against what they know not; against a strict course of life. Those that truss up the loins of their souls, and are careful of their ways, they are the only sound Christians; they are the only comfortable Christians, that can think of all conditions, and of all estates comfortably. I beseech you take these things to heart, and let us be stirred up to perform this duty I speak of, of daily trying and examining of our ways, that daily we may relish Christ.

Quest. What is the reason there is no more rejoicing and thankfulness for Christ?

Sol. We keep not the wound, I mean corruption, open; we see that which is unmortified, but we dry it up; and therefore we do not relish Christ. Sweet is Christ to the soul that is exercised in a search of his own heart and ways.

Quest. But at what times especially are we to examine?

Sol. At all times, every day; because we must feed on Christ every day. Therefore we ought to have these sour herbs, considering that we daily sin, that Christ may relish. Christ justifieth the ungodly every day. We have use of justification; and therefore we should daily see our corruptions, and judge ourselves for them: then Christ is Christ indeed, and Jesus is Jesus indeed to us. Every day let us do this. We have short memories; and sin when it is green it is easily rooted out. Therefore,

1. Every day, before sin be rooted, let us judge ourselves. The more we do it now every day, the less we shall have to do when we die, and when we are on our sickbeds; and therefore do it still, that we may have the less to do when we are weak. Is that a fit time to go over our life, and to censure our courses, when we are in such a case as we cannot think of earthly things? Oh, it is an ill time to get grace when we should use grace. And therefore, that we may have the less to do when we shall have enough to do to struggle with sickness; and have nothing to do when we die, but to die and comfortably yield up our souls to God let us be exact in our accounts every day.

2. But more especially we should do so when we are to deal with God, as now we are to receive the communion, wherein we draw near to God. Those that go to great persons, they will not go in rags, but put on their best attire, and make all neat and handsome, that nothing may be offensive. Have we this wisdom when we appear before any greater than ourselves? When we are to appear before God and Christ (especially to have so near communion as we have in the sacrament), let us labour, I say, to come neat and prepared. When they were to come to the passover, the lamb was singled out beforehand three days, that they might have time to prepare themselves in, Exod. xii. 6. But we ought especially to examine and to judge ourselves when we come near to God in holy communion, to feast with God, which is here intended, when we come to receive the blessed sacrament. They should have prepared and have judged themselves. Because they neglected it they were

judged of God; and therefore know you that mean to receive now, now is the time when we should judge ourselves, the more especial time. Though we should do it every day, yet this is the special time. Take heed of superstition though, to thrust all religion into one time, to the time of the communion, as many do. They turn off all their examination to a little time before the communion, and the taking of the communion to one time of the year, to Easter; and thus they think God will bear with them. Oh, take heed! that is superstition. As I said before, keep a daily account; every week examine how we have kept our daily account; and every month examine how we have kept our weekly account; and when we come to the communion, examine how we have kept our daily account, whether we have slubbered anything before, especially when we come to take the communion.

Quest. But what shall we do, when we have done all? When we have examined, and judged, and passed a censure upon ourselves, what shall [we] do when we have done all?

Sol. When we are condemned in one court, go to another; as a man that is condemned in the Common Law, he appeals to the Chancery. When we are condemned in the court of justice, fly to God's chancery, fly to mercy. He that hath a sentence passed in one court, he appeals to another: when we have judged ourselves, then appeal to mercy; for this is to do it in faith; and when we judge ourselves in faith, then, upon our judging, we know that God will pardon. You know he hath promised, 'If we confess our sins, he is merciful to forgive them,' 1 John i. 9. Say, Lord, I confess them, cancel thou the bond, cancel thou the debt. Therefore a Christian's plea is, when he hath judged himself, to fly to God for pardon. Saul, we know, could judge himself; and Judas could pass a sentence upon his own act, that he had sinned; but they went no further, they did not fly to God for mercy in Christ. Therefore let us fly to the throne of grace; as we have an excellent pattern of this, Ps. cxxx. 3: saith the psalmist there, 'If thou be strict to mark what is done amiss, Lord, who shall abide it?' There he is condemned in one court. If thou be strict to mark what is done amiss, who shall abide it? There, being condemned in that court, he flies to the throne of grace: 'But there is mercy with thee, that thou mightst be feared.' Lord, if thou be strict to mark what is done amiss by me in this action and in that action, who shall abide it? But, Lord, there is mercy with thee in Jesus Christ, in whom thou hast stablished a throne of mercy; there is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Take this course, and undoubtedly God will shew mercy; because the Son directs us to the Father in the Lord's prayer that we should ask forgiveness; and God

the Father directs us to his Son, to believe his Son for forgiveness. 'This is his commandment, that we believe in his Son Jesus Christ,' 1 John iii. 23. We cannot honour the Father more, we cannot honour the Son more, than to go to God for mercy; because God in Christ now will be glorified in his mercy.

Let us fetch out a pardon of course for every sin. 'If we confess our sins, he is merciful to forgive our sins.' And therefore it is our own fault if we find not the assurance of the forgiveness of them, because we deal not roundly, without a spirit of guile, with God. That is the next duty then, after we have judged ourselves, to go to mercy. And to shew you one example, how peace comes in after this judging of ourselves, Rom. vii. 24, the blessed apostle complains of his own corruptions. He had laid sore to his own charge, that the ill that he would not do, that he did; and the good that he would do, that he did not; and he breaks out, 'Oh! wretched man that I am.' What did he find presently upon this? 'Thanks be to God,' presently upon it, as if he had found peace presently upon complaining of his corruptions. Oh, miserable man, &c. So when we honour God by confessing and judging ourselves, he will honour us with inward peace and joy; because faith honours him by trusting and relying upon his mercy. If therefore we would find inward peace in the pardon of our sins, let us deal faithfully with our souls in spreading our sins before God; and we shall find peace presently upon it. If not, learn to wait; for undoubtedly God will make good his promise.

Quest. But what shall we do in the next place, after we have so opened the case to God, and gone to him for pardon, and forgiveness, and mercy in Christ?

Sol. Then renew our covenant with God for the time to come, of better service, and enter upon reformation, upon our resolution; for this is a fruit of the former.

Quest. How shall we know that we have humbled ourselves, and judged ourselves as we should do?

Sol. When we relish the mercy of God in the pardon of our sins.

Quest. But how shall we know when God hath pardoned our sins?

Sol. When he gives us grace to renew our covenants for the time to come, not to offend him; and when he gives us strength to reform our ways; for with pardoning mercy there goeth healing mercy: Ps. ciii. 1, 'Praise the

Lord, O my soul, that forgives all thy sins, and heals all thine infirmities.' So these must go together, judging and censuring of ourselves; then pleading for mercy, and renewing of our covenants, with reformation thereupon. A Christian looks as well to the time to come as to the time past: for the time past he repents; for the time to come he resolves against all sin. A wicked carnal man could be content to be freed from the guilt of sins past, that his conscience might not twitch him and torment him. But for the time to come he makes no conscience to entertain any vows, and purposes, or desire, that God would assist him against all sin. But a Christian is as careful of the sin that he is in danger to commit for the time to come, as a wicked man is to have the sin past off his conscience.

As therefore we would have an evidence of our certainty, let us look that we renew our covenants and purposes for the time to come; an excellent pattern for this you have, Ps. xix. 12, where David prays, 'Lord, cleanse me from my secret sins' (for the sins that hung upon him, and his sins past), and what for the time to come? 'Lord, keep me that presumptuous sins have not the dominion over me.' So we should pray to God, 'Lord, cleanse me from my former sins, and keep me by thy Holy Spirit, that presumptuous sins for the time to come have not the dominion over me;' and as it is in the Lord's Prayer, to join both together, 'Forgive us our debts,' and 'lead us not into temptation' for the time to come. 'Those that feel in their souls' assurance of pardon, they will entertain purposes against all sin for the time to come; they will as heartily say, Lord, lead me not into temptation, as they will say, Lord, forgive my sins.

Use 1. Well, I beseech you, let us lay these things to heart, to practise them. Our peace depends upon them. Oh! how sweet is peace and rest, after we have made our peace with God, when we have dealt thoroughly and soundly with our own souls, and have not daubed with them! There may be dangerous times a-coming; there is a cloud hangs over our heads; we know not how it may fall; we see all the world is in combustion. Who, when troubles come, will be the happy man? [Even] he that hath judged himself, accused himself, that hath mortified his corruptions, and, according to the grace that God hath given him, renewed his covenant and laboured to reform his life, and keeps it in his purpose of heart so to do (as David prays, that he may not offend God for the time to come), he is fit for all times; whatsoever times come they shall find him in good purposes. What a fearful thing were it if death, if some terrible judgment should light on us in an evil course of life; what would become of us then? Happy man is he that is in the

good way, in good purposes, in good resolutions, that the bent of his soul is to God and to heavenward; and therefore, as we would evidence to ourselves, that our state is good, that we are wise, and not fools, I beseech you let us practise this duty, and make it more familiar to us than we have done; and then undoubtedly we shall find somewhat in us better than nature. Nature cannot judge itself. Corruption cannot pass a censure upon itself. It is grace, a principle above nature, that censures corruption; and therefore when we judge ourselves, it is an undoubted evidence that we are in the state of grace. Who would want such an evidence?

Use 2. Again, when we find want of grace, go out of ourselves, go to God and to Christ. Naturally we stick in ourselves. Judas and Saul, they could not go to God for mercy, when their conscience was awaked with the sense of their sin. To go to God for pardon, it is an argument that there is somewhat wrought above nature in the heart; and therefore, as we would have an evidence to our souls, that there is somewhat in us above common men, let us judge ourselves; let us spare no sin, that God may spare all, Be severe to ourselves, that God may be merciful to us; and when we have done this, look to the abundant mercy of God in Christ. 'Where sin hath abounded, grace hath more abounded,' Rom. v. 13. Oh! mercy is sweet after we have searched into our corruptions. There is a height, and breadth, and depth of mercy, when we have felt the height, and breadth, and depth of corruption first. The Lord give a blessing to that which hath been delivered.

SERMON II.

JUDGMENT'S SEASON.

For this cause many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.—1 Cor. XI. 30-32.

After blessed St Paul had sown the seed of heavenly doctrine, Satan had sown some tares. Besides some corruption in doctrine, there was also corruption in life among the Corinthians; whereupon God was forced in mercy to visit them with some judgment: and lest they should be ignorant of the cause, the blessed apostle here doth put his finger to it, 'for this cause.' We have considered these four things in the words: the cause of the judgment; and then the kinds; and the remedy for the prevention, if it had been used: 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged;' and the

comfort: howsoever, ‘when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.’ Of the cause, the kinds, and the remedy we have spoken; and now we proceed to the comfort.

Mark here the text that I have read unto you. Though we do all neglect this forenamed remedy in part, yet God is wonderful merciful: ‘When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.’ We will unfold the comfort, as the text leads us. In the words consider these things especially, these general heads:—

1. First of all, that there is a world that must be condemned: we-shall not be condemned with the world.

2. And then, God’s people shall not be condemned with the world.

3. The third conclusion that ariseth out of the text is this, that the way that God sanctifies to prevent his children from damnation, is fatherly correction and chastisement; and therefore we are judged, that we should not be condemned with the world; in the unfolding of which course that God takes, these three things are to be touched:—

(1.) That God’s dealings with his children are but chastisements.

(2) And his chastisements ‘We are chastened of the Lord.’

(3.) And that they are blessed for this end, to keep us from damnation. These things we will speak of in order.

Doct. 1. First, There is a world that is to be condemned: God’s children shall not be condemned with the world.

What is the world in this place?

The world in this place, it is not the frame of heaven and earth; but (to avoid multiplicity of acceptions, in which were idle to spend time) by world here is meant those that Peter speaks of, the ungodly world, the world of ungodly. As we see, 2 Pet. iii. 7, they are called the world of ungodly; so there is a world took out of the world, the world of the elect. For as in the great world there is the little world—man—so in the great world of mankind, there is a little world—the world of God’s people; but here it is the world of the ungodly.

Why are they called the world?

They are called the world, partly because they are great in the world. They swagger in the world, as if they were upon their own dunghill there, and as if they were the only men in the world, as indeed for the most part they are. God's people are a concealed, a hidden people here. And then again, they are the world, because they are the most of the world. But especially they are the world, because the best thing in them is the world. They have their name from that they love. Love is an affection of union. What we love, that we are knit unto. Now because carnal men are in love with the things of the world, being united in their affections to it, they have their name from that they love. And indeed, anatomise a carnal man that is not in the state of grace, rip him up in his soul, what shall you find in him but the world? You shall find in his brain worldly plots, worldly policy and vanity. You shall find little of the word of God there, and scarce any thing that is good, because the best thing in him is the world; therefore he is the world. But to pass from the meaning of the word to the point: This world must be condemned. Why condemned? Mark these four or five reasons.

[1.] First of all, because the world doth set itself upon things that must be condemned, upon present vanities. Why? All things in this world must pass through the fire ere long, the frame of heaven and earth and all in it. Now those that love the world especially, and have no better things in their souls, they must perish with the world. He that stands on ice, and on slippery things, he slips with the thing he stands on. So those that fasten their souls upon the world, upon slippery and vain things, they fall, and slip with the things themselves. Now, because the world pitched their happiness in the things of this life, they are vain as the things themselves. But to go on.

[2.] A second reason why the world must be condemned is this, because they serve a damned prince, and it is pity that the state of the subject and the state of the prince should be severed. Satan they serve; Satan rules in them according to his own lust; Satan bathes himself in their humour as it were, in their anger, in their pride [in their covetousness], in their melancholy, in their passion. As Saul, when he was given up to an evil passion, the devil seized upon him; so the devil leads them according to the stream of their own humour and of their own lusts; they are led according to the bent of the prince of the world. Now, being led by the temptations of Satan, who knows where to have them upon any temptation, and leads them as we lead sheep with a green bough, when he presents anything to them, he knows where to

have them; and he being a damned prince and governor, all that are under him are in the same condition.

[3.] The third reason why the world shall be damned is this, because the world condemns God. It is but quittance. Carnal people in the world condemn God's ways and God's children, and the ways of religion to be nice and foolish. The world hath its conceits of itself, and scorns the sweetness of religion, and accounts the word and obedience to be a weak and poor spirit. Considering that the world passeth such censures upon God's ways, and condemns the generation of the righteous, if God condemn the world, do you wonder, when the base and slavish world, led by the devil and by their own lusts, will condemn God and his ways? And certainly, if you would see into the poisonous disposition of persons among whom we live, that are yet in the world, how malicious they are to God's courses, you will not wonder that God hath ordained such to be set on the left hand, to pass the sentence of eternal condemnation upon them; because though the light discover to them which way they should walk, yet they abhor all God's ways, and take ways of their own: as if they would teach God wisdom, and prescribe what he should do; as if they were wiser than God. All your politicians they are such: they lead their lives as if they would teach God wisdom: what he should prescribe; as if they were wiser than he a great deal. Do you wonder that he condemns them then?

Obj. But you will say, 'the world?' What do you talk? We are baptized. We hear now and then a sermon! Are we the world? The world are Pagans, and Turks, and Jews, and such; perhaps papists. Such as they are the world.

Ans. Oh no, beloved, 'Babylon is in Jerusalem,' as the father saith, the world is in the city of God, the world is among you. Nay, and that part of the world that shall be deepest damned is here amongst us. For our damnation shall be deeper than the 'Turks' or Jews'. 'You have I known of all the nations of the world, saith God; and therefore I will be sure to visit you,' Amos iii. 2. The three had grounds, beloved, were the world, Mat. xiii. 1, seq. Howsoever, all heard the word, yet there was but one good. You may be of the world, and yet live in the midst of the church, as Paul, Phil. iii. 18, seq., complains of many, 'of whom, saith he, I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, they are enemies to the cross of Christ,' [they were teachers in the church; they were so far from being aliens, 'whose end is damnation, whose belly is their god, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things.' When the guides and teachers of the church, that should give aim at

salvation to other people; when they shall make 'their belly their god, and damnation their end;' shall we secure ourselves that we are in a good estate, because we are baptized, and because we hear the word; when the 'three bad grounds' did so? It is another manner of matter to be out of the world, and to be in Christ, than the world takes it for. Beloved, in holy duties there are two things; there is the outward duty, the shell, and the life and soul of the duty. A carnal worldly man may do the outward thing; he may be baptized and receive the communion; he may come to hear the word of God, but there is a life and soul in the duty; to hear as he should; to be moulded into the performance of it; to obey that we hear, and to come to receive the sacrament with reverence and due preparation; and to increase the assurance of salvation, and our comfort and joy. This is the hard part of the duty; this the world cannot do. Let us value ourselves by the practice of the inward part of the duty, the power of the duty, and not rest in the outward performance.

[4.] The next reason to show that the world must needs be condemned, it is this, because even in the church there are a company of men (I beseech you, let not your thoughts go out of your congregations and places we live in when we speak of the world) that will be damned. It is a strange thing; that will be damned! Who will be damned? I say, there are a company among whom we live, that resolve to be damned. Why? There are evil courses, which whosoever will take, they will go to hell; they will end in death, as in the Proverbs, Prov. viii. 35. 'He that takes such a course, hates his own soul.' God saith thus, that is Wisdom himself; and therefore if you wilfully walk in those courses that lead to hell, it is as much as if you would be damned. Indeed, there is none but would be saved, if they would be saved in the paths of the broad way, that lead to damnation; they could be content to go to heaven in a race of vanity. Who would not he saved in that sense? But the world will be damned in this sense, if they resolve to take a course to flatter their own lusts, going their own ways in spite of God, in spite of his truth, in spite of conscience, and to despise the Spirit that awakeneth them and tells them that there is another way that they should walk in, and puts them in mind, 'This is the way, walk in it,' Isa. xxx. 21; and this is not the way, avoid it; and yet they will rush on in their courses, as the horse rusheth into the battle. Say God what he will, the world will be damned. Are there not many that have been told of their pride, of their vanities, of their lusts, of their sins that their conscience tells them they pamper themselves in? and they will not amend for all this. This, in God's construction (and this conscience will tell them another day), is because they would go on rebelliously in courses tending to damnation. Nay, which is worse, there is a generation of

venomous persons, that hate the ministers, hate good people, hate the image of God, and hate anything, that may present to their hearts a dislike of the courses they are wedded to. Oh! I would they would hate the devil so; and do you wonder that these are damned, that hate the image of God, the motions of the Spirit, and raise reproaches upon religion, and make it odious as much as they can, that their vileness may the less appear, and be the less disgraced in their wicked ways? And yet this is the course of many thousands in the bosom of the church, and in the best places, that are guilty of this; whom if one tell, that this temper and frame of soul is contrary to God, and will yield nothing but desperation in the end, notwithstanding they will not regard what you say. Well, beloved, I must hasten. Many other reasons there are to show that the world must be damned, as,

[5.] The world, it is shut out of Christ's prayer. They have no part in the prayer of Christ, in him that died to redeem us. And the world will not receive the Spirit, because they maintain their own lusts. Many other reasons the Scripture heaps upon this, that there are a company of men that must and will be damned. But what is the use of this?

Use (1.) First, to pull our friends, our children, out of the world; to get ourselves out of the world, as soon as we can. Come out of Sodom, come out of Babylon, make all haste; for, as the angel tells Lot, 'I will destroy this place,' Gen. xix. 16. The world is a place that God will destroy. It is Sodom; it is Babylon; get out of it. There is no being there, except you will reap eternal damnation with the world.

(2.) Again, pass not for the censures of worldly proud people, that think that they are jolly Christians, when they are but in truth damned persons. God may recover them, but yet they are in damnable ways. Who cares for the sentence of a damned person, till he have gotten his pardon? Such are all profane persons, that have not the work of grace wrought in their hearts in an effectual manner; they are yet in the state of damnation. Why should we pass for their censures? There are a company of weak persons, who reason as weakly, If I do this, the world will say thus and thus. What is the world? The world is a generation of unregenerate wretched people, that must be damned. Who would regard the censure of a damned person? and indeed who would follow the guise of damned persons? And yet of late such is the madness of people, that they take up the fashions, though they be condemned fashions. They do not consider the vanity of it, so to take up the fashions of damned persons. The world is a condemned generation; therefore take not up the

guise and fashion of the world. The world's fashion is the worst fashion of all. I speak not of correspondency with the world in civil actions in the passages of our life. We must 'come out of the world,' as Christ saith, 'if we will not be correspondent in outward things,' 2 Cor. vi. 17; and here should be a redeeming of our peace with the world in yielding in lessor matters. But I speak of those things which concern our inward comfort and peace, and that concern the practice of holy duties; let us not stand in it, what the world judgeth or allows, but practise holy duties, though the world censure them; and abstain from wicked courses, though the world applaud them. So we shall have a seal that we are taken out of the world.

Use (2.) Let us make another use of trial, and examine whether we be taken out of the world or no. In brief, therefore, let us ask our aims, our ends. For, those that are taken out of the world have aims beyond the world; they frame their courses to supernatural ends, to eternity; and labour so to guide themselves in this, that they may be saved in another world. We should steer and guide our actions suitable to our peace hereafter. We should have further ends than the world hath. He that is a worldling confines his thoughts within the compass of the world; he hath no further aim. Sometimes he hath by-thoughts of heaven and happiness. But he makes it not his aim, it is not his scope to which he directs his course. In the second place, answerable to our aims, let us examine what our affections are. Our affections will tell us of what city we are, whether of Jerusalem, or of Babylon, as one of the ancients saith well.

Ask thy love, Whither dost thou weigh down in thy love? Doth earthly love as a weight press thee to things below? or is it a sanctified love, that carries thee to Christ, and to the things of God? Examine thy affections of love, of joy and delight, of what city thou art. Mere earthly actions are hypocritical; therefore the inward affections are the best discoverers of the estate of our soul, where our joy and delight is. And ask likewise in the third place, our relish, What do we savour most? Come to a carnal man; put him to a course of vanity; he hath learned the language of the times, all your complimentary phrases; he hath them exactly; all the language of the time he can speak. But come to him in matters of religion; he is out of his theme there; he savours not those things. Those that are of the world speak of the world. Talk to them of vanity, of this and that, and you put them to their proper theme; but tell them of other things, they are mere strangers; and they speak as if they had never learned anything in that element. And so those that are of the world, they converse with those that are of the same bent; doves

flock to doves, and delight in those that are like themselves. Many such arguments of trial we may have, but especially think what I have said before. Look to your aims, to your affections, and to your inward relish and bent of soul, which way your conversation is bent, and how it relisheth; and these will discover to us our state, as in Rev. xiii. 11, seq., and other places: there antichrist is called the beast that riseth out of the earth; because Romish religion is taken out of the earth, that is, it hath earthly aims, earthly grounds and principles. It is all for the world; it is a fallacy indeed, popery and not religion; and thereupon the pope is called the beast rising out of the earth. All the considerations that feed popery are out of the earth. Oh! a glorious monarch of the church, to have glory; and in the church to have all that may feed the senses, and that may please the outward man. Every thing, I say, is to please the outward man, to get riches, &c. They are called Gentiles; 'the outward court shall be cast to the Gentiles.' He speaks there, that antichrist with his crew that follows him, they should trouble, vex, and persecute the church, and cast it out to the Gentiles. The followers of antichrist are called Gentiles. But I speak not of them. We are earth and Gentiles, if our aims, projects, and affections be towards the earth, as the Scripture useth to speak. Therefore, let us examine ourselves by what I have said. I beseech you, let us consider that the world must be condemned. And before I leave it, do but think what damnation is. I beseech you, have no slight thoughts of it. The Scripture saith, 'We shall not be condemned with the world.'

What is condemnation?

To be condemned is to be adjudged from the presence of God, and to be adjudged to eternal torment with the devil and his angels. It were somewhat unseasonable to enlarge this point; but I beseech you consider what is wrapped in this word 'condemned,' 'condemned with the world;' that so if we hate the end, damnation, we may hate the way that leads to it, the ways of the world. But to go on.

Doct. The second general is this, that God's children shall not be condemned with the world.

Quest. Why?

Ans. 1. Because they are the first-fruits dedicated to God out of the world, and Christ was condemned for them. How can they be condemned for whom Christ himself was condemned?

Ans. 2. And then a godly man in the state of grace, he is in heaven already; and who shall pull him from heaven? How can he be condemned that is in heaven already? We sit in heavenly places already. Beloved, to bold that an elect Christian may fall away, is to pull Christ himself out of heaven; we are in heaven already in Christ. A Christian being a member of Christ cannot be condemned, no more than Christ can be condemned, be it spoken with reverence to his majesty.

Ans. 3. Again, for idiom Christ is a priest, he is a king. He is a king to rule them in this world, and to subdue whatsoever might oppose their salvation. Whom he hath bought with his blood as a priest, he rules as a king, and orders all things to help their salvation. Where Christ is a king, for those he is a priest. Can those be condemned then? And he vouchsafes them a spirit stronger than the world. God's children have a spirit in them that overcomes the world: 'Stronger is he that is in you,' saith John, 'than he that is in the world,' 1 John iv. 4. For the Spirit of God suggests reasons, and arguments, and motives that are stronger to a believing soul than the temptations of the world are; the world biasset them one way, and the Spirit of God another way. The children of God have the Spirit of God, especially a spirit of faith, therefore they overcome the world. It presents better things in religion than the world can afford. Now those that have the Spirit of God, and a spirit of faith, by which they overcome the world, how can they be condemned with the world? And God takes a safe course with his children.

Note. That they may not be condemned with the world, he makes the world to condemn them; that they may not love the world, he makes the world to hate them; that they may be crucified to the world, he makes the world be crucified to them. Therefore they meet with crosses, and abuses, and wrongs in the world. Because he will not have them perish with the world, he sends them afflictions in the world, and by the world. Thus I might enlarge myself in the condition of God's people, of his saints; they shall not be condemned with the wicked world.

Use. The use of it is this, that we should be in love with the state of God's people. Who would not be in love with this condition? I may boldly speak it, my beloved. The meanest poor soul that hath the work of grace upon it, that is taken out of the world, is in a better condition than the greatest worldling. Let a man be as happy as a world can make him; if he be a condemned man, what is his condition? All the time that other men live, that are not in the state of grace, it is but the time between the sentence passing

and the execution. Now, that is but a little time. The life of a carnal man, it is but the life of a man condemned at the bar, and is deferred for the execution a while. Another man, that is in the state of grace, he is safe; he shall not be condemned with the world; he is in heaven already; he is sure of it, as if he were there. I beseech you, let this make us in love with the sincerity of religion, and let us never cease labouring till we have gotten out of this cursed state into this happy estate. There is but a little flock of Christ. We should never give our temples quiet, and our souls rest, till we evidence to them that we are of the little number which are taken out of the world; till we see that we are a first-fruits dedicated to God; till we find the beginnings of grace wrought in our souls. Why should we defer one hour till we have gotten this assurance, considering our life is so uncertain?

Doct. 3. The third general thing is this, the course that God takes with his children in this world, whereby they are preserved from damnation, it is corrections and chastisements. We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world; wherein, as I showed you, there are these three branches. I will specialty speak of the last.

(1.) First, that whatsoever God's dealings he with his children, it is but a fatherly correction and chastisement; and therefore it is in mercy, in discretion; a little punishment is enough of a mother to her child. God hath the wisdom of a father, but he hath the bowels of a mother; and therefore God is pitiful and merciful, because he is a Father. There is a wondrous sweet comfort wrapped in that word Father. The whole world is not worth this that is yielded to a Christian from this, that a Christian is the child of God, and that God is his Father. I might enlarge myself in the point, that all are but fatherly corrections. A father, when he sees his child in an evil way, he corrects him; but it is a preventing correction, it is to prevent execution after. A child set at liberty makes his mother and his father ashamed; and so if we should be set too much at liberty, if God should not meet us with seasonable correction, we should shame religion and shame Christ; and therefore God in mercy corrects us with fatherly correction. Oh! it is a wonderful comfort to think, when we are taken into the covenant of grace, all comes from God as a Father then; and having taken us of enemies to be children, will he cast off his children for infirmities? Will a mother cast off her children for breaches, for something that displeaseth her? No! But rather she will be more merciful and more pitiful. But I will not enlarge myself in this point. It is a familiar point; and, I suppose, you hear it often. But, I beseech you, do but think of it, that it may be ready in your hearts and in

your memories against temptation, to have a good conceit of God. It overcomes temptation oftentimes to have a good conceit of God, to present God to our souls as a father, whereas the devil would present him as a judge, as one that hates us. Oh! take heed of it, this is but fatherly correction. God is our Father: 'Our Father which art in heaven,' saith Christ. Let us help our souls by presenting God to us in these colours, as a father in temptation, and all that we suffer as fatherly corrections. To speak familiarly, we know in the street, when one child is corrected, and another is not, we know he is the father that corrects. God doth not use to correct those that are not his children; he lets them go on still, they are not worth correcting; because they have abused his mercy before, he lets them go on. When God takes us in our sinful course, and meets with us, and hedgeth our ways with thorns, he shows himself to be a Father. We are bastards, and not sons, if we have not correction, as at large it is sweetly followed, and many arguments to it, Heb. xii. 7, seq. God shows himself a Father when he corrects us, or else we are bastards, and not sons.

Use 1. Well, let us take all things therefore the better at God's hands, because they are but corrections; for we need it, the best of us. The best gardens have need of weeding, and the best metals have need of purging, and the best linen hath need of washing. God knows it well enough, and therefore he will purge us. As the Scripture saith, As gold and silver is purged, he will purge out the dross, and all in mercy. We lose nothing by any visitations of God but corruption. The fruit of all his dealing with us is to take sin from us.

2. It is said here in the second place, that as they are corrections, so they are from God. We are chastened of the Lord. I will but touch it in a word, and that to help our forgetfulness in a main point. In the governing of a Christian life we are carried naturally to second causes. Now all second causes are but rods in God's hands. Look therefore to the hand that smites, look to God in all. He chastiseth us, as David said in the matter of Shimei, 2 Sam. xvi. 10; and as Job, 'It is the Lord that hath given, and the Lord hath taken away,' Job i. 21. And so in benefits we should see God in all things, and think we are to deal with him. Our work lies in heaven, therefore in any visitation or cross, I beseech you, think of it. We are to deal with the great Mover of heaven and earth, that hath all second causes in his hand; that hath the hearts of kings in his hand; and let us make our peace with him.

Quest. Why should we go to the serjeant? We should make our peace with the judge; make not peace with the second causes, but with the principal. It is God that chastiseth; let us make our peace there, and he will take off the second cause. I cannot follow the point; I beseech you think of it. We forget it in our practice, and that makes us so atheistical, as if there were not a God to govern the world, but we run presently upon second causes.

Let us go on; God's corrections are but chastenings, and they are from him. And they are sanctified of him, which is the main point, to preserve us from being damned with the world. These corrections are sanctified by God for that end.

Quest. And how is that?

Ans. 1. Because they embitter sinful courses to us. When we are crossed in our sinful courses, sinful courses are embittered unto us; we grow out of love with them.

Ans. 2. And then again, these chastisements, they help us to relish heaven and heavenly things better. Oh! then the word of God is the word of God indeed; then Christ is Christ; then heavenly things are heavenly things; then a messenger, one of a thousand, will be heard, as Job xxxiii. 23; then welcome the man of God all that time. When a man cannot relish earthly things, when he cannot take comfort by his friends, then welcome heavenly comforts. Chastisements, therefore, they help us, that we be not damned with the world, by making us out of love with vanities, that we shall not care for them. We see they do us good, to help us to relish heavenly things. Blessed are those corrections that are sanctified that way. We hear with other cars then. When we have been in the fire, and God hath met with us by crosses, we hear with another manner of attention than at other times. Though I might be large on the point, for it is very large, rather let us think of it to make use of it. But first to take away all objections, that I may fasten the comfort upon our souls the better, it may be objected,

Obj. 1. Oh! but it is such a correction as takes away my friends from me. I cannot have the use of my friends, as sometime in a noisome contagious disease.

Ans. What if thou hast no friends but God and his angels to help thee to heaven? Whatsoever comfort God conveys by friends, he hath it in himself

still; and he can convey those immediate comforts which are most sweet, when they come from the spring; when outward comforts fail, those are the best comforts. It is a greater grace for a prince to visit a sick body himself than to send a messenger to visit him. So when no man can come to us, God himself comes from heaven, and visits us by the comforts of the Holy Spirit; and what do we loose then?

Obj. 2. Oh! but it is a sharp affliction, a sharp cross.

Ans. Oh! but it is a sweet hand it comes from. Shall not I take a cup out of a father's hand? It is a bitter cup, but it is out of a father's hand, and therefore out of a loving hand. It is from love, and it is directed to my good, and it is sweetly tempered and mixed, and moderated; and therefore if it come from love, and be directed to my good, and for the present be mixed and moderated—why should I complain of the correction, that is for my good, to keep me that I should not be damned with the world?

Obj. 3. But how can death itself be a correction, when it takes away life, that we have no time to be better?

Ans. I answer, God, to his children, before he takes them out of the world, he gives them his Spirit, that they sharply repent, and put much to a little time; and God requires rather truth of heart than length of time. As we see sick bodies shoot out suddenly that did not grow before, so a sick afflicted soul it shoots out suddenly. God visits it with sharp repentance, though it be short, perhaps that they call their ways to account and though he take them out of the world, yet he saves their souls.

Obj. 4. But perhaps it is but hypocritical repentance before my death (because many recover, and show themselves to be hypocrites after); and so if I should die, perhaps I should die an hypocrite.

Ans. Oh! take heed of that. Many do so; as an ancient saith, He that is never good but under the cross (he means only), is never good. He that is good under bonds is never good; if he doth it from fear, and not from hatred of sin. But thou shalt know that it was not in hypocrisy that now thou hast repented in thy sickness, if thou desire rather the grace of God, than to recover. A soul that is sanctified had rather have pardon of sin, and strength against corruption, than to have recovery; and he desires God from his soul: Now, Lord, sanctify this sickness, and this cross before thou take it away; for the plaster would fall off if the wound were healed; and the malady would

cease if there were not a ground. I beseech you therefore, those that make that objection, let them consider whether they desire the removal of the cross rather, or to have it sanctified, before it be removed from them. A true heart doth so; and it were better that we should be under the cross all the days of our lives, and to have the cross laid more heavy upon us, than that we should grow worse under it, as many do, and are not the better for it. But say thou, 'Nay, Lord, rather sear me, and burn me, and chastise me; save my soul and do what thou wilt.' That is the disposition of a Christian; for God takes a great deal of liberty with our carcasses, and in our outward estate. Such things we must leave behind us, we know not how soon; and therefore he takes liberty to correct us in them sharply; but so he saves our souls, all is in mercy. It is a blessed correction that draws us nearer to him, that makes us hate sin more, and love the ways of God more.

Obj. 5. But it will be objected again, but I am accessory to my own death, I have been an intemperate man, I have shortened my own days.

Ans. Beloved, a heavy temptation at the hour of death! But be not discouraged. For so blessed Josiah shortened his own days; for he went rashly when he had counsel to the contrary; and so 'the good prophet' shortened his own days when the lion met him and slew him by the way for his disobedience, 1 Kings xiii. 24; and so the good thief. Therefore despair not at that, if the thing should be that thou shouldst fall into some course whereby thou shouldst shorten thine own days, and be accessory to thine own death; as these Corinthians, they were accessory to their own deaths, and they slept before their time; they cut the thread of their own life and they put out their own candle. No question but this was heavy upon the conscience; I brought myself to it. This is the hell of hells of the damned souls; I brought myself hither. So when we are guilty of the punishment and affliction of ourselves, it is most bitter unto us. But, I say, consider the former examples, God hath strange ways to bring his children home to him, and sometimes the furthest way about is the nearest way. home. God suffers his children to sin, and by sin to shorten their days, and all to occasion repentance and a sight of their corruption, and a hatred of themselves, and of their base courses, and to give themselves to him more thoroughly than before. So infinitely wise and gracious is God to those that belong to him. So that, notwithstanding all objections to the contrary, the position laid down before is true, that God sanctifies corrections to us, that we should not be damned with the world.

Uses of all. Use 1. Now to make some general use of all that hath been spoken, and so to end all. Is this so? Here we might stand upon a point to instruct our judgment, to show that all the corrections of God's children, they come not from vindictive justice, but from a fatherly affection, against that doctrine of popery that maintains satisfaction; that judgments are for satisfaction. A proud and damnable point. Can a man with a penny deserve a thousand pounds? Sin deserves eternal damnation. Can we with a little suffering satisfy that? 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 28, eternal death. It is a gross position. No! They are corrections, not satisfactions; they come from fatherly affection. This is to rectify our Judgment in that point.

Use 2. And then again, to help us against Satan's temptations. He useth afflictions as temptations to weaken our faith.

Obj. If God did love thee, he would never do so and so; God hates thee; why doth he follow thee with his judgments, but that he hates thee and hath no delight in thee? And why should he single out thee more than others?

Ans. Retort hack again, Nay! because God loves me, he deals thus with me; because he means to save my soul, therefore he will not suffer me quietly to run the broad way to destruction. Therefore it is rather an argument of love, from that, whereby Satan would shake our faith. Doth not Satan set upon Christ with this temptation? He comes with an 'if.' 'If thou be the Son of God,' Matt. iv. 3, seq. If thou wert the child of God, shouldst thou be so afflicted? Whereas, indeed, because we are the sons of God, therefore we are afflicted. Beat hack therefore Satan's weapons into his own bosom again. If God corrected his own Son, that is, the author of our salvation (when yet under the signs of his greatest displeasure, his Father loved him), let us think that we may be beloved of God in the signs of his greatest displeasure, as Christ upon the cross, 'My God, my God,' &c. He apprehended, in the signs of greatest displeasure, God's love, and so should we. Let us answer God's dealing with the like. His dealing is this. In the worst condition he calls us children, and he is our father, and loves us. Therefore, in the worst condition, let us trust him, and say with Job. 'Though thou kill me, yet will I trust in thee,' Job xiii. 15.

Quest. Why?

Ans. Because thou mayest kill me, and yet be a father, and mayest do it in love. I will answer thy dealing by my faith again; therefore though thou kill me, yet will I trust in thee.

Use 3. Again, this strengthens our judgment in the point of perseverance, that being once in the state of grace, we shall hold out still. For rather than God's children shall fall away, God will take a course that they should not be damned with the world; He will correct them. It is most divinely set down, Rom. viii. 35. Saith he, among other things, 'Neither life nor death shall be able to separate us from the love of God;' neither life, nor the vanities of this life.

Quest. And what if we give God cause to visit us with death?

Ans. 'Yet neither life nor death shall separate us from the love of God,' as here the Corinthians they were visited with death; yet neither life nor death shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ; and therefore be established in the truth of that point.

Use 4. Then again, for a further use, it fenceth the soul against the scandal of the cross, and of visitations and sicknesses and crosses that we meet withal in the world; for the scandal is this: shall we be in love with the ways of God, wherein we meet with these and these corrections? Oh, yes! take not scandal at that which is sanctified by God to be a moans to preserve us from being damned with the world. And the child of God, take him at the lowest, take him at the worst, he is better than a worldling at the best. Take no offence, therefore, at God's dispensation with his children. All is, that they may not be damned with the world. Do not only justify God, but magnify God for his corrections, and after thou shalt receive fruit by them. And we have reason, when we find ourselves more mortified to the world, and to have the quiet fruit of righteousness to magnify God. Hath the Spirit sanctified it to thee to make thee lead another course of life? Say, Blessed be God for sending this cross, for indeed we have oftentimes occasion to bless God more for crosses than for comforts. There is a blessing hidden in the worst things to God's children, as there is a cross in the best things to the wicked. There is a blessing in death; a blessing in sickness; a blessing in the hatred of their enemies; a blessing in their losses whatsoever. There is a blessing hidden in the worst things; and therefore let us not only justify God, but glorify and magnify God for his mercy, that rather than we shall be condemned with the world, he will take this course with us.

Use 5. And then here again, you have a ground of impregnable comfort in all temptations whatsoever; a wondrous comfort, that God will take a course with his to bring them to heaven. What a blessed course is this, that the time to come we may take in trust of God, as well as the time past? That

now in the state of grace, rather than he will condemn us, he will take one course or other to bring us to heaven? Bather than David shall live in his sin, he will send Nathan to him; rather than Peter shall not repent, Christ will look back upon him; rather than God's children shall go the broad way, God will send the devil himself to annoy them, and to infest them, and to vex them. God will be sure to lose none of his. What a comfort is this? and therefore never think that we can be in such a condition wherein there is true ground of despair. No! We cannot. We are under hope in the most woeful condition in the world. We are under hope still: for there is more mercy in God than can be sin and evil in us; and he is infinitely wise to rule all to his own ends. What if things seem untoward? They are in his hands; he hath a powerful hand to manage the worst things to good. So gloriously wise and powerful is God, that he sways the worst things. 'All things work for the best for those that love God,' Rom. viii. 28, even the worst things in this world.

Obj. Oh! but profane spirits will object and say, 'If this be so, we may be careless; if our salvation be made sure, that we shall not be condemned with the world, that God will take care even to bring us to heaven.

Ans. Oh! but the text takes away that objection of profane spirits that take liberty from this blessed truth of God. For though God do not damn his with the world, yet he sharply corrects them here. By a careful sober life they might obtain many blessings, and prevent many judgments, and make their pilgrimage more comfortable. Therefore it argues neither grace, nor wit to argue so, because God will save me, therefore I will take liberty. No! Though God will save thee, yet he will take such a course that thou shalt endure such sharpness for thy sin, that it shall be more bitter than the sweetest of it was pleasant. There is no child of God that ever came to heaven, but God hath made their sinful courses more bitter to them than ever they have had benefit by them, though their souls have been safe. Put the case a man were sure not to be executed, yet to be branded, to be stigmatised, or to be disgraced in the country, would he for a paltry thing, not worth the speaking of, do wrong, because he should not be executed, and have friends to keep him from that? Who would do such a thing as that, to bring himself to shame for a thing of nothing? So put the case thou shalt not be damned, thou art sure of that; yet thou mayest fall into such a course as God may brand thee; and thou mayest bring disgrace to religion; and mayest weaken the comfort of thine own soul; and mayest make Satan rejoice; and mayest grieve the angels about thee; and mayest vex the Spirit in thee; we may put a sting to the affliction we suffer, we may deprive ourselves of comfort in the midst of comforts for our

boldness. Who, that hath the use of his wits, would do this for the pleasures of sin for a season?

Oh! therefore, when you go about to sin, consider what you go about. I go about to grieve God's Spirit, to provoke my heavenly Father; I go about to force out of his hand some rod, some correction; I go about to rejoice Satan; to grieve the angels, that are about me for my custody; to put a sting to my trouble, and to embitter it. This is the ill of ills, when a man is in affliction; my own wickedness brought me to this. Let us wisely consider this: though God save our souls, yet he will take such a course in this world, as we shall wish that we had not tried conclusions with God. David gave liberty to his lusts, but he wished (no doubt a thousand times), that he had not bought his pleasure at so dear a rate. Therefore, this I add, to fence this truth from the offence that a carnal heart takes at it. But to come to the proper and native use of it. Consider, I beseech you, how this doctrine is a fence against the rock of despair, and against the rock of presumption.

First, Against the rock of presumption. The soul may say, shall I be bold to sin? Surely I shall buy the pleasures of sin at a dear rate; God will correct me sharply. And shall I force! God for such a pleasure, and for such a profit? No! I will not buy sin at that rate. So it fenceth the soul from presumption.

Again, it fenceth the soul from despair. Oh! but I have sinned; my own weakness hath given me the foil; and Satan he joins with my weakness and hath foiled me. Oh! but do not you yet despair, for therefore we are corrected, that we should not be condemned with the world; as I said before, a Christian is never so low, but mercy triumphs over the ill in him. There is more abundant mercy in God, than there can be ill in us. So happy a condition it is to be in Christ, that in the covenant of grace, God sets himself to triumph over the greatest ills, over sin, and over affliction. There can be no ill so great, but it yields to his mercy in Jesus Christ, and therefore be not discouraged, whatsoever ill we suffer. And so it keeps us from these two rocks of presumption and despair. Let us therefore for a conclusion of all take this course.

First of all, be sure, beloved, that we get out of the world, get out of Sodom, get out of the condition we are in by nature. Trust not to a formal profession of religion. Do not deceive your souls; it will deceive you. Get out of the world, and get into Christ; get something by attending upon the means, and by prayer, and by crossing your corruptions; get somewhat in

you, that may evidence that you are taken out of the world, and that you are in Christ, being led with a better spirit than your own.

In the next place, when you are in the state of grace, honour that condition. Walk worthy of that glorious condition. Oh! the state of a Christian, it is a glorious state. It requires much holy wisdom to manage the state of Christianity. If we be Christians, let us carry ourselves like Christians worthily; if we will have good of our profession. Let us carry ourselves so, as that we may not go so far in religion, as may minister God more matter to damn us. What good is it to have so much knowledge, and so much profession as shall damn us the more? But if we will be religious, let us be religious to purpose, and let us walk worthy of this glorious state.

Obj. Oh! but in the next place, I have not done it, I have forgotten my condition, forgotten my hopes, forgotten my state, and regarded my base lusts more; I have been surprised, and caught.

Sol. Then take this course: judge yourselves, if you have been overtaken; take the counsel of the apostle, while there is hope, and judge yourselves.

Obj. But I see now, God is ready to take me out of the world, and I have not judged myself as I should; though I be out of love with my courses, and am in league with no evil course, yet I have been faulty.

Sol. Oh! comfort thyself, let not Satan swallow thee up in despair; mark what the apostle saith, God sends this, that we should not be condemned with the world; and therefore presently make a covenant with him, renew thy purposes presently, as Ps. xxv. 1, seq. All his ways to his children are mercy and truth; his ways of correction and his ways of love, all his ways are mercy. And therefore take heed that we never deny our own mercy, that we never forsake our own mercy; let not Satan prevail so much. We have need of all this, beloved, especially to remember it in the time of temptation, in spiritual desolation, when we gasp for comfort; let us labour to learn this spiritual wisdom, to present to our own souls the promises of the gospel, and the relation that God hath put upon himself, to be a father; his dealings to us, that they are fatherly corrections. Let not Satan wring these comforts out of our souls. But let us honour God by trusting him in life and death, and say with Job, 'Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15. So sweet and powerful is the death of Christ, that it turns all things, oven the bitterest, to the greatest good. But this may be sufficient by the blessing of God's Spirit.

Yea and Amen (or, Precious Promises Laid Open Out of 2 Cor. I. 10-23)

But as God is true, our word towards you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God are in him yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

The blessed apostle, that he might have the better place in the hearts of his hearers, endeavours here with all diligence to wipe off any imputation which they might have against him; that so his doctrine might come home to their souls, and have the freer access to work upon their consciences.

We have therefore in these words St Paul's apology for not coming unto the Corinthians, according to his promise. Wherein he allegeth that it was not from any inconstancy in him, but indeed from corruption in manners among them: ver. 28, 'I call God to record, that to spare you I came not.' The apostle as a man, and as a holy man, might promise many things common to this life, and might lawfully vary afterwards upon the appearance of real impediments.

But the things which he promiseth, and speaks of as an apostle, they admit of no such uncertainty. Therefore his care is to decline all thoughts of wavering therein, and to maintain the credit of the gospel, which he had taught, to the uttermost; knowing well how ready 'false teachers' would be to persuade the people that Paul was as light in his preaching as he was in keeping his word with them. Therefore 'our word is true, as God is true,' saith he.

There is the same ground of the certainty of evangelical truths, as there is of God himself. 'Jesus Christ,' whom I preached among you, was not 'yea and nay,' saith the apostle, but 'yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever.' Whence may be observed:

Fact. 1. That the object of preaching now in the time of the gospel, is especially Jesus Christ. This is the rock upon which the church is built. Christ should be the subject matter of our teaching, in his nature, offices, and benefits; in the duties which we owe to him, and the instrument whereby we receive all from him, which is faith.

If we preach the law, and discover men's corruption, it is but to make way for the gospel's freer passage into their souls. And if we press holy duties, it is to make you walk worthy of the Lord Jesus. All teaching is reductive to the gospel of Christ, either to make way, as John Baptist did, to level all proud thoughts, and make us stoop to him, or to make us walk worthy of the grace we receive from him.

The bread of life must be broken; the sacrifice must be anatomized and laid open; the riches of Christ, even his 'unsearchable riches,' must be unfolded. 'The Son of God,' must be preached to all; and therefore God, who hath appointed us to be saved by Christ, hath also ordained preaching, to lay open the Lord Jesus, with the heavenly treasures of his grace and glory. But to go forward.

Jesus Christ who was preached among you by me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay.

Obs. Here observe, that the consent of preachers in the mysteries of salvation, is an excellent means to strengthen faith in their hearers; not in regard of the truth itself, but in regard of men. So it pleaseth God to condescend to our weakness, in adding sacraments and oath unto his promises, thereby to show the more stableness of his counsel towards us.

By 'yea' here is meant certain, constant, invariable. The times vary, but not the faith of the times. The same fundamental truth is in all ages. Sometimes indeed it is more explicated and unfolded; as we have in the New Testament divers truths more clearly revealed than in the Old. There is not a new faith, but a larger explication of the old faith. Divine truth is always the same. If there hath been a church always, there hath ever been a divine truth. Now it is an article of our faith in all times to believe a 'catholic church.' Certainly then there must be a catholic truth to be the seed of this church. Therefore we should search out what was that 'yea,' that positive doctrine in those apostolical times of the church's purity, before it was corrupted.

The church was not long a virgin; yet some there were that held the truth of Christ in all ages. Our present church holds the same positive truths with the apostles before us. Therefore we say, 'Our church was before Luther,' because our doctrine is apostolical; as also is our church that is continued thereby, because it is built upon apostolical doctrine.' Put the case we cannot show the men, as they ridiculously urge; what is that to the

purpose? From an ignorance of particular men, will they conclude us to be ignorant of the church of Christ, which hath ever been?

Hence the true church may easily be discerned. The points of religion wherein our adversaries differ from us, be but patcheries of their own. They were not 'Yea' in the apostles' times. Their purgatory, invocation of saints, and sacraments of divers kinds, were devised by themselves afterwards. And indeed, for a thousand years after Christ, many of the differences betwixt us and the papists were never heard of, neither were they ever established by any council till the Council of Trent.

Our positive points are grounded upon the Holy Scriptures. We seek the 'old way' and the 'best way,' as Jeremiah adviseth us, Jer. vi. 16. There was no popish trash in Abraham's time among the blessed patriarchs, nor in Christ's time, no, nor many hundred years after. They came in by little and little, by human invention, for their own advantage; a mere policy to get money and abuse the people. Indeed, they hold many of our truths, but they add something of their own to them. They add necessity of tradition to the Scriptures, merits to faith; they add saints to Christ in divine worship. They have seven sacraments to our two. They may safelier therefore come to us than we to them. We hold all that they should hold, only then' own additions we hold not; we leave them to themselves. So much for that.

Doct. 2. To touch only another point that borders a little upon it. Divine truth is of an inflexible nature. This crosseth another rule of theirs; for they hold that they may give what sense of Scripture they will, and that the current of the present church must judge of all former counsels. What! doth the truth vary according to men's judgments? Must we bring the straight rule to the crooked timber for to be measured? Shall the judgment of any man be the rule of God's unerring truth? Shall present men interpret it thus, and say it is so now? And shall others that succeed after say, Whatever it was then, now it is thus? and must we believe all? God forbid.

Doct. 3. This declareth that no man can dispense with God's law. This written word is alike in all. Truth is truth, and error error, whether men think it to be so or no. Reason is reason in Turks as -well as amongst us. The light of nature is the light of nature in any country as well as here. Principles of nature vary not as languages do, they are inbred things. And if principles of nature be inviolable and indispensable, much more is divinity. Filth is filth, we all confess. Opinion ought not to be the rule of things, but the nature of the thing itself.

Therefore, what is against nature, none can dispense withal. God cannot deny himself. What is naught in one age is naught in another, and for ever naught. There is no monarch in the world can dispense with the law of nature, or with the divine law of God. For the opinion of any man in the world is not the rule which he may comfortably live by, but the undoubted light of Christ's -written word.

I speak this the rather to cross their base practices, who, when God calls them to stand for his cause and truth, they will bend and bow the sacred truth (which is always 'yea and amen') to their own by-ends and base respects. As if the opinion of any man in the world were the rule of their faith and obedience. This is to make God no God. Is not right right? Is not the law the law! Is not the word of Christ a word that alters not but remains stedfast to all eternity?

Assure yourselves there is a truth of God that we must maintain to the death, not only in opposing heresy, but resisting of impiety wheresoever we meet it. John Baptist was a martyr when he stood out against Herod, and said, 'Thou must not have thy brother Philip's wife,' Mat. xiv. 3. He would not be meal-mouthed in reproving his sin, but cried out against the unlawfulness of it, though it cost him his life. Men ought to suffer for the truth, and not, for base ends, deny the least word of God, because it is a divine sparkle from himself.

'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him are amen.'

This comes in after this manner. The word that I preached, saith Paul, is invariable, because Christ himself is always yea, and I have preached nothing but Jesus Christ among you. My preaching, then, must needs be a certain and immutable truth.

There are divers readings of the words, but the most material is (as this translation and the best expositors have it), 'All the promises of God in Christ are yea; that is, they are certain and constant in him. And then they are 'amen;' that is, in Christ they are fulfilled. In him they are made, and in him they are accomplished. The whole carriage of the promises are in Christ; for his sake they were first given, and in him they shall be performed. As Christ himself was yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever, so are all God's promises made in him, undoubtedly, eternally, and unchangeably true to all posterities.

Here are divers truths which offer themselves to our consideration.

Obs. first. Take notice, that since the fall of man, it hath pleased our good God to establish a covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, and to make him a second Adam, by whom we might be restored to a better estate than ever we had in the first Adam. In which happy condition there can be no intercourse betwixt God and man without some promise in his Christ, so that now God deals all by promises with us. The reason is this.

Reason 1. How can poor dust and ashes dare to challenge anything of the great Majesty of heaven, without a warrant from himself? How can the conscience be satisfied? (Conscience, you know, is a knowledge together with God.) How can that rest quiet in anything but in what it is assured comes from God? And therefore, for any good I hope for from God, it behoves me to have some promise and word of his mouth for it, this being his constant course of dispensation to his people. While we live in this world we are always under hope. 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 2. Now, hope looks still to the promise, whereof some part is unperformed.

How doth heaven differ from earth but in this? Heaven is a place all for performances. Hero we have some performances to encourage us, but are always under some promise not yet accomplished. And therefore, the manner of our apprehension of God in this world exceedingly differs from that in heaven.

Hero it is by faith and hope; there it is by vision. Vision is fit for performance. Faith and hope look always to a word revealed; God therefore rules his church in this manner for their greater good. Alas! what can we have from God but by the manifestation of his own good will? May we look for favour from God for anything in ourselves? It is a fond conceit.

Reason 2. Again, God will have his church ruled by promises in all ages, to exercise the faithful in prayer and dependence upon him. God will see of what credit he is among men, whether they will rely upon his bare promise or no. He might do us good, and give us no promise; but he will try his graces in us, by arming us against all difficulties and discouragements, till the thing promised be performed to us. Promises are, as it were, the stay of the soul in an imperfect condition; and so is faith in them, until our hopes shall end in full possession. And we must know that divine promises are better than earthly performances. Let God give man never so much in the world, if he have not a promise of better things, all will come to nothing at the last. And

therefore God supports the spirits of his servants against all temptations, both on the right hand and on the left, by sweet promises. He will have them live by faith, which always hath relation to a promise. This is a general ground, then, that God now in Christ Jesus hath appointed to govern his church by way of promises.

But what is a promise?

A promise is nothing but a manifestation of love; an intendment of bestowing some good, and removing some evil from us. A declaring of a man's free engagement in this kind is a promise. It always comes from love in the party promising, and conveys goodness to the believing soul. Now what love can there be in God to us since the fall, which must not be grounded on a better foundation than ourselves? If God love us, it must be in one that is first beloved. Hereupon comes the ground of the promises to be in Jesus Christ. All intercourse between God and us must be in him that is able to satisfy God for us. The almighty Creator will have our debts discharged before he enters into a covenant of peace with us.

Now this Christ hath perfectly done, and thereby reconciled lost sinners. Hereupon the promise immediately issues from God's love in Christ to believing souls. He must first receive all good for us, and we must have it at the second hand from him. The promises in Christ are as the spirits in the body. They run through all the ages of the church. Without him there is no mercy nor comfort to be had. God cannot look on this cursed nature of ours out of Christ; and therefore whosoever apprehends any mercy from God, he must apprehend it in Christ, the promised seed. To make it clearer. Our nature since the fall is odious to God; a sinful, cursed nature remains in the best of us; and therefore that God may look peaceably upon it, he must look upon it in him that hath it undefiled, and in him whom he loves, even his only Son, like unto himself, that hath taken our nature upon him.

Now, our nature in Christ must needs be lovely and acceptable; and if ever God love us, it is for Christ alone, who was predestinated before all worlds to be a sacrifice for us, to be the head of his church, 1 Peter i. 10. He was ordained to do us good before we ourselves were ordained. Christ is the first beloved, and then we. God loves us in his beloved one. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mark i. 11. As if the Lord had said, I am pleased in him, and in all his; in his -whole mystical body. Christ is the Son of God by nature, we by adoption. Whatever good is in us is first and principally in him. God conveys all by the natural Son to the adopted sons.

Therefore, all the promises are made to us in Christ. He takes them from God for us. He himself is the first promise, and all are 'yea and amen in him.' They are not directed to us abstracted from him; but we are elected in Christ, sanctified in him, acquitted from sin through him. 'By his stripes we are healed,' Isa. liii. 5. If Christ had not satisfied the wrath of God by bearing our iniquities upon the cross, we had been liable every moment to condemnation. If he had not been free from our sins, we had for ever lain under the burden of them.

'You are yet in your sins,' saith St Paul, 'if Christ be not risen,' 1 Cor. xv. 17. We are freed from our debts, because Christ our surety is out of prison. He is in heaven, and therefore we are at liberty.

The promises are a deed of gift which we have from and by Christ, who is the first object of all the respect that God hath to us. Why are the angels attendants on us? Because they attend upon Jacob's ladder; that is, upon Christ, that knits heaven and earth together. So that the angels, because they attend upon Christ first, become likewise our attendants. We have a promise of 'eternal life,' but this life is 'in his Son,' 1 John v. 11. God blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in him, Eph. i. 3, and makes us sons in him the natural Son. Whatsoever prerogative we enjoy, it is in Christ first, and so belongs to us; but no further than we by faith are made one with him. How darest thou think of God, who is a 'consuming fire?' Heb. xii. 29, and not think of him as he is pleased and pacified with thy person in Christ, who took thy nature upon him, to be a foundation of comfort, and a second Adam; a public person, satisfying divine justice for all that are members of his body?

We may think upon God with comfort, when we see him appeased in his Christ. As long as he loves Christ, he cannot but love us. Never think to have grace, or salvation, or anything without Christ. Doth God love me? Doth he do good to my soul for my own sake, abstracted from his Son? No, surely. Then should I fly from his presence. But he looks upon me in his beloved, and in him accepts of my person. Therefore our Saviour prayeth, 'I desire thee, blessed Father, that the love wherewith thou lovest me, may be in them, and I in them,' John xvii. 23.

This should direct us in our dealing with God, not to go directly to him, but by a promise. And when we have a promise, look to Christ, in whom it is performed. If we ask anything of God in Christ's name, he will give it us, John xiv. 13. If we thank God for anything, thank him in Christ, that we have it in him. What a comfort is this, that we may go to God in Christ and claim

the promises boldly, because he loves us with the same love he bears to his only beloved Son. If we get fast hold on Christ, and cleave there, God can as soon alter his love to him as alter his love to us; his love is every whit as unchangeable to a believing member, as to Christ the head of the body. The promises are as sure as the love of God in Christ is, upon which they are founded, and from which ‘nothing can separate us,’ Rom. viii. 35. For promises being the fruit of God’s love, and God’s love being founded first upon Christ, it must needs follow, that all the promises are both made and made good to us through him.

If a prince should love a man, and his love should be founded upon the love he bears to his own son, surely such a one may have comfort: that love will never fail him, because it is an affection natural, and therefore unalterable. He will always love his son, and therefore will always delight in him in whom his son delighteth. Now Christ is the everlasting Son of the Father—his dear and only Son, in whom he is ever well pleased, and through whom he cannot be offended with those that are his. So surely as God loves Christ, so surely he loves all that are united to him. There is nothing in the world can separate his love from his own Son; neither is there anything able to separate his love from us that are one with him, Rom. viii. 35. God loves Christ’s mystical body, as well as his natural body. He hath advanced that to glory at his right hand in heaven; and will he, think you, leave his mystical body, the church, in a state of abasement here on earth? No certainly. God loves every member of his Son? for as he gave us to Christ, so him hath he sealed and anointed to be a Saviour for his people.

This is the reason why God looks upon us with a forbearing eye, notwithstanding the continual matter of displeasure he finds in us: he looks on us in his Son; his fine to us is grounded on his love to Christ. And hereupon comes our boldness with God the Father, that we can go to him in all distresses with comfort, and say, ‘Lord, look on thy Son whom thou hast given for us, and in him behold his poor members now before thee.’ ‘In ourselves we have dread, but in thy dearly beloved we have joy in thy presence.’ If we come in the garments of our elder brother, we are sure to get a blessing; but in ourselves, God cannot endure to behold us. If we bring Benjamin to our father, if we carry Christ along with us, then come and welcome.

Upon what unchangeable grounds is the love of God and the faith of a Christian builded? How can the gates of hell prevail against the faith of a true

believer, when it is carried to the promise, and from the promise to God's love? The love of God to Christ shall as soon fail, as the faith of a sincere Christian shall be shaken. The promises else should be of no effect; they should be 'yea and nay,' and not 'yea and amen.'

If the promises could be shaken, the love of God and Christ should be uncertain. Overturn heaven and earth, if we overturn the faith of a true, persevering Christian. There is nothing in the world of that firmness as a believing soul is; the ground he stands upon makes him unmoveable. Our union with the Lord Jesus makes us like 'mount Sinai, that cannot be shaken.' But we must know there are three degrees or steps of love, whereof a promise is the last:—

1. Inward love.
2. Real performance.
3. A manifestation of performance intended before it be done.

Love concealed doth not comfort in the interim. Therefore God, who is love, doth not only affect us for the present, and intend us mercy hereafter; but because he will have us rest sweetly in his bosom, and settle ourselves on his gracious purposes, he gives us in the mean time many 'rich and precious promises,' 2 Pet. i. 4. He not only loves us, and shows the same in deeds now, but he expresseth his future care of us, that we may build on him, as surely as if we had the thing performed already.

By this we see how God loves us. He hath not only an inward liking and good will to us in his breast, but manifests the same by word. He reveals the tenderness of his bowels towards us, that we may have the comfort of it beforehand. God would have us live by faith, and establish ourselves in hope, because these graces fit us for the promise. If there were no promises, there could be no faith nor hope.

What is hope but the expectation of those things that the word saith? And what is faith, but a building on the promise of God? Faith looks to the word of the thing; hope to the thing in the word. Faith looks to the thing promised; hope to the possession and performance of it. 'Faith is the evidence of good not seen,' Heb. xi. 1, making that which is absent as present to us. Hope waits for the accomplishment of that good contained in the word. If we had nothing promised, what need hope? and where were the

foundation of faith? But God being willing to satisfy both (that we may be heavenly-wise, in relying upon a firm foundation; and not as fools, 'trust in vanity,' Ps. iv. 2), in mercy gives us promises, and seals them with an oath for our greater supportment. That love which engaged the Almighty to bind himself to us in 'precious promises,' 2 Pet. i. 4, will furnish us likewise with grace needful till we be possessed of them. He will give us leave to depend upon him, both for happiness and all quieting graces, which may support the soul till it come to its perfect rest in himself.

Now these gracious expressions of our good God may be reduced into divers ranks. I will but touch some few particulars, and show how we should carry ourselves to make a comfortable use of them.

First, There are some universal promises for the good of all mankind; as that God would never destroy the world again, &c., Gen. ix. 11.

Secondly, There are other promises that more particularly concern the church. And these are promises.

(1.) Either of outward things.

(2.) Or of spiritual and eternal things, of grace and glory.

In the manner of promising they admit of this distinction. All the promises of God are made to us either,

(1.) Absolutely, without any condition. So was the promise of sending Christ into the world, and his glorious coming again to judgment. Let the world be as it will, yet Christ did come, and will come again, with thousands of angels, to judge us at the last, 2 Tim. iv. 1.

Or (2.) Conditional; as the promise of grace and glory to God's children, that he will forgive their sins, if they repent, &c. God deals with men (as we do by way of commerce one with another), propounding mercy by covenant and condition; yet his covenant of grace is always a 'gracious covenant.' For he not only gives the good things, but helps us in performing the condition by his Spirit; he works our hearts to believe and to repent.

Thus all promises for outward things are conditional; as thus, God hath promised protection from contagious sickness, and from trouble and war; that he will be 'an hiding-place,' Ps. xxxii. 7, and a 'deliverer' of his people in

time of danger, Ps. xl. 17; that he will do this and that good for them. But these are conditional; so far forth as in his wise providence he sees they may help to preserve spiritual good things in them, and advance the graces of the inward man. For God takes liberty in our outward estate to afflict us or do us good, as may best further our soul's welfare. Because, do what we can with these bodies, they will turn to dust and vanity ere long. We must leave the world behind us. Therefore he looks to our main estate in Christ, to the 'now creature;' and so far as outward blessings may cherish and increase that, so far he grants them, or else he denies them, to his dearest ones.

For we cannot still enjoy the blessings of this life, but our corrupt nature is such, that, except we have somewhat to season the same, we shall surfeit, and not digest them. Therefore they are all given with exception of the cross; as Christ saith, he that doth for him anything, 'shall have a hundredfold here,' Mat. xix. 29, but 'with persecution.' Be sure of that, whatsoever else he hath. Lot Christians look for crosses to season those good things they enjoy in this life.

Use. To come now to some use of the point. Are all the promises, of what kind soever, whether spiritual or outward, temporal or eternal, are they all made to us in Jesus Christ? And are they certainly true, 'yea and amen' in him? Then I beseech you get into Christ betimes, strengthen your interest in him by all means, out of whom we have nothing that is savingly good. Rest not in anything abstracted from him, so as to be accepted with God.

Obj. But you will say, Doth not God do many good things to them that are out of Christ? Doth not the sun shine, and the rain fall, upon the just and the unjust; upon the evil as well as the good? Doth he not clothe, and feed, and protect wicked men daily?

Ans. He doth indeed, it cannot be denied. But are they blessings? Are these favours to them? No; but as God saith to Moses, Deut. xxviii. 16: 'If thou sin against me, cursed shalt thou be in thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep: cursed at home, cursed abroad.' They are cursed in their very blessings. A graceless, brutish person, though he swim with worldly pleasures, and have never such revenues and comings in to maintain his bravery, is yet an accursed creature in the midst of all. For what are we made for, think you? To live here only? Oh no. 'Then we were of all others the most miserable,' 1 Cor. xv. 19. There is an eternity of time a-coming, wherein, after a few days spent in the flesh, we shall live either in

perpetual bliss, or unspeakable torment. The very best things beneath have a snare in them; they rather hinder than further our eternal welfare.

Quest. How doth that appear?

Ans. Because for the most part they make men secure and careless in the worship of God, so as to despise the power of godliness, and follow iniquity with greediness. We may see by men's conversations that outward things are snares to them. They are not promises in Christ; for then they would come out of God's love only, which alone makes mercies to be mercies indeed to us, and without which, the best of blessings will prove but a curse in the end.

If I have anything in this world, any deliverance from evil, or any positive good thing, I may know it is for my benefit, when my heart is made more spiritual thereby, so as to value grace and holiness at the highest rate; I esteeming my being in Christ above all transitory things whatsoever, above riches and honour and the favour of great persons, which at the best is fading. Our interest in him will stand by us, when all these things are withered and shrunk to nothing. Christ is a fountain never drawn dry; his comforts are permanent. The good in the creature soon vanisheth and leaveth the soul empty. Therefore get into Christ speedily, it concerns thee nearly.

For this purpose attend upon the means of salvation, and beg of God that he would make his own ordinances, by his Spirit accompanying the same, effectual to thy soul; that he would open the excellencies of Christ to thee, and draw thy affections to close with him.

Quest. How are we in Christ?

Ans. When, by knowing of him, our knowledge carries our hearts unto him, John xvii. 3. When our wills cleave to that which we know to be excellent and necessary for us, when I firmly adhere to Christ as the only good for me, then I love him, then I rest on him, then I have peace in him.

I may discern that I am in Christ, if upon my knowledge of him, my heart is united to him, and I find peace of conscience in him. Faith hath a quieting and establishing power. If I be in Christ, my soul will be cheered and satisfied with him alone. I know all is yea and amen in him; therefore my soul rests securely here. However our outward condition be various and perplexed, yet our estate in Christ is firm and constant.

Quest. What is a man out of Christ?

Ans. As a man in a storm that hath no clothes to hide his nakedness, or to shelter his body from the violence of the weather. As one in a tempest, that hath not house nor harbour to cover him. As a stone out of the foundation, set lightly by, and scattered up and down here and there. As a branch out of the root; what sap is there in such a thing, it being good for nothing but to be cast into the fire?

A man that is not built up in Christ, planted in him, nor clothed with him, is the most destitute, despicable creature in all the world; and if we look with a single eye, we shall so discern him. Such a man's case is deeply to be bewailed. Had we but hearts to judge righteously, we would prefer the meanest condition of God's child, before the greatest estate of any earthly monarch, he their flourishing felicity never so resplendent. Oh! the miserable and woeful plight that all profane wretches are in, who neglect grace and the mysteries of Christ, to gratify their base lusts. Such an one, there is but a step between him and hell; he hath no portion in the Lord Jesus. 'I account all dung and dross,' saith St Paul, 'in comparison of Christ, to be found in him, not having on mine own righteousness,' Philip, iii. 8. Happy is that man at the day of judgment, who thus appears.

Use 2. Again, if so be that all promises are 'yea and amen in Christ,' then here take notice of the stability of a Christian, that hath promises to uphold him. Compare him with a man that hath present things only, with an Esau that abounds with worldly goods; and how great is the difference? God gives them their portion here, as he saith to Dives, 'Thou hadst thy good things,' Luke xvi. 25, seq.: that thou chiefly caredst for, thou hadst them here, but Lazarus had pain, misery, and poverty. Now therefore the case is altered; he is advanced, 'and thou art tormented.'

A believing Christian enjoys the sweetness of many promises in this life (for God is still delivering, comforting, and perfecting of him; renewing of his spirit, and supplying him with inward peace); but the greatest part is yet to be accomplished. Perfection of grace and glory is to come. He is a child, he is a son. The promise here is his chief estate.

Another man hath present payment, and that is all he cares for; he hath something in hand, and swells with a conceit of happiness thereby. Alas! what are we the better to have a great deal of nothing? Solomon, that had tried all the world, resolves it to 'vanity and vexation of spirit,' Eccles. i. 14.

All things below are uncertain, and we are uncertain in the use of them. If we have no better a life than a natural one, eternal joy appertains not to us. Take a Christian and strip him in your thoughts from all the good things in the world, he is yet a happier man than the greatest worldly favourite out of Christ; for the one hath nothing but present things, with a great deal of addition of misery, which his ease and contentment makes him more sensible of; as being more tender and apprehensive of an evil than other men. The other, though he want many comforts of this life, and enjoys not present performances; yet he is rich in bills and bonds. God is bound to him, who hath promised he 'will never forsake him, but be his portion for ever,' Heb. xiii. 5. He hath a title to every communicable good. 'Godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come,' 1 Tim. iv. 8. A happy man! Whatever is most useful for his safe conduct to heaven, he is sure to have it. He that will give us a kingdom, will not deny us daily bread; he that hath prepared a country for us, will certainly preserve us safe, till we come there.

Besides that we have here in performance, we have many excellent promises of a greater good in expectation, which in Christ are all 'yea and amen.' They are certain, though our life be uncertain, and the comforts of our life, less than life itself, mutable and perishing. If life, the foundation of outward comforts, be but a vapour, what are all the comforts themselves, think you?

It is a Christian's rejoicing in the midst of all changes beneath, that he hath promises invested into him from above that are lodged in his heart, and made his own by faith, which have 'a wondrous peculiarising virtue to make that a man's own that is otherwise generally propounded in the gospel. A Christian, take him at all uncertainties, he hath somewhat to build on, that is 'yea and amen,' undoubtedly sure, that will stick by him.

I speak this to commend the estate of a believing Christian; to make you in love with it, seeing in all the changes and varieties of this world he hath somewhat to take to. In all the dangers of this life he hath a rock and chamber of providence to go unto, as it is Isa. xxvi. 20. God hath secret rooms to hide his children in in times of public disturbance, when there is a confusion of all things. God hath a safe abiding place for thee.

'I have many troubles,' saith David, 'but God is my defence continually,' Ps. lxxxviii. 4. He is my 'shield and strong tower;' whatsoever I want I have it in him. What a comfort is this!

A Christian knows either he shall be safe here or in heaven, and therefore rests securely. 'He that dwells in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' Ps. xci. 1, 2; that is, in the love and protection of God above. As Moses saith, 'Lord, thou hast been our habitation from everlasting to everlasting,' Ps. xc. 1; that is, thou art our sure help in the greatest extremity that can befall us in any age of the world.

Therefore build on his promise, for God and his word are all one. If we have nothing to take to when troubles come, woo unto us! In ourselves considered, we are even as grass, and as a tale that is told, soon vanishing. But our estate in God is durable. We have here no continuing city; sickness may come, and death may environ us the next moment. Happy are they that have God for their habitation. We dwell in him when we are dead. When we leave this world we shall live with God for ever. 'The righteous is not troubled for evil tidings,' Ps. cxii. 7. He is not shaken from his rock and stay. He fears no danger, because 'his heart is fixed,' ver. 8.

What a blessed estate is it to be in Christ, to have promises in him, to be protected and preserved, not only whilst we are in this vale of tears, but when this earthly tabernacle shall be dissolved, even to all eternity. If our hearts be fixed on God, let us hear evil tidings of war, or famine, or pestilence, let it be what it will, blessed men are we. 'Every word of God is tried as silver in the fire,' saith the psalmist, Ps. xii. 6. The promises are tried promises; we may safely rest upon them. But if we have nothing to take to when troubles arise, we are as a naked man in a storm, without any shelter, encompassed round with distress and misery.

The promises are our inheritance, yea, our best inheritance in this life. Though the Lord should strip us naked, and take away all things else, yet if the promises remain ours, we are rich men, and may say with the psalmist, 'My lot is fallen into a good ground; thy testimonies are better unto me than thousands of gold and silver,' Ps. xvi. 6. For the promises are as so many obligations, whereby God is bound to his poor creature. And if wretched men think themselves as rich as they have bonds, though they have never a penny in their purses, much more may a true Christian, who hath the promises of Christ for his security, esteem himself a wealthy person; as having many bonds whereby not man, but God, is engaged to him, and that not only for temporal good things, but for heavenly favours and spiritual blessings, for all which he may sue God at his pleasure, and desire him to make good his word of truth.

There is little difference betwixt a poor Christian and him that abounds in this world's riches; only this, the one hath wealth in his own possession, the other hath it in God's bond; the one hath it in hand, the other in trust. As for the worldling, he hath but a cistern when he hath most; whereas every faithful soul hath the spring-head, even God himself to fly unto in all distresses, who will never fail him, but be a 'sun and a shield,' to defend us from all evil and preserve us in all goodness all our days. But I goon.

'Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath also anointed us, is God.'

Obs. 1. Here observe, that the Christian needs not only converting but establishing grace. He that hath begun any good work in us must perfect it. The God of strength must give up his promise to support our weakness, without which we cannot stand. Peter was in the state of grace, and yet when God did not stablish him, we see how he fell. The weakest believer with the establishing grace of God will stand; and the strongest Christian, without divine assistance, will sink and fall away.

Obs. 2. Whence this may be further considered, that the life of a Christian is a perpetual dependent life. He not only lives by faith in his first conversion, but ever after. He depends upon God for protection and strength throughout his whole course. God doth establish us in Christ. The ignorance of this makes men subject to backsliding. For when we trust to grace received, and seek not for new supply, we are straight of Peter's condition, 'Though all forsake thee, yet will not I,' Luke xxii. 83, which occasioned his shameful fall. He had too much confidence in grace received.

God is therefore fain to humble his children, to teach them dependence. And usually where any special grace is bestowed upon sinners, God joins something therewith to put them in mind that they do not stand by their own strength. Peter makes a glorious confession, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,' Mat. xvi. 17, 18, 19; and Christ honoured him exceedingly, saying, 'Upon this rock will I build my church.' But yet by and by we see he calls him, 'Satan, get thee behind me,' Mat. xvi. 23, to teach us that we stand not by our own power. When we are strong, it is of God; and when we are weak, it is of ourselves. Jacob wrestled with the Almighty, and was a prevailers, but he was fain to halt for it. Though he had the victory, and overcame at last, yet he was stricken with lameness all his days. God did this to mind him that he had that strength whereby he prevailed out of himself.

Use. A Christian then should set upon nothing in his own strength. Hannah saith comfortably, 'No man shall be strong in his own might,' 1 Sam. 2, 9. God is all our sufficiency. Man naturally affects 'a kind of divinity, and will set upon things in confidence of his own abilities, without prayer and seeking of God's help. He thinks to compass great matters, and bring things to a good issue by his own wit and discretion. Oh! delude not yourselves. This cannot be. 'Acknowledge God in all thy ways, and he shall direct thy paths, Prov. iii. 6. Seek unto the Lord in every enterprise thou goest about; acknowledge him in the beginning, progress, and issue of all thy employments. What do we but make ourselves gods, when we set upon business without invocation and dependence? A Christian is wondrous weak, even vanity of himself; but take him as he is built upon the promises, and as he is in God, and then he is a kind of almighty person, 'He can do all things through Christ that strengthens him,' Philip, iv. 13. A Christian is in sort omnipotent whilst he commits his ways to God, and depends upon the promise; otherwise he is weakness itself, the most impotent creature in the world.

Let God, therefore, have all the glory of our establishing, and depend on him by prayer for the same. As all comes of his mere grace, so let all return to his mere glory. 'Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to thy name be given the praise,' Ps. cxv. 1. It is the song of the church militant on earth, and it is the song of the church triumphant in heaven, that all glory is to God in the whole carriage of our salvation. The promises are in him. He only made the covenant, and he must perform it to us: without him we can do nothing. Labour, therefore, to be wise in his wisdom, strong in his strength, to be all in all in Christ Jesus.

Obj. How shall we know that a man hath establishing grace?

Ans. His assurance is firm when his temptations are great, and his strength to resist little; and yet notwithstanding he prevails over them. Satan is strong and subtle. Now if we can stand against his snares, it is a clear evidence of greater strength than is in ourselves. In great afflictions, when God seems an enemy, and clouds appear between him and us, if then a man's faith can break through all, and in the midst of darkness see God shining in Christ upon him, and resolve, 'Though thou kill me, yet I will trust in thee,' Job xiii. 15; here is a strong establishing.

In the times of martyrdom there was fire and faggot, and the frowns of bloody men; but who were the persons suffering? Even many children, old

men and women, the weakest of creatures. Notwithstanding the Spirit of God was so strong in these feeble ones, as their lives were not precious to them; but the torments and threatenings of their cruel persecutors were cheerfully undergone by them, as Heb. xi. 34, seq. Hero was God's power in man's infirmity. If we have not something above nature, how is it possible we should hold out in great trials?

Means to obtain establishing grace.

By what means may a Christian obtain this stablishing grace?

First, Labour for fundamental graces. If the root be strengthened, the tree will stand fast.

(1.) Humiliation is a special radical grace. The foundation of religion is very low. Abasement of spirit is in all the parts of holiness. Every grace hath a mixture of humility, because they are all dependencies on God. Humility is an emptying grace, and acknowledged that in ourselves there is nothing. If God withhold his influence, I am gone; if he withdraw his grace, I shall be like another man, as Samson was when his hair was cut off. Self-emptiness prepares for spiritual fulness. 'When I am weak,' saith blessed Paul, 'then I am strong;' that is, when I feel and acknowledge my weakness, then my strength increases; otherwise a man is not strong when he is weak; but when he is sensible and groans under the burden of his infirmities, then he is inwardly strong.

(2.) Another fundamental grace is dependence upon God; for considering our own insufficiency, and that faith is a grace that grows out of ourselves, and lays hold of the righteousness of another to justify us, nothing can be more necessary to quiet the soul. 'Believe, and you shall be established:' as the promises are sure in themselves, so should we repose firm confidence in them.

Obj. But how doth God establish us by faith?

Ans. By working sound knowledge in us: 'This is life eternal, to know thee,' John xvii. 3. When we know the truth of God's word aright, we have a firm ground to depend on; for the more a man knows God in covenant, the more he knows Christ and the promises, the more he will trust and rely upon them. 'They that know thy name will trust in thee,' Ps. ix. 10, saith the prophet. Therefore labour for certainty of knowledge, that thou mayest have

a certainty of faith. What is the reason our faith is weak? Because we are careless to increase in knowledge. The more we know of God, the more we shall trust in him. The more we know of a man that he is able and just of his word, the more safely we put confidence in him. So the more our security is in God's promises, as his bonds increase, so our trust will be strengthened.

(3.) Thirdly, if thou wouldst have establishing grace, beg it earnestly of God. Our strength in him is altogether by prayer. Bind him, therefore, with his own promise; beseech him to do unto thee according to his good word. He is the God of strength, desire of him the spirit of strength; allege to him thy own weakness and inability without him, and that if he helps not, thou shalt soon be overcome; lay open thy wants in God's presence; show him how unable thou art of thyself to withstand temptations, to bear crosses, to perform duties, to do or suffer anything aright; turn his gracious promises into prayers; desire God that he would stablish thee by his grace; that he would prop and uphold thy soul in all extremities.

Quest. What is the reason that Christians are so daunted, and fly off- in time of danger?

Ans. They have no faith in the promise. The righteous is as mount Sinai, that shall not be moved. He builds on a foundation that can never be shaken, for the heart is never drawn to any sinful vanity, or frightened with any terror of trouble, till faith lets go its hold. Out of God there is nothing for the soul safely to stay itself upon.

No marvel to see men fall that rest on a broken reed. Alas! whatsoever is besides God, is but a creature; and can the creature be other than changeable? The comfort that we have in God never fadeth; it is an abiding, lasting comfort, such as contents the soul, and satisfies all the wants and desires of it, which things beneath can never accomplish.

We see that the heavens continue; and the earth, without any other foundation, hangs in the midst of the world by the bare word of the Almighty. Therefore well may the soul stay itself on that, when it hath nothing else in sight to rely upon.

In this case Christians should look, first, that their principles and foundations be good; and, secondly, builded strongly upon them. For the soul is as that which it relies on: if upon empty things, itself becomes poor and empty; which the devil knowing, strives to unloose our hearts from our

Maker, and draw us to rely upon false objects. He sees full well, that whilst our souls cleave close to God, there is no prevailing against us by any malice or subtlety of men or devils. The saints, in him, are bold and undaunted in the midst of troubles and torments. Indeed, the sweetest communion with God is, when we are beaten from other helps: though misery upon misery encounters us below, yet there is still succour issuing from above to a believing soul. If God hath it in heaven, faith will fetch it down and enjoy the sweetness of it here. That man can never do amiss that hath his dependency upon the Almighty; there being no communion like that of a faithful heart with the Lord.

It is the office of faith to quiet our souls in all distresses; for it relies upon God for heaven itself, and all the necessary provision, till we come thither. Strengthen faith, therefore, and you strengthen all. What can daunt that soul, which in the sorest affliction hath the great God for his friend? Such a spirit dares bid defiance to all the powers of darkness. Satan may for a time exercise, but he can never wholly depress a gracious heart. True believers can triumph over that which others are slaves unto.

They can set upon spiritual conflicts, and endure fiery trials, which others tremble to think of. They can put off themselves, and be content to be nothing, so their God may appear the greater; and dare undertake or undergo anything for the glory of their Maker. Considering they are not their own, but have given up themselves to Christ, 'they count not their lives, or anything that is theirs, dear for him,' Acts xx. 24.

He that stablisheth us with you is .God, who hath anointed us, &c.

Messiah signifies 'anointed.' Our nature is enriched in Christ with all graces: 'He is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows' for us, Ps. xlv. 7, that we might have a spring of grace in our own nature; that God and Christ being one, and we being in the Lord Jesus, might have all our anointing of the first anointed, for 'of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John i. 16.

Quest. What are those graces which we receive from Christ's fulness?

A us. (1.) First, The grace of favour and acceptance; for the same love that God bears to Christ, he bears to all his, though not in so high a degree.

(2.) Secondly, The grace of sanctification, answerable to the grace of sanctification in him. Every renewed work in us comes from Christ.

(3.) Thirdly, The rich privileges and prerogatives that issue to persons sanctified. We have dignity for dignity, favour for favour, gracious qualifications for gracious qualifications in Christ. God anoints us all in his Son. As the ointment that was poured upon Aaron ran down to 'the skirts of his garment,' so the weakest Christian is stablished with grace by Christ. Grace runs from the Head to the poorest member, 'the hem of the garment.' Every one that doth but touch Christ, draws virtue and strength from him.

Quest. Why is it called here an anointing?

Am. Because, as the holy anointing, Exod. xxx. 31-33, was not to be applied to profane uses, so neither are the graces of the Spirit (God being the author of them) to be slighted and undervalued by the professors of them.

Quest. What are the virtues of this ointment?

Ans. First, It hath a cherishing power; it revives the drooping sold, and cheers a fainting spirit. When men are ready to sink under the burden of their sins, this easeth them.

Second, Anointing hath a strengthening power. It makes our limbs vigorous. So doth grace fortify the soul, nothing more. Our life is a combating life with Satan, and temptations of all sorts; therefore we need continual anointing to make us nimble and active in resisting our enemy. Oil hath a suppling quality; so the Spirit of God makes pliable the joints of the soul. It supports us with hidden strength, and enables us to encounter great oppositions, and to be victorious through Christ over all.

Grace is little in quantity, but it is mighty in operation. It carries the soul through difficulties; nothing can stand in the way of a gracious man, no, not the gates of hell. The spirit of grace that is in a Christian is stronger than he that is in the world. 'A grain of mustard seed,' the very least measure of true holiness, is stronger than the greatest measure of opposition. A Christian's strength lies out of himself. He never overcomes by his own power: 'He can do all things through Christ assisting him,' Philip, iv. 13. Otherwise he is a most impotent creature, unable to do or suffer anything, ready to give over at the least trouble, and sink under every pressure of affliction.

Third, Again, ointment doth excellently delight and refresh our spirits; as we see the box in the gospel, when it was opened, the whole house smelled of it, John xii. 3. So grace is a wondrous sweet thing. Before we are anointed with the Spirit of Christ, with stablishing grace, what are we but a company of nasty, abominable persons in the eyes of God? All things are accursed to us, and we are accursed in whatever we do. God cannot look on us but as loathsome creatures; as the prophet saith, 'I would not so much as look on thee, if it were not for Jehoshaphat's sake,' 2 Kings iii. 14.

That which makes a man sweet is grace. This makes our nature, that is noisome and offensive in the nostrils of the Almighty, in itself, to become pleasant and amiable. A wicked man is a vile man, an ulcerous, deformed creature. Grace is of a healing nature wheresoever it is. This cures our spiritual distempers, beautifying the inner man, and making the whole frame of a Christian's carriage sweet and delectable.

(1.) First, to God, who loves the scent of his own grace, wheresoever he finds it.

(2.) Secondly, to angels. The conversion of sinners rejoiceth them, Luke xv. 10. When our custody is committed to their charge, how are they delighted with the beauty of holiness shining in us! The graces of God in his saints are a feast to them. The very name of a godly and gracious man 'is as a sweet ointment' everywhere, Cant. i. 8.

(3.) Holy men, when they are read of in stories, what a savour do they cast in the church! So far as a Christian is a 'new creature,' it makes him in love with himself, scorning to be so undervalued as to defile himself with base services. So far as a man is gracious, he gives himself to honourable employments. Being a vessel of grace, he improves his abilities to glorious uses, esteeming things below too mean for him.

Grace is a wondrous pleasant thing, offensive to none but to wicked men, that have no savour of God or goodness. It sweetens the soul, makes it delectable for Christ and his Holy Spirit to lodge in, as in 'a garden of spices.' A gracious man, that hath subdued his corruptions, is wondrous amiable, both to himself and to the communion of saints. His heart is 'as fine silver.' Everything is sweet that comes from him. Grace is full of comfort to a man's own conscience, the sense of which enlargeth the soul to all holy services.

Fourthly, An ointment hath another property, it consecrates persons to holy uses. Anointed persons are raised above the ordinary rank. The graces of God's Spirit elevate men above the condition of others with whom they live. Anointed persons are sacred persons, they are inviolable: 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm,' Ps. cv. 15. We wrong the 'apple of God's eye,' Zech. ii. 8, we offer indignity to Christ himself, if we hurt these. Indeed, nothing can hurt them; but God, by his overruling power, turns all for their good.

Lastly, An ointment is a royal liquor. It will be above all. So the graces of God's Spirit, where they are, will be uppermost, they will guide and govern all. As if a man have excellent parts, grace will rule these and make them serviceable to Christ his truth and members. If we have weakness and corruption, grace will subdue it by little and little, and never leave conflicting till it hath got the victory.

What are our souls without God's anointing? Dead, stinking, offensive to God, to good men, and to ourselves. We cannot see with peace the visage of our own souls. Who can reflect seriously into his heart and life without horror, that hath no grace? A man that sees his conscience awakened without this anointing, what is he? Surely as the body without the soul. It is not all the excellencies of the soul laid upon a dead body, or all the goodly ornaments that bedecked it, can keep it from stinking, and being a loathsome object, because it wants the soul to quicken and enliven it to good employments. Of itself it is but a piece of earth. All the vigour and life that the body hath is communicated from the soul. They are beholden to our souls for many things. Put the richest ornaments whatsoever upon the body, and not the Spirit of grace upon the soul (to cherish and refresh the same, that it may appear lovely in God's sight), all is to no purpose.

Likewise this anointing hath relation to the persons anointed: kings, priests, and prophets. Christ is primarily anointed, and all our grace is derived from him. He teacheth us divine things by a divine light. The poorest Christian in the world, whose heart is right with God, sees good things with such convincing love, that he embraces them, and ill things with such a convincing hatred, that he abhors them. A man that lives without God in the world may talk, but he cannot do; he may speak of death, but he dares not die; he trembles to think of the last tribunal, and of resigning his soul into the hands of his Maker. Such an one may discourse of suffering, but when it comes to the point, his heart fails him. Oh! how he shrinks when danger

approacheth. What indirect courses will he take to save his skin! How hardly is corrupt self brought under! How heavily do men come off in this point of doing and suffering for Christ, laying down all at his feet, and resolving to be disposed of at his pleasure in everything. Men speak much of patience and self-denial, but they do not practise them. These virtues shine not forth in their conversation, which is the shame of religion. Only a true Christian hath the right knowledge of the doing of things, and is able to speak a word 'in due season,' Isa. 1. 4, to reprove, to admonish, to comfort. Every member in the communion of saints hath some qualification for the good of the whole body.

A faithful man is likewise spiritually anointed a priest to stand before God Almighty. He pours out his soul for himself and for others, having God's ear open at all times to his suits. Every sincere Christian is a favourite in heaven. He hath much credit there, which he improves for the welfare of the church here below. And he keeps himself as a priest, unspotted of the world. A true Christian is taught of God, and knows the meaning of that law of his, which prohibiteth priests so much as to touch defiled things. Therefore he studies innocency; he runs not after the course of the multitude, neither is carried away with the streams of the times. He will not converse familiarly with those that may stain him but so far as his calling leads him, lest he should thereby contaminate his spirit. A Christian priest hath his heart always to the 'holy of holies,' that so he may offer up thanks and praise to God, and offer himself a sacrifice to him. His endeavour is to kill and slay those beasts, those lusts, that lurk in his heart, contrary to the Almighty.

Lastly, He that is anointed by the Spirit is a king in regard of his great possessions, for all are ours. 'Things present, and things to come, life and death, prosperity and adversity,' all help us to heaven, Rom. viii. 38. Evil things are ours in advantage and success, though in disposition they be not ours, but have a hostile disposition in them. God overpowers the evil of things, and gives a Christian a living principle of grace, to suck sweet out of sour, and draw good out of evil. What a king is this, that even the most terrible things are at his command, and work for the best unto him! He conquers and brings under his greatest enemies, and fears neither death or judgment, nor the vengeance to come. Knowing God in Christ to be his reconciled Father, he rests assured all things else will be at peace with him. Others have kingdoms out of themselves, but in themselves they are slaves. Every lust leads them away captive. A Christian is such a king as hath a

kingdom within himself. He hath peace and joy and rest from base allurements, and terrors of conscience. He walks by rule, and therefore knows how to govern all. The glory of his Maker is the chief thing he eyes, and to that he refers every action.

‘Who hath anointed us, and sealed us.’

Anointing and sealing go together. The same God anoints us doth also seal us. Both are to secure us of our happy condition. Now Christ is the first sealed: John vi. 27, ‘Him hath the father sealed.’ God hath set Christ apart from others, hath distinguished him, and set a stamp upon him to be the Messiah by the graces of the Spirit, whereof he was richly beautified, and by many miracles, whereby he showed that he was the Son of God; by his resurrection from the dead, by his calling of the Gentiles, and many other things.

Christ being sealed himself, he sealed all that he did for our redemption with his blood, and hath added for the strengthening of our faith outward seals, the sacraments, to secure his love more firmly to us.

But in this place another manner of sealing is to be understood. For here is not meant the sealing of Christ, but the sealing of us that have communion with him. The same Spirit that seals the Redeemer seals the redeemed.

Quest. What is the manner of our sealing by the Spirit?

Ans. (1.) Sealing we know hath divers uses. First of all, it doth imprint a likeness of him that doth seal. When the king’s image is stamped upon the wax, everything in the wax answers to that in the seal, face to face, eye to eye, body to body. So we are said to be sealed when we carry in our souls the image of the Lord Jesus; for the Spirit sets the stamp of Christ upon every true convert. There is the likeness of Christ in all things to be found in him. As the child answers the father, foot for foot, finger for finger in proportion, but not in quantity, so it is in the sealing of a believer. There is a likeness in the soul that is sealed by the Spirit to the Lord Jesus. There is understanding of the same heavenly supernatural truths; there is a judging of things as Christ judgeth, a loving of that which he loves, and a hating of that which he hates; a rejoicing to do that which he delights in, and a grief to commit anything that displeaseth his majesty. Every affection of the soul is carried that way that the affections of our blessed Saviour are carried, in proportion; everything in the soul is answer-able to him in its degree.

There is no grace in Christ, but there is the like in every Christian in some measure. The obedience of Christ to his Father, even to the death, is to be found in every true Christian. The humility whereby Christ abased himself, it is in every renewed heart. Christ works in the soul that receives him a conformity to himself. The soul that believes that Christ hath loved him, and done such great things for him, is ambitious to express Christ in all his ways. Being once in Christ, we shall delight to be transformed more and more unto him. To bear the image of the 'second Adam' upon our breasts, to make it appear that Jesus Christ lives in us, and that we 'live not to ourselves, but to him that died for us,' 2 Cor. v. 15; to be meek and heavenly-minded as he was, talking and discoursing of spiritual things, going about doing good everywhere; active for God, fruitful in holiness, doing and receiving all the good we are able, drawing others from this world to meditate of a better estate, labouring for the advancement of God's kingdom, and approving ourselves to him. This is one use of sealing, to imprint a likeness.

(2.) A second use of the seal is distinction. Sealing is a stamp upon one thing among many. It distinguisheth Christians from others, as we shall see after.

(3.) Again, it serves for appropriation. Men seal those things that are their own. Merchants, we see, set their stamp on those wares which they have or mean to have a right unto. It pleaseth God thus to condescend unto us, by applying himself to human contracts. He appropriates his own to show that he hath chosen and singled them out for himself to delight in.

(4.) Sealing further serves to make things authentical, to give authority and excellency. The seal of the prince is the authority of the prince. This gives validity to things, answerable to the dignity and esteem of him that seals.

These are the four principal uses of scaling; and God by his Spirit doth all these to his. He stamps his own image upon us; he distinguisheth us from others, even from the great refuse of the world. God by his Spirit appropriates us to himself; he makes us to be his, and shows that we are his. He likewise authoriseth us, and puts an excellency upon us, to secure us against all temptations. When we have God's seal on us, we stand firm in the greatest trial. 'Who shall separate us from the love of God?' Rom. viii. 35. We dare defy all objections of Satan, and accusations of conscience whatsoever. A man that hath God's seal stands impregnable in the most tempestuous season; for it is given for our assurance, and not for God's. The Lord knows

who are his. He seals not because he is ignorant, but for our comfort and establishment.

Quest. Whether is the Spirit itself this seal, or the work of the Spirit, and the graces thereof wrought in us?

Ans. I answer, the Spirit of God, where it is, is a sufficient seal that God hath set us out for himself; for whosoever hath the Spirit of Christ, the same is his. He is the author of our sealing; so that, except you take the Spirit for that which is wrought by the Spirit, you have not the comprehension of sealing, for that which the Spirit worketh is the seal. The Spirit goes always with his own mark and impression. Other seals, when they are removed from the stamp, the stamp remains still. But the Spirit of God dwells and keeps a perpetual residence in the heart of a Christian, guiding him, moving him, enlightening him, governing him, comforting him, doing all offices of a seal in his heart, till he hath brought him to heaven. The Holy Ghost never leaves us. It is the sweetest inhabitant that over lodging was given to. He doth all the saving good that is done to the soul, and is perpetually with his own work in joy and comfort. Though he seem sometimes to be in a corner of the heart, and is not easily discerned, yet he always dwells in his sealed ones.

Quest. What is the stamp that the Spirit seals us withal?

Ans. 1. The Spirit works in this order for the most part. First of all, the Spirit doth, together with the word (which is the instrument, and the chariot wherein it is carried) convince us of the ill that is in us, and the misery attending on us for the same. It convinceth us of sin, and the fearful estate we are in by that, and abaseth us thereupon. Therefore it is called the 'spirit of bondage,' Rom. viii. 15, because it makes a man tremble and quake, till he see his peace made up in Christ.

Ans. 2. When he hath done this, then he convinceth us of righteousness, by a sweet light discovering the excellencies of the Lord Jesus, and the remedy in him provided for sinners. God opens the eye of the soul, to see the all-sufficiency of his Son's sanctification, and inclines the heart to cast itself by faith upon him.

Ans. 3. When we are thoroughly convinced of the ill that is in us, and of the good that is in Christ, and are moved by the Holy Ghost to go out of ourselves, and embrace reconciliation in the Lord Jesus, then a super-added work is vouchsafed unto us; for the Spirit daily perfecteth his own work. He

adds, therefore, after all, his seal, to confirm us; which seal is not faith; for the apostle saith, 'After you believed, you were sealed,' Eph. i. 13, where we see the work of faith and sealing distinguished. First, the soul is set in a good estate, and then follows assurance and establishment.

Quest. But what needs confirmation when we believe? Is not faith confirmation enough: when a man may know by a private reflect act of the soul that he is in a state of grace?

Ans. This act of ours in believing is oft terribly shaken, and God is wondrous desirous that we should be secure of his love. He knows he can have no glory, nor we any solid peace else. Therefore when we by faith have sealed to his truth, he sees that we need further sealing that our faith be current and good; for all is little enough in the time of temptation; the single witness of our soul is not strong enough in great assaults. For sometimes the Spirit is so tossed and disquieted with temptations, that we cannot reflect aright on ourselves, nor discern what is in our own breasts without much ado. Therefore God first works faith to apply the promise, 'Whosoever believes in Christ shall be saved,' Acts ii. 21. I believe in Christ, therefore I shall be saved; and then sealeth this belief with an addition of his Holy Spirit; for this sealing is a work upon believing, an honouring of faith with a superadded confirmation.

Quest. How shall we know that there is such a spiritual sealing in us?

Ans. (1.) I answer, when we truly believe, the 'Spirit of adoption,' Rom. viii. 15, reveals unto us that we are the 'sons of God' by a secret whispering and intimation to the soul (which the believing heart feels better than I am able to express), saying, 'Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven.' There is a sweet kiss vouchsafed to the soul: the Lord refresheth it with the light of his countenance, and assures it that all enmity is now slain. I am thy salvation. Thou art for ever mine, and I am thine. Because thou believest, behold thou art honoured to be my child.

Ans. (2.) Again the 'Spirit of adoption,' quickens and fills the soul with heavenly ejaculations to God; it stirs up fervent supplications to cry, 'Abba, Father.' The soul when it truly believes, hath a bold and familiar speech to God.

There are two things in the prayer of a Christian that are incompatible with a carnal man: there is, first, an inward confidence; and secondly, an

earnestness in the soul, whereby he goes to God as a child to his loving, father, not considering his own worthiness or means, but the constant love that is borne to him.

This spiritual speech of God to the soul, and of the soul to God, is an evident demonstration of our truth in grace, because we can do that which no hypocrite in the world can attain to.

Ans. (3.) Thirdly, This sealing of the Spirit after we believe, is known by the work of sanctification which it effecteth in us. The Holy Spirit seals our spirits, by stamping the likeness of Christ upon us; so as when a man finds in his soul some lineaments of the heavenly image, he may know thereby that he is 'translated from death to life,' Col. i. 13. When he finds his heart subdued to humility and obedience, to such a holy and gracious frame as Christ's was, he may clearly discern that he hath something more than the 'old man' in him. When a man can say, Naturally I am proud, but now I can abase myself; naturally I am full of malice, now I can love and pray heartily for my enemies; naturally I am lumpish and dead-hearted, now I can joy in the Holy Ghost; naturally I am apt to distrust the Lord, and be discontented with my condition, now I can rest securely upon his promise and providence; sin hath been my delight, now it is my sorrow and heart-breaking; I find somewhat contrary to corruption in me, I carry the image of the 'second Adam' about me now; I say, whosoever hath this blessed change, may rest assured of his right to happiness. 'Know you not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' saith the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. A Christian that upon a thorough search finds something of Christ always in his soul, can never want a sweet evidence that he is 'sealed to the day of redemption.'

Ans. (4.) The fourth way is by the joy of the Spirit; which is the beginning of heaven as it were, and a possessing of glory before our time. There are few of God's children, but in the course of their pilgrimage, first or last, have this divine impression wrought in them, enlarging and ravishing their souls to joy in the Almighty.

Yet this is especially seen after conflict, when the soul hath combated with some strong corruption or temptation. 'To him that overcomes will I give of the hidden manna,' saith Christ, 'and a white stone, which none can read but he that hath it,' Rev. ii. 17; that is, he shall have assurance that he is in the state of grace, and the sweet savour of goodness itself shall be his portion. Usually God gives comfort after we have conflicted with some sinful disposition and have got the victory, as we see in Job. After God had

exercised that champion a long time, at the last he discovered himself in a glorious manner to him, Job xlii. 12.

In the midst of afflictions, when a Christian is under great crosses, and God sees he must be supported with spiritual strength, or else he sinks, then he puts in with supply from above. When the creature cannot help us, the Creator of all things will. Thus Paul in the midst of the dungeon, being sealed with the Spirit, 'sang at midnight' when he was in the stocks, Acts xvi. 24, seq.: and so David in the midst of persecution; Daniel in a lion's den; the three children in the fiery furnace, &c. God doth as parents, smile on their little ones when they are sick and dejected. He reserves his choicest comforts for the greatest exponents. When God hath a great work for his children to do, or some sharp suffering for them to undergo, as an encouragement beforehand, he oft enlargeth their spirits that they may be able to go through all; as our Saviour Christ had James and John with him upon the mountain, to strengthen them against his ensuing suffering.

Let us then examine ourselves by that which hath been delivered. Hath God spoken to thy soul, and said, I am thy salvation,' 'thy sins are remitted,' and thy person received into my favour? Doth God stir up thy spirit to call upon him, especially in extremity, and to go with boldness and earnestness to his throne? Surely this is an evidence of the seal of the Spirit; for whoever wants this cannot look God in the face when distress is upon him. Saul in this case goes to the witch, and Ahithophel to desperate conclusions. Judas in extremity, we see what becomes of him. So every one that hath not this sealing of the Spirit (to whom God speaks not peace, 'by shedding abroad the love of Christ in his heart,' Rom. v. 5), must needs sink as lead in the bottom of the sea, which hath no consistence, till it come to the centre, to hell. Did you ever feel the joy of the Spirit in holy duties, after inward striving against your lusts, and getting ground of them? This is a certain sign that God hath sealed you.

Quest. But you will say, How can that be a seal? A seal continues with the thing, but the joy of the Spirit comes after the work of the Spirit, and abides not with us.

Ans. I answer, though we have not always the joy of the Spirit, yet we have the Spirit of joy; which, though it be not known by joy, yet may be discerned by its operation and working. A Christian may have a gracious work of the Spirit in him, and yet want the delight and joy of the Spirit. Therefore when that fails, look to thy sanctification, and see what

resemblance of Christ is formed in thee. See if thy heart be humble and broken; if thou have a heavenly disposition like to thy Saviour. When the joy of the Spirit ceaseth, go to the work of the Spirit, and from the work of the Spirit to the voice of the Spirit. Canst thou cry to God with strong supplications? or if thou canst not pray with distinct words, canst thou mourn and groan? 'The Spirit helps our infirmities, when we know not what to ask,' Rom. viii. 26. This sighing and groaning is the voice of God's Spirit, which he will regard wheresoever he finds it. This made Job in his distress to swim above water.

If one be in the midst of extremity, and can seriously seek to God, it is an undoubted sign that such a one is sealed, especially when the corruption of his soul joins with Satan's temptations the more to afflict him. For a sinner in the midst of storms and clouds of darkness, then to cast anchor, and quiet his soul in Christ, argues great faith. So when a temptation closes with our corruption, and affliction yields ground to further the temptation, then to pray and rely securely upon God is a gracious sign. For Satan useth the afflictions we are in as temptations to shake our faith, as thus, Canst thou be a child of God, and be so exercised, so vilified, so persecuted? Didst thou belong to Christ, would ever these crosses and losses and miseries have befallen thee? Deceive not thyself! Thus affliction is a weapon to temptation, for Satan to help his fiery darts with, he having such a dangerous party in us—as our own corruption—doth us the more harm continually.

Quest. How shall a man know whether God hath a part in him?

Ans. I answer, If he can run against the stream; if he find his soul resisting Satan's temptations, and raising him above afflictions, standing out and combating with corruptions to the uttermost. When he can check his carnal heart that draws him downwards, saying, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?' Ps. xlii. 5, it is a good sign.

David found inward corruptions and outward afflictions joining with Satan's temptations, to depress his spirit; hereupon he chides his own soul, 'Why is it thus with thee? why art thou dejected in this manner?' And then he lays a charge upon it, 'Trust in God,' ver. 11. Whatsoever hardship we meet with in the world, yet there is hope in God still. Though we can find little comfort below, yet there are rivers of consolation above. It argues a gracious heart to quiet one's self in God in the worst times.

Use 1. I beseech you let us labour to have our souls sealed with the Spirit of God, to have further and clearer evidence of our estate in grace. It is a blessed thing to have Christ live in us. The enemies of our salvation are exceeding many, and how soon death or judgment may seize us, we know not. God will set none at his right hand but his sheep, those that have his own image on them. His best sheep have no outward mark, but an inward. The world sees not their beauty; 'The king's daughter is all glorious within,' Ps. xlv. 13.

How comfortably will the soul commend itself to Christ, when it finds itself stamped with the Spirit of Christ; when he can cheerfully say, Lord Jesus, receive my soul,' Acts vii. 50. Thou that hast redeemed me by thy blood, and sealed me by thy Spirit, acknowledge thine own likeness in me. Though it be not as it should be, yet there is somewhat of thine in me.

Beloved, we must not give false evidence of ourselves, as we must not against others. What a comfort hath a sealed soul in the hour of death, and in all extremities. What a difference is there between such a soul and others in the time of affliction, as in the time of pestilence, war, and persecution for Christ. The soul that is sealed knows that he is marked out for happiness in the world to come. Whatsoever befalls him in this life, he knows that God in all confusion of times knows his own seal, and that his destroying angel shall spare and pass over those that are marked, Ezek. ix. 4, seq. And though our bodies escape not, yet our souls shall.

Josiah we see was taken away from the evil to come; and Lot was delivered from the judgment of the Sodomites. If we partake not of the sins of the wicked, we shall never partake of their plagues. God hath a special care of his 'little ones' in this life; and if he take them away, yet their death is precious in his sight, Ps. cxvi. 15. He will not part with them but upon special consideration. He sees if they live it will be worse for them. Their precious souls are in continual danger. He sees it is best for them to be gathered to God, and the souls of perfect ones in heaven; therefore he provides a shelter to free them from all storms on earth.

And as he hath an eye over them in regard of outward miseries, so in respect of spiritual corruption and infection, as Rev. vii. 3. God's holy ones were 'sealed,' so many of such a tribe, and so many of such a tribe, to signify that God hath always some that he will keep and preserve from the leprous contagion of sin and antichrist; even in evil times God hath his 'little flock' still.

In the obscure ages of the church, nine hundred years after Christ, when there was little learning and goodness in the world, and Egyptian darkness had overspread the earth, God had always sealed ones, marked out for himself, whom he preserved from the danger of dark times. Why then should we be afraid of evil tidings? Let any affliction, or death itself, come, Christ will know his own stamp in us. He hath a hook of remembrance for those that are his; and when he gathers his jewels, they will be highly set by, Mal. iii. 17. God in common calamities suffers his luggage, wicked men, to go to wreck; but he will secure his jewels, his darlings, whatever come of it. Labour therefore to be a sealed person.

Quest. But you will say, What shall I account of myself, if there be but a little sign of grace in me?

Ans. Be not discouraged. You know in wax, though the stamp be almost out, yet it is current in law notwithstanding. Put the case the stamp of the prince be an old coin, is it not current though it be cracked? Suppose the mark of the Spirit should be dim and blurred, scarce discernible in us (this ought to be our shame and grief), yet some evidences of grace are still remaining; there are some sighs and groans against corruption, which may continually support us. If we mourn in our spirits, and do not join with our lusts, nor allow ourselves in them, this is a divine impression, though it be, as it were, almost worn out. The more comfort we desire, the fresher we should keep this seal of comfort.

Use 2. And labour to grow in faith and obedience, that we may read our evidence clearly; that it be not overgrown with the dust of the world, so as we cannot see it. Sometimes God's children have the graces of the Spirit in them, yet they yield so much to fears and doublings, that they can read nothing but their corruption. When we bid them peruse their evidences, they can see nothing but worldliness, nothing but pride and envy, because they grieve the Holy Spirit by their negligence and distrust. Though there be a stamp in them, yet God holds the soul from it, and gives men up to mistake their estates, for not stirring up the graces of his Spirit in them.

Honour God by believing, and he will honour thee by stamping his Spirit more clearly on thee. What a comfort is it to have the evidence of a gracious soul at all times. When a man carries about him the mark of the Spirit, what in the world can discourage such a soul? On the contrary, if a man have not something above nature in him, when death and judgment comes, how miserable is his condition? If a man be a king or an emperor of

the world, and have not an interest in Christ's righteousness, ere long he shall be stripped of all, and adjudged to eternal torments. Oh, the excellency of man's soul; a jewel more to be prized than a prince's diadem.

It is the folly of the times to set up curious pictures, but what a poor delight is this in comparison of the ambition of a true Christian, to see the image of Christ stamped in his soul, to find the joy of the Spirit, and God speaking peace to his inner man.

The transforming of ourselves into the image of Christ is the best picture in the world. Therefore we should labour for the 'new creature,' that as we grow downward one way, we may grow up towards heaven another; that as the life of nature decays, so the spiritual life may be more active and working. It should be our daily study, while we live in this world, to attain that 'holiness, without which no man shall ever see God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1, et alibi.

There is besides the common broad seal of God, his privy seal. What is the reason that many proud-hearted persons are damned? The truth is, they are all for external contentments, and despise the ordinances of God. For though they stand upon their admission into the church, upon the common seals and prerogatives (which in themselves are excellent), yet relying on these things over-much betrays many souls to the devil in the time of distress. It is another manner of seal than the outward seal in the sacrament, that must settle peace in the conscience. When once the beginnings of faith are wrought in us, then we may with comfort think upon our receiving of the communion; but the special thing to be eyed is the hidden seal. If the external means work no inward sanctification in our hearts, we shall be the worse rather than the better for them; yet we must not be so profane as to think slightly of God's ordinances; they are of great consequence.

For when Satan shakes the confidence of a Christian, and saith, Thou art an hypocrite, God doth not love thee, these help us to hold out. Why, saith the soul, I can speak by experience that I have found the contrary; the Lord hath removed my fears, he hath pardoned my sin and accepted my person; he hath given me many precious promises to support my spirit. Here is the excellency of the sacrament. It comes more home to me; it seals the general promises of God particularly to myself; for finding the inward work of the Spirit in my heart, and God having strengthened my faith by the outward seal, I can defy Satan with all his accusations, and look death in the face with comfort. We should labour therefore to observe God's sealing days, when he

uses to manifest himself to his people; which though it may be every day (if we be spiritually exercised), yet it is in the Lord's day more especially; for then his ordinance and his Spirit go together.

Now there is a sealing of persons, and of truths, besides the sealing of our estates, that we are the children of God. There is a sealing of every particular truth to a Christian. For where there is grace to believe the truth, God seals those truths firmly to that soul by the comforts of his Spirit. For example, this is a truth, 'Whosoever believes in Christ, shall not perish but have everlasting life,' John iii. 15. Now the same Spirit that stirs up the soul to believe this, seals it fast upon the conscience even to death. There is no promise, but upon our believing the same, it is sealed by God upon us; for those truths only abide firm in the soul which the Holy Ghost sets on. What is the reason that many forget their consolations? The reason is, they hear much, but the Spirit settles nothing on their hearts.

Quest. What is the reason that unlettered men many times stand out in their profession to blood, whereas those that are more able and learned yield to anything?

Ans. The reason is, the knowledge of the one is set fast upon the soul; the Spirit brings his seal and this man's knowledge close together; whereas the learning and abilities of the other, is only a discursive thing, swimming in the brain without any solid foundation. Their knowledge of truths is not spiritual; they see not heavenly things by heavenly, but by a natural light. Those that would not apostatize must have a knowledge suitable to the things they know; they must see spiritual things by the Spirit of God. Therefore when we come to hear the word, we should not come with strong conceits of our own, to bring all to our wits, but with reverent dispositions and dependence upon God, that he would teach us together with his ministers, and close with his ordinances so as to fasten truths upon our souls; else shall we never hold out; for that which must stablish and quiet the soul, must be greater than the soul.

In time of temptations, when the terrors of the Almighty encompass us, when God lays open our conscience, and writes bitter things against us, those truths that most satisfy the soul at such a time must be above the natural capacity of the soul. Therefore, saith the apostle, 'It is God that establishes,' and God by his Spirit that seals us up unto the day of redemption; because divine truths of themselves in the bare letter cannot stir up the heart. It is only the blessed Spirit (which is above our spirits) that must quiet the

conscience in all perplexities. The Lord can soon still the soul when he settles spiritual truths upon it. Therefore go to him in thy distress and trouble of mind. Send up ejaculations to God, that he would seal the comfort revealed in his word to thy soul, that as it is true in itself, so it may be true to thee likewise.

This is a necessary observation for us all. Oh, we desire in the hour of death to find some comforts, that be standing comforts, that may uphold us against hell and judgment. Know that nothing will do this but spiritual truths spiritually known; but holy truths set on by the Holy Ghost upon the soul. Oft therefore enter into thine heart, and examine upon what grounds and motives thou believest. Consider well what it is thou believest, and upon what evidences, and with what light; otherwise expect not to find solid peace.

Quest. What course may a Christian generally take when he wants comfort and inward refreshing?

Ans. There are, in 1 John v., ‘three witnesses in heaven and three in earth,’ to secure us of our estate in grace, The three witnesses in heaven are, ‘the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.’ And the three witnesses in earth are, ‘the Spirit, the water, and blood;’ and these three on earth, and those three in heaven agree in one. Now by the Spirit here is meant the feelings and sweet motions thereof. The water may well be the laver of sanctification; and by blood is understood the sufferings of Christ for our justification.

When therefore we find that extraordinary seal I spake of before—the joys of the Spirit of God—that it is not in us, what shall we do? Shall we despair then? No. Then go to the water. When the witness of the Spirit is silent, go to the work of the Spirit; see what gracious dispositions are found in thee.

Quest. Ay, but what shall we do if the waters be troubled in the soul, as sometimes there is such a confusion that we cannot see the image of God upon it in sanctification.

Ans. Then go to the blood. There is always comfort. Go to the ‘fountain set open for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in,’ Zech. xiii. 1. That is never dry. If we find much sin upon our consciences, and no peace in our hearts, apply the blood of sprinkling. That will give rest.

When thou findest nothing but corruption and filthiness in thy soul, when thou seest neither joy nor sanctification of spirit, go to the Lord Jesus, and he will purge thee from all guilt, and wash thee with clean water. But to go on.

Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts.

This is the third word, borrowed from human contracts, to set forth God's gracious work in the soul. Anointing we had before, and sealing. Now here is 'earnest.' The variety of expression shows there is a great remainder of unbelief in the soul of man, which causeth the blessed Spirit to use so many words to manifest God's mind, and assure the soul of salvation; stablishing, anointing, sealing, and earnest.

And indeed so it is. Howsoever we in the time of prosperity, when all things go well with us, are apt to presume our estate is good, yet in the hour of death, when conscience is awaked, we are prone to nothing so much as to call all in question, and believe the lies and doubts and fears of our own deceitful hearts, more than the undoubted truth and promise of God. Therefore the Lord takes all courses to establish us. He gives us rich and precious promises; he gives us the Holy Spirit to confirm us in those promises, he seals us with that Spirit, and gives us a comfortable 'earnest' thereof, and all to settle these wretched and unbelieving hearts of ours. So desirous is God that we should be well conceited of him, that he loves us better than we love ourselves. He prizeth our love so much, that he labours by all means to secure us of our eternal welfare; as knowing, that except we apprehend his love to us, we can never love him again, nor delight in him as we ought to do.

Now the Spirit is an 'earnest' of our inheritance in heaven. We are sons here indeed; but we are not heirs invested into the blessed estate we have title to. God doth not keep all our happiness till another world, but gives us somewhat to comfort us in our absence from our husband. He gives us the Holy Ghost in our hearts, as a pledge of that glorious condition, which we shall one day have eternally with him. This is the meaning of the words.

But to show you more particularly in what regard the Spirit is called an 'earnest.'

(1.) First of all, you know an earnest is used for security of a contract. So the Holy Spirit doth secure us of the blessed estate we shall have in heaven for ever.

(2.) Secondly, An earnest is part of the bargain, a part of the whole which is secured. Though it is a very little part, yet it is a part. So it is with the Spirit of God in its gracious work upon our hearts. The joy of the Spirit is a part of that full joy and happiness which shall be revealed hereafter to us.

(3.) Thirdly, An earnest is little in comparison of the whole. So the Spirit, in the work and graces thereof, is little in regard of that fulness which we shall have in heaven. But though an earnest be small in itself, yet it is great in security. A shilling secures a bargain of a thousand pounds, we see. We value an earnest not for its own worth so much as for that which it is a pledge of: for the excellent bargain and rich possession which it doth interest us into. So the Spirit of God with its blessed effects in the soul, the joy and peace of the Spirit, cheering and reviving perplexed sinners; this earnest, I say, though it be little in itself, yet it is great to us in respect of the assurance that we have by it.

(1.) Again, it hath the term of an earnest, because an earnest is given rather for the security of the party that receives it, than in regard of him that gives it. So God gives us the 'earnest of the Spirit,' grace and comfort in this life, not so much for God. For he means to give us heaven and happiness when we are dissolved. As he hath passed his promise, so he will undoubtedly perform the same; he is Lord and Master of his word. He is Jehovah that gives a being to his word, as well as to every other thing. But notwithstanding, having to do with mistrustful, unbelieving men, he is pleased to condescend to our weakness; he stoops to the lowest capacity, and frames his speech to the understanding of the simplest soul, for which purpose this term of earnest is here borrowed.

In these respects the Spirit of God, together with the graces of it, and the comforts it brings (for they are not divided) is called an 'earnest.' And thus having cleared the point, we will observe this doctrine for our further instruction.

That a Christian ought to be, and may he assured of his interest in God; because, as I have said before, an earnest is given not so much for God's sake, as for our sakes. This then must needs follow from hence. Either none have this earnest, or else those that have it may be assured of their

comfortable condition. Otherwise God is fickle, and plays fast and loose with his children, which is blasphemy to affirm. Besides, if none have this earnest, then the apostle speaks false when he saith, 'God hath stablished us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit,' which is horrible impiety once to conceive.

Quest. If this be so, then either such as have this seal and earnest of the Spirit may be assured of their estate in grace or not. And if not, where is the fault? Will not God really and truly vouchsafe unto his people this earnest of the Spirit in their hearts?

Ans. Undoubtedly he will. He is desirous that we should be persuaded of his love in all things, and therefore we may and ought to be assured of his favour towards us. St John's whole epistle 'contains little else but sundry marks and evidences how we may know that we are the children of God. Wherefore was Christ himself sealed of the Father to the office of Mediator? wherefore did he die and rise again? and wherefore doth he still make intercession for us in heaven? That we should doubt of God's love, whereas he hath given us that which is greater than salvation, yea, greater than all the world, even his own Son? No, certainly. Can we desire a more ample testimony of his favour than he hath already bestowed upon us? Is it not the errand of all God's mercies to bring us nearer to himself, that we should not doubt of his love, but rest securely upon him? Why then do we distrust the Almighty, who is truth itself, and never failed any?

Yet we must know that Christians have not at all times alike assurance of their interest; for there is an infancy of grace, where we are ignorant of our own condition. And there is a time of desertion, whereas God, to make us look better to our footing, leaves us a little, as if he would forsake us quite; when indeed he only withdraws his assistance for a while to make us cleave the closer to him. There be also certain seasons, wherein, though we are assured of God's favour, yet we have no feeling or apprehension of the same, which differeth in Christians much, according as they are more or less sensible of their estates. Some again use not that care and diligence in the use of means which God requires, whereupon they are justly deprived of that inward peace and comfort which others enjoy. There is a difference likewise in growth and continuance in Christianity. Some are strong Christians, and some weak; answerable whereunto is the difference of assurance of God's love usually in the hearts of his people. Nay, it is possible that for a long time the Lord's jewels, his redeemed ones, may want this blessed comfort.

For we must conceive there is a double act of faith.

First, An act whereby a poor distressed sinner casts himself upon God as reconciled to him in Christ.

Secondly, There is a reflect act, whereby knowing that we rely upon the truth and promise of the Almighty, we have assurance of his favour. Now a man may perform the one act and not the other. Many of the saints sometimes can hardly say that they have any assurance; but yet, notwithstanding, they will daily cast themselves upon the rich mercy and free grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Besides, There are many things which may hinder this act of assurance, because (together with believing) God may present such things to my mind as may so damp and disquiet my soul, that I cannot have any definitive thoughts about that which God would especially have me to think upon.

As when God would humble a man, he takes not away the Spirit of faith wholly from him, but sets before such a sinful creature his anger and sore displeasure, together with the hellish torments and pains of the damned as due to his soul, which makes him for the present to be in an estate little differing from the reprobate. So that he is far from saying he hath any assurance at that time. Yet, notwithstanding, he doth not leave off nor renounce his confidence, but casts himself upon God's mercy still. 'Though the Lord kill him, yet will he trust in him,' Job xiii. 15, although he sees nothing but terror and wrath before him. This God doth to tame our presumption, and to prepare us for the enjoyment of his future glory. If we feel not sense of assurance, it is good to bless God for what we have. We cannot deny but God offers himself in mercy to us, and that he intends our good thereby; for so we ought to construe his merciful dealing towards us, and not have him in jealousy without ground. Had we but willing hearts to praise God for that which we cannot but acknowledge comes from him, he will be ready in his time to show himself more clearly to us. We taste of his goodness many ways, and it is accompanied with much patience. And these, in their natures, should lead us not only to repentance, but to nearer dependence on him. We ought to follow that which God leads us unto, though he hath not yet acquainted us with his secrets.

These things we must observe, that we give not a false evidence against ourselves. Though we have not such assurance as we have had, yet always there is some ground in us whereupon we may be comforted that we are God's children, could we but search into it. Let us not then be negligent in labouring for the same, and in the Lord's good time we shall certainly obtain

it. It is the profaneness of the world that they improve not those helps which God hath afforded for this purpose.

Nay, they had rather stagger, and take contentment in their own ways, saying, If God will love me in a loose, licentious course, so it is; but I will not 'give diligence to make my calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 10; I will never bar myself of such profits and delights, nor forsake all, chiefly to mind spiritual things.

Whereas we ought constantly to endeavour for assurance of grace, that God may have honour from us, and we the more comfort from him again, that we may live in the world above the world, and pass cheerfully through the manifold troubles and temptations which befall us in our pilgrimage.

A man in his pure naturals will swell against this doctrine, because he feels no such thing, and thinks what is above his measure is hypocrisy. He makes himself the rule of other Christians. to walk by, and therefore values and esteems others by his uncertain condition. But the heart of a Christian hath a light in it; the Spirit of God in his soul makes him discern what estate he is in.

In a natural man, all is dark. He sees nothing, because his heart is in a dungeon. 'His eye being dark, the whole man must needs be in blindness,' Mat. vi. 22, seq. All is alike to him; he sees no difference between flesh and spirit, and therefore holds on in a doubting hope, in a confused disposition and temper of soul, to his dying day.

But a Christian, that labours to walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, cannot rest in such an unsettled estate; he dares not venture his eternal welfare upon such infirm grounds. What! To depart this life, and be tossed in uncertainty, whether a man goes to heaven or to hell! What a miserable perplexity must such a soul needs be in! Therefore, he is still 'working out his salvation,' Phil. ii. 12, and storing up of grace against the evil day.

And well may this condition challenge all our diligence in labouring for it, because it is neither attained nor maintained without the strength and prime of our care. For the sense of God's favour will not be kept without keeping him in our best affections, above all things else in the world besides; without keeping of our hearts constantly close and near to him; which can never be done without keeping a most narrow watch over our loose spirits, which are ever ready to stray from him, and fall to the creature.

It cannot be kept without exact walking, and serious self-denial. But what of that? Can we spend labours to better purpose? One sweet beam of God's countenance will requite all abundantly. A Christian indeed undergoes more trouble and pains, especially with his own heart, than others do; but what is that to his gains? One day spent in communion with God is sweeter than a thousand without it. What comforts so great as those that are fetched from the fountain! Oh, woe to him that savours not these heavenly, but lingers after carnal comforts. It cannot but grieve the Holy Spirit, when the 'consolations of the Almighty' are either forgotten, or seem 'nothing to us,' Job xv. 11.

Quest. But why doth the Spirit thus establish and seal us, and convey grace to our souls? Why doth that do all?

Am. 1. Because since the fall we have no principles of supernatural good in us; and there must be a principle above nature to work grace in our barren hearts.

Ans. 2. Again, there is still remaining in us an utter averseness to that which is spiritually good in the best. Therefore there must be somewhat to overpower their corrupt disposition.

Quest. But why the Spirit rather than the Father or the Son?

Ans. He comes from both, and therefore is fit to witness the love of both. The Holy Ghost is in the breast of the Father and the Son; he knows their secret affections towards us. A man's spirit is acquainted with his inmost thoughts. The blessed Spirit is privy to the hidden love of God, and of Jesus Christ to us poor creatures, which we are strangers unto. Therefore none so fit to cheer and revive us.

Indeed, the love originally is from the Father; but in regard of application of what is wrought by the Son, all proceeds from the Holy Ghost; he receives grace from Christ for us. It must needs be so, because no less than the Spirit of God can quiet our perplexed spirits in time of temptation. For when the conscience of a guilty person is affrighted, what man can allay its fears? That which must settle a troubled spirit must be a spirit above our own; it being no easy thing to bring the soul and God together after peace is broken. We have both wind and tide against us in this business, grace being but weak, and corruption strong in the best of us.

We should labour therefore for heavenly spirits, and get something more than a man in us. There can never be any true peace attained till the Spirit from above settle it in our souls. An unsanctified heart is an unpacified heart. If there be a neglect of holiness, the soul can never be soundly quiet. Where there is not a clear conscience, there cannot be a calm conscience. That is a general rule. Sin, like Jonah in the ship, will raise continual storms both within and without a man. Take away God once, and farewell all true tranquillity. Spiritual comforts flow immediately from the Spirit of comfort, who hath his office designed for that purpose.

Quest. But how shall we know that we have the Spirit? How may a man know that he hath a soul?

Ans. 1. By living and moving, by actions vital, &c. Even so may a man know he hath the Spirit of God by its blessed effects and operations.

It is not idle in us, but as the soul quickens the body, so doth the Spirit the soul. Every saving grace is a sign that the Spirit is in us. Wheresoever the Spirit dwells, he transforms the soul, and changes the party, like himself, to be holy and gracious. This is an undoubted symptom of the Spirit's habitation.

Ans. 2. Secondly, All spiritual graces are with conflict; for that which is true is with a great deal of resistance of that which is counterfeit. 'The flesh still lusts against the Spirit,' Gal. v. 17, and Satan cannot endure to see any man walk comfortably to heaven. What, thinks he, such a base creature as this is to have the earnest of salvation, to live here as if he were in heaven already; and to defy all opposite powers! Sure he shall have little peace this way. I will disquiet and vex his spirit. If he will go to heaven he shall go mourning thither.

This is the reasoning of the cursed spirit, whereupon he labours to shake our assurance and follow us with perplexities. The grace and comfort of a Christian is with much conflict and temptations, not only with Satan, but with his own heart; which, so long as guilt remains, will ever be misgiving and casting of doubts. There must, therefore, be a higher power than the soul of man to quiet and allay its own troubles.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, The Spirit enables us to the practice of those duties which by nature we are averse unto, as to love an enemy, to overcome our revenge, to be humble in prosperity, and contented with any estate. It draws

our affection heavenward, and makes us delight in God above all as our best portion. He that hath the Spirit joys in spiritual company and employment; he hates sin, as being contrary to that blessed 'earnest' which he hath received. He looks oil things as God doth, and approves of the same, as he is made more or less spiritual thereby, and so is brought nearer to that fountain of goodness—God himself. By them he esteems his best being to be in Christ, and therefore labours more and more to be transformed into his likeness. He values nothing in the world further than it conduceth to his spiritual welfare. If all be well for that, he accounts himself happy, whatsoever else befalls him. Indeed, where the Spirit hath taken up his firm abode, that soul will little sot by any outward change. Nothing can be very ill with a man that hath all well within him.

But that I may not distract your thoughts, you shall find divers properties of the Spirit of God in Rom. viii. 1, seq., which I will briefly touch. First, it is said that the Spirit where it is 'dwells' in that heart, as in a house; it 'rules' wherever it comes. The Holy Ghost will not be an underling to our lusts. It repairs and makes up all our inward breaches. The Spirit prepares his own dwelling, he begets knowledge and acquaintance of God within us. He is not in us as he is in the Mucked; he only knocks at their hearts, but hath not his abode there.

Secondly, When the Spirit comes into a man, he subdues whatsoever is contrary to it, and makes way for itself by pulling down all strongholds which oppose it. Therefore we are said 'to mortify the deeds of the flesh' by the Spirit, ver. 13. Those that by help of the Spirit have got the victory of sin, can in no wise be led as slaves by the flesh; as, on the contrary, he that cherishes corruption and crucifies it not (by spiritual reasons, but out of civil respects to be freed from aspersions, and to uphold his reputation or the like) is a mere stranger to the Holy Ghost's working.

Thirdly, As many as are 'led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.' As the angel went before the Israelites from Egypt into Canaan, so the Spirit of God goes along with his in all their ways, removing all lets and strengthening against all impediments in their Christian race. It conducts us sweetly, not violently, as the devil doth those that are possessed with the Spirit. We are led strongly indeed, because it is against corruption within us, and opposition from without us; but yet sweetly, to preserve the liberty and freedom of the soul still. We are all by nature like children or blind men. We cannot lead ourselves. The Spirit must be our conductor], or we shall wander

and go aside presently. Those therefore that enjoy the same, submit themselves to its guidance and direction in all things.

Fourth, Again, The Spirit stirs up sighs and groans, that cannot be expressed. When we are not able to pray, or lay open the griefs of our souls, if we can but send our sighs and groans to heaven, they shall be accepted; for God will hear the voice of his own Spirit, from whence these sobs and complaints come. How should we be overwhelmed with despair, did not the Spirit support us? Those, therefore, that in extremity have nothing to comfort them, yet are able to send forth holy desires to the Lord, may certainly conclude that the Spirit is in them.

Fifth, Again, The Spirit makes us mourn and wait for the adoption of sons. The same Spirit that sanctifies a sinner, witnesses to his soul that God is his. Worldlings grieve not for their absence from Christ, neither at all long they for his blessed appearing, because their heaven is here. They mourn not for the hidden distempers and secret imperfections of their souls; whereas the godly are much in condemning themselves for that which no creature can tax them of. Want of communion with their Maker, straitness of spirit, distraction in duty, that they cannot obey as they would— these exceedingly deject them, yet wait they will without despair till God have finished their course. There is such a divine power in faith, as a very little beam of it, having no other help than a naked promise, will uphold the soul against the greatest discouragements, and keep it from utter sinking.

Indeed, 'waiting' is a difficult duty, both in regard of the long day which God usually takes before he performs his promise, as also by reason of the untowardness of our natures, being ready to be put off by the least frown, did not God by a Spirit of constancy preserve the soul immovable in all conditions, whether present or to come, so as it fails not before him: and why? Because it knows full well that God, in whom it rests, is unchangeably good.

Alas! we are at the best but light and vain creatures, till the divine Spirit fix and settle us. The firmer our union is here, the surer will be our standing in all danger; for what can daunt that soul, which in the greatest troubles hath made the great good to be his own? Such a person dares cheerfully encounter any opposition, as having a Spirit higher than the world about him; and seeing all but God far beneath him. Though I might name more, what a many sweet evidences are here to manifest a soul truly acted and led by the Spirit of God!

Quest. How may a man obtain this blessed guest, to lodge in his soul and rule over him?

Ans. First, Attend upon the teaching of the gospel. 'Received ye the Spirit by the hearing of the law, or of faith preached?' saith the apostle, Gal. iii. 2. The Spirit is usually given with a clear unfolding of Christ.

Secondly, Omit likewise no means wherein the Spirit is effectual; for as a man walking in a garden, though he think not of it, draws a sweet scent of the flowers, so the word of God, being dictated by the Spirit, leaves a heavenly savour in such as converse with it. The spirit of a man is like water that runs through minerals. We see baths have their warmth from minerals that they run through. So it is with the soul in its holy employments. When it hath to deal with good books and good company, it draweth a spiritual tincture from these things, and is bettered by them.

Thirdly, Withal, take heed that thou 'grieve not the Holy Ghost,' for that will cause an estrangement of his presence in thy soul.

Quest. How is that done?

Ans. By cherishing contrary affections and lusts to his blessed motions, as when we hear the word, but resolve never to obey it. When God knocks at our hearts for entrance, oh how readily should we set open these everlasting doors to receive him! If Christ be willing to give us his Spirit, it must needs be our own fault if we remain carnal; there being nothing in a manner required to be spiritual, but not to resist the Spirit. What greater indignity can we offer to the blessed Comforter, than to prefer our base lusts before his motions, leading to happiness? What greater unkindness can a man do his friend, than to slight his loving direction, and embrace the counsel of a professed enemy? The Holy Ghost presses such forcible reasons upon us of heavenly-mindedness and despising earthly things, that it is more than evident none are damned in the bosom of the church but those that set a bar against the Spirit of God in their hearts. Such are damned because they will be damned, that, say the preacher whatever he will, think it better to be as they are, than to entertain such a guest as will mar and alter all that was there before.

Take heed, therefore, of resisting the Spirit in the least kind; sad not his blessed motions, but make much of the same by yielding subjection thereunto. Lay thy soul often before the Spirit; suffer thyself to be moulded

and fashioned by his gracious working. Oh consider how high the slighting of a gracious motion reaches, even to the contemning of God himself. Certainly as we use these, so would we use the Spirit himself, were he [not] invisible to us.

And converse not with carnal company; for what wilt thou gain there but sorrow to thine heart, if thou belongest to God; and as holy Lot, vex thy righteous soul with the unclean conversation of these Sodomites? It is an undoubted sign of a man destitute of grace, not to care at all what company he frequents.

Fourthly, Seeing the Holy Ghost is promised to them that ask it, beg earnestly, for it is at God's hands. This is the 'good thing' that God gives. Christ seems to insinuate as much, saying, What can I give you better than the Holy Ghost? Yet this 'will I bestow on them that ask it,' Mat. vii. 7, seq.; for indeed that is the seed of all grace and comfort. A world of promises is included in the promise of giving the Spirit.

Labour therefore, above all gettings, to obtain this high prerogative. The comforts of the Spirit are above all earthly comfort, and the graces of the Spirit enable to encounter the greatest temptations whatsoever. A man that hath this stands impregnable. God may withdraw his favour for a time, to humble us; but to quench the work of the Spirit, once wrought in the soul, all the power of all the devils in hell cannot stir it. This will carry us through all oppositions and difficulties in our Christian race. Let a man never baulk or decline a good cause for anything that he shall suffer; for the seal and earnest of the Spirit is never more strong than when we are deprived of all other comforts save that alone.

What makes a man differ from himself and from other men but this? Take a Christian that hath the 'earnest of the Spirit,' you shall have him defy death, Satan, the world, and all. Take another that is careless to increase his 'earnest,' how weak and feeble will you find him, ready to be overcome by every temptation, and sink under the least burden.

The apostle Peter, before the Holy Ghost came upon him, was astonished with the voice of a weak damsel; but after, how forward was he to suffer anything.

Labour not then to be strengthened in things below, neither value thyself by outward dependences. Alas! all things here are perishing. If thou

hast grace, thou hast that which will stand by thee when these fail. The Comforter shall never be taken away. What are all friends in the world to the Holy Ghost! This will speak to God for us when no creature dares look him in the face. The Spirit will make requests with 'sighs and groans' in our behalf; and we may be sure we shall be heard when that intercedes for us. What prison can shut up the Spirit of God? Oh gain this, whatever thou loosest; prefer it to thy chief treasure. The very 'earnest' of the Spirit is far more precious than the creature's full quintessence. If the promises laid hold on by faith quicken and cheer the soul, what shall the accomplishment of them do! If the giving a taste of heaven so lift our souls above all earthly discouragements, how glorious shall we shine forth when the Spirit shall be all in all in us! This will make us more or less fruitful, more or less glorious in our profession, and resolute in obedience through our whole course.

If we want this, we can never be thankful for anything; for it is the love of God that sweetens every mercy to us; and indeed is more to be valued than any blessing we enjoy besides: which if we eye not or are ignorant of, what can we expect but wrath and displeasure in all that befalls us? Oh it is sweet to see favours and benefits issuing from grace and love. They do not always prove mercies which men oftentimes esteem to be so. We can have no solid comfort in any condition, further than God smiles upon us in it. What a fearful case must that then be, wherein a man cannot be thankful for what he hath.

Every condition and place we are in should indeed be a witness of our thankfulness to God. We must not think life was given only to live in. Our life should not be the end of itself, but the praise of the Giver thereof. It is but fit that we should refer all that is good to his glory, who hath joined his glory to our best good, in being glorified in our salvation; which while we question and doubt of, it is impossible ever to be cheerful towards him.

Besides, how can a man suffer willingly, that knows not that God hath begun any good work in him? How lumpish and dead is he under the cross without this assurance! It is worth the considering, to see two men of equal parts under the same affliction, how quietly and calmly the one that hath interest in Christ will bear his grievances, whereas the other rages as a fool, and is more beaten. A man will endure anything comfortably, when he considers it proceeds from his Father's good pleasure. This breeds a holy resigning of ourselves to God in all estates; as Eli, the 'will of the Lord be done.' His will is a wise will, and ever conduceth to his people's good.

Fearest thou danger? Cry unto God, 'I am thine,' 'Lord, save me.' I am the price of thy Son's blood, let me not be lost. Thou hast given me the earnest of thy Spirit, and set thy seal upon me for thine own, let me neither lose my bargain nor thou thine.

Hence it is that God's child can so easily deny himself in temptations and allurements which others sink under. Oh! saith he, the Holy Ghost hath 'sealed' me up 'to the day of redemption,' shall I grieve and quench the same for this base lust? It is a great disparagement to prefer husks before the provision of our Father's house. When we give content to Satan and a wretched heart, we put the Holy Ghost out of his office.

Again, without this we can never comfortably depart this life. He that hath the earnest of the Spirit in his heart, may laugh Satan in the face, and rejoice at death's approaching, as knowing there will be an accomplishment then of all the bargain. Then the marriage will be perfectly consummate; then shall be the great year of jubilee, the Sabbath of rest for ever. He that lives much by faith will find it no hard matter to die in it. But let a man stagger and doubt whether he belong to God or no, what a miserable case will he be in at the time of dissolution! Death, with the eternity of torment after it, who can look it in the face without the assurance of a happy change? This makes men, that see no greater pleasure than the following of their lusts, resolve of swimming in worldly delights still. Alas! say they, I had as good take this pleasure as have none at all; what shall become of me hereafter, who knows?

A Glance of Heaven (or, A Precious Taste of a Glorious Feast)

To the Christian Reader

Beloved! it is grown a custom that every book whosever, or of whatsoever subject, must be presented to you in state; with some prescript purposely. Were it not that custom is a tyrant, this labour might now be spared. Such matter from such an elder as here follows, needs no 'epistle of recommendation.' The reverend author is well approved to be 'a man of God,' a 'seer in Israel,' by those things which, without control, have already passed the press. Might I have my wish, it should be no more but a 'double portion' of that Spirit of God which was in him. The divine light, which radiated into his breast, displays itself in many other of his labours, but yet it is nowhere more condensed than in this following. It is truly said of Moses, by faith 'he saw him that was invisible,' Heb. xi. 27.

And St Paul prays for the Ephesians, 'that they might know the love of that which passeth knowledge,' Eph. iii. 19. These things imply a contradiction. Yet in like phrase I fear not to say of this father and brother, he saw those things 'which eye hath not seen,' spake those things which 'ear hath not heard,' and uttered those things 'which have not entered into the heart of man to conceive,' 2 Cor. ii. 9. This knot needs no cutting. He that rightly understands the text will easily look through this mystery without the help of an hyperbole. His scope was to stir us up to love God; his motive to persuade is taken from the excellency of those things which God hath prepared for them who love him. That excellency is expressed in a strange manner; by intimating it cannot be expressed, no, nor so much as comprehended by any natural ability of the body or mind. Yet it is expressed in the doctrine of the gospel sufficiency. So as here, as in a glass, we may 'behold the glory of God,' and in beholding, be 'changed from glory to glory,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. What duty more necessary than to love God? What motive more effectual than the gospel? For what is the gospel but a revelation of such things as natural men could never invent? Such things, that is, so precious, so useful, so comfortable to us; so divine, admirable, and transcendent in themselves. Many of us are like the angel of Ephesus, 'We have lost our first love,' Rev. ii. 4; yea, as our Saviour prophesied, Mat. xxiv. 12, 'The love of many waxes cold.' One reason may be, because to see-to, we reap so little fruit of our love. Were it so, that we had nothing in hand, no

present pay, that we served God altogether upon trust, without so much as an earnest, yet there is something 'prepared.' Let us believe that, and our hearts cannot but be warmed. We shall then be 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,' Rom. xii. 11. Be we persuaded of that, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you have showed towards his name,' Heb. vi. 10, and then we may triumphantly insult with Paul, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' Rom. viii. 35. There is this difference between natural sight and spiritual. The one requires some nearness of the object, the other perceives things at greatest distance. As faith makes future things present, so it makes remote things near, and things 'prepared' to affect as if they were enjoyed. But what hath God prepared? If I could answer this, it might not only satisfy, but inebriate. 'Such as eye hath not seen,' &c. It seems to be a proverbial form of speech, whereby the rich plenty of the divine blessings and benefits which God intendeth to us in and by Christ, according to the gospel, is shadowed forth. The words are to see-to as a riddle, but here is 'one of a thousand, an interpreter,' Job xxxiii. 23, at hand, to unfold them. I could say much to invite you, but that the matter itself is as a loadstone. My testimony will add little weight, yet, having some care committed to me by Mr P. N., whom this business chiefly concerned, I could do no less than let you understand here is one rich piece of spiritual workmanship, wrought by a master builder, very useful for the building up and beautifying of God's temples. The blessing of God Almighty be with it, and upon the whole Israel of God.—So prays L. Seaman.

The First Sermon

But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.—1 Cor. II. 9.

The holy apostle St Paul, the trumpet of the gospel, 'the vessel of election,' was ordained to be a messenger of reconciliation, and to spread the sweet savour of the gospel everywhere. And answerably to his calling, he makes way for the excellency of his embassy into the hearts of those he had to deal with. This he doth by the commendation of his function. And that he might the better prevail, he removes all objections to the contrary. There were some that would debase his office, saying that the gospel he taught—Christ crucified—was no such great matter. Therefore, in the 6th verse of this chapter, he shows that the gospel 'is wisdom, and that among them that are perfect;' among the best and ablest to judge. St Paul did not

build, as the papists do now, upon the blindness of the people. But it were not popery if they did not infatuate the people. St Paul saith to this effect:— We dare appeal to those that are the best, and of the best judgment, let them judge whether it be wisdom or no; the more perfect men are, the more able they are to judge of our wisdom.

It might be objected again, You see who cares for your wisdom, neither Herod, nor Pilate, nor the great men and potentates, the scribes and pharisees, great, learned men, and withal men of innocent lives, notable for carnage. Therefore, saith he, ‘We speak not the wisdom of this world, or the princes of this world, that come to nought.’ Do not tell us of such men’s wisdom, they and their wisdom will come to nought too. We teach wisdom of things that are eternal, to make men eternal. As for the princes of the world, they and all that they know, their thoughts and all their plots and devices, perish. But ‘we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery;’ that is, the wisdom of God’s revealing, a deep wisdom, a mystery that ‘God ordained before the world;’ ancient wisdom, not a yesterday’s knowledge, though lately discovered. The preaching of the gospel is the discovery of that wisdom that was hidden before the world was.

And to invite you, and make you more in love with it, it is a wisdom ‘to your glory.’ God hath a delight to show himself wise in devising a plot to glorify poor wretched man.

As for the words themselves, they are a proof of what he had said before, why none of the princes of the world knew this great mystery. If so be that the ‘eye of any man hath not seen, nor the ear of any man hath heard, nor the heart of any man hath conceived,’ what do you tell us of the wise men, which were not all, nay, what should I speak of men? The very angels (as we know by other places) are excluded from a full knowledge of these mysteries. Therefore it is no marvel though none of the princes of this world knew them. They are universally hidden from all natural men. This I take to be the sense of the words. They are taken out of Isaiah lxiv. 4. St Paul delights to prove things by the prophets. But here it is not so much a proof as an allusion, which we must observe to understand many such places. For Isaiah there speaks of the great things God had done for his church, such as eye had not seen, nor ear heard. And the apostle alludes to it here, and adds somewhat. This clause, ‘nor hath entered into the heart of man,’ is not in that place, but it is necessarily understood. For if the eye doth not see, and the ear hear, it never enters into the heart of man. For whatsoever enters into the

heart of man, it must be by those passages and windows, the gates of the soul, the senses.

And whereas St Paul saith, 'for them that love him,' it is for them that 'expect him,' as in Isaiah. The sense is all one. Whosoever love God, they expect and wait for him. Where there is no expectation, there is no love.

This is the apostle's drift. If God did do such great matters for his church, as 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,' according to the prophet Isaiah, what shall we think he will do in the kingdom of grace here and of glory hereafter?

The words then, as we see, contain the excellency of the mysteries of the gospel, described first by the hiddenness of it to men at first.

Secondly, By the goodness of the things revealed, such as 'neither eye hath seen,' &c.

The hiddenness and excellency of the gospel in that respect is set forth by way of negation. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived.' And indeed this is the way to set forth excellent divine things. God himself is set out by way of denial; by removing imperfections: he is invisible, immortal, &c. And so heaven, that is near to God, as being prepared by him, it is set out by way of denial, as St Peter saith, 'It is an inheritance immortal, undefiled,' &c., 1 Peter i. 4.

So here positive words could not be found sufficient to set out the excellency of the things that God hath prepared.

As for the knowledge of the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ, we neither can come to it by natural invention nor by natural discipline. All the things that we know naturally, we know by one of these two ways; but divine things are known neither way.

Where could there have been any knowledge of Christ, if God had not opened his breast in the gospel, and come forth of his hidden light, and showed himself in Christ, God-man; and in publishing the gospel established an ordinance of preaching for this purpose—where had the knowledge of salvation in Christ been?

To prove this we have here a gradation. The eye sees many things, but we hear more things than we see. Yet 'neither eye hath seen nor ear heard.' Ay, but the conceits of the heart are larger than the sight of the eye or the hearing of the ear. Yet neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive,' &c. The philosopher saith, there is nothing in the understanding, but it came into the senses before: and therefore it cannot enter into the heart of man, if it enter not by the eye or by the ear.

The things here spoken of be especially the graces, and comforts, and privileges to be enjoyed in this life, and the consummation and perfection of them in heaven. Christ brings peace and joy, justification and sanctification, and the like; and even in this life. The perfection of these is in heaven, where the soul and the body shall be both glorified, in a glorious place, together with glorious company; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, innumerable angels and just men. These are those things that 'eye hath not seen,' &c.; the beginnings here, and the perfection and consummation of them hereafter. Having thus far unfolded the words, I come to the points considerable.

Doct. First, God hath a company of beloved children in the world, that he means a special good unto.

The second, God hath prepared great matters for them.

1. If great persons prepare great things for those whom they greatly affect, shall we not think that the great God will prepare great things for those that he hath affection to, and that have affection to him? If God be a friend to the elect, and they be his friends, surely he will answer friendship to the utmost. Answerable to the great love he bears his children, he hath provided great things for them.

If that be excellent that is long in preparing, then those things which belong to God's children must needs be excellent; for they were preparing even before the world was. Solomon's temple was an excellent fabric; it had long preparation, 1 Chron. xxii. 5. Ahasuerus made a feast to a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, Esther i. 1, seq. It was long in preparing. Great things have great preparation. Now these things that God intends his children have been preparing even from everlasting; and they are from everlasting to everlasting. They must needs be excellent. But before I dwell on any particular point, here is a question to be answered.

Quest. If the things that God hath prepared for his children be secret and excellent, how then come we to know them at all?

We come to know them (1.) By divine revelation. God must reveal them first, as it is in the next verse, 'God hath revealed them by his Spirit.'

The Spirit reveals them by way of negation, and indefinitely; as also by way of eminence. Whatsoever is excellent in the world, God borrows it to set out the excellency of the things that he hath provided for his children in grace and glory.

A feast is a comfortable thing. They are called a feast. A kingdom is a glorious thing. They are called a kingdom. Marriage is a sweet thing. They are set forth by that; by an inheritance; and adoption of children, and such like. So that all these things are taken to be shadows of those things. And indeed they are but shadows; the reality is the heavenly kingdom of grace and glory, the heavenly riches, the heavenly inheritance, the heavenly sonship. When all these things vanish and come to nothing, then comes in the true kingdom, sonship, and inheritance.

Again (2.) We know them in this world by way of taste. For the things of the life to come there are few of them but God's children have some experimental taste of them in this world. God reserves not all for the life to come, but he gives a grape of Canaan in this wilderness.

(3.) Thirdly, by arguing from the less to the greater. If peace of conscience be so sweet here, what is eternal peace! If a little joy here be so pleasant and comfortable that it makes us forget ourselves, what will be that eternal joy there! If the delights of a kingdom be such that they: fill men's hearts so full of contentment that oftentimes they know not themselves, what shall we think of that excellent kingdom! So by way of taste and relish we may rise from those petty things to those excellent things, which indeed are scarce a beam, scarce a drop of those excellencies.

If Peter and John, when they were in the mountain, were not their own men,—when they saw but a glimpse, but a little glory of Christ manifested in the mount, Mat. ix. 6,—what shall we think when there is the fulness of that glorious revelation at the right hand of God, where there is 'fulness of pleasures for ever'? Ps. xvi. 11. How shall our souls be filled at that time! Thus by way of rising from the lesser to the greater, by tasting, feeling, and

by divine revelation, we may know in some measure the excellency of those things prepared for us.

Now to clear this thing more fully, know that there, are three degrees of revelation.

First, There must be a revelation of the things themselves, by word, and writing, or speech, and the like; as we know not the mind of a man but either by speech or writing. So there must be a revelation of these things, or else the wit of angels could never have devised how to reconcile justice and mercy, by infinite wisdom, by sending a mediator to procure peace, God-man, to work our salvation. Therefore we could not know them without a revelation and discovery outward. This is the first degree, that we may call revelation by Scripture, or by the doctrine of the gospel. Who could discover those things that are merely supernatural, but God himself?

Second, Then again, When they are revealed by the word of God, and by men that have a function to unfold the unsearchable riches of Christ by the ministry of the gospel, yet notwithstanding they are hidden riddles still to a company of carnal men. Put case the veil be taken off from the things themselves, yet if the veil be over the soul, the understanding, will, and affections, there is no apprehension of them. Therefore there must be a second revelation, that is, by the Spirit of God. Of necessity this must be; for even as the apostle saith in this chapter, 'None knoweth the mind of man but the spirit that is in man,' ver. 11, so none knoweth the mind of God but the Spirit of God. What is the gospel, without the Spirit of Christ to discover the mind of God to us? We know not the good meaning of God to us in particular. We know in general that such things are revealed in Scripture; but what is that to us if Christ be not our Saviour and God our Father? unless we can say as St Paul saith, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. Therefore you see a necessity of revelation by the Spirit.

But this is not all that is here meant. There is,

Thirdly, A higher discovery, and that is in heaven. That that is revealed here is but in part; and thereupon if we believe, we believe but in part, and -we love but in part. If our knowledge, which is the ground of all other graces and affections, be imperfect, all that follows must needs be imperfect also. Therefore St John saith, 'We know that we are the sons of God, but it appears not what we shall be,' 1 John iii. 2. What we shall be in heaven it doth not appear now. There must be a further revelation, and that will be

hereafter, when our souls shall be united together with our bodies. And then, indeed, our eyes shall see, our ears hear, and hearts shall conceive those things that while we are here in the womb of the church we neither can see, nor hear, nor understand, more than the child in the womb of the mother can conceive the excellencies in this civil life. Thus we see these truths a little more unfolded. I will now add somewhat to make use of what hath been spoken.

Use 1. First of all, therefore, for matter of instruction. If it be so, that the things of the gospel be such, as that without a revelation from God they could not be known, then we see that there is no principle at all of the gospel in nature. There is not a spark of light, or any inclination to the gospel, but it is merely above nature. For he removes here all natural ways of knowing the gospel, eye, ear, and understanding. Therefore the knowledge of it is merely supernatural. For if God had not revealed it, who could ever have devised it? And when he revealed it, to discover it by his Spirit, it is supernatural; but in heaven much more, which is the third degree I spake of. Therefore, by the way, you may know the reason why so many heresies have sprung out of the gospel, more than out of the law and the misunderstanding of it. There are few or no heresies from that, because the principles of the law are written in the heart. Men naturally know that whoredom, and adultery, and filthy living, &c., are sins. Men have not so quenched nature but that they know that those things are naught. Therefore there have been excellent law-makers among the heathens. But the gospel is a mere 'mystery' discovered out of the breast of God, without all principles of nature. There are thousands of errors that are not to be reckoned, about the nature, the person, and the benefits of Christ; about justification and sanctification, and free will and grace, and such things. What a world of heresies have proud wits continually started up! This would never have been but that the gospel is a thing above nature. Therefore, when a proud wit and supernatural knowledge revealed meet together, the proud heart storms and loves to struggle, and deviseth this thing and that thing to commend itself; and hereupon comes heresies, the mingling of natural wit with divine truths. If men had had passive wits to submit to divine truths, and to work nothing out of themselves, as the spider out of her own bowels,; there had not been such heresies in the church; but their hearts meeting with supernatural truths, their proud hearts mingling with it, they have devised these errors; that I note in the first place.

Use 2. Then again, if the things that we have in the gospel be such divine truths, above nature altogether, then we must not stand to look for

reason too much, nor trust the reason or wit of any man, but divine authority especially. For if divine authority cease in the gospel, what were it? Nothing. The law is written in men's hearts; but we must trust divine authority in the gospel above all other portions of Scripture, and not to the wit of any man whatsoever.

The Church of Rome, that is possessed with a spirit of pride and ignorance and tyranny, they will force knowledge on them that be under them from their sole authorities. The church saith so, and we are the church; and it is not for you to know, See., and Scriptures are so and so. But is the gospel a supernatural mystery above the capacity of any man? and shall we build upon the authority of the church for these truths? Oh, no! There must be no forcing of evangelical truths from the authority or parts of any man. But these are not things that we stand in so much need of.

Therefore I hasten to that which is more useful. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,' &c.

Use 3. Here then we have an use of direction how to carry ourselves in reading and studying holy truths: especially the sacred mysteries of the gospel. How shall we study them? We think to break into them with the engine of our wit, and to understand them, and never come to God for his Spirit. God will curse such proud attempts. 'Who knows the things of man, but the spirit of a man? and who knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God?' Therefore in studying the gospel, let us come with a spirit of faith, and a spirit of humility and meekness. There is no breaking into these things with the strength of parts. That hath been the ground of so many heresies as have been in the church. Only Christ 'hath the key of David, that shutteth, and no man openeth; and openeth, and no man shutteth,' Rev. iii. 7. He hath the key of the Scripture, and the key to open the understanding. And to press this point a little. If 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things of the gospel,' without the revelation of the Spirit, then we must come with this mind when we come to hear the things of the gospel. Lord, without thy Holy Spirit they are all as a clasped book; they are hidden mysteries to me, though they be revealed in the gospel. If my heart be shut to them, they are all hidden to me.

We see men of excellent parts are enemies to that they teach themselves, opposing the power of the gospel. Whence is all this? Because they think only the opening of these things makes them divines, whereas without the Holy Ghost sanctifying and altering the heart in some measure to taste and

relish these things, that as they are divine in themselves, so to have somewhat divine in the heart to taste these things, it is impossible but that the heart should rise against them; and so it doth. For when it comes to particulars, you must deny yourself in this honour, in this pleasure, and commodity; now you must venture the displeasure of man for this and that truth. The heart riseth in scorn and loathing of divine truth. When it comes to particulars they know nothing as they should. For when is truth known, but when in particulars we stand for it; and will neither betray it nor do anything that doth not benefit a Christian? If we have not the Spirit of God to relish truths in particular, they will do us no good. And except the Spirit sanctify the heart of man first by these truths, the truth will never be understood by the proud natural heart of man.

Therefore the course that God takes with his children is this. Those that he means to save, he first inspires into their hearts some desire to come to hear and attend upon the means of salvation, to understand the gospel; and then under the means of salvation he shines into the understanding by a heavenly light, and inspires into the will and affections some heavenly inclination to this truth of the gospel, to justification, sanctification, self-denial, and the like, and works a new life; and new senses, and upon them, wrought under the means, comes the soul to relish, and to understand these mysteries; and then the ears and the eyes are open to see these things, and never before. A holy man, that hath his heart subdued by the Spirit of God in the use of the means, oh he relisheth the point of forgiveness of sins; he relisheth the point of sanctification; he studies it daily more and more, and nearer communion with God; he relisheth peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost; they are sweet things, and all the duties of Christianity, because he makes it his main business to adorn his profession; and to live here, so as he may live for ever hereafter. And this must be of necessity; for mark out of the text: if the natural eye and ear and heart can never see nor hear, nor conceive the things of God, must there not be a supernatural ear and eye and heart put into the soul? Must not the heart and all be new-moulded again? If the former frame be not sufficient for these things, of necessity it must be so.

Use 4. From hence learn to arm yourselves against all scandals. When ye see men of all parts and account, and such there may be, men of deep apprehensions and understanding in the Scripture for the matter of notion, and for the language of the Scripture exquisite, and yet to be proud, malicious, haters of sanctity, next to devils, none greater, consider what is the reason. Either they have proud spirits that despise and neglect the means of

salvation altogether; or if they do come, they come as judges; they will not submit their proud hearts to the sweet motions of the Spirit. Stumble not at it, if such men be both enemies to that they teach themselves, and those that practise it. The reason is, because their proud hearts were never subdued by the Spirit to understand the things they speak of. For such a teacher understands supernatural things by a natural light, and by human reason; that is, to talk, and discourse, &c., but he sees not supernatural things by a supernatural light, divine things by a divine light. Therefore a poor soul that hears the things published by him, understands them better by the help of the Spirit than he that speaks them; better indeed for his use and comfort. As we see, there are some that can measure land exactly; but the man that owneth the land measured, he knows the use of the ground and delights in it as his own. The other can tell, here is so much ground, &c. So some divines, they can tell there are such points, and so they are raised; and they can be exquisite in this; but what profit have they by it?

The poor soul that hears these things, by the help of the Spirit he can say, These are mine, as the man for -whom the ground is measured. As it is with those that come to a feast, the physician comes and says, This is wholesome and good, and this is good for this and that, but eats nothing. Others that know not these things, they eat the meat, and are nourished in the mean time. So when such men discourse of this and that, a poor man that hath the Spirit, he relisheth these things as his own. The other goes away, only discourseth as a philosopher of the meat, and eats nothing.

And therefore when thou read and hear these things, content not yourselves with the first degree of revelation. No; that is not enough. When you have done that, desire of God to join his Spirit, to give you spiritual eyes and hearts, that you may close with divine truths, and be divine as the truths are; that there may be a consent of the heart with the truth. Then the word of God will be sweet indeed.

Use 5. Again, here we see this divine truth, that a man when he hath the Spirit of God knows things otherwise than he did know them before, though he did not know them by outward revelation of hearing and reading, &c. And he believes them otherwise than he did before; he sees them by a new light. It is not the same knowledge that an unregenerate man hath with that he hath after, when God works upon his heart, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15; for then it is a divine supernatural knowledge. And it is not the same faith and belief. The Spirit of God raiseth a man up in a degree of creatures above other men, as

other men are above beasts; he gives new eyes, new ears, and a new heart; he moulds him anew every way. Therefore you have good men sometimes wonder at themselves, when God hath touched their hearts, that they have had such shallow conceits of this and that truth before. Now they see that they were in the dark, that they were in a damp before, that they conceived things to be so and so, and thought themselves somebody. But when God opens their eyes, and takes away the scales, and lets them see things in their proper light, heavenly things by a heavenly light, and with a heavenly eye, they wonder at their former foolishness in divinity, especially so far as concerns the gospel. For there is more in the Scripture than pure supernatural divinity; there are many other arts in the Scripture.

The gospel, I say, is a knowledge, not of natural men, or great wits, but of holy sanctified men. Therefore we must not think that these things may be known by nature, &c. It is a sacred knowledge, so much as will bring us to heaven; it is a knowledge of holy men, that have their hearts brought to love and taste, and relish that they know. Therefore it is no wonder, though a company of men of great parts live naughtily. They are no true divines, because they have no true knowledge. The devil is no divine, nor a wicked man properly. Though he can discourse of such things, yet he is not properly a divine; because he knows not things by a divine light, or heavenly things by a heavenly light. The knowledge of the gospel, it is a knowledge of sanctified, holy men. But to come nearer to our practice.

Use. 6. If eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive those things that God hath prepared for his, then let us make this the rule of our esteem of anything that is good, or anything that is ill; make it a rule of valuation. The apostle here, you see, hath a rank of things above the sight of the eye, or the hearing of the ear, or the conceiving of the heart of man. If there be such a rank of things above this, then the greatest ills are those that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man; and indeed they are so. We grieve at the ague, and at the stone, and at the gout; they are grievous things indeed. Oh, but what be these things that we feel and see, to those in another world, that we cannot apprehend for the greatness of them! The torments of hell, we cannot conceive and understand them here; for it is indeed to be in hell itself to conceive what hell is. And therefore when God enlargeth men's spirits to see them, they make away themselves. And so for the greatest good. These goods here, this outward glory, we can see through it. Christ could see through all the glory in the world that the devil showed him, Mat. iv. 8. And

these are things that we can hear of, and hear the utmost that can be spoken of them. Therefore surely they are not the greatest good. There are more excellent things than they. Because the eye sees them, the ear hears of them, and the understanding can conceive of them. But there be things that the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the soul conceived; and these be the joys of heaven. And thereupon, to descend to practice, if this be a rule to value things that the best things are transcendent, beyond sense and comprehension, then shall I for those things that I can see, and can hear, and feel, and understand, shall I lose those excellent good things, that ‘neither eye hath seen nor ear heard,’ &c.? Is not this desperate folly, to venture the loss of the best things, of the most transcendent things, that are above the capacity of the greatest reaches of the world? Shall I lose all for petty poor things that are within my own reach and compass?

How foolish, therefore, are those that are given to pleasures! They feel the pleasure indeed, but the sting comes after. They delight in those ill things that they can hear, and hear all that can be spoken of them, and never think of the excellent things that the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c.

Let this make us in love with divine truths in the Scripture, with the gospel, that part of the Scripture that promiseth salvation by Christ, and all the graces and privileges of Christianity. They are above our reach. We study other things. We can reach them. We can reach the mysteries of the law by long study, and the mysteries of physic, and to the mysteries of trades by understanding, and when men have done all they may be fools in the main—Solomon’s fools. They may do all these things, and be wise for particular things, by particular reaches of that which eye hath seen, and ear heard, &c.; and then for the best things that are above the capacity of men, they may die empty of all, and go to the place of the damned. To be wise to salvation is the best wisdom.

What a pitiful case is this, that God should give us our understandings for better things than we can see or hear in this world, yet we employ them in things of the world wholly. Let us not do as some shallow, proud heads, that regard not divine things. The holy Scriptures they will not vouchsafe to read once a-day, perhaps not once a-week; nay, some scarce have a Bible in their studies. For shame; shall we be so atheistical, when God hath provided such excellent things contained in this book of God, the Testament? Shall we slight these excellent things for knowledge that shall perish with us? as St Paul saith before the text. The knowledge of all other things is perishing,

knowledge of perishing men. Learn on earth that that will abide in heaven, saith St Austin. If we be wise, let us know those things on earth, that the comfort of them may abide with us in heaven. Therefore let us be stirred up to value the Scriptures, the mysteries of salvation in the gospel; they are things that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,' &c. Nay, I say more, that little that we have here, by hearing truths unfolded, whereby the Spirit of God slides into our hearts, and works with them. There is that peace that a man hath in his heart, in the unfolding of the point of justification or adoption, or any divine comfort, that it breeds such inward peace and joy as is unspeakable and glorious. All that we have in the world is not worth those little beginnings that are wrought by the hearing of the word of God here. If the first fruits here be joy oftentimes 'unspeakable and glorious,' 1 Peter i. 8, if the first fruits be 'peace that passeth understanding,' Phil. iv. 7, what will the consummation and perfection of these things be at that day?

Again, here you see a ground of the wonderful patience of the martyrs. You wonder that they would suffer their bodies to be torn, and have their souls severed so violently from their bodies. Alas! cease to wonder; when they had a sense wrought in them by the Spirit of God of the things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard. If a man should have asked them why they would suffer their bodies to be misused thus, when they might have redeemed all this with a little quiet? Oh, they would have answered presently, as some of them have done: We suffer these things in our bodies and in our senses, for those that are above our senses; we know there are things laid up for us that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c. What do you tell us of this torment and that torment? We shall have more glory in heaven than we can have misery here. For we can see this, and there is an end of it; but we shall have joy that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c. As St Paul most divinely, in divers places in Rom. viii. 18, the things that we suffer here are not 'worthy of the glory that shall be revealed.' Therefore let us not wonder so much at their patience as to lay up this ground of patience against an evil day when we may be drawn to seal the truth with our blood. By the way learn what popery is. They think to merit by their doings, but especially by their sufferings, though they be ill doers, and suffer for their demerits; this is their glory. Shall those stained good works (put case they were good works, they be defiled, and stained, and as menstruous cloths, as it is, Isa. xxx. 22), shall they merit the glory to be revealed, that is so great that eye hath not seen? &c. What proportion is there? In merit there must be a proportion between the deed done and the glory. What proportion is there between stained imperfect defiled works, and the glory to be revealed? Should not our lives be

almost angelical? 'What manner of men should we be in all holy conversation,' 2 Pet. iii. 11, considering what things are laid up in heaven, and we have the first fruits of them here? Can men be too holy and exact in their lives, that look for things 'that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard?' &c.

I wonder at the stupidity and hellish pride and malice of men's hearts, that think any man can be too exact in the main duties of Christianity, in the expression of their love to God, in the obedience of their lives; in abstinence from the filthiness of the world, and the like. Can a man that looks for these excellent transcendent things be too careful of his life? I beseech you yourselves be judges.

The Second Sermon

As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c.—1 Cor. II. 9.

The apostle sets out the gospel here with all the commendations that any skill in the world can be commended by. From the author of it, 'God.' From the depth of it, it is 'wisdom;' in a mystery, 'hidden wisdom.' From the antiquity of it, 'it was ordained before the world was.' From the benefit and use of it, 'for our glory.' God is content his wisdom should be honoured in glorifying us, such is his love. And then when it was revealed, that none of the 'princes of the world' (he means not only commanding potentates, but, he being a scholar himself, esteemed philosophers, Pharisees, and learned men to be princes, because the excellency of a man is in the refined part of man, his soul), none of these princes of the world, for all their skill and knowledge, knew this.

In this verse he shows the reason why 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,' &c. He removes knowledge, by removing the way and means of knowledge. The means of knowledge in this world is by the passage and entrance of the senses. Now, this heavenly mystery of the gospel, it is such a knowledge as doth not enter into the soul by the senses.

The points we propounded were these: 1. That God hath a people in the world, whom he favours in a special manner.

Then, secondly, for these that he accounts his friends, he hath prepared great matters. Kings prepare great matters for those they mean to advance; what shall we think then God will do for his friends?

Now, these things prepared, they are great matters indeed; for, in the third place, they are such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c.

And then, in the fourth place, the disposition and qualification of those for whom God hath prepared such great matters. It is for those ‘that love him;’ not for his enemies, or for all men indifferently, but for those that love him.

Of the first and second I spake in the former; and I will not now stand to speak of them, but enlarge myself in the two last.

The things that God hath prepared for them that love him, are such excellent things as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, &c. He means the natural eye, and ear, and understanding, or heart of man.

There be three degrees of discovery of heavenly things:

First, In the doctrine of them; and so they are hid to them that are out of the church.

And then, secondly, in the spiritual meaning of them; and so they are hid to carnal men in the church.

And then, thirdly, in regard of the full comprehension of them, as they are indeed; and so they are reserved for heaven. We have but a little glimpse of them, a little light into them in this world. Now, in this place is meant the things that are discovered in the gospel, especially as they are apprehended by the Spirit, together with the consummation of them in heaven. For they differ only in degree, the discovery of the heavenly things in the gospel here; the privileges, and graces, and comforts of God’s children, and the consummation of them in heaven. And we may reason from the lesser to the greater, if so be that a natural man—though he have natural eyes, and ears, and wits about him—cannot conceive the hidden mysteries of the gospel spiritually with application; much more unable is he, and much less can he conceive, those things of a better life. Now the things of the gospel, the privileges, the graces, and comforts which Christ, the spring and head of them all, in whom all are, and whence we have all, cannot be comprehended by a natural man. He can discourse of them as far as his natural wit conceives them, but not understand heavenly things in their own light as heavenly things, as the things of the gospel. They can talk of repentance—that we commonly speak of, which is a mystery—but notwithstanding who knows

repentance by the light proper to it, but he that by the Spirit of God hath sin discovered to him in its own colours! He knows what it is to grieve for sin.

The sick man knows what it is to be sick. The physician knows it by definition, by books, and so he can enlarge it; but if he be not sick, the sick patient will speak to better purpose. So there is a mystery in the common things of the gospel, repentance and grief for sin. A holy man feels it another matter, because he feels sin discovered by the Spirit of God. And so in faith, in the love of God, and every grace of the gospel is a mystery. If one come to the Schoolmen, they will tell you of faith, and dispute learnedly of it, and deduce this from that; but when he comes to be in extremity, when the terrors of the Lord are upon him, when he comes to use it, he is a mere stranger to it; to cast himself, being a sinful creature, into the arms of God's mercy, he cannot do it without a further light of the Spirit discovering the hidden love of God to him in particular; and so for other graces. Therefore they do but speak of these things—men that are unsanctified—as a blind man doth of colours. They inwardly scorn the truth they speak of; and those to whom they speak, if by the power of God's Spirit they come to profit by the things they teach, if themselves be carnal, they hate them. A carnal man believes not a whit of what he saith; he hath only a common light for the good of others, a common illumination to understand and discover things, and a doctrinal gift to unfold things for others, and not for themselves. For themselves they scorn them in their hearts, and in their lives and conversations, and they will speak as much when it comes to self-denial in preferment, in pleasures, in anything that is gainful. Tush! tell him what he hath taught, or what he knows out of the book of God, he cares not, he knows them only by a common light; but for a particular heavenly light with application and taste to himself, springing from an alteration by the Spirit, he never knows them so. Therefore content not thyself with a common light, for together with our understanding God alters the taste of the whole soul; he gives a new eye, a new ear, to see and hear to purpose, and a new heart to conceive things in another manner than he did before.

But you will ask, How can a godly man know them at all, seeing 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,' &c.?

I answer, first, the things of another life, as we see here, are known by negation, as God is, by way of removing imperfections. The natural eye sees them not, nor the natural ear hears them not, Ac. No; nor the spiritual eye nor ear in a full measure. So things transcendent, that are above the reach of

man, are described in the Scriptures by the way of denial, which is one good way of knowledge.

That 'ye may know the love of God that is above knowledge,' saith the apostle, Eph. iii. 19; that ye may know it more and more. But it is above all knowledge in regard of the perfection of it. As a man may see the sea, but he cannot comprehend the sea. He may be much delighted in seeing the sea, but he sees neither the bottom nor the banks; he cannot comprehend such a vast body. He may see the heavens, but he cannot comprehend them. So a man may know the things when they are revealed, but he cannot comprehend them; apprehension is one thing, and comprehension is another. There may be apprehension in a poor degree, suitable to the capacity of the soul here; but, alas! it is far from the comprehension that we shall have in heaven. That is one way of knowing them, by way of negation and denial of imperfections to them.

And then, secondly, they are known, as we call it, by way of eminence; that is, by comparing them with other things, and preferring them before all other excellencies whatsoever; as we may see the sun in water by resemblance. For God borrows from nature terms to set out grace and glory, because God will speak in our language. For they are called a 'kingdom' and a 'feast,' and a 'crown' by way of comparison. Shallow men think there is a great deal in a kingdom; and indeed so there is, if there were no other. There is great matters in a 'crown,' in 'the feasts' of kings, and the like. But alas! these be shadows; and there is no rhetoric or amplification in this, to say they be shadows. A shadow is as much in proportion to the body as these are to eternal good things. The true reality of things are in the things of another world, for eternity. If we talk of a kingdom, let us talk of that in heaven; if of a crown, of that wherewith the saints are crowned in heaven. If we talk of riches, they are those that make a man eternally rich; that he shall carry with him when he goes out of the world. What riches are those that a man shall outlive, and die a beggar, and not have a drop to comfort him, as we see Dives in hell had not? Luke xvi. 19, seq. Here are riches indeed. So if we talk of beauty, it is the image of God that sets a beauty on the soul, that makes a man lovely in the eye of God. True beauty is to be like God. And to be born anew to that glorious condition is the birth and inheritance. All these poor things are but acting a part upon a stage for a while, as the proudest creature of all that is invested in them will judge ere long; none better judges than they. This is one way of knowing the things of the gospel, by naming of them in our own language. As if a man go into a foreign country, he must learn

that language, or else hold his peace: so God is forced to speak in our own language, to tell us of glory and happiness to come, under the name of crowns and kingdoms, and riches here. If God should set them out in their own lustre, we could not conceive of them.

But, thirdly, the most comfortable way whereby God's people know the things of heaven, and of the life to come, is in regard of some taste; for there is nothing in heaven but God's children have a taste of it before they come there in some measure. They have a taste of the communion that is in heaven, in the communion they have on earth: they have a taste of that eternal Sabbath, by some relish they have of holy exercises in these Christian Sabbaths. A Christian is as much in heaven as he can be, when he sanctifies the holy Sabbath, speaking to God in the congregation by prayer, and hearing God speak to him in the preaching of the word. That peace that we shall have in heaven, which is a peace uninterrupted, without any disturbance, it is understood by that sweet peace of conscience here 'that passeth all understanding,' Eph. iii. 19. We may know, therefore, what the sight of Christ face to face will be, by the sight we have of Christ now in the word and promises. If it so transform and affect us, that sight that we have by knowledge and faith here, what will those sights do? So that by a grape we may know what Canaan is: as the spies, they brought of the grapes of Canaan into the desert. We may know by this little taste what these excellent things are.

The fourth way is by authority and discovery. St Paul was rapt up in [to] the third heaven; he saith, they were such things that he saw, that could not be spoken of, strange things, 2 Cor. xii. 4. And Christ tells us of a kingdom. Christ know what they were. And the word tells us what they are. Our faith looks to the authority of the word, if we had not the first fruits, nor any other discovery. God that hath prepared them, he saith so in his word, and we must rest in his authority. And there are some that have been in heaven. Christ our blessed Saviour, that hath taken into a perpetual union the manhood with the second person, which he hath knit unto it, he knows what is there; and by this means we come to have some kind of knowledge of the things to come.

Fifthly, Again, by a kind of reasoning likewise from the lesser to the greater, we may come to know not only the things, but the greatness of them. As, is there not comfort now in a little glimpse, when God shines upon a Christian's soul, when he is as it were in heaven? Is there such contentment

in holy company here, what shall there be in heaven? Is there such contentment in the delights of this world, that are the delights of our pilgrimage? (They are no better; our houses are houses of pilgrimage; our contentments are contentments of passengers.) If the way, the gallery that leads to heaven, be so spread with comforts, what be those that are reserved in another world! A man may know by raising his soul from the lesser to the greater. And if the things that God hath provided in common for his enemies as well as his friends (as all the comforts of this world, all the delicacies and all the objects of the senses, they are comforts that are common to the enemies of God, as well as his friends): if these things be so excellent, that men venture their souls for them, and lose all to be drowned in these things, Oh what peculiar things are they that God hath reserved for his own children, for those that love him, when those that are common with his enemies are so glorious and excellent! These kind of ways we may come to know them by the help of the Spirit.

Those unmixed joys, those pure joys, that are full of themselves, and have no tincture in heaven, are understood by those joys we feel on earth; the joy of the Holy Ghost, which is after conflict with temptations, or after afflictions, or after hearing and meditating on good things. The heavenly joys that flow into the soul, they give us a taste of that full joy that we shall have at the right hand of God for evermore. That comfort that we shall have in heaven, in the presence of God, and of Christ, and his holy angels, is understood in some little way by the comfortable presence of God to the soul of a Christian, when he finds the Spirit of God raising him, and cheering him up, and witnessing his presence; as oftentimes, to the comfort of God's people, the Holy Ghost witnesseth a presence, that now the soul can say, God is present with me, he smiles on me, and strengtheneth me, and leads me along. This comfortable way God's children have to understand the things of heaven, by the first fruits they have here. For God is so far in love with his children here on earth, and so tender over them, that he purposes not to reserve all for another world, but gives them some taste beforehand, to make them better in love with the things there, and better to bear the troubles of this world. But alas! what is it to that that they shall know? as it is 1 John iii. 2, 'Now we are the sons of God, but it appears not what we shall be.' That shall be so great in comparison of that we are, that it is said not to appear at all. It appears in the first fruits in a little beginnings; but alas! what is that to that glory that shall be! 'Our life is hid with Christ in God,' Col. iii. 3. It is hid. There is no man knows it in regard of the full manifestation; because here it is covered with so many infirmities, and afflictions, and so

many scorns of the world are cast upon the beauty of a Christian life; it is hid in our head Christ. It is not altogether hid, for there is a life that comes from the root, from the head Christ to the members, that quickens them; but in regard of the glory that shall be, it is a hidden life.

Reasons. Let us consider the reasons why God will have it thus, to make it clear, before I go further. We must be modest in reasons when we speak of God's counsels and courses. I will only name them to open our understandings a little.

1st Reason. (First.) It is enough that God will have it so. A modest Christian will be satisfied with that, that God will have a difference between heaven and earth. God's dispensation may satisfy them.

(Second.) God will have a difference between the warring church and the triumphing church.

This life is a life of faith, and not of sight. We walk and live by faith. Why? Partly to try the truth of our faith, and partly for the glory of God, that he hath such servants in the world here that will depend upon him, upon terms of faith, upon his bare word; that can say, 'There are such things reserved in heaven for me, I have enough. What a glory is it to God that he hath those that will trust him upon his bare word! It were no commendation for a Christian to live here in a beautiful, glorious manner, if he should see all and live by sight. If he should see hell open, and the terrors there, for him then to abstain from sin, what glory were it! The sight would force abstinence. If we should see heaven open, and the joys of it present, it were no thanks to be a good man, for sight would force it.

2d Reason. The second reason is this, that God will have a known difference between hypocrites and the true children of God. If heaven were upon earth, and nothing reserved in faith and in promise, every one would be a Christian. But now the greatest things being laid up in promises, we must exercise our faith to wait for them. Now, there are none that will honour God in his word but the true Christian. That there are such excellent things reserved in another world, in comparison of which all these are base, there is none but a true Christian that will honour God upon his word, that will venture the loss of these things here for them in heaven, that will not lose those things that they have in reversion and promise for the present delights of sin for a season! Whereas the common sort, they hear say of a heaven, and happiness, and a day of judgment, &c. But in the mean time they will not

deny their base pleasures and their rebellious dispositions, they will cross themselves in nothing. Do we think that God hath prepared heaven for such wretches as these? Oh let us never think of it! God therefore hath reserved the best excellencies for the time to come, in promises and in his word, if we have grace to depend upon his word, and in the mean time go on and cross our corruptions. It is an excellent condition to be so. It shows the difference that God will have between us and other men.

3d Reason. Again, thirdly, our vessels could not contain it. We are incapable; our brain is not strong enough for these things. As weak brains cannot digest hot liquors, so we cannot digest a large revelation of these things. As we see St Peter was not himself in the transfiguration; he forgot himself, and was spiritually drunk with joy, with that he saw in the mount. He wot not what he said, as the scripture saith, when he said, 'Master, let us make three tabernacles,' &c., Mark ix. 5. Nay, St Paul himself, the great apostle, when he saw things in heaven above expression, that could not nor might not be uttered, could not digest them, 2 Cor. xii. 4. They were so great, that if he had not had somewhat to weigh him down, to balance him, he had been overturned with pride. Therefore there was a 'prick in the flesh' sent to Paul himself, to humble him, 2 Cor. xii. 7. Are we greater than Paul and Peter, the great apostles of the Jews and Gentiles; when these grand apostles could not contain themselves? When they see these heavenly things, and but a glimpse of them, the one did not know what he said, and the other was humbled, by way of prevention, with a prick in the flesh; and shall we think to conceive of these things? No! we cannot; for that is to be in heaven before our time. These and the like reasons we may have to satisfy us in this, why we cannot conceive of the things to come as they are in their proper nature. God saith to Moses, when Moses would have a fairer manifestation of God, 'No man can see me and live,' Exod. xxxiii. 20. If we would see God as he is, we must die. If we would see heaven, and the joys of it as it is, we must die first. No man can see the things that the apostle here speaks of, in their proper light and excellency, but he must die first.

They are not proportionable to our condition here. For God hath resolved that this life shall be a life of imperfection, and that shall be a perfect estate of perfect glory. Alas! our capacities now are not capable, our affections will not contain those excellent things. Therefore God trains us up by little and little to the full fruition and enjoying of it. Thus we see how we come to have some knowledge of them, and why we have not a full knowledge of them here.

Use 1. Well, to leave this and go on. If this be so, then let us oft think of these things.

The life of a Christian is wondrously ruled in this world by the consideration and meditation of the life of another world. Nothing more steers the life of a Christian here than the consideration of the life hereafter; not only by way of comfort, that the consideration of immortal life and glory is the comfort of this mortal base life, but likewise by way of disposition and framing a man to all courses that are good. There is no grace of the Spirit, in a manner, but it is set on work by the consideration of the estate that is to come; no, not one.

What is the work of faith? 'It is the evidence of things not seen,'

Heb. xi. 1. It sets the things of another world present before the eye of the soul, and in that respect it is victorious. It conquers the world, because it sets a better world in the eye. Where were the exercise of faith, if it were not for hope of such an estate which feeds faith? The excellency of faith is, that it is about things not seen. It makes things that are not seen to be seen; it hath a kind of omnipotent power; it gives a being to things that have none, but in the promise of the speaker.

And for hope, the very nature of hope is to expect those things that faith believes. Were it not for the joys of heaven, where were hope? It is the helmet of the soul, to keep it from blows and temptations. It is the anchor of the soul, that being cast within the veil into heaven, stays the soul in all the waves and troubles in this world. The consideration of the things to come exerciseth this grace of hope. We look within the veil, and cast anchor there upward, and not downward; and there we stay ourselves in all combustions and confusions by the exercise of hope, Heb. vi. 19.

And where were patience? If it were not for a better estate in another world, a Christian 'of all men were most miserable,' 1 Cor. xv. 19. Who would endure anything for Christ, if it were not for a better estate afterwards?

And so for sobriety. What forceth a moderate use of all things here? The consideration of future judgment, that made even Felix to tremble, Acts xxiv. 25. The consideration of the estate to come, causes that we surfeit not -with the cares of the world and excess, but do all that may make way for such a glorious consideration.

What enforceth the keeping of a good conscience in all things? St Paul looked to the resurrection of the just and of the unjust; and this made him exercise himself to keep a good conscience.

And so purity and holiness, that we take heed of all defilements in the world, that we be not 'led away with the error of the wicked,' 2 Peter iii. 17; but 'keep ourselves unspotted,' James i. 27. What forceth this but the consideration of a glorious condition in another world! 'He that hath this hope purgeth himself,' 1 John iii. 3. There is a purgative power in hope; a cleansing efficacy, that a man cannot hope for this excellent condition, but it will frame and fit the soul for that condition. Can a man hope to appear before a great person, and not fit himself in his deportment and attire beforehand, to please the person before whom he appears? So whosoever hopes to appear before Christ and God, of necessity that hope will force him to purge himself. Let us not stand to search curiously into particulars, what the glory of the soul or of the body shall be (the apostle discovers it in general, we shall be conformed to Christ our head in soul and body'), but rather study how to make good use of them; for therefore they are revealed beforehand in general.

Use 2. And withal to humble ourselves, and to say with the psalmist, 'Lord, what is man, that thou so far considerest him?' Ps. viii. 4; sinful man, that hath lost his first condition, and hath betrayed himself to thine and his enemy; to advance him to that estate, 'that neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard,' &c. This consideration will make us base in our own eyes.

Shall not we presently disdain any proud conceits? Shall we talk of merit? What can come from a creature that shall deserve things that 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard;' that such proud conceits should enter into the heart of man? Surely grace never entered into that man's heart, that hath such a conceit to entertain merit. Shall a man think by a penny to merit a thousand pounds; by a little performance to merit things that are above the conceit of men and angels? But a word is enough that way.

Use 3. And with humiliation, take that which always goes with humiliation, thankfulness, even beforehand. When the apostle St Peter thought of the 'inheritance immortal and undefiled,' &c., he begins, 'Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c., 1 Peter i. 3, 4. He could not think of these things without thankfulness to God. For we should begin the life of heaven upon earth, as much as may be; and what is that but a blessing and praising of God? Now we cannot more effectually and feelingly

praise God, than by the consideration of what great things are reserved for us; for faith sets them before the soul as present, as invested into them. Now if we were in heaven already, we should praise God, and do nothing else. Therefore faith making them sure to the soul, as if we had them, sets the soul on work to praise God, as in Eph. i. 3, and in 1 Peter i. 3. St Peter and Paul, they could never have enough of this. Thus we should do, and cheer and joy our hearts in the consideration of these things in all conflicts and desolations. We little think of those things, and that is our fault. We are like little children that are born to great matters, notwithstanding not knowing of them, they carry not themselves answerable to their hopes. But the more the children grow into years, the more they grow in spirit and conceits, and carriage fitting the estates they hope for.

So it is with Christians at the first; when they are weak they are troubled with this temptation and with that, with this loss and with that cross; but when a Christian grows to a full stature in Christ, every petty cross doth not cast him down. He thinks, What! shall I be dejected with this loss, that have heaven reserved for me? Shall I be cast down with this cross, that have things that 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard,' &c., prepared for me? He will not. He makes use of his faith to fetch comfort from these things that are reserved for him, that are inexpressible and inconceivable.

Use 4. And let us comfort ourselves in all the slighings of the world. A man that hath great hopes in his own country, if he be slighted abroad, he thinks with himself, I have other matters reserved elsewhere, and I shall have another manner of respect when I come home. The world it knows not God, nor Christ, nor us. Shall not we be content to go up and down as unknown men here, when God the Father and Christ our Saviour are unknown? There are better things reserved at home for us. Therefore let us digest all the slighings and abusage of carnal men. And let us not envy them their condition that is but for term of life, use it as well as they will; that hath a date that will be out we know not how soon. Alas! all their happiness it is but a measured happiness; it is within their understandings; their eyes can see it and their ears can hear it, and when they can neither see nor conceive more in this world, then there is an end of all their sensible happiness. Shall we envy, when they shall shortly be turned out naked out of this world to the place of torment? We should present them to us as objects of pity, even the greatest men in the world, if we see by their carriage they be void of grace; but not envy any condition in this world. But what affection is due and suiting to the estate of a Christian? If we would have the true affection, it is

admiration and wonderment. What is wonderment? It is the state and disposition of the soul toward things that are new and rare and strange; that we can give no reason of, that are beyond our reach. For wise men wonder not, because they see a reason, they can compass things. But a Christian cannot but wonder, because the things prepared are above his reach. Yea, when he is in heaven, he shall not be able to conceive the glory of it. He shall enter into it; it shall be above him; he shall have more joy and peace than he can comprehend. The joy that he hath there it is beyond his ability and capacity, beyond his power; he shall not be able to compass all. It shall be a matter of wonder even in heaven itself, much more should it be here below. Therefore the holy apostles, when they speak in the Scriptures of these things, it is with terms of admiration and wonderment, 'joy unspeakable and glorious,' 1 Peter i. 8, and 'peace that passeth understanding,' Philip, iv. 7; and when they speak of our deliverance out of the state of darkness into the state of grace, they call it a being 'brought out of darkness into his marvellous light,' 1 Peter ii. 9. And so 'God loved the world,' he cannot express how, John iii. 16. 'Behold what love hath the Father showed us, that we should be called the sons of God,' 1 John iii. 1. To be called, and to be, is all one with God; both beyond expression.

Use 5. Again, if this be so that God hath provided such things as neither 'eye hath seen nor ear hath heard,' &c, beg of God first the Spirit of grace to conceive of them as the Scripture reveals them, and then beg of God a further degree of revelation, that he would more and more reveal to us by his Spirit those excellent things. For the soul is never in a better frame than when it is lift up above earthly things. When shall a man use the world as though he used it not? When he goes about his business in a commanding manner, as seeing all things under him; when he is raised up to conceive the things that are reserved for him above the world. That keeps a man from being drowned in the world. What makes men drowned in the world to be earth-worms? They think of no other heaven but this; they have no other thing in their eye. Now by the Spirit discovering these things to them that have weaned souls, it makes them go about the things of the world in another manner. They will do them, and do them exactly, with conscience and care, considering that they must give an account of all; but they will do them with reserved affections to better things. Therefore let us oft think of this, and labour to have a spirit of faith to believe them that they are so, that there are such great things; and then upon believing, the meditation of such excellent things will keep the soul in such a frame as it will be fit for anything without defiling of itself. A man that hath first faith that these things are so,

and then that hath faith exorcised to think and meditate what these things are, he may be turned loose to any temptation whatsoever. For first of all, if there be any solicitation to any base sin, what will he think? Shall I for the pleasures of sin for a season, if not lose the joys of heaven and happiness that 'eye hath not seen,' &c., yet surely I shall lose the comfort and assurance of them. A man cannot enjoy the comfort of heaven upon earth without self-denial and mortification. Shall I lose peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost for these things? When Satan comes with any bait, let us think he comes to rob us of better than he can give. His bait is some present pleasure, or preferment, or contentment here. But what doth he take from us? That which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,' &c. He gives Adam an apple, and takes away paradise. Therefore in all temptations consider not what he offers, but what we shall lose; at least the comfort of what we shall lose. We shall lose the comfort of heaven, and bring ourselves to terrors of conscience.

Religion is not so empty a thing as that we need to be beholding to the devil for any preferment, or riches, or contentment, or pleasure. Hath God set up a profession of religion, and do we think that we must be beholding to his, and our enemy, for any base contentments? No. It is a disparagement to our religion, to our profession and calling, and to our Lord and Master we serve, to think that he will not provide richly for his. You see here he hath prepared things that 'eye hath not seen,' &c.

And by this likewise we may judge of the difference of excellencies; the difference of degrees of excellencies may be fetched from hence. The things that the eye can see they may be excellent good things, but if the eye can see them there is no great matters in them. The thing that the ear hears by reports are more than the eye sees. We may hear much that we never saw, yet if we can hear them and conceive of them upon the hearing, they are no great matters, for the soul is larger than they. We conceive more than we can hear; the conceit is beyond sight and hearing. If we can conceive the compass and latitude of anything, it is no great matter, for it is within the reach, and model, and apprehension of man's brain; it is no wondrous matter. Ay, but then the things that are most excellent of all they are above sight and beholding and hearing and conceit, that the soul cannot wholly compass and reach them. Those are the excellent things of all. The rule of excellency is to know what we can conceive, and what is beyond our comprehension. The wit of man can conceive all things under the heavens. All the knowledge we have comes within the brain of man; the government of states and the like.

Oh but the things that God hath provided for his never came wholly within the brain of man, and therefore they are the most excellent!

And so by way of contraries for ills; what are the greatest ills? Those that the eye can see, that we can feel, and hear of, and conceive? Oh no. The greatest ills are those torments that never eye saw, that ear never heard of. It is to be in hell to know these things. They are beyond our conceit. 'The worm that dies not, fire unquenchable,' Mark ix. 43, the things above our apprehension are the most terrible things. It is not the gout or the stone. Men feel these things, and yet suffer them with some patience. These are not the greatest ills, but those of another world that are reserved for God's enemies; as the best things are those that are reserved for his friends.

Therefore let us make use of our understandings in laying things together, and make use of God's discovery of the state of Christianity, the excellencies of religion. Why doth God reveal these things in the word? That we should oft meditate of them, and study them, that we may be heavenly-minded. For there are none that come to heaven but they must have a taste of these beforehand. There are none ever enjoy them in perfection. When the day of revelation shall come (the gospel now is the time of revelation, but the day of revelation is the time of judgment), then shall we be revealed what we are. But in the mean time there is a revelation by the Spirit in some beginnings of these things, or else we shall never come to have the perfection of them in heaven. If we know not what peace, and joy, and comfort, and the communion of the saints, and the change of nature is here in sanctification, we shall never know in heaven the fulfilling of it.

And those that have the first fruits here, if they be in a state of growth, that they desire to grow better continually, they shall, no question, come to the perfection; for God will not lose his beginnings. Where he gives earnest, he will make up the bargain.

Therefore let us all that know a little what these things are by the revelation of the Spirit, let us be glad of our portion. For God that hath begun, he will surely make an end.

The affection, and bent and frame of soul due to these things is admiration, and not only simple hearing. If these things in their beginnings here be set out by words of admiration, 'peace that passeth understanding,' and 'joy unspeakable and glorious,' what affection and frame of spirit is suitable to the hearing of those things that are kept for us in another world!

If the light that we are brought into here be admirable, great (we are brought out of darkness into admirable wonderful light), if the light of grace be so wonderful to a man that comes out of the state of nature, as it is indeed (a man comes out of a damp into a wonderful clear light), what then is the light of glory! Therefore let us often think of it. Those that are born in a prison, they hear great talk of the light, and of the sun, of such a glorious creature; but being born in prison, they know not what it is in itself. So those that are in the prison of nature, they know not what the light of grace is. They hear talk of glorious things, and have conceits of them. And those that here know not the glory that shall be after, when they are revealed, that affection that is due to them is admiration and wonderment. 'So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,' John iii. 10; and 'Behold what love the Father hath showed to us, that we should be called the sons of God,' 1 John iii. 1. What love! He could not tell what, it is so admirable; and to know the love of God, that is above all knowledge! Who can comprehend the love of God, that gave his Son! Who can comprehend the excellency of Christ's gift! The joys of heaven by Christ, and the misery of hell, from which we are delivered and redeemed by Christ! These things come from the gospel, and the spring from whence they come is the large and infinite and incomprehensible love of God. And if it be so, what affection is answerable but admiration? Behold what love! If God have so loved flesh and blood, poor dust and ashes, so as to be heirs of heaven, and of such glory as eye sees not, nor cannot in this world; nor ear hears not; nor hath entered into the heart of man, till we come fully to possess them; let us labour to admire the love of God herein.

And labour to know more and more our inheritance, as we grow in years, as children do. They search into the great matters their parents leave them, and the nearer they come to enjoy them, the more skill they have to talk of them. So should we: the more we grow in Christianity and in knowledge, the more we should be inquisitive after those great things that our Father hath provided in another world. But to go on.

How shall we know whether these things he prepared for us or no? whether we be capable of these things or no? God hath prepared them, and he hath prepared them for those that love him; but how shall we know that God hath prepared them for us?

In a word, whom God hath prepared great matters for, he prepares them for great matters. We may know by God's preparing of us, whether he hath prepared for us. God prepared paradise before Adam was created: so

God prepares paradise, he prepares heaven before we come there. And we may know that we shall come to possess that, if we be prepared for it. What preparation? If we be prepared by a spirit of sanctification, and have holy desires and longing after those excellent things; for certainly there is preparation on both sides. It is prepared for us, and us for it. It is kept for us, and we are kept for it. Whom God keeps heaven for, he keeps them for heaven in a course of piety and obedience. We may know it by God's preparing of us, by loosing us from the world, and sanctifying us to himself. Thus a man may know whether those great things be prepared for him or no.

But the especial thing to know whether they be provided for us or no is love. God hath prepared them for them that love him: not for his enemies. He hath prepared another place, and other things for them; those torments that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man,' for those that are his enemies, that would not come under his government; but these things are prepared 'for those that love him.'

'For those that love him.' Especially that love is all in all, in the disposition of a holy man. All graces are one in the spring, which is love. They are several in the branches, but they are one in the root.

Thus you have heard the use we are to make of this, that there is a reservation of a glorious condition for the people of God so great that neither 'eye hath seen,' &c.

But who be the parties that God hath prepared these things for?

'For them that love him.'

This is the fourth part, the disposition of the parties for whom, 'for them that love him.'

Quest. 1. Why not for those that God hath elected? Why doth he not go to the root of all? The great things that God hath prepared for those that he hath chosen to salvation? No. That is out of our reach, they would not have us to go to heaven, but rather go to our own hearts. We must search for our election, not above ourselves, but within ourselves.

Quest. 2. Why doth he not say, to them that believe in him, because faith is the radical grace from whence the rest spring?

Ans. But faith is a hidden grace many times; and the apostle's scope is to point to such a disposition, that every one may know, that is more familiar. Sometimes faith is hidden in the root, and it is showed in the effect more than in itself, in love. A poor Christian that is in the state of grace, that saith, 'Oh, I cannot believe,' ask him if he love God. Oh yes; he loves the preaching of the word; he loves good people and good books, and the like. When he cannot discover his faith, he can his love. Therefore the Holy Ghost sets it out by the more familiar disposition, by love rather than faith.

Quest. 3. Why doth he not say, For those that God loves? God's love is the cause of our love.

Ans. Because God's love is manifested more familiarly by our love to him; for that is always supposed. Wheresoever there is love to God, and good things, there is God's love first. For our love to God is but a reflection of that love he hears to us. First, he shines on us, and then the beams of our love reflect upon him. Therefore he need not say, whom God loves (though that be the cause of all), but who love God; and know thereby that he loves them.

Quest. 4. But why for them that love him more than for any other thing? Am. Because all can love. Therefore he sets down this affection. There is no man living, not the poorest lazar in the world, that hath a heart and affections, but he can love. He doth not say, that are prepared for this great Christian, and that learned Rabbi. No. But for all that love him, be they poor or rich, great or small, all those that love him. Therefore he sets down that to cut off all excuses. Yea, and all that love him, be they never so many, are sure to have these great things prepared for them. God hath 'prepared these things for those that love him.'

To come therefore to some observations. The first general thing is this, that,

Obs. God doth qualify all those in this world, that he hath prepared heaven and happiness for in another world.

The cause of it is his free love. But if you ask me what qualifications the persons must have? They are such as 'love him.' This is not the proper cause why, but the qualification of the persons for whom these things are. There must be an inward disposition and qualification, before we come to heaven.

All those that hope for heaven without presumption must have this qualification, they must be such as 'love him.'

Why?

Reasons. The Scripture is plain, (1.) No unclean thing shall enter into heaven. No whoremonger, or drunkard, or filthy person. Be not deceived, saith the apostle, you think God is merciful, and Christ died, &c., but neither such, nor such as you are (and your consciences tell you so) shall ever enter into heaven, 1 Cor. vi. 9, seq. We must not think to come *è coeno in coelum*, out of the mire and dirt of sin into heaven. There is no such sudden getting into heaven; but there must be an alteration of our dispositions, wrought by the Spirit of God, fitting us for heaven.

(2.) Another is, that that I touched before, that heaven and earth differ but in degrees, therefore what is there in perfection must be begun here.

(3.) Then again, thirdly, it is impossible for a man, if he be not truly altered, to desire or wish heaven as it is holy. He may wish for it under the notion of a kingdom, of pleasure, and the like; but as heaven contains a state of perfect holiness and freedom from sin, he cares not for it. A man that is out of relish with heavenly things, and can taste only his base sins, whereon his affections are set and exercised, cannot relish heaven itself. A common, base sinner, his desires are not there. There must be some proportion between the thing desired, and the desire. But here is none. He is not for that place, being an unholy wretch.

Therefore his own heart tells him, I had rather have this pleasure and honour that my heart stands to, than to have heaven, while he is in that frame of desire. Therefore there is no man that can desire heaven that is not disposed aright to heaven before. Beetles love dunghills better than ointments, and swine love mud better than a garden. They are in their element in these things. So take a swinish base creature, he loves to wallow in this world. Tell him of heaven: he hath no eyes to see it, no ears to hear it; except he may have that in heaven that his heart stands to (which he shall never have), he hath no desire of heaven. Therefore in these and the like respects, of necessity there must be a disposition wrought before we come there. These things are prepared for those that 'love God.'

Use 1. If this be so, let us not feed, ourselves with vain hopes. There are none of us but we desire, at least we pretend that we desire, heaven; but most

men conceive it only as a place free from trouble and annoyance; and they are goodly things they hear of, kingdoms, crowns, and the like. But except thou have a holy, gracious heart, and desirest heaven that thou mayest be free from sin, and to have communion with Christ and his saints, to have the image of God, the divine nature perfect in thee, thou art an hypocrite, thou carriest a presumptuous conceit of these things; thy hope will delude thee; it is a false hope. 'Every one that hath this hope purgeth himself,' 1 John iii. 3. Every one, he excludes none. Dost thou defile thyself, and live in sinful courses, and hast thou this hope? Thou hast a hope, but it is not this hope; for every one that hath this hope purgeth himself. No, no; however in time of peace, and pleasure, and contentment that God follows thee with in this world, thou hast a vain hope; yet in a little trouble, or sickness, &c., thy own conscience will tell thee another place is provided for thee, a place of torment, that neither 'eye hath seen nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive' the misery of it. There is not the greatest man living, when he is troubled, if he be a sinful man, whose greatness can content him. All his honour and friends cannot pacify that poor conscience of his. But death, 'the king of fears,' will affright him. He thinks, I have some trouble in this world, but there is worse that remains; things that he is not able to conceive of. Let us not therefore delude ourselves. There is nothing will stand out but the new creature, that we find a change wrought by the Spirit of God. Then we may without presumption hope for the good things which neither 'eye hath seen,' &c.

Use 2. Again, we see in the second place God's mercy to us; the qualification is within us, that we need not, go far to know what our evidence is. Satan abuseth many poor Christians. Oh I am not elected, I am not the child of God! Whither goest thou, man? Dost thou break into heaven? When thou carriest a soul in thy breast, and in that soul the affection of love; how is that sot? Whither is thy love carried, and thy delight, and joy, those affections that spring from love? Thy evidence is in thine own heart. Our title is by faith in Christ. His righteousness gives us title to heaven. But how knowest thou that thou pretendest a just title? Thou hast the evidence in thy heart. What is the bent of thy soul? Whither is the point of it set? Which way goeth that? Dost thou love God, and divine things, and delight in them? Then thou mayest assure thyself that those things belong to thee, as verily as the Scriptures are the word of God, and God a God of truth. When thou findest the love of God in thy heart, that thy heart is taught by his Spirit to love him, then surely thou mayest say, Oh blessed be God that hath kindled this holy fire in my heart. Now I know that 'neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor

hath entered into the heart of man, those excellent things that are laid up for me.’

The Third Sermon

Eye hath not seen, &c.—1 Cor. II. 9.

Saint Paul, as we heard before, gives a reason in these words, why the ‘princes of this world’ (not only the great men, that oftentimes are not the greatest clerks, but the learned men of the world, princes for knowledge), why they were ignorant of the mysteries of the gospel.

Now the fourth is the disposition of those for whom he doth all this; the quality he infuseth into them, they are such as ‘love him.’

1. He hath prepared them before all eternity. He prepared happiness for us before we were; nay, before the world was. As he prepared for Adam a paradise before he was; he created him, and then brought him into paradise: so he prepared for us a kingdom with himself in heaven, a blessed estate before we were; i. e., in election, before the heavens were. And then in creation he prepared the blessed place of the happy souls of happy persons hereafter, where he himself is. He prepared it for himself, and for all those that he means to set his love upon from the beginning to the end.

2. And then, secondly, he prepared them more effectually in time. He prepared these things when Christ came in the flesh, and wrought all things for us, in whom we have all. Of these things thus prepared he saith, ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard them,’ &c. In what sense it is meant are heard before. Now take the whole of the matter; the meaning is, the matters of grace, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory, they are but one. For (to add this by the way) the kingdom of heaven in the gospel includes three things.

First, The doctrine of the gospel, the publishing of it.

And then, secondly, Grace by that doctrine.

And thirdly, Glory upon grace, the consummation of all.

So the mysteries of salvation is, first, the doctrine itself. That is the first degree of the kingdom. The doctrine itself is a mystery to all those that never

heard of it; for what creature could ever conceive how to reconcile justice and mercy, by devising such a way as for God to become man, to reconcile God and man together? That Immanuel, he that is 'God with us,' should make God and us one in love, this could be no more thought of, than Adam could think of himself to be made a man when he was dust of the earth. Could man when he was worse than dust, in a lost, damned estate, think of redemption? It is impossible for a man that cannot tell the form and the quintessence, that cannot enter into the depth of the flowers, or the grass that he tramples on with his feet, that he should have the wit to enter into the deep things of God, that have been concealed even from the angels themselves till God discover them. I add this to illustrate what I said before. Therefore the doctrine itself, till God discover it out of his own breast, was concealed to the angels themselves; and since the discovery, they are students in it, and look and pry into it, 1 Peter i. 12. But where the doctrine is no mystery, but is discovered, there the application and spiritual understanding, to those that have not the light of the Spirit, is such a thing as 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard.' And therefore we must have a new light, a new eye, a new ear, and a new heart, before we can apprehend the gospel, though we understand it for the literal truth. As for the things of glory, we have no conceit of them fully, but by a glimpse and weak apprehension; as a child conceives of the things of a man, by some poor weak resemblances. As St Paul saith, 'When I was a child I spake as a child, I thought as a child,' 1 Cor. xiii. 11. So when we are now children, in comparison of that perfect estate we shall attain in heaven, we think and speak as children, of these holy and heavenly things that shall be accomplished in another world.

And observe this too, that when we would understand anything of heaven, and see anything, say, 'This is not that happiness I look for,' 'I can see this, but that is not to be seen.' And when we hear of anything that is excellent, 'I can hear this, it is not my happiness.' And when we comprehend anything, 'I can comprehend this;' therefore it is not the happiness I look for, but those things that are above my comprehension, that are unutterable and inexpressible.

Moreover, let us be stirred up to think it a base thing-for a Christian to lose the comfort and assurance he hath of these things 'that eye hath not seen nor ear heard,' for any earthly thing whatsoever. We account it a poor thing of Esau to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage, Heb. xii. 16. And we all smart for Adam's ill bargain that he made, to sell paradise for an apple. And it was a cursed sale that Judas made, that sold Christ himself for thirty

pieces of silver. Surely it is that that every carnal man doth; and howsoever we cannot lose heaven, yet it should be our endeavour to enjoy heaven upon earth, to enjoy the assurance of this condition. When we do anything to weaken our assurance, and to weaken our comfort, what do we but with Adam lose heaven for an apple, and with Esau part with our birthright, as much as the assurance and comfort of it is, for a mess of pottage? Therefore let us account it a base thing to be over-much in love with any earthly thing, whereby we may weaken (though we could lose) the comfort and assurance of this happy condition, which is so transcendent. All wicked men, and indeed all men whether good or bad, as far as they fall into sin, are fools; the Scripture terms them so. There is none wise indeed but the true Christian, and that Christian that preserves the sense, and feeling, and assurance of his happy condition.

‘For those that love him.’

The disposition of the parties is, they are such as ‘love God.’ He saith not, such as are elected, because that is a thing out of our reach to know; but by going upward, by going backward, to go from our grace to our calling, and from thence to election; nor such as believe, because that is less discernible than love; nor the love of God to us, for that is supposed when we love him. Our hearts being cold, they cannot be warm in love to him, but his love must warm them first. Love is such an affection as commands all other things, therefore he names that above all. And love is such a thing as every one may try himself by. If he had named either giving or doing of this or that, men might have said, I cannot do it, or I cannot part with it, but when he names love, there is none but they may love. The point considered was, that There must be a qualification of those that heaven is provided for.

They must be such as love God, such as are altered, and changed, and sanctified to love him; because no unclean thing shall enter in thither; because we cannot so much as desire heaven without a change.. We cannot have communion there with Christ and those blessed souls without likeness to them, which must be by a spirit of love; our natures must be altered. Therefore it is a vain presumption for any man to think of heaven unless he find his disposition altered. For we may read our eternal condition in heaven by our disposition upon earth. The apostle Peter saith, 1 Pet. i. 3, ‘Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that hath begotten us to a lively hope of an inheritance immortal and undefiled, reserved in heaven.’ So that the inheritance in heaven, we are begotten to it; we must be new born; we

must have a new birth before we can inherit it; 'He hath begotten us to an inheritance immortal,' &c. He that is not a child may not think of an inheritance. Put case there be never so many glorious things in heaven that 'eye hath never seen nor ear ever heard,' &c., if our names be not in Christ's will, that we are not his, and prove ourselves to be his, by the alteration of our dispositions, what are all those good things to us, when our names are not contained there!

It is called a hope of life, 'a lively hope,' 1 Pet. i. 3; because he that hath this 'hope purgeth himself.' It makes him vigorous and active in good. If his hope of life make him not lively, he hath no hope of life at all. Therefore those that will look for heaven (that Satan abuse them not by false confidence), let them look whether God have altered their hearts; that the work of grace be wrought in some measure. For God hath not ordained these great things for his enemies; for blasphemers, that take God's name in vain; that run on in courses contrary to his will and word; that live in sins against the light of nature; do you think he hath provided these great matters for them? He hath another place for them. Therefore let us not be abused by our own false hearts to think of such a happy condition. Unless we find ourselves changed, unless we be new born, we shall never enter into heaven.

'Lord, Lord,' say they. Christ brings them in pleading so, 'Lord, Lord;' not that they shall say so then, that is not the meaning; but now they cherish such a confidence. Oh we can speak well, and we can pray well, 'Lord, Lord.' Oh thou vain, confident person, thy confession and profession, 'Lord, Lord,' shall do thee no good. I will not so much as own thee; 'Away hence, thou worker of iniquity,' Mat. xxv. 41. Thy heart tells thee thou livest in sins against conscience. Away, avaunt, I will none of thee. God in mercy to us will have the trial of the truth of our evidence in us. The ground of all our salvation is his grace, his free favour, and mercy in his own heart; but we cannot go thither; he would have us to search within ourselves, and there we shall find 'love.'

'God hath prepared for those that love him.'

Obs. In particular, therefore, those that God hath provided so excellent things for, they are such as love him. They are such, first of all, that are beloved of him; and show that they are beloved of him by their love to him. Therefore, when the papists meet with such phrases, they think of merit. He hath provided heaven for them that love him, and show their love in good works. But we must know that this is not brought in as a cause why, but as a

qualification of the persons who; who shall inherit heaven, and who shall have these great things. It is idle for them to think that these things are prepared for those whom God foresees would do such and such good works. It is as if we should think he hath provided these happy things for those that are his enemies. For how could he look for love from us in a state of corruption, when the best thing in us was enmity to him? Is it not a vain thing to look for light from darkness? to look for love from enmity and hatred? Therefore how could God foresee anything in us, when he could see nothing but enmity and darkness in our dispositions by nature?

And then (as we shall see afterward) this love in us it must be with all our heart, and soul, and might. It is required and commanded; and when we do all this, we do but what we are bound to do. But they abuse such places upon so shallow ground, that indeed it deserves not so much as to be mentioned.

To come then to the point itself, the disposition of those that shall come to heaven then is, they must be such as love God. Now he names this because these two go always together. There goes somewhat of ours together with somewhat of God's, to witness to us what God doth. There goes our choice of God, with his choosing of us; our knowing of God, with his knowledge of us; our love to him, with his love to us. Therefore, because these are so connexed and knit together, he takes the one for the other; and to make it familiar to us, he takes that which is most familiar to us, our love to him.

Now he names this above all other affections, because love is the commanding affection of the soul. It is that affection that rules all other affections. Hatred, and anger, and joy, and delight, and desire, they all spring from love; and because all duties spring from love both to God and man, therefore both tables are included in love. And when the apostle would set down the qualifications of those that shall enjoy these things, he saith they are for those 'that love him.' Because it stirs up to all duty, and adds a sweet qualification to every duty, and makes it acceptable and to relish with God. It stirs up to do, and qualifies the actions that come from love to be accepted.

All duties to man spring from love to man, and love to man from love to God. It is the affection that stirs up the duty, and stirs up the affection fit for the duty; it stirs up to do the thing, and to do all in love. Whatsoever we do to God or man, it must be in love. All that God doth to us it is in love. He chooseth us in love, and doth everything in love; and all that we do to

God it must be in love. Therefore he names no other affection but this, because it is the ground, the first-born affection of the soul. Therefore Christ saith it is the great commandment to love God, John xv. 12. It is the great commanding commandment, that commands all other duties whatsoever; it is the first wheel that turns the whole soul about.

Again, it is such an affection as cannot be dissembled. A man may paint fire, but he cannot paint heat. A man may dissemble actions in religion, but he cannot affections. Love is the very best affection of truth. A man may counterfeit actions; but there is none that can love but the child of God. 'God hath prepared these things for those that love him.'

Then again, without this, all that we do is nothing, and we are nothing. We are nothing but an empty cymbal. Whatsoever we do is nothing; all is empty without love. 'My son, give me thy heart,' Prov. xxiii. 26; that is, if thou wilt give me anything, give me thy affections, or else they are still-born actions, that have no life in them. If we do anything to God, and do it not in love, he regards it not. That is the reason why he mentions love instead of all. It is so sweet an affection, and so easy; what is more easy than to love? It is comfortable to us to consider that God hath made this a qualification of those that he brings to heaven; they are such as 'love him.'

Quest. But why doth he set down any qualification at all, and not say, for Christians?

An. Because profession must have expression. When God sets down a professor of religion, he sets him down by some character that shall discover him to be as he is termed. How dost thou know thou art good? Dost thou love God, or call upon God? as it is in other places, 'To all those that call upon his name,' 1 Cor. i. 2, to let us know that religion and holiness is a matter of power. Wouldst thou know what thou art in religion? Dost thou love God, or call upon God?

It is not to be tolerated, to be Christians, to profess as Demas, 2 Tim. iv. 10. Oh no! but they must be such as from the heart-root are good, 'such as love God.'

Therefore, dark disputes of election and predestination, at the first especially, let them go. How standest thou affected to God and to good things? Look to thy heart whether God have taught it to love or no, and to relish heavenly things. If he hath, thy state is good. And then thou mayest

ascend to those great matters of predestination and election. But begin not with those, but go first to thine own heart, and then to those deep mysteries afterward. If a man love God, he may look back to election, and forward to glorification, to the things that 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard,' &c. But see first what God hath wrought in thy heart, what affection to heavenly things; and thence from thy affections to go backward to election, and forward to glorification, there is no danger in it.

To come therefore to express more particularly this affection of love, which is the disposition that God requires and works in all those that he intends heaven to. Let us search into the nature of this love to God. What it is to love we need not be taught, for all men know it well enough. It is better known, indeed, by the affection than by discourse. What it is to love is known by those that love better than by any books or treatises whatsoever, for it is the affection that is in all men. Natural love, it is in those that have no grace at all, and civil love in those that are evil men. They know what it is to love by reason of that wild fire, that carnal love that is in them, that transports them. A man may see the nature of it in those as well as in any; for set aside the extravagant nature of it in such kind of persons, we may see the nature of it. Therefore I will not meddle with that point; it is needless. I come therefore to this love of God, to show how this stream of affection should be carried in the right channel to God, the right object of it, who only can make us happy by loving of him. Other things, by loving of them, they make us worse, if they be worse than ourselves; for such as we love, such we are. Indeed, our understandings make us not good or ill, but our love doth. By loving God and heavenly things we become good. Our affections show what we are in religion.

There be four things in this sweet affection in true natural love.

1. There is an estimation and valuing of some good thing, especially when the love is to a letter, when it is not between equals. Now there is a great distance between God and us. There is a high esteem in common love; love will not stoop to nothing. There cannot be love maintained but upon sight of a supposed excellency; love will not stoop but where it sees somewhat worth the valuing. Therefore there is a high esteem of somewhat as the spring of it. And that is the reason that we say a man cannot be wise and love in earthly things, because love will make a man too much to value those things that he that apprehends better would not.

2. In the second place, there is a desire to be joined to it, that we call the desire of union.

3. In the third place, upon union and joining to it, there is a resting, a complacency and contentment in the thing to which we are united, for what is happiness itself but fully to enjoy what we love? AY hen we love upon judgment and a right esteem, to enjoy, that is happiness and contentment indeed.

4. In the fourth place, where this true affection is, there is a desire of contentment to the party loved, to please him, to approve ourselves to him, to displease him in nothing. Every one knows that these things are in that affection by nature.

Look to carnal self-love, a man may know what it is to love; the affection is all one in both. Take a man when he makes himself his idol, as till a man love God he loves himself above all, he is the idol and the idolater; he hath a high esteem of himself, and those that do not highly esteem him he swells against them. Again, self-love makes a man desire to enjoy himself, and to enjoy his content, to procure all things that may serve for his contentment.

Now, when the Spirit of God hath purged our hearts of this carnal idolatry of self-love, and self-seeking, and sufficiency, and contentment in himself, then a man puts God instead of himself; grace, and the Spirit doth so; and instead of highly esteeming of himself, he esteems highly of God, and of Christ, and religion. Then, instead of placing a sufficiency in himself and the things of this life, and resting in them, there is a placing of sufficiency in God all-sufficient. And instead of seeking his own will and content in all things, mens mihi pro regno, my mind is to me a kingdom, then a man seeks to give contentment to God in all things, and ‘to be a fool, that he may be wise,’ 1 Cor. iii. 18, and to have no will and no delight in anything that cannot stand with the pleasure of and obedience to God.

Thus a man, by knowing what his own natural corruption is, he may know what his affection is to better things.

First of all, there must be an estimation, an esteem of God and Christ; for to avoid misconceit, we take both these to be one: God our Father in Christ, and Christ. Whatsoever Christ did for us in love, he did it from the love of the Father who gave him. And when we speak of the love of God, we

Speak of the love of Christ to us. Therefore there must be a high esteeming, and valuing, and prizing of God above all things in the world, and of his love.

(1.) Now, this must needs be so; for where grace is, it gives a sanctified judgment; a sanctified judgment values and esteems things as they are. Now the judgment, apprehending God and his love to be the best thing to make us happy, prizeth it above all: 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and what have I in earth in comparison of thee?' Ps. lxxiii. 25. He prizeth God and his love above all things in the world.

Now, if we would know if we have this judgment, we may know it by our choice. This valuing it is known by choice: for what a man esteems and values highly he makes choice of above all things in the world. What men make choice of is seen by their courses. We see it in holy Moses, Heb. xi. 26, seq. He had a high esteem of the estate of God's people, that afflicted people. As afflicted as they were, yet he saw they were God's people, in covenant with him, and more regarded of him than all the people in the world besides; and upon his estimation he made a choice: 'he chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' His choice followed his esteem. So if we value and esteem God and religion, and love God above all things, we will make choice of the Lord. As St Peter saith, John vi. 68, seq., when Christ asked them, 'Will ye also forsake me?' saith he, 'Lord, whither shall we go?' We have made choice of thee; 'whither shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.' Let us do that in truth that he for a time failed to do, when he said, 'Though all forsake thee, yet will not I,' Mat. xxvi. 83. If we make this choice of Christ from the truth of our hearts, this shows our esteem.

What is thy choice? Is it religious ways and religious company? Is it the fear of God above all things? 'One thing have I desired, that I may dwell in the house of God for ever, and visit his temple,' Ps. xxvii. 4. Hast thou with Mary made choice of the better part? Dost thou value thyself as a member of Christ, and an heir of heaven, as a Christian above all conditions in this world (for what a man esteems he values himself by)? Then thou art a true lover, thou hast this love planted in thy heart, because thou hast a true esteem. You see Paul accounted 'all dung and dross in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ,' Philip, iii. 8. Oh that we could come to that excellent affection of St Paul, to undervalue all things to Christ, and the good things by Christ and religion! Certainly it is universally true, where Christ is loved, and

God in Christ, the price of all things else fall in the soul. For when we welcome Christ, then farewell all that cannot stand with Christ.

(2.) Again, our esteem is known by our willing parting with anything for that that we esteem; as a wise merchant doth sell all for the pearl, Mat. xiii. 46. We may know therefore that we esteem God and his truth; for they go together, God and his truth and religion. We must take God with all that he is clothed with, wherein he shows himself unto us. If we sell all for the truth of God, and part with all, and deny all for the love and obedience of it, it is a sign we have an esteem answerable to his worth, and that we love him.

Those therefore that will part with nothing for God, nor for religion and the truth, when they are called to it, do they talk of love to God? They have no esteem, they value not God. If they did esteem him, they would sell all for the pearl. Therefore those that halt in religion, that care not which way religion and the truth goes, so they may have honour and pleasures in this world, where is their esteem of the gospel, and of the truth of Christ and of God? They have no love, because they have no estimation.

(3.) Again, what we esteem highly of we speak largely of. A man is always eloquent in that he esteems. It will put him, to the extent of his abilities, to be as eloquent as possible he can be. You never knew a man want words for that he prized, to set it out. Therefore when we want words to praise God, and to set out the value of the best things, it is an argument we have poor esteem of them. All go together, God and the things of God. What! do we talk of loving God, and despise Christians and religion? They are never severed. If a man esteem the best things, he will be often speaking of them. If a man set his affections upon a thing, it will suggest words at will. Therefore those that are clean out of their theme, when they speak of good things, are to seek, Alas! where is the affection of love? where is esteem? Esteem it makes a readiness to speak.

(4.) Esteem likewise carries our thoughts. Wouldst thou know what thou esteemest highly? What dost thou think of most and highest? Thou mayest know it by that. We see the first branch, how we may know we love God, if we have a high esteem and valuing of God, by these signs.

Secondly, Where there is true love and affection, there is a desire of union; of knitting and coupling with the thing loved. Of necessity it must be so; for love is such a kind of affection, it draws the soul all it can to the thing

loved. It hath a magnetical force, the force of a loadstone. Every one knows what this means.

This affection of love makes us one with that we love. If a man love the world, he is a worldling, a man of the world, because affection breeds union. Though a man be never so base in choosing, whatsoever a man loves he desires union with it; and being so, he hath his name from that he loves. He that loves the world is a worldling, an earthworm. Now, if there be the love of God, as in covenant, as a Father in Christ, for so we must conceive of God, there will be a desire of fellowship and communion with him by all means, in the word and sacrament, &c. If a man desire strangeness, that he cares not how seldom he receive the sacrament or come into God's presence, is here love? How can love and strangeness stand together? Thou art a strange person from God, and the things of God; thou hast no joy in his presence. Where thou mayest enjoy his presence here in holy things in this world, if thou delight not in his presence and in union with him, how canst thou say thou lovest him?

Can a man say he loves him whose company he cares not for? Thou carest not for God's company. Thou mayest meet him in the word and sacraments, and in good company: 'Where two or three are gathered together, I will be in the midst,' Mat. xviii. 20. Dost thou pretend thou lovest God if thou carest not for these? Thou hast no fellowship in this business; all that relish not heavenly things, they do not love.

Now, to try whether we have this branch of love, that is, a desire of union. Where therefore there is a desire of union with the party loved, of uniting to that person (for we speak of persons), there will be a desire of communion.

(1.) A desire of union will breed a desire of communion; that is, there will be a course taken to open our minds. If we have a desire of communion with God, we will open our souls often to him in prayer, and we will desire that he will open himself in speaking to our hearts by his Spirit. And we will desire that he will open his mind to us in his word. We will be careful to hear his word, and so maintain that sweet and heavenly commerce between him and our souls by this intercourse of hearing him and speaking to him: 'Where two or three are gathered together, I will be in the midst.' Therefore those that make no conscience either of hearing the word, or of prayer public and private, and of using the glorious liberty that we have in Christ, of free access to the throne of grace, that do not use this prerogative and privilege to

cherish that union and communion they may have with God, they love not God and Christ. Strangeness is opposite to love, and it dissolves and disunites affections. Therefore when we are strange to God, that we can go from one end of the week to the other, and from the beginning of the day to the end of it, and not be acquainted with God, and not open our souls to him, it is a sign we have no love; because there is no desire of union and communion with him.

(2.) Again, where we love we consult and advise, and rest in that advice, as coming from a loving person, especially if he be as wise as loving. So in all our consultations, we will go to God and take his counsel; and when we have it, we will account it the counsel of one that is wise and loving.

Those therefore that trust to their own wits, to policy and such like, what do they speak of love when they make not use of that covenant that is between God and them? They consult not with him; they make not his word the 'man of their counsel,' Ps. cxix. 21; They go not to him by prayer for advice; they commit not their 'ways' to him, as the psalmist speaketh, Ps. xxxvii. 5.

(3.) And this distinguished a good Christian from another man: a good Christian he is such a one as acquaints himself with his God, and will not lose that intercourse he hath with God for all the world. As Daniel, he would not but pray; they could not get him from it with the hazard of his life, Dan. vi. 11.

(4.) Again, where this desire of union and joining is, there is a desire even of death itself, that there may be a fuller union, and a desire of the consummation of all things. Therefore so far as we are afraid of death, and tremble at it, so far we want love. When the contract is once made between Christ and the soul of a Christian, for him to fear the making up of the marriage, when we are now absent from the Lord, to fear the sweet eternal communion we shall have in heaven, where we shall have all things in greater excellency and abundance, it is from want of faith and love. Therefore we should be ashamed of ourselves when we find such thoughts rising in our hearts, as they will naturally, to be basely and distrustfully afraid of death. St Paul saith, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ;' that is good, nay, it is much better for me, Philip, i. 28. Nay, it is best of all to be with Christ. Therefore, you see, it stirred up his desire: 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.' 'Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly,' saith the church, Rev. xxii. 20. And the Spirit in the spouse stirs up this desire likewise: 'Come; the Spirit

and the spouse say, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. And we should rejoice to think there are happier times to come, wherein there will be an eternal meeting together that nothing shall dissolve, as the apostle saith, 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'when we shall be for ever with the Lord.' Oh those times cheer up the heart of a Christian beforehand!

Now where these things possess not the soul, how can we say that we love God? In Cant. i. 1 the church begins, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.' She desires a familiar communion with Christ in his word and ordinances, 'Let him kiss me,' &c. Let him speak by his Spirit to my heart. In this world Christ kisseth his church with the kisses of his mouth. Rut in the latter end of the Canticles, 'Make haste, my beloved,' viii. 14, she desires his second coming, thinks it not enough to have the kisses of his mouth; 'Make haste, my beloved, and be as the young roes upon the mountains of spices;' that is, come hastily from heaven, the mountain of spices, and let us meet together, my beloved. These things be somewhat strange to our carnal dispositions, but if we hope ever to attain to the comfort of what I say, we must labour that our hearts may be brought to this excellent condition, to desire the presence of Christ. That is the second property of love.

The third is to rest pleased and contented in the thing when we are joined with it; so far as we are joined with it to place our contentment in it. And it is in the nature of that affection to place contentment in the thing we desire to have, when we have it once.

Now we may know this our contentment whether we rest in God or no by the inward quiet and peace of the soul in all conditions, when whatsoever our condition be in this world, yet we know we have the light of God's countenance, and can rest and be content in it more than worldly men in their corn and wine and oil, as David saith, Ps. iv. 7, 'I rejoice more in the light of thy countenance, than when they have their corn and wine and oil when we can joy and solace ourselves with the assurance of God's favour and love in Jesus Christ. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,' and rejoice in God, as it is Rom. v. 1; we rejoice in God as ours.

'Therefore those that go to outward contentments, that run out to them as if there were not enough in God and divine things to content their souls, but they must be beholding to the devil and to the flesh, this is not to rest in God. He is over-covetous whom God cannot content. If we be in covenant with him, he is able to fill our soul, and all the corners of it; he is able to satisfy all the delights and desires of it; he is a gracious Father in Christ.

Whither should we go from him for contentment? Why should we go out of religion to content ourselves in vain recreations and pleasures of sin for a season, when we have abundance in God?

And where there is contentment, there will be trusting in him and relying upon him. A man will not rely upon riches, or friends, or anything; for where we place our contentment, we place our trust. So far as we love God, so far we repose affiance and trust in him; he will be our rock and castle and strength. Wouldst thou know whether thou retest in him or no? In the time of danger, whither doth thy soul run? To thy purse if their be a rich man? or to thy friends if thou be a worldly-minded man? Every man hath his castle to fly to. But 'the name of the Lord is a strong tower,' Ps. lxi. 8. He that is a child of God flieth thither for refuge, and there he covereth himself, and is safe. He enters into those chambers of divine providence and goodness, and there he rests in all troubles.

Therefore ask thy affections whither thou wouldst run if there come a confusion of all things. When men are apt to say, Oh what will become of us! and they think of this and that, a good Christian hath God to rest in. He hath God reconciled in Christ, and in his love he plants himself in life and death. He makes God his habitation and his castle, as it is Ps. xviii. 2, 'I love the Lord dearly, my rock and my fortress.' And Moses in Ps. xc. 1, seq. (for his psalm it is), 'Thou hast been our habitation from everlasting to everlasting.' We dwell in thee. Though in the world we are tossed up and down, and live and die, yet we alway dwell with thee. So a Christian hath his contentment and his habitation in God; he is his house he dwells in, his rock, his resting-place, his centre in which he rests. 'Come unto me, and ye shall find rest to your souls,' Mat. xi. 28. When a man is beat out of all contentments, he may know by this whether he love God or no. As David when he was beat out of all, and they were ready to stone him; but 'he trusted in the Lord his God,' Ps. xxvi. 1, et alibi. So in losses and crosses hast thou contentment in God, thou wilt fetch what thou lovest out of the love of God, and what thou art crossed in thou wilt fetch out of God's love. Thou wilt say, This and that is taken from me, but God is mine; I can fetch more good by faith from him than I can lose in the world. A soul that is acquainted with God, when he loseth anything in the world, he can fetch it out of the fountain and spring. He is taught to love God; he is skilful this way to pitch his hope and affiance in God, where he hath enough for all crosses. Let us labour to bring our souls more and more to this, and then we shall know what it is to love God by this placing of our contentment in him. 'Take all from me,' saith holy

Austin, 'so thou leave me thyself'. So a Christian can say, 'Take all from me, so I have God.

Indeed, where shall a man have comfort in many passages of his life, if he find it not in religion? What will become of a man in this uncertain world, if he have not somewhat where he may place his content? Ob, he will find before he die that he is a wretched man. He knows not where to find rest and contentment before he dies; he will be beat out of all his holds here either by sickness or one thing or other.

The fourth and last is, where the true affection of love to God is, it stirs up the soul to give all contentment to God, to do all things that may please him. This is the nature of love. It stirs up to please the party loved. Isaac's sons saw that their father loved venison, therefore they provided venison for him, Gen xxv. 28. Those that know what God loves will provide what they can that that God may delight in. He loves a humble and a believing heart. 'Thou hast wounded me with one of thine eyes,' Cant. iv. 9—the eye of faith, when the soul can trust in the word, and humbly go out of itself. His delight is in a broken yielding heart, that hardens not itself against his instructions, but yields. A broken heart that lies low, and hears all that God saith, Oh 'it is a sacrifice that God is much delighted in,' Ps. li. 17, et alibi. A humble spirit is such a spirit as God dwells in.

'He that dwells in the highest heavens dwells in a humble spirit,' Isa. lvii. 15. Doth God delight in a meek, broken, humble spirit? Oh then it will be the desire of a Christian to have such a spirit as God may delight in. A meek soul is much esteemed; 'the hidden man of the heart,' 1 Pet. iii. 4, is much prized. Search in God's word what he delights in, and let us labour to bring ourselves to such a condition as God may delight in us, and we in him. And then it is a sign we love him, when we labour to procure all things that may give him content. You know that love where it is, it stirs up the affections of the party to remove all things that are distasteful to the party it loves. Therefore it is a neat affection; for it will make those neat that otherwise are not so, because it will not offend; much more this divine heavenly affection, when it is set on a right object, upon God, it is a neat, cleanly affection. It will purge the soul; it will work upon the soul a desire to be clean as much as can be, because God is a pure, holy God, and it will 'have no fellowship with the works of darkness,' Eph. v. 11. Therefore as much as human frailty will permit, it will study purity, to keep itself 'unspotted of the world,' James i. 27. It will not willingly cherish any sin that may offend the Spirit. Those

therefore that are careless of their ways and carriage and affections, that make nothing of polluting, and defiling their affections and their ways, there is not the love of God in their hearts. It stirs up shame to be offensive in the eyes of such a one, especially if they be great. There is both love and respect met together. Where it is a reverential love with respect, there is a shame to be in a base, filthy, displeasing condition. God hates pride and idolatry, &c. Therefore a man that loves God will hate idols and all false doctrine and worship that tends this way. His heart will rise against them, because he knows God hates it, and all that take that course. He observes what is most offensive to God, and he will avoid it and seek -what is pleasing to him.

God and Christ are wondrously pleased with faith. 'Thou hast wounded me with one of thine eyes.' Faith, and love from faith, wounds the breast of Christ: therefore let us labour for faith. 'O woman, great is thy faith,' Mat. xv. 28. It is such a grace as binds and overcomes God, it honours him so much. Let us therefore labour for faith, and in believing, for all graces. They are things that God loves. Therefore let us labour to be furnished with all things that he loves. Especially those graces that have some excellency set upon them in the Scripture we should most esteem. Isaac, when he was to marry Rebecca, he sends her jewels beforehand, that having them, she might be more lovely in his eye, Mat. xv. 28. So Christ, the husband of his church, that he might take more delight and content in his church, he sends her jewels beforehand; that is, he enricheth his church with the spirit of faith, meekness, humility, and love, and all graces, that he may delight and take content in his spouse. Those that have not somewhat that God may delight in them, they have not the spirit of love. Those, therefore, that rebel instead of giving God content; that resist the Spirit, and the motions of it, in the ministry, and in reprehensions, and the like: those that live in sins directly against God's command, that are common swearers, and filthy persons, neglecters of holy things, profane, godless persons, do they talk of the love of God and of heaven? You may see the filthiness of their hearts by the filthiness that issues from them. God keeps not such excellencies for such persons. The love of God, and living in sins against conscience, will not stand together. A demonstration of love is *exhibitio operis*, the exhibition of somewhat to please God. Show me in thy course what thou doest to please God. If thou live in courses that are condemned, never talk of love. It is a pitiful thing to see in the bosom of the church, under the glorious revelation of divine truth, that men should live apparently and impudently in sins against conscience, that glory in their shame. It is a strange thing that they should glory in their profaneness and swaggering; that they should glory in a kind of atheistical

carriage. As they have been bred, so they will be still. Many are marred in that; they are either poisoned in their first breeding, or neglected in it.

To see under the glorious gospel of Christ, that those that think they have souls eternal, that they should live in impudent base courses, void of religion and humanity, only to satisfy their own lusts, instead of satisfying and obeying God; men that live in the bosom of the church as beasts, and yet hope to be saved as well as the best; Oh, but the hope of the hypocrite, the hope of such persons, will deceive them.

Oh let us labour therefore to have this affection of love planted in our hearts; that God by his Spirit would teach us to love him, and to love one another. This affection of love must be taught by God. It is not a matter of the brain to teach that, but a matter of the heart. God only is the great schoolmaster and teacher of the heart. He must not only command us to love, but teach our affections by his Holy Spirit, to enable our affections to love him.

Where love is in this regard likewise to give content, there will be love of all those whom the party we approve ourselves to loves. Is there any of Jonathan's posterity, saith David, that I may do good to them for his sake? 2 Sam. ix. 1. The soul that loves God and Christ saith, Is there any good people, any that carry the image of God and Christ? It will be sure to love them. It will do good to Jonathan's posterity. Those that hate them that carry the image of God and Christ, that their stomach riseth against good men, how do they 'love him that begets, when they love not him that is begotten?' 1 John v. 1. There cannot be the love of God in such a man. Undoubtedly if we love God, we shall love his children, and anything that hath God's stamp upon it. We shall love his truth and his cause and religion, and whatsoever is divine and toucheth upon God. We shall love it, because it is his. It is such an affection as sets the soul on work to think, Wherein may I give content to such a person? It is full of devices and inventions to please. Therefore it thinks, Can I give consent in loving such and such? As Christ saith, he that respects these little ones, it is to me, it is accountable on my part, I will see it answered, Matt, xviii. 5. If the love of Christ be in us, we will regard this, because we will think: Christ will regard me for the good I do for his sake, and in his name, to this and that party. Thus we see how we may try this sweet affection, and not deceive our own souls.

And therefore, where there is a desire of giving content, there will be a zeal against all things; to remove all things in our places and callings that may

offend. It will carry us through all difficulties. To please him, it will make us willing to suffer. I will please him, by suffering some indignity for his cause. I will do it, that I may engage his affection to me. Therefore the disciples gloried in this, when they were thought worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, Acts v. 41. Where there is a desire to please God, it is so far from being ashamed or afraid to suffer, that it joys in this. Oh, now there is occasion given to show that God respects me more, if I, for his sake, stand out in his quarrel, and break through all difficulties.

It will make us please him in all things that we are capable, in all things that we can do any way in our standings; as Christ describes it out of Moses, to 'love God with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength,' Deut. vi. 5. Where love is, it sets all on work to please and give content. It sets the mind on work to study, Wherein shall I please God? And it will study God's truth, and not serve him by our own inventions. We must serve and love God after his mind; that is, as he hath commanded. It will set the wits on work to understand how he will be served, and to love him with all our soul, and with all our heart; that is, with the marrow and strength of our affections, with all my strength, he a man what he will be. If he be a magistrate, with the strength of his magistracy; if he be a minister, with the strength of his ministerial calling. In any condition I must love him, with all that that condition enableth me to. For it is a commanding affection; and being so, it commands all within and without to give content to the person loved. It commands the wit to devise, and the memory to retain, good things. It commands joy and delight; it commands anger to remove hindrances; and so all outward actions, love commands the doing of all things; it sets all on work. It is a most active affection. It is like to fire. It is compared to it. It sets all on work, and commands all that man is able to do. Therefore those that study not in all their endeavours according to their callings and places, according to every thing that God hath entrusted them with, to please God and to honour him in their conditions, they love not God.

What a shame is it, that when God hath given us such a sweet affection as love, that he should not have our love again, when we make ourselves happy in loving him? He is happy in his own love, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but when he intends to make us happy, it is a shame that we should not bestow our affections upon him.

Much might be said to this purpose for the trial of ourselves, whether we love God or no. Let us not then forget these things; for it is the

command both of the Old and New Testament; they run both upon love. 11 give you a new command,' saith Christ, John xv. 12; and yet it is no new command, but old and ordinary. But it is commanded now in the gospel; that is, it is renewed by new experiments of God's love in Christ, 'that we should love him, as he hath loved us,' John xiii. 34, which is wonderfully; that we should love him, and 'love one another.' And all this is in this affection, as we see when the Holy Ghost would set out the disposition and qualification of such as those great things are prepared for, that 'neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man,' he sets it down by this, 'They are for those that love him.'

The Fourth Sermon

As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.—
1 Cor. II. 9.

That which hath already been said should force us to beg the Spirit of God to teach the heart, to teach us the things themselves, the inside of them. For a spiritual holy man hath a spiritual knowledge of outward things of the creatures; he sees another manner of thing in the creature than other men do. As another man hath a natural knowledge of spiritual things, so a holy man hath a spiritual knowledge even of the ordinary works of God; and raiseth and extracts a quintessence out of them, that a worldly man cannot see, to glorify God, and to build up his faith in the sense of God's favour, &c. This I add by the way to that.

But the highest performance of this, that there are things provided for God's people that 'neither eye hath seen nor ear hath heard,' &c., it is reserved for another world. For the promises of the gospel have then their fulfilling indeed. These words are true of the state of the gospel here now, but they have their accomplishment in heaven. For whatsoever is begun here is ended there. Peace begun here is ended there. Joy that is begun here it shall be ended there. Communion of saints that is begun here it shall be ended there. Sanctification that is begun here it shall be ended there. So all graces shall be perfect, and all promises performed then. That is the time indeed when God shall discover things that 'neither eye hath seen nor ear heard,' &c. In the mean time let us learn to believe them, and to live by faith in them, that there are such things.

And God reserves not all for another world, but gives his children a taste of those things beforehand to comfort them in their distresses in this world, as indeed there is nothing in this world of greater use and comfort to raise them, than the beginnings of heaven upon earth. A little peace and joy in the Holy Ghost will make a man swallow all the discontents in the world. Now God is so far good to us, as that he lets us have some drops of these things beforehand to raise up our spirits, that by the taste we may know what great things he hath reserved for us. But of these things, and the use of them, I spake before.

We come then to speak of the qualification of the persons, 'For them that love him.'

Not that we love God first, and then God prepares these things for us; but God prepares them, and acquaints us what he means to do with us, and then we love him. A Christian knows before what title he hath in Christ to heaven, and then he works. He knows Christ hath wrought salvation for him, and then he works out his salvation in a course tending to salvation. For there must be working in a course tending to the possession of salvation. That Christ hath purchased; we must not work and think by it to merit heaven. We know we have heaven, and those great things in the title of Christ, and then we fall on loving and working. There is a clean contrary order between us and those mercenaries. They invert the order of God; for, for whom God hath prepared these things, he discovers them to the eye of faith, and then faith works by love. This I add by the way.

Now he sets down this description of those persons for whom these excellent things are prepared, by this affection of love, by this grace of love, as being the fittest for that purpose to describe a Christian. Faith is not so fit, because it is not so discernible. We may know our love when we cannot know our faith. Ofttimes those that are excellent Christians, they doubt whether they believe or no; but ask them whether they love God and his truth and children or no? oh yes! they do. Now God intending to comfort us, sets out such an affection as a Christian may best discern; for of all affections we can discern best of our love. But to come to the affection itself, there are three things in love.

There is the affection, passion, grace of love. We speak of the grace here.

The affection is natural.

The passion is the excess of the natural affection when it overflows its bound.

Grace is the rectifying of the natural affection, and the elevating and raising it up to a higher object than nature can pitch on. The Spirit of God turns nature into grace, and works corruption and passion out of nature, and elevates and raiseth that which is naturally good, the affection of love to be a grace of love. He raiseth it up to love God (which nature cannot discover), by spiritualizing of it. He makes it the most excellent grace of all. So that while I speak of the love of God, think not that I speak of the mere affection, but of the affection that hath a stamp of grace upon it. For affections are graces when they are sanctified. And indeed all graces (set illumination aside, which is in the understanding) spring from this. What is true grace but joy, and love, and delight in the best things? And all others spring from love. What do we hate but what is opposite to that we love! And when are we angry, but when that we love is opposed and wronged? Then there is a holy zeal. So that indeed all grace is in the affections, and all affections are in this one primitive affection, this first-born and bred affection, love. I speak of it then as a special grace. Now the way of discerning of it we heard partly before. The way to discern of this sanctified affection, this grace, is to know what we esteem, for love, it is from an estimation. And likewise, in the second place, esteem breeds a desire of union. And desire of union breeds content in the thing when we have it. And contentment in the person breeds desire of contenting back again. These things I stood on, and will not press further.

Let us examine and try ourselves oft by our affections, how they stand biassed and pointed, whether to God and heavenward, or to the world; for we are as we love. For what we love, we, as it were, marry; and if we join our love to baser things, we marry baser things, and so debase ourselves. If we join in our affections to things above ourselves, to God, and spiritual things, we become spiritual as they are. So that a man stands in the world between two goods, somewhat that is better than himself, and something that is meaner; and thereafter as he joins in his affections, thereafter he is. For the affection of love to God and to the best things makes him excellent; and his affection to baser things makes him base. Let a man be never so base in the world, if his affections be base, he is a base person. Therefore we have the more need to try our affections.

But to answer some cases briefly.

1. It will be objected, may we not love anything but God and holy things? May we not love the creatures, because it is here specified as a note of those, that these things are 'prepared for those that love God'?

Yes. We may love them as we see somewhat of God in them, as every creature hath somewhat of God in them. Whereupon God hath the style of every creature that hath good in it. He is called a 'Fountain,' a 'Rock,' a 'Shield,' everything that is good, to show that the creatures every one hath somewhat of God. He would not have taken the style of the creature else. We may love the creature as it hath somewhat of God in it, a being, or comfortable being, or somewhat; and as it conveys the love of God to us, and leads us back again to God. There is no creature but it conveys some love, and beams, and excellency of God to us in some kind, and leads us to God. So we may love other things. We may love men, and love God in them, and love them for God, to bring them to God, to leave a holy impression in them, to be like God. There is no question of this. But the love of God, that is the spring of all.

But it will be said by some weak conscience, How shall I know I love God, when I love the world and worldly things? I love my children, and other things, perhaps that are not ill; I fear I love them more than God.

We must know for this, that when two streams run in one channel they run stronger than one stream. When a man loves other good things, nature goes with grace. So nature, going with grace, the stream is strong. But when a man loves God, and Christ, and heavenly things, there is grace only; nature yields nothing to that. When a man loves his children or his intimate friends, &c., nature going with grace, it is no wonder if the stream be stronger when two streams run in one. So corruption in ill action oftentimes carry the affections strong. As in many of our loves there is somewhat natural that is good, yet there is some corruption, as to love a man for ill. Here nature and corruption is strong, but in supernatural things grace goes alone.

Then again, we must not judge by an indeliberate passion, by what our affection is carried suddenly and indeliberately to; for so we may joy more in a sudden thing than in the best things of all, as in the sight of a friend there may be a sudden affection. But the love of God, it is a constant stream. It is not a torrent, but a current that runs all our lifetime. Therefore those affections to God and heavenly things, in a Christian, they are perpetual. They make no great noise, perhaps, but they are perpetual in the heart of a

Christian. A sudden torrent and passion may transport a man, but yet he may have a holy and heavenly heart. I speak this for comfort.

2. Ay, but my love to God is faint and little.

Well, but it is a heavenly spark, and hath divinity in it. It is from heaven, and is growing, and vigorous, and efficacious: and a little heavenly love will waste all carnal love at length, it is of so vigorous and constant a nature. It is fed still by the Spirit; and a little that is fed and maintained, that is growing, that hath a blessing in it (as the love of God in the hearts of his hath; for God continually cherisheth his own beginning), that little shall never be quenched, but shall overgrow nature at length, and eat out corruption, and all contrary love whatsoever. Though for the present we see corruption overpower and oppress grace, yet the love of God being a divine spark, and therefore being more powerful, though it be little, than the contrary, it hath a blessing in it to grow, till at length it consume all. For love is like fire; as in other properties so in this, it wastes and consumes the contrary; and raiseth up to heaven, and quickens, and enlivens the persons, as fire doth. And it makes lightsome dead bodies; it transforms them all into fire like itself. So the love of God, by little and little, transforms us all to be fiery; it transforms us to be lovers. These cases needed a little touching, to satisfy some that are good and growing Christians, and must have some satisfaction.

3. But it may he asked again, as indeed we see it is true, what is the reason that sometime meaner Christians have more loving souls than great scholars, men of great parts? One would think that knowledge should increase love and affection?

So it doth, if it be a clear knowledge; but great wits and pates, and great scholars busy themselves about questions and intricacies, and so they are not so much about the affections. A poor Christian oftentimes takes those things for granted that they study, and dispute, and canvass, and question. There is a heavenly light in his soul that God is my Father in Christ, and Christ, God and man, is my Mediator. He takes it for granted, and so his affections are not troubled. Whereas the other, having corruption answerable to his parts, great wit and great corruption, he is tangled with doubts and arguments. He studies to inform his brain; the other to be heated in his affections. A poor Christian cares not for cold niceties, that heat not the heart and affections; he takes these for granted if they be propounded in the Scripture. Instead of disputing, he believes, and loves, and obeys; and that is the reason that many a poor soul goes to heaven with a great deal of joy, when others are tangled

and wrapped in their own doubts. So much for satisfying of these things. To go on, therefore, to give a few directions how to have this heavenly fire kindled in us, to love God, considering such great things are provided for those that love God. It is a matter of consequence: as we desire heaven, we must desire this holy fire to be kindled in us.

Let us know for a ground, as it were, that it is our duty to aim at the highest pitch of love that we can, and not to rest in the lowest. The lowest pitch of loving God, is to love God because he is good to us. That is good. The Scriptures stoops so low as to allow that God would have us love him and holy things for the benefit we have by them. But that is mercenary if we rest there. But God stoops to allure us by promises and favours, though we must not rest there. But we must love God, not for ourselves, but labour to rise to this pitch, to love ourselves in God, and to see that we have happiness in God, and not in ourselves. Our being is in him. We must love ourselves in him, and be content to be lost in God; that is, so to love God, that if he should cast us away (his kindness is better than life), do others what they will, we will love him, and ourselves for his excellencies, and because we see ourselves in him and are his children. We must labour to rise to that, and that is the highest pitch that we can attain to. We must know that for a ground.

And know this for another, that when we speak of the love of God, we speak of love incorporate into our conversations and actions; not of an abstracted love and affection, but of love in our places, and callings, and standings, love invested into action. Therefore the Scripture saith, we must love God 'with all our mind, with all our heart, with all our power and strength,' Deut. vi. 5; that is, in our particular places. To make it clear. When we speak of love to God, we speak of love to him in our particular callings. He loves God that is a magistrate and executes justice for God's sake; and he that is a minister, and teacheth the people conscionably for God's sake, and shows them the way to heaven. He loves God as a man in the commonwealth, a statesman, &c., that in that place seeks the glory of God, and the good of the church and religion. Shall men talk of love to God, and their affections are stirred up I know not whereabouts? No. It is an affection that is discovered in actions.

How can we love God with all our might, except as far as our might extends, our love extends? How far doth thy activity, thy power, thy sphere, that thou canst do anything, stretch? So far must thy love; and thou must

show thy love in all the powers and abilities that God hath furnished thee with.

For a man that hath great place and opportunity to do good, and to think it enough only to love God in his closet, &c., this is not the love we speak of. A man must love God with all his might, as he stands invested in relation this way or that way.

The love of God in a private man will not serve for a magistrate or a public man. He must show his love in his place by standing in the gap, to hinder all the ill, and to do all the good he can. Every man must do so, but such a one more especially, because God hath trusted him with more. Well, these things premised, to come to some directions how to come to love God.

First of all, the way to love God is to have a heavenly light to discover what we are in ourselves and our emptiness; for being as we are, we can never love God till we see in what need we stand of his favour and grace, that we are damned creatures else.

Now when we come to have our eyes opened to see our sinfulness and emptiness, we will make out to God, and make out to his mercy in Christ above all things. Indeed, the first love is the love of dependence, before we come to a love of friendship and complacency with God; a love to go out to him, and to depend upon him for mercy and grace and all. A love that riseth from the sense of our misery, and goes to him for supply.

There is a sweet concurrence of misery and mercy; of emptiness and fulness; of beggary and riches.

Now when we see our own misery, and beggary, and sinfulness; and then a fulness in God to supply; of riches to enrich us every way; then this breeds a love. This is the way to all other loves that follow. And where this is not premised, and goes before, a man will never delight in God. In Luke vii. 47 that good woman she loved much. Why? Much was forgiven her; many sins were forgiven her.

So when the soul shall see what need it hath of forgiving mercy, of pardoning mercy, and how many great debts God hath forgiven us in Christ, there will be a great deal of love, because there is a great deal forgiven. And we must begin indeed with seeing the infinite mercy of God before any other attribute of God, and then we shall love him after. This is the first thing.

There is no soul that over loves God so, as the poor soul that hath been abased with the sense of sin and its emptiness, that it is empty of all goodness; and then sees a supply in the mercy of God in Christ. Those souls love God above all.

Another way to love God is to consider of his wonderful goodness, to meditate and think of it. He is good and doth good. It is a communicative goodness. Let us think of his goodness, and the streaming of it out to the creature. The whole earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. What are all the creatures but God's goodness? We can see nothing but the goodness of God. What is all the creatures but Deus explicatus, God unfolded to our senses? He offers himself to our bodies and souls; all is God's goodness.

And then see this goodness fitted to us. It is a fit goodness that comes from God. He is good and doth good, and so fitly he proportions his goodness. For he hath fitted every part of us, soul and body, with goodness; all the senses with goodness. What do we see but goodness in colours? What do we hear but his good, in those delights that come that way? We taste and feel his goodness. Against the cold we have clothing; in hunger we have food; in all necessities, in all exigencies, we have fit considerations of God for all necessities whatsoever outward.

But then for our souls, what food hath he for that? The death of Christ, his own Son, to feed our souls. The soul is a spiritual substance; and he thought nothing good enough to feed it but his own Son. We feed on God's love in giving Christ to death; and on Christ's love in giving himself to death.

The soul being continually troubled with the guilt of some sin or other, it feeds on this; it is nourished with Christ every day more and more, especially at the sacrament. Thus we see how God hath fitted his goodness to us. And then in particular dangers how he fits us with several deliverances; so seasonably as we may see God's love in it.

Then as God's goodness is great and fit, so it is near us. It is not a goodness afar off, but God follows us with his goodness in whatsoever condition we be. He applies himself to us, and he hath taken upon him near relations, that he might be near us in goodness. He is a father, and everywhere to maintain us. He is a husband, and everywhere to help. He is a friend, and everywhere to comfort and counsel. So his love it is a near love. Therefore he hath taken upon him the nearest relations, that we may never want God and the testimonies of his love.

And then again this goodness of God, which is the object of love, it is a free goodness, merely from himself; and an overflowing goodness, and an everlasting goodness. It is never drawn dry; he loves us unto life everlasting. He loves us in this world, and follows us with signs of his love in all the parts of us, in body and soul, till he hath brought body and soul to heaven to enjoy himself for ever there. These and such like considerations may serve to stir us up to love God, and direct us how to love God.

Benefits will work upon a beast; as it is Isaiah i. 2, 'Hear. O heavens; and hearken, O earth: the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but my people have forgotten me.'

Proud men become baser, and more brute than the very brutes; benefits will move the very brute creatures. So, I say, these favours to us in particular should move us, except we will be more brute than the brutes themselves.

Especially to move us all, consider some particularities of favours to us more than to others, for specialties do much increase love and respect.

Consider how God hath followed thee with goodness outwardly, when others have been neglected. Thou hast a place in the world, and riches, and friends, when many other excellent persons want all these. There are some common favours to all Christians; as the favour we have in Christ, forgiveness of sins, sanctification, and such other favours. But there be some specialties of divine providence, whereby it appears that God's providence hath watched over us in some particulars more than others; those be special engagements. And is there any of us that cannot say that God hath dealt specially, in giving them some mercy more than to others? I add this therefore to the rest.

Again, to help us to stir up this grace of love, consider those examples of loving of those that have then lived in former times. Take David, and Paul, and other holy men. David wonders at his own love: 'Lord, how do I love thy law?' Ps. cxix. 97. And have we not more cause comparing the grounds of our affection, when we have more than they in those times? What! did he wonder at his love of God's law, when the canon was so short? They had only Moses, and some few books, and we have the canon enlarged; we have both the Old and New Testament, shall not we say much more, How do I love thy law, thy gospel, and divine truths! This should shame us, when they in dark times so loved the truth of God, and we see all clear and open, and yet are cold.

Likewise it is good in this case to converse with those that are affectionate. As face answereth face, so spirit answers spirit; as 'iron sharpeneth iron,' so one sharpens another, Prov. xxvii. 17. Conversation with cold ones will make one cold: 'For the abundance of iniquity, the love of many shall wax cold,' Mat. xxiv. 12. Conversing with sinful, cold people casts a damp upon us. But let us labour, if we will be wise for our souls, when we find any coldness of affection, to converse with those that have sweet and heavenly affections. It will marvellously work upon our hearts.

I might say much this way to stir us up, and direct us how to love God.

But indeed nothing will so much enable us to love God as a new nature. Nature will love without provocation. The fire will burn, because it is fire, 'and the water will moisten, because it is water; and a holy man will love holy things, because he is holy; a spiritual soul will love spiritual things, because he is spiritual. Therefore, besides all, add this, that our natures be changed more and more, that they be sanctified and circumcised as God hath promised: 'I will circumcise your hearts, that ye may love me,' Deut. xxx. 6. There must be a circumcised heart to love God. We must be sanctified to love God; for if nature be not renewed, there cannot be this new commandment of love. Why is love called a new commandment, and an old commandment?

It is called old for the letter, because it was a command in Moses time: 'Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy soul,' Deut. vi. 5. But now it is a new commandment, because there is abundance of spirit given by Christ; and the Spirit sanctifies us and writes this affection in our hearts. It was written in stone before, but now is written in our hearts by the Spirit. And now there are new incentives and motives to love, since Christ came and gave himself for us, new encouragements and provocations to love. Therefore it is a new commandment, from new grounds and motions, that are more a great deal than before Christ. But there must be a new heart to obey this new command of love. The old heart will never love.

Therefore we must, with all the means that may be used, beg the Spirit of sanctification especially, beg the discovery of God's love to us, for our love is but a reflection of God's love. We cannot love God except he love us first. Now, our love being a reflection of God's love, we must desire that he would give us his Spirit to reveal his love; that the Spirit being a witness of God's love to us, may thereupon be a Spirit of love and sanctification in us.

And let us labour to grow more in the assurance of God's love, and all the evidences of it. Let us dwell long in the meditation of these things. The dwelling in the meditation of God's love, it will make us to love him again. As many beams in a burning-glass meeting together they cause a fire, many thoughts of the many fruits of God's love in this world, and what he intends us in the world to come, our hearts dwelling on them, these beams will kindle a holy fire in our hearts.

Many are troubled with cold affections, and wish, Oh that they could love! They forget the way how to love. They will not meditate; and if they do meditate, they think to work love out of their own hearts. They may as well work fire out of a flint, and water out of a stone. Our hearts are a barren wilderness. Therefore let us beg the Spirit that God would alter our hearts, with meditation and all other helps; that God would sanctify us, and discover his love to us, and that he would give us his Spirit (for he doth the one where he doth the other). When God doth so, then we shall be enabled to love him. We must not think to bring love to God, but we must fetch love from God. We must light our candle at his fire. Think of his love to us, and beg the Spirit of love from him; love is a fruit of the Spirit. That is the course we ought to take, for God will teach our hearts to love.

Now, to stir us up the more, to add some motives and encouragements to labour more to get this affection. Let us consider seriously that without this love of God we are dead; and whatsoever comes from us it is stillborn, it is dead. Without love we are nothing; without love all that comes from us is nothing; without love 'I am as a tinkling cymbal,' saith Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. For a man to be nothing in religion, and all that comes from him to be dead and still-born, to be abortive actions, who would be in such a case? Therefore let us labour, before we do anything that is good, to have our hearts kindled with the love of God, and then we shall be somebody, and that that we do will be acceptable; for love sweetens all performances. It is not the action, but the love in the action; as from God it is not the dead favour that comes from him that comforts the soul of a Christian, so much as the love and sweetness of God in the favour. That is better than the thing itself. When we have favour from God in outward favours, consider the sweetness: 'Taste and see how gracious the Lord is,' Ps. xxxiv. 8. The taste of the love and favour of God in the blessing is better than the thing itself, for it is but a dead thing. And so from us back again to God. What are the things we perform to him? They are dead. But when they are sweetened with the affection of love, done to him as a father in Christ, he tastes our

performances as sweet. Love makes all we do to have a relish, and all that he doth to us. Therefore we should labour for this sweet affection.

And withal consider, that we may be called to do many things in this world. Surely there are none of us but we have many holy actions to perform. We have many things to suffer and endure in the world, many temptations to resist. What shall or will carry us through all? Nothing but love. If we have loving and gracious hearts, this affection will carry us through all good actions, through all oppositions and temptations; for 'love is strong as death,' Cant. viii. 6. Consider therefore that there are so many things that will require this affection, this blessed wing and wind of the soul, to carry us along, in spite of all that is contrary, through all opposition; let us labour for love, and that affection will carry us through all. Indeed, if we have that it is no matter what a man suffers. A man can never be miserable that hath this affection of love. If this heavenly fire be kindled in him he cannot be miserable; take him in what condition you will, take him upon the rack. St Paul in the dungeon sang at midnight in the dungeon, in the stocks, at an uncomfortable time and place. When he had been misused, his heart was enlarged to sing to God out of love, Acts xvi. 25. Nay, everything increaseth it. The things we suffer increaseth this flame. Let a man love God, whatsoever he suffers in a good cause it increaseth his love, he shall find his love increased with it. The more he loves the more he can suffer; and the more he suffers the more he loves God, and the more he increaseth in a joyful expectation of the times to come. And love is always with joy, and hope, and other sweet affections. It draws joy with it always, and hope of better things; and as joy increaseth and hope increaseth, so a man's happiness increaseth in this world. Therefore it is no matter what a man suffers that hath a gracious and loving heart, enlarged by the Spirit of God. Let him never think of what he suffereth of pain, of losses and crosses, if God discover his fatherly breast, and shine on him in Christ; and he look on God reconciled, and taste of the joys of heaven beforehand. If you tell him of sufferings, you tell him of that that encourageth him. It is an argument I might be long in, and to great purpose; for if we get this holy fire kindled once, we shall need little exhortation to other duties. It would set us on work to all. And like the fire of the sanctuary that never went out, so it is such an affection, that if it be once kindled in the heart it will never out. It is a kind of miracle in ill when we love other things besides God, baser than ourselves; it is as much as if a river should turn backward. For man that is an excellent creature, to be carried with the stream of his affection to things worse than himself, it is a kind of monster for a man to abuse his understanding so. What a base thing is it for a man to suffer

such a sweet stream as love, a holy current, to run into a sink? Who would turn a sweet stream into a sink, and not rather into a garden? into a sweet place to refresh that? Our love is the best thing in the world, and who deserves it better than God and Christ? We can never return anything, but this affection of love we may again. And can we place it better than upon divine things, whereby we are made better ourselves? Doth God require our affections for himself? No. It is to make us happy. It advanceth our affection to love him; it is the turning of it into the right stream. It is the making of us happy that God requires it. For consider all things that may deserve this affection. It will keep us from all sin. What is any sin but the abuse of love? For the crookedness of this affection turns us to present things, that is the cause of all sin. For what is all sin, but pleasure and honours and profits, the three idols of the world? All sin is about them. And what are all good actions but love well placed? The well ordering of this affection is the well ordering of our lives; and the misplacing of this affection is the cause of all sin.

And to make us the more careful this way, consider that when we place our affections upon anything else, consider the vanity of it. We lose our love and the thing and ourselves. For whatsoever else we love, if we love not God in it, and love it for God, it will perish and come to nothing ere long. The affection perisheth with the thing. We lose our affections and the thing; and lose ourselves too, misplacing of it. These are forcible considerations with understanding persons. And if we would use our understanding and consideration and meditation, and our souls, as we should, to consider of the grounds and encouragements we have to love God, and the best things whereby we may be dignified above ourselves, it would not be as it is; we should not be so devoid of grace and comfort. It was a miracle that the three young men should be in the midst of the furnace, and be there as if they were in another place, no hotter, Dan. iii. 12, 13, seq. And it is a miracle that men should be in the midst of all encouragements that we have to love God (as there is not the like reasons for anything in the world to keep our souls in a perpetual heat of affection to love God—no motives, or arguments, or incentives; all are nothing to the multitude of arguments we have to inflame our affections), and yet to be cold in the midst of the fire. It is a kind of miracle to have dark understandings and dead affections; that notwithstanding all the heavenly means we have to keep a perpetual flame of love to God, yet to be cold and dark in our souls; let us bewail it and be ashamed of it.

What do we profess ourselves? Christians, heirs of heaven; so beloved of God as that he gave his own Son to deliver us, being rebels and enemies, in so cursed a state as we are all in by nature. Poor creature! inferior to the angels that fell, that he should love man, sinful dust and ashes, so much as to give his own Son to free us from so great misery, and to advance us to so great happiness, to set us in 'heavenly places with Christ,' Eph. i. 3, and to have perpetual communion with him in heaven; to have such encouragements, and to be cold and dead-hearted; nay, wilfully opposite in our affections, to be enemies to the goodness of God and grace, having such arguments to love God. And yet how many spirits edged by the devil oppose all that is good, and will not give way to God's Spirit? God would have them temples, they will be sties. God would marry them; nay, they will be harlots. God would have them happy here, and hereafter. No; they will not; they will have their own lusts and affections.

Let us be afraid of these things, as we love our own souls and ourselves; and consider what encouragements we have to love God for which such great things are reserved as 'neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive.'

The Excellency of the Gospel Above the Law

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—2 Cor. III. 17, 18.

The Apostle beginneth this chapter with the commendation of his ministry, having been put upon it by their undervaluing of him; yet so as together with himself he commendeth them as his best and only testimonial and letters of commendation, ver. 2; and so maketh way for himself to fall into a more set and large commendation of the glorious gospel itself, whereof God 'hath made him so able a minister to them, ver. 6. And because the excellency of anything is best commended by comparing and setting by it something else that excels in itself, and yet is exceeded by it, therefore he carrieth along his commendation of the ministry of the gospel through the whole chapter, by comparing it with the law and the ministry of the Old Testament. This comparison is made by the apostle,

First, more briefly, in laying down some distinct properties and prerogatives of the gospel wherein it excelleth the law, ver. 6, as

(1.) That this was 'the ministry of the New Testament;' that of the law of the Old.

(2.) And 'not of the letter,' as the law was; 'but of the Spirit.'

(3.) Nor of death, 'for the letter killeth'; but of life, for 'the Spirit quickeneth.'

And then, by inferences drawn from these properties thus briefly summed up, the apostle more largely illustrates the transcendent glory of the gospel, and how far it exceedeth the glory of the law; although it be granted the law be glorious. As

[1.] If that which was but a ministration of the letter written and engraven in stone was glorious, verse the seventh; that is, if the literal notions

and bare knowledge of the law, which (like so many dead words or characters) maketh no alteration at all, but leaveth their hearts hard and stony, like the tables on which the law was written, which remained stones still; if this was glorious, even the literal knowledge of the law: as it was, both in the Jews' own account of themselves and in the judgment of the nations amongst whom they lived: 'how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? verse the eighth; the meaning whereof is largely explained in the third verse; where the Corinthians are said to be an 'epistle written not with ink' (or dead letters), 'but with the Spirit of the living God'; which kind of writing leaveth not the heart a heart of stone, as the dead writing of the law did, but changeth it into a 'heart of flesh,' and maketh such a thorough alteration in the whole man, as the writing within, 'in the tables of their hearts,' is 'known and read of all men. So that their lives and conversations being answerable to that spiritual and gracious writing of Christ in their hearts, they are 'manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ.' And therefore such a ministry as this is, by which the Spirit of the living God is received (and not by the law, Gal. iii. 2), which is a Spirit of glory, and worketh glorious things both in the hearts and lives of men, must needs be 'rather glorious.'

[2.] Another inference we have in the ninth verse; 'If the ministration of condemnation be glorious;' that is, if that word which 'concluded men under sin,' Gal. iii. 22, and pronounced the sentence of death upon them, 1 be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For it is more glorious to pardon than to condemn; to give life, than to destroy. It is the glory of a man to pass over an offence, Prov. xix. 11., and in God it is called the 'riches of his glory,' Rom. ix. 23. 'The law, which was made glorious,' in terrifying, condemning, and stopping the mouths of men, insomuch as they had not a word to say for them selves, 'hath no glory, by reason of the glory' of the gospel' that excelleth, even in this respect, that it bringeth such a righteousness, as by the merit whereof and satisfaction given by it, we are justified and have peace towards God, notwithstanding the utmost rigour of the law.

[3.] The apostle argueth further, ver. 11, 'If that which is done away was glorious,' as the old covenant is, which was made old by the coming of the new, Heb. viii. 8, and by it removed as a thing grown weak and shaken, Heb. xii. 27, 'much more that which remaineth,' which is the new covenant, which cannot be shaken, but shall remain, and is 'the everlasting gospel,' Rev. xiv. 6, 'is more glorious,' as God's last works exceed the former, and taketh away

the remembrance of them in comparison. As when he createth 'new heavens and a new earth,' the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind, Isa. lxx. 17.

[4.] There is another excellency of the gospel above the law, which the apostle addeth, and insisteth upon it more largely than upon all the rest, and that is, the comfortable plainness and perspicuity of the doctrine and ministry of it: verse the 12th, 'seeing we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.' In which it excelled the ministry of Moses, which was in much difficulty and obscurity, and that in a threefold respect, laid down in the 13th, 14th, and 15th verses.

(1.) The matter of it was terrible, tending to the shame, confusion of face, and condemnation of the hearers; insomuch as they were not able to stand before him, nor stedfastly to behold his face, it was such a dazzling and amazing light that shined in his ministry.

(2.) The manner of delivery was in obscure and dark expressions, that 'the children of Israel could not see to the end of that which is abolished;' that is, they could not see the drift and scope of his ministry, by reason of the types and shadows, which was 'the veil he put upon his face.'

(3.) Their minds were blinded. There was 'a veil upon their hearts,' which is evident by experience in the Jews at this day, who so cleave in their affection to Moses, and to the shadows and ceremonies of his ministry, that they reject the scope and end of it, which is Jesus Christ crucified. And they can do no other. For although the veil that was upon Moses's face be removed, as it is by the doctrine of the gospel, which sheweth us in all possible plainness what the drift and meaning of Moses was in all those types and ceremonies, yet until the gospel in the spirit and efficacy of it cometh home to their hearts, and taketh off 'the veil that is upon their hearts' also; that is, until their natural blindness and obstinacy be taken away, which cannot be, but is rather increased, by the law. 'For although Moses be read, yet until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away,' 2 Cor. iii. 14 the Jews will unavoidably abide in their ignorance and bondage.

Now, in opposition to this darkness and obscurity of the law in all those respects, the apostle exalteth the gospel in this high and excellent privilege of it, that it is plain, and evident, and full of demonstration, and that the light of it is not terrifying and amazing, but sweet and comfortable. So that we may with much liberty and boldness of spirit look constantly upon the great and

glorious things set before us in it, although it be no other but the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[5.] And there is, moreover, such an efficacy and working power in this ministry of the gospel, as it will not suffer men to remain the same without alteration, as they did under Moses's ministry, though he was read daily, but it will 'change' them even 'into the image of Jesus Christ, and carry them on still in that image and likeness, from one degree of glory to another,' after a most admirable and spiritual manner of working. This special excellency and prerogative of the gospel is laid down in the two last verses of this chapter, which are the words upon which we shall more largely insist in the following discourse.

Verse 17. 'Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

'The Lord is that Spirit' that takes away the veil that is spoken of before.

He sets down what Christ is by what he doth; Christ is 'that Spirit,' because he gives the Spirit.

And then a sweet effect of the Spirit of Christ, 'Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty.'

The Spirit here is not taken for the person of God, as if the Holy Ghost had said, 'The Lord is a Spirit,' and not a bodily thing, though that be a truth.

And as it is not meant naturally, so not personally, 'Christ is that Spirit,' as if Christ were the Holy Ghost. That were a confusion of persons. Nor as restrained to the third person. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit. Neither, as some heretofore would have it, to shew that the Spirit is Jehovah, God. It is neither to shew that Christ is God, nor that the Spirit is God, nor that Christ is the Holy Ghost. But it is meant in regard of a special dispensation. 'The Lord is that Spirit,' that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of his church by marriage, office, &c., 'is that Spirit;' that is, he

(1.) Hath the Spirit in himself eminently; and

(2.) Dispenseth and giveth the Spirit unto others; all receiving the Spirit from him as the common root and fountain of all spiritual gifts.

First, He was ‘that Spirit,’ as having the Holy Ghost in himself as man. The Holy Ghost filled the human nature and made it spiritual. The Spirit is all in all in the human nature of Christ; and whatsoever he doth, he doth, as it were, being full of the Spirit, in himself. He gives the Spirit as God, and receives it as man. So he both gives and receives. The Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son as God, but the Spirit sanctified Christ as man, as it did in the virgin’s womb. The Holy Ghost sanctified that blessed mass of his body. It sanctified him, and filled him with all graces and gifts; whereupon it is said, ‘He received the Spirit without measure,’ John iii. 84; that is, in abundance. Christ hath the Spirit in himself in a more eminent excellent manner than all others; and it must needs be so for these reasons:

(1.) From the near union between the human nature and the divine. They are one person. Therefore there is more Spirit in Christ than in all creatures put them together; than in all the angels, and all men, because the divine nature is nearer to Christ than it is to the angels or to any creature.

(2.) Christ hath the Spirit without measure, both in regard of extension and intension, as we say. He hath all graces in all degrees, even next to an infinite. All others have it in their measure and proportion. |

(3.) The Spirit doth rest upon Christ invariably. In other men that have the Spirit, it ebbs and flows; it is sometimes more and sometimes less. There be spiritual deserts, not only in regard of comfort, but in regard of grace, though not totally. But the Spirit rests on Christ eternally in a full measure; and therefore you have it thus in Isa. xi. 2, ‘The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might,’ &c.

(4.) By reason of his place or offices in relation to the church, as head, husband, king, priest, prophet, &c. The head is made by nature the seat of the more noble faculties, as of seeing, hearing, understanding, judging, and is furnished accordingly with greater plenty of spirits for the ruling and governing the whole body. So Christ is the Head of the church, and the government of all the world is laid upon him, and all excellencies are derived from him unto all his members, as from the root life is derived unto all the branches. And therefore he must needs have the Spirit in greatest abundance. His fulness of the Spirit is as the fulness of the fountain; ours is but as the fulness of the cistern. He hath grace in the spring; we have it but in the conduit. His graces are primitive; ours derivative. We have nothing but what

we have received. Therefore it is said, 'He hath the oil of gladness poured upon him above his fellows,' Ps. xlv. 7.

He hath his name from anointing, 'Christ.' He was anointed; that is, separated and ordained to the office of mediatorship, by anointing, not properly, that is, with any material oil, but with the Spirit. This was in regard of his human nature only, but it was above his fellows; that is, above all kings and priests, for they are his fellows in regard of titles. He was above them all, for all have their anointing from him. Therefore he is the King of kings, and the Prophet of prophets, &c. Also above all his fellows. As we take his fellows for Christians, they are his fellows; 'I go to my God and your God,' &c., John xx. 17. He is the 'first-born' amongst them, and in all things he hath the pre-eminence.

(5.) He is to be as the pattern, we are to follow him. We are 'predestinated to be conformed to him,' Rom. viii. 29, and to grow up to that fulness which is in him. And in this respect there is cause why he should have the Spirit and all the graces of it in greater abundance, that he might exceed all, even Christians of greatest growth and perfection. He is to be a pattern and example to all: to the strongest as well as to the weak. Even Paul himself, who was a leader to others, for the excellency of the grace of Christ that was in him, was yet a follower of Christ. 'Be you followers of me, as I am of Christ,' 1 Cor. iv. 16.

Quest. When did this fulness of the Spirit come upon Christ? When had he it?

Ans. 1. There was a fulness of the Spirit poured out upon Christ in the union of the human nature with the divine. Union and unction went together. There was anointing of the Spirit, together with the union of the Spirit.

Ans. 2. There was a more full manifestation of the Spirit in his baptism. When the Holy Ghost fell on him in the shape of a dove, then he received the Spirit. He was to enter into the ministry of the gospel. 'The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him,' because he had anointed him to preach good tidings unto the meek, &c., Isa. lxi. 1.

Ans. 3. But the fullest degree of declaration and manifestation of the Spirit upon Christ was after his resurrection; after he had satisfied fully for our salvation. Then the stop of his glory was taken away. For to work our

salvation, there was a keeping back of the glory of Christ from his human nature, that he might be abased to suffer for us. When he had fully suffered for us, that stay of his glory, his abasement, was taken away, and then nothing appeared but all glory and Spirit in Christ. All things were put under his feet, and he was set upon his throne as a glorious king. His priestly office appeared in his death, his prophetic office before his death. But then he appeared to be King and Lord of all in the resurrection. Thus we see how Christ is that Spirit; that is, he is full of the Spirit in regard of himself.

Secondly, He is 'that Spirit' in regard of his dispensations towards his church and children. 'The Lord is that Spirit;' that is, [1.] of all truths, and [2.] of all persons, to give life and quickening to them.

(1.) First, of truths. What is the scope of the whole Scriptures but Christ? from the first promise of the blessed seed, 'The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head,' Gen. iii. 15, to the end of the book. What is all the Scriptures without Christ? The law is a dead letter; yea, and so is the gospel too without Christ. He is that Spirit 'which gives life unto all the Scriptures. Moses without Christ is but a shadow without a body, or a body without a soul. Take away Christ, what was the brazen serpent? What was the ark? What were the sacrifices? What is all? Is not Christ 'all in all' these? The kings, and priests, and prophets, they were types of Christ; all the promises they were made and fulfilled in Christ. The law ceremonial aimed at Christ; the law moral is to drive us to Christ. Christ is the Spirit of all. And the Scripture without Christ it is but a mere dead thing; it is but a shell without a kernel, as it is to the Jews at this day.

(2.) Christ is 'that Spirit,' in regard of persons, quickening them. He is a universal principle of spiritual life, infusing it into all his church and children. Christ is always with his church from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end. It was no loss to the church that Christ in his bodily presence left it, for he left them 'the Comforter,' his Spirit, by which he wrought greater works after his ascension than he did before. He is 'anointed with the oil of gladness,' and grace 'above his fellows,' Ps. xlv. 7, but all was for his fellows. Whatsoever he is, or hath, all is for his church and children. 'For us' he was born, 'for us' he was given. He is a King, a Priest, a Prophet for us. He died for us, he rose again for us. And he doth all he doth towards the church, as he hath the Spirit, and by the Spirit. The Father is the first in the Trinity, 'from whom' all conies; and the Son, 'by whom' all things are; but the Holy Ghost is the immediate worker of all things, next the creature. All things are

applied from God the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. What Christ wrought, and what the Father in wisdom devised, was applied by the Spirit; and so the framing of us to be fit for such a glorious condition as we have by Christ, is also by the Spirit. And this is the reason why Christ giveth the Spirit to those to whom he purposeth to give faith or love, or to work any gracious work.

For where Christ saveth, he doth it not only by merit and satisfying the wrath of God for us, but also by sanctifying and effectual working in us, that he might be a perfect Saviour. Now the essential vigour and operative principle in all things, either wrought by or from the Father or the Son, is the Spirit. As in man there is his will from which he resolveth and purposeth, there is wisdom and understanding by which he proceedeth, and then there is a vigorous power in man by which he executeth and doth all. So is it in this working of God. The Father plotteth and determineth of what is to be done; the Son, 'who is the wisdom of the Father,' 1 Cor. i. 24, dispenseth what the Father willeth; the Holy Spirit, the power of both, finisheth and worketh all upon us, and therefore he is called the 'power of the highest,' Luke i. 85.

Whatsoever works come from God to the creature in general, and are wrought in the world, as works of creation and providence, are immediately by the Holy Spirit nakedly considered, as the third person coming from the Father and the Son. And in those special works, wrought in his church and on his children, all things cometh from the Holy Ghost, but not simply considered as the third person, but as he is 'the Spirit of Christ;' that is, first sanctifying and filling the human nature of Christ, and then sanctifying and filling us. Christ could not give the Holy Ghost immediately to us, we being in enmity with God, and separated from him through our sins; but he must first take it to himself, who having by his death' and sufferings reconciled us to his Father, and purchased the Spirit for us, may now dispense and give forth his Spirit to us.

If we had stood in Adam, we should not have received grace so as now we do; for we should have received it from the first Adam but as from a man. Now we receive it not from mere man, but, which is much more, from the 'second Adam,' who is God-man. Nay, Adam himself received not his grace after so glorious a manner as we do, for he received it from the Spirit nakedly considered as the third person in the Trinity, and as all other creatures received their excellencies. But we receive it from the Holy Spirit, which doth not only proceed from the Father and the Son, but cometh, as it

were, through our own nature, which was marvellously united to God the Son, and made one with him, unto us, and worketh in us.

‘The first Adam was a living soul, the last Adam was a quickening Spirit,’ 1 Cor. xv. 45. He quickened himself when he was dead, and he quickens all his members too. First, he receives the Spirit himself, and the same Spirit that filled and sanctified his human nature, the same Spirit sanctifieth his church, which he ‘loves even as himself.’ As he loveth that his own human nature, which the Holy Ghost sanctified, so doth he love his own mystical body, his church, being mystically united to him, and sanctifieth it by the same Spirit.

Christ dispenseth his Spirit unto us, as head of his church, and this he doth in divers respects.

(1.) As he is God, by way of immediate influence. He poureth it out upon us as the prime and principal cause. And this he doth as God, not as man, for the manhood cannot work above itself, it cannot do the work of God, it cannot work grace or give the Spirit.

(2.) As he is man, considered as joined together with the Godhead, by way of merit and satisfaction. He procureth the Spirit to be given and poured out, which is done by the Father and the Son on all those who are beloved in the Son. So that the Spirit is given by Christ, with the Father, as Mediator, meritoriously. For he by suffering and satisfying procured the gift. Christ himself is the first gift, yea, the greatest that ever was given, the giving of Christ to die, to satisfy the wrath of God, and to obtain eternal life. Next to that main gift is the gift of the Spirit, in which is the seed of all gifts and graces; and this we have by his merit and mediatorship. Yet this we must likewise remember, that although Christ be said to give the Spirit, as he doth, yet the Holy Spirit giveth itself too. For there is such a unity in the Trinity of consent and nature, that though the Father and the Son send the Spirit, yet the Spirit comes of his own self. Though the Father and the Son give the Spirit, yet the Spirit giveth himself.

(3.) We have the Spirit from Christ not only by way of merit, but in some kind by way of example. He is the exemplary cause of all graces in us; looking to whom, we are transformed, as we shall see afterwards, ‘from glory to glory.’ For when we consider that Christ hath done so much for us as to save us, and redeem us, and die for us, this begetteth a love in us to Christ, and makes us often to think of him, and desirous to imitate him, as we usually do such as we love and highly esteem of.

The dispensation of the Spirit is in most abundance after the resurrection of Christ. As he appeared in himself then to be most spiritual and glorious after he rose again; so then being as the sun in its full height and perfect beauty, casteth his beams most plentifully abroad, and that for these reasons,

[1.] Because then he having finished the work of redemption and satisfied the wrath of God fully, and given contentment to divine justice, and accomplished all by his death, there was nothing to hinder the blessed gift of the Spirit. It is said that 'before, the Holy Ghost was not given, because Christ was not glorified,' John vii. 39. The gift of the Holy Ghost especially depends upon the glorifying of Christ. When he had fulfilled the work of redemption, and was raised to glory, God being pacified gave the Holy Ghost as a gift of his favour.

[2.] Then again after his resurrection and ascension, he did give the Holy Ghost more abundantly than before to his church, because now he is in heaven, and hath the advantage of the place, being exalted on high. As that glorious creature the sun, by the advantage it hath being placed in the heavens above us, is able to shine upon the greatest part of the earth at all times; and we need not call the sun down from its place to come into our houses, or fields, or gardens. No. Where it is seated in its proper place or orb, it hath the best opportunity, in most abundance and largest extent, to send down heat and light and influence to inferior things. So Christ doth his church more good now he is in heaven, from whence he sends the VOL. iv. o Spirit, than he could do if he were below; because though his human nature be confined in heaven, his person is everywhere. And being 'ascended now fur above all heavens,' he giveth gifts more liberally and plentifully, insomuch as he filleth all things, Eph. iv. 10. He enlargeth the tents of his gospel, and hath taken in a greater people to himself. We see in winter, when the sun is low and near the earth, all things are dead and cold; but when the sun in the spring cometh to overtop us, to be in a higher point above us, we see how all things put a new garment upon them. There is a new vigour and freshness in them. So there was more abundant vigour of the Spirit when Christ came in the flesh; his virtue appeared much more every way than before. But when this blessed Son of righteousness was advanced, and seated at the right hand of his Father, where his nature was perfectly enriched, and perfectly adorned with all kind of graces what soever in the highest glory of them, his influence of light and heat now beginning to be increased, and the efficacy and working of it to be felt everywhere, the glorious beams of the sun began to

be scattered, and the light of the gospel to shine to a greater number of people. Now there was no respect of persons, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, all was one. The commission was enlarged to all, Mark xvi. 15, 'Go preach the gospel to every creature;' and with the word the Spirit went, and was received; and those that were 'added to the church,' even such as 'should be saved,' were many thousands, Acts ii. 47.

Thus have we opened the meaning of the words, and shewed 'how Christ is that Spirit,' both in respect of the Spirit's being eminently in him, and his giving of it, and spiritual gifts by it. All the vigour and life and influence we have that is spiritual and supernatural, and above the ordinary course, is from the Spirit; and whatsoever the Spirit hath, or doth for us, is done as sent from Christ, in whom the Spirit is in all fulness. Now we shall shew how many ways the consideration of these truths will be profitable and useful to us in the course of our lives, and for the comfort of our spirits.

Use 1. Christ is the Spirit of the Scriptures, of all truths, of all ordinances. We may by this be able to reconcile the Scriptures, one place with another, where they seem to contradict. The law is said to be 'a dead letter,' a 'ministration of condemnation,' &c., 2 Cor. iii. 6, seq.; but in the 19th Psalm there it is said, 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,' &c., Ps. xix. 7. These places are thus reconciled. The law is said to be dead, so it is without Christ, without the Spirit which quickeneth; and so is the gospel too, even 'a savour of death,' 2 Cor. ii. 15. And so are the sacraments also as well as the word, dead ordinances if Christ be not in them. The law is said to be 'perfect,' and 'to convert the soul.' So it doth, when the Spirit goeth along with it, as it did ordinarily before Christ came in the flesh, as in David's time. But after Christ was come, who was the substance of those shadows, they became 'beggarly rudiments,' as in Paul's time, Gal. iv. 9. And the Spirit did not work with them, but with the gospel, 'the hearing of faith,' Gal. iii. 2.

Use 2. And we may understand likewise from hence what the reason it that an ordinance at one time differeth so much from itself at another time in respect of the life and comfort of it, as we often find even in our own experience; as also why the same ordinance (be it word, or sacrament, &c.) at the same time is profitable to one, and another hath no benefit at all from it. This is from the presence or absence of Christ, who is 'that Spirit.' What is the reason that wine, or aqua vitae, doth more refresh and strengthen than common water? It is of the same substance, of the same colour that other

water is. But there is more spirit in it. All things work answerable to the spirits that is in them. So what is the reason that the reading or hearing of the same thing affecteth one, and not another at all? The substance of the thing is the same, but the Spirit is. not the same. The Spirit goeth with the one, and not with the other. We grant that our negligence in preparation and attention, our pride and earthly-mindedness, our want of faith to mingle with the word: these, or the like, may be causes why we are many times sent empty away; yet this still must be observed as a most evident truth, that all the efficacy and fruit of any ordinance dependeth upon Christ's being present in it, who is 'that Spirit' that quickeneth. The most powerful means that ever was ordained for our good will be dead and heartless if he be not there by his Spirit to put life into it. It may seem strange what John saith, chap. vi. ver. 63, 'The flesh profiteth nothing.' 'The flesh of Christ,' our nature which Christ took, and in which so much was wrought for us, which is the greatest ordinance of all, yet this flesh 'profiteth not,' nor will there be any benefit of it, if it be not applied to us spiritually. For it is not the flesh simply considered, but as by it and with it we receive the Spirit of Christ, which Spirit quickeneth and maketh the flesh of Christ 'meat indeed.' As it is with the flesh of Christ, so with all other ordinances. The Scriptures profit nothing, preaching profiteth nothing, the sacraments will profit nothing; there is none of these will be 'meat indeed,' unless the Spirit of Christ quicken them.

Therefore we ought to join with all the ordinances of God, a desire that Christ would join his Spirit, and make them effectual. We ought to come to the ordinances in a dependence upon Christ for a blessing upon them, and for his presence in them, who is the life and scope of all; and then we should not find such dulness and deadness in them. It is the sin of this age, this formality. It is the sin of those that have any thing in them. Set desperate drunkards and roarers and such wretches aside, as plainly discover themselves to be acted by the spirit of the devil. Take them that conform themselves in any fashion to religion, the killing sin that they lie under is this same dead formality. They will hear a sermon now and then, look on a book, and it may be pray morning and evening, but never look up to the living and quickening Spirit Jesus Christ. So that all they do is dead and loathsome, like salt that hath no savour. What is the best liquor if it hath lost its life and spirit, but flat and unsavoury: and blood when the spirits are out of it, what is it but loathsome gore! So are all their performances, even like sacrifices that had no fire in them. The Lord loathed such sacrifices as he did Cain's; and so

he doth all our flat and lifeless services, yea and our persons too, being as Jude saith, 'fleshly, and not having the Spirit,' ver. 19.

Use 3. What need is there that we should sanctify all we take in hand by prayer! When we go to hear a sermon, when we take up the Bible to read a chapter alone by ourselves, or in our families, we should lift up our eyes and hearts and voices to heaven; we should say to Christ, Lord, join thy Spirit, be present with us; without thee thy word is dead, our hearts are dead, and will harden under the means, and darken in the light, and we shall fall under the heavy condemnation of these secure and formal times, if thou leavest us.

Use 4. Christ is said to be that Spirit, to send the Spirit as God, and to receive it as man, in fulness, and that for our sakes. It is a point of much comfort, that there is such abundance of Spirit in our nature in Christ, and for the behalf of the church, that we have a fulness to receive of. It was a comfort to Joseph's brethren, and that family, that Joseph was full of honour, and rules the second in the kingdom. Therefore they should want nothing that was good in Egypt. Is it not a comfort for Christians to know that Christ is the Spirit, that he hath the Spirit to give, the Spirit of wisdom in all straits, the Spirit of truth to keep us from all errors, the Spirit of strength for all services, the Spirit of comfort for all afflictions? He that is their Lord hath abundance of Spirit in him, and for them. Therefore, when we want any grace, or gift of the Spirit, we should go to Christ; for God doth all by Christ. Christ doth all by the Spirit. Desire Christ that he would vouchsafe his Spirit to rule us, counsel us, comfort us, and strengthen us. Therefore in our emptiness, as indeed we are empty creatures of ourselves, let us go to Christ for the Spirit. He hath received that fulness for us; desire him that out of his fulness he would vouchsafe to give unto us.

It is the reason why Christians are so dead and so dull and so dark in, their spirits; they do not first consider themselves, and then go to Christ. We should all, in all exigencies whatsoever, make use of this our great high treasurer, the great high steward of heaven and earth, of this our Joseph, the second person in heaven. He is at the right hand of God, and all to fill his church with his Spirit. Our comfort is now that our strength and comfort lies hid in Christ, that is near to us as man, and near to God as God. He is between the Father and us; he is near the Father as being of the same nature with him; he is near us as being of the same nature with us. So being a mediator in office, and being so fit for a mediator in nature, what a comfort is this.

Indeed, there is no coming to God, no intercourse between God and us immediately, but between God-man and God and us, who is the mediator between God and us. He comes between. In Christ we go to God, in our flesh, in our nature; and in Christ, and from Christ, and by Christ, we have all grace and comfort. From Christ we have all as God, together with the Holy Ghost and the Father; and we have all in Christ as a head and husband; and we have all through Christ as mediator by his merit. Therefore we should go to Christ every way.

Use 5. Let us labour to be in Christ that we may get the Spirit. It is of great necessity that we should have it. Above all things next to redemption by Christ, labour for the Spirit of Christ.

Christ is our Saviour, not only by merit and satisfaction, but by efficacy and grace, that is, as he hath purchased us for his people by his blood; so he will subdue our corruptions, and rule us by his Spirit.

For, first, 'He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his,' Rom. viii. 18. Those that have not the efficacy of the Spirit in them to rule them, shall not have benefit by his death to reconcile them, for these go away together, Christ as a king to rule, and as a priest to die. 'He came by blood and by water,' 1 John v. 6, to satisfy and to sanctify.

Secondly, There is a necessity of the Spirit, that we be new creatures. It was the Spirit's brooding upon the chaos that brought forth all, Gen. i. 2; so the Spirit must sit upon our souls before any change will be made. Now there is a necessity that we be changed, and that we be new, or else we can never be inhabitants of the new heavens and the new earth. We must have the Spirit of God. Therefore, Zech. iv. 6, as in the material temple 'it is not by might, or by power, but by the Spirit,' so in raising up spiritual temples it is not by strength of wit or parts, but by the Spirit. Therefore the Spirit is necessary for us, even as our being in grace^e is necessary.

The holy apostles, we know, till the Spirit came more abundantly upon them, what dark creatures they were! But when the Holy Ghost was come upon them, how full of life and light and courage they were! that the more they suffered, the more they might suffer! So it will be with Christians: the more spiritual they grow, the more lightsome and courageous; the more strong, the more lively and vigorous to all duties. The Holy Ghost is the substantial vigour of all creatures whatsoever. All the spiritual vigour of every thing comes from the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit from Christ.

For nothing can work above itself. Nature cannot work above nature. That which elevates nature above itself, and sets a spiritual stamp, and puts divine qualities upon it, is the Spirit of God. That divine quality is called spirit. There is the flesh and the spirit. All in us is flesh by nature, and whatsoever is spiritual and divine cometh from the Spirit, and therefore it is called spirit. You see therefore a necessity of the working of the Spirit, even as there is a necessity to be new creatures, and to be spiritual. If we will be spiritual, we must have it from him that is first spiritual, the Spirit himself; that is the principal and fountain of all that is spiritual.

Thirdly, We are called oftentimes to do and suffer such things as are above nature; and therefore we must have a spirit above nature. When we feel sin, to believe the forgiveness of sins; when we see death, to believe life ever lasting; and when we are in extremity, to believe God present with us to deliver us, to believe contraries in contraries, is a strange almighty work of faith, by the work of the Spirit. It is above the work of nature to die, to end our days with comfort, and to resign up our souls, for nature sees nothing but darkness and desolation in the grave and destruction. Nothing can make a man comfortable in death, but that which raiseth him above nature, the Spirit of God.

Now these things, and many such like, we must do and suffer, if we be Christians; and therefore we must have the Spirit to enable us to do all. The Spirit is to the soul as the soul is to the body. What is the body without the soul? A carcase, a loathsome dead thing. What is the soul without the Spirit? A chaos of darkness and confusion.

Well, how shall we know whether we have the Spirit of Christ or no?

(1.) We may know it partly by that I said before. The Spirit is a vigorous working thing, and therefore all three persons take upon them the name of Spirit, but the Holy Ghost especially, because he is the spiritual vigour. The Spirit is an operative thing. The spirits are the quintessence and extraction of things, that is nothing but operation. God that is nothing but a pure act is said to be a spirit. Those that have the Spirit of God are full of act and vigour. The spirits of dull creatures are active when they are extracted. Shall the spirits of bodies be vigorous, and shall not the Holy Ghost be vigorous, that is a substantial vigour? Therefore, if a man have the Spirit of God in him, it will work in him; it is very operative.

Therefore it is compared to fire in divers respects, for,

First, Fire it is of a working nature. It is the instrument of nature. If we had not fire, what could we work? All fabrics and all things are done by fire, especially metals; they are framed and made malleable by fire. So the Holy Ghost, it is a working thing and softeneth the heart, and makes us malleable; it makes us fit for the impression of all good.

Secondly, Fire, again, though bodies be dark, it makes them lightsome like itself. Iron is a dark body, but if the fire penetrate it, it makes it light some. We are dark creatures of ourselves: if we have the Spirit it makes us light.

Thirdly Again, fire it makes cheerful, and ascends upwards. If a man have the Spirit of God, his conversation will be upward, his conversation will be heavenly, he minds the things of God, he doth not grovel here below; so in divers such respects the Holy Ghost is compared to fire, and hath such effects in us. In some sort we find our understandings enlightened, and ourselves quickened, and carried up to the above nature, in holy and heavenly actions; and then it is a good sign that we have the Spirit of Christ, A part will follow the whole. As we see a part of the earth it falls to the centre, because all the earth is heavy, all the whole earth falls down to the centre, and therefore every little clod will do it; so Christ our head, that hath abundance of the Spirit, is in heaven, and if we have the Spirit we will follow him, and mind the things where Christ is.

(2.) Where the Spirit of Christ is likewise, it convinceth, as it is John xvi. 8, seq.; that is, it brings a clear evident conviction with it, that the truth of God is the truth of God, It is no doubtful thing. Therefore when a man staggers in the truth, in this and that course, whether he should do this or that, it is a sign he hath not the Spirit, or that he hath it in a very little measure, because the Spirit is a convincing thing, as light it convinceth a man. He doth not doubt of that that he seeth at noon-day. So that that a man seeth by the Spirit, he is convinced of. When a man doubts and wavers, whether he should take a good course or a bad, and wavers, it is a sign he is carnal, and hath not the Spirit of God; for if he had not the Spirit it would convince him, and set him down, You must take this course if you will be saved. That is said to convince, that saith more for a thing than anything can say against it. Now when a man hath the Spirit of God, he can say more for God and for good things and good ways, than all the devils in hell by discouragement can say against them. Therefore, when a man cannot say anything for God, and for good causes to purpose, he hath not the Spirit of

God, The Spirit of God would so convince him, that he should answer all cavils and objections. The argument is wondrous large. I give you but a taste, to know whether the Spirit of Christ be in you or no.

(3.) In a word, if Christ be that Spirit, and have infused the Spirit into us, it will make us like him; it will transform us into his likeness, it will make us holy and humble and obedient as he was, even to the death. These things might be largely followed, but we have occasion to speak of these in other portions of Scripture. Therefore, that ye may get the Spirit of God, take these directions.

[1.] We must go to Christ, study Christ. If we will have the Spirit, study the gospel of Christ. What is the reason that before Christ there was so little Spirit in comparison? There was but a little measure of the knowledge of Christ. The more Christ is discovered, the more is the Spirit given; and according to the manifestation of Christ what he hath done for us, and what he hath, the more the riches of Christ is unfolded in the church, the more the Spirit goes along with them. The more the free grace and love of God in Christ alone is made known to the church, the more Spirit there is; and again back again, the more Spirit the more knowledge of Christ; for there is a reciprocal going of these two, the knowledge of Christ and the Spirit. What is the reason, that in popery the schoolmen that were witty to distinguish, that there was little Spirit in them? They savoured not the gospel. They were wondrous quick in distinctions, but they savoured not the matters of grace, and of Christ. It was not fully discovered to them, but they attributed it to satisfaction, and to merits, and to the pope, the head of the church, &c. They divided Christ, they knew him not; and dividing Christ, they wanted the Spirit of Christ; and wanting that Spirit, they taught not Christ as they should. They were dark times, as themselves confessed, especially about nine hundred and a thousand years after Christ, because Christ was veiled then in a world of idle ceremonies to darken the gospel and the victory of Christ that the pope made, who was the vicar of Satan. These were the doctors of the church then, and Christ was hid and wrapped in a company of idle traditions and ceremonies of men; and that was the reason that things were obscure.

[2.] Now when Christ, and all good things by Christ, and by Christ only, are discovered, the veil is taken off. Now of late for these hundred years, in the time of reformation, there hath been more spirit and more lightness and comfort. Christians have lived and died more comfortably. Why? Because Christ hath been more known. And as it is with the church, so it is

with particular Christians, the more they study Christ, and the fulness that is in Christ, and all comfort in him alone to be had 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30 the more men grow up in the knowledge of Christ, the more they grow spiritually; and the more spiritually they grow, the more they grow in the knowledge of Christ. Therefore, if we would have the Spirit, let us come near to Christ, and labour to know him more, who is the fountain of all that is spiritual.

[3.] Then again, if we would be spiritual, let us take heed ice trust not too much to dead things, without Christ; to have a kind of popery in the work done; to think that reading, and hearing, and receiving the sacrament, and that the government of the church will do it, as if it were as man would have it. Put case there were all these, which are excellent good things; but what are all these without the Spirit of Christ! A man may be dead with all these. Though he hear never so much, and receive the sacrament never so often, if a man go not to Christ the quickening Spirit in this manner: Lord, these, and my soul too, are dead things without thy Spirit, therefore quicken me. Join Christ with all our performances, without which all is nothing, and then he will be spiritual to us.

[4.] And when we go to Christ for the Spirit, as we must beg it if we will have it, God will give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him, Luke xi. 13, remember that we use the means carefully; reading, and hearing, and holy communion of saints, because though these without the Spirit can do nothing, yet the Spirit is not given but by these. These are the golden conduits of the Spirit of Christ. No man is ever spiritual but they are readers, and hearers, and conferrers of good things, and attenders upon the means of salvation, because God will work by his own tools and instruments. Therefore it is said, Rev. i. 9, that John was 'full of the Spirit upon the Lord's day.' Let a Christian sanctify the Sabbath as he should do, he will be in the Spirit on the Lord's day more than on other days. Why? Because then he is reading, and hearing, and conferring, and in some spiritual course; and the more a man on the Lord's day is in a spiritual course, the more he is in the Spirit: 'John was in tho Spirit on the Lord's day.' So much for these words, 'The Lord is that Spirit.'

'And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

We see here what the Spirit works where it is. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' I will name the instance that I gave before, that I may the better go on. We say the sun is heat and influence; not that it is so,

for they be accidents, but the sun appears to us for our comfort in heat and influence, therefore we call it by that name. We say of a man, he is all spirit. So Christ is all Spirit. The sun is all light, and where the light and heat of the sun is there is fruitfulness. So Christ is all Spirit, and where the Spirit of Christ is there is spiritual liberty.

It were expense of time to no purpose to tell you of the divers kinds of liberty. In a word, liberty is that that all desire, but our miscarriage is in the means of it, the way to attain to it. Here we see whence to have it, from the Spirit of Christ. Liberty is a sweet thing, especially liberty from the greatest enemies of all. If outward liberty be such a sweet thing liberty from tyranny and base servitude, it is a thing that man's nature delights in; and the contrary, man as a man abhors; and he hath not the nature of a man that doth not abhor it, what shall we think then of the liberty of the Spirit from the great enemies that daunt the greatest monarchs in the world? Liberty from the anger of the great God; and liberty from Satan, God's executioner; liberty from the terror of conscience, from the fear of death, and hell, and judgment; what shall we think of liberty in these respects? Therefore we speak of great matters here below when we speak of liberty.

Now liberty is either Christian or evangelical. You may think this a nice difference, but there is some reality in it.

(1.) Christian liberty is that that belongs to all, even to those before Christ. Though they have not the term of Christians, yet they were members of Christ. Christ was head of the church 'yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8.

(2.) Evangelical liberty is that that is more appropriated to the times of the gospel since the coming of Christ. Now the liberty that belongs to Christians as Christians, is perpetual from those grand enemies, the greatest enemies of all, spiritual and inward liberty. In evangelical liberty, besides that, there is another outward liberty, from the ceremonial and moral law and such like; and a liberty from the restraint of the law. The Jews were under many restraints, that under the gospel in this time we are not. I speak therefore of liberty as it runs through all ages of the church, not of evangelical merely since the time of Christ. Where the Spirit is, both these liberties are now since the coming of Christ. Now in that the Holy Ghost saith here, 'Where the Spirit of Christ is there is liberty,' it supposeth that we are in bondage before we have the Spirit of Christ.

That is a supposed ground and truth, and indeed so it is. For out of Christ we are slaves, the best of us all are slaves. In Christ the meanest of all is a free man, and a king. Out of Christ there is nothing but thralldom. We are under the kingdom of the devil. When he calls us we come. We are in thralldom under the wrath of God, under the fear of death and damnation, and all those spiritual enemies that I need not mention. They are well enough known to you by often repetition. There is no man but he is a slave till he be in Christ; and the more free a man thinks himself to be, and labours to be, the more slave he is. For take a man that labours to have his liberty, to do what he list, he thinks it the happiest condition in the world; and others think it the best condition to have liberty not to be tyrannised over by others. It is the disposition of man's nature without grace. They account it a happiness to have their wills over all other, but the more liberty in this, the more slavery. Why?

The more liberty that a man hath to do lawlessly what he will, contrary to justice and equity, the more he sins. The more he sins the more he is enthralled to sin. The more he is enthralled to sin the more he is in bondage to the devil, and becomes the enemy of God. Therefore if a man would pick out the wretchedest man in the world, I would pick out the greatest man in the world if he be naught, f that hath most under him; he hath most liberty, and seeks most liberty, and accounts it his happiness that he may have his liberty. This is the greatest thralldom, and it will prove, when he dies and comes to answer for it, the greatest thralldom of all. Therefore the point needs not much proof, that if we be not in Christ we are slaves, as Augustine saith in his book *De Civitate Dei*, 'He is a slave though he domineer and rule.'

A man till he be in Christ is a slave; not of one man or of one lord over him, but he hath so many lords as he hath so many lusts. There are but two kingdoms that the Scripture speaks of, that is, the kingdom of Satan and darkness, and the kingdom of Christ; all therefore that are not in the kingdom of Christ, in that blessed liberty, they must needs be shoaled under the other kingdom of Satan. This is a ground. Therefore I speak shortly of it, as an incentive and provocation to stir us, up, to get into Christ, to get the Spirit of Christ, that we may have this spiritual liberty, or else we are all slaves, notwithstanding all our civil liberties, whatsoever they be. Now, 'where the Spirit of Christ is there is liberty,' there is freedom from that bondage that we are in by nature, and which is strengthened by a wicked course of life. For though we be all slaves by nature, born slaves, yet

notwithstanding by a wicked course of life, we put ourselves into bonds and tangle ourselves; so many sins and so many repetitions of sin, so many cords; the longer a man lives the greater slave he is. Now when the Spirit of Christ comes, it frees us from all; both from the natural and from the customary slavery.

Now this liberty is wrought by Christ and applied by the Spirit. What Christ works he makes it ours by his Spirit, which takes all from Christ. As Christ doth all by the Spirit, so the Spirit takes all from Christ. All the comfort it hath is from reasons taken from Christ, from grounds from Christ, and doctrines from Christ, but yet both have their efficacy Christ as the meritorious cause, and the Spirit as the applying cause. The Spirit discovers the state of bondage we are in by nature, and it discovers withal a more excellent condition; and as it discovers, so likewise the Spirit of God brings us to this state, by working faith in that that Christ hath done for us. Christ hath freed us by his death from the curse of the law, from the wrath of God, from death and damnation, and the like. Now whatsoever Christ hath done the Spirit works faith, to make this our own by uniting us to Christ. When Christ and we are one, his sufferings are ours, and his victory is ours, all is ours. Then the Spirit persuading us of the love of God, and Christ redeeming us from that cursed slavery we were in, that Spirit, it works love in us, and other graces whereby the dominion of sin is broken more and more, and we are set at liberty by the Spirit.

Now the Spirit doth not work liberty properly originally, but Christ is the grand redeemer. But Christ redeemeth two ways. First, He redeems us by paying the price, and so he only redeemeth, for he paid the price to divine justice. We are in bondage to the wrath of God under his justice; and so there must be satisfaction to justice before we can be free.

Then, secondly, We are in bondage to Satan, as God's executioner and jailor. Now from him we are freed by strong hand. So Christ freeth us by his Holy Spirit, working such graces in us as makes us see the loathsomeness of that bondage; working likewise grace in us to be in love with a better condition, that the Spirit discovers to us. So that the Spirit brings us out by discovery and by power. All that Christ freeth by virtue of redemption, paying the price for, all those he frees likewise by his Spirit, discovering to them their bondage, and the blessed condition whereunto they are to be brought to a state of freedom, which freedom he perfects by little and little, till he bring them to a glorious freedom in heaven.

And the reason of this, that where Christ doth free by way of redemption, to die and satisfy God's justice for any, to those he gives his Spirit, by which Spirit they are set at liberty the reasons are manifold. To name one or two.

[1.] Christ doth save all that he doth save answerable to the nature of the party saved. He saves them as reasonable persons, for he saves us that he may make us friends. He saves us as men, and redeems us as men. He doth not only pay a price for us as we buy a thing that is dead, but like wise he frees us, so as we may understand to what, and by whom we are freed, and what condition we are freed from. Therefore there must be a Spirit joined with the work of Christ, to inform us thoroughly, being creatures fit to be informed.

[2.] And God intending to come into covenant with us, that we may be friends with him, which is our glory and happiness, he acquaints us as friends with all the favours and blessings that he hath done for us. He acquaints us what misery he brings us out of, and what happiness he brings us unto, and what is our duty. This is the work of the Spirit, to shew us what he hath done for us, that we may be friends.

[3.] And then it is a ground to love God. God saveth us by a way of love in the covenant of grace. His desire is that we may love him again, and maintain love. Now how can this be, without the Spirit of God discover what God in Christ hath done for us? Therefore there must be the Spirit to shew to the eye of the soul, and to tell us, this Christ hath done for us.

[4.] Then again there must be a fitting for heaven, for that glory that God intends us in election. Now this fitting must be altogether by the Spirit. The same Spirit that sanctified Christ in the womb, the same Spirit that anointed Christ, anoints all those that are Christ's, that they may be fit for so glorious a head. So there must be the Spirit as well as Christ in the work of redemption and liberty.

Now this Spirit of God doth set us at liberty, in all the course and whole carriage of salvation, from the beginning to the end.

He sets us at liberty at the first in calling us.

He sets us at liberty when we are justified.

He sets us at liberty when he sanctifieth us.

And he sets us then at liberty fully in glorification.

First of all, the Spirit of God is a Spirit of liberty, when we are first called powerfully and effectually. For living in the church sets us not at liberty, unless the Spirit stir us up to answer a divine call. 'For many are called but few are chosen,' Mat. xx. 16. In the church there is Hagar and Ishmael as well as Isaac. There are hypocrites as well as sound Christians. There is outward baptism as well as inward. There is outward circumcision of the flesh as well as inward of the spirit. A man may have all these outward privileges, and yet notwithstanding be a slave in the bosom of the church; for Ishmael was a bond-slave though he were in the house of Abraham. Therefore the first beginning of spiritual liberty is, (1.) When the Spirit of God in the ordinances, in the means of salvation, stirs up the heart to answer God's call as it were. When we are exhorted to believe and repent, the Spirit gives power to echo to God, 'Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief,' Mark ix. 24. Lord, I repent, and desire to repent more and more. When the Spirit of God in the ordinance saith, 'Seek my face, Thy face, Lord, will I seek,' Ps. xxvii. 8. Be thou mine, Lord, and I will be thine. This spiritual echo and answer of the soul comes from the Spirit of God in calling, and it is the first degree of liberty.

(2.) Now this answer of the soul, by the power of the Spirit, overpowering our corruptions, is together with the obedience of the inward man to go out. For man answereth the call, not only by the speech of the heart, Lord, I do it; but he doth it indeed. Therefore when by the power of the Spirit we come out of the world and out of our corruptions, and walk more freely in the ways of God, then we are set at spiritual liberty. Now the Spirit doth all this. For if it were not the Spirit that persuaded the soul, when the minister speaks, alas! all ministerial persuasions are to no purpose. If the Spirit do not stir up the soul to answer, all speech is to no purpose from men. But this the Spirit doth. In the first place he openeth the eyes with spiritual eye-salve to see our natural bondage; he openeth our eyes to see, I must come out of this condition if I will be saved, of necessity, or else I am miserable for ever. And it is enough for the soul of a miserable man if he be convinced to see his misery and bondage, what he is by nature; for let us be convinced of that once, and all the rest of the links of the golden chain of salvation will follow. Let a man be convinced that he is as the Scripture saith he is, and as hereafter he shall find to his cost, you shall not need to bid him

come out of his conversation and condition, and worldly course that he is in. All this will follow where there is conviction of spirit. . Therefore the first work of the Spirit in spiritual liberty is to convince us of sin and misery; and then to work, as I said, an answer of the soul, and an obedience of the whole man. This I will not be long in, being a clear point.

Second, 'Where the Spirit is, there is liberty.' Again, in matter of justification there is a liberty and freedom of conscience from sin and the curse of sin, and all the danger that follows upon sin, by the Spirit,

Obj. But you will say, the liberty of justification is wrought by Christ; we are justified by the obedience of Christ; and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us.

Ans. It is true Christ is our righteousness. But what is that to us except we have something to put it on? Except we be united to Christ, what good have we by Christ if Christ be not ours? If there be not a spiritual marriage, what benefit have we by him if we have not him to pay our debt? For his riches to be ours, and our debt to be his, there must be a union first. Now this union is wrought by the Spirit. It is begun in effectual calling. From this union there comes to be a change; his righteousness is mine, as if I had obeyed and done it by myself; and my debts and sins are his. This is by the Spirit, because the union between Christ and me is by the Spirit. For whatsoever Christ hath done, it is nothing to me till there be a union. And then freedom is by the Spirit likewise, because the Spirit of God works faith in me, not only to unite and knit me to Christ, but faith to persuade me that Christ is mine, and that all his is mine, and that my debts are his. This supernatural hand of faith the Spirit works to lay hold upon Christ, and then to persuade me. For the Spirit is a lightsome thing, and together with the graces it tells me the graces it works. As reason, besides reason, it tells me that I use reason when I do. It hath a reflex act. So the Spirit of Christ it hath a reflex act upon itself; for, being above reason, it doth not only lay hold upon Christ, it doth not only do the work, but it tells me that I do so when I do. Therefore it not only tells me that Christ is mine when I believe, but it assures me that I do believe. It carries a light of its own. I know the light by the light, and reason by reason, and faith by faith, together with the reflex act joining with it. So that the reflex act joining with it, the Spirit is the cause of liberty in justification in that respect, as it is a means of union, whereupon there is a passage of all that is Christ's to be mine, and mine to be Christ's. And likewise it assures me that I do believe, when I do believe without error.

For the Spirit is given me to know the things that I have by Christ, not only to know the privileges by Christ, but the graces of Christ.

And, beloved, unless the Spirit should do it, it would never be done; for the soul of man is so full of terrors and fears and jealousies, that except the Spirit of God witness to my spirit, that God is reconciled in Christ, and that Christ's righteousness is mine, I could never be persuaded of it. For the soul it always thinks God is holiness itself, and I am a mass of sin. What reason have I to think that God will be so favourable to such a wretch, to such a lump of sin as I am, were it not that God the Son hath satisfied God the Father? God hath satisfied God; and the Spirit certifies my conscience. So the Spirit, that searcheth the deep things of God, that knows what love is in the breast of God, and therefore he searcheth the heart, he searcheth the heart of God, and he searcheth my spirit. Except the Spirit should tell me that God the Son hath satisfied (and God the Father will accept of the satisfaction of God the Son), I should never believe it. Therefore God must stablish the heart in a gracious liberty of justification, as well as that God the Son hath wrought it.

It is no wonder that men of great parts without grace are full of terrors and despair; for the more parts and wit a man hath without the Spirit of God, the more he disputes against himself, and entangles himself with desperate thoughts. But when the Spirit is brought to speak peace to the soul in Christ, and makes the soul to cast itself on him for salvation, then God's Spirit is above the conscience. Though conscience be above all things else, yet God is above conscience, and can still the conscience; and the Spirit tells us that God the Father is reconciled by the death of God the Son. And when God witnesseth what God hath wrought, then conscience is at peace. Thus we see how the Spirit sets us at liberty in the great matter of justification.

Third, So likewise in the matter of holy life, in the whole course of a holy life, 'where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty,' and freedom from the slavery of sin. For there the understanding is freed from the bondage of ignorance, and there the "will is freed from the bondage of rebellion; there the affections likewise, and the whole inward and outward man is freed. But this liberty of holiness, inherent liberty, it doth spring from the liberty that we have by justification, by the righteousness of Christ, whereby we are perfectly righteous, and freed from all the title that Satan hath in us. We are freed from the curse of God, from the law, and enabled in a course of sanctification to go on from grace to grace. The Spirit of Christ comes after

justification. For whom God gives forgiveness unto, he gives his Spirit to sanctify them. The same Spirit that assures me of the pardon of my sin, sanctifies my nature. Where the Spirit is of sanctification, it breaks the ruling power of sin. Before then the whole life is nothing but a continual sinning and offending of God; but now there is a gracious liberty of disposition, a largeness of heart which follows the liberty of condition. When a man is free in state and law from wrath, and from the sentence of damnation, then he hath a free and voluntary disposition wrought to serve God freely, without fear or constraint.

When a man is under the bondage of the law, when he is under the fear of death, being armed with a sting, whatsoever he doth he doth it with a slavish mind. Where the Spirit of God is, there is the spirit of adoption, the spirit of sons, which is a free spirit. The son doth not duties to his father out of constraint and fear, but out of nature. The Spirit alters our nature and disposition. It makes us sons, and then we do all freely. God doth enlarge the hearts of his children. They can deny themselves in a good work. They are 'zealous of good works.' It is the end of their redemption; as it is Tit. ii. 14, 'We are redeemed to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' For then we have a base esteem of all things that hinder us from freeness in God's service, as worldliness, &c. What doth a Christian when he seeth his gracious liberty in Christ? The love of the world and worldly things, he is ready to part with all for the service of God. He is so free-hearted that he can part with life itself. Paul saith of him self, 'My life is not dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy,' Acts xx. 24. As we see in the martyrs and others how free they were, even of their very blood.

What shall we think of those therefore, that if we get anything of them, it must be as a sparkle out of the flint. Duties come from Christians as water out of a spring. They are natural, and not forced to issue, so far forth as they are spiritual.

I confess that there is remainders of bondage where the Spirit sets at liberty; for there is a double principle in us, while we live in this world, of nature and grace. Therefore there will be a conflict in every holy duty. The flesh will draw back when the Spirit would be liberal. The flesh will say, Oh but I may want! When the Spirit would be most courageous, the flesh will say, But there is danger in it. So that there is nothing that we can do but it must be gotten out of the fire. We must resist. Yet notwithstanding here is

liberty to do good, because here is a principle that resists the backwardness of the flesh.

In a wicked man there is nothing but flesh, and therefore there is no resistance. And we must understand the nature of this spiritual liberty in sanctification. It is not a liberty freeing us altogether from conflict, and deadness, and dulness, and the like; but it is a liberty enabling us to combat, not freeing us from combat. It is a liberty to fight the battles of the Lord against our own corruptions, not freeing us from it. That is the liberty of glory in heaven, when there shall be no enemy within or without.

Therefore let not Christians be discouraged with the backwardness and untowardness of the flesh, to good duties. If we have a principle in us to fight against it, to enable us to fight against our corruptions, and to get good duties out of it in spite of it, it is an argument of a new nature. God will perfect his own beginnings, and subdue the flesh more and more, by the power of his Spirit. We see our blessed Saviour, what a sweet excuse he makes for his disciples when they were dead-hearted and drowsy, when they should have comforted him in the garden: Oh, saith he, 'the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak,' Mat. xxvi. 41.

Indeed, there is a double hindrance in God's people when they are about holy duties, sometimes from their very mould and nature, considered not as corrupted; the very mould without the consideration.

And then consider it as it is made more heavy and dull by the flesh, and corruptions in them, as there be invincible infirmities and weaknesses in nature. Sometimes deadness, after labour and expense of spirits, creeps in invincibly, that a man cannot overcome those necessities of nature. So that 'the spirit may be willing, and the flesh weak;' the flesh without any great corruption. God looks upon our necessities; as the father saith, Free me from my necessities. As we see, Christ made an excuse for them. It was not so much corruption, though that were an ingredient in it, as nature in itself. Christ saw a great deal of gold in the ore, therefore we see how he excuseth them. Therefore when we are dull, let us strive. Christ is ready to make excuse for us, if our hearts be right: 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' I speak this for the comfort of the best sort of Christians, that think they are not set at liberty by the Spirit, because they find some heaviness and dulness in good duties. As I said, there is sin in us while we live here, but it reigns not. After a man hath the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Christ maintains a perpetual combat and conflict against sin. It could subdue sin all

at once if God saw it good; but God will humble us while we live here, and exercise us with spiritual conflicts. Therefore God sees it sufficient to bring us to heaven, to set up a combat in us, that we are able by the help of the Spirit to fight God's battles against the flesh. So that the dominion of sin may be broken in us, and excellently, saith Paul, Rom. viii. 2, 'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and of death.' The law of the Spirit of life, that is, the commanding power of the Spirit of Christ, that commands as a law in the hearts of God's people, it frees us from the law, that is, from the commanding power of sin and death. So that the dominion and tyranny of sin is broken by the Spirit of Christ, and so we are set at a gracious liberty. In some respects we are under grace, there fore sin shall not have dominion over us, as the apostle speaks.

Again, by the Spirit of Christ in sanctification we are made kings, to rule over our own lusts in some measure; not kings to be freed altogether from them, but kings to strive against them. It is a liberty to fight, and in fighting to overcome at last. When the Israelites had a promise that God would give their enemies into their hands, the meaning was not that he would give them without fighting a blow, but I will give them into your hands. You shall fight; and be of good comfort, in fighting you shall overcome. So this liberty of sanctification, it is not a liberty that we should have no combat with our corruptions, but a gracious liberty to keep them under, till by subduing them by little and little, we get a perfect victory. What greater encouragement can a man have to fight against his enemy, than when he is sure of the victory before he fights, of final victory! You see then how the Spirit brings a liberty into the soul. It brings us out of that cursed kingdom of Satan and sin. It brings us out of the curse of God and the law in justification; and it brings us from the dominion and tyranny of sin, by a spirit of sanctification.

But this is not all that is in liberty; for the Spirit doth not only free us from all that is ill, from sin, but from that that follows it. There is some ill that follows, as fear and terrors of conscience, &c. They follow sin and death and wrath, and such like, the subjection to these. Now, where the Spirit of God is, it frees from the ill consequents, from the tail that follows sin. Where the Spirit is, it frees us from fear; for the same Spirit that tells us in justification that God is appeased, the same Spirit frees us from the fear of damnation and death and judgment; from the terrors of an evil conscience. being 'sprinkled with the blood of Christ,' 1 Pet. i. 2, we are freed from fear.

And it frees not only from the fear of ill things, but it shews immunity and freedom to good. Liberty implies here two things: a freedom from ill, from a cursed condition, and likewise a liberty to a better; a liberty from ill, and to good. We must take it in the just latitude, because the benefits of Christ are complete, not only privative but positive; not only to free us from ill, but to confer all good to us, as much as our nature is capable of. As much as these souls of ours are capable of, they shall be made free and glorious and happy in heaven, God will leave no part of the soul unfilled, no corner of the soul empty. By little and little he doeth it, as we shall see in the next verse. When we are called out of Satan's kingdom we are not only called out of that cursed state, but we are made free of a better kingdom; we are made the members of Christ; we are enfranchised. And so in justification we are not only freed from damnation, from the justice and wrath of God, but likewise we can implead our righteousness whereby we have title to heaven, which is a blessed privilege and prerogative. We are not only free from the curse of the law, but likewise we have other gracious prerogatives and privileges. We are not only freed from the dominion of sin, but we are likewise set at liberty by the Spirit to do that that is good. We have a voluntary free spirit to serve God with as great cheerfulness as we served our lusts before; and as we are freed from the rigour and curse of the law, so we have prerogatives to good answerable. We are now by the Spirit set at liberty to delight in the law, to make the law our counsellor, to make the word of God our counsellor. That that terrified and affrighted us before, now it is our direction. Even as he that was a severe schoolmaster to one in his under years, after, when he comes to years, becomes a wise tutor to guide and direct him; so the law that terrified and whipped us when we were in bondage, till we be in Christ, it scares us to Christ, that law after comes to be a tutor, to tell us this we shall do, to counsel us, and say this is the best way; and we come to delight in those truths, when they are discovered to us in the inward man. And the more we know, the more we would know, because we would please God every day better. So that besides freedom from that that is ill, and the consequents of ill, there is a blessed immunity and prerogative and privilege. That is meant here by liberty.

For God's works are complete. We must know when he delivers from ill he advanceth to good. His works are full works always. He doth not things by halves. Therefore we have through Christ, and by the Spirit, not only freedom from that that is ill, but advancement to all that is comfortable and graciously good.

And one thing give me leave to touch, which though it be more subtle, yet it is useful, that the text puts me to speak of. 'Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty' of the inward man, liberty of judgment, and liberty of will. Where the Spirit of God is not, there is no liberty, no free will. A little to touch upon that.

That which we call free will, it is either taken for a natural power and endowment that God hath put upon the soul, and so the will is always free in earth and in hell. The devil's will is free so, free to evil. There is the natural freedom; for freedom it is a dowry upon the will, invested upon the will, that God never takes from it. To do it freely, that is, upon reason that it sees, be it good or evil, so I mean not freedom; but I take freedom for ability and strength to that that is good. For any liberty and ability to that that is good is only from the Spirit; and the defence of Luther's and others that wrote of this freedom, is sound and good, that the will of man is slavish altogether, without the Spirit of God. 'Where the Spirit is there is liberty;' liberty as it is taken for power and ability to do good. In a word, there is always a liberty of the subject, of the person; a liberty of the understanding, but not of the object, to this or to that thing. A liberty to supernatural objects comes from supernatural principles. Nothing moves above its own sphere; nothing is acted above its own activity, that God hath put into it. Now a natural man can do nothing but naturally; for nothing can work above itself, by its own strength, no more than a beast can work according to the principles of a man. Therefore the soul of man hath no liberty at all to that which is spiritually good, without a supernatural principle, that raiseth it above itself, and puts it into the rank of supernatural things.

First, The Spirit of God puts a new life into the soul of a man; and then when he hath done that, it preserves that life against all opposition; and together with preserving that life, it applies that inward life and power it hath put into it to particular works. For when we have a new life, yet we cannot do particular actions without the exciting power of the Spirit of God. The Spirit stirs up to every particular thing, when the soul would be quiet of itself. The moving comes from the Spirit of God. As every particular moving in the body comes from the soul, so the Spirit it puts a new life, it applies that life, it applies the soul to every action. Where the Spirit of God therefore is not, there is no liberty to any supernatural action; but 'where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty.' It follows both negatively and affirmatively. There is a liberty of will to that that is good. So then this riseth from hence, again, that where

the Spirit of God is efficacious and effectual in his working, there it robs not the soul of liberty, but perfects that liberty.

You have some divines, too many indeed, that hold that the Holy Ghost only works by way of persuasion upon the soul, and by way of moving, as it were, without; but he doth not enter into the soul, nor alter and change the soul; he doth not work upon the soul as an inward worker, but only as an outward entreater and persuader and allurer, propounding objects, and with objects persuasions and allurements. This is too shallow a conceit for so deep a business as this; for the Spirit works more deeply than so. It puts a new life into the soul; it takes away the stony heart and gives a fleshly heart, Ezek. xl. 19. Those phrases of Scripture are too weighty to fasten such a shallow sense upon them, only as to entreat them to be converted, as a man would entreat a stone to be warm, and to come out of its place. He might entreat long enough. But the Spirit with that speech, it puts a new life and power, and then acts and stirs that power to all that is good.

Obj. Oh, say they, which is their main objection, here is a prejudice to the liberty of the will! This is to overthrow the nature of man!

Ans. Oh, by no means! This is no prejudice to the liberty of the will; for the Spirit of God is so wise an agent that he works upon the soul, preserving the principles of a man. It alters the judgment by presenting greater reasons, and further light than it saw before; and then it alters the will, that we will contrary to that we did before, by presenting to the will greater reasons to be good than ever it had to be ill before. Then the soul chooseth freely of its own will any thing, when it doth it upon discovery of light and reason, with advisement and reason. Then the soul doth things freely, when it doth them upon the designment of reason, when judgment tells me this is good. Now when the Spirit changeth the soul, it presents such strong reasons to come out of that cursed estate I am in, and to come to the blessed estate in Christ, that the will presently follows that that the understanding presents as the chief good of all. Here the freedom is preserved, because the will is so stirred by the Holy Ghost, as that it stirs itself, being stirred by the Holy Ghost; and upon this ground it sees a better good. So that grace takes not away liberty. No; it stablisheth liberty. Though we hold that in effectual grace the Spirit of God works upon the soul throughly, yet not withstanding we preserve liberty, because we say that the soul works of its own principles, notwithstanding grace; because the Spirit of God acts and leads the soul according to the nature of the soul. The Spirit of God preserves things in the

manner of doing of things. It is the manner of doing of the reasonable creature, to do things freely. Therefore the Spirit working upon the soul, it preserves that modus, though it work effectually upon the soul; and the more effectually it Works upon the soul, the more the soul is; because it seeth reason to do good. Therefore the more we give to the Spirit in the question of grace and nature, the more we stablish liberty, and prejudice it not. Where these three or four rules are observed, there liberty is preserved, though there be a mighty working of the Holy Spirit; as,

First, Where the will chooseth and makes choice, and inclines to a thing with the advisement of reason. Alway that must be, or else it is not a human action. Now when the Spirit of God sets the will at liberty, a man doth that he doth with full advisement of reason; for though God work upon the will, it is with enlightening of the understanding at the same time; and all grace in the will comes through the understanding, as all heat upon inferior things it comes with light. So that though heat cherish the earth, it comes with light. So all the work upon the soul is by the heat of the Spirit. But it comes from the light of the understanding. So the freedom of the soul is preserved, because it is with light.

Second; Again, where freedom is, there is a power to apprehend other things, as well as that it doth; to reason on both sides, I may do this or that. For that power to reason on both sides is proper to the soul alway. Now grace takes not away that power to reason on both sides; for when a man is set at liberty from the base slavery of ill to do good, he can reason with himself, I might have done this and that if I would be damned. So that the judgment is not bound to one thing only, but the judgment tells him he might have done otherwise if he would; but he sees he must do this if he will not be damned.

Third; Again, where there is liberty and freedom, there is an enlargement to understand more things than one, or else there were no freedom; and though the soul be determined to choose one thing, and not many, yet of itself it hath power to choose many things. To make this clear a little: some creatures are confined to one thing, out of the narrowness of the parts they have; some are confined to one thing, out of the largeness of parts. These seem contrary, but thus I will give this instance to make it clear. The creature that is unreasonable is alway confined to one manner of working, because they want understanding to work in a diverse manner. Birds, make their nests

and bees make their hives always after one manner, because of their narrowness, that they have not choice.

Now when the Spirit sets a man at liberty to holy things, he is confined to good; especially this is in heaven. This is out of largeness of understanding, apprehending many goods and many ills; and that good that he conceives to be the best good, out of a large understanding he is determined to that one. So that, though the Spirit of God take away as it were that present liberty that a man cannot do ill, it will not suffer him to be so bad as he was, yet it leaves him in a state of good, to do a multitude of good things. And then, though it confine him to a state of happiness, that he cannot will the contrary, yet here is no liberty taken away, because it is done out of strength of knowledge, not out of narrowness; because there is no more things for him to judge, but out of largeness, telling him this is the best of all, and carries all the soul after it. The glory of heaven robs not a man of his power.

What is the reason they are determined eternally to that that is good? Is it for want of understanding that the angels choose not ill? No! They know what ill is by speculation, but there is a strength of understanding to know that that is good; and the understanding, where it hath full light, it carries the will to choose. Therefore 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' Notwithstanding all objections to the contrary, the Spirit takes not away, nay, it strengthened, the liberty of the soul. It is an idle objection and a great stay of many that are willing to be deceived, Oh if grace confine a man, determine him, as the word is, sway him one way perpetually, that he holds on to the end, and leaves him not at liberty to his will, this confining and swaying one way it is an abridging him of his liberty, &c. No. For it comes not from weakness of understanding, but from strength of understanding; and it is perfect liberty to do well. There fore, on the contrary, it is so far from abridging the liberty of the soul that it cannot do ill, or that it cannot but persevere to do good, that it is the strength of liberty.

For I would know whether the first Adam's liberty were greater, or the liberty in heaven, the second Adam's liberty? Our liberty in grace or that in glory? The liberty of the first man was, that he might not sin if he would; the liberty of Christ was, that he could not sin at all. Which think you was the chief? He that could not, or he that might not sin if he would? Was there not a more gracious and blessed liberty in Christ than in Adam, when he might not sin if he would? Is this a worse liberty then when a man cannot sin? So

when the Spirit of God bears that sway over the soul, and takes away that potentiality and possibility to sin, that a man cannot sin, because he will not, his will is so carried by the strength of judgment, this is the greatest good. I will not move out of this circle. If I go out of this I shall be unhappy. And this is the greatest liberty of all.

What do we pray in the Lord's prayer but for this liberty? Thy will be done,' Mat. vi. 10. That is, take me out of my own will more 'and more; conform my will to thine in all things. The more I do so, the more liberty I have. The strength of that petition is, that we may have perfect liberty in serving God.

The greatest and sweetest liberty is, when we have no liberty to sin at all; when we cannot sin. It is greater chastity not to have power to resist, to be impregnable in continence and sobriety. When there is such a measure of these graces as they are not to be overcome, it is greater strength than when they may be prevailed over. So men mistake to think this the greatest liberty to have power to good or evil. That is the imperfection of the creature. Man was at the first created free to either good or evil of himself, that he might fall of himself. This was not strength, but a thing that followed the creature that came out of nothing, and that was subject to fall to his own principles again. But to have the soul stablished that it shall not have freedom to ill, it is so stablished in good. It hath the understanding so enlightened, and the will so confirmed and strengthened, that it is without danger of temptation. That is properly glorious liberty, and that is the better endowment of both, so that we see it clearly that grace takes not away liberty, but establisheth it.

Now besides this inward spiritual liberty that we have by the Spirit, there is an outward preserving liberty that must be a little touched, and that is twofold. v '(1.) A liberty of preaching the gospel; and (2.) A liberty of discipline, as we call it; of government that is in the church of God; and should be at least in all places, because we are men, and must have such helps. Now these are liberties that the Spirit bestows upon the church wheresoever there is an inward spiritual liberty. Men are brought into the church by the liberty of the gospel, and preserved by government. There must be a subjection to pastors; there must be teaching and some discipline, or else all will be in a confusion. Now this inward liberty is wrought by the liberty of the gospel.

Quest. What is the liberty of the gospel?

Ans. When there is a blessed liberty in the church to have true liberty opened, the charter of our liberty.

Quest. What is the charter of our liberty?

Ans. The word of God. When the charter and patent of our liberty is laid open, in laying it open we come to have interest in those liberties. Therefore the liberty of the temple, the liberty of the church, of the word and sacraments, and some order in the church with it, it brings in spiritual liberty and preserves it. It is as it were the bonds and sinews of the church. Now where the Spirit of God is with the gospel, there is this liberty of the gospel; there are the doors of the temple and sanctuary set open, as, blessed be God, this kingdom hath had. With the spiritual liberty, there is an outward liberty of the tabernacle of God and the house of God, that we can all meet to hear the word of God and to receive the sacraments; that we can all meet to call upon God in spirit and in truth; and these outward liberties, beloved, are blessed liberties. For where God gives these outward liberties, he intends to bestow and to convey spiritual liberty. How shall we come to spiritual liberty without unfolding the charter, the word of God? Therefore Christ hath established a ministry, apostles, and doctors, and pastors, to edify the church to the end of the world; and therefore we see where there is no outward liberty of unfolding the word, where there is no outward liberty of the ministry, there wants this inward liberty. For God by the preaching of the gospel sets us at liberty.

Again, when Christ preached the gospel first, it was the year of jubilee. Now, in the year of jubilee, all servants were set at liberty, and those that had not sold their inheritances might recover them again if they would. This jubilee was a type of the spiritual liberty that the gospel sets us at. Those that have served sin and Satan before, if they will regard the gracious promises of the gospel, they may of slaves of sin and Satan be come the free men of Jesus Christ. But in those times some would be servants still, and would not be set at liberty. Their ears were bored for perpetual slaves;] and it is pity but their ears should be bored for ever lasting slaves, that now, in the glorious jubilee of the gospel, resolve still to be slaves. When a proclamation of liberty was made to come out of Babylon all that would, many would stick there still. So many are in love with Egypt and Babylon and slavery. It is pity but they should be slaves. But those that have more noble spirits, as they desire liberty, so they should desire spiritual liberty especially. And here you see how to come by it. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;' and

where the ordinance of God is; that is, the ministry of the Spirit, there is the Spirit. Where these outward liberties are, it is a sign that God hath an intendment to set men at spiritual liberty.

Those, therefore, that are enemies of the dispensation of the gospel in the ministry, they are enemies to spiritual liberty; and it is an argument that a man is in bondage to Satan when he is an enemy any way of the unfolding of the word of God. For it is an argument that he is licentious, that he will not be called to spiritual liberty, but live according to the flesh; when he will not hear of the liberty of the Spirit, as you have some kind of men that account it a bondage, 'Let us break their bands, and cast away their cords,' Ps. ii. 8. Why should we be tied with the word and with these holy things? It is better that we have no preaching, no order at all, but live every man as he would. Though they speak not so in words, yet their lives and profane carriage shew that they regard not outward liberties; and that argueth that they are in spiritual bondage, and that they have no interest in spiritual liberty, because they are enemies of that whereby spiritual liberty is preserved.

Therefore the gospel is set out by that phrase, 'The kingdom of God.' Not only the kingdom of God set up in our hearts, the kingdom of the Spirit, but likewise where the gospel is preached, there is the kingdom of God. Why? Because with the dispensation of divine truth Christ comes to rule in the heart; by the outward kingdom comes the spiritual kingdom. They come under one name.

Therefore those that would have the spiritual kingdom of God, by grace and peace to rule in their hearts till they reign for ever in heaven, they must come by this door, by the ministry, by the outward ordinance. The ordinance brings them to grace; and grace to glory. And it is a good and sweet sign of a man spiritually set at liberty, brought out of the kingdom of Satan, and freed from the guilt of sin, and from the dominion of sin, which is broken in sanctification, when we can meekly and cheerfully submit to the ordinance of God, with a desire to have his spiritual thralldom discovered, and to have spiritual duties unfolded, and the riches of Christ laid open. When he hears these things with a taste and relish, and a love, it is a sign God loves his soul, and that he hath interest in spiritual liberty, because he can improve the charter of his soul so well. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

And besides this liberty in this world, there is a liberty of glory, called 'the liberty of the sons of God,' Rom. viii. 21. The liberty of our bodies from corruption, the glorious liberty in heaven, when we shall be perfectly free.

For, alas! in this world we are free to fight, not free from fight; and we are free, not from misery, but free from thralldom to misery. But then we shall be free from the encounter and encumbrance. 'All tears shall be wiped from our eyes,' Rev. vii. 17. We shall be free from all hurt of body, in sickness and the like, and free from all the remainders of sin in our souls: that is perfect liberty, perfect redemption, and perfect adoption, both of body and soul. And that we have by the Spirit too; for where the Spirit of God is, there is that too in this world in the beginning of it. For, beloved, what is peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost? Is it not the beginnings of heaven? Is it not a grape of the heavenly Canaan? Is it not the Spirit that we have here an earnest of that inheritance? An earnest penny; and an earnest is a piece of the bargain. It is never taken away, but is made up with the bargain. Therefore, when by the Spirit we have the beginnings of grace and comfort, we have the beginnings of that glorious liberty; and it assures us of that glorious liberty as sure as we have the earnest. For God never repents of his bargain that he makes with his children. Grace in some sort is glory, as we see in the next verse; because grace is the beginning of glory. It frees the soul from terror and subjection to sin, from the thralldom of sin. So the life of glory is begun in grace. We have the life of glory begun by the Spirit, this glorious life.

Use 1. If we have all these blessed liberties in this world and in that to come by the Spirit, then we should labour to have the Spirit of Christ, or else we have no liberty at all; and labour every day more and more to get this spiritual liberty in our consciences, to have our consciences assured by the Spirit that our sins are forgiven, and to feel in our consciences a power to bring under sin that hath tyrannized over us before. Let us every day more and more labour to find this spiritual liberty, and prize daily more the ordinances of God, sanctified to set us at liberty. Attend upon spiritual means, that God hath sanctified, wherein he will convey the Spirit. There were certain times wherein the angel came to stir the waters of the pool, John v. 3. So the Spirit of God stirs the waters of the word and ordinances, and makes them effectual. Attend upon the ordinances of God, the communion of saints, &c., and the Spirit of God will slide into our souls in the use of holy means. There is no man but he finds experience of it. He finds himself raised above himself in the use of holy means. The more we know the gospel, the more we have of the Spirit; and the more Spirit we have, the more liberty we enjoy. If we prize and value outward liberty, as indeed we do, and we are naturally moved to do it, how should we prize the charter of our spiritual liberty, the word of God, and the promises of salvation (whereby we

come to know all our liberty, where we have all the promises opened to us; the promise of forgiveness of sins, of necessary grace; the promise of comfort in all conditions whatsoever). Therefore let us every day labour to grow farther and farther both in the knowledge and in the taste and feeling of this spiritual liberty.

Use 2. Oh beloved, what a blessed condition it is to have this spiritual liberty! Do but see the blessed use and comfort of it in all conditions. For if a man hath the Spirit of God to set him at spiritual liberty, in all temptations, either to sin, he hath the Spirit of God to free him from temptation; or, if temptation catch hold on him for sin, he hath the Spirit of God to fly to, the blood of Christ, to shew that if he confess his sins and lay hold on Christ, he hath pardon of sin; and the blood of Christ 'speaks better things than the blood of Abel.' It speaks mercy and peace. If he by faith sprinkle it upon his soul, if he know the liberty of justification, and make use of it: what a blessed liberty is this when we have sinned!

In restraint of the outward man. If ever God restrain us to humble us, what a blessed thing is this, that the spirit is at liberty! and that is the best part of a man. A man may have a free conscience and mind, in a restrained condition; and a man may be restrained in a free state. In the guilt of sin, bound over to the wrath of God, and bound over to another evil day, a man in the greatest thralldom may have liberty. What a blessed condition is this!

So in sickness, to consider that there is a glorious liberty of the sons of God, and a redemption of body, as well as of soul, that this base body of mine shall be like Christ's glorious body; that there is a resurrection to glory the resurrection will make amends for all these sicknesses and ills of body what a comfort is it to think of the resurrection to glory!

And so when death comes, to know that by the blood of Christ there is a liberty to enter into heaven; that Christ by his blood hath opened a passage to heaven.

And so in all necessities, to think I have a liberty to the throne of grace; I am free of heaven; I am free of the company of saints in earth and in heaven too; I am free to have communion with God; I have a freedom in all the promises; what a sweet thing is this, in all wants and necessities, to use a spiritual liberty, to have the ear of God, as a favourite in heaven! Not only to be free from the wrath of God, but to have his favour, to have his care in all

our necessities: what a blessed liberty is this, that a man may go with boldness to the throne of grace by the Spirit of Christ!

Beloved, it is invaluable. There is not the least branch of this spiritual liberty but it is worth a thousand worlds. How should we value it, and bless God for giving Christ to work this blessed liberty; and for giving his Spirit to apply it to us more and more, and to set us more and more at spiritual liberty. For both the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all join in this spiritual liberty. The Father gives the Son, and he gives the Spirit; and all to set us free. It is a comfortable and blessed condition.

Use 3. But how shall we know whether we be set at liberty or no? Because all will pretend a liberty from the law and from the curse of God, and his wrath in justification? And though it be the foundation of all, I will not speak of that, but of that that always accompanies it, a liberty of holiness, a liberty to serve God, a liberty from bondage to lusts, and to Satan. Therefore,

(1.) Wheresoever the Spirit of God is, there is a liberty of holiness, to free us from the dominion of any one sin. We are freed 'to serve him in holiness all the days of our lives,' Luke i. 75. Where the Spirit therefore is, it will free a man from thralldom to sin, even to any one sin. For the

Spirit discovers to the soul the odiousness of the bondage. For a man to be a slave to Satan, who is his enemy, a cruel enemy, what an odious thing is this! Now whosoever is enthralled to any lust, is in thralldom to Satan by that lust. Therefore where this liberty is, there cannot be slavery to any one lust. Satan therefore cares not how many sins one leaves, if he live in any one sin; for he hath them in one sin, and can pull them in by one sin. As children when they have a bird, they can give it leave to fly, so it be in a string to pull it back again; so Satan hath men in a string, if they live in any one sin. The Spirit of Christ is not there, but Satan's spirit, and he can pull them in when he will. The beast that runs away with a cord about him, he is caught by the cord again; so when we leave many sins, and yet notwithstanding carry his cords about us, he can pull us in when he lists. Such are prisoners at liberty more than others, but notwithstanding they are slaves to Satan by that, and where Satan keeps possession by one sin, and rules there, there is no liberty. For the spirit of sanctification where it is, is a counter-poison to the corruption of nature, and it is opposite to it, in all the powers of the soul. It suffers no corruption to get head.

(2.) Again, where this liberty from the Spirit is, there is not only a freedom from all gross sins, but likewise a blessed freedom to all duties, an enlargement of heart to duties. God's people are a voluntary people. Those that are under grace, they are 'anointed by the Spirit,' Ps. lxxxix. 20, and that spiritual anointment makes them nimble. Christian is nothing but anointed. Now he that is truly anointed by the Spirit, is nimble, and quick, and active in that that is good in some degree and proportion. One use of anointing is to make the members nimble, and agile, and strong; so the Spirit of God is a spirit of cheerfulness and strength where it is. There fore those that find some cheerfulness and strength to perform holy services, to hear the word, to pray to God, and to perform holy duties, it is a sign that this comes from the Spirit of God. The Spirit sets them at this liberty, because otherwise spiritual duties are as opposite to flesh and blood as fire and water. When we are drawn therefore to duties, as a bear to a stake, as we say, with foreign motives, for fear, or out of custom, with extrinsical motives, and not from a new nature, this is not from the Spirit. This performance is not from the true liberty of the Spirit. For the liberty of the Spirit is, when actions come off naturally without force of fear or hope, or any extrinsical motive. A child needs not extrinsical motives to please his father. When he knows he is the child of a loving father, it is natural. So there is a new nature in those that have the Spirit of God to stir them up to duty, though God's motives may help as the sweet encouragements and rewards. But the principal is to do things naturally, not for fear, or for giving content to this or that man.

Artificial things move from a principle without them, therefore they are artificial. Clocks and such things have weights that stir all the wheels they go by, and that move them; so it is with an artificial Christian that composeth himself to a course of religion. He moves with weights without him; he hath not an inward principle of the Spirit to make things natural to him, and to excite and make him do things naturally and sweetly. 1 Where the Spirit of God is, there is freedom; that is, a kind of natural freedom, not forced, not moved by any foreign extrinsical motive.

(3.) Again, where the freedom of spirit is, there is a kind of courage against all opposition whatsoever, joined with a kind of light and strength of faith, breaking through all oppositions. A consideration of the excellent state I am in; of the vileness of the state we are moved to by opposition; when the Spirit discovers these things with a kind of conviction, what is ah 1 opposition to a spiritual man? It adds but courage and strength to him to resist. The more opposition, the more courage he hath. In Acts iv. 23, seq.,

when they had the Spirit of God, they opposed opposition; and the more they were opposed, the more they grew. They were cast in prison, and rejoiced; and the more they were imprisoned, the more courageous they were still. There is no setting against this wind, nor no quenching of this fire, by any human power, where it is true; for the Spirit of God, where it sets a man at liberty indeed, it gathers strength by opposition. See how the Spirit triumphed in the martyrs over all opposition, fire, and imprisonment, and all. The Spirit in them set them at liberty from such base fears, that it prevails in them over all. The Spirit of God, where it is, is a victorious Spirit. It frees the soul from base fears of any creature. 'If God be on our side, who shall be against us?' Rom. viii. 33, 34. It is said of St Stephen, that they could not withstand the Spirit by which he spake, Acts vi. 10; and Christ promiseth a Spirit that all the enemies shall not be able to withstand: so those that are God's children, in the time of opposition, when they understand themselves and that to which they stand, God gives them a Spirit against which all their enemies cannot stand. The Spirit of Christ in Stephen put such a glory upon him, that he looked as if he had been an angel, Acts vi. 15; so the Spirit of liberty, where it is, it is with boldness, and strength, and courage against opposition. Those, there fore, that are awed with every petty thing for standing in a good cause, they have not the Spirit of Christ; for where that is, it frees men from these base fears, especially if the cause be God's.

(4.) Again, where the Spirit of liberty is, it gives boldness with God himself, and thus it is known especially where it is: 'Where the Spirit is, there is liberty.' What to do? Even to go to God himself, that otherwise is a 'consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29. For the Spirit of Christ goes through the mediation of Christ to God. Christ, by his Spirit, leads us to God. He that hath not the Spirit of God cannot go to God with a spirit of boldness. Therefore, when a man is in affliction, in the time of temptation or great affliction, especially when there is opposition, he may best judge what he is in truth. When a man is in temptation, or opposition from the world, within or without, and can go boldly to God, and pour out his soul to God freely and boldly as to a father, this comes from the Spirit of liberty. Where the Spirit of Christ is not, though the parts be never so strong, or never so great, it will never do thus. Take another man, in the time of extremity, he sinks; but take a child of God in extremity, yet he hath a spirit to go to God, and to cry, Abba, Father; to go in a familiar manner to God. Saul was a mighty man. When he was in anguish, he could not go to God. Cain could not go to God. Judas, a man of great knowledge, he could not go to God. His heart was naught; he had not the Spirit of Christ, but the spirit of the devil; and the

spirit of bondage bound him over for his treason to hell and destruction; because he had not the Spirit to go to God, but accounted him his enemy; he had betrayed Christ. If he had said as much to God as he did to the scribes and Pharisees, he might have had mercy in the force of the thing. I speak not of the decree of God, but in the nature of the thing itself. If he had said so much to Christ and to God, he might have found mercy. So let a man be never so great a sinner, if he can go to God, and spread his soul, and lay open his sins with any remorse; if he can come, and open his soul in confession and in petition, and beg mercy of God in Christ, to shine as a Father upon his soul this Spirit of liberty to go to God, it argues that the Spirit of Christ is there, because there is liberty to go to God. In Rom. viii. 26, speaking there of comfort in afflictions, this is one among the rest, 'that the children of God have the Spirit of God, to stir up sighs and groans.' Now, where the Spirit of God stirs up sighs and groans, God understands the meaning of his own Spirit. There is the spirit of liberty, and there is the spirit of sons; for a spirit of liberty is the spirit of a son. A man may know that he is the son of God, and a member of Christ; and that he hath the spirit of liberty in him, if he can, in affliction and trouble, sigh and groan to God in the name and mediation of Christ; for the Spirit stirs up groans and sighs: they come from the Spirit.

That familiar boldness whereby we cry 'Abba, Father,' it comes from sons. They only can cry so. This comes from the Spirit. If we be sons, then we have the Spirit, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. So, if we can go to God with a sweet familiarity, Father, have mercy upon me, forgive me; look in the bowels of pity upon me, this sweet boldness and familiarity, it comes from the spirit of liberty, and shews that we are sons, and not bastards.

Your strong, rebellious, sturdy-hearted persons, who think to work out [of] their misery, out of the strength of parts and friends, &c., they die in despair. Their sorrows are too good for them. But when a broken soul goes to God in Christ with boldness, this opening of the soul to God, it is a sign of liberty, and of the liberty of sons, for this liberty here is the liberty of sons, of a spouse, of kings, of members of Christ: the sweetest liberty that can be imagined. It is the liberty that those sweet relations breed of a wife to the husband, and of loving subjects to their prince, and of children to their father. Here is a sweet liberty; and 'where the Spirit of God is, there is all this sweet liberty.'

There are three degrees that a man is in, that is in the way to heaven.

[1.] The state of nature, when he cares neither for heaven nor hell in a manner, so he may have sensual nature pleased, and go on without fear or wit, without grace, nay, without the principles of nature, so he may satisfy himself in a course of sin. That is the worst state, the state of nature.

[2.] But God, if he belong to him, will not suffer him to be in this sottish and brutish condition long, but brings him under the law; that is, he sets his own corrupt nature before him, he shews him the course of his life, and then he is afraid of God: 'Depart from me, I am a sinner;' as Adam he ran from God when he had sinned, that was sweet to him before; so a brute man, when he is awakened with conscience of sin, considering that there is but a step between him and hell, and considering what a God he hath to deal with, and that after death there is eternal damnation, when the Spirit of God hath convinced him of this, then he is in a state of fear, and when he is in this state, he is unfit to have liberty to run to God. He useth all his power to shift from God all he can, and hates God, and wisheth there were no God, and trembles at the very thought of God, and of death, &c.

[3.] Oh, but if a man belong to God, God will not leave him in this condition (and though this be better than the first, it is better that a man were out of his wits almost, than to be senseless as a block); there is another condition spoken of here, that is, of liberty; when God by his Spirit discovers to him in Christ forgiveness of sins, the gracious face of God ready to receive him, 'Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28, saith Christ; and 'where sin hath abounded, grace more abounds,' Rom. v. 20; when a man hears this still sweet voice of the gospel, he begins then to take comfort to himself, then he goes to God freely. Now all in this state of freedom, take them at the worst, they have boldness to go to God. David in his extremity, he runs to God. David trusted in the Lord his God. When he was at his wits' end, what doth Saul in his extremity? He runs to his sword's point, Judges ix. 54, seq. Take a man under nature, or under the law, in extremity, the greater wit he hath, the more he entangleth himself. His wit serves to entangle him, to weave a web of his own despair. But take a gracious man, that is acquainted with God in Christ, in such a man there is a liberty to go to God at the lowest; for he hath the Spirit of Christ in him. What did the Spirit in Christ himself direct him to do at the lowest? 'my God, my God,' Mark xv. 34. In the deepest desertion, yet 'my God.' There was a liberty to go to God. So take a Christian that hath the same Spirit in him, as indeed he hath, 'My God' still. He owns God and knows him in all extremity.

Many are discovered hence to have no Spirit of God in them. In trouble whither go they? To their purse, to their friends, to anything. They labour to overcome their troubles one way or other, by physic and the like, but never to go with boldness and comfort, and a kind of familiarity to God. They have no familiarity with God. Therefore they have not a Spirit of liberty.

[4.] Again, where this Spirit of liberty is, as there is a freedom to go to God, so in regard of the creature and the things here below, there is a freedom from popular, vulgar conceits, from the errors of the times and the slavish courses of the times.

There are always two sorts of wicked persons in the world.

(1.) The one who accounts it their heaven and happiness, to domineer over others; to bring them into subjection, and to rule over their consciences if they can, and sell all to please them, conscience and all.

(2.) Another sort again, so they may gain, they will sell their liberty, their reason and all: if it be but for a poor thing, so they may get anything that they value in the world, to make them beasts, as if they had no reasonable understanding souls, much less grace. Between those two, some domineering and others beastly serving, a few that go upon terms of Christianity, are of sound judgment. Now where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty, that is, a freedom not to enthrall our judgments to any man, much less conscience. The judgment of man enlightened by reason is above any creature; for reason is a beam of God, and all the persons in the world ought not to think to have power over a man, to say anything against his knowledge. It is to say against God, if it be but in civil matters, be it what it will. Judgment is the spark of God. Nature is but God's candle. It is a light of the same light that grace is of, but inferior. For a man to speak against his conscience to please men, where is liberty! For a man to enthrall his conscience to please another man! No man that hath the spirit of a man will be so pharisaical, to say as another man saith, and to judge as another man judgeth, and to do all as another man doth, without seeing some reason himself; going upon the principles of a man himself. It is true of a man as a man, unless he will unman himself. It is much more true of a Christian man. He will not for base fears and engagements enthrall his conscience, and sell heaven and happiness and his comfort for this and that; and those that do it, though they talk of liberty, they are slaves; though they domineer in the world, the curse of Cain is upon them, they are slaves of slaves.

Therefore, where the Spirit of Christ is, there is an independent liberty. A man is independent upon any other man, further than he sees it agrees with the rules of religion; and he is dependent only upon God, and upon divine principles and grounds. The apostle saith, 'The spiritual man judgeth all things, and is judged of none,' 1 Cor. ii. 15. So far as a man is 'led with the Spirit,' Horn. viii. 14, he discerns things in the light of the Spirit. He judgeth all things to be as they are, in the light of the Spirit, and is judged of none. His meaning is not, that none will usurp judgment of him, for that they will do. The emptiest men are most rash and censorious; but he is judged of none aright. It is a fool's bolt. But the spiritual man indeed passeth a right verdict upon persons and things, as far as he is spiritual. And that is the reason that carnal men especially hate spiritual men above all things. They hate men that have a natural conscience, that judge according to the light of reason, for that is above any creature. When a man will not say white is black, that good is evil, to please any man in the world, a man that hath a natural conscience will not do this. And this is very distasteful. Where men idolise themselves they love not such, but such as are slaves to them. But much more, when a man is spiritual, he judgeth all things and censureth them and their courses; for he is above all, and seeth all beneath him. Therefore the greatest men in the world are holy men. They are above all other men, and without usurpation, they pass a censure upon the course and state of other men, though they be never so great. Howsoever the image of God is upon them, in regard of their authority and the like, yet in their dispositions they are base, and slaves to their corruptions and to Satan. They are not out of the base rank of nature. Now a 'man that is a child of God, he is taken into a better condition, and hath a spiritual liberty in him. 'He judgeth all things and is judged of none.' They may call him this and that; it is but malice, and a spice of the sin against the Holy Ghost; but their hearts tell them he is otherwise. He shall judge them ere long, for 'the saints shall judge the world.' Therefore Christians should know, and take notice of their excellency. 'Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty' to judge all things as far as they come within their reach and calling, to judge aright of all things. Therefore we should know how to maintain the credit of a Christian, that is, to maintain a liberty independent upon all but God; and other things with reservation, as far as they agree with conscience and religion. Thus we see how we may judge of this liberty. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

He doth not say licentiousness to shake off all government; for by too much licentiousness all liberty is lost; but 'where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty.' For a true Christian is the greatest servant and the greatest freeman

in the world; for he hath a spirit that will yield to none. In things spiritual he reserves a liberty for his judgment, yet for outward conformity of life and conversation he is a servant to all, to do them good. Love makes him a servant. Christ was the greatest servant that ever was. He was both the servant of God and our servant. And there is none so free. The greater portion of the Spirit, the more inward and spiritual freedom; and the more freedom, the more disposition to serve one another in love, and to do all things that a man should do outwardly, all things that are lawful. We must take heed of that, mistake not this spiritual liberty. It stands with conformity to all good laws and all good orders, and there is a great mistake of carnal men for want of this. They think it liberty to do as men list. It is true, if a man have a strong and a holy understanding, to be a good leader to it, but it is the greatest bondage in the world, to have most freedom in ill. As I said before, those that are most free in ill are most slaves of all; for their corruptions will not suffer them to hear good things, to be where good things are spoken, to accompany with those that are good, their corruptions hath them in so narrow a custody. Some kind of men, their corruptions are so malignant and binding, that they will not suffer them to be in any opportunity wherein their corruptions may be restrained at all, but they hate the very sight of persons that may restrain them, and all laws that might restrain them. Now this is the greatest slavery in the world, for a man to have no acquaintance with that that is contrary to his corrupt disposition.

Well, 'new lords new laws,' as soon as ever a man is in Christ and hath Christ's Spirit, he hath another law in his soul to rule him contrary to that that there was before. Before he was ruled by the law of his lusts, that carried him whither he would; but now in Christ he hath a new Lord and a new law, and that rules him according to the regiment of the Spirit, 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ hath freed me from the law of sin and of death,' Horn. viii. 2.

Use 4. Again, seeing where the Spirit of God is, there is this sweet and glorious liberty, let us take heed by all means that we do not grieve the Spirit. When we find the Holy Ghost in the use of any good means to touch upon our souls, Oh give him entrance and way to come into his own chamber, as it were to provide a room for himself; as Cyprian saith, *Consecra habitaculum, &c.*, enter into thy bedchamber; consecrate a habitation for thyself. So let us give him way to come into our souls when he knocks by his motions. We that live in the church, there is none of us all but our hearts tell us that we

have often resisted the Holy Ghost. We might have been saved if we had not been rebellious and opposite. Grieve not the Spirit by any means.

Quest. How is the Spirit grieved?

Ans. Especially these two or three ways.

(1.) The Spirit being a Spirit of holiness, is grieved with unclean courses, with unclean motions and words and actions. He is called the Holy Spirit, and he stirs up in the soul holy motions like himself. He breathes into us holy motions, and he breathes out of us good and holy and savoury words, and stirs us up to holy actions. Now when we give liberty to our mouths to speak rottenly, to swear I am ashamed almost to name that word when we give liberty to such filthiness, is not this a grieving of the Spirit, if we have the Spirit at all? If we have not a care to grieve our selves, do we not grieve all about us? Therefore take heed of all filthy unholy words, thoughts, or carriages. It grieves the Spirit.

(2.) Then the Spirit is a Spirit of love, take heed of canker and malice. We grieve the Spirit of God by cherishing canker and malice one against another. It drives away the sweet spirit of love. Therefore make conscience of grieving the Spirit. He will not rest in a malicious heart who is the Spirit of love.

(3.) Again, the Spirit of Christ, wheresoever it is, it is joined with a spirit of humility. 'God gives grace to the humble,' James iv. 6. It empties the soul that it may fill it. It empties it of what is in it, of windy vanity, and fills it with itself. Therefore those that are filled with vain, high, proud conceits, they grieve and keep out the good Spirit of God; for we should empty our souls that the Spirit of God may have a large dwelling there, or else we grieve the Spirit.

(4.) In a word, any sin against conscience grieves the Spirit of God, and hinders spiritual liberty, because 'where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty.' Would we preserve liberty, we must preserve the Spirit. If we sin against conscience, we hinder liberty every way. We hinder our liberty to good duties. When a man sins against conscience he is dead to good actions. Conscience tells him, Why do you go about it, you have done this and that? He is shackled in his performances; he cannot go so naturally to prayer and to hearing. Conscience lays a clog upon him.

[1.] He is shackled, in prayer especially; he hath not liberty to the throne of grace. How dares he look to heaven, when he hath grieved the Spirit of God, and broken the peace of his conscience? What communion hath he with God? So it hinders peace with God. A man cannot look Christ in the face. As a man, when he hath wronged another man, he is ashamed to look on him, so the soul when it hath run into sins against conscience, it is ashamed to look on Christ, and to go to God again. There fore any sin against conscience grieves the Spirit, and hinders all sweet liberty that was before. It takes away the degree of it.

[2.] It hinders boldness with men, for what makes a man courageous in his dealings with men? A clear conscience. Let it be the stoutest man in the world, let him maintain any lust against conscience, it will make him so far a slave; for when it comes to the crossing of that lust once, then you shall see he will even betray all his former stoutness and strength. If a man be covetous and ambitious, he may be stout for a time, but when he comes to be crossed it will take away all liberty that a man hath, to cherish any sin.

In a word, to preserve this liberty, let us go to Christ, from whom we have this liberty; complain to him. When we find any corruption stirring, go to the Lord in the words of St Austin, and say, 'Now, Lord, free me from my necessities.' I cannot serve thee as I should do, nor as I would do. I am enthralled to sin, but I would do better. I cannot do so well as I would; free me from my necessities. Complain of our corruptions to God. As the woman in the law, when she complained if she were assaulted, she saved her life by complaining, Deut. xxii. 25, 27, so let us complain to Christ if we find violence offered to us by our corruptions. I cannot by my own strength set myself at liberty from this corruption. Lord, give me thy Spirit to do it. Set me more and more at liberty from my former bondage, and from this that hath enthralled me. So complain to Christ, and desire him to do his office. Lord, thy office is 'to dissolve the works of the devil,' 1 John iii. 8. And go to the Spirit. It is the office of the Holy Ghost to free us, to be a Spirit of liberty. Now desire Christ and the Holy Ghost to do their office of setting us at spiritual liberty. And this we must do in the use of means and avoiding of occasions, and then it will be efficacious to preserve that spiritual liberty as will tell our consciences that we are no hypocrites; and that will end in a glorious liberty in the life to come.

And let this be a comfort to all poor struggling and striving Christians that are not yet set at perfect liberty from their lusts and corruptions; that it is

the office of the Spirit of Christ as the King of the church; it is his office by his Spirit to purge the church perfectly, to make it a glorious spouse. At last he will do his own office. And besides this liberty of grace joined with conflict in this world, there is another liberty of glory, when I shall be freed from all oppositions without, and from all conflict and corruption within. It is called 'the liberty of the sons of God,' Rom. viii. 21, and those that look not more and more for the gracious liberty to be free from passions and corruptions here, they must not look for the glorious liberty in heaven. But those that live a conflicting life, and pray to Christ more and more for the Spirit of liberty to set up a liberty in us, these may look for the liberty of the Son of God, that will be ere long, when we shall be out of reach, and free from corruption; when the Spirit of God shall be all in all. Now our lusts will not suffer the Spirit to be all in all, but in heaven he shall; there shall be nothing to rise against him. This that hath been spoken shall suffice for that 17th verse, 'The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.' I proceed to the next verse, which I purpose to dwell more on.

Verse 18. 'But we all, as in a glass, with open face behold the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.'

As the sun riseth by degrees till he come to shine in glory, so it was with the Sun of righteousness. He discovered himself in the church by little and little. The latter times now are more glorious than the former; and because comparisons give lustre, the blessed apostle, to set forth the excellency of the administration of the covenant of grace under the gospel, he compares it with the administration of the same covenant in the time of the law; and in the comparison prefers that administration under the gospel as more excellent. Now besides other differences in the chapter, he insists upon three especially.

They differ in generality, evidence, efficacy.

(1.) First, in regard of the generality, 'We all now with open face,' &c. Moses only beheld the glory of the Lord in the mount, but 'we all,' not all men, but all sound Christians that have their eyes opened; all sorts of believers, behold this glory. In spiritual things there is no envy. Every one may be partaker in solidum, entirely of all. Envy is in the things of this life, where the more one hath the less another hath. It is a matter of glory and excellency the more are partakers of spiritual things. The Jews rejoiced that the Gentiles should be called, and we now rejoice in hope, and should rejoice

marvellously if we could see it effected, that the Jews should be taken in again; the more the better; 'we all.'

(2.) And then for evidence. ('We behold with open face,' that is, with freedom and boldness, which was not in the time of the law. For they were afraid to look upon Moses when he came down from the mount, his countenance was so majestic and terrible. But 'we all with open face,' freely, boldly, and cheerfully, look upon the glory of God in the gospel. The light of the gospel is an alluring comforting light; the light of the law was dazzling and terrifying.

'As in a glass.' They beheld God in a glass, but it was not so clear a glass. They beheld him as it were in the water, we behold him in crystal. We see God in the glass of the word and sacraments, but they in a world of ceremonies. Christ was to them swaddled and wrapped up in a great many types.

(3.) And then for the power and efficacy, the gospel is beyond the law. The law had not power to convert, to change into its own likeness; but now the gospel, which is the ministry of the Spirit, it hath a transforming changing power, into the likeness of Christ whom it preacheth. 'We are changed from glory to glory.' It is a gradual change, not all at once, but from glory to glory, from one degree of grace to another; for grace is here called glory. We are changed from the state of grace till we come to heaven, the state of glory.

And then the cause of all. It is 'by the Spirit of the Lord.' The Spirit runs through all. It is 'by the Spirit of the Lord' that we behold. It is the Spirit of the Lord that takes away the veil. It is by the Spirit that we are changed from glory to glory.

Thus you see how many ways the administration of the covenant of grace now is more excellent than the administration of the covenant of grace was then. In a word it hath four excellencies especially, as,

First, Liberty and freedom from the bondage of ceremonies and of the law. In a great part they had little gospel and a great deal of law mingled with it. We have much gospel and little law. We have more freedom and liberty.

Second, And thereupon we have more clearness. We see Christ more clearly. 'With open face we behold the glory of the Lord.'

Third. And thirdly, there is more intension of grace. The Spirit works more strongly now, even to a change. The ministry of the gospel hath the Spirit with it, whereby we are changed from the heart-root inwardly and thoroughly.

Fourth, And lastly, in the extension. It is more large. 'We all,' Gentiles as well as Jews, 'behold,' &c.

Hence, let us seriously and fruitfully consider in what excellent times the Lord hath cast us, that we may answer it with thankfulness and obedience. God hath reserved us to these glorious times, better than ever our forefathers saw.

There are three main parts of the text: Our communion and fellowship with God in Christ. 'We all now in a glass behold the glory of the Lord.' And then,

Our conformity thereupon. By beholding we are changed into the same image.

The third is the cause of both; the cause why we 'behold the glory of God,' and why by beholding 'we are changed from glory to glory;' it is 'the Spirit of God.'

This text hath many themes of glory. All is glorious in it. There is the glorious mercy of God in Christ, who is the Lord of glory, the gospel in which we see the grace of God and of Christ; 'The glorious gospel,' 1 Tim. i. 11, the change by which we are changed, a glorious change 'from glory to glory,' and by a glorious power, by 'the Spirit of the Lord,' all here is glorious. Therefore blessed be God, and blessed be Christ, and blessed be the Spirit, and blessed be the gospel, and we blessed that live in these blessed and glorious times 1 But to come to the words.

'But we all as in a glass,' &c.

The happiness of man consists especially in two things:

The means how to attain them both are laid down in this verse.

I shall speak of them in order. First, of our communion with the chief good; and then of the conformity wrought upon that communion.

And in the communion, first of God's discovering of himself by his Spirit.

And then of our apprehension of him by beholding.

'We all with open face behold the glory of the Lord,' &c.

In the glass of the gospel we see Christ, and in Christ the glory of God shining, especially of his mercy.

The point then here is, that,

Doct. The grace and free mercy of God is his glory. Now in our fallen estate the glory of God is especially his mercy shining in Jesus Christ.

What is glory?

Glory implieth these things.

[1.] First, Excellency. Nothing is glorious but that that is excellent.

[2.] Secondly, Evidence and manifestation; for nothing is glorious, though it be excellent, if it appear not so. Therefore light is said to be glorious, because the rays of it appear and run into the eyes of all as it were. And therefore we call things that are glorious by the name of light, *illustrissimus* and *clarissimus*, terms taken from light, because where glory is there must be manifestation. Thus light, it is a creature of God that manifests itself and other things.

[3.] Thirdly, Victoriousness. In glory there is such a degree of excellency as is victorious, and convincing that it is so indeed; conquering the contrary that opposeth it. Light causeth darkness to vanish presently. When the sun which is a glorious creature appears, where are the stars? And where are meaner men in the appearance of a glorious prince? They are hid. The meaner things are shadowed by glory.

[4.] Again, usually glory hath with it the suffrage and approbation of others, or else it hath not its right end; that is, Why doth God create such glory in nature as light, and such like, but that men may behold the light? and why are kings and great men glorious at certain times, but that there be beholders? If there were no beholders there would be no glory.

Now to apply this to the point in hand. 'The glory of the Lord;' that is, his attributes, especially that of grace, mercy, and love in Christ. That especially is his excellency.

And there is an evidence and manifestation of it. It appears to us in Christ, 'The grace of God had appeared,' Titus ii. 11. Christ is called grace. He is the grace of God invested and clothed with man's nature. When Christ appeared, the grace and mercy and love of God appeared.

Then again it is victorious, shining to victory over all that is contrary. For, alas! beloved, what would become of us if there were not grace above sin, and mercy above misery, and power in Christ Jesus above all the power in Satan and death!

And then they have a testimony of all that belong to God; for they have their eyes opened to behold this glory, and by beholding are transformed from glory to glory, as we shall see after.

So that whatsoever may be said of glory may be said of this glory, whence all other glory indeed is derived. 'The glory of the Lord.'

By the glory of the Lord then is meant especially the glory of his mercy and love in Jesus Christ.

The several attributes of God shine upon several occasions; They have in it were several theatres whereon to discover their glory. In creation there was power most of all. In governing the world, wise providence. In hell, justice in punishing sinners. But now to man in a lapsed estate, what attribute shines most, and is most glorious? Oh it is mercy and free grace. If grace and mercy were hid, our state being as it is since the fall, what were all other attributes but matter of terror? To think of the wisdom, and power, and justice of God would add aggravations. He is the more wise and powerful to take revenge on us, &c. Grace is the glorious attribute whereby God doth as it were set himself to triumph over the greatest ill that can be, over sin. That that is worse than the devil himself cannot prevail over his grace. There is a greater height and depth and breadth; there are greater dimensions in love and mercy in Christ than there is in our sins and miseries; and all this is gloriously discovered in the gospel.

Do you wonder then why the grace of God hath found such enemies as it hath done alway, especially in popery, where they mingle their works with

grace? For the opposite heart of man being in a frame of enmity to God, sets itself most against that that God will be glorified in. Therefore we should labour to vindicate nothing so much as grace. We have a dangerous encroaching sect risen up, enemies to the grace of God, that palliate and cover their plot cunningly and closely, but they set nature against grace. Let us vindicate that upon all occasions; for we live by grace, and we must die by grace, and stand at the day of judgment by grace; not in our own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ, being found in him. But because it is a sweet point, and may serve us all in stead, to consider that God will honour himself gloriously in this sweet attribute, let us see a little how the glory of God shines in Christ more than otherwise; parallel it with other things a little.

(1.) The glory of God was in Adam; for Adam had the image of God upon him, and had communion and fellowship with God; but there is greater glory now shining in the gospel, in Jesus Christ, to poor sinners. For when man stood in innocency, God did good to a good man, and God was amiable and friendly to a friend. Adam was the friend of God then. Now to do good to him that is good, and to maintain sweet communion with a friend, this is good indeed, and it was a great glory of God's mercy that he would raise such a creature as man hereto. But now in Jesus Christ there is a further glory of mercy; for here God doth good to ill men, and the goodness of God is victorious and triumphant over the greatest misery and the greatest ill of man. Now in the gospel God doth good to his greatest enemies herein, as it is Rom. v. 10. God set forth and commended gloriously his love, that 'when we were enemies, he gave his Son for us. Therefore here is greater glory of mercy and love shining forth to fallen man in Christ than to Adam in innocency.

(2.) The glory of God shines in the heavens. 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork,' Ps. xix. 1. Every creature hath a beam of God's glory in it. The whole world is a theatre of the glory of God. But what is the glory of creation, of preservation, and governing of the world, to the glory of his mercy and compassion that shines in Christ? The glory of the creature is nothing to this; for all the creatures were made of nothing; but here the glory of mercy is such in Christ that God became a creature himself.

(3.) Nay, to go higher, to the angels themselves. It is not philangelia, but philanthropia that outshines all. God is not called the lover of angels. He

took not upon him the nature of angels, but the nature of man; and man is the spouse of Christ, the member of Christ. Angels are not so. They are but ministering spirits for the good of them that shall be saved. Christ, as it is Eph. i. 21, when he rose again, he was 'advanced above all principalities and powers,' therefore above the angelical nature. Now Christ and the church are all one. They make but one mystical body. The church is the queen, and Christ is the king. Therefore Christ mystical, the church, is above all angelical nature whatsoever. The angels are not the queen and spouse of Christ. So the glory of God's goodness is more to man, to sinful man, after he believes and is made one with Christ, than to any creature whatsoever. Thus God hath dignified and advanced our nature in Jesus Christ. Comparisons give lustre. Therefore this shews plainly unto us Christians that the glory of the mercy and love and kindness of God to man in Christ shines more than his glory and mercy and kindness to all the creatures in the world besides. Therefore here is a glory with an excellency.

On the other side, nothing more terrible than to consider of God. Out of Christ, what is he but a 'consuming fire'? Heb. xii. 29. But to consider of his mercy, his glorious mercy in Jesus Christ, nothing is more sweet. For in Jesus Christ God hath taken upon him that sweet relation of a Father; 'The Father of mercy, and God of all comfort,' 2 Cor. i. 8. So that the nature of God is lovely in Christ, and our nature in Christ is lovely to him. And this made the angels, who, though they have not increase of grace by Christ, yet having increase of comfort and glory, when Christ was born, to sing from heaven 'Glory to God on high,' &c., Luke ii. 14. What glory? Why, the glory of his mercy, of his love, of his grace to sinful men. Indeed, there is a glory of wisdom to reconcile justice and mercy together, and a glory of truth to fulfil the promise. But that that sets all attributes for our salvation on work was mercy and grace. Therefore that is the glory of God especially here meant. For as we say in morality, that is the greatest virtue that other virtues serve, so in divinity, that attribute which others serve is the greatest of all. In our salvation, wisdom, yea, and justice itself, serves mercy. For God by his wisdom devised a way to content justice, by sending his Son to take our nature, and in that nature to give satisfaction to justice, that there might be a harmony among the attributes. To make some use of this.

Use 1. Doth God manifest his glory? I will not speak at large of glory, being an endless argument, but confine it to the glory of grace and mercy in the gospel, which therefore is called the glory of the gospel. I say, doth God shew such glorious mercy in Christ? Then, I beseech you, let us justify God,

and justify this course that God hath taken to glorify his mercy in Jesus Christ, by embracing Christ. It is said of the proud Pharisees, 'they despised the counsel of God,' Luke vii. 80. God hath poured out mercy, bowels of mercy, in Christ crucified. Therefore, in embracing Christ, we justify the counsel of God concerning our salvation.

Do but consider what a loving God we have, who would not be so far in love with his only Son as to keep him to himself, when we had need of him: a God that accounts himself most glorious in those attributes that are most for our comfort. He accounts not himself so glorious for his wisdom, for his power, or for his justice, as for his mercy and grace, for his philanthropic, his love of man. Shall not we therefore even be inflamed with a desire of gratifying him, who hath joined his glory with our salvation? that accounts himself glorious in his mercy above all other attributes? Shall the angels, that have not that benefit by Christ as we have, shall they in our behalf, out of love to us and zeal to God's glory, sing from heaven, 'Glory to God on high?' and shall we be so dead and frozen-hearted that reap the crop, as not to acknowledge this glory of God, breaking out in the gospel, the glory of his mercy and rich grace? The apostle is so full when he falls upon this theme, that he cannot speak without words of amplification and enlargement; one while he calls it 'rich grace,' Eph i. 7, another while he stands in admiration, 'Oh the depth of the love of God,' Horn, xi. 38. What deserves admiration but glorious things? The best testimony that can be given of glorious things is when we admire them. Now if we would admire, is there anything so admirable that we can say, Oh the height, and depth, as we may of the love of God in Christ? There are all the dimensions of unparalleled glory, height, and breadth, and depth. Therefore, I beseech you, let us often even stand in admiration of the love of God to us in Christ. 'So God loved the world,' John iii. 16. The Scripture leads to this admiration by phrases that cannot have a podesis, a redition back again. 'So.' How? We cannot tell how. 'So' as is beyond all expression. The Scripture itself is at a stand for words. Oh base nature, that we are dazzled with anything but that we should most admire. How few of us spend our thoughts this way, to consider God's wonderful and admirable mercy and grace in Christ, when yet there is no object in the world so sweet and comfortable as this is, that the very angels pry into! They desire to pry into the mystery of our salvation by Christ. They are students therein. The cherubim, they were set upon the mercy seat, having a counterview, one upon another, implying a kind of admiration. They pry into the secrets of God's love in governing his people, and bringing them to heaven. Shall they do it, and shall not we study and admire these things, that

God may have the glory? God made all for his glory, beloved; and ‘the wicked for the day of wrath,’ as Solomon saith, Prov. xvi. 4. And hath he not new made all for his glory? Is not the new creature more for his glory than the old creature? Therefore if we will make it good that we are new creatures, let us seek to glorify God every way, not in word alone, but in heart admiring him, and in life conversing with him.

And that we may glorify God in deed, let us glory in God’s love; for we must glory in this glory. Nature, beloved, is glorious of itself, and vain-glorious. But would you glory without vanity? Go out of your selves and see what you are in Christ, in the grace and mercy and free love of God, culling us out from the rest of mankind; and there you may glory safely over sin, and death, and hell. For being justified freely from our sins, you can think of death, of the damnation of others, of hell, with out fear. ‘God forbid,’ saith St Paul, that I should glory in anything, but in the cross of Christ,’ Gal. vi. 14; that is, in the mercy of God appointing such a means for satisfaction. ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man glory in his strength,’ &c., Jer. ix. 23. There is a danger in such glorying. It is subject to a curse. But if a man will glory, let him ‘glory in the Lord.’

Use 2. Again, if God account his mercy and love in Christ, especially his glory, shall we think that God will admit of any partner with Christ in the matter of salvation? If, as the psalmist saith, ‘he made us. and not we ourselves,’ Ps. c. 8, shall we think that we have a hand in making our selves again? Will God suffer his glory to be touched upon by intercessions of saints’ merits, and satisfaction, and free will? Grace is not glorious if we add the least thing of our own to it. Cannot we make a hair of our head, or the grass that we trample upon, hut there must be a glory and power of God in it? And can we bring ourselves to heaven? There fore away with that ‘Hail, Mary, full of grace!’ ‘Hail, Mary, freely beloved!’ is the right interpretation; and they that attribute matter of power and grace and favour to her, as in that ‘Oh beseech thy Son,’ &c., they take away that wherein God and Christ will be glorified, and attribute it to his mother and other creatures. I do but touch this, to bring us into loathing and abomination of that religion that sets somewhat of the creature against that wherein God will be glorified above all.

Use 3. Again, let us stay ourselves, when we walk in darkness, with the consideration of the gloriousness of God’s mercy in Jesus Christ, here called ‘the glory of the Lord.’ It is no less mercy than glorious mercy that will satisfy

us, when we are in distress of conscience; and if this will not, what will? Let Satan aggravate our sins as much as may be, and join with conscience in this business; yet set this glorious mercy against all our sins, make the most of them, they are sins of a finite creature. But here is infinite mercy, triumphing and rejoicing over justice, having gotten the victory over it. Oh beloved, when the time of temptation comes, and the hour of death, and conflict with conscience, and a confluence and concurrence of -all that may discourage, Satan will bestir himself; and he is a cunning rhetorician to set all the colours upon sin, especially in the time of despair; be as cunning to set all colours upon mercy, glorious mercy. If God were glorious in all other attributes, and not in mercy, what would become of us? The glory of other attributes without mercy tends to despair; glorious in wisdom to find us out; glorious injustice to deal with us in rigour. These affright, but that that sweeteneth all other attributes is his mercy.

What a comfort is this to sinful man, that in casting himself upon Christ, and upon God's mercy in Christ, he yields glory to God; that God hath joined his glory with our special good; that here is a sweet concurrence between the summum finis and the summum bonum of man! The last end of man of all is the glory of God; for that is as it were the point of the circle from which all came (for he made all for his glory), and in which all ends; so is the chief good. Therefore by the way it is a vain conceit for some to think, 'Oh we must not look to our own salvation so much; this is self-love.'

It is true, to sever the consideration of the glory of God's mercy and goodness in it, but see both these wrapped and knit together indissolvable, our salvation and God's glory. We hinder God's glory if we believe not his mercy in Christ to us. So at once we wrong ourselves and him, and we wrong him not in a mean attribute, but in his mercy and goodness, wherein he hath appointed to glorify himself most of all; and therefore, I beseech you, let us yield to him the glory of his mercy, and let us think that when we sin we cannot glorify him more than to have recourse to his mercy. When Satan tempts us to run from God, and discourageth us, as he will do at such times, then have but this in your thoughts, God hath set himself to be glorious in mercy, above all other attributes. And this is the first moving attribute that stirs up all the rest, and therefore God will account himself honoured if I have recourse to him. Let this thought therefore be as a city of refuge. When the avenger of blood follows thee, flee presently to this sanctuary. Think thus, Let not me deny myself comfort and God glory at once: 'Where sin abounds, grace abounds much more,' Rom. v. 20. Though sins after

conversion stain our profession more than sins before conversion, yet notwithstanding go to the glorious mercy of God still, to seventy times seventy times, there is yet mercy for these. f We beseech you be reconciled, saith St Paul to the Corinthians, when they were in the state of grace, and had their pardon before. Let us never be discouraged from going to Christ.

Oh, but I have offended often and grievously. What saith the prophet? 'My thoughts are not as your thoughts; but as high as the heavens are above the earth,' &c., Isa. lv. 8. Therefore howsoever amongst men, oft offences breed an eternal alienation, yet notwithstanding with God it is not so. But so oft as we can have spirit to go to God for mercy, and spread our sins before him, with broken and humble hearts, so often we may take out our pardon. Compare Exod. xxxiii. with Exod. xxxiv. Moses, in chap, xxxiii. 18, seq., had desired to see the face of God. There was some little curiosity perhaps in it. God told him that none could see him and live. To see the face of God in himself must be reserved for heaven, we are not proportioned for that sight. But in the next chapter there he shews himself to Moses; and how doth he shew himself and his glory to Moses? The Lord, the Lord, gracious, merciful, long-suffering,' clothed all in sweet attributes. He will be known by those names. Now, then, if we would know the name of God, and see God as he is pleased and delighted to discover himself to us, let us know him by those names that he proclaims there, shewing that the glory of the Lord in the gospel especially shines in mercy; and as I said before, it must be glorious mercy that can satisfy a distressed conscience, howsoever in the time of ease and peace we think a little mercy will serve the turn. But when conscience is once awaked, it must be glorious and infinite mercy must allay it.

And therefore those that find their consciences anything wounded with any sin, stand not out any longer with God, come and yield, lay down your weapons, there is mercy ready. The Lord is glorious in his mercy in Jesus Christ. It is a victorious triumphing mercy over all sin and unworthiness whatsoever. Look upon God in the face of Jesus Christ; as you have it in 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the know ledge of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' In the face of Christ God is lovely. Loveliness and excellency is in the face above all the parts of the body.

'The glory of God.'

We are never in such a condition as we ought to be, except grace be glory to us; and when is grace glory to a sinner? Oh, when he feels the weight

and burden of his sin, and languishing desires. Oh that I might have a drop of mercy! Then grace is glory, not only in God's esteem, but in the eye of the sinner. Indeed, we are never soundly humbled till grace in our esteem be glory; that is, till it appear excellent and victorious. I beseech you remember it. We may have use of it in the time of desertion.

How is this grace of God in Christ conveyed to us yet nearer? By the gospel.

‘As in a glass.’

The gospel is the ‘good word of God,’ Heb. vi. 5. It reveals the good God to us, and the good Christ. It is a sweet word. For Christ could do us no good without the word, if there were not an obligation, a covenant made between God and us, the foundation of which covenant is the satisfaction of Christ. If there were not promises built upon the covenant of grace, whereby God hath made himself a debtor, what claim could a sinful soul have to Christ and to God's mercy? But God hath bound himself in his word. Therefore the grace of God shines in Christ, and all that is in Christ is conveyed to us by the word, by the promise. The gospel then is a sweet word. You know that breeding promise of all others, Gen. iii. 15, ‘The seed of the woman.’ That repealed and conveyed the mercy of God in Christ to Adam. So the continuance of that and all the sweet and gracious promises bud from that; all meet in Christ as in a centre, all are made for him and in him. He is the sum of all the promises. All the good things we have are parcels of Christ. Christ he is the Word of the Father, that discovers all from the bosom of his Father. Therefore he is named ‘the Word.’ The gospel is the Word from him. Christ was discovered to the apostles, and from the apostles to us, to the end of the world, by his Spirit accompanying the ordinance. So the mirror wherein we see the glorious mercy of God, is first Christ. God shines in him, and then there is another glass wherein Christ is discovered, the glass of the gospel. Thus it pleaseth God to condescend to stoop to us poor sinners, to reveal his glory, the glory of his mercy, fitly and suitable in a Saviour, God-man, God incarnate, God our brother, God our kinsman, and to do it all yet more familiarly, to discover it in a word. And then to ordain a ministry together with the word, to lay open the riches of Christ; for it is not the gospel considered nakedly, but the gospel unfolded by the ministry.

Christ is the great ordinance of God for our salvation. The gospel is the great ordinance of God, to lay open ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ,’ Eph. iii. 8. The casket of this jewel, the treasury of his treasure, the grace and love

and mercy of God, are treasured in Christ; and Christ and all good things are treasured in the gospel. That is the rich mine; and the ministry of the gospel lays open that mine to the people. Nay, God yet goes further. He gives his Holy Spirit with the ministry. It is the ministry of the Spirit, that howsoever there are many that are not called and converted in the gospel, yet the Spirit of God is beforehand with them. There are none under the gospel but the Spirit gives them sweet motions. He knocks at their hearts, he allures and persuades them; and if they yield not, it is because of the rebellion of their hearts. There is more grace of the Spirit offered than is entertained. So that the mouths of men shall be stopped. Thus God descends, and Christ, and grace, the gospel, the ministry, the Spirit, all in way of love to us, that we may do all in a way of love to God again. It should therefore work us to do all with ingenuous hearts to him again.

The gospel is the glass wherein we see this glory. Christ indeed in some sort is the glass, for we cannot see God out of Christ but he is a terrifying sight. But in the glass Christ we can see God, as we see the sun in the water. If we cannot see the sun in his glory, that is but a creature, how can we see God himself but in some glass? Therefore we must see him in Christ, and so his sight is comfortable.

And in the dispensing of the gospel, especially in the preaching and unfolding of the word, the riches of God in Christ are unfolded, and not only unfolded, but the Spirit in unfolding conveys the sense, assurance, and persuasion thereof unto us.

There is such a connection between the evangelical truth of God and Jesus Christ, that they have both one name, to insinuate to us that as we will be partakers of Christ, so it must be of Christ, as he is revealed in the gospel, not in conceits of our own. The word is truth, and Christ is truth. They have the same name; for were there never so much mercy and love in God, if it were concealed from us, that we had nothing to plead, that we had not some title to it by some discovery of it in his will, the word and the seal of the word, the sacraments (for the sacrament is but a visible word, they make one entire thing, the word and sacraments; the one is the evidence, the other the seal), what comfort could we take in it? Now his will is in the promise, wherein there is not only a discovery of what he doth or will do, but he hath engaged himself: 'If we believe, we shall not perish, but have life,' John iii. 15; and 'Come unto me,' Matt. xi. 28, and be refreshed, saith Christ. Every one that thirsts, come and be satisfied, John vii. 37. And now we may claim the

performance of what he hath spoken, and bind him by his own word. 'He cannot deny himself,' John vii. 37. So now we see him comfortably in the glass of the word and sacraments.

These three go together, the glory of God; Christ the foundation of all grace, in the covenant of grace; and then the gospel of grace, the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of life, that discovers the gracious face of God shining in Christ. We have communion with God through Christ, with Christ through the gospel; therefore in the gospel 'we behold as in a glass the glory of God.'

This is suitable to our condition while we are here below. We cannot see divine things otherwise than in a glass. That sight of God that we shall have in heaven, immediately, without the word and sacraments, that is of a higher nature; when our natures shall be perfect. But while we live here we cannot see God but in Christ, and we cannot see him but in the word and sacraments. Such is the imperfection of our sight, and such is the lustre and glory of the object, the glory of God, that we cannot perfectly see it but in a glass. God said to Moses, 'None can see me and live.' His meaning is, none can see me as I am, none can see me immediately and live. If we would see God, and the glory of God immediately without a glass, we must see it in heaven. We must die first. We must pass through death to see God face to face as he is; then, not as he is, but more familiarly than we can now. Then God will represent himself so as shall be for our happiness, though not simply as he is; for he is infinite, and how should finite comprehend infinite? We shall apprehend him, but not comprehend him. While we are in earth, therefore, we must be content to see him in a glass, which is the gospel, especially unfolded.

Now in this word 'glass,' in which we see the glory of God, is implied both a perfection and some imperfection.

Perfection, because it is as a clear crystal glass in regard of the glass that was before; for those under the law saw Christ in a glass of ceremonies. And, as I said before, there is difference between one's seeing his face in water and in a crystal glass. So then this implies perfection in regard of the former state.

Again, in regard of heaven, it implies imperfection, for there we shall not see in a glass. Sight in a glass is imperfect, though it be more perfect than that in water. For we know out of the principles of learning and experience, that reflections weaken, and the more reflections, the more weak. When we

see a thing by reflection, we see it weakly; and [when] we see it by a second reflection from that, we see it more weakly. When we see the sun on the wall, or any thing that is light, it is weaker than the light of the sun itself. When a man seeth his face in a glass, it is a weaker representation than to see face to face. But when we see the sun upon the wall, reflexing upon another wall, the third reflection is weaker than the first. The more reflections the more weak. So here all sight by glasses is not so powerful as that sight and knowledge which is face to face in heaven. That is the reason that St James saith, that he that seeth his face in a glass is subject to forget (i. 28). What is the reason that a man cannot remember himself, when he seeth his face in a glass, so well as he can remember another man's face when he seeth it? Because he seeth himself only by reflection. Therefore it is a weaker presentation to him, and the memory and apprehension of it is weaker. When he seeth another face to face, he remembers him longer, because there is a more lively representation. It is not a reflection, but face to face. So there is imperfection in this sight that we have of God, while we are here, as in a glass. It is nothing to that when we shall see face to face, without the word and sacraments or any other medium, which sight, what it is, we shall know better when we are there. We cannot now discover it. It is a part of heaven to know what apprehensions we shall have of God there. But sure it is more excellent than that that is here. Therefore this implies imperfection.

We consist of body and soul in this world, and our souls are much confined and tied to our senses. Imagination propounds to the soul greater things than the senses. So God helps the soul by outward things that work upon the senses; sense upon the imagination, and so things pass into the soul.

God frames his manner of dealing suitable to the nature he hath created us in. Therefore he useth the word and sacraments, and such things, whereby he makes impressions upon the very soul itself.

And this indeed, by the way, makes spiritual things so difficult as they are oftentimes, because we are too much enthralled to imagination and sense, and cannot abstract and raise our minds from outward sensible things to spiritual things. Therefore you have some, all the days of their life, spend their time in the bark of the Scriptures; and they are better than some others that are all for notions and outside: such things as frame to the imagination, and never come to know the spirit of the Scriptures, but rest in outward things, in languages and tongues, and such like. Whereas these things lead

further, or else they come not to their perfection. The Scripture is but a glass, to see some excellencies in it. 'We see as in a glass.'

Now the use of a glass among us especially is twofold.

(1.) It is either to help weakness of spirit against the excellency of object. When there is a weak sight and an over excellent object, then glass is used, or some polite and clear body, as we cannot see the sun in itself. The eye is weak and the sun is glorious. These two meeting therefore together, we help it by seeing the sun in water, as in an eclipse.

If a man would judge of an eclipse he must not look on the sun, but see it in water, and there behold and discern these things; so to see the glory of God in himself, it is too glorious an object. Our eyes are too weak. How doth God help it? He helps it by a glass, by 'God manifest in the flesh,' 1 Tim. iii. 16, and by the word and sacraments whereby we come to have communion with Christ. To apply this more particularly.

Now that we are to receive the sacrament, conceive the sacraments are glasses wherein we see the glory of the love and mercy of God in Christ. For take the bread alone, as it doth not represent and figure better things, and what is it? and take the wine alone, as it doth not represent better things, and what is the wine? But an ordinary poor creature. Oh, but take them as they are glasses, as things that convey to the soul and represent things more excellent than themselves, so they are glorious ordinances. Take a glass as a glass, it is a poor thing; but take the glass as it represents a more excellent thing than itself, so they are of excellent use; so bread and wine must not be taken as naked elements, but as they represent and convey a more excellent thing than themselves, that is, Christ and all his benefits, the love and mercy and grace of God in Christ; and so they are excellent glasses. Therefore I beseech you now, when you are to receive the sacrament, let your minds be more occupied than your senses. When you take the bread, think of the body of Christ broken; and when you think of uniting the bread into one substance, think of Christ and you made one. When the wine is poured out, think of the blood of Christ poured out for sin. When you think of the refreshing by the wine, think of the refreshing of your spirits and souls by the love of God in Christ, and of the love of Christ that did not spare his blood for your soul's good. How doth Christ crucified and shedding his blood refresh the guilty soul, as wine refresheth the weak spirits. Thus consider them as glasses, where better things are presented, and let your minds be

occupied as well as your senses, and then you shall be fit receivers, as 'in a glass.'

God when he made the world, this glorious frame of the creatures, and all their excellencies, he created light to discover itself, and all other excellencies. For light is a glorious creature. It discovers itself. It goes with a majesty and discovers all other things, good and bad whatsoever; and together with light God created sight in man, and other senses, to apprehend the excellency of the creation. What were all this goodly frame of creatures, the sun, and moon, and stars, and glory of the earth, if there were not light to discover and sight to apprehend it by? Is it not so in this outward creation of the old heavens and old earth that must be consumed with fire? And is it not much more in the new creation? There is excellent glory, marvellous glory, wondrous grace in Christ, &c. Must there be light, and must not there be an eye to discover this? Surely there must. Therefore it is said here, 'We behold.'

God puts a spiritual eye by his Spirit into all true believers, whereby they behold this excellent glory, this glorious grace, that God may have the glory, and we the comfort. Those are the two main ends. God intends his own glory and our salvation. There must be a 'beholding.' How should he have glory and we comfort, unless all were conveyed by spiritual sight! Well then the Spirit creates and works in us spiritual senses. With spiritual life there are spiritual senses, sight, and taste, and feeling. Sight is here put for all, 'We behold.'

There are many degrees of sight. It is good to know them. Therefore I will name some of them.

[1.] We see God in his creatures, for 'the heavens declare the glory of God.' They are a book in folio. There God is laid open in his creatures. That is a goodly sight. But what is this to the knowledge of him in his will to us, what he means to us? The creatures discover not what he means to us.

[2.] Besides therefore the sight of God in the creatures, there is a sight of God in his will, in his word and promises. There we see what he is. His grace is revealed in Christ, and what his good will to us is, and his will from us, what he will do to us, and what he will have from us again. There we see him as a spouse sees her husband in a loving letter which concerns herself. We see him as the heir sees a deed made to him with an inheritance. He sees with application. It is not a bare sight, but a sight with feeling and discovery of a favour. So the sight in the word and sacraments, it is a higher sight.

[3.] There was a sight of Christ when he was in the flesh. When he was covered with the veil of our flesh upon earth, it was a sweet sight. Abraham desired to see it, John viii. 56, and Simeon, when he saw it, was willing to be dissolved and to depart, Luke ii. 29. He had enough. But that outward sight is nothing without another inward sight of faith.

[4.] There is a sight therefore of faith, and other sights are to no purpose if they be without this, a sight of God shining in Christ. And this is perfected in heaven, in the sight of glory, when we see him as he is. Now there is a comfort in all these sights, to see him in his word and works. It was a glorious thing to see him in his bodily presence; and by faith to see God in Christ, to see his face in Christ. Oh it is a sweet and lovely sight to see God shining in Christ! Oh but what is all this to the sight of him after in glory! Now this beholding meant here especially, is the beholding of faith, in the ordinances, in the word and sacraments. 'We all behold,' as in the glass of the word and sacraments, by the eye of faith. Faith is expressed by beholding, by knowledge; for indeed faith is nothing but knowledge with application. Therefore faith includes knowledge. What is faith, but to know God and Christ, and the promises as mine? Christ in the sacrament as mine, as verily as the outward things are mine: Knowledge with application is faith. Therefore, when I say faith, I include knowledge, 'We behold.'

The knowledge of the mind is compared to the eye of the body. Knowledge and faith is compared to seeing and beholding, for many reasons.

First, Because sight is the most glorious and noble sense. It is the highest in situation, and the quickest in apprehension, for in a moment, presently sight apprehends its object in the highest heavens. So it is with faith. It is the most noble sight of all, and it is quick as sight is; for faith is that eagle in the cloud. It breaks through all, and sees in a moment Christ in heaven: it looks backward, and sees Christ upon the cross; it looks forward, and seeth Christ to come in glory. Faith is so quick a grace, that it presents things past, things above, things to come, and all in a moment, so quick is this eagle-eye of faith.

Second, Again, it is the largest sense; for we can see almost the whole hemisphere at one view. That a little thing in the eye should apprehend so much in a moment, as it is quick in apprehension, so it is large in comprehension.

Third, Again, it is the most sure sense sight more than hearing; therefore that divine act of knowledge is compared to seeing; believing is compared to

beholding. When faith looks upon God in the glass of the word and promises, it is as certain as the object is certain. Now, how certain is the object? The mercy and love of God in Christ, who is truth itself, is most certain.

Fourth, Then it is that sense that works most upon the soul, sight; for what the body seeth, the soul is affected and moved with. The affections of desire and love rise out of sight. It works upon the affections most. Therefore the knowledge that stirs up the affections, and works upon the heart, is compared to sight. It affects us marvellously, for, answerable to our faith, we love, and joy, and delight. It alters the frame of the whole man. Therefore it is expressed here by beholding. Divine, spiritual knowledge, it works upon the heart. So we see why this beholding spirituality of the understanding and soul, is compared to outward sight. It is called beholding, because it is a most noble spiritual act of the soul; and it is most certain and sure. 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1; and it works upon the heart and soul.

Use. Therefore, we should labour to clear this eye of the soul, that we may behold the glory of God in the glass of the gospel.

Quest. How shall we have the eye of our souls fit to behold the glory of God?

Ans. 1. We must fix the eye of the soul; fix our meditation upon the glory of God and the excellency of Christ. A moving, rolling eye seeth nothing. Therefore we must set some time apart, to fix our meditations upon these excellent things in the gospel.

Ans 2. Then again, we must labour to have the hindrances removed, both within and without.

(1.) Sight within is hindered by some inward suffusion. We must labour that the soul be cleansed and purged from all carnal passions and desires and base humours, that we may clearly behold this spiritual object. Unless the soul be spiritual, it can never behold spiritual things. The bodily eye cannot apprehend rational things, nor the rational eye behold not spiritual things. Therefore there must be a spiritual eye. The soul must be purged and sanctified by the Spirit. There must be some proportion between the soul

and spiritual things, before the soul can behold them. Therefore, as the soul must be fixed upon this meditation, so the Spirit of God must sanctify and purge the soul.

(2.) Outward hindrances of sight, as dust in the eyes, and clouds, &c., they hinder sight. Satan labours to hinder the sight of the soul from beholding the glory of God shining in the gospel, with the dust of the world, as the apostle saith in the next chapter, 'The god of this world blinds the eyes of men,' 2 Cor. iv. 4, that they behold not the glory of God shining in the gospel. Therefore, if the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that perish, that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded their minds, that they believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine upon them, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Therefore, take heed of too much worldly things, of fixing our souls upon the dust of the world, upon things here below. The sight of Christ, and of God in Christ, it is not gotten by looking below, by fixing the soul upon base things below. Let us look, therefore, that our souls be inwardly cleansed, and fixed upon spiritual things; and then we shall the better behold the glory of God shining in the gospel.

And we should preserve this sight of faith by hearing. Hearing begets seeing in religion. Death came in by the ear at the first. Adam hearing the serpent, that he should not have heard, death came in by the ear. So life comes in by the ear. We hear, and then we see: 'As we have heard, so have we seen,' say they in the psalm, Ps. xlviii. 8. It is true in religion, most of our sight conies by hearing, which is the sense of learning. God will have it so. Therefore we should maintain all we can this beholding of the glory of the Lord in the glass of the word; and for that end hear much.

You will ask me, What is the best glass of all to see and know Christ in?

If you ask a papist, he will shew you crucifixes, and such kind of things. Oh but to behold Christ in the glass of the word, with a spirit of faith, that is the best picture and representation that can be! It is scarce worth spending so much time, as to confute that foolery, to have any grace wrought in the heart by such abominable means as that is, as they use it. Take it at the best, it is but a bastardly help, and bastardly means breed a bastardly devotion. For will God work grace in the heart by means of man's devising? If pictures be any teachers, they are 'teachers of lies,' saith the prophet, Isa. ix. 15; and in the church of God, till pastors and teachers became idols, idols never became teachers. Then came the doctrine of idols teaching of simple people, when idols became teachers a thousand years after Christ. So that the best picture

to see Christ in, is the word and sacraments; and the best eye to see him with, is the eye of faith in the word and sacraments. Keep that clear, and we need no crucifixes, no such bastardly helps of bastardly devotion, devised by proud men that would not be beholden to God for his ordinances. But a touch is almost too much for such things, that are so clear to men that have spiritual eyes. In Gal. iii. 1, see what St Paul saith his judgment was: 'Oh foolish Galatians, be fore whom Christ hath been painted and crucified!' How was he painted? Nothing but by the preaching of Christ crucified in the gospel, and the riches of Christ in the gospel; and in the sacraments laid open. Do you think there were any other crucifixes in the world then?

'With open face.'

The manner of this beholding is 'with open face.' There must be a double veil taken away before we can behold the glory of God: the veil of obscurity, and the veil of slavery; the veil of ignorance and infidelity within, and the veil of the things themselves. These two veils are both taken away before we can with open face behold the glory of the Lord. The inward veil is taken away by the Spirit of God illuminating our understandings, and giving us a spirit of faith. The outward veil of the obscurity of the things is taken away by the teaching and ministry of the gospel, having that help to know the meaning of the Scriptures; so that now in these glorious times of the gospel, both the veils are taken away, that we may behold without hindrance the glory of God shining in the gospel. For now we enjoy the ministry of the Spirit. The Spirit is effectual to shine in our hearts. And then we have the gifts of men, outward gifts, whereby the veil of ignorance is taken away in regard of the things themselves, the things are unfolded.

If the things of themselves be dark; or if they be lightsome, and there be no sight within; or if there be sight, and that sight be veiled; there can be no seeing. But now to God's elect he takes away all these veils, he shines inwardly and gives outward light in the help of means; and yet not withstanding while we live here, there is always some obscurity and darkness, for the veil of the Scriptures is not quite took away. There is some darkness of the Scriptures, and likewise the veil of ignorance and infidelity is not altogether taken away. There are some remainders of ignorance, of infidelity, and hardness of heart; but yet in a great measure it is taken away here, and shall by little and little be took away, till we come to see God face to face in heaven.

'With open face.'

Coverings had two uses in the Jewish state.

They had a use of subjection. Therefore the women had their veils in token of subjection.

And they had a use likewise of obscurity, to hinder the offensive lustre of that that is glorious. Therefore Moses put a veil on his face when he came down from the mount. Now in Christ Jesus in the gospel, both these veils are taken away in some respects. The veil of subjection and slavery, so far as it is a slavery, is taken away. The Spirit of Christ works liberty. As I said before, now we serve God as sons, and not as servants any longer. The veil of subjection is taken away, only there is a spouse-like filial subjection; the servile subjection we are freed from.

And then the veil that hid the things is taken away too. So now 'with open face we behold the glory of the Lord.' Now the things themselves, Christ and the gracious promises of grace and glory and comfort, they are clearly laid open without any veil. How comes it then that we see them not? There is a veil over our hearts. The more shame for us, that when the things are unveiled we should have a veil upon our hearts, of ignorance and unbelief. Therefore if any believe not, it is because 'the God of this world hath blinded their eyes,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. Where the means of salvation are, and Christ laid open in the means, if men do not believe, the fault is not in the things; for they are unveiled, they are discovered and laid open. The fault is in us. There is a veil over the heart. There is a cloud of ignorance and unbelief, that keeps the heart from beholding the glory of the mercy of God in Christ.

'With open face.'

We see the glory of God with boldness in the gospel. We go boldly to God. Christ takes us by the hand and leads to his Father. We have boldness and access to God through Christ by the Spirit, as St Paul teacheth in divers places, if God is not terrible to us. Now in Christ, God's nature is fatherly and sweet to us. Christ in the gospel is our head. Therefore we go boldly to God in Christ; and Christ by his Spirit brings us to his Father. We may boldly lay open our souls in prayer; and all our complaints before him as to a Father. We come not as malefactors to a judge, as slaves to a lord, but as children to a father, as a wife to her spouse. 'With open face' in the gospel, we behold God, that is, with boldness we go to him. The gospel by shining upon us takes away a spirit of fear and bondage; the more we see Christ the less fear;

the more love the less fear. The more we see the grace of God in Christ, it diminisheth a spirit of fear, and puts into us a spirit of love and boldness. For it presents to us in Christ, full satisfaction to divine justice, that when we offer Christ to the Father whom he hath sent and sealed for us, God can not refuse a Saviour of his own sending and sealing, and appointing to satisfy his justice. Therefore we go boldly to the throne of grace. It is a marvellous privilege that we see God clearly in the gospel, with open face, with a spirit of boldness, the veil of ignorance being taken away. For the sight of God to a conscience that is natural, and is not convinced of the mercy of God by the Spirit, it is a terrible sight. A guilty conscience can not see a man but it trembles. It cannot see a judge without trembling. And will not the trembling conscience, the guilty soul, flee from the face of God apace, that trembles at the sight of a man? What is so contrary as the nature of God to the nature of man out of Christ? The unholy, impure, and unclean nature of man, to the pure, holy nature of God? If Christ had not taken our nature and sanctified it in himself, and satisfied justice in it, what boldness could this unclean nature of ours have had to go to the holy God? Let us, I beseech you, be wrapped up in admiration of the singular love of God to us, especially in the days of the gospel, that now we see in a glass, in a clear glass, the love of God in Christ, and with open face boldly we may go to God.

Sometimes when the soul is bold in sin, it weakeneth boldness and faith, and makes us look upon that object that our sins hath deserved, upon a wise God. For howsoever we may behold his glorious face in Christ, yet if we behold sin against conscience, God will hide himself, Christ will hide his face, and hide the promises, and leave us to terrors of conscience; and the soul shall not apprehend his gracious face in Christ, but that correction that our sin hath deserved. God hath power over the soul, and makes the soul apprehend what object he will; and he presents to a bold soul that runs into sin what it deserves, hell for the present. There is no terrors to the terror of a Christian that is bold in sin, till God shine upon him in his grace again. Sins against conscience, especially wasting sins, weaken faith, that we cannot go so boldly to God. Therefore those that say when they sin against conscience, that all the cause of their grief is because they do not conceive the free mercy of God, they are ignorant of God's ways. God is wise, and though he pardon sin, as sin is pardoned in heaven, before it be pardoned in the conscience, they shall never be pardoned in thy conscience till God have made thy conscience smart for it; and God will let wrath into thy conscience, and thy faith shall stagger. It is a sin for faith to stagger, it should not do so; but it will tremble and quake, till we have humbled ourselves before God.

What is the way, after we have had boldness and sweet familiarity with God, and it hath been interrupted by sin? how shall we recover ourselves?

Surely, to apprehend our sins to be pardonable in Christ, and that God is an everlasting Father, and that the covenant of grace is everlasting, and that there is mercy in Israel for this thing; and the conceit of mercy must work our hearts to grief and shame. That is certain; for mark in the gospel, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28. He calls us when we find our consciences afflicted and tormented. 'He came to save that which was lost,' Mat. xviii. 11. By the blessed power of the Spirit, the blood of Christ is as a fountain 'for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in,' Zech. xiii. 1, and the 'blood of Christ purgeth us from sin,' 1 John i. 7; and Christ bids us for daily trespasses ask pardon, Mat. vi. 12. Daily therefore conceive goodness in God still, an everlasting current of mercy; and this must work upon us grief and shame, and recover and strengthen our faith again. For God's children, after breaches, arise the stronger rather than ever they were before. But this only by the way. We see here how God's glorious grace is conveyed to us, and what wrought in us to apprehend it, a spiritual eye to see it, in the glass of the gospel, and 'with open face we behold it,' we may go boldly to the throne of grace.

I beseech you, let not that privilege be forgotten, this privilege of the gospel. What is the glory of the times we live in, but God's face discovered in Christ? In the gospel faith is wrought in us to apprehend this, to see God's face openly, and that we may come boldly with Benjamin, our elder brother; come with Esau's garments, Gen. xxvii. 23; come with Christ, and we cannot be too bold. Remember alway there must be a reverent familiarity, because he hath majesty mixed with his bowels of mercy. Both are mixed together; beams and bowels. So our carriage to him must be loving and familiar, as he is full of bowels of mercy. But then he hath majesty. A reverent familiarity is fit for a father, and for so gracious and so sweet a God. Therefore that phrase we see in the Scriptures, 'We go boldly,' and cry, 'Abba, Father,' Rom. viii. 15. Father is a word of reverence; that is, we go boldly to God in Christ, and open our wants as to a father, with love and reverence; as it is said here, 'with open face.' Let us not forget this privilege.

'We all.'

Here is the generality, 'We all.' Before, in Moses's time, he alone went into the mount and saw God; but now 'we all,' Jews and Gentiles, where the gospel is preached, 'we all.' Therefore, you see here the church is enlarged by

the coming of Christ. And it was a comfort to St Paul, and to all good Christians, to think of the enlargement of the church by taking in the Gentiles, as it will be a comfort hereafter to think of the enlarging of the church by taking in the Jews again. The more the better in religion. Why is it a privilege for many, that 'we all?' Because in matters of grace and glory there is no envy at all. All may share without prejudice. All cannot be kings here upon earth, nor all cannot be great men, because the more one hath the less another hath. But in Christ and in religion all may be gracious. God respects every one, as if there were none but them. He respects all as one, and one, as if there were none but he. Every man in solidum, as civilians express it, entirely enjoyeth Christ, as if there were none but he. He is to all as one, and to one as if there were none but he. There is no envy, as I said, in grace and glory, where all may share alike. And that is the reason why it is always comfortable to think of community in religion. It is joined with comfort.

And indeed so it is matter of comfort to see a communion of many in one; for what is the mystical body of Christ Jesus but many members joined in one body, under one gracious and glorious head? And therefore it is a deformed sight to see fraction and disunion. It is that the devil rules in. Divide and rule. It is fit for the devil. God and Christ rule in union. The same Spirit of God that knits the members to the head by faith, knits the members one to another in love; and all grace is derived from the head to the members, as they are united to the body. If there be therefore disunion, there is no grace conveyed so far as there is disunion. There is no grace conveyed from the head; for the body grows up as compact under one head.

Therefore let us labour to cherish union, and as we hate distraction! itself, so hate distraction and division; for dissipation causeth distraction. There fore by all means labour for union, especially now we are to take the communion, that is a seal of our communion with Christ by faith, and one with another. By love let us labour to bring our hearts to a holy communion.

None gains by disunion but the devil himself. Always his policy is to make the breach greater where any is. Therefore let us labour by all means to be united. The more join together in the blessed mysteries of the gospel, the more comfort and the more glory. When all live and join together in holy things of God, and in sweet love one to another, it is the glory of that place and society and state. So much for that 'we all.'

'And are changed.'

I shewed before how man's happiness stands partly in communion with God, and partly in his conformity and likeness to God. And surely where soever there is communion there will be conformity. This conformity is here set down springing from communion. 'We all behold the glory of God.' Now, reconciled in Jesus Christ, what doth that beholding work? A conformity. We are 'changed into the same image, from glory to glory.' In these words we see,

First, A necessity of a change; changed we must be.

Then in this change there must be a pattern of conformity. We are changed into the image of Christ, who is the prototype, the first type and idea of all perfection. We are changed into the same image.

And then, how this change is wrought to the image of Christ. It is by beholding the glory of Christ in the gospel. There is a transforming power in beholding the glory of God's mercy in Christ. It is not a delighting object only, to see the mercy of God in Christ, but it is a powerful object that hath an influence upon the soul.

And then the state of man after this change, it is a glorious condition, 'We are changed from glory.'

And then it is a growing condition, 'We are changed from glory to glory.' Still, till we come to that pitch, where there can be no growth; when the soul shall be filled 'with the fulness of God,' as the apostle speaks, Eph. iii. 19; when the soul shall have all the powers that it hath to receive and retain, and comprehend, all the corners of it filled. So we grow from glory to glory till then. These things follow one another. To begin with the first.

There is a necessity of a change.

In the state we are we must be changed, as Christ tells Nicodemus, John iii. 1, seq. There must be a change; and such a change as is a new birth. It must be all new, as a bell; if there be but a crack in it, it must be new moulded and cast again. It is good for nothing else. So the soul of man, if there be but a flaw, but a crack, all is naught. It must be cast and moulded again anew. We must be set in tune again. All is out of tune. Before the soul can make any sweet harmony in the ears of God, there must be a change. There is no coming to heaven without a change. What need I press this, it is so easy a point in religion. 'Except we be born anew we cannot enter into

heaven,' John iii. 3. But to clear from evidence of reason the necessity of a change in the whole man.

First, Because we are in a contrary state to grace and to God. We are dead. There must be life in us before we come to heaven. We are enemies, and if enemies we must be made friends. How shall we be fit for communion else with God, wherein our happiness stands, without conformity? Communion is between friends. Before those that are in an opposite condition can be friends, there must be an alteration; and this alteration it must be on God's part, or on our part. Now who must change?

God that is unchangeable, or we that are corrupt and changeable? God will not change. There is no reason he should. He is, goodness itself, always unchangeable. His perfection stands in an individual point. He cannot alter a whit. There is not a shadow of change in God. Therefore, when there is difference between God and us, the change must be on our part. We must be changed, as it is Rom. xii. 2, and other places, 'in the spirit of our minds.' We must be wholly moulded anew. Where there is a condition so opposite as the frame of our hearts is to God, he being holiness and we a mass and lump of sin, of necessity there must be a change. God intends in the gospel to bring us near himself, and Christ's end is to bring us to God, as it is 1 Pet. iii. 18. All the gospel is to bring us back to God from whom we fell. Now our nature, as I said, is denied and unholy; and we cannot be friends with God till there be a likeness in disposition to God. Therefore our natures must be suitable to the sweet and holy and pure nature of God in some measure. We enter into a covenant with God, in the covenant of grace, and how can we maintain the covenant of grace, without some likeness to God and Christ? In that regard of necessity there must be a change; and this change must be on our part. As we see in an instrument, those strings that are out of tune are brought to them that are in, so it is we that must change and alter, and not God. God is always unchangeable, like himself in his love; and it is our comfort that he is so unchangeable in his mercy and holiness and justice. There fore I say the change must be on our part,

'Flesh and blood, as it is, cannot enter into heaven,' 1 Cor. xv. 50; that is, the nature of man, as it is corrupted; we must have new judgments of things, and new desires, and new esteem, new affections, new joys, new delights, new conversation, new company. All the frame of the soul must be new. There must be a new bent of soul. It must be turned another way. The face of the soul must look clean another way. Whereas before it looked to the

world-ward, and to things below, now it must look to Godward and heavenward. Therefore those that are in their pure naturals, that feel no change in themselves, what shall we think of them? They are not in the state of grace, for of necessity there must be a change.

There is a double change, real and gradual.

First, A real change, from ill to good.

And then, A gradual change from better to better, 'from glory to glory.'

The first change is from the state of nature to grace at our first conversion, when God puts the first form and stamp upon us.

And then a change in grace, 'from glory to glory,' we must be changed.

Second, Then again, we all expect glory in heaven; and how can we do that except we be fitted for it? The church is the fitting place for glory. We enter into heaven in the church here. We are hewn and squared here. If we be not holy here, we shall never enter into heaven. There must be a change begun here if ever it be perfected in heaven. 'No unclean thing shall come there,' Rev. xxi. 27. As soon as ever Satan, an angel of light, sinned, he was tumbled out of heaven. It will brook no unclean thing; no unclean thing shall ever come there again. Therefore our nature must be altered suitable to that place and glorious condition, before we come to heaven. Except we be new born, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. There is direct Scripture for it. Beloved, this is forgot. Men trust to the grace and mercy of God, and look not after a change; and this holds many from embracing the gospel in the truth of it; knowing Christ as the truth is in him. They hear they must be changed, which they are unwilling to. They believe that God is merciful, and that Christ died, &c. They snatch so much of the gospel, as may serve to build them up in self-love. So far they think all is well. But when they see such grace as must teach them 'to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,' Titus ii. 12, and such grace as must change and alter them, this they cannot brook. They are content to go to heaven if they may have it in a way to hell; in maintaining their corruptions; being proud and covetous and worldly, as they are. This must not be. Of necessity there must be a change.

Third, Nay, I say more, beside the former reasons, the soul that truly desires mercy and favour, desires always power against sin. Pardon and power go together, in God's gift and in the desire of a Christian's soul. There

is no Christian soul but he desires the grace of sanctification to change him, as much as the grace of pardon; for he looks upon corruption and sin as the vilest thing in the world; and upon grace and the new creature as the best thing in the world. There is no man changed but he hath those apprehensions of sanctification.

Remember this against some weak conceits likewise, that would have all the change in justification. They rent Christ's offices, as if he were all priest, and not a king to govern; as if he were righteousness, and not sanctification; as if he had merit to die for us and to give us his righteousness, and no efficacy to change our natures; as if in the covenant of grace God did not write his law in our hearts, but only forgave our sins. He doth both in the covenant of grace. And where God makes a combination, we must not break it. Efficacy and merit, justification and sanctification, water and blood, go together. There must be a change. But to follow the point a little further.

Fourth, There must be change, because no holy action can come from an unchanged power and faculty. Actions spring from powers and faculties. They are suitable to them. Therefore there must be a change in the powers and faculties of the soul, before there be a change in the life and conversation. These three follow in nature.

The form, and living, and being of things; and powers; and action issuing from the power. So in the life of grace and sanctification there is a power and ability to believe in God, and to be holy, and to love God; and then the actions of love spring from that power. We live, and then we have a power to move. In nature, being and life and moving go together. So if we have a being in grace, we have a power to move. I beseech you, therefore, consider the necessity of a change of the inward man, of the powers and faculties of the soul. Can the eye see without a power of seeing? or the ear hear without a faculty of hearing? Can the soul perform sanctified actions without a sanctified power? It is impossible.

And especially the alteration and change is in the will, which some would have untouched. They would have it free; those that would have no more given to grace than needs must. But grace works upon the will most of all. Divinity rules the will especially. For the bent of the will makes a good or a bad man; and the desires of the will carry the whole man with it. We are as the bent is of our will. We are as the choice of our will is. If the choice, and bent, and bias be the right way, by the Spirit, it is good. If the will be not inclined and wrought to go the best way, there is no work of grace at all.

Though all grace come in through the understanding enlightened, that is the first, yet it goeth into the will. It passeth through the understanding into the will, and it puts a new taste and relish upon the will and affections.

Well, you see, therefore, that the grace wrought in the gospel it is not a mere persuasion and entreaty, &c., but a powerful work of the Spirit entering into the soul and changing it, and altering and turning the bent and inclination of the will heavenward, whereas corruption of nature turns the soul downward to things below. When the Spirit of God entereth into the soul, it is not only by mere outward persuasion to leave it to the liberty of will, but it altereth the taste of the will. The soul is carried up, and is shut to things below. It useth the world as though it used it not. We must have great conceits of the work of grace. The Scripture hath great words of it. It is an alteration, a change, a new man, a new creature, new birth, &c. We see the necessity of a change.

Fifth. Again, another reason is this: God, where he calls and dignifies, he also qualifies. Princes cannot qualify those they raise, but God, whom he advanceth to glory, he fits and qualifies for glory; where he bestows his mercies and favours to life everlasting, he calls to great matters, and he also changeth them. If Saul were changed when he came to be a king, in regard of a new quality, shah 1 we think that God will call any to the participation of his glorious mercy in Christ, in pardoning their sin, and accepting them to life eternal, but he will change them? No. Whosoever he calls to glory, he changeth and altereth their dispositions to be fit for so glorious a condition as a Christian is called to. There must be a change.

Proud men love not to hear of this. It is a prejudice to their former authority. What! I that was accounted a wise man, now to be a fool! I that was accounted so and so, to alter all my frame and course, and to turn the stream another way the world will say I go mad. I say because grace altereth and changeth all: 'Old things are passed away, and all things are become new,' 2 Cor. v. 17; those that are carnal and proud cannot endure a change, because it is some prejudice to their reputation. But it must be so if they look for salvation. Thus you see that point proved enough.

'Into the same image.'

The pattern to which we are changed is the image of Christ. It is a rule, and a true rule, the first in every kind is the measure of all the rest. It is the idea, the pattern, and platform of all the rest. Now Christ is the first, for he is

the 'first-born,' the 'first fruits,' the 'first beloved.' There fore he is the pattern of all the rest, and the measure of all other. The nearer we come to Christ, the better we are; for that is the measure of a thing, the nearer it answereth to that the better. Now Christ is the best, and our nature in Christ is joined to the Godhead in one person. There fore we are changed to the likeness of Christ, 'the second Adam;' for as before we are changed, we are corrupted and depraved according to the likeness of the first Adam after his fall; and as before his fall, if he had not fallen, we had been born according to his likeness, that is, good and righteous; so now being fallen, as soon as by faith we are planted and grafted into the second Adam we are changed into his likeness. Christ as it were is God's master-piece, that is, the excellentest work, and device, and frame of heaven that ever was, to set up such a Mediator, to reconcile justice and mercy in bringing God and man into one person. Now Christ being God's master-piece, the best and most excellent frame of all, he is fit to be the pattern of all excellency whatsoever. Therefore he is the image, the idea, the pattern and platform of all our sanctification.

Christ the second Adam is the image into which we are changed. We are not changed to the image of the first Adam by grace, but to the image of the second Adam. There is from him a derivation of all good, opposite to all the ill we drew from the first Adam. We drew from the first Adam the displeasure of God; by the second we obtain the favour of God by his death and satisfaction. With the wrath of God we drew corruption from the first Adam, in the second we have grace. From the first Adam we have death, and all the miseries that attend death and follow it. In the second Adam we have life and all happiness, till it end in glory. In a word, whatsoever ill we have in the first Adam, it is repaired abundantly in the second, when we are changed into his image. Therefore, when you read of the image of God in the New Testament, it must be understood of the image of God in Jesus Christ, the second Adam.

Now this image consists in knowledge, in holiness and righteousness. If we compare Col. iii. with Eph. iv., this was perfect in Christ, who was the image of his Father, and we must be like Christ the second Adam in sanctification.

Now the grounds why we must be conformable to the image of the second Adam, and not to the first, are these:

Because the second Adam is far excelling the first Adam; and as I said, we must be conformed to the best image. As we have borne the image of the first, so we must bear the image of the second, as it is in 1 Cor. xv. 49.

And then the image of God in the second Adam is more durable. For all excellencies and grace is more firmly set on Christ than ever they were upon Adam. It is set upon him with such a character and stamp as shall never be altered. When God set his image on the first Adam it was rased, and decayed, and lost, by the malice of the devil, because it was not set on so firmly, Adam being a man and a good man, yet he was a man change able. But Christ is God-man; in one nature God hath set such a stamp of grace on the human nature, being eternally united to the Godhead, that shall never be altered. Therefore we are renewed according to the image of God as it is stamped on Christ, not as it was stamped on the first Adam.

And that is the reason why the state of God's children is unalterable, why being once gracious they are so for ever. If God set the stamp of the Spirit of Christ on them, it is firm, as it is upon Christ. It never alters in Christ, nor in those that are members of Christ. The alteration is in growth from better to better. God's children sometimes a little deface that image by sin, security, and the like. But as a piece of coin that is a little defaced, yet it hath the old stamp still, and is acknowledged for good coin, so a Christian in all desertions, in the worst state, he hath the stamp still. Though it be darkened by his carelessness, yet after it receives a fresh stamp it is an everlasting stamp. When once we are God's coin we are never reprobate silver. And all is, because we are 'renewed according to the image of Christ,' and grace is firmly set in our nature in Christ so sure that all the devils in hell cannot rase it out. And he is the 'quickening Spirit,' and therefore able to transform us to his likeness better than the first Adam was. Therefore the image of God is the likeness the second Adam, and we are changed into that.

Now the reasons why the second Adam changeth us into his own image are many:

First, Because he is a powerful head that changeth all his members, powerful root that changeth all his branches into his own nature, a powerful husband that changeth his own spouse. I say, he is a quickening Spirit, a public person, and the root of all believers, as the first Adam was of us all as we are natural men.

Second, Again, it is meet that brethren should be all alike; therefore, as it is in Rom. viii. 29, 'we are predestinate to be conform to Christ.' 'He is the first among many brethren.' The chief brethren must be all alike. Therefore we being predestinate to salvation, it was fit we should be predestinate to be conformable to our elder brother, that brethren might be of one nature and disposition. It is fit that the husband and wife should be of one disposition. Christ is the husband and we are the spouse. There fore by grace he alters, and cleanseth, and purgeth his spouse, as it is Eph. v. 25, seg., 'He loved his spouse, and gave himself for it; that he might purge it, and make it a glorious spouse.' It is meet the wife should be the glory of the husband, as St Paul saith, 1 Cor. xi. 7, that is, that she should reflect the excellencies of her husband. Therefore that the church might be the glory of Christ and reflect the excellencies of Christ, she is changed to be like Christ more and more daily. There is a kind of congruity that brethren should be like, and that the spouse and the husband should be alike. Therefore God hath ordained that we should be like him in a threefold degree: in suffering, in grace, and in glory. Whosoever will be like him in glory, must be like him in grace. First God's election and ordaining must have its issue; that is, the representation of the likeness of Christ in our natures.

Third, Again, the end of Christ's coming was 'to destroy the works of the devil, 1 1 John iii. 8, to deface all Satan's works, especially his work in us, the image of Satan in our dispositions. For every man by nature carries the image of the devil on him, till the image of Christ be stamped on, and the image of Satan rased out. For in man there is naturally an opposition to the truth, a hatred of God and of good things. Now Christ coming to dissolve the works of the devil, puts out this image, and sets his own stamp and image upon the soul. Therefore unless Christ change us to his own image he should miss of the end of his coming. These and many such reasons there are to prove that we are restored according to the image of Christ Jesus, and why Christ will change us to his own likeness. To add one more:

Fourth, The end of Christ is, that we should enter into a sweet communion with him. Therefore he will set such a stamp upon us as he may delight in us and be friends. Now if he should not change our natures, what cor respondence could there be between Christ and us? Now when he hath altered and changed us, he looks on us as carrying his stamp and image.

Use 1. If this be so, that we are changed into the image of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, then I beseech you let m labour every day more and

more to study Christ, that so by beholding Christ we may be transformed into his likeness. For the looking upon Christ is a transforming sight. Therefore let us look into his disposition as it is set forth in the gospel, and to his carriage, and look to his privileges, that so we may receive 'grace for grace,' grace suitable to his grace, disposition suitable to his disposition, conversation suitable to his conversation, and privilege and prerogative suitable to his prerogative, that we may be like him every way.

What was his disposition and carriage? It were too large to unfold it to you as it is in the gospel, but because we must be changed into the image of Christ, it is good to look to that picture, that we may resemble that Image as much as may be. You see in the gospel how he carried himself to his friends, enemies, the devil, himself.

You see how full of love he was. What drew him from heaven to earth, and so to his cross and to his grave, but love to mankind? You see how full of goodness he was: 'He went about doing all the good he could,' Acts x. 88. How much good doth that speech savour of that Paul speaks of him, 'It is a more blessed thing to give than to receive,' Acts xx. 35. See how full of zeal he was! He whipped the buyers and sellers out of the temple, John ii. 15. He was full of goodness. It was his meat and drink to do good, John iv. 82, seq. It was as natural to him as for a fountain to stream out.

(1.) And as I said for his carriage toward his friends, to those that were good, how sweet and indulgent was he.

[1.] Where there was any beginnings of goodness, he did encourage it. He never sent any back again, but those that went back again of their own head, as the young man. Christ sent him not back. He was so full of sweetness to weak Christians, nay, he discovered himself most to the weakest. He was never more familiar with any than with the woman of Samaria, that was an adulteress, John iv. 6, seq.; and Mary that had been a sinner, how sweetly did he appear to her first, John xx. 1, seq. How sweet was he to sinners when they repented! how ready to forgive and pardon! See it in Peter. He never cast him in the teeth with his apostasy; he never upbraided him with it; he never so much as tells him of it, only he 'looks' upon him, and afterward, 'Lovest thou me?' &c., John xxi. 15.

[2.] He would not 'quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed,' Mat. xii. 20, so gentle and sweet a Saviour have we. He was sweet to those that were good in the lowest degree of goodness; nay, where there was but a

representation of goodness, as in the young man, he kissed and embraced him when he came and said, 'What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Mark x. 17. He embraced him, and made much of him. And so to the Pharisee, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God,' Mark xii. 34. He laboured to pull him further. He was of a winning, gaining disposition. Those that were good he loved them, and carried himself so to all as much as might be. Shall we not labour to be of his disposition, not to set people further off, but to be of a gaining, winning nature?

[3.] See how obedient he was to his Father, 'Not my will, but thine be done,' Mat. xxvi. 42; both in active and passive obedience, in all things he looked to his Father's will, being subordinate to him. Wheresoever there is subordination, there ought to be obedience. Now there is a subordination to God as our Father in Christ. Therefore we should labour to be obedient even to death, as Christ was. Our happiness stands in subordination. The happiness of the inferior is in subjection to the superior that may do him good. Therefore we must be obedient to God as Christ was. We see he prayed whole nights.

(2.) For his own particular, how holy and heavenly was he. He takes occasion of vines, of stones, of water, of sheep, and all things to be heavenly minded, to raise his soul upon all occasions. And when he rose from the dead, and conversed with his disciples, what was his talk? He discoursed all of matters of the kingdom of heaven. So his whole disposition was heavenly and holy in himself, and patient in wrongs done to him. He did not return injury for injury. You see how meek he was. I give you but a touch of every particular. You may by proportion apply the rest. He was in his own particular holy and heavenly, and full of purity and holiness and heavenliness.

(3.) What was he to his enemies? Did he call for fire from heaven when they wronged him? Was he all on a heat? When his poor disciples, being more flesh than spirit, would have fire from heaven, 'You know not what spirit you are of,' saith he, Luke ix. 55. He shed tears for those that shed his blood, 'Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem,' &c., Mat. xxiii. 37, that afterward crucified him. And upon the cross you see there to his very enemies, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do,' Luke xxiii. 34. So then if we will be like to Christ, consider how he carried himself to God in devotion and obedience, and how in himself he was full of purity and holiness, unspotted every way; how to his friends, to all that had any goodness in them; and how to his enemies, he prayed for his very enemies.

(4.) And for the devil himself. Deal with him as Christ did, that is, have no terms with him, although he come to us in our nearest friends. He came to Christ in Peter. 'Satan avoid,' saith he, Mat. xvi. 82. If the devil come to us in our wives, in our children, in our friends, 'avoid Satan.' Satan comes to us sometime in our friends, to give corrupt judgment, to maintain self causes, to do this or that that may crack our conscience. Discern the devil in our best friends; for sometime they may be the instruments of the devil. The devil may convey his spirit through Peter. Let us imitate Christ. Discern between our friends' love and the subtilty of the devil in them, and be able to give them an avault, 'avoid Satan.' We see Christ when he encountered Satan, he fights not with Satan's weapons; and when he was to deal with his instruments, but with the word of God. He gives not reproach for reproach, nor sophistry for sophistry; but 'It is written,' Mat. iv. 4, et alibi, shewing that we must encounter Satan with God's armoury, with weapons out of the book of God.

And then when Satan would confess him, and make much of him, 'Oh thou art the Son of God,' he would have nothing to do with him. So those that are manifestly led with the spirit of Satan, and would press kindness on us, have nothing to do with them so far. As we say of the devil he is not alway a liar, but he alway cozeneth; so take those that are led by the spirit of the devil, that are Jesuited papists, they lie not in all, but there is cozening in all; for all is but snaring kindness and gifts that will hurt more. All offers from Satan, and those that are led with the spirit of Satan, we ought to suspect, as Christ we see when Satan offered him a kindness, he saw he was to be took heed of. Therefore saith he, 'away,' you and your kindness. So have nothing to do with devilish men. Those are best at ease, and prosper most that have least to do with them; those that see they are alway deceivers though they be not alway liars; those that are nearest hostility prosper best. Thus you see a taste of Christ's carriage to his friends, to his enemies, to Satan. And for hypocrites he speaks, 'Woe to them,' Mat. xxiii. 13. He hated them above all the proud Pharisees. I might spend much time in going over particulars in the gospel, to see what expressions there are of Jesus Christ.

Use 2. I beseech you, make this use of it, when in the gospel you read of any expression of his love and gentleness, of his obedience and humility, in washing his disciples' feet, and 'Learn of me for I am meek,' &c., Mat. xi. 29, and 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28, then think this is the expression of my blessed Saviour, 'the second Adam,' to whose image I must be conformed, and transformed, and changed; and

therefore when you are moved and tempted to sin, from your own corruption, or from Satan, reason thus with yourselves: Would our blessed Saviour, if he were upon earth, do this? would he speak thus? would he not do thus if he were here now? would he not be ready to do this good turn? Surely he would; and I must be changed into his image and likeness. Therefore let me consider what my blessed Saviour would do in the like case. Surely our blessed Saviour would not stain and defile his body. He would not make his tongue an instrument of untruth to deceive others. He would not be covetous and injurious. Art thou a Christian or no? If thou be a Christian thou hast the anointing of Jesus Christ. That anointing that was poured on him as the head, it runs down to thee as a member, as Aaron's ointment ran down to his skirts. If thou be the skirt of Christ, the meanest Christian, thou hast the same grace if thou be a Christian. And therefore thou must express Christ, that as thou art partaker of his name, so thou must be partaker of his anointing. If thou be a Christian, why doest thou thus? Doth this suit with thy profession? Dost thou carry the image of Satan, and dost thou think to be a Christian, except it be in title and profession only? No. There is no Christian but if he be a true Christian he is changed into the likeness of Christ-, into his image. There fore it is a good thought upon all occasions, every day to think what would my blessed Saviour say if he were here? and what did he in the like case when he was upon earth? I must be 'led by the Spirit of Christ,' or else I am none of his. Therefore let us shame ourselves when we are moved by our corruptions and temptations to do anything contrary to this blessed image.

And consider, the more we grow into the likeness of Christ, the more we grow in the love of God, who delights in us as he doth in his own Son: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat. iii. 17. Now the more like we are to Christ, the more he is pleased with us.

And the more we shall grow in love one to another; for the liker pictures are to the first pattern, the liker they are one to another. So the liker we grow to Christ, the liker we are one to another, and the more like, the more love.

Who keeps Christ alive in the world, but a company of Christians that carry his resemblance? As we say of a child that is like his father, this man cannot die as long as his son is alive, because he resembleth his father; so as long as Christians are in the world, that have the Spirit of Christ, Christ cannot die. He lives in them, and Christ is alive no otherwise in the world

than in the hearts of gracious Christians, that carry the picture and resemblance of Christ in them.

But how are we changed into the likeness of Christ? How come we to be like him?

When once we believe in Christ, we are graft into the similitude of his death, and into the likeness of his resurrection. It is a point somewhat mystical, yet it is stood upon in the Scriptures, in Rom. vi. especially, at large.

How come we to die to sin by virtue of Christ's death? and to live to righteousness by the fellowship of Christ's resurrection? It is said we are transformed into the likeness of Christ. The phrases of Scripture shew it. But to stand upon these phrases a little.

Beloved, as it was in Christ's own person when Christ died, whole Christ died and was crucified, but yet the death itself, the crucifying was terminate in the human nature: the human nature died and not the God head; yet by reason of the union, whole Christ died and was crucified: the 'Lord of glory' was crucified, as the Scripture speaks. And as it was in Christ natural, so it is in Christ mystical, whole Christ mystical was crucified, whole Christ mystical is risen again, notwithstanding the crucifying was terminate in Christ the head, not in the members. As his death was terminate in his human nature, it ended and was confined in that; so this crucifying belonged to the head, and the head rose; yet whole Christ, all believers as soon as they are one with Christ, by reason of the mystical union, they are dead and crucified in Christ their head, and risen and sit in heavenly places, in Christ their head. So then a true believer, when he is made one with Christ, he reasons thus, My corruption of nature, this pride of heart that naturally I have, this enmity of goodness, this is crucified; for I am one with Christ. When he died, I and my head did die, and this pride and covetousness and worldliness, this base and filthy carnal disposition, was crucified in Christ my head. I in my head was crucified, and I in my head now am risen and sit in heaven. Therefore now I am in some sort glorious. Therefore I mind things above in my head. And therefore because of the necessary conformity of the members to the head, I must more and more die to sin, be crucified to sin, and rise by the Spirit of Christ and ascend with him. The more I know, and consider, and meditate of this, the more I am transformed into the likeness of his death and resurrection. But to go a little further.

Quest. What things in Christ's death did especially discover themselves to us, when we once believe, to our comfort?

Ans. Three things.

In regard of us, wonderful love, that he died for us.

In regard of sin, wonderful hatred, that he would die for sin.

And wonderful holiness and love of grace. He shewed his hatred of sin, that he would shed his heart-blood for it; and wanting the glory of God, as it were, by feeling the wrath of God for a time, even in hatred to sin.

There were these two affections pregnant in Christ upon the cross, wondrous love for us to die for us, and wondrous hatred of sin to purge it, for which he died; and wondrous holiness, from whence hatred of sin came. Whence doth hatred of sin come, but from wonderful purity and holiness, that cannot endure sin? Thus, when the soul considers it is one with Christ, it hath the same affections that Christ had. Christ in love to us died. Can I apprehend that love of Christ when he died and was crucified and tormented for my sin, but out of love I must hate sin again? And when I consider how Christ stood affected to sin upon the cross, when he died to purge it, and to satisfy for it, can I have other affections, being one with him, than he had upon the cross? I cannot. So, whether I consider his love to me, or the hatred he bore to sin, considering myself one with him by a mystical union, I shall have the same affection of love to him, and so like him every way, to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates.

I cannot but hate sin; and, hating sin, I must act his part anew, that is, as he died for sin, so I die to sin; as he was crucified for it, so it is crucified in me; as he was pierced, so he gives corruption a stab in me; as he was buried, so my corruption is buried; and as he died once, never to die again, so I follow my sins to the grave, to death, and consumption of old Adam, that he never riseth again. So I say, the consideration of my union with Christ, that I in Christ did die and was crucified, because my head died and was crucified. And then it puts that affection into me that was in Christ, and makes me act Christ's part, to die to sin daily more and more. These and the like thoughts are stirred up in a Christian, which St Paul aims at in Rom. vi. and other places.

So by the virtue of his resurrection I am conformable more and more to the graces in him; for as the power of God's Spirit raised him up when he was at the lowest, when he had been three days in the grave, so the Spirit in every Christian raiseth them up at the lowest to comfort, to a further degree of grace, more and more; nay, when they are fallen into any sin or any affliction for sin, the same power that raised Christ when he was in the grave, for our sins, in the lowest humiliation that could be, it raiseth them from their sins daily, that they gather strength from their sins. The power that raised Christ at the lowest raiseth a Christian at the lowest in sin and in affliction for sin; for when he is tripped and undermined by his corruptions, God by that power that raised Christ at the lowest recovers and strengthens him, and makes him afresh revenge himself upon his sin. And when he is at the lowest, in the grave, the same power will raise him, like Christ every way. So you see how we are changed to the likeness of Christ.

How shall we know then whether we have the image of Christ stamped upon us or no?

If we be changed into the likeness of Christ, we shall be changed in our understandings, to judge of things as he did. His aim was to please his Father in all things. He judged matters of grace and of the kingdom of God above all other; for the soul is more worth than the whole world. See the judgment that he passed upon things: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be cast upon you,' Mat. vi. 38. We must be changed in our judgment if we will have his image upon us. We must be like him in our will, in our choice, in the cleaving, and purpose, and resolution of our will. We must have the bent of our soul as his was. Our souls must be edged and pointed as his was, wholly for heaven and the kingdom of God. And so for our affections, there must be a change in them, in our love, and joy, and delight. We must love and joy and delight in whatsoever he did.

Now the way to stir us up to this is to see what image we naturally carry, and to see ourselves in the glass of the law. If a man consider thus, if Christ's image be not upon me, I carry the image of the devil, this would make him labour to get another image upon him. For, beloved, at the day of judgment Christ will not own us if he see not his image upon us. Caesar will own Caesar's coin if he see his image upon it. 'Whose image and superscription is this? Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's,' Mat. xxii. 20. If Christ see his stamp on us, he will own us at the day of judgment, or else not. Naturally we are all opposite to Christ; naturally we are full of pride and malice; of the

spirit of the world and the devil. Get out this by all means, or else Christ will not own us at the day of judgment. He will not look on us. He cannot abide to see us if we have not his image. We must bear the image of the second Adam as we did the image of the first.

Again, the law of God was written in Adam's heart, it is expressed and copied out. There see ourselves. There see all the curses. There see ourselves guilty of the breach of every commandment. If we understand the law spiritually, that desire of women and revengeful thoughts are murder and adultery. Understand the law spiritually, and see ourselves in that glass, see ourselves utterly condemned. This will make us fly to the glass of the gospel, that we may be changed into the image of Christ.

There is another image that we more desire to be changed into. We are transformed into the likeness of the world, cast into the mould of the times. We labour to have those opinions that the times have, and those ways of getting and rising to preferment that the world hath, and to have that carriage and disposition every way that the world hath, and so frame to the spirit of the world in all things, that so we might not be observed by others, and crossed in our pleasures, and preferments, and profits. Well, this desire to be transformed into the likeness of the world, to have the spirit of the world, what will it come to in the end? The world shall be condemned. If we will be condemned with the world, let us labour to be transformed into the opinion of the world, and to go with the stream and errors of the time if we desire to be damned. The world must be condemned. It is the kingdom of Satan, wherein he rules. Therefore there is no image or likeness for us to be transformed into, if we will be saved and have comfort, but the image of Christ; and can we have a better likeness to be transformed into than the image of him by whom we hope to be saved? than to be like him, from whom we hope for so great a matter as salvation is?

Use 2. Again, that we may be changed into the likeness of Christ, let us fix our meditations upon him, and we shall find a change we know not how, insensible. As those that stand in the sun for other purposes, they find themselves lightened and heated; so let us set ourselves about holy meditations, and we shall find a secret, insensible change; our souls will be altered and changed we know not how. There is a virtue goes with holy meditation, a changing, transforming virtue; and indeed we can think of nothing in Christ but it will alter and change us to the likeness of itself, because we have all from Christ. Can we think of his humility and not be

humble? Can we think, was God humble, and shall base worms be proud? Shall I be fierce when my Saviour was meek? Can a proud, fierce heart apprehend a sweet, meek Saviour? No. The heart must be suitable to the thing apprehended. It is impossible that a heart that is not meek, and sweetened, and brought low, should apprehend a loving and humble Saviour. There must be a suitableness between the heart and Christ. As he was born of a humble virgin, so he is born and conceived in a humble heart. Christ is born and conceived, and lives and grows in every Christian; and in a humble and lowly heart, made like him by his Spirit: that is the womb. The heart that is suitable, that is the heart that he is formed in.

Use 3. Again, to be changed into this image, when we are once in the state of grace, let us look to the remainder of our corruptions. The best of us shall see that that will make us look after Christ. Look to our worldly mindedness, to our passions, to our rebellions, to our darkness and deadness of spirit, and then go to Christ. Lord, thou hast appointed Christ to be a head, to be a full vessel, that of his grace we might have grace for grace. He was 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows,' Ps. xlv. 7, but for his fellows. I am earthly-minded, he is heavenly. I am full of rebellions, of lusts; all is at peace in him. The image of God is perfect in him, and he is a head to infuse grace, a head of influence as well as of eminence. He is not only above me, but he hath all grace for me. Therefore, go to Christ. I need thy heavenly-mindedness, and some portion of thy meekness, of thy spiritual strength. I am weak, and dark, and dead, shine on me. Thou hast fulness for me. So go to Christ, and draw upon every occasion virtue and life from Christ our head. This is to know what is meant by being transformed to Christ our head.

There are two conformities, beloved, exceeding comfortable to us, and we must meditate on both.

First, Christ's conformity to us. He was transfigured into our likeness. He became man in love to us; not only man, but in the form of a servant, base man. He took man's nature, and man's base condition, Phil. ii. 8. Here is the ground of our comfort, that Christ took our form, he transfigured himself to our baseness; and shall not we labour to be transformed, to be like him, that out of love stooped so low to be like us? Let us but think of this, beloved! Our blessed Saviour took our nature on him pure and holy by his Spirit. He followed sin to death. He was conceived, and lived, and died without sin, to satisfy for sin; and now by his Spirit he cleanseth out sin. He

pursued and chased out sin from his conception in all the passages of his life; so we should be like him. Drive away sin, get the Spirit, that our nature in us may be as it was in him: holy, and pure, and spiritual. Shall he be conformed to us, and shall not we be conform to him? Many such reasons and considerations there be to move us to be changed into the image of Christ.

Christ, in this work of changing, is all in all; for (1.) first of all, by Christ's death and satisfaction to divine justice, we have the Spirit of God that doth all; for the Spirit is the gift of God's love, next to Christ, the greatest. Now Christ having reconciled God, God being reconciled, gives the Spirit. Our sins being forgiven, the fruit of God's love is the Spirit. So we have the Spirit by the merit of Christ.

(2.) Again, we have it from Christ, as a head, derived unto us. We have the Spirit for Christ and from Christ. Christ receives the Spirit first, and then he sends it into our hearts. So for Christ's sake, and from Christ as a head, we have the Spirit.

(3.) Again, from Christ we have the pattern of all grace whatsoever, to which we are changed. The pattern of all grace is from Christ. He begins to us in every grace.

(4.) Again, in the fourth place, the reasons inducing are all from Christ. For we are not only changed by power, but by reason. There is the greatest reasons in the world to be a Christian, and to come out of the state of nature. When our understanding is enlightened to see the horrible state of nature, with the angry face of God with it, and then to have our eyes opened at the same time to see the glorious and gracious face of God in Jesus Christ, here is the greatest wisdom in the world to come out of that cursed state to a better. Now, the reasons of this change are fetched from Christ, that by knowing Christ we know by reflection the cursed state out of him, and to see the glorious benefits by Christ's redemption and glorification. These set before the eye of the soul, and then the heart wrought upon these by reasons. If Christ gave himself for me, shall not I give myself to Christ? Paul hath his heavenly logic, 'Christ die for us, that we might live to him,' 2 Tim. ii. 11. So we have the merit of the Spirit from Christ, the derivation of the Spirit from Christ as head, and the pattern of grace from Christ, and the inducing reasons from Christ, in this changing to his image.

(5.) Again, in that Christ is the image to which we are changed, let us learn, if we would see anything excellent and comfortable in ourselves, see it

in Christ first. There is nothing comfortable in man but it is in Christ first, as the first image, the first receiver of all, Christ Jesus himself. If we would see the love of God, see the love of God in Christ our head first, in him that is God's beloved; if we would see the gifts that God hath blessed us with spiritual blessings, but it is in Christ. We have it from our head first. If we would see God's favour, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat. iii. 17. I am well pleased in him, and in all his, that are one mystical body with him. If we would see comfortably our ill done away, our sins removed, see it in Christ abased, in Christ crucified, and made a curse. See them all wiped away in the cross of Christ. If we would see glory upon the removal of our sins, see it in Christ first. He is first risen, and therefore we shall rise. He is ascended, and sits in heavenly places, therefore we ascend and sit in heavenly places with him. All that we have or look to have comfortable in us, see it in the first pattern and platform in Christ. The reason is clear in Rom. viii. 29. We are elected and predestinate' to be conformed to the image of his Son.' We are predestinate to be conformed to Christ in all things, to be loved as he is, to be gracious as he is. To rise to be glorious, to be freed and justified afterward from all our sins, as he our surety was. We are ordained to be conformable to him every way. In a word, the flesh of Christ it was holy, it was a suffering flesh, and then a glorious flesh, now it is glorious. So our nature must be like this image. It must be sanctified flesh, by the same Spirit that sanctified the mass that he was made of in the womb. It must be suffering flesh, in conformity to him; for the flesh that he took was suffering flesh, and he had a kingdom of patience before he had a kingdom of glory. So we must go through a kingdom of patience to the kingdom of glory, and then upon conformity in holiness with Christ comes our conformity in glory. When we are content to be conformed to Christ in our suffering flesh, then we shall be conformed to Christ in our glorious flesh; for our flesh must be used as "his was. It must be holy and patient and suffering, and then it shall be glorious. So in all things we must look to Christ first; he must have the pre-eminence.

Beloved, of all contemplations under heaven, there is no contemplation so sweet and powerful as to see God in Christ, and to see Christ first abased for us and ourselves abased in Christ, and crucified in Christ, and acquitted in Christ. And then raise our thoughts a little higher. See ourselves made by little and little glorious in Christ. See ourselves in him rising and ascending and sitting at the right hand of God in heavenly places. See ourselves, by a spirit of faith, in heaven already with Christ. What a glorious sight and contemplation is this! If we first look upon ourselves what we are, we are as

branches cut off from the tree; as a river cut off from the spring, that dies presently. What is in us but we have it by derivation from Christ, who is the first, the spring of all grace, the sum of all the beams that shine upon us? We are as branches cut off. There fore now to see Christ, and ourselves in Christ, this transforms us to be like his image. It is the sweetest contemplation that can be.

We see this change is wrought by beholding. The beholding of the glory of God in the gospel, it is a powerful beholding; for, saith he, 'we ore changed, by beholding, 1 to the image of Christ. Sight works upon the imaginations in brute creatures; as Laban's sheep, when they saw the parti-coloured rods, it wrought upon their imaginations, and they had lambs suitable. Will sight work upon imagination, and imagination work a real change in nature? And shall not the glorious sight of God's mercy and love in Christ work a change in our soul? Is not the eye of faith more strong to alter and change than imagination natural? Certainly the eye of faith, apprehending God's love and mercy in Christ, it hath a power to change. The gospel itself, together with the Spirit, hath a power to change. We partake by it of the divine nature.

This glass of the gospel hath an excellency and an eminency above all other glasses. It is a glass that changeth us. When we see ourselves and our corruptions in the glass of the law, there we see ourselves dead. The law finds us dead, and leaves us dead. It cannot give us any life. But when we look into the gospel and see the glory of God, the mercy of God, the gracious promises of the gospel, we are changed into the likeness of Christ whom we see in the gospel. It is an excellent glass, therefore, that hath a transforming power to make beautiful. Such a glass would be much prized in this proud world; such a glass is the gospel.

Therefore let us be in love with this glass above all other glasses what soever. Nothing can change us but the gospel. The gospel hath a changing power, as you have it Isa. xi. 6, seq.: there the lion shall feed with the lamb,' &c. 'For the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,' ver. 9. The knowledge of Christ Jesus is a changing knowledge, that changeth a man even from an untractable, fierce creature, to be tractable, sweet, and familiar. So that the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, you see, it is a transforming knowledge, and changeth us into the image of Christ, to the likeness of Christ. Especially upon this ground, that when we look upon Christ, and God in Christ, we see ourselves there in the love of Christ, and in the love of

God; and thereupon we are moved to be changed to Christ, not by seeing Christ alone, or by seeing God in Christ alone, but by seeing God's love in Christ to us, and Christ's love to us. For the Spirit of faith, which is given together with the gospel, it sees Christ giving himself for me, and sees God the Father's love in f me in Christ, and giving me to Christ. When the Spirit of faith with this appropriation seeth God, mine in Christ, and seeth Christ mine, and sees myself in the love of God, and in the love of Christ, hereupon the soul is stirred up from a holy desire to be like Christ Jesus, that loved me so much, and to be conformable to God all I can. For if the person be great and glorious, and our friend too, there is a natural desire to be like such, to imitate them, and express them all we can. Now when we see ourselves in the love of God and Christ, out of the nature of the thing itself, it will stir us up to be like so sweet, and gracious, and loving a Saviour.

There are three sights that hath a wondrous efficacy, and they go together.

God sees us in Christ, and therefore loves us as we are in Christ.

Christ sees us in the love of his Father, and therefore loves us as he set us in his Father's love.

We see ourselves in Christ, and see the love of God to us in Christ.

These three sights are the foundation of all comfort. God gives us Christ, and sees us as given to him in his election. Christ sees us given of the Father, as you have it John xvii. 12; and loves us as we loved of the Father, and then sees us as his own members. And we by Spirit of faith see Christ, and see ourselves in Christ, and given to Christ by the Father. Hereupon conies a desire of imitation and expression of Jesus Christ. When we see ourselves in Christ God looks upon us in Christ, and we look upon ourselves in Christ; and when we look upon the mercy of God in Christ, it kindleth love, and love kindleth love, as fire kindleth fire. Fire hath that quality, that it turns all to itself. Now the meditation of the glorious love of God in Christ it works love, and love is an affection of changing; love transforms as fire doth. The love of God warms us, and we are fit for all impressions, as things that are warm. Iron is a dull and heavy thing, yet when it is warm it is bright and pliable, and hath as much as may be of the nature of fire imprinted upon it. So our dead, and dull, and inflexible, and unyielding souls become malleable and flexible by the love of Christ shining upon them. His love transforms them and kindles them. So here is the way how the glory of God's love in

Christ transforms us, because the discovery of the bowels of mercy in God towards us kindles love to him; and that being kindled it works likeness, for love to greatness transforms us. It works a desire to be like those that are great. Where there is dependence there is a desire to be like, even among men. Much more considering that God so loves our nature in Christ, and that our nature is so full of grace in Christ as it is, the love of God in Christ, that hath done so much for us, it breeds a desire to be like Christ in our disposition, all we can.

By looking to the glory of God in Christ we see Christ as our husband, and that breeds a disposition in us to have the affections of a spouse. We see Christ as our head, and that breeds a disposition in us to be members like him.

Quest. How shall we know then that we see God in Christ, and the glory of God in the gospel comfortably?

Ans. Hath this sight a transforming power in thee, to the image of Christ, to make thee like him? If it have not a transforming power, it is a barren, empty contemplation, that hath no efficacy or comfort at all. So far as the sight of God's love in Christ breeds conformity to Christ, so far it is gracious and comfortable. See therefore whether thou art transformed to the image of Christ. If there be not a change, there is no beholding of Christ to speak of. No man ever sees the mercy of God in Christ by the eye of faith, but he is changed.

For, beloved, as there must be a change, so it is in this order, from beholding the mercy of God in Christ. For can you imagine that any soul can see itself in the glass of God's love in Jesus Christ, that it should see in the gospel Christ, and in him God reconciled unto him in particular, but that soul, out of the apprehension of God's love in Christ, will love God again, and be altered and changed? It is impossible such a sight therefore, whereby we see ourselves in this glass, as when we look in a glass, and see our own image, we see our own selves in Christ, and the love of God. Such a sight altereth and changeth alway. It works love, and love is the worker of imitation; for what doth make one labour to express another in their disposition, carriage, and conversation? Oh it is love, as children imitate their parents. Love is full of invention, and of this kind of invention, that it studies to please the person loved, as much as it can every way. Hereupon we come to be desirous to be like Christ, because we see the glory of God's mercy shining in Christ.

The adversaries of the grace of God they fall foul upon us, because we preach justification by the free mercy and love of God in Christ. Oh, say they, this is to dead the spirits of men, that they have no care of good works.

Beloved, can there be any greater incentive and motive in the world to sanctification, to express Christ and to study Christ, than to consider what favour and mercy we have in Christ? how we are justified and freed by him, by the glorious mercy of God in Christ? There cannot be a greater. Therefore we see here they depend one upon another. By seeing in the glass of the gospel the glory of God, we are transformed from glory to glory. An excellent glass the gospel is: by seeing God's love in it we are changed. The law is a glass too, but such a glass as St James speaks of, that when a man looks into it, and sees his duty, he goes away, and forgets all, i. 23. The law discovers our sin and misery. Indeed, it is a true glass. If we look there, we shall see the true picture of old Adam and of corruption; but it is such a glass as works nothing upon us. But when this glass is held out by the ministers of the word, whose office it is to hold the glass to people, when they see the love of God in Christ, this is a changing, transforming glass, to make them that were deformed and disfigured before, that bore upon them the image of Satan before, now to be transformed to be like Christ, by whom they must be saved. Is there any study in the world, therefore, more excellent than that of the gospel, and of the mercy of God in Christ, that transforms and changes men from one degree of grace to another, as it follows in the text.

Therefore, those that find themselves to be the 'old men' still, that have lived in corrupt courses, and do so still, let them not think to have any benefit by the gospel. They deceive themselves. They never knew God. For he that saith he hath communion with God, and walks in darkness, he is a liar, 1 John iv. 20. St John gives him the lie, for God is light. How can a man see himself in the love of God, and remain in a dark state opposite to love? Will it not alter a man? It will not suffer him to live in sins against conscience. Let no man that doth so, think he hath benefit by Christ. That knowledge is but a notional knowledge, a speculation, a swimming knowledge: it is not a spiritual knowledge; because wheresoever the knowledge of God in Christ is to purpose, there is a change and conversion of the whole man. There is a new judgment and new affections. The bent and bias of them is another way than they were before. There is a change which is called a turning in the Scripture. Those things that were before them before, are now behind them; and those things that were behind them, are now before them. Whereas they turned their back upon God and good

things, now they turn their faces, they look God-ward and heaven-ward, and to a better condition; for this change is nothing else but conversion. Therefore a man may say as he said, 'I am not I.' Those that have seen Christ, it makes them differ from themselves; this sight works a change.

If there were not a change, it would make God forsworn; as it is Luke i. 13, seq., in Zacharias's song, 'He hath sworn that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our lives.' If any man, therefore, say he is delivered from his enemies, that he thinks he shall not be damned and go to hell, and yet doth not live in holiness and righteousness, he makes God's oath frustrate, for God's oath joins both together: 'He hath sworn that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we should serve him without fear;' without slavish fear, but with a fear of reverence: 'in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.' Whosoever, therefore, are in a state of deliverance, have grace granted them whereby they may serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life; they are changed into the same image,

'From glory to glory.'

By glory is meant especially grace here, and that which accompanies the grace of God, the favour of God. When we are persuaded of it by the Spirit, by which grace is wrought in us, upon grace in us there follows peace, and joy, and comfort, and many such things which the Scripture accounts to be glory.

We say there are four degrees of the glory of a Christian.

First, initial glory, in his first conversion, and thereupon, the knowledge of his deliverance from that cursed and damnable state that he is in; the knowledge, likewise, of his title to life everlasting. He comes to have friendship with God; he comes to have his nature renewed, that 'he may be friends with God. There must be an assimilation by the Spirit, like God, in a holy disposition. Now, upon the favour of God we come to be friends with God, and to have our natures altered; and hereupon comes those glorious qualifications, as peace, and joy, and consolation in all conditions, and liberty, and boldness to the throne of grace. This is glory, beloved! Is it not a glory to be friends with God, and to have God deal with us as friends? to reveal his secrets to us of his love and grace in Christ? to discover the hidden mysteries of his love to us, that was hid from the beginning of the world? We never

know it till our effectual calling, till our first conversion, for God to be friends with us all our lives: Abraham was the friend of God. And then to have our nature renewed, to have our shame laid aside. Indeed, sin makes us shameful. It is the dishonour and abasement of the soul. The very change of our nature to be such as God may delight in, this is glory. The image of God is glory. Therefore in Rom. iii. 23, et alibi, it is said we are stripped and 'deprived of the glory of God' since the fall, that is, of the image of God, by Adam's sin, whereby we resembled God in holiness; so grace whereby we resemble God is the image and likeness of God, and that is the glory of man. If one should ask, What is the best glory of a man? that intrinsical glory that characteriseth a man indeed? It is the stamp of Christ upon him, the image of the second Adam, in his soul to be like him.

And hereupon those glorious qualifications that follow upon it, glorious peace, and glorious joy; glorious and unspeakable comfort, above all dis comforts whatsoever; as indeed the comforts of religion are comforts triumphing and prevailing above all dis comforts. There are no comforts but those in religion, that are above the dis comforts we meet with in this world. For what can be set against the wrath of God, against hell and damnation, but the comforts of the gospel? Now when a man is in the state of grace, and hath these glorious things following him, sweet and glorious peace that passeth understanding, that all the world, and all the devils in hell cannot shake, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and comforts above all dis comforts whatsoever: and then glorious liberty he hath to come into the presence of God upon all occasions, being a friend of God are not these things glorious, beloved? And these belong to every Christian.

Second, Now as a Christian grows in assurance of his salvation and further friendship with God, and further peace and joy and comfort, there is a further degree of glory. The growth of grace is glory. Therefore in 2 Pet. i. 5, seq., he follows the point at large. When we add grace to grace, he

VOL. IV. 8 saith it gives a further entrance into the kingdom of God: for the kingdom of God is begun in grace here; and the further we grow in grace, the more we enter into the kingdom of grace; and the further we enter into that, the nearer we are to the kingdom of glory.

Third, The next degree of glory is when the soul enjoys the presence of God iii heaven.

Fourth, Then the upshot and conclusion, the closure and consummation of all, at the day of judgment, when body and soul shall be united again. Then is perfect glory. Here it is insinuated, when he saith we are changed from glory to glory, that is, from grace to grace, till all end in glory, which is the perfection of all in heaven, when body and soul shall be both glorious, 'from glory to glory.'

In this is considerable, first, that grace is glory: and then, that grace being glory, is growing in a continual course till it come to perfection. We grow 'from glory to glory,' from one degree of grace to another.

[1.] Grace whereby we resemble Christ is glory, and indeed so it is, for the image and likeness of God is our glory. What was Adam's glory but his likeness to God? He was created in God's image. And what is our glory? To be like Christ. Therefore grace is our glory.

[2.] Mans perfection is his glory. But the renewing of God's image in grace is man's perfection. Therefore it is his glory.

[3.] That which makes a man terrible to all opposites whatsoever is glory. But grace makes a man terrible to the devil and to wicked men. Both grace in one man, and grace in the church; for the church is 'terrible, like an army with banners,' Cant. vi. 4. When the ordinances of God are set up in glory, and there is glorious obedience to them in the church, it is terrible to the enemies as an army with banners; for there is a lustre and glory in all that is God's, both in the persons of believers, and likewise in the ordinances of God. Grace is glorious. As the wise man saith, 'Wisdom makes a man's face to shine,' Eccles. viii. 1. Is not wisdom a glorious thing: to see a wise understanding man able to guide himself and others? It puts a beauty upon a man, to be a wise and understanding man. Humility makes a man glorious; for it makes God put glory upon a man, when a man is glorious, and understands it not. As Moses when his face shined, he knew not that it shined himself. Many humble men are glorious and think not so. They are glorious, and they shine, though they see it not.

Is it not a glorious thing to be taken out of ourselves, to deny ourselves, to offer a holy violence to ourselves, and to our corruptions? Is not this a glorious thing, when others lie grovelling like slaves under their corruptions, to stand unmoveable in all the changes of the world, and in all inter course of troubles to stand as a rock in the midst of all, unmoveable, founded upon the love of God in Christ, and the hope of glory after? Not to be shaken with the

wind of temptations from his standing, at least not to be shook off his standing: this is glorious, to have a constant spirit.

Is it not glorious to have admittance boldly by grace; to go into the presence of God at all times; to be prevailer with God? Faith overcomes not only the world, but God himself. It binds him with his own promise. Is not faith a glorious grace, that triumphs over the great God himself, binding him with his own word and promise?

Is not love a glorious grace, that melts one into the likeness of Christ? Beloved, get love. It is the only artificial worker of imitation. It melts us into the likeness of Christ. It constrains, it hath a kind of holy violence in it. No water can quench it. We shall glory in sufferings for that we love. Nothing can quench that holy fire that is kindled from heaven. It is a glorious grace.

Hope, what doth it? When it casts anchor in heaven, it keeps us in all the waves. It purgeth our natures to be like the thing hoped for. There is no grace but it is glorious. So that grace is glory. The image of God is glory. It makes a man glorious. It makes him shine.

Beloved, do but represent to your thoughts such a one as Joseph, of a sweet, wise, and loving spirit. It is an excellent state to see a man in his place in the commonwealth. What a glorious sight is it to see a Joseph, a Nehemiah, to see a man like Paul, all on fire for the glory of God and the good of the church! The care of all the churches lay upon him. The conceit of a man shining in grace, what a glorious representation in our thoughts is it!

And so in men now living. When we see wisdom and love tending to the common good; when we see a spirit of mortification, when we see a spirit of love, that is not for itself but for other men, a spirit of love above self-love, all for the good of others, as Christ 'went about doing good,' Acts x. 38, it makes them so lovely and glorious, as that no object in the world is so glorious, as to see a man in whom the image of Christ is; it puts a glory upon him.

Besides, it puts an inward glory upon a man, when it makes him rejoice: "The Spirit of glory rests upon him," Isa. lxi. i. Nay, in imprisonments and abasements, take a good man in any condition, he is glorious. His carriage is glorious. You shall not see flesh and blood, no revengeful humour. When flesh and blood is subdued, and nothing Appears in a man but the image of Christ, he is a glorious creature in the greatest abasement that can be. When

Paul was in the stocks, what a glorious condition was he in! When he sung at midnight, when the Spirit of glory was upon him! To see the martyrs suffer without revenge, to pray for their enemies, that they had a spirit that conquered all wrongs and fear of death, and displeasure of men; a triumphant spirit above all things below, to raise them above encouragements and discouragements, what a glorious thing was this! To see a man in his right principles, with the image of God upon him, he sees all things below, beneath him. This is glorious, to see a man that overcomes the world, that cares no more for the offers of preferment on the right hand, or for threatenings on the other hand. All is nothing to him. He breaks it as Samson did his cords. To see such a victorious spirit, is not this glorious! To see a glorious soul, that is above all earthly things whatsoever, that tramples the world under foot, as the 'woman clothed with the sun' treads the 'moon under her foot,' Rev. xii. 1. The church clothed with Christ, who is the glory of the church, tramples all earthly things under feet. Grace is victorious and conquering, prevailing over those corruptions that prevail over ordinary men. A Christian as David, when he had Saul in the cave, overcomes himself, 1 Sam. xxiv. 4, seq. It is an argument of a great deal of strength of grace. Christ overcame himself on the cross. He prayed for his enemies. So when the nature of man is so subject to the power of grace, that though there be rebellions in us, as there will be, while we are in this world, yet they can not overpower the principle of grace. All this while a man is a glorious Christian, because he is not subject to the common humours and infirmities and weaknesses" of men. Therefore that makes a Christian glorious, when he brings every thought and affection, and every corruption, as much as may be, to the subjection of the Spirit of glory, to the Spirit of Christ in him. Though old Adam stir in him, yet he brings him down, that he doth not discover himself to the scandal of the gospel and profession, and to the weakening of the love of good things in the hearts of others. It shall not break out. He subjects these rising thoughts. Here grace is glorious.

Another man cannot do this. He cannot love God; he cannot deny himself; he cannot resist temptations, not inwardly. He may forbear an action out of fear, but a Christian can love, and fear, and delight in good things; and he can resist, and he can enjoy the things of this life, in a subordinate manner to better things. A worldling cannot do it. There is a glory upon a Christian, a derivative glory from Christ. For we shine in his beams. We are changed according to his image 'from glory to glory.'

Obj. The thing is not much questionable that grace is glorious, but it may be objected, Doth grace make one glorious? Then how comes the world to despise such as have grace? such as are like Christ?

Ans. 1. I answer it is from blindness, from spiritual drunkenness and madness. They cannot discern of things; they are besotted; they see no difference. Therefore they cannot discern things that are excellent. But take a man in his right principles; take a sober man, and he will see an excellency in a Christian above himself.

Ans. 2. Again, grace is not made so much of oftentimes in the world, because it is joined with so many infirmities. Our life 'is hid with Christ,' Col. iii. 3. It is hid under infirmities and under afflictions oftentimes; and being hidden it doth not appear so much in this world.

Ans. 3. And then again, however men force upon themselves a contempt of grace, and of the best things, yet notwithstanding it is but forced; for their conscience stoops at it. Witness conscience when it gives evidence on their deathbed. Take a man when he is himself, when he is sober, when he is best able to judge, when those things are taken from him, that obscured and darkened his judgment, and then you shall have him justify all things that are good, both grace and the means of grace.

Ans. 4. Again it must be so, that we may be conformable to Christ. The world misjudgeth the state of a Christian. They think them vile and base persons. So they did Christ the head of the church. You see how Christ was esteemed. His glory was veiled with our nature and with misery a while; but it sparkled out oftentimes in his miracles. Now this was that he might suffer and perform the work of salvation. For the devil nor the wicked world would never have done that they did to him, if his glory had broken forth to the full lustre of it.

So it is with the body mystical of Christ. The world misjudgeth of them. It appears not now what they shall be hereafter, nor what they are now indeed; because God will have them conformable to Christ. If so be that the glory of Christians were discovered in the true lustre, who would wrong a Christian? If they did see him indeed to be a member of Christ and an heir of heaven, the care of angels and the price of Christ's death; if they did see him in his excellency, all the world would admire him, and make another man of him than of potentates and monarchs! But how then should he be conformable to his head in afflictions? The head was to save us by death. He

must be abased. The world must take him as a strange man, and we that must be conformed to him, we must pass as unknown men in the world. But not so unknown, but that grace breaks out some times to admiration and imitation; and when it hath not imitation, it stirs up envy and malice in others, in the children of the devil. Therefore, notwithstanding all objections, grace is glory. It makes us like Christ, who is glorious, who is 'the Lord of glory.'

And then it draws glory with it, glorious peace and glorious comfort, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the attendants of grace in the hearts of God's people. Is it not, as I said, a glorious thing for a man to have that peace in him that passeth all understanding, that shall settle and quiet his soul in all tumults in the world? When all things are turned upside down, for a Christian to stand unmoveably built upon the rock: whence comes this glorious pitch, but from grace? Grace and peace: one follow another. Then for a man to have inward joy and comfort in the midst of afflictions and disconsolations in the world, it is a wonderful and a glorious thing. It is called 'joy unspeakable,' 1 Peter i. 8, and 'glorious grace,' 2 Cor. iii. 8. Therefore in regard of that that follows it, in this world it is glory.

Hence it is that the wise man saith, that 'the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' He is more glorious than another man, as pearls are above pebbles. He is more excellent in life, in death, and after death especially; for there is a growing from glory to glory. He is glorious in life, more glorious in death, when his soul shall be put into glory in heaven; and most of all glorious when Christ shall come to be glorious in his saints, as it is in 2 Thess. i. 10. So he is excellent in life, and in death, and for ever. For another man, that is but a man a man, said I, nay, if a man be but a man, he is either like a devil in subtlety, or a beast in sensuality; he carries the image either of a beast or of the devil, besides a man. A righteous man therefore that hath the image of God stamped upon him, he is better than another man every way; for he is in a higher rank of creatures. Grace sets a man as far above other men as other men are above other creatures. At the first the creatures revered God in Adam. They came and took their names from him. They were subject to him. So grace is a glorious, majestic thing. Wicked men, even Herod, revered grace in John Baptist, Mark vi. 20, and evil men reverence it in their hearts, in God's people, though their mouths speak against it. A Christian is a spiritual man. As reason lifts a man above other creatures, so the image of God set upon a man, it lifts and raiseth him above other men.

Use 1. If grace and the image of God and Christ in us be glory, and make us excellent, let its all labour for grace above all things. We all, as I said before, desire liberty; and as we desire liberty, so we desire glory; but we know not the way how to come to it. In seeking liberty, we seek licentiousness; in seeking glory, we seek it from men that cannot give it. We seek glory in outward things that are nothing. What is the glory of all outward things, but the shining of a rotten piece of wood in the night time, or as a glow-worm? What is all this glory but a flash? It is nothing. If we would seek true glory indeed, as naturally all do, let us seek grace. Thereby we resemble Christ, 'the Lord of glory;' thereby we are glorious in the eyes of Christ; thereby we are glorious both with out and within. Though this glory for the present be hid, thereby we are terrible to the devil and all enemies. For ever since his head was crushed by Christ, that broke the serpent's head, he is afraid of man's nature in Christ; he is afraid of Christians, as knowing that they be better than himself. And he shall be judged by them ere long. The devil shall be judged by Christians. Therefore let us study for this glory. A man is never glorious till he be a Christian. It is said of Antiochus, that he was a vile person. What! Though he was a king? Yes. Let a man be never so great in the world, if he be a wicked man, a man that dishonoureth his tongue, that should be his glory, that hath not the language of Canaan, that dishonours and defiles his body, that should be the 'temple of the Holy Ghost,' 1 Cor. vi. 19, a man that carries a malicious and malignant spirit, that hath the image of the devil in his soul: if he be never so great a person, he will be vile ere long, when all relations shall end in death. All excellencies must be laid down in death. Therefore seeing all other excellencies cannot keep a man from being a vile person, let us labour for that that will put a glory upon us. Labour for the image of Christ to be stamped upon our soul. There is a great humour in this age in looking to pieces of workmanship. If a man have skill to discern a piece, as they call it, it is more than ordinary. Beloved, what a vanity is this (though these pictures be lawful; they are a kind of mute poetry). But what is this to the having of the glorious image of Christ stamped upon us; to be glorious in the eye of God and in the very judgment of carnal men!

There is nothing so excellent as grace, and nothing so base as sin. In deed there is nothing base but sin; and nothing excellent but grace. So that God's children, not only in their glorious riches and prerogatives to be the sons of God and heirs of heaven, are glorious, but they have an inward glory. 'The spouse of Christ is glorious within,' Ps. xlv. 13. Insomuch that Christ is in love with his own graces. He wonders at his own graces in his children.

Use 2. Again, oppose this to the scorn and hatred of the world; base-minded persons, that disgrace goodness that their illness may be the less discerned. They labour to make all alike, all they can, by slanders at least, that their illness may not appear. Oppose the judgments of God's Spirit that esteems grace glory against all the judgment of the base world. Beloved, they shall know one day, that those that they despise shall judge them; and their hearts secretly tell them so. What makes them malign men better than themselves? They have a secret conceit, he is above me. 'The spiritual man judgeth all things,' 1 Cor. ii. 15. He is a man that discerns by a spiritual eye. He judgeth and condemneth my ways, and hereafter he will judge me. A secret conscience in him makes him fear a good man. Though he deprave and malign him, yet his heart stoops.

Use 8. Again, is grace glory? When God sets it on us, shall we cast our crown in the dirt? Shall we defile and blemish our glory by sinning against conscience? We forget our excellency, that grace is glory. It teacheth us how to carry ourselves to ourselves. If there be grace in us, let us be honourable to ourselves. It is a good caveat that we should be venerable to ourselves; that is, Christians should take a holy state to themselves. What! I that am an heir of heaven; I that am a king; I that am a conqueror; I that am the son of God; I that am a freeman: should I tangle myself with these things? Shall I go and stain myself? Is it not an unsightly thing to see a golden pillar daubed with dirt? or to see a crown cast into the dirt? God hath put a crown upon me; he hath made me a king; he hath made me an heir of heaven; he hath made me his son; he hath put a glory upon me; shall I abase myself to devilish base courses? No. I will be more honourable in my own eyes. Let us think ourselves too good for the base services of Satan. These thoughts we should take to ourselves. These are not proud thoughts, but befitting our condition. When we are tempted to any base course, whatsoever it is, it is contrary to my calling.

Use 4. And let us comfort ourselves in the work of grace, though it be wrought in never so poor a measure, in all the disparagements of the world; for those that are besotted with false vain-glory, they have the eyes of their souls put out, and dimmed and dazzled with false glory. They cannot judge of the glory of a Christian. They want eyes. Therefore let us be content to pass in the world as hidden. Christ passed concealed in the world; only now and then the beams of his glory brake forth in his miracles. So we must be content. For our glory is hid in Christ, for the most part; and it is clouded with the imputations and malice of men, and sometimes with infirmities, as it

will in this world. Let us comfort our selves with this, that we are glorious howsoever, and glorious within; and this glory will break out in a holy conversation. And it is better to be glorious in the eyes of God, and angels, and good men, and in the consciences of ill men, than to have glory from their mouths. Malice will not “ suffer them to glorify them with their mouths, but their consciences must needs stoop to goodness; for God hath put a majesty into goodness, that any man that is a man, that is not a beast, that hath natural principles, will reverence it; and the consciences of such men will make them speak the truth one day, and they shall say, ‘We fools thought these men mad,’ but ‘now we see ourselves fools.’ Therefore in the disparagements of worldly men, that know not where true glory lies, let us be content with this, that God hath made us truly glorious by working a change in a comfortable measure; let us comfort ourselves in this.

Use 5. Again, by this we may know whether we have grace in us or no. If we think grace to be glory, let us have that judgment and conceit of grace.

(1.) Of the change of our natures, by the Spirit of God, and the truth of God, as the Holy Ghost hath here, calling it glory. That very judgment shews that there is an alteration in our affections; that we are changed in the spirit of our minds; that we have a right conceit of heavenly things. For none but a Christian indeed can judge grace to be glory, that can truly think so. For if a man think grace to be glory truly, if he be convinced by the power of the Spirit, he will be gracious. For there is an instinct in all men by nature to glory in something. You have the gulls of the world, they glory in something, in swaggering, beastly courses. You have devilish men glory that they can circumvent others. Rather than men will have no glory, they will glory in that that is shame indeed. Man having a disposition alway to glory in something, if he be convinced that grace is glory, he will be gracious.

Therefore, I beseech you, enter into your own souls, and see what conceits you have of the image of God, of the graces of Christianity, and then certainly it will raise a holy ambition to have that stamp set upon you.

(2.) Again, this is another evidence that a man is gracious, if he can look upon the life of another that is better than he with a conceit that it is glory, and loving of it as glory. Many men see grace in other men, but with a maligning eye. They see it to disgrace it. For naturally this is in men. They are so vain-glorious and ambitious, that when they see the lives of other men outshew theirs, instead of imitation, they go to base courses. They obscure and darken that light with slanders, that they will not imitate in their courses.

This is in the better sort of men, the prouder, and greater sort of men. What grace they will not imitate they will defame. They will not be outshined by anything. Therefore, those that can see so far into the life of another man, as they love it, and honour the grace of God in another man, it is a sign there is some work of glory begun in them. Men can endure good things in books, and by reports, and good things of men that are dead, &c., but they cannot endure good things running in their eyes. Especially when it comes in a kind of competition and comparison, they love not to be outshined.

‘From glory to glory.’

We see the state of God’s children here, and the state in heaven, come both under one name; both are ‘glory.’ The children of God are kings here, they shall be kings in heaven. They are saints here, as they be saints in heaven. There is an adoption of grace as well as an adoption of glory, Rom. viii. 30, et alibi. There is a regeneration here of our souls; there is a regeneration of soul and body then. We are new creatures here; and we shall be new creatures there.

Quest. Why do all come under one name, the state of glory in heaven, and the state of grace here? Is there no difference?

Ans. Yes. But the difference is in degrees, and not otherwise. For heaven must be begun here. If ever we mean to enter into heaven here after, we enter into the suburbs here. We must be new creatures here. We are kings here; we are heirs apparent here; we are adopted here; we are regenerate here; we are glorious here, before we be glorious hereafter. Therefore, beloved, we may read our future state in our present. We must not think to come de scelo in coelum, as he saith, out of the filth of sin to heaven, but heaven must be begun here. You see both have the same name, grace, and glory. Therefore, wouldst thou know what thy condition shall be afterwards? Read it in thy present disposition. If there be not a change and a glorious change here, never look for a glorious change hereafter. What is not begun in grace shall never be accomplished in glory. Both grace here and glory hereafter coming under the same name, it forceth this.

And likewise it is a ground of comfort; for why have we the same term here? When we are in the state of grace, why are we decked and adorned with the same title as we shall be in heaven?

It is partly for certainty. Grace is glory, as well as the perfection of it is glory, to shew that where grace is truly begun it will end in glory. All the powers in the world cannot interrupt God's gracious progress and way. What is begun in grace will end in glory. Where the foundation is laid, God will be sure to put up the roof. He never repents of his beginnings. Solomon saith that the 'righteous is like to the sun,' that grows brighter and brighter, till he come to his full strength, Prov. iv. 18. So the state of the godly grows more and more, from light to light, till he come to full strength. The state of the wicked is clean contrary. The state of the wicked is like the declining day. The sun grows down and down till it be twilight, and thence to darkness, and then to utter darkness. So they being dark in themselves, they grow from the darkness of misery and terror of conscience to eternal darkness, black, dismal darkness in hell. But the state of the godly it is like the course of the sun after midnight, that is growing up, up still, till it come to mid-day. So the state of the godly it is always on the mending hand; it is always a growing state; it is a hopeful condition. They go from glory to glory. And therefore let us be assured of eternal glory for the time to come, as sure as we are of the beginnings of grace here wrought. You see, then, a main difference between the godly and others

Other men grow backward, proficere in pejus, as we say. They take degrees back from worse to worse, till they end in utter desolation and destruction for ever. But the other riseth by degrees, till they come to that happiness that can admit no further degrees. All the glory of the world ends in vanity and in nothing; but the glory of a Christian that begins in grace, you see it proceeds from glory to glory, always growing and amending. If men were not spiritually mad, would they not rather be in a condition always amending and growing more and more hopeful still, than to be in a condition always declining, and most subject to decline when it is at the top. There is no consistence in any human felicity, but it is in praecipite, near a downfall when it is at the highest. God's children are near rising when they are at the lowest. There is a spirit of glory lights, and not only so, but rests on them. It doth not light upon them and then go away. It is not as a flash or blaze of flax or so. But the Spirit rests and grows still upon them, 'from glory to glory.' The state of a Christian it is comfort able, that is soundly converted, when he shall think every day brings me nearer my glory; every day I rise I am somewhat happier than I was the day before, because I am somewhat more glorious and nearer to eternal glory; when another wretch that lives in sins against conscience may say, I am somewhat nearer hell, nearer eclipsing, and

ebbing, and declining than before. So every day brings terror to the one, and matter of comfort to the other. 'From glory to glory.'

Grace, we see, is glory, especially when it is in strength; and the more grace grows, the more glory. The more it shines, the more glory. We say of fire, the more it burns the less it smokes; the less infirmity appears that may disgrace it, the more grace. The more light and lustre, and the less infirmity. Glory belongs to the growth of grace in this world. For is not a Christian a glorious Christian when he is a grown Christian? when he sends a lustre as a pearl? when as a glorious light he shines to the example of others? when he is able, as Paul saith gloriously of him self, 'I can do all in Christ that strengthened me,' Philip, iv. 13, to want and to abound. Cast him into any condition what you will, he is like him self. Cast Joseph into prison, he is Joseph still; cast Paul in the dungeon, he is Paul still, and is never more glorious than in the midst of afflictions. So grace growing to some perfection is glorious; 'wisdom makes a man's face to shine,' saith Solomon, Eccles. viii. 1. So it is true of all other graces in some perfection. They make a man shine. There is nothing in the world so glorious as a Christian that is grown to some perfection. Indeed, he is so glorious, that the eye of the world, when it is cast upon him, it stirs up envy, as carnal persons, when they see a Christian man unmoveable in the midst of all motions, and unchangeable in all changes, when nothing can alter him, but he goes on, they wonder at the condition of this man, whereas indeed his grounds and resolutions are above all discouragements or encouragements that the world can afford. David was a king and a prophet, and David was a holy man, and David, for constitution of body, was ruddy and of a sweet complexion; and David, for the manner of his kingdom, was a king of a great people, There were many excellencies of David. Oh but what doth David account the prerogative of a man? 'Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven, in whose spirit there is no guile,' Ps. xxxii. 2; that is, that is truly sanctified in spirit; that is in the state of justification; and as a witness of that, of the forgiveness of his sins, hath a spirit without guile. Happy is that man, not that is a king, or a prophet, or a strong man, or a beautiful man, or hath this endowment or that; but happy is the man whose sins are forgiven, and whose spirit is sanctified.

'From glory to glory.'

We see then that there must be an increase, a growing 'from glory to glory.' There is no stop nor stay to be made in religion. There must be of

necessity a desire to grow better and better; for glory will grow still to glory. Grace will never cease till it end in glory.

[1.] Both in our dispositions that have it wrought in us; we shall desire it may increase in us the image of God and Christ more and more. [2.] And in God's purpose. Where he begins he makes an end. He hath not chosen us to imperfection, but to perfection; and he hath called us not to imperfection, but to perfection. He hath elected us to perfection. He hath chosen us to be spotless, not to be conflicting with our corruptions, and to be halting always as Jacob. We shall have perfect strength. We are called and elected to perfection. Therefore there is no standing at a stay in religion; there must be a perpetual growth. It is our disposition to desire and endeavour it still.

For, beloved, it is that that is inbred to all things that are imperfect, to hasten to perfection, till they come to their ubi, to their pitch. We see it in grain, weak grain. Till it come to the full growth, it breaks through clods, through harder things than itself. There is a nature in corn and seeds, that have a beginning of life in their kind in them, till those seeds come to growth, they put out themselves with a great deal of strength against opposition. So grace is of such a strong nature. Being intended by God to perfection, it will not rest in mean beginnings, but puts itself forward still, and breaks through opposition. I will not stand upon the common place of growth in grace. It is a large discourse, and I touched it upon many occasions. You see the necessity of it. There must be a growth from glory to glory.

A growth not in parts as we say. For at the first regeneration, in the first beginning, when we are gracious, there is the beginning of a new life, and there is the seeds of all graces. But especially this growth is in intension and extension. Grace grows more and more in strength, and extends and reacheth itself further and further to the use of many. Grace grows, I say, in the intension of itself, and extends and reacheth itself to the use of more. The more a Christian lives, when he is in a right state and frame as a Christian should be, he is of more strength in all particular graces, and doth the more good, and shines more in his life and conversation to others.

And likewise, as there is a growth in intension and extension, so there is a growth in the quality and purity of grace; for the longer a man lives, those graces that he hath grow more refined. When a Christian is but a new Christian, he tastes much of the old stock. As all fruit at the will taste of the stock, so there is no fruit of righteousness that comes from a man, at his first

conversion, but it tastes a great deal of old Adam, savours of the old stock. The more he live, and grows spiritual, the more that that comes from him relisheth of the Spirit, the more refined is wisdom, the more refined is his love, the more refined from self-love, joy and delight is more refined.

Obj. Hence we may answer an objection by the way; an old man seems not to grow in grace. He seems not to be so good a man, not to be so zealous as when he was young; not so forward.

Ans. Beloved, In those that are young there is a great deal of nature joined with a little grace, and that grace in them makes a greater expression, because it is carried with the current of nature. But in age it is more refined. That that is, that knowledge they have, is more pure and more settled, and that love and affection is more refined. There is less self-love, and that zeal they have it is joined with more heavenly discretion. There is less wild fire, there is less strange fire with it. Though there be less heat of nature, that it do not work in outward demonstrations to the eye of the world, yet it is more refined and pure. So grace grows thus likewise in the purity and perfection of it; not altogether pure, for somewhat will stick to our best performances, savouring of the worst principle in nature. For as we carry flesh and spirit always, so that that comes from them will savour of corruption; yet less in a grown Christian, that is a father in Christianity, than in another.

‘From glory to glory.’

Grace is glory in regard of the state before. The least degree of grace is glory in regard of the state of nature. But grace is not glory properly till it come to a growth. Grace is not glorious, so in comparison to other Christians that are grown. In regard of the state of nature, grace is glory, take it in the lowest; for is not this a glory for a man to be taken into the fellowship of Christ? to be the son of God, and an heir of heaven? to have angels for his attendants? to be begotten by the glorious gospel, the word of God, that immortal seed? Whatsoever thing is about a Christian it is glorious. Is not he glorious that hath God the Father, and God the Son, the Lord of glory, and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of glory, and the glorious gospel, and glorious angels for his attendants? Every thing is glorious in a Christian. In every Christian there is this. So grace is a kind of glory; but notwithstanding we must not content ourselves with that. Grace is then especially glory when it comes to growth. We must labour that grace may appear. What is glory? Properly glory is excellency and victory over the contrary with manifestation, excellency manifested. Now a man is said to be glorious in grace, when his

grace comes to be excellent in view, and victorious over the contrary with public manifestation.

Use 1. Now this we ought to labour for; though grace be glory in respect of the former estate, yet in the rank of Christians we ought to be glorious, that is, more and more gracious; both.

In regard of God, that God may have the more glory from us. The more grace, the more esteem from him, because we resemble him.

And in regard of Christ Jesus: the more glorious we are, the more we resemble him. Let us labour to be more and more glorious, in regard likewise of the church, whom we shall benefit more. The more we grow in grace, the more we shall prevail with God by our prayers. Who prevailed more with their prayers than Moses, and such men? Again, when grace is glorious, that is, with victory and full manifestation, the more we are fit to give a lustre and light, that others seeing it may glorify God; to draw others to the love of grace, when they see grace glorious. Now grace is then glorious in us that others may be encouraged. When we can resist strong temptations, when we are not like children 'carried away with the wind of every doctrine,' Eph. iv. 14, this is a glorious thing. When a Christian can hold his own in the worst times; when it is a witty thing to be a Christian: as Hilary said in a time of schism, 'it required a great deal of wit to be a Christian', it requires a great deal of wit and study to hold a man on in Christianity.

And for a man to be strong against temptations and the world, whether it frown or fawn, that he cares for neither, but holds his own, is not this a glorious thing? When a man shall carry himself as a lion, break through oppositions in ill times, and fall square, cast him as you will, in all conditions, here is a glorious Christian. Therefore through grace be glory, that must not content us, but we must labour to have such a measure of glory as that we may be glorious in our own rank. Is it not a glorious thing when a man can break through doubts and fears that trouble other folk too much? As the sun is said to be in glory when he is gotten on high; there are many clouds in the morning, but when the sun is gotten to his height at noon-day, he scatters all. So a Christian is in his glory and exaltation when he can scatter doubts, and fears, and terrors that trouble other weak beginning Christians. Therefore when we are troubled with scruples, with this and that, we should labour to get out of them, that grace may be glorious; to shew that we have gotten such a light and such a convincing knowledge, and that we are so rooted in

faith and grace, that the Spirit of Christ in us hath broken through all these clouds and mists, and made us glorious.

‘From glory to glory.’

Our glory it is not like a torrent that runs amain for a time, and after is dried up for ever. Grace it is a continuing and an increasing thing. It continues still. As the stream that it is fed with is an ever-living spring, so is grace. It is fed with the grace in Christ, and he is a never-dying spring, a fountain. For that grace in him is fed with his divinity. There fore there must be a perpetual spring in Christ. So where Christ hath opened a spring in the heart, he will feed that grace perpetually.

Use 2. Let none be discouraged that have grace begun in them. God will go on with his own grace. When he hath begun a good work, ‘he will finish it to the day of the Lord,’ 1 Cor. i. 8. Though grace be little at the first, yet it shall not stay there. It grows up we know not how; but at last it is glorious indeed. For till grace be grown, it is little discerned from other things: as between weeds and herbs there is little difference when they be green, till they be grown. Grace is little at the first, as a grain of mustard-seed, Mat. xiii. 31. Jerusalem is not built in a day, as we say of Rome. You have some that are a weaker sort of Christians, that are good, they would fain be in Canaan, as soon as ever they are out of Egypt, and I cannot blame them. But hereupon they are discomfited. As soon as ever they have grace in them, they would have their pitch presently, out of spiritual covetousness. Oh that I had more knowledge and more victory! &c. These desires are good; for God puts not in vain desires into the hearts of his children, but they must be content to be led from glory glory, from one degree of grace to another. Christ himself grew more it favour with God and man. As that little stone grew to a mountain, Dan. ii. 84, so we must be content to grow from grace to grace. There is a gardual proceeding in the new creature. We must not be presently in Canaan. God will lead us through the wilderness, through temptations and crosses before we come to heaven. Many because they see they are far short of other that are stronger Christians, therefore they think they have no grace at

Therefore let those that are on the growing hand, though they be short of many that are before them, let them not be discouraged with their over little beginnings. For it is God’s ordinance and course in this world, bring his children by little and little through many stations. As they were led in the wilderness from standing to standing, and from place to place, so God brings

his children by many standings to heaven. And it is one part of a Christian's meekness to [be] subject to God's wisdom in this kind, and not to murmur that they are not so perfect as they would be, or as they shall be; but rather to magnify the mercy of God that there is any change in such defiled and polluted souls; that he hath vouchsafed any spiritual light of understanding, any love of good things; that the bent of their affections are turned to a contrary course than they were before; that God hath vouchsafed any beginnings. Rather magnify his mercy than quarrel with his dispensation, that he doth not this all at once; and, indeed, if we enter into our own hearts, it is our fault that we are not more perfect. But let us labour to be meek, and say, Lord, since thou hast ordained that I shall grow from glory to glory, from one degree of grace to another, let me have grace to magnify thy mercy, that thou hast given me any goodness, rather than to murmur that I have no more. And be content in the use of means, and endeavour to grow further, though we have not so much as others have. Nay, we may not be discouraged, because of the weakness of grace, but we may not be discouraged with a seeming interruption in our spiritual growth. God sometimes works by contraries. He makes men grow by their puttings back, and to stand by their falls. Sometimes, when God will have a man grow, he will suffer him to fall, that by his fall he may grow in a deeper hatred of sin, and in jealousy over his own heart, and a nearer watchfulness over his own ways; that he may grow more in love with God for pardoning of him, and grow more strong in his resolution for the time to come that he may grow more in humility. None grow so much as those that have their growth stopped for a time. Let none be discouraged when they find a stop, but consider that God is working grace in another kind. The Spirit appears in one grace when it doth not in another. It grows in one grace when it doth not in another. Sometime the Spirit will have us grow in humility; as the juice of the herbs runs to the root in the winter, it is in the leaves in the spring, it is in the seed in the autumn; as the life sometime appears in the plant in one part and sometime in another; so the Spirit of God appears sometime in humility, sometime in joy, sometime in spiritual strength and courage. Let none be discouraged overmuch when they find a stop; for there is no interruption of Spirit altogether, and this little interruption is like a sickness that will make them grow and shoot up more afterwards. It spends the humours that hinders growth. There is such a mystery in the carrying of men from glory to glory, that it makes men more glorious sometimes by base sins. I would have no man discouraged there fore. Indeed, God will work so, that he shall wish he had not given him occasion to shew his strength in his weakness, his glory

in his shame; but God, where he hath begun he will go through with the work, and will turn all to good.

And to encourage us here, grace begun hath the same name as grace perfect. Both are glory. Why doth God call them by one name? To encourage Christians. He tells them that if it be begun it is glory, not that it is so properly, but if it be begun it shall never end till it come in heaven. Therefore God styles grace in all the latitude, from the highest to the very beginnings, by the same name, to encourage Christians. If they be within the door of the temple, though they be not so far as those that are in high and glorious places, yet they are going thither. To encourage Christians

28G EXCELLENCY OF THE GOSPEL to know that unavoidably and indefeasibly they shall come to perfection of glory if it be begun. And God looks not on Christians as they are in their imperfections and beginnings, but that that in time he means to bring them to. He intends to bring them to glory. Therefore he gives grace the style of glory. As in the creatures God looked not on the seeds of trees as such, but he looked on them as seeds that he meant to make trees of; and when God looks upon his children, he looks not on them as they are children, but as they shall be perfect men. Doth the wisdom of God look on the seeds of trees as he intends to make them trees? and doth he not look upon Christians, that are babes in grace, as he intends to make them men, to come to the perfect stature of Christ? He views us at once in our beginnings and perfections. All is presented at once to him. Therefore he gives one name to the whole state of grace, grace and glory, all is glory. I beseech you therefore, if there be any goodness, any blessed change in us, let us be comforted; for he that hath brought us to the beginnings of glory will never fail till he hath brought us to perfect glory in heaven, and there our change shall rest. There is no further change there, when we are once in our element.

For even as God, when he made man, he rested from all his work upon the Sabbath; man was his excellent piece. So the Spirit of God will rest, sanctifying and altering of us. When we are once in heaven, in that eternal Sabbath, then we shall need no changes from glory to glory. We shall for ever be filled with the fulness of God, till which time there is no creature in the world so changeable as a Christian.

For, first, you see he was made in God's image and likeness in his state of standing.

After he fell there was a change, to his second state of sin.

After the state of fall, there is a change to the state of grace.

After that from one degree of grace to another in this world till he die.

And then the soul is more perfect and glorious. But at the last, when body and soul shall be united, there shall be no more change; there shall be an end of all alteration.

So we see that God intends by his Spirit to bring us to perfection, though by little and little, to perfection of glory as far as our nature is capable, and this shall be at the latter day.

Quest. Why not before? why not in this world?

Ans. Beloved, we are not capable here of that fulness of glory. Saint Peter on the mount had but a glimpse of the glory of heaven, and he was spiritually drunk as it were, he knew not what he said, Mark ix. 6. We are not capable. Therefore we must grow here from glory to glory, till we come to that perfection of glory. God that gives us the earnest could make up the bargain here if we were capable of it, but we are not.

God will have a difference between the militant and the triumphant church, and will train us up here to live the life of faith, till we come to live the life of sight, the life of vision for ever in heaven.

Doth God by his Spirit change us by his Spirit to the likeness of Christ, 'from glory to glory,' till he have brought us to perfection of glory in heaven? Oh let us comfort ourselves in our imperfections here. We are here lame Mephibosheths. He was a king's son, but he was lame. We are spiritually lame and defective, though we be kings' sons. Oh, but we shall grow from glory to glory, till all end in perfection in heaven. What a comfort is this in our imperfections, that as every day we live in this world cuts off a day of our life, for we live so much the shorter, so every day we live brings us nearer to heaven; that as we decay in the life of nature every day, so we grow up another way, 'from glory to glory,' till we come to perfect glory in heaven; is not this a sweet comfort? Let us comfort ourselves with these things.

Use 3. Again, if the state of God's people be thus sweet and comfortable, and full of well-grounded hopes, that glory shall go further on

to glory, and end in glory, then why should we be afraid of death? For grace will but end in glory. A mean glorious estate will but even be swallowed up of a truly glorious estate. Indeed grace is swallowed up of glory, even as the rivers are swallowed up of the ocean. Glory takes away nothing, but perfects all better by death. Why should we be afraid of death? We are afraid of our glory, and of the perfection of our glory.

There be degrees of glory. There is glory begun here in grace, and there is the glory of the soul after death, and the glory both of soul and body for ever in heaven, and these make way one to another. A Christian is glorious while he lives, and he grows in glory while he lives. He is more glorious when he dies, for then his soul hath perfectly the image of Christ stamped upon it. But he is most glorious at the day of resurrection, when body and soul shall be glorious, when he shall put down the very sun itself. All glory shall be nothing to the glory of the saints, 'They shall shine as the sun in the firmament,' Dan. xii. 3. And indeed there will be no glory but the glory of Christ and of his spouse; all other glory shall vanish and come to nothing. But the glory of the King of heaven and his queen that he hath chosen to himself to solace himself eternally with, when the spiritual marriage shall be accomplished, they shall be for ever glorious together. Why then should we be afraid of death? For then there shall be a further degree of glory of the soul, and after that a further degree of body and soul, when our bodies shall be conformable to the glorious body of Christ, when they shall be spiritual, as it is in 1 Cor. xv. 44. I beseech you, therefore, let us learn this to comfort our selves against those dark times of dissolution, when we shall see an end of all other glory. All worldly glory shall end in the dust, and lie down in the grave; when we must say that 'rottenness is our father,' and the 'worm our mother,' Job. xvii. 14. We can claim no other kin in regard of our body, yet then we shall be more glorious in regard of our souls. Christ shall put a robe of glory upon us, and then afterward we shall be more glorious still.

Therefore it is base infidelity to be afraid of our dissolution, when indeed it is not a dissolution, but a way to glory. We should rather consider the conjunction, than the dissolution. Death takes in pieces body and soul, but it joins the soul to Christ. It makes the soul more glorious than it was before. We go from glory to glory. Our Saviour Christ saith, 'He that believeth in me shall never die,' John xi. 26. What doth he mean by that?

Indeed, we shall never die, for grace shall be swallowed up of glory. As soon as ever the life of nature is gone, he lives the life of glory presently. So

he never dies. There is but a change of the life of grace and of nature for the life of glory.

What that glory shall be at that day, it is a part of that glory to know; for indeed it is beyond expression, and beyond the comprehension of our minds. They cannot conceive it nor our tongues express it. Peter, as I said, seeing but a glimpse of it, said, 'It is good for us to be here.' He forgot all his former troubles and afflictions. If such a little glimpse of glory could so possess the soul of that blessed man Peter, as that it made him forget all his former miseries, and all his afflictions whatsoever, to be in love with that condition above all others, what shall the glory of heaven be then! Shall we think then of our former misery, and baseness, and trouble, and persecutions? Oh no.

Use 4. Again, let us be exhorted by this to try the truth of grace in us, by our care to grow and proceed from glory to glory, still to be more glorious in Christianity. Beloved, of necessity it must be so. Let us not deceive ourselves in our natural condition. Do we content ourselves that we live a sick man's life? No. We desire health. When we have health, is that all? No. When we have health, we desire strength too, that we may encounter oppositions. Is it so in nature, that life is not enough, but health; and that is not enough, but strength too? And is it not so much more in the new creature, in the new nature, in the divine nature? If there be life, there will be a desire to have health, that our sick souls may be more and more healed; that our actions that come from our faculties sanctified be not sick actions; that they be not weak languishing actions; that we may have healed souls; that God together with pardoning grace may join healing grace, to cure our souls daily more and more, that we may be more able to performances. And then, when we have got spiritual health, let us desire spiritual strength to encounter oppositions and temptations, to go through afflictions, to make way through all things that stand in our way to heaven. Let us not deceive ourselves. This will be so. If there be truth of grace, still a further and further desire of grace, carrying us to a further and further endeavour.

The more we grow in grace, the more God smells a sweet sacrifice from us; that that comes from us is more refined and less corrupt. It yields better acceptance to God.

And then for others, the more we grow in grace, the more we grow in ability, in nimbleness, and cheerfulness to do them good; and that that comes from us finds more acceptance with others, being carried with a strong spirit of love and delight, which alway is accepted in the eyes of men.

The more we grow in grace, the more cheerful we shall be in regard of ourselves. The better we are, the better we may be; the more we do, the more we may do. For God further instils the oil of grace, to give us strength and cheerfulness in good actions, so that they come off with delight. Our own cheerfulness increaseth as our growth increaseth. In a word, you see glory tends to glory, and that is enough to stir us up to grow in it. Seeing glory here, which is grace, tends to glory in heaven, we should never rest till we come to that perfection; till the glory of grace end in glory indeed. For what is the glory of heaven but the perfection of grace? And what is the beginnings of grace here but the beginnings of glory? Grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected. Therefore, if we would be in heaven as much as may be, and enter further and further into the kingdom of God, as Peter saith, 2 Pet. i. 5, seq., let us be always adding grace to grace, and one degree to another. Put somewhat to the heap still, that so we may go from glory to glory, from knowledge to knowledge, from faith to faith, from one degree to another.

Obj. But it will be objected that Christians sometimes stand at a stay, sometimes they seem to go back.

Ans. In a word, to answer that, some because they cannot see themselves in growing, they think they grow not at all. It is but ignorance; for we see the sun moves, though we see him not in moving. We know things grow, though we see them not in growing. Therefore it follows not, that because we perceive not our growth from grace to grace, that therefore we grow not.

But put the case indeed that Christians decay in their first love and in some grace. There is a suspension of growth. It is that they may grow in some other grace. God sees it needful they should grow in the root, and therefore abaseth them in the sense of some infirmity, and then they spring out amain again. As after a hard winter comes a glorious spring, upon a check grace breaks out more gloriously. And there is a mystery in God's government in that kind, that God often increaseth grace by the eight and sense of our infirmities. God shews his powerful government in our weakness; for God's children never hate their corruption more than when they have been overcome by it. Then they begin to be sensible of it, that there is some hidden corruption that they discerned not before, that it is fit they should take notice of. The best man living knows not himself till he comes to temptation. That discovers himself to himself. Temptation

discovers corruption and makes it known, and then stirs up hatred for it. As love stirs up endeavour, so hatred aversation and loathing. It is profitable for God's children to fall sometimes. They would never be so good as they are else. They would not wash for spots; but when they see they are foul indeed, then they go to wash. But this is a mystery; God will have it so for good ends.

It checks the disposition of some good people. They think they have not grace, because they have but a little. This phrase shews that we have not all at once. God carries us by degrees, 'from glory to glory,' from one degree of grace to another. God's children, when they have truth of grace wrought in them, their desires go beyond their endeavour and strength. Their desires are wondrous large, and their prayers are answerable to their desires. Therefore in the Lord's prayer what say we? 'Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,' Mat. vi. 10. Can it be so in this world? No. But we must pray till we come to it. We must pray till we come to heaven, where prayer shall cease. So the prayers and desires of God's people transcend their endeavours. Their prayers are infinite. Hereupon, the chief thing in conversion being the desire, the turning of the stream of the will, when they find their will and their desire good, and their endeavour to fall short of their purposes, they say, Surely I have no good, because I have not that I would have, as if they should have heaven upon earth. We must grow 'from glory to glory.' And thank God for that beginning. It is God's mercy that he would work the least degree of grace in such rebellious hearts as all of us have; that he would work any goodness, any change, though never so little. God looks not to the measure, so much as to truth. For he will bring truth to perfection, though it be never so little. Let us be comforted in it. And it is God's government, to bring his children to glory by little and little, that so there may be a dependence of one Christian upon another; the weaker on the stronger: and that there may be pity, and sweet affections of one Christian to another; and that there may be perpetual experience of God's mercy in helping weak Christians; and a perpetual experience of that which is the true ground of comfort, justification; that we must needs be justified, and stand righteous before God, by Christ's absolute righteousness, having experience of our imperfect righteousness. So a little measure of grace in us is for great purpose. Therefore let none be discouraged, especially considering that God, whom we desire to please, values us by that little good we have, and esteems us by that condition lie means to bring us to ere long to perfection. So long as we take not part with our corruptions, but with the Spirit of God, and give

way to him, and let him have his work in us; so long be of good comfort in any measure of grace whatsoever.

Use. 5. Again, in that grace is of a growing nature, in all changes and alterations, whatsoever we decay in, let us not decay in grace. Beg of God. Lord, whatsoever thou takest from me, take not thy Spirit from me! take not thy stamp from me! Let me grow in the inward man although I grow not in the world. Let us labour to grow 'from glory to glory,' though we lose other wise. That is well lost and parted with in the world that is with the gain of any grace, because grace is glory. It is a good sickness that gets more patience, and more humility. It is a good loss that makes us grow less worldly-minded and more humble by it. All other things are vanity in comparison. And that grace that we get by the loss of them is well gained. Grace is glory; and the more we grow in grace, the more we grow in glory. Therefore I beseech you labour to thrive that way, to grow up heavenward, daily more and more in our disposition. Beloved, the more grace we get the more glory; and the more like we are to Christ and to God, the more we adorn our profession; and the more we shame Satan and his instruments, and stop their mouths, the more duties come off naturally and sweetly from us without constraint. It is good for us to be grown Christians, that we need not be cumbered with corruptions. The more we grow, the more nimble and cheerful and voluntary we shall be in duty. We shall partake more of that anointing that makes us nimble in God's service. There is nothing in the world so glorious as a grown Christian. Therefore let us be in love with the state of Christianity, especially with grown Christians. Of all things, he is compared with the best. If he be a house, he is a temple; if he be a plant, he is a cedar growing up; if he be a flower, he is a lily rising and growing fresher; if he be a stone, he is a pearl. He grows in estimation and use more and more. Beloved, if we had spiritual eyes to see the state of a Christian, of a grown Christian especially, we would labour above all things to thrive in this way. Have we not many works to do? Have we not many enemies to resist? Have we not many graces to perfect? Are we not to die and to appear before God? Are we not to enjoy the blessings of God purely? and do not these things require a great deal of strength of grace? Oh they do. Therefore labour above all things in the world to behold God's love in Christ, and to behold Christ, that by this sight we may grow from glory to glory.

And this will make us willing to die. What makes a man willing to die, but when he knows he shall go from glory to greater glory? After death is the perfection of glory. Then we are glorious indeed, when we are in heaven. A

weak sight here by faith changeth us; but a strong sight, when we shall see face to face, perfectly changeth us. Then we shall be like him, when we shall see him face to face.

A wicked man cannot desire death, he cannot desire heaven itself. Why? Because heaven is the perfection of grace. Glory [which] is but grace he loves not. Therefore it is a certain evidence of future glory, for a man to love grace, and to grow. I say such a man is willing to die. A wicked man, that hates grace, that loves not Christ in his image, in his children, or in his truth, he hates glory that is the perfection of grace; for peace, and joy, and comfort, they are but those things that issue from grace, and spring from grace. Grace is the chief part of heaven, the perfection of the image of God, the perfection of all the powers to be like Christ. But for peace and comfort that springs from it, a wicked man loves peace and quiet, but to have his nature altered he loves not that; and if he love not grace, how can he love glory? There is no man but a Christian that loves heaven. We are ready to drop away daily. Now to be in a state unchanged, it is a fearful thing. Unless we be changed by the Spirit of God, we shall be afraid to die. We cannot desire to be in heaven. The very heaven of heavens is the perfection of grace. To see God to be all in all, and by the sight of God to be transformed into his likeness, it is the chief thing in heaven. Therefore I beseech you let us labour more and more to grow in grace; set Christ before us. Let me add this one thing, make use of our patterns among us. Christ is now in heaven, but there will be the Spirit of Christ in his children to the end of the world; and grace is sweetly conveyed from those that we live amongst. We grow up in grace by growing in a holy communion one with another. Christ will kindle lights in every generation. Therefore let us labour to have the spirit of those we live with given to us; in conversing, to be like Christ in his members; to love the image of Christ in his children, and to converse with them; to be altered into their likeness. This will change us to the glorious likeness of Christ more and more.

Those that care not what company they keep, those that despise the image of Christ in those among whom they live, can they grow in grace?

We shall give account of all the good examples we have had. Doth God kindle lights for nothing? We should glorify God for the sun and moon and stars, and other creatures. Is not a Christian more glorious than all the creatures in the world? We should glorify God for grace in Christians, and labour to be transformed to them that we may grow the liker to Christ, that

we may grow more and more glorious. I speak this to advance the communion of saints more and more, as we desire to partake more and more of this grace, and to grow 'from glory to glory.'

Use 6. Again, considering that God means to bring us, by little and little, by degrees, to perfect glory of body and soul, and condition in heaven to be like Christ, let this make us be content to be vile for Christ in this world, as David said it-when he was scorned, 'I will be yet more vile,' 2 Sam. vi. 22, 'do you think I think much to shew myself thus, for the honour of God?' When Michal scoffed, 'I will be more vile.' Let us be content to go out of the camp, and bear the reproach of Christ, Heb. xi. 26, bear the reproach of religion. Let the world scorn us for the profession of religion. God is bringing us from glory to glory, till he bring us to perfect glory; and shall we suffer nothing for him? Let us be content to be more vile, and to bear the reproach of religion. The very worst thing in religion, the reproach of Christ, as Moses made a wise choice, it is better than the treasures of Egypt, Heb. xi. 26. The most excellent things in the world are not so good as the worst thing in religion, because reproach ends with assurance of comfort, that God will take away that, and give us glory after. Therefore, let us not be discouraged from a Christian course, but go through good report and bad report, break through all, to finish our course with joy, as St Paul speaks of himself, Acts xx. 24.

Use 7. And doth God bring us from glory to glory, till he have brought us to perfection of glory? Then, I beseech you, let us beforehand be thankful to God, as we see in the epistles of blessed St Paul and Peter: 'Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that hath begotten us to an inheritance immortal, undefiled, reserved in heaven,' saith St Peter, 1 Pet. i. 4; and so St Paul. Let us begin the employment of heaven beforehand. For why doth God discover to us that he will bring us to glory? why doth he discover it to our faith, that excellent state? That we might begin heaven on earth, as much as might be. And how shall we do that? By the employment of heaven. What is that? 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,' Rev. iv. 8. There is nothing but magnifying and glorifying of God. There shall be no need of prayer. There are praises always; and so much as we are in the praises of God, and glorifying of God for his mercy and love in Christ, so much we are in heaven before our time. I beseech you, therefore, be stirred up in consideration of this, that we are leading on by degrees, from glory to glory, till we come to perfection. Let us even give God the praise of all beforehand. For it is as sure as if we had it. For one way, how things to come are present,

is by faith. Glory to come is present two or three ways already, that may stir us up to glorify God beforehand.

(1.) The glory to come is present to Christ our head. We, in our husband, are in heaven. Now he hath taken heaven for us!

(2.) And in regard of faith, that is the evidence of things not seen. It is the nature of faith to present things to come as present. To faith, glory to come is present, present in Christ, and we are part of Christ, Christ mystical, and members. And we in our head are in heaven already, and sit there. And to faith, that makes things present that are to come, we are in heaven already.

(3.) And we have the earnest of heaven, the first-fruits of the Spirit. We have grace which is glory, the beginnings of glory. We have the first-fruits and earnest. Now, an earnest is never taken away, but is made up by the bargain with the rest; so the earnest of the Spirit of God, the first-fruits of peace and joy, of comfort and liberty to the throne of grace, these are the beginnings of heaven. Therefore, be much in praising God. Oh that we could be so! If we could get into a frame and disposition to bless God, we could never be miserable; no, not in the greatest afflictions, for thankfulness hath joy always. When a man is joyful, he can never be miserable, for joy enlargeth the soul. When is a man most joyful, but in a state of thankfulness? And what makes us thankful so much, as to consider the wonderful things that are reserved in another world, the glory that God is leading us to by little and little, from glory to glory, till we be perfect? 'Even as by the Spirit of the Lord.'

'As' here is taken according to the phrase in the Greek; and there is the like word in the Hebrew. It signifieth likeness and similitude some times, and sometimes otherwise. It is not here meant as if we were like the Spirit of the Lord, but this change is wrought even as by the Spirit of the Lord. That is, it is so excellent and so strong, that you may know that it is done by none but the Spirit of God.

Again, 'as by the Spirit of the Lord,' that is, so far as the Spirit of the Lord changeth us. It implieth those two things, that is, it is done by the power of the Spirit, that we may know it is done by the Spirit of the Lord; and then, as by him and no further, for we no further shine than he enlighteneth us. As the air, it is no further light than the sun shines into it; so we have no more glory, strength, comfort, and peace, or anything gracious or glorious, than the Spirit of God shines into us: therefore he saith, 'as by the Spirit of the Lord.' It is so glorious and excellent, and so far forth as he doth it. 'As by the Spirit of the Lord;' so he expresth the meaning of that phrase.

Now you see here the doctrine is clear, that all that I have spoken of before comes from the Spirit of the Lord, and from no other cause.

The beholding, the transforming, the degrees of transforming from glory to glory, the taking away of the veil, all is from the Spirit of the Lord. To go over the particulars.

The Holy Ghost doth open our eyes to behold the glory of the Lord, and therefore he is called the Spirit of illumination. The Holy Ghost takes away the veil of ignorance and unbelief, and thereupon he is called the Spirit of revelation. The Holy Ghost upon revealing the love of God to us in Christ, and the love of Christ to us, and illuminating our understandings to see these things, he breeds love to God again, shewing the love of God to us, and thereupon he is called the Spirit of love. Now when God's love is shed into us by the Spirit of illumination and revelation, then we are changed according to the image of Christ; and thereupon the Holy Ghost, from the working of a change, is called the Spirit of sanctification, because he is not only the holy temple of that blessed person, but he makes us holy; and because this change is a glorious change, a change from one degree of grace to another, till we come to be perfect in heaven; hereupon it is called a Spirit of glory, as St Peter saith, 'the Spirit of glory resteth on you,' 1 Peter iv. 14, that is, the Spirit of peace, of love, of comfort, of joy, &c. The Spirit, in regard of this blessed attribute, working all these, he is called the Spirit of glory. The Spirit hath divers names according to the divers operations he works in the saints and people of God; as here the Spirit of illumination, of revelation, of love, of sanctification, of glory, all is by the Spirit. Whatsoever is wrought in man it is by the Spirit. All comes from the Father as the fountain, and through the Son as Media tor; but whatsoever is wrought it is by the Holy Ghost in us, which is the substantial vigour in the Trinity. All the vigour and operation in the Trinity upon the creature, it is by the Holy Ghost, the third person. As in the creation the Spirit moved upon the waters, and moving there and brooding on them, framed the whole model of the creatures; all were framed by the Holy Ghost; so the Holy Ghost upon the water of our souls frames the new creature, frames all this change 'from glory to glory,' all is by the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is here in the passive term, 'We are changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.' So in the chain of salvation you have passive words in them all. 'Whom God foreknew he chose: and whom he chose he justified: and whom he justified he glorified,' Horn. viii. 80, all because they come from God, and the Spirit of God. So here we are transformed from glory to glory, all is by the Spirit of God, the

third person. For, beloved, even as from God toward us all things come through the Son by the Spirit, so back again, all things from us to God must come by the Spirit and through Christ. We do all by the Spirit, as all things are wrought in us by the Spirit. God gives us the Spirit of prayer and supplication, and the Spirit of sanctification; and we pray in the Spirit, and work in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. We do all in the Spirit, to shew that the Spirit doth' 7 all in all. In this new creature and work of sanctification it is by no less than the Spirit of the Lord. For, beloved, as it was God that redeemed us, so it is God that must change us; as it was God that wrought our salvation and reconciled us, no less person could do it, so it must be God that must persuade us of that glorious work, and fit us for it by his Holy Spirit. It is God that must knit us to our head Christ, and then by little and little transform us to that blessed condition that Christ hath purchased for us. God the Son doth the one, and God the Spirit doth tho other. You have all the three persons in this place, for we see the glory of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost shining in Jesus Christ. Christ is the image according to which we are changed. The Spirit is he that changeth us according to that image. God shews his mercy in Christ. We knowing and apprehending the mercy of God in Christ by the Spirit, are changed by that Spirit 'from glory to glory.' So that the blessed Trinity, as they have a perfect unity in themselves in nature, for they are all one God, so they have a most perfect unity in their love, and care, and respect to mankind. We cannot want the work of any one of them all. Their work is for the good of mankind. The Father in his wisdom decreed and laid the foundation how mercy and justice might be reconciled in the death of the Mediator. Christ wrought our salvation. The Holy Ghost assures us of it and knits us to Christ, and changeth and fits us to be members of so glorious a head, and so translates and transforms us more and more 'from glory to glory.'

It is a comfortable consideration to see how our salvation and our fitting for salvation, till we be put in full possession of it, stands upon the unity of the three glorious persons in the Trinity, that all join in one for the making of man happy.

I will name two or three doctrines, before I come to that which I mean to dwell on.

As, first, that

Doct. The Spirit comes from Christ.

It is said here, 'By the Spirit of the Lord,' that is, of Christ; because Christ doth spirare, as well as the Father. The Father doth spirare, and the Son doth breathe. The Holy Ghost proceeds by way of spiration from both. Therefore the Spirit is not only the Spirit of the Father, but of the Son, as we see here, 'The Spirit of the Lord.' Christ sends the Spirit, as well as the Father. 'I will send you the Comforter.' The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son; and he doth report to us the love of the Father and of the Son; and therefore, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, the shutting of the chapter, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost,' &c. As the Holy Ghost hath communion in proceeding from the Father and the Son, and knows the secrets of both; so he reveals them to us. The love of God the Father, and the Son, and the communion of the Holy Ghost; so the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father; he is called here the Spirit of the Lord.

Then again, the Spirit is a distinct person from Christ. It is said before, 'The Lord is that Spirit.' That might trouble men, how to know that the Lord is that Spirit.' Men might think that Christ is all one with the Spirit. No. Here the Spirit is said to be the Spirit of the Lord. He means he is another distinct person from Christ; and the Spirit is God as well as Christ, because the Spirit hath the operations of God attributed to him, to change and transform, and make new. We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Creation and renovation of all new is from an almighty power. All the power in heaven and earth cannot make that that was not, to be, especially that that was contrary and opposite, to be. Now for a man in opposition and enmity to religion, to be changed to a better image, to the image of Christ, it argueth an almighty power. These doctrinal points I do but only touch. I come to that that I judge more useful; that is, that

Doct. Whatsoever is good in us comes from the Spirit of God.

What need I stand upon reasons? Whatsoever is above nature it must come from God's Spirit. The Spirit is the author of all things above nature. Grace whereby we are like Christ, is above nature; therefore it must be by the Spirit of God.

Besides, that which riseth of nothing, and is opposite, and hath Satan to oppose it, it must have an almighty power to work it. Therefore whosoever works anything that is supernaturally good in us, he must be above the devil. We cannot so much as call Jesus, with a feeling, but by the Spirit of God. We cannot think a good thought. All is by the Spirit, whatsoever is gracious and

comfortable in us. I should be over-troublesome to you to be much in so clear a common argument as this is. Therefore I will hasten to make some use of it.

Use 1. And therefore put out of your thoughts, I beseech you, when you look to have any grace or comfort wrought, shut out of your hearts too much relying upon any outward thing. Think not that education can make a man good, or plodding can make a man good: in bodily exercise, in hearing much, in conferring much, in custom or education, or any pains of our own. These are things that the Spirit will be effectual in, if we use them as we should; but without the Spirit what are they? Nay, what is the body of Christ without the Spirit? 'The flesh profiteth nothing,' John vi. 63. What is the sacrament and the word? Dead things without the Spirit of the Lord. Nothing can work upon the soul, no outward thing in the world, but the Spirit of God; and the Spirit of God works upon the soul by the means of grace, by gracious habits and qualities wrought. For he doth not work upon the soul immediately. Before he alter and change the soul, the Spirit works upon the soul by altering, and changing of it; and when it hath altered the soul, then it joins with the soul, and alters and changeth it according to the image of Christ, more and more still.

I beseech you, in your daily practice, all learn this, that you trust not too much to any outward performance or task; to make idols of outward things. People when they would change their dispositions, and be better, they take a great deal of pains in hearing, and reading, and praying. All these are things necessary; but they are dead things without the Spirit of Christ. Therefore in the use of all those outward things, whatsoever they be, look up to Christ, that is the quickening Spirit, that sends the Spirit into our hearts. The Spirit must enliven and give vigour to all these things, and then somewhat will be done in religion, in hearing, and reading, and praying, and receiving the sacrament. Therefore in all these look to the Spirit first. He laboureth in vain that relieth not wholly upon the Spirit of God, that trusts not to a higher strength than his own. It must be a higher strength than our own that must work any good in our souls, either grace, or comfort, or peace. And therefore in the use of all things, as the proverb is, *oculos ad coelum*, &c. Let the eye be to heaven, when the hand is at the stern & at the same time; and then we shall be transformed and changed by the Spirit of God. Know that in all means alway the Spirit is the principal, efficient, blessing, cause of all. And therefore before we set upon anything that is good, wherein we look for any spiritual good, desire God by his Holy Spirit that he would clothe what shall

be said. Words are wind without the Spirit. The Spirit must go with the ordinances, as the arteries go together with the veins. You know in the veins in the body there are arteries that go with them. They convey the spirits. The veins convey the blood. That is a dull thing, without the spirits, of itself. If there were no spirits in the arteries, what would the blood in the veins be? Nothing but a heavy uncomfortable humour. But the arteries that come from the heart, the fountain of life, being joined, and conveying the spirits, they quicken the blood that comes from the liver. So the veins and arteries join together to make the blood cheerful. The word and truth of God are like the blood in the veins. There is a great deal of matter in them, but there is no life at all. There must the Spirit go along with them to give life and quickening to the word, to clothe those divine truths with the Spirit, and then it works wonders, not else. Paul spake to Lydia, Acts xvi. 14, seq., but the Holy Ghost opened her heart. The Spirit hath the key of the heart to unlock and open the heart. We speak to the outward man, but except the inward man be opened by the Spirit of God and unlocked, all is to no purpose. Therefore let us pray for the Spirit of this changing. All is by the Spirit of the Lord.

It is in mystical Christ, even as it was in natural Christ; all his grace was from the Holy Ghost as man. For though he were conceived of the Holy Ghost, he was anointed by the Holy Ghost; he was sealed by the Holy Ghost; he was led by the Holy Ghost into the wilderness; he offered himself by the Spirit; he was raised by the Spirit; he was full of the Spirit. As it was in Christ natural, so it is in Christ mystical; that is, in the church all is by the Spirit. As he was conceived in the womb by the Spirit, so we are conceived to be Christians by the Spirit. The same Spirit that sanctified him sanctifieth us. But first the Spirit by way of union sanctifieth us, by knitting us to him the head of all; and then unction comes after union; anointing after union. Then the Spirit, when he hath knit us to Christ, works the same anointing that he did in Christ. Therefore we are called Christians of Christ, not only partakers of the naked name, but of the anointing of Christ that anointing that runs down the head of our spiritual Aaron to the skirts, to every poor Christian. All change, all comfort, all peace is from the Spirit of Christ. Therefore give him the glory of all. If we find any comfort in any truth, it comes not from us, but from his Spirit; and we must go upward to him again. As all descends from heaven, from the Father of lights and from the Spirit of God, so all must ascend again. Yield him the praise of all. And one work of the Spirit is to carry our souls up. For the Spirit, as it comes from heaven to change, so it carries us up again to view and to imitate Christ, to be where Christ is. As water when it is to be carried up, it is carried as high as the spring head, from

whence it came, so the Spirit coming from Christ, it never leaves changing and altering of us till it have carried us to Christ again. Therefore as it is the work of the Spirit to carry us to Christ, so let us desire it may carry us beforehand for the good work begun in us, in thankfulness, that we may begin heaven upon earth. All is from the Spirit of Christ.

A man now in the state of grace must look for nothing from himself; for as we are saved altogether out of ourselves by Christ the mediator, so the fitting for that glorious salvation that we have purchased by Christ, it is by the Spirit. The working of our salvation is by God, and the assurance of it to our souls is by the Holy Ghost, by the witness of God sealed to us. And the fitting and preparing and changing and sanctifying of us, it is by the Holy Ghost. All is out of us in the covenant of grace, wherein God is a gracious Father in Christ. All is out of us in regard of the spring. The work indeed is terminated in us. The Spirit of God alters our understanding, will, and affections, but the spring is out of us. As in paradise those four streams that watered paradise, that ran through it, yet the head of them was out of paradise, in another part of the world. So though the work of the Holy Ghost, the streams of the Spirit, run through the soul and water it; yet the spring of those graces, the Holy Ghost, is out of us, and Christ the root of salvation is out of us. For God in the covenant of grace will not trust us, as in Adam God trusted us with grace, he had grace in his own keeping. If he would he might have stood. He had liberty of will, but God saw we were all ill husbands of grace and goodness, that he would not trust us again. Therefore he trusted God-man, the second Adam, with grace; and he sends his Spirit into us, and conveys grace 'from glory to glory' by degrees, and all by the Spirit of the Lord.

And, in the next place, this point of doctrine should marvellously comfort and stay us, and direct us.

Use 2. It should comfort us when we find no goodness at all, nor no strength at all in our natures. Doth God expect that we should have anything from ourselves? Who expects anything from a barren wilderness? Our hearts are such. God knows it well enough. There is no goodness in us, no more than there is moisture in a stone or a rock. Therefore he looks that we should beg the Spirit of him, and depend upon him for the Spirit of his Son, to open our eyes with the Spirit of illumination; to reveal his love to us, and then to sanctify us and to work us more and more to glory, and to work out all

corruption by little and little. He expects that we should depend upon him for the Spirit in all things we do.

Therefore Christians are much to blame. They think to work and to hew out of their own nature the love of God, and keep ado with their own hearts, as if they had a principle of grace in themselves as of them selves; and they may long enough work that way. But that is not the way, but acknowledgment that in ourselves, as of ourselves, as Saint Paul saith, we cannot do anything, Philip, ii. 13. We cannot so much, by all the power in the world, as think a good thought. If we should live a thousand years, there cannot rise out of our hearts a good desire of ourselves. All is out of us from the Spirit of the Lord. Now thereupon we must not look for it in ourselves, but go to God for his Holy Spirit. Go to Christ for his Spirit, for the Spirit proceeds from them both, that he would enlighten us and sanctify us, as I shewed in particular before. We must not there fore presume that we can do anything of ourselves; and so we must not despair. Shall we despair when once we believe in Christ? when we have abundance of grace and Spirit in our head Christ? And he can derive his Spirit as he pleaseth. He gives the Spirit by degrees as he pleaseth; for he is a voluntary head to dispense it as he will. He is not a natural head. Who shall despair when he is in Christ, who is complete? And in him we receive grace for grace, grace answerable for grace in him.

Let none presume that he can do anything of himself, for you see how God suffered holy men to miscarry. It was folly in this case in Peter to presume of his own strength: 'Though all forsook Christ,' Mark xiv. 31, seq., yet would not he. He presumed upon his own strength. God left him to himself. You see how foully he fell. So it is with us all, when we presume upon the strength of our nature and parts. We must not come to this holy place in the strength of our own wit and parts, but come with a desire that the Spirit may join with his ordinances, and make them efficacious for our change. All change is by the Spirit of the Lord. Nothing works above his own sphere. It is above the power of nature to work anything supernatural. Therefore if we will profit by the word, come not with presumptuous spirits, but lift up our hearts to God, that his Spirit may clothe the ministry with vigour and power, that he may convey holy truths into our hearts, and make them effectual for the changing of the inward and of the outward man. Then we come as we should. All is by the Spirit of the Lord, blessing all means whatsoever, without which all means are dead. Therefore we must open as that flower that opens and shuts as the sun shines on it. So must we as Christ

shines on us; and we ebb and flow as he flows upon us. We shine or are dark as he shines on us. As the air is no longer light than the sun shines, so we are no longer lightsome and open, and flow and are carried to anything, than Christ by his Spirit flows on us. For we do what we do, but we are patients first to receive that power from the Spirit. We hear and do good works, but the activity and power and strength comes all from the Spirit of God.

Use 3. Hence likewise we may make another use of trial, whether we have the Spirit of Christ or no; whether we have the Holy Ghost, which is called here the Spirit of the Lord.

I will not go out of the text for trials.

(1.) If a man have the Spirit of God, it openeth the eyes of the soul to see in the glass of the word, the face of God shining on him in Christ. If a man have the Spirit he sees God as a Father, by the Spirit of illumination.

(2.) Again, if thou hast the Spirit of God, thou hast the Spirit of love. God's Spirit manifesteth the hidden love of God, that was hid in the breast of God, to his soul; for the Spirit of God searcheth the breast of God and the secret of God, and it searcheth my heart. Now he that hath the Spirit of God knows the love of God in Christ to him; it reveals the love of God, the height, and breadth, and depth of it to our spirits. As in the text, we see the gracious love of God in Christ, and then we love him again.

(3.) And thereupon where the Spirit is it changeth. It is not only a Spirit of illumination, but of sanctification. Where he dwells he sanctifieth the house, and makes it a temple. It is efficacious. Where the Spirit is, it will work. It is like the wind. Where it is it will stir, it will move. Where it moves not it is not at all. Where the Spirit alters not the condition from bad to good, and from good to better, suspect that it is not there; at least it will move. As the pulses will have a drawing in, and a sending out, by stirring, so there will be some operation of the Spirit that is discernible to a judicious eye; always some stirring where the Spirit of God is.

The papists slander us willingly: I think against many of their consciences that understand anything. Oh, say they, we will have Christians like Satan, to appear as angels of light, and blackamoors in white garments, that have their teeth white, and nothing else. So your Christians put on the garment of Christ's righteousness. Let them put on that, and then though

they be not changed a whit, it is no matter. Who teacheth thus? We teach out of this text, that,

First of all, the Spirit of God opens our eyes. He takes off the veil and then we see the glory of God's mercy in Christ, pardoning our sin for the righteousness and obedience of Christ; and then that love warms our hearts, so that it changeth our hearts by the Spirit, from one degree of grace to another. There is a changing power that goes with the love of Christ, and with the mercy of God in Christ. This [is] our doctrine. The same Spirit that justifieth us by applying to us the obedience of Christ, the same Spirit sanctifieth us. Therefore their allegations and objections are to no purpose. We see here the Spirit of the Lord changeth us.

And so for your common atheistical professors, that profess themselves Christians. They partake of the name, but not of the anointing of Christ. True Christians that are anointed with the Spirit of Christ, it will enforce a change. Beloved, we cannot behold the sun, but we must be enlightened; we cannot behold the Sun of righteousness, but we shall be changed and enlightened. The eye of faith, though we think not of it, though it look upon Christ for justification and forgiveness of sins, yet notwithstanding at the same time insensibly there is an alteration of the soul. If a man look up for other ends, yet at the same time there is an enlightening by the sun. So at the same time that we look upon the mercy of God in Christ, at the same time there is a glory shines upon us, and we are altered and changed, though we think not of it. At the very instant that we apprehend justification and forgiveness of sins, in the mercy of God in Christ, at the same instant there is a glory put upon the soul. We cannot have commerce with the God of glory, but we shall be glorious. Therefore, there is no man that hath anything to do with God, that hath not some glory put into his soul, whatsoever he is.

Therefore, let no man think he hath anything to do in religion till he find the work of the Spirit altering and changing him. He hath the title of Holy Spirit, from the blessed work of sanctifying and changing: he doth change us.

(4.) And when he hath changed us, he governs and guides us from glory to glory. Where the Holy Ghost is, therefore, he promotes the work of grace begun. He doth not only move us but promote; he promotes the work begun. Therefore those that have the Spirit of God, they rest in no degree of grace, but grow from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, from faith to faith, till they come to that measure of perfection that God hath appointed them in Christ. Those, therefore, that set up their staff, and will go

no further, that think all is well, they have not the Spirit of God. For the Spirit stirs up to grow from one degree of grace to another, to add grace to grace, and to enter further and further into the kingdom of grace, and to come nearer to glory still.

(5.) For this end the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and guides us, as it is, Rom. viii. 26. He is a tutor to us. Where the Holy Ghost is in any body, it is as a counsellor. 'Guide me by thy counsel, till thou bring me to glory,' Ps. xxxi. 3, et alibi. It is a tutor. As noblemen's children they have their tutors, so God's children are nobly born. They have their tutor and counsellor, as well as angels to attend them. They have the Spirit of God to tell them, This do, and that do, and here you have done ill. They have a voice behind them, to teach them in particular wherein they have done amiss. They that have the Spirit, find such a sweet operation of the Spirit, the Spirit is a teacher and a counsellor to them. They that are acquainted with the government of God's Spirit, they find it checking them presently when they do ill. It grieves them when they grieve the Spirit, so it teacheth them in particular businesses, Do this, do not that. Thus may we know if we have the Spirit, if it guide and govern us from glory to glory, till we come to perfection, where the Spirit is all in all in heaven.

(6.) Another evidence is this, the Spirit where it is it rests and abides; because it doth not only change us at the first, but it leads us from glory to glory. As St Augustine saith, 'Wicked men have the Spirit of God knocking, and he would fain enter; as the wickedest man, when he hears holy truths discovered, the Spirit of God knocks at his heart, and he finds sweet motions in his poisonous rebellious nature, but this is but the Spirit knocking, that would have entrance. But God's children have the Spirit entering, and dwelling and resting there. The Spirit of God resteth on Christ, and it rests on Christ's members. How can it change them, and having done so, guide and govern them from glory to glory; but he must rest there, he must take up his lodging and residence. A Christian is not an ordinary house, but a temple; he is not an ordinary man, but a king; he is not an ordinary stone, but a pearl; he is not an ordinary tree, but a cedar; he is an excellent person. And therefore the Spirit of God delights to dwell in him. As the excellency of the body is from the soul, so the excellency of the soul is from the Spirit dwelling in him. However, in particular operations, the Spirit suspends his acts of comforting and guiding, to humble them for their presumption, always the Holy Ghost is in the heart, though he be hid in a corner of the heart. 'I will send you the Comforter, and he shall abide with you for ever,' saith Christ,

John xiv. 16. Thus we may see how we may try ourselves, whether we have the Spirit of the Lord or no. If we have not the Spirit, we are none of his, we are none of Christ's, Rom. viii. 13, 14. And then whose are we, if we be none of Christ's? Do but think of that. Therefore if we would not be men not having the Spirit, that is, men dead, led with a worse spirit than our own, let us labour to know whether we have the Spirit of Christ or no. Let us see what change there is to the likeness of Christ. For,

(7.) The Spirit, as it comes from the Lord, so it makes us like the Lord, and we are changed by reasons from the Lord; by reasons and considerations from Christ, and from the love of God in Christ; because the Spirit takes from Christ whatsoever he hath: 'He shall take of mine,' &c., John xvi. 13. That is the comfort he comforts the soul with; he fetches them from his death and bloodshed, and the love of God in him. That he takes of Christ. So there is a change wrought in us by reasons fetched from the love of God in Christ, those conforming reasons. God hath given his Son, and Christ hath given himself, and we feel the love of God by the Spirit. If the Spirit work any grace or comfort by considerations fetched from Christ, this is the true Spirit. The change and alteration that it works in us is according to the image of Christ, that we may be like Christ. So Christ is the beginning and the end, and Christ is all. He works from Christ and to Christ. Let us examine therefore if we have the Spirit of Christ, whether it change us; and examine if we have the Spirit, from what reasons and grounds it changes us; and then we may upon some comfortable grounds say we have the Spirit indeed.

If we have not the Spirit, how shall we come to have the Spirit? What means must we use to get it?

In a word, this chapter excellently sets out that, for, [1.] The gospel is called the ministry of the Spirit; for the opening of the love of God in Christ, which is the gospel, is the ministry of the Spirit. Why? Because God hath joined the Spirit with the publishing and opening of these mysteries. Therefore study the gospel, and hear unfolded divine evangelical truths. The more we hear of the sweet love of God in Christ, the more the Spirit flows into the soul together with it. The Spirit goes together with the doctrine of the gospel; which is called the ministry of the Spirit. Therefore let us delight in hearing evangelical points, the love of God opened in Christ.

A civil moral man, Oh he is taken mightily, if he hear a moral witty politic discourse that toucheth him; and he is in his element then. What is this to the gospel? This hath its use. Oh but the Spirit goes with the opening

of the gospel, with evangelical points; and if our hearts were ever seasoned with the love of God, these points of Christ, and the benefits and privileges by Christ, they will affect us more than any other thing in the world. That is one means to study the gospel, and to hear the truths of the gospel opened where the Spirit works.

[2.] Again, the Spirit of the Lord it is given to us usually in holy community. The Holy Ghost fell upon them in the Acts when they were gathered together, Acts iv. 31; and surely we never find sweeter motions of the Spirit than now, when we are gathered at such times, about holy business, as this day. We never find the Spirit more effectual to alter and change our souls, than at such times. 'Where two or three are gathered together, I will be in the midst of you,' Mat. xviii. 20, but by the Spirit, saith Christ, warming, and altering, and changing the soul. For God infuseth all grace in communion, as we are members of the body mystical. Those that have sullen spirits, a spirit of separation, that scorn all meetings, they are carried with the spirit of the devil, and of the world. They know not what belongs to the things of God. It is the meek spirit that subjects itself to the ordinance of God. The Holy Ghost falls usually upon men when they are in holy communion.

[3.] And in Luke xi. 13, there God will give the Holy Ghost to all that beg him. Pray for the Holy Ghost, as the most excellent thing in the world. He shall be given to them that beg him, as if he should say, there is nothing greater than that, and God will give him to them that ask him. Therefore, come to God, and in any thing we have to do, empty ourselves and beg the Spirit; for the more a man empties him of his own confidence, in regard of holy performance of duties, the more we will desire to be filled with the fulness of the Spirit; and this sense of our own emptiness will force prayer.

Therefore, know that of ourselves we can do nothing holily, that may further our reckoning, but by the Spirit. Do all things therefore in a sense of our own emptiness, and beg the Spirit.

As likewise when we are framed by the Spirit to obedience. Those that obey the motions of the Spirit, the Spirit joins more and more closely with their souls. God gives his Spirit to them that obey him. Those that obey the first motions of the Spirit, they have further degrees. What is the reason that men have no more Spirit in the ordinances? The Holy Ghost knocks at their hearts, and would fain have entrance, and they resist it, as Stephen saith, Acts vii. 51. Now the Holy Ghost is willing to enter upon the soul, but he is

resisted. Therefore if you will have him more and more, let us open our souls, that the King of glory may come in. The Spirit is willing to enter, especially in holy assemblies. Saith St John, Rev. i. 10, 'I was on the Lord's day, I was in the Spirit,' that is, as if he were drowned in the Spirit on the Lord's day. When we are about holy exercises we are never more in the Spirit than then. Let us open our souls to the Spirit, and then we shall find the Spirit joining with our souls. The Spirit is more willing to save us, and to sanctify us, than we are to entertain him. Oh that we were willing to entertain the sweet motions of the Spirit! Our natures would not be so defiled, and we so uncomfortable as we are. There are none of us all, but we find comfortable motions in holy exercises. Thus we may get the Spirit of the Lord, that doth all, that illuminates, and sanctifieth, and ruleth, and rests in us.

(8.) And let us learn, I beseech you, hence to give the third glorious person, the Holy Ghost, his due. Since we have all by the Spirit, let us learn to give the Spirit his due, and learn how to make use of the work of the Spirit. There are several works of the Spirit. You see here what the Spirit doth, 'We all.' The Spirit unites us together. It is a Spirit of union. It knits all together by one faith to God. All meet in God the Father reconciled; and we all are joined together by love, wrought by the Spirit, 'with open face.' Who takes away the veil? We are all veiled by nature. The Spirit takes away the veil from our eyes, and from the truth. What is the reason the gospel is so obscure? The Spirit takes not away the veil, it teacheth not by the ministry; or else it takes not away the veil from the eyes. The Spirit takes away the scales from our eyes, and the Spirit in the ministry takes away the obscurity of the Scriptures. All those that we call graces, the free gifts, the ministerial gifts, they are the gifts and the graces of the Spirit; and they are for the graces of the Spirit. Skill in tongues and in the Scriptures, and in other learning, are given to men that they may take away the veil from the Scriptures, that they may be lightsome; and then when the Spirit is given, he takes away the veil from the soul by his own work; and then with open face 'we behold the glory of the Lord.' What doth open our eyes to see, when the veil is taken off? The Spirit. We have no inward light nor sight, but by the illumination of the Spirit. All light in the things, and all sight in us, it is by the illumination of the Spirit. And then the change according to the image of Christ, this is altogether 'by the Spirit of Christ, it is altogether from the Holy Ghost. Christ baptizeth 'with the Holy Ghost, and with fire,' Mat. iii. 11, and Christ came 'by blood, and by water,' 1 John v. 6: by blood, to die for us; and by water, by his Spirit to change us and purge and cleanse us. All is by the Spirit.

Christ came as well by the Spirit as by blood. This change, and the gradual change from glory to glory, all is by the Spirit. Therefore we should not think altogether of Christ, or God the Father, when we go to God in prayer; but think of the work of the Spirit, that the Holy Ghost may have his due.

Lord, without thy Spirit, my body is as a thing without a soul, a dead, loathsome, stiff, unapt carcase, that cannot stir a whit; and so my soul without the operation of thy Holy Spirit, it is a stiff, dead, unmoveable thing; and therefore by thy Spirit breathe upon me. As thy Holy Spirit in the creation did lie upon the waters, and brood as it were all things there; lying upon the waters it fashioned this goodly creature, heaven and earth, this mundus. So the Spirit of God lying upon the waters of the soul, it fashions all graces and comforts, whatsoever they are; all is wrought by the Spirit in the new creature, as all in this glorious fabric of the world was by the Spirit of God. Let the Spirit of God therefore have due acknowledgment in all things whatsoever.

And what are we to look to mainly now? The knowledge of God the Father, and his love to us shining in Christ, all is in Christ; and if we would have anything wrought in us, any alteration of our natures, let us beg the Spirit, that we may have the discovery of the love of God in Christ, and the Spirit attending upon the gospel.

And because we have all these abundantly in these latter times of the church, in the second spring of the gospel, in the reformation of religion, after our recovery out of popery, there is a second spring of the gospel. Oh, beloved, how much are we beholding to God! Never since the beginning of the world was there such glorious times as we enjoy. We see how the holy apostle doth prefer these times before former times, when the veil was upon their eyes, and when all was hid in ceremonies, and types, and such things among the Jews. 'Now,' saith he, 'we behold the glory of God, and are changed by the Spirit from glory to glory.'

To conclude all. Therefore consider that the glory of the times, and the glory of places and persons, all is from the revelation of Christ by the Spirit, which hath the Spirit accompanying it. The more God in Christ is laid open, the more the times, and places, and persons are excellent. What made the second temple beyond the former? Christ came at the second temple. Therefore though it were baser in itself, yet the second temple was more glorious than the first. What made Bethlehem, that little city, glorious? Christ was born there. What makes the heart where Christ is born more glorious

than other folk? Christ is born there. Christ makes persons and places glorious. What makes the times now more glorious than they were before Christ? What made the least in the kingdom of heaven greater than John Baptist? He was greater than all that were before him; and all that are after him are greater than he. Because his head was cut off, he saw not the death and resurrection of Christ, and the giving of the Holy Ghost. He saw not so much of Christ. So that the revelation of Christ and the love of God in Christ, it is that that makes times, and persons, and places glorious, all glorious, because the veil is taken away from our eyes. We see Christ the King of glory in the gospel nourishing, and the love of God manifested, and by the Spirit of God the veil is taken away inwardly as well as outwardly. Now for a fuller discovery of Christ than in former times, comes the glory of the times. Now there are more converted than in former times, because the Spirit goes together with the manifestation of Christ. What is the reason that this kingdom is more glorious than any place beyond the seas? Because Christ is here revealed more fully than there. The veil is taken off, and here 'we see the glory of God with open face,' which changeth many thousands from glory to glory by the Spirit of God that accompanies the revelation of the gospel. Is there any outward thing that advanceth our kingdom before Turkey, or Spain, &c.? Nothing. Their government, and riches, and outward things are as much as ours, if not more. The glory of places and times are from the revelation of Christ, that hath the Spirit accompanying of it. That Spirit changeth us 'from glory to glory.' Our times are more glorious than they were a hundred years or two before. Why? Because we have a double revelation of Christ, and of antichrist. We see Christ revealed, and the gospel opened, and the veil taken off. We see antichrist revealed, that hath masked under the name of head of the church, and hath seduced the world.

Now this double revelation challengeth acknowledgment of these blessed times. What should all this do but stir us up to know the time of our visitation, and to thankfulness; to bless God that hath reserved us for these places and countries that we live in, to cast our times to be in this glorious light of the gospel to be born in. What if we had been born in lose dark Egyptian times of popery? Our lives had not been so comfortable. Now we live under the gospel, wherein 'with open face' we see the glory of the mercy of God in Christ, the 'unsearchable riches' of Christ opened and discovered to us. And together with the gospel, the ministry of the Spirit, goeth the Spirit; and those that belong to God, thousands by the blessing of God are changed from glory to glory.

Certainly if we share in the good of the times we will have hearts to lank God, and to walk answerably, that as we have the glorious gospel, so we will walk gloriously, that we do not by a base and fruitless life dishonour so glorious a gospel. I beseech you let us think of the times, else if we be not the better for the glorious times, if the veil be not taken away, we are under a fearful judgment. 'The god of this world hath blinded our eyes,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. Do we live under the glorious light, and yet are dark, that we see no glory in Christ? We see nothing in religion, but are as ready to entertain popery as true religion. Is this the fruit of the long preaching of the gospel, and the veil being taken off so long? Certainly the god of this world hath cast the dust of the world into our eyes, that we can see nothing but earthly things. We are under the seal of God's judgment. He hath sealed us up to a dark state, from darkness of judgment to the darkness of hell without repentance. Therefore let us take heed how we live in a dull and dead condition, under the glorious gospel, or else how cursed shall we be! The more we are exalted and lifted up above other people in the blessings of God this way, the more we shall be cast down. 'Woe be to Chorazin,' &c., Mat. xi. 21; and Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?'

I beseech you let us take heed how we trifle away our time, these precious times and blessed opportunities; for if we labour not to get out of the state of nature into the state of grace, and so to be changed from glory to glory, God in justice will curse the means we have, that in hearing we shall not hear, and seeing we shall not see, and he will secretly and insensibly harden our hearts. It is the curse of all curses, when we are under plenty of means, to grow worse and duller. Oh take heed of spiritual judgments above all others, tremble at them. They belong to reprobates and cast aways. Let us labour for hearts sensible of the mercies of God in Christ, and labour to be transformed and moulded into this gospel every day more and more. That that hath been spoken shall be sufficient for this time, and for this whole text. and for this whole text.

Exposition of 2 Corinthians Chapter IV

To the Reader

Christian reader, there are three ways by which a minister preaches: by doctrine, life, and writing. It may be questioned which is the hardest.

1. Truly for preaching,—the apostle's *τίς ικανός*, 2 Cor. ii. 16, 'who is sufficient?' may correct the slight apprehensions of hearers, and the hasty intrusion of teachers. Luther was wont to say, If he were to choose his calling, he would dig with his hands rather than be a minister: The disposition both of speakers and hearers, saith Chrysostom, makes this work difficult. In regard of hearers, scarce any member groans under more moral diseases than the ear. We read of an 'uncircumcised ear,' Acts vii. 51; 'deaf ears,' Rom. xi. 8, Micah. vii. 16; 'itching ears,' 2 Tim. iv. 2; 'ears that are dull of hearing,' Mat. xiii. 15. Most people come to hear as men do to a theatre, non utilitatem sed voluptatem percepturi, not so much to feed their faith as please their fancy. And for teachers, how many dangers do they lie open to! If they do not preach novelties, falsities, yet to preach *sana, sanè*, sound things soundly; to deliver the word, *ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι*, Col. iv. 4, 'as it ought to be spoken.' To 'speak a word in season,' Isa. 1. 4; to 'approve' themselves to God workmen that need not be ashamed; *ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας*, rightly cutting the word into parts, giving every one his portion, 2 Tim. ii. 15. And when a man hath done God's work in God's strength, to go away, with a humble heart, be labor:—such a one is an 'interpreter,' 'one among a thousand,' Job xxxiii. 23.

2. But then for the life. Alas! how many think the work is done when the glass is out; how many are good in the doctrine, bad in the application, especially to themselves; how hard is it to have life in doctrine, and doctrine in life! It is easier to preach twenty sermons than to mortify one lust. It was a harder task Paul set Timothy, 2 Tim. iv. 12, when he bids him be an example to believers, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, &c., than when he bids him 'give attendance to reading, exhortation, doctrine,' ver. 13. Yet we shall often hear ministers say, They must study to preach, then study to practise. God would have the very snuffers in the tabernacle pure gold, to show they that purge others must shine themselves. Surely they must needs be 'unclean,' that chew the cud by meditation, but divide not the hoof by practice. Lastly,

3. For writing—that hath more pre-eminency, though the two former have more vivacity. There is, saith a good man, as much difference between a sermon in the pulpit and printed in a book, as between milk in the warm breast and in the sucking bottle. Yet the convenience of it is very great. Good books are the baskets that preserve excellent lessons that they be not lost. This also wants not its difficulty; for what censures, impostures, contempt, wrestings, have the labours of the most eminent saints been exposed to, yea, the Scriptures themselves—the pandect of all truth, the testament of our Lord Jesus—how much have they suffered in all ages, besides the great difficulty, that is in other men’s spirits to write truth. Yet let us bless God for the writings of his servants, for by these, ‘being dead, they yet speak to us,’ Heb. xi. 4. We have the prophets and apostles, in their writings, preaching to us. Their sermons were like a running banquet, refreshed many; their writings were a standing dish. Sermons are like showers of rain, wet for the present. Books are like snow-banks, lie longer upon the earth, and keep it warm in winter. It might be a problem whether professors preaching and writing, or confessors dying, have most profited the church.

Some have thought it preposterous in times of reformation to shut the pulpit against erroneous persons, and leave the press open to them, that being so compendious a way to propagate and to multiply errors; and the liberty, used more to condemn truths received, than to debate in a friendly way things indifferent. Indeed, it must be acknowledged a very sad thing, the multitude not only of vain but blasphemous treatises this age hath produced, and the great mischief they have done. But blessed be God, the press is as open to truth as error, and truth has been as nimble heeled as error. God never yet suffered any Goliath to defy him, but he raised up a David to encounter him. Though error, like Esau, hath come out first, yet truth, like Jacob, hath caught it by the heel, and wrestled with it, Gen. xxv. 26. If God hath suffered any horn to push at his Israel, he hath presently raised a carpenter to knock it off. Let us bless God for the witnessing spirit that is abroad, though it go in sackcloth, Rev. xi. 3. Think how great a mercy it is to keep ground, though we cannot gain ground.

Let none complain of the multitude of good books. Though one bad one be too many, yet many good ones are too few; or, as one saith, ‘one useless or erroneous book is too many. Many useful orthodox books are but one.’ All the prophets and apostles make but one Bible, upon which account we may say all the books that faithfully interpret that are but one book.

All these ways this reverend author was serviceable to the church of God while he lived; and, since his decease, the providence of God hath brought to light several tracts of his, some sooner, some later. And that in great wisdom; for our foolish nature doth many times prize the labours of those dead, whom we despised living, as the Jews, 'Their fathers killed the prophets, and their sons builded their tombs,' Matt, xxiii. 29. We may have such in these days. The spirit of man hath a more reverent opinion of things past than present, of things ancient than modern, of things farther off than near at hand. Another thing wherein the wisdom of God appears in the multitude of books, is, not only a discovery of the manifold gifts of the Spirit, that he pours on his servants (which could not well be seen but in variety and diversity), but also to invite us to the farther study of them by change; for the best of us have some seeds of curiosity. Now God, by the variety of gifts and graces in his servants, invites us to pass from one to another.

We shall say no more, but entreat thee to consider this treatise as a posthume. 'The notes were taken from his mouth by the pen of a ready writer, and a person of note and integrity, whose design is not to forge a piece under the author's name. The very style and matter is so like his other pieces, we hope the legitimacy of it will not be questioned. It is easier to counterfeit another man's name than another man's gifts. Had the author lived to supervise his own work, no question but it would have passed his hand with more authority and more politeness. Thou wilt sometimes meet with some repetitions, yet with the addition of new matter. When thou meetest with it, read it as an impression which may carry force, and work more upon thy heart. In a word, the 'earthen vessel' is broken, the 'heavenly treasure' is preserved for thy use, and here offered to thee.

Now that God hath caused light to shine out of darkness, cause the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, to shine in thine and our hearts, more and more to the perfect day! So pray,

Thy souls' and thy faiths' servants in the Lord's work,
Simeon Ash.
Joseph Church.

A Learned Commentary or Exposition Upon the Fourth Chapter of the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians

For God, he commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—2 Cor. IV. 6.

In the last verse of the former chapter, the blessed apostle sets out the dignity of the gospel above the things of Moses and the things of the law.

‘We all,’ saith he, ‘with open face, as in a glass, behold the glory of God, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory,’ &c. And hereupon, in the beginning of the next chapter, he sets out the excellency of the gospel ministry, being conversant about so excellent a mystery, and showeth his fidelity in it. ‘Therefore,’ saith he, ‘we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commend ourselves to the consciences of all men in the sight of God.’ Here he showeth his fidelity in the ministry, and his courage, ‘he fainteth not;’ and likewise his sincerity, he ‘labours to approve himself to the consciences of them in the sight of God.’ Perhaps he had not all their good words; but it is better to have the consciences of people to give testimony of us than their words, their hearts than their mouths. Therefore the apostle knew not what they censured, but knew he had got some authority in their consciences; and therefore labours ‘to approve himself to them in the sight of God,’ which showeth his sincerity. For this is the property of sincerity, to do all as ‘in the sight of God;’ to do good at all times, in all places, to all persons, in all actions. He that is sincere honours God in all.

Obj. Well, it might be objected, ‘Many care not for the ministry nor the gospel, it is too obscure,’ &c.; as it is the common course of the popish Jesuits to fall to accusation of Scripture as dark.

Ans. But, saith he, ‘If the gospel be hid, it is hid to them whom the god of this world hath blinded.’ And for further answer of the objection, ‘If the gospel be hid from any, it is from them that perish.’ And what is the cause? It is in regard of their own hardness of heart, joined with the malice of Satan. The god of the world hath thrown dust in their eyes, otherwise the gospel is clear enough. The blessed apostle was so privy to his own fair, open, free-dealing, that he dares freely say, ‘If the gospel be hid, it is to them that perish.’ There is no unfaithfulness, no obscurity in me. Satan hath an hand in it: ‘the god of this world hath blinded their eyes.’

The god of this world. What! doth he put God out of his place? No; but the world maketh him so, namely, a god, by doing that to Satan, partly in himself and partly to his instruments, that they should do to God. They are at his beck, and run at his command; he leadeth them by worldly profits and pleasures, as a sheep is led by a green pasture. His influence acts. Wicked men are rightly styled 'men of the world,' Ps. xvii. 14; and Satan is truly called, by our apostle, 'the god of the world,' for they make him so by yielding to him in his designs.

Satan hath ruled in the church for many hundred years, yet more formerly than he doth in these times; but he did it subtly. Great persons ruled by their friends, their friends were ruled by popish spirits; they by Jesuits, and the Jesuits by the man of sin, and he by Satan. So you see all resolved to the first principle. Satan hath a great hand in the government of the world. Doubtless the frogs that came out of the mouth of the beast, Rev. xvi. 18, are Jesuits and irksome devilish spirits. He lieth hid in a corner, and is not seen; but he is the god of the world, because by his subordination he ruleth as he list.

Use. Here you see the malice of man, justice of God, and usurpation of Satan. Man is the delinquent, God the judge, Satan the executioner. Man hath a hard and malicious heart against the light, he swelleth against it, and hateth nothing so much as the light. Take a worldly man that hath great parts, offer him the world, contrary to his lusts and preferment, he will swell. Satan cavils against it. Indeed, men hate nothing so deadly as light, and this is the procuring cause of all mischief. When the truth is forced on you, and you will have none, then God as a just judge saith, 'Take him, Satan; take him, Jesuit; take him, this or that profane person or vice; and how can such persons escape the blackness of darkness for ever?

And, beloved, can a man receive this glorious light of the Lord Jesus, when men are so dull and ignorant in the great point of religion? not only because they hate the light, and put off God's just judgments, but also from Satan's temptations, either immediately from himself or his instruments. And lest this should seem to be spoken something too high, 'the gospel is hid to them that perish,' &c., therefore, saith he, 'we preach not ourselves, but Christ; and ourselves your servants for his sake.' He did not speak this arrogantly, for all his ministerial function. He aimeth not at himself, but 'I serve Christ; and am your servant for his sake.' Not the servant of your lusts, for had he been the servant of men he had not been the servant of the Lord

Jesus Christ; but the servant of their souls, one that would have laid his hands at their feet to serve them, and would have been their servant indeed for their souls' good.

Now, the words that I have read to you show the chief and principal cause of the glorious light of the gospel, and the means both to remove the cause of obscurity from the Scripture, and from St Paul's ministry, and show where it is indeed.

The principal cause of all light is God: 'God, that hath commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,' not only outwardly in his word, but in our hearts. And to that end he gave the word, &c. So here is the chief cause of the chief end.

First, The chief cause of all saving light that we have in the ministry, of the word is God, that shineth in our hearts by the ministry of the gospel. And,

Secondly, The chief end is to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; not obscurely, like popish spirits, to impose darkness upon the Scriptures. Darkness is not from them; for the subject of the Scriptures declareth the image of God, not the accidental, but the real image of God the Father, who is light; and then they oppose God, who is light in himself. But the end of the gospel is to give light, and 'the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' If therefore the cause and matter and end be light, where is the cause of obscurity?

To come to the words:

First, You see the cause of light, of inward light in the heart. There is a double light—a light in the air and a light in the eye. So there is a light in the heart and a light in the truths themselves. Now, God is the cause of that inward light: 'God hath shined in our hearts;' not only to us, but in our hearts, by his Holy Spirit.

Second, The end of this light is, not to shine in our hearts to no purpose, but to shine in our hearts that we may shine to others; that we may prove the light we have, that shineth to us in darkness, to convey the knowledge of God to all. What knowledge? The knowledge of Christ, and saving knowledge 'in the face of Christ.' And why doth God enlighten the ministers that they may convey light to others? That God's glory may be

manifested. All is for his glory. The glory of his goodness, and justice, and his sweet attributes are manifested in Christ, which I shall speak of when I come to them.

Here he sets out God shining in the hearts of his ministers and children, by comparing of the light shining in darkness and God's commanding of light to shine out of darkness in the creation together. He ariseth from works of nature to works of grace, and from earthly things leads the Corinthians to spiritual things, in showing an exact proportion between the things of nature and the things of grace; and therefore so should we in the matter of grace and glory.

This he doth to help our apprehensions of heavenly things, by these kind of glasses.

Therefore look how he takes things of nature to this end, and mark what he saith. He saith not Almighty God hath shined in our hearts, but he sets down that glorious attribute of God's almightiness by a word more familiar [to our understandings: 'He that hath commanded light to shine out of darkness! And thereupon showeth the almighty power, wisdom, and goodness, that God graciously hath shined in our hearts. It is a wonderful comfort to the soul to single out of God what is fittest, either out of his attributes, his word, his works, or his creation.

But here we will speak first of that whence he raiseth his proportion, of God's commanding light to shine out of darkness; secondly, and then will show the proportion between outward and spiritual light.

1. The proportion of God's commanding light to shine out of darkness, and of light to shine in the sold. The rise whence he fetcheth this is from the creation: 'God commanded light to shine out of darkness.' You know there was a primitive light; *lux prirnogenita*, as Basil calls it; the first light, which was before the body of the sun, and after was put into the body of the sun, at the fourth day. He created the light first. God 'commanded that light to shine out of darkness.' Now, there is much ado, to no great purpose, what that light was that was created out of darkness, before the sun was made the receptacle of light. The time is short, and to spend it in unnecessary speculations is curious to search, and too rash to determine what that light was, whence it was taken, whether out of the confused mass or the purest part of it, and so lifted up to shine in the world; or whether he did create light out of darkness, taking darkness for the terminus, and not for the

matter, to create light out of darkness, because there was nothing but darkness before; or whether God created this primitive light out of any body in the mass, or it was created out of darkness as out of a mass. But the Scripture determines it not, and therefore we will not meddle with anything in these matters without light of Scripture. Certain it is, that this light did distinguish day and night, and afterward was carried to the body of the sun. And it was created by God's commandment; for it is said, 'he that commanded light out of darkness hath shined in our hearts.'

Now, it is said here that light is God's creature. It is out of darkness, and it is by God's command. It was but his word *fat et fait*, a word and a world; as it was spoken it was made, Gen. i. 3.

1. The thing created was light; 2. The manner how, by the word; 3. Out of what? From darkness. I will not speak distinctly of them—it were to little purpose—but altogether: 'God hath commanded light to shine out of darkness.'

This command shows that God did it quickly and easily. It was but a word, a command; and he did it without any influence at all, by a mere word.

It was independently done of God. There was no matter to make it of, at least as good as nothing; for it was made of the mass. The mass was made of nothing.

Reason 1. Now, if you ask, Why God did create light in the first place? I answer, It was because he might distinguish his six days' works. If there had not been [light] to distinguish day and night, where had that distinction been?

Reason 2. And then again, God had lost the glory of his works if he had not created light. Light hath a heavenly quality, the principal of all qualities, the most excellent part of all.

Reason 3. And God created it first, that it might discover itself and all other things. It was *primum visibile*, that made all others seen. What had the beauty of the creatures been if light had not been created? They had all been covered in darkness. What end had there been of the eye and colours? Indeed, there is no quality that so much resembles God and divine things as light. The Scripture is exceedingly delighted in the using of this term light: 'God is the light of the world,' John i. 4, seq.

‘Christ is the light of the world, that lighteth every one that cometh into the world,’ John i. 9. The Holy Ghost is light, the angels light, the saints are the children of light. So that God taketh from hence those terms by which he sets out the dignity and excellency of himself, his children, and servants; and shows you the reasons of that light ‘that enlightens every one that cometh into the world.’

Light showeth and discovereth all the excellency of things, and distinguisheth one thing from another, and therefore Ambrose calleth it *lux prima gratia mundi*, the first grace of the world, and that ornament of the creature which sets out all other ornaments, that distinguisheth one from another.

Reason 4. Again, it is that quality that doth quicken and enliven, and therefore the things that do quicken, and enliven are lightsome; a lively quality that puts life and cheerfulness into things. Light is sweet, Eccles. xi. 7. And it hath a quality likewise that it is not alone, for it is *vehiculum*, a conveyer of all influence from heaven. The virtue of conveying life into things on the earth is the light. Heat is but a connection. Heat cometh with light; and heat together with light, fosters and cherisheth all things in the world; as in nature, if there were not fire and heat, what could be good in nature? and if not heat and light, what would become of the world? All progressions and motions come from hence; and when light discovers good or ill, danger or commodity, this or that, thereupon the creature moves or removes from things hurtful, by benefit of the light. To be in darkness is a most hideous and irksome condition. Darkness breeds nothing but fear and terror, which weakeneth the spirit, and doth whatsoever is contrary to light. *Lux gloria creationis, tenebrae sunt opprobria.*

I might be very large in setting out the excellency of it, and all to good purpose, that we might see the excellency of the benefit thereof.

O beloved, what were our lives without it! We forget common benefits. How dark, disconsolate, fearful, terrible, and uncomfortable were our lives if they were without (this quickening and solacing quality of light! and therefore we ought to take notice even of the rise of St Paul. I do but give a taste, ‘For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’

We see then that God by his authority commanded light to shine out of darkness. But what God? God the Father or God the Son? I answer, Elohim, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. All things were first from the Father, but the Son was Λόγος, and it was the Word that gave this command, Heb. i. 8. But the will of God is his word. The will of Christ is λόγος; for God created all things by the Son, who is the Wisdom of the Father. Therefore this word, 'Let there be light,' came from that Word, that Λόγος, which is the cause of all things, as John i. 3, 'By him were all things made that were made.' And the Spirit was an immediate cause; for the Spirit of God lay upon the waters. It lay upon the chaos. By it all things were made. It brooded as a hen upon the chickens, and as an eagle fluttereth upon her young ones. The Holy Ghost did cherish and foster the primitive matter, on which all things were made. But they all agree in one.

You have the story in the first of Genesis. Elohim did it, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I would willingly come to some observation that may make it useful to us. Before I come to the main thing, this is worth our observing.

Obs. 1. That God commanded light out of darkness, to show that God is the Almighty God, gracious, wise. We see that all things came from an almighty power. So the use of everything, the connection and subordination of one thing to another, it sheweth that all things came from a wise and gracious beginning. For we see that in the earth there are many beautiful things. The heavens, how glorious are they! and in the world how many excellent beauties! What were these if there were no light? and what were light if there were not an eye? Now, where there is a reference of one thing to another, and a connection of things, and a use of one thing to serve another, it showeth that he was a God, and a wise God, that made all. This principle cannot be too much stood upon, because the weight of Christianity lieth upon it. The order, and use, and goodness of things, and connection of things, show there is a good and a wise God. Take that for granted.

So you see what manner of worker God is in the creation, although independent, that can do all things at a word, with ease, without influence, without help. He dependeth not on matter as we do, that can do nothing without matter and subject to work upon, but he can work his own matter, can raise things out of nothing.

Use. And it is very observable, for to help us in the dealings of our lives, to have such a conceit of God that we should not limit God in our thoughts;

when we are in any extremity to tie him to this thing or to that thing. He can make matter out of nothing. Why should we limit the unlimited God, and so hinder our own comfort? Therefore we should infer hence, that God commandeth light to shine out of darkness. Observe that, when we be in dark conditions, and dark in sin, whatsoever sin and dark conditions we are in, as Isa. xlv. 7, 'I the Lord create light out of darkness,' that is, out of a darksome condition. Now light is taken for a comfortable condition, Esther viii. 16. When we be in any dark condition, limit not God. He is an independent worker. Question not how this may be and that may be. We must not bring God within the compass of our conceits and reasons. God is not as man; and therefore whatsoever our condition be, let us never limit God. God's people should never be better, the times were never worse. Where we be bad, God is good. Times are bad, God is good. He can alter all. When there is no hope of escaping, no likely issue, God can make it good. In the hardships, the exigencies of the soul, God takes occasion to show the glory of his power, as Isa. iv. 5, God, saith he, 'created a pillar of fire, to go before the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan.' If we want any comfort in any condition, being in covenant with such a God, if we be his children, he can create light, and can make a pillar of fire to go before his people to bring them to Canaan. See what the apostle saith, 2 Cor. i. 8, 'He is the God of all consolations;' not of this or that consolation, but the God of all consolations; that if we want he can work good out of the contrary, light out of darkness; he can draw matter of comfort out of discomfort; he can make every condition serve to his own ends; he can make 'all things work together for the good of his children,' Rom. viii. 28. The greater the power of this great God is, the greater is our comfort. We serve a God that can 'command light to shine out of darkness,' and shall we despair in any condition whatsoever? He can give rest without sleep, and strength without meat. He cannot be limited. Therefore let us not limit him.

Use 2. So again, for the state of the church, whatsoever condition it is in, consider the creation. 'God commands light to shine out of darkness.' The church being in darkness, God can command the light presently to shine out of darkness, as in Esther's time, Esther vi. 3, seq. What terrible darkness was the church in, when Haman was commanded to destroy all the Jews! and what a terrible case was the church in in Egypt and Babylon! In a most darksome condition; and yet God brought light out of darkness, as in Esther's time.

And so of latter times; a little before Luther's time, was not the church brought low, so that darkness overspread the world? and cannot God raise up the blessed light of the truth? And also of latter times, look but the last year, in what a dark condition the church was. But God begins to do for his church again. Who would have thought this the other year, when the enemy began to be so insolent? But God can fetch Cyrus from the east and from the north to help his people, Isa. xlv. 28; xlv. 1. God can fetch a man from the north, from this place and that place, to help his church. Therefore in no condition of the church despair; for we are in covenant with God, that can 'command light out of darkness.' 'He that is in darkness, and hath no light,' let him trust in the name of his God, Isa. 1. 10. We must cast anchor at midnight, and trust in the midst of darkness. We see darkness is hideous, yet a little spark of light doth banish it, and overcome it, as a little rotten wood expelleth it in some measure, that hath shining in it. Now, beloved, is this darkness in the world, this lower darkness, driven away by a spark of light in some proportion? and shall not we think that great Light, the Father of lights, God, when he shines on the soul, will quickly banish away all darkness? It must needs be so.

Use 8. This may help us likewise for time to come. Groat things are promised for time to come. We must help ourselves by this former work of creation. God that 'commanded light to shine out of darkness' will restore the Jews his ancient people again. St Paul calleth it the resurrection from the dead, Rom. xi. 15. It shall be a raising from the dead, as it were. He that 'commanded light to shine out of darkness' can do it, and will do it. He that did make all things out of nothing, can cause that that which is less, a resurrection. And so the fulness of the Gentiles, they be now in darkness, and in the shadow of death. What pitiful darkness are the East and West Indies in, and many of the southern countries, that serve the devil, not God? Better times are coming. The converting of the Gentiles will come, and in due time we may expect that the 'man of sin' shall be laid flat in the dust. Babylon shall fall. It is fallen exceedingly much, specially in the hearts of the people, which is the way to the last fall; but antichrist must fall together,! and then the church will be glorious, Rev. xiv. 8. He that made all things out of nothing, can make great things out of nothing. He that made of nothing glorious things, can make glorious things nothing. It is the same power to annihilate that it is to create. God, that made all things out of nothing, can bring all things to nothing. God will consume, and blast, and blow upon that 'man of sin.' Jehovah is mighty, and doth mightily. Therefore the vast world shall be consumed ere long. Comfort yourselves therefore with these things

from hence, that God that made all things of nothing, can turn those things that are into nothing again.

Would you know how? ‘Strong is the Lord that judgeth his,’ Rev. xviii. 8. He answereth an objection. Oh, but she flourisheth, and hath many princes, emperors, potentates, and strong arms of flesh to support her. ‘But strong is the Lord that hath spoken it,’ and can do it. If God will consume her, who can support her? Thus we see what use to make of the foundation of St Paul: He fetcheth it from God’s commanding light out of darkness.

It is a very sweet use to search the former works of God, to look back and consider what God hath done in former times. You may see in Isa. xxvii. 3, and Ps. lxxiv. 16, ‘The day is thine, the night is thine.’ Thou hast made distinctions between day and night: thou canst deliver thy church. It is a singular grace to make use of common things, even of the works of creation; for herein a child of God differs from another. Another takes God’s common mercies, and sees the works of God, and goeth on brutishly. A fool considers not these things. Oh, but the intelligent Christian considers the great work of creation, of his commanding of all things out of nothing, and he can make no common use of things. And that is the excellency of a Christian; to support his faith, he can make use of sacraments, and word, and creation. Therefore, let us know we be God’s children, by gaining glory to God by our gracious spirits, by showing our skill by the Spirit, to let nothing pass without observing, which may support our faith and encourage our souls, as the apostle fetcheth comfort from the work of creation. Let us make use of this so great a God, who can do great things, and you can do great things with him. If a company would join in an army of prayers, it were worth all the armies in the world; it would set the great God on work. He that can raise light out of darkness, what cannot he do to his poor church, if they had a spirit of prayer to set him on work! Let us pray for the things we have promises for with much confidence: for the conversion of the Jews, and confusion of the ‘man of sin.’ We have the word for it. God goeth before it. The enemies begin to fall before the church. Follow God wheresoever he goeth. There is something for faith to lay hold upon, and encouragement, that he is mighty; and whatsoever he can do, he will do for the good of the church; and you see how he can do it. He doth but command, and it is done. God with his beck commands all. He can hiss for an enemy from the farthest part of the world, and have them come presently, Isa. v. 26. His finger will do great matters: what will his arm do then? When our blessed Saviour was in the days of his flesh, and said, ‘Depart, Satan,’ he must be gone presently. He

commanded away the devil at a word; he rebuked fevers, sicknesses, waves, tempests: he spake but the word, and all was quiet and still; the devil and all, at his command. And is not he as strong in heaven as on earth? It is but a word, out of doubt, to deliver his church, and restore lightsome times again.

‘What aileth thee, O thou Jordan, that thou gatherest thyself on heaps? The sea fell hack at thy rebuke, O Lord,’ Ps. cxiv. 5. He hath all things at command. A whale is commanded to receive Jonah, i. 17; a fish was at his command to bring tribute, Mat. xvii. 27; and all things in heaven and earth. Oh what a God we serve, who as he can bring out of darkness, so he can do it by his word.

Use 4. Therefore, labour from hence for perfect resignation of our souls, and bodies, and conditions, into the hands of this God that can do all with his word, as those three men did in Dan. viii. 16, ‘God can deliver us if he will,’ but we will resign ourselves into his hands. What lost they by that? And the poor man in the gospel: ‘Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,’ Mat. viii. 2. Presently, ‘I will, be thou clean.’ If we can, in any disconsolate condition, say, If thou wilt, Lord, thou canst, we shall, in God’s blessed time, have an answer, I will; therefore thou shalt be in a better condition. Leave it to him that knoweth better what is for the good of us, than ourselves do.

And therefore, I beseech you, make this use of it. Give up yourselves to God, and serve him exactly and perfectly. Will you have a rule and a ground to serve God exactly at every beck and command? Remember you have such a God as commands light out of darkness, and shall not we serve him? Shall we be slack in obedience to him that can create comforts when we want? that can bring us out of any condition, or at least, can make any condition comfortable? He can enter into dungeons, prisons, and make prisons paradises; he can by his Spirit do immediately what the creature doth; for what command is in the creature but it is in him? And he can speak that comfort to the soul that the creature can; and therefore, shall we not walk perfectly with him that is an independent worker, that can work above means, against means, that can do all he hath done, and more than he hath done, can do all that he will do, and will do more than we can conceive he can? And shall not we resign ourselves to him, and walk perfectly with him? shall we displease him, to please men? shall we leave his subjects and children, for this and that fear? Let our condition be never so uncomfortable, he can make it comfortable, and he can make the greatest and most glorious

condition in the world a hell; and therefore, let us make use of these in all the extremities of the church.

Verse 6

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The apostle labours, in the beginning of the chapter, to remove an imputation cast upon the gospel, as if it were not true doctrine. But if it be so, it is to them ‘in whom the god of this world hath blinded their eyes.’ Secondly, he labours to remove the imputation of vain-glory, as if his preaching did such great wonders; and showeth that the efficacy of all is from above, from God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness; and for this end, ‘to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’

The words have these two parts: the chief and principal cause of all heavenly light in us—ministerial will not serve the turn—‘God commanded light to shine,’ &c.

For the first, ‘God hath commanded light to shine out of darkness.’ There is no less work to shine in that dark heart of man, than to create the world, to create light out of darkness. So much harder than that (though not in regard of an omnipotent power, for to that nothing is hard, but in regard of the thing itself), because there is much obscurity and rebellion in the heart. There is no help at all.

To add a little—that we may be raised up to admiration of the excellency of the new creature. There is nothing at all of it in our nature. There is something in nature to join with duty; there is a seed of it in us. But for heavenly light, for knowledge of God in Christ, there is nothing at all of it in nature. It must not be repairing and piercing, but a whole creation. And therefore there be more good lessons in the gospel than in the law, because the law hath something in it that accordeth with us, for the law and the law in our hearts agree; but the gospel is altogether from without, both the truth itself, and the special grace wrought by the gospel. And therefore the proud and vain hearts of men make this and that conceit of Christ and his offices, because nature will not submit to it, it having nothing of it in itself; and therefore the gospel must raise oppositions. It bringeth in self-denial, being

the first doctrine, so contrary to the will, which turneth a man out of himself. Therefore God that created light out of darkness must shine in our hearts.

And yet let me add this, we should not despair, for it is God that shineth. Come under the means wherewith God is pleased to be effectual, attend on the posts of wisdom, and God will stir the waters in his good time, John v. 3, will convey an almighty power in the use of the ordinances. Let no man therefore despair, because it is in God's power to shine in our hearts, and it is well for us that it is in the power of God to work grace, for now it is out of our own. And all immediately depend on God. Meet him, attend him there, and he will meet us; depend on him, and undoubtedly he will work grace first or last. This is God's way, and you shall find God in it.

Secondly, the end of this light that God commandeth to shine in our hearts, not in our brains. God's illumination goeth through the whole soul, alters the will and affection. They that are not altered in the course of their hearts and souls, as well as their understandings, in Scripture they are said to know nothing at all. He that knoweth not Christ so as to put off the old man, and put on the new, that hath not divine light passing through the understanding to the will, and through the whole man, he knoweth nothing in religion but what may stand with damnation.

When the light presseth on him in his courses, he is always reprovng it, and therefore they be never quiet. It is a vexing light, an unprofitable light, nay, a light whereby damnation is increased, if it be not joined with sanctification and illumination overspreading the whole soul.

And the end of it is to give the 'light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

God's children they have light shining on them. No man hath grace in themselves alone; and specially it is true of ministers, who besides personal graces, have graces of office for others. And therefore 'God shineth in their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' He shineth on them that they may reflect their light on others, as the moon and stars, that have their light from the sun, that they may reflect on the earth, and inferior bodies.

1. The particulars are these: the knowledge of God is the end of all. Now that God will be glorified, especially in his attributes of mercy and love, wisdom and justice, and holiness, all these are seen specially in the gospel,

but most of all the sweet attributes of grace and mercy. The glory of God is his aim, and his glory shines in these attributes, and they shine in the face of Christ.

Now Christ must be made known, his face must be showed, and therefore there must be a light to make known the face of God in Jesus Christ. Religion is the way of God, the end especially in these sweet attributes, and these must have a ministry. God hath ability at call, to give the light of the knowledge of these excellencies in Christ.

Of the first we spake. There is one first cause of all things, and one last end, that is God; all for his glory. All things come from God, and all things must terminate and end in him. Now this glory is victorious, excellent, and manifested, and so manifested as it is apprehended by others. Now God's glory is wisdom, mercy, holiness, goodness. They are excellent in God, and excellently victorious over the contrary; for he is so good that his goodness is above our ill, and it is with a glorious discovery, and it is glorious that we do apprehend it. For if we be Christians, our eyes he opened by the Spirit to apprehend the glory that shineth in the gospel. Therefore God sets down this excellency by way of glory. It is not ordinary grace, but glorious grace, glorious love, and glorious wisdom, to reconcile mercy and justice. It is glorious, and eminently victorious. And all Christians have eyes to see that it is no ordinary excellency, but glory in God. When God will have it excellently set out by the word, he calls it 'glory,' to satisfy a conscience awakened, which will not be satisfied but by glorious mercy and infinite mercy. When we be in health and strong to sin (as many, the Lord be merciful to them, use their wits and strength and policy to offend, running in a course of sin, and never think of these); but Satan is a cunning rhetorician; he will amplify bitter things against us at the hour of death and time of temptation. And unless we have something that is above all his rhetoric and high mercies, victorious mercies, glorious mercies above all our sins, and above Satan's malice, the conscience will not be satisfied.

And let no man object his sins at such times, for God is glorified when his mercy is received, and his goodness entertained. 'Where sin aboundeth, grace aboundeth much more,' Rom. v. 20. Where sin aboundeth in the conscience that is guilty and groaneth under it, oh grace aboundeth in such a man; grace is glorious grace to such a man. The more thy sin is, the more is the glory of grace in pardoning it.

But how is this glorious mercy and goodness of God derived to us, God being so pure and holy, and we so unholy?

Therefore in the next place, it is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God will not suffer the glory of one of his attributes to devour and consume another, but he will have his justice fully satisfied. And therefore this glorious mercy is to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ, who was made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13.

‘In the face of Jesus Christ.’ It is a borrowed speech, and all one with that which went before, ‘Christ who is the image of God,’ in the 4th verse of this chapter. He meaneth the person of Christ, incarnate, and living, and dying, and being made a curse for us: Christ made man.

Face is the person described by that face; for the face is the most known part of a man. It is the glass of the soul, wherein we may see a man’s inside, his affections, love, hatred, and whatsoever is in the inward man. And so God discovers himself, and whatsoever is in him, ‘in the face of Jesus Christ.’ We may see his hatred of sin, his love of the elect, and whatsoever is in God. Whatsoever we see in Christ, it is in God originally.

We will unfold the point in three particulars.

1. First, We will show that in the gospel we see the face of Christ, that is, more familiarly than others. It is a speech appropriated in some manner to the gospel.

Secondly, We see the face of God in Christ.

Thirdly, That this seeing of the face of God in Christ is a most comfortable and excellent sight and knowledge.

First of all, in the gospel, we see the face of Christ. Moses, and all before Christ, saw Christ, but not the face of Christ. They saw him not so plainly, clearly, distinctly, and comfortably as we do in times of the gospel.

Now we see Christ incarnate, and Christ sacrificed for us; Christ dead, risen, ascended, and sitting on the right hand of God. They did not. And therefore Saint Ambrose saith well, *Christus umbra in lege, imago in evangelio, veritas in coelo*; in the law he was a shadow, the image of God in

the gospel, but in heaven he is the truth. And there we shall see him most lively of all.

Now there be five or six ways of God's manifesting of himself.

1. One is more excellent than the other, that is, by speech, which is an excellent manifestation.

2. And then by vision.

3. And then by dreams, as in old time.

4. And then by miracles, of which he wrought many.

5. And by sacrifices, as the passover.

G. And last of all, by types.

All these ways God manifested himself before Christ. But, as Heb. i. 2, now God speaks to us in his own Son, that is, more familiarly, even by God in our nature; and therefore the manifestation by Christ is more excellent than all former manifestations.

Then his three offices were shadowed out by king, priest, and prophet. All the kings, priests, and prophets were shadows of this great prophet, priest, and king. And all the benefits of salvation were shadowed darkly: his election, by singling Abraham out of his father's house, Gen. xii. 1; the Israelites out of the world; his vocation, by calling of Abraham and his people, Gen. xvii. 5; his justification, by divers sacrifices, which were types of Christ; by the paschal lamb, Ex. xii. 3, seq.; by the brazen serpent, Num. xxi. 9, the propitiatory and the mercy seat, Ex. xxv. 17. The great work of redemption shadowed out, by their redeeming out of Babylon and Egypt, Ex. xii. 31, seq.; the great works of sanctification, by their washing and cleansings, Lev. xiv. 8, which were the shadow of the inward purity of the soul; and glorification, the consummation of all blessings, by the land of Canaan, Josh. i. 2, seq., and 'the holy of holies,' which was the type of heaven, Ex. xxvi. 33. So that all the benefits we have of salvation were shadowed out then, but they be clear in the gospel; we see the face of Christ. In the gospel we hear Christ speaking himself. God in our nature discovers all these things to us.

Obj. But you will say, We cannot see the face of Christ, for it is gone, we cannot see him now.

Sol. No. But when we preach the gospel, receive the sacraments, hear the word, we see Christ. We see Christ in the gospel, the word is the glass of Christ; and so are the sacraments, wherein you may see the face of Christ. *Fides est spiritualis oculus*; faith is a spiritual eye, and seeth Christ.

But Abraham saw Christ and was glad. True. But now faith sees Christ more clearly than ever before. Nay, it is in some sort better for us to see Christ with the eye of faith in heaven than to see him on the earth walking up and down. Many reprobates saw him on earth, but now none can see him but with eyes of faith; none can speak to Christ but those that have learned his language.

And it is for our advantage that we see not Christ now. He doth more good in heaven than he could do on the earth. He is now at the right hand of God, and hath all power in heaven and earth. The sun, if it were lower, would consume the world, but it is high, that it may shine over more than half the world at once. So Christ, for the good of the church, is gone to heaven, and we have more good from him by the Spirit than if he were on earth.

Obj. But you will say, We shall not see his face till we see him in heaven.

Ans. True. Therefore, mark, 1, the diversity of the phrase in comparing it to former times.

We see his face in the gospel. But if we compare these times to the glorious times when he will come gloriously to judgment, we saw him but in the glass, then we shall see him face to face. So you see in what sense we see the face of Christ. What they expected and looked for, that we see. Beloved, it is happiness for us to live in these times of the church. We see Christ clearly. All the happiness of the church dependeth on the Scripture and knowledge of Christ; for he is the glory of the church, and the happiness of the church. And those times that have most of Christ are the most happy times. Now, considering we in the latter age of the world know Christ most, we are most happy. Wherein was the first temple glorious above the second? The second temple had not many things the other had. Ay, but Christ came into the second temple, and that made it glorious: 'Blessed is the eye that

seeth the things that you see, and the ears that hear what you hear,' Mat. xiii. 16.

So it is our happiness that we live in a second spring of the gospel, and not when it was covered not only with Jewish ceremonies, but with fond superstitions of their own. But now we see Christ face to face. His excellency is unveiled. It is our happiness if we be better for it, or else it will increase our damnation.

2. But it is not sufficient, unless we see God in Christ, and the glory of God 'in the face of Jesus Christ.' For the soul will not rest but in God. God is the last rest and stay of the soul. As 1 Peter i. 21, Christ was raised again from the dead, 'that your faith and hope might be in God.' God is the stay, and rest, and subsistence of the soul; it cannot rest but in God. So that we must see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, else the soul will not be sufficiently stayed. Therefore consider in what sense 'the glory of God shineth in the face of Jesus Christ.' You must know first that Christ is the perfect image of his Father; his Father shineth in him.

There be three or four things in the Scripture that set out this great mystery. As, 1, Christ is called the character of the Father, *χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως*, Heb. i. 3. They differ in this, that they be not the same in personal subsistence. They be Father and Son, one in essence; in love to mankind all one; only in personal subsistence they differ, the Father is not the Son.

2. Then he is the Wisdom of the Father.

3. Then he is the Word, showing the likeness. The word is but the image of the soul. There is the inward word and the outward word; the inward is nothing but the expression of the soul, and when it is outwardly expressed, it is but the soul conveying itself outwardly. And therefore in the original tongue, we showed that one word showeth both reason and speech, because speech should be nothing but the issue of reason. And therefore Christ is called *λόγος*.

It is not enough that the glory of God appeareth in the second person of the Trinity, that he is the character of God, and the image of God, and the Word, but we must see what he is to us, and how he discovers the word to us.

So that he is the image of God in a double sense.

1. As an invisible image of his invisible Father.

2. To us-ward, he showeth to us what the Father is; so that he is the image of God, in regard of God, and in regard of us.

We see by his discovery the wisdom of God in him, and so he is the hidden word, that is, the expression of the Father. But what is that to us, without expression to us? So that he is made to us. As a man knows what is hidden in a man's mind, by his words, so by Christ we know the hidden meaning, and good will of the Father to us, because Christ is the word in a double sense, as an expression of the Father's image, and his discovering to us the words of the Father.

So that the glory of God, especially God the Father, is now to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ, not only as Christ is the second person, God, but as Mediator, God-man. Now Christ is the image of God to us, the wisdom of God to us, and the character of the Father to us.

To come to it more particularly. 'In the glory of God to us, shining in the face of Jesus Christ.' Everything in the Father is comfortable to us, shining in Christ. God as discovered in Scripture is not comfortable to us, but as discovered to us in him.

1. As the sweet sovereignty of God over all in Christ. He is made King of kings, Lord of lords. So in the face of Christ we see God Lord over all, for our good, committing all to Jesus Christ: 'All power is given me from my Father,' Mat. xxviii. 18.

2. And all the graces that are in God. You may term them so, for indeed all the sweet excellencies in God are seen in Christ, as the wisdom of God, the justice of God. All the sweet affections of God are seen in Christ. What are those that in a high sense may be attributed to God? That is, his love and mercy; God is love, but he is so in Christ, he is 'the Father of mercy,' but it is for Christ's sake that he is so. His sweet love to mankind, see it in Christ.

3. And then the relation he stands in. Take one, his being our Father. How is God our Father in a comfortable sense? He is a Father to Christ; and what Christ is by nature, we are by adoption. 'I go to my Father and your

Father;’ therefore to your Father, because my Father, ‘to your God and my God therefore to your God, because my God, John xx. 17.

4. Now, to go on farther, take Christ in all his states and offices, take him in his whole dispensation of salvation, and you shall see something of the glory of the Father in all. The Father, by his Spirit, sanctified him in the womb, gave his only begotten Son to death for us, made him a curse for us. ‘To us a Son is given,’ Isa. ix. 6. The Father raised him up again. See the Father in his humiliation and exaltation, see him in all the sweet offices he hath taken upon him to accomplish our salvation. The Father hath anointed him by the Spirit to be king, and priest, and prophet. Him hath the Father sealed, setting his stamp on him, to be our Saviour. The Father hath sent him; he hath his warrant and commission from the Father. The Father hath set him forth to be a propitiation, Rom. iii. 25. So that all the authority he hath in all his offices it is from the Father.

5. But more specially, we see the love of the Father in Christ crucified and made a curse for vs. For there, as it were, the Father poured out his bowels. For how could the mercy and goodness of God appear, more than to give his own Son, equal with him? as it is at large set down, Phil, ii. 6, seq. That God should give his Son, the greatest gift that ever could be thought of, that could make ten thousand worlds of nothing, that he should give him to us, and take our nature into unity with his divine nature, that he might suffer in it; how could the glory of mercy shine more than to give him to be a curse for us, to satisfy his justice in that manner? It is a mystery that requireth a large time, for herein shineth the glorious mercy of God, but especially Christ’s love in giving of himself, and the Father’s in giving him. So you see how the glory of God shineth in Jesus Christ.

Quest. But how doth Christ discover the Father to us?

Ans. 1. He discovers his Father to us, in opening his Father’s meaning, as a prophet teaching us, coming to be a minister of the circumcision to teach in our nature; and to teach by his Spirit in his apostles and ministers, to the end of the world. Therefore, John i. 18, it is said, that ‘the only begotten Son of God, that lieth in the bosom of the Father, hath revealed him to us.’ Christ is the ἐξηγήτης, the great expositor of the Father, the λόγος, for he lieth in the bosom of his Father, which implieth an intimate knowledge, because he lieth in the bosom, he knows the secrets of God’s love to every

particular believing soul. It implieth likewise a high valuation of Christ, to show that the Father loveth him and honours him.

Now 'lying in the Father's bosom,' that is, the Father being so intimate and familiar with his Son, there is knowledge of union (different from our knowledge of faith) which the human nature hath from the divine, by virtue of union, and he is fit to discover it, because he is in the bosom of the Father, highly valued and prized by the Father.

2. Again, Christ is discovered not only as lying in his bosom, as an expositor and prophet; but Christ discovers what his Father is by his whole life and conversation. For see Christ, and see the Father. See his meekness and humility in stooping low, his love, his fruitfulness, his goodness, as a man; for so he resembleth God, as his human nature could do, every way showing forth the grace of God in his whole course, disposition, and conversation, he carrieth himself as the Son of God.

8. But the main way whereby Christ layeth open God the Father to us, was in his suffering. The Father was discovered in all that Christ did and suffered. For it was all done by the Father's authority. Christ did not only speak by words showing what the Father was (as the son when he resembleth the disposition of the father, we say, you may in him see his father), but you may see the Father's authority in everything. So 'God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,' John iii. 16. It pleased the Father to reconcile the world to himself. So you see how the face of God is discovered in Christ, and how Christ discovers himself, John i. 18; it is an excellent place. 'No man hath seen the Father at any time, but the only begotten Son he hath revealed him;' and John xiv. 9, 'Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.' They both agree about the salvation of mankind. You not only see the love of the Son in our salvation, but the love of the Father in the Son. In Eph. i., Gal. i., these great mysteries are at large unfolded.

4. But one other way, and the most sweet of all, whereby Christ revealeth his Father to us, is by his Spirit, together with the means of salvation; for as it is excellently set down in Mat. xi. 27, 'No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son revealeth him,' that is, by the Spirit. None knoweth the Father to be his Father but by the Son, who hath begot him by the Spirit. None knoweth the Son but they that be begotten by the Spirit. We must have the Spirit both from the Father and the Son before we can have the Father and the Son, and therefore it is called

communion of the Spirit; because the Spirit of the Father and Son discovers the Father to be our Father, and the Son to be our Saviour.

So that add this to all other discoveries, and you have a full discovery of Christ, as the Father is laid open by Christ to every particular Christian. You see then that God the Father hath shined in the face of Jesus Christ. God the Father liveth in light that no soul can approach to but only the Son. He is come out of his hidden light. Nay, the Father hath discovered the bowels of good will to mankind, and in his Son he discovers by his Spirit his particular good will to every particular Christian. So that we may with boldness go to the Father in the name of Christ.

Three things beget boldness:

First, When the matter of disagreement is taken away.

Secondly, Likeness of disposition.

Thirdly, Acquaintance and familiarity.

1. Now Christ, by his death and suffering, hath taken away the disagreement, that is, our sins. He hath borne our sins, and borne them away as the scape-goat did, Lev. xvi. 8. When we believe in him, he takes our sins and carrieth them away: *Christus tibi crucifixus est, cum credis in Christum crucifixion*, Christ is then crucified to thee, when thou believest in Christ crucified. So that the sluice of mercy being open, it runneth amain on us.

2. There must be a likeness; because by Christ we have the Spirit to renew us, to make us savour the things of God, to love the things God loveth, to hate the things God hates. Now, a sanctified soul delights in communion with God, a carnal man hates it; the more holy anything is, the more he distastes it.

8. Again, from likeness of disposition comes familiarity and acquaintance with God, cherished by love, devotion, and piety; and all this we have in Christ. And therefore we go boldly, having God's justice fully satisfied, and finding the Spirit renewing our natures, and claim acquaintance with God, and pour out our souls to him as to a Father in Christ Jesus. Oh the wonderfulness of this privilege, that now in Christ we can call God Father, his Father and our Father; that we can pour out our complaints before him, as to a gracious Father, in all our necessities! The world is not worthy of this

privilege that we enjoy who in all distresses and wants can go boldly to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and call him our Father.

Use 1. We should value these privileges more than we do, and improve them more than we do. Are we in God or in Christ? Then glory in God—Rom. v. 3—whence the apostle Paul makes a threefold glorying:

1. A glorying in affliction under the cross.

2. He glorieth in the hope of glory; and not only so, but 3. ‘We glory in God.’ How is that? That God the Father is ours.

If Christ be in me, I have God with Christ: ‘God is with Christ reconciling the world to himself,’ 2 Cor. v. 10. ‘All things are yours; you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s,’ 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23. If we are Christ’s we have God, and all; and can we have more? ‘Show us the Father,’ saith Philip, ‘and it sufficeth us,’ John xiv. 8; that is, show the Father to be our Father, bring us into acquaintance with him, and what need we more? Let it be discovered to our souls that God is our Father, and that will suffice, or nothing.

Use 2. Labour therefore to joy in this prerogative; and when we think of God, let us not think of Deus absolutus, of an absolute God distinguished from Christ. If ever we go to God in prayer, look up to him ‘in the face of Christ.’ We must ascend to him as he descended to us. How is that?

Doth not he descend and convey all his favours in God incarnate, nay, God in our flesh? He came down in our nature, and we must go back again to him in our nature, in Christ; and therefore it is not only fruitless, but dangerous presumption, to go directly to God without a mediator. In the Law nothing must be done without a priest, who must offer all our sacrifices, and so all that are between God and us must be by mediation of our high priest Jesus Christ.

And then present ourselves to God in his name: Lord, I offer thy own Son unto thee, a Son of thine own sending, sealed, appointed, elected, and predestinated to be my Saviour. Thou canst not refuse the righteousness of thy own Son, thou gavest him to be my Saviour. Therefore taking Christ along with us, we may break through the very justice of God; for, Lord, I bring one with me that hath satisfied thy justice; therefore I go through thy justice to thy mercy-seat in Christ, in whom thy mercy is glorified. I go not with my own righteousness, but clothed with Christ.

3. And will not this answer Satan's temptations? Send thy soul to God in Christ, the glory of God, and he will shine in Christ. Christ is ordained to be my Saviour, and I cast myself into his arms, and put myself in the bowels of Christ.

So in all temptation I beseech you make use of this grand comfort, that the glory of God may shine in the face of Christ.

There be three of the sweetest sights that ever were thought of for poor Christians.

That is, God the Father's sight of us in his Son Christ, as members of him whom he loveth. Absolutely we are miserable.

Again, we see God 'in the face of Christ,' and Christ sees us in his Father's good pleasure, as given to him in charge of the Father; 'Thine they were, thou gavest them me,' John xvii. 24. Christ seeth us in God's eternal purpose to save, for Christ saveth none but them whom God gave. 'All that thou gavest come to me, and thou castest them not away,' John xvii. 2. God's choice and Christ's salvation run parallel. So God's choice saveth none but such as Christ is anointed to save, and God seeth us to be saved. As he gave us to Christ, and as Christ died for us, so we by spiritual faith see ourselves in Christ, as our Father. These do so arm the soul against all discouragements, that nothing can separate it, for God's love to me is bounded in his love to Christ. God looks on me, but he looks on Christ first. Now God's love is eternally founded on Christ, therefore eternally founded on me to be one with Christ. It is excellently set down: Rom. viii. 35, 'What shall separate me from the love of Christ?' for it is a love of God founded on Christ. God loveth Christ, and so likewise he will love me. As Christ is his 'Son in whom he is well pleased,' Mat. iii. 17; so he loveth whole Christ mystical, for he gave his Son for the body of Christ the church; and therefore whensoever we hear of the love of Christ, go to the love of the Father. Hath Christ loved me? Then see the Father's love in that love. You may enlarge these things in your own meditations, they being wonderful useful.

'The glory of God that shineth in the face of Jesus Christ.' Therefore, I beseech you, let us now value and esteem the great mystery of the incarnation and Christ crucified, because Christ is the common centre of heaven and earth, in whom we all centre: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost meet in Christ the Mediator. The first person sees us in Christ, the second person took our nature into union with himself, and the Holy Ghost

sanctifieth it; so all meet together in Christ, He is the abridgment of all the elect in one, so that all the three persons, as they appeared at his baptism, met together in him. Let us mainly labour to get into Christ, and then grow up in Christ, in the knowledge of God the Father, and love of the Father, to grow more and more acquainted with the secret will of the Father to our salvation; and therefore esteem much of all the blessed means sanctified to strengthen our faith in the word and sacraments. In the sacrament see the Father. When the minister giveth the bread and wine, think that God the Father giveth his Son to every one of us in particular, and all to strengthen our faith; see God the Father together with God the Son. The Father was the person first offended, and therefore God the Father is reconciled by Christ. And it is more comfort that God the Father, the person offended, hath the chief hand in the plot of salvation; 'He gave Christ's body to be broken, and his blood to be shed for our sins,' Rom. iii. 25.

I beseech you therefore to labour to be acquainted every day more and more with these mysteries, and do not take these as any encouragement to a sinful course, because the glory of mercy shineth in Jesus Christ, and therefore turn grace into wantonness. Mark this one thing. Amongst other attributes that shine in God, there is specially his holiness and displeasure against sin, for God showed his displeasure against sin in turning his angels out of heaven. Heaven itself could not brook sin. It turned Adam out of paradise, and is the chiefest procurer of God's wrath; but all these are nothing to that hatred of sin that appeared in Christ. The purity of God appeared in him above all things in the world, and it will at the day of judgment appear more in sending the greatest part of the world to eternal destruction and torment. But it is not so much as in making his Son a curse. Therein we see the holiness of God, that rather than man's sins should not be satisfied for, he would set apart his own Son to satisfy it. How much then is the holiness of Christ, that offered himself for it? how much is the holiness of God, that gave his Son to take it away? Can any man now believe in God as his Father first, and in Christ as his Saviour, and live in sin?

We must look on sin as the Father when he gave the Son, and on sin as the Son did when he gave himself. Therefore if we do not look on sin as most opposite to holiness, and have not an antipathy rooted in our hearts, how can we bear God's image and the image of Christ resembling him in all things? How can we think ourselves his members when we want his Spirit? How can we say we be his, when he walks in light and we in darkness?

If that holiness be not rooted to look on sin, in some measure, as God the Father and Son [do], we can as yet have no comfort, and therefore there is no reason to 'turn the grace of God into wantonness,' Jude 4.

And then remember this one caveat more. Whatsoever I spoke of the love of God the Father, and Christ the Son, is nothing unto us, unless every [one] of us labour in particular to have the Spirit of the Father and the Son discovering to us in particular this, that the Father is our Father, and the Son our Saviour, for that is the issue of our ministry. We must not rest in the ministerial discovery of things, but if we belong to God there is a work of the Spirit, and the chief work of it is to particularize and to bring truths home to every man's soul; and therefore Christ is nothing to us, unless the mind of God to us in particular be discovered. The Spirit knoweth the 'secrets of God,' and revealeth to every particular man their particular interest in God the Father and God the Son, and this should be our desire and prayer every day, together with all knowledge, that God would give his Spirit to discover to us his peculiar love in Jesus Christ, and that Christ would by his Spirit discover our interest in him. Ministerial light will not serve for comfort unless our spirits be sealed to be the sons of God. Therefore are the sacraments to seal in particular an interest in Jesus Christ. Therefore we should set our faith on work. God in particular died for me, as if for none but me, and God the Father giveth me comfort in Christ. As I taste the outward element with outward sense, so with my inward taste of faith I taste of Christ. These be the things will stand in stead against temptation. He is the Saviour of the elect; but what though? The Spirit of the Father and the Son must discover the love of the Father to us in his Son.

These words contain the chief cause of all spiritual light, which is God, who by the same power by which he 'commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts,' or rather by a greater, because here is more opposition, and no help at all from nature to spiritual things, not so much as a seed of it.

'Hath shined into our hearts.' The end of spiritual knowledge in the ministry, is especially 'to give the glory of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

I propound these things.

First, That God is glorious in his mercy, wisdom, and other attributes, his reconciling justice and mercy together. Secondly, That this glory of mercy

is in Christ, and satisfaction of his justice by him. Thirdly, That the glory of God, and all his sweet attributes in the face of Christ, must be made known to others; and that this knowledge may be, there must be a calling. So God hath shined into our hearts to give the light. The ministry is to give the light of the knowledge of God; knowledge leadeth us to Christ; Christ to God, in whom our faith is terminated, as in its last object.

Divers of these things we have unfolded,

As the first, that God's mercy is a glorious mercy: therefore called the 'glory of God in the face of Christ.' That his mercy, specially in Christ, is his triumphing attribute. The power of God shineth in creation, the justice of God in damnation; but mercy triumphs in salvation by Christ. And it is not every mercy, but glorious mercy. Mercy sets all others on work, and therefore I mean that excellent mercy that stirred up wisdom to devise a way how justice might be satisfied, and so reconciled, that a way may be made for mercy. So that there is a wonderful mystery in these things, which the very angels desire to behold. This glory 'shineth in the face of Jesus Christ.'

'None knoweth the Father but the Son, none the Son but the Father, and they to whom the Father and the Son will reveal themselves by the Spirit,' Mat. xi. 27. If the Father revealeth his Son by his Spirit, the Son revealeth the Father by the Spirit. Then they are known, but [not] else.

'The glory of God shineth in the face of Jesus Christ,' being incarnate, made God-man. I will proceed to bring this truth home, to make it more clear and comfortable.

You see then the glory of God shine in Christ, and then it shines to us. So that Christ is between God and us; the face of Christ between God and our face.

What is the reason of this order? Because God and we be in such opposition, that Christ must be between. God cannot love our nature, but as it is pure, and clean, and undefiled; and it is only so in Christ. And therefore he loveth our nature only in Christ, as being knit to Christ, and so purged by the Spirit of Christ. For there cannot be more opposite terms than between God, 'who is a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29, and sinners; therefore Christ cometh between. That is, the middle person of the Trinity must be the middle person for reconciliation. He that is the Son is fit to make us sons. He that is the image of God, is fit to restore us to God's image. He that is

beloved, is fit to bring us in love with the Father, to give entrance and access to him. And therefore God shineth first 'on the face of Christ' before it come to us. It cometh to us at the second hand by reflection.

Then Christ is *primum amabile*, the first subject and seat of divine love, for he is the first begotten; and whatsoever God loveth he loveth in relation to his Son. If he loveth us it is in relation to him. If he loveth any before they be in Christ, it is to give them to Christ. So that all the love of God must be seated in the first subject and receptacle of his love, which is Christ. First God shines on Christ, and then on all them that be one with Christ. Therefore Christ is called ὁ ἀγαπητός, 'The beloved,' and the Son of God's love, 'in whom are all the treasures of wisdom,' Col. ii. 3; and therefore is truly lovely.

Whatsoever good we have, it is in Christ. For the first degree of salvation, the first link of the chain, from election to glorification, all is in Christ, seated in free grace, of which Christ is the first-fruit. For so 'God loved the world, that he gave his Son,' John iii. 16. Christ himself, and all the benefits by him, are first-fruits of the free grace of God, which was *amor benevolentiae*, a love of good will; but then there was *amor amicitiae*, a love of amity, which is only in Christ; and the execution of all favours is in Christ. He calleth, justifieth, sanctifieth, and glorifieth in Christ, because by our consistence in Christ we have all benefits, even from election to glorification. The apostle runneth in this stream: Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be God, who hath blessed you with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.' We are beloved in him, as the first love. So that in all things Christ is the first. He was the first Son of God, we sons in him. What he is by nature, we are by grace and adoption. He is first beloved, we beloved for him, as having communion and fellowship with him. He hath justified us from our sins, and therefore we are justified in him. He is our surety. If he be not acquitted, we shall never be acquitted. He is risen, therefore we rise. He is the 'first-fruits of those that sleep,' 1 Cor. xv. 20. He is the 'first-born of many brethren,' Rom. viii. 29; the 'first begotten from the dead,' Col. i. 18. He ascended, therefore we ascend. He sits in heavenly places, therefore we sit in heavenly places; for God hath elected us to be conformed to him. He is the first-fruits of God's predestination, as Austin observeth. God first made choice of him as the head of all, and of us in him. We are elected to be conformed to him in grace and comfort, in the love of God here, and in glory and perfect happiness hereafter. He is our eldest brother. Now it is fit therefore that he should have pre-eminence in all things. Christ in all things hath pre-eminency, in love and

grace, in every passage of glory, resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of God; and in all things hath pre-eminency.

This is a very comfortable and useful point in the great mystery of Christ and glorification, to know the foundation of God's love to us. It is seated on Christ first, and then it cometh to us; nay, and through Christ, in Christ, as an head, through Christ as mediator.

Use 1. Therefore let us make this use of it. Never think of God without Christ. And again, never think of any spiritual favour, but think of it in Christ first. If we think of any promise, think of it as given to Christ first. For all promises are made over to him, and he maketh them over to us. 'All promises are in him yea and amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20. Promises come from love. Love is first in him, and therefore must come first from him; and therefore desire God to make them good for his sake. If we think of the love of God, think of it in our flesh, in Christ first, as our head. If we think of freedom from sin, think of Christ our surety, who is first freed from it. If we think of resurrection and ascension, think of it in Christ our head. If we think of glory, think of it in Christ; we are glorious in our head. And have it as a fruit of his prayer, that 'we should be where he is,' John xvii. 24. Whensoever we think of anything that is good, think of it first in Christ, that God may have his scope and end, which is, that Christ the second person, that took our nature on him, may have his pre-eminency.

Use 2. And this should make us in our devotions to bless God for being the Father of Jesus Christ, when we bless him for being our Father. O blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for if he had not been his Father, he had never been our Father: John xx. 17, 'I go to my God and your God, my Father and your Father.' If he had not been his God and his Father, he had never been our God and our Father. Therefore bless God for his love to Christ, and Christ for his love to us; for they both join in our salvation. As Rom. viii. 39, 'Nothing can separate from the love of God,' nor from the love of Christ. They be both together in the verse, because they be all one in Christ. See the love of the Father in Christ. See his own love in himself, together with his Father's. Therefore consider the sweet agreement of the Trinity towards the salvation of mankind; and that we come not to heaven, are elect, and saved only by the counsel of the Father, or only by the love of the Son, or only by the operation of the Holy Ghost, but all three joining together in our salvation. God looks on us 'in the face of Jesus Christ.' God loveth us, the Son loveth us, the Holy Spirit sealeth the love of

both to us. So then conclude that our salvation is strongly built. It is built on the love of the Father in Christ, and on the love of Christ, together with the Father, and on the assurance of the Holy Ghost, testifying both these to our souls. God for ever loveth his Son, and God for ever must love us, for he shineth on us 'in the face of his Son.' Now what is the love of God to his Son? Pure love, tender love, bowels of love, an everlasting love, and a rich love. And is not his love to us the same? If he loveth Christ, he loveth whole Christ; not only Christ personal, but mystical Christ, and all his members. He loveth the whole body of Christ with a pure, tender, perfect, and everlasting love. And therefore as God's love can never be removed from his own Son that lieth on his bosom, so God's true love shall never be removed from any true Christian that liveth in his Son.

It is a comfortless, fond conceit to imagine any separation in that kind, because his love is founded not upon love to their persons, but on his Son. Now having an everlasting foundation, it must be an everlasting love; and this may comfort us in all conditions.

Use 3. To make another use to direct our devotions aright, we must not go to an absolute God, for he is 'a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29, but must take Christ's name along. We must take Christ along in all our prayers. It is an unworthy conceit to think God will be pleased otherwise than in his Son. It is God must satisfy God, and not we, that be stubble to go to the fire. It is presumption, and the end of it will be confusion. Therefore go to God in the sweet name of his Son Jesus Christ. Only so. We do not conceive worthily enough of God if we think he can have any communion with us, if his love be not conceived in the person of Christ. Therefore if we will have worthy conceits of him, go to him, that is, God made flesh in our nature, a Saviour of his own appointment, a mediator of his own sending, and sealed. And God will not refuse him, if you bring his Son before him. Therefore let it be our rule to put up our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our head.

Now our natures are in Christ lovely to God, because our flesh is in him pure, sanctified, and separate from all sin; so that he loveth our natures. And the nature of God, before opposite, is now lovely to us, because God dwells in our nature, as the apostle saith, bodily, that is, fully, Col. ii. 9. Now God in our nature is lovely. God out of our nature is not, because he is purity and holiness itself; but in our nature he is all love and mercy, for his justice is fully satisfied. God by his Spirit will never leave any particular Christian till he makes their nature in them like his own nature, that is divorced and separate

wholly from sin, that it may be a pure glorious nature, fit for so glorious a head. Therefore go boldly to the throne of grace. There be good terms between God and us through Christ.

‘We shall die, because we have seen God,’ saith Manoah, Judges xiii. 22. Now we shall live because we have seen God in Christ. Out of Christ we cannot see an angel, and live; but seeing God in the face of Christ, a mediator not of our appointing, this is a sweet and comfortable sight.

I beseech you, let us make a comfortable use of these things. God thinks of us in Christ. It was a good prayer of a holy martyr, ‘that God would shine on him in the face of Jesus Christ.’ He was so guilty of his own sins and corruptions that he durst not look upon God, but desires God to look on his Son first, and then on him, in his Son. In Christ God can see us perfect, for Christ’s righteousness is our righteousness, and we have the same spirit with Christ. For note that by the way.

As Christ, by taking our nature on him, testified by the Spirit he was the Son of God in our nature, so the same Spirit of Christ having knit us to Christ, and sanctifying our nature, we become the sons of God and Christ too. The same Spirit that sanctified the nature of Christ in the womb, will sanctify every Christian. And as the grace of union was the cause of Christ’s unction, so the grace of union with Christ is the ground of all communion with Christ. And therefore labour in the first place to be one with Christ by faith, the foundation of all the comfort that I have unfolded.

To us-ward is the union with Christ by faith, that Christ and we are one; for if God look on us in the face of his Son, then we must be one with his Son: bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, by his Spirit, as he is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, by our nature. He took our human nature that we might partake of his divine nature; and therefore labour for union, that we may have gracious communion with him. If we be one with Christ we are his friends, and he will be with us. ‘I and the Father will sup with him, Rev. iii. 20. Rest specially in that. It was the effect of Christ’s prayer, ‘that we may be all one: I in them, and thou in me, and that thou mayest love them with the love thou lovest me,’ John xvii. 22, 23. So intimate was Christ’s love that he desires the same love to us, and in us, one with another. This is a blessed union of the Trinity in one, and of Christ with the Father, and of every Christian with Christ and the Father, one with another. This is the fruit of Christ’s offering himself a sacrifice to God, ‘that we may be one, as they are one: I in them, and thou in me.’

The reason of Christ's prayer for that union is, that all good is conveyed from the Father to us, 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' as we have our consistence and being in Christ, and are one with Christ; and that makes the sacraments and all holy ordinances to be means to bring us into communion with Christ, and to seal it to us, and thereby our communion with the Father and the Holy Ghost. If the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be ours, what can we want? 'Show us the Father and it will suffice,' saith Philip, John xiv. 8. If we have God for our Father, we need no more. Therefore make much of the means whereby our union and communion and fellowship with God in Christ is stayed, and confirmed to us. To go on.

It is said here, there must be a 'knowledge of this glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' And the ministry is the cause of that knowledge, for God hath shined in our hearts to give the light, &c.

Doct. So that we must know the face of God in Jesus Christ. Knowledge is the first thing in this new creation, as light was the first in the old creation. God by his word made light, and God by his word puts the Spirit of light in our hearts. All grace is conveyed by knowledge, grace being nothing but knowledge digested. And therefore, Col. iii. 10, the apostle maketh it the 'image of God,' which in the Eph., iv. 24, he calls 'holiness and righteousness.' But there he bringeth all under that one head, because all grace cometh by knowledge, and all comfort is conveyed by knowledge. For even as together with light from heaven comes influence and heat, so together with the divine light comes the divine influence and heat of the soul. Therefore the apostle joineth together grace and knowledge: 2 Pet. iii. 18, 'Grow in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' So you see the reason why the glory of God in Christ must be known. For it is an axiom in divinity, no spiritual blessing doth a man good but by way of knowledge, and therefore out of the church there is no salvation, because the church being like Goshen, there is no light of knowledge out of the church. Therefore it is a gross and fundamental error of them that will have men saved in any religion, for all salvation cometh by knowledge, and that is only in the church.

Use 1. I beseech you, therefore, labour for knowledge of God 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' and to grow in it every day more and more. 'Without knowledge the soul is not good,' Prov. xix. 2. The soul is dark, and therefore those that be enemies of knowledge, are enemies to the salvation of God's

people. They are enemies of God's glory, because God's glory shineth in the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But this is a clear truth.

Use 2. To make it more useful; every man thinks he knoweth Christ. But knowledge of God's glory in Christ is another matter.

(1.) It is a purifying knowledge, and it is a sanctifying knowledge.

(2.) It is a knowledge that is both full and experimental. It is a knowledge with a taste. It is a knowledge that brings a man to salvation. He relisheth divine truths. Every divine truth hath a sweetness and a savour in it, and our souls are to relish it. If there be not relish in the palate, the relish in meat is to no purpose. And therefore God giveth knowledge per modum gustus. When things are to us as in themselves, then things have a sweet relish. God's favour and sonship, and grace and peace, they have sweet relish in themselves.

And as they are in themselves, so they are to every Christian. There is a harmony or suitableness in every Christian to divine truths wrought in him. If we have not a relish of divine truths, undoubtedly we know them not as we should-.

Use 3. And it is a knowledge with application of interest in the things, when we know God to be our God, and Christ to be our Christ, heaven to be ours, and all the promises to be ours, for that is the nature of faith to make its own, whatsoever it layeth hold on. What good doth Christ, and the glory of God in Christ, if we know not Christ, and God in Christ, and make applications that God and Christ may be ours? Therefore the sacraments are ordained for the particular attaining to the knowledge of Christ, that as we are really interested in what we receive, and turn it into ourselves, so by faith we have interest in Christ, and he is one with us, and we with him.

Use 4. And then this knowledge is a transforming knowledge, suitable to the object. In nature, objects have an influence into the things that apprehend them. If a man look on a lovely object, it stirs up affection of love; if on hateful objects, it stirs up affection of hatred. But much more in divine things, for they have not only influences into the spirit, but a Spirit accompanying the influence to transform the soul. So that by reason of the object and the Spirit, all divine truths have a transforming force.

Therefore, he that knoweth God to be his God, transforms himself to be his Son. He that knoweth Christ as he should, transformeth himself to be like Christ, to labour for the gracious bountifulness, free obedience, and disposition of Christ. We cannot know Christ as we should, by a spiritual knowledge, without it transform us to the likeness of the thing we know. The knowledge of the glory of God in Christ, will make us glorious Christians. Apprehending glory we shall be glorious, as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iii. 18: 'Beholding the face of God in Christ, μεταμορφούμεθα, we are changed from glory to glory,' that is, from one degree of grace to another.

Wherein is our happiness? For what is the happiness of a Christian, but to be like Christ, and in Christ like God? The very heathen could say, likeness to God, and communion with God, is the foundation of all happiness. Therefore, this transforming happiness, by which we look to be saved, which makes us more like Christ, that we must labour after, this may be sufficient to stir up our affections, to labour to know God in Christ, being that which is most excellent knowledge. The right knowledge of God in Christ is that that the very angels have a desire to look unto, 1 Pet. i. 12. It is a knowledge we should more desire than angels; for if we know God in Christ as we should do, we are above angels. Bid God take the nature of angels? Are they the mystical body of Christ? No. They are the acquaintance of Christ's, but not the spouse of Christ. In both these respects we are above angels. And shall not we study that more than angels, that have more interest therein than angels? Is not the knowledge of this glorious? and shall not we study to know that, that raiseth our natures above the angels themselves? So we should do. And so we will do, if we have the Spirit of God, as Paul, Phil. iii. 7, 8: 'I count all dung and dross,' not in comparison of Christ, but διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου μου, in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. The right knowledge of God shining in the face of Christ, with an interesting knowledge of Christ to be my Saviour, God my Father, myself to be a temple of the Holy Ghost, a member of Christ, heir of heaven, to know I am by grace what Christ is by nature: what is all the world to this, if we had hearts to consider of it? And therefore labour to prize and value this knowledge every day more and more, to beg the Spirit of revelation, that God would reveal himself to us in Christ more and more: pray for the Spirit that knoweth the secrets of God and Christ, that we may know God to be our God, and Christ to be our Saviour. And let it be the desires of our hearts, that God would give us deep knowledge of him, in particular: not only in general, but that he would reveal his fatherly love in Christ, and Christ's sweet love to us.

Quest. But how shall we come to this knowledge?

Sol. God shines not into the brain, but into the very heart of his ministers, that they may give the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Doct. So that the end of God's shining on his ministry is, that they may shine on others.

So then, if you ask what is the sanctified means of God to come to so excellent a knowledge of the face of God in Christ, it is specially to the ministry. So God shines in them, that they may give the light of the knowledge they have to others.

And here I will unfold to you their excellency, and authority ministerial, and the necessity of the calling, they being the light of the world, the sun of the world; of whom it is said, 'As the Father sendeth me, so I send you,' John xx. 21. But these things concern our calling more.

Only it concerns all to know this, that God hath not set up an ordinance in his church in vain. As it is glorious to know 'the glory of God in the face of Christ,' so if ever we will know it, we must come to the ministry, that God hath set up as lights in his church; for they be appointed to give thee 'the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.' So that the ordinance of God is joined with access to the ministers of God. If you regard God and Christ, regard the ministry, for the grace of God, and faith, and knowledge, and the ministry of faith, are all linked together, and be that despiseth the ministers, despiseth God, and grace, and heaven and all. And therefore the word, as opened in the ministry, is called *τὸν λόγου τῆς καταλλαγῆς*, 'the word of reconciliation,' 2 Cor. v. 18. No reconciliation without it; *τὸν λόγου τῆς ζωῆς* 'the word of life,' Philip, ii. 16; *τὸ ἐνδοξον εὐαγγέλιον*, 'the glorious gospel,' 1 Tim. i. 11; *τὸν ἀνδρείον Βραχίονα τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς τὴν σωτηρίαν*, 'strong arm of God to salvation;' *τὴν δυνάμιν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, 'the power of God,' 2 Cor. vi. 7; because God conveyed all these things by it. And they that despise it, despise glorification, reconciliation, glory, and life, and all. It is *ὁ λόγος τῆς βασιλείας*, the 'word of the kingdom,' Mat. xiii. 19; because we enter into the kingdom of grace here, by his ordinance, and then into the kingdom of God. Therefore to despise God's ordinance is to despise God; and Acts xiii. 46, the apostle saith, 'Seeing you account yourselves

unworthy of the kingdom of heaven.' If they will not hear the gospel, it is as if they despised the kingdom of heaven.

Use. That I advise is, that every one labour for a right apprehension of the ordinances of God. 'Let a man esteem of us as the ministers of Christ,' 1 Cor. iv. 1, neither more nor less, but just so; that is, not lords over our faith, but ministers that dispense the mystery of Christ.

I need not speak much of this, because God never wrought good in any but they would have a due and right conceit of the ministers and ordinances of God. And they that have base conceits of it, it is a sign God never wrought any good in them. And therefore I speak to them that have respect to the ordinances of God, and that they [may] have more respect to it. Mark what the apostle saith, 'God shines on the heart of the apostles to give light,' &c.

Obj. But it may be objected, God shines in the hearts of his ministers that they may shine on others. Can only good men convert?

Ans. I answer first, that they have a great advantage above all others, because they have those affections and those desires to stir them up to pray to God heartily for their people. And then they have love to the people. It is love that begets grace, and so they having sanctified hearts, that way they do more good than others. But the effect of God's ordinance is not tied to the dignity of any man's person. Judas was a preacher, as bad as he was. Those that convert many shall 'shine in heaven,' if they be good, Dan. xii. 4; if they be bad they may convert others and never come thither themselves; therefore respect the ordinance of God for itself. But because a good expression of the integrity and constant sufficiency in the teacher is a good help to attention and respect, therefore we ought to be careful in the choice of these. For though God's ordinances depend not on the worthiness of the minister, yet there is much help this way.

Obj. But you will say, Can the ministry cause the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ? They be but men, and God shineth in us that we may give knowledge of God.

Ans. I answer, man doth it whether they be good or otherwise, ministerially. God honours them so far as to give them his own title: Acts xvi. 14, Paul preached, God opens Lydia's heart. There must be a concurring of God with the ministry: 1 Cor. iii. 6, 'Paul may plant, and Apollos water,

but God giveth the increase.’ But if Paul plant and God giveth not increase, all is to no purpose. ‘Be faithful in thy calling,’ saith Paul to Timothy, and so thou shalt both save thyself and thy hearers, 1 Tim. iv. 16. So that God appoints calling, and giveth gifts and callings for the good of his church. The sun shineth on the moon and stars, to enlighten the world; and the light that ministers have is to shine upon others. God teacheth men by men, and it is most suitable and proportionable to our weakness. As it is a trial of our obedience to respect the word, as it comes from one subject to the same infirmity with ourselves, so it is suitable to our weakness. We could not hear God, nor an angel, therefore God giveth gifts to men for men. Beloved, it is a marvellous fruit of God’s love, that he will establish such a calling, the end of which is to bring men to heaven. They be ‘sent of God,’ Acts xiii. 26; they be the ‘salt of the earth,’ Mat. v. 13, the world would be putrified without it; they be ‘the light,’ Philip, ii. 15, the world would be dark without it. If it were not for the gospel, what is England, that is now so glorious above other countries that sit in darkness? And therefore seeing God conveyeth all good to us this way, let it be our prayer to God ‘to send labourers into his vineyard,’ to set up light in dark places, and to teach his ministers, that they may teach us.

It is strange that Paul, so holy a man as he was, should desire the Romans, chap. xv. 30, ‘to pray and strive with God in prayer for him.’ ‘I beseech you,’ I conjure you, ‘by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Spirit, that you strive to God for me.’

Note. The devil sets against this ordinance of God especially, for it battereth his kingdom, and is a means to draw men out of his darkness, ‘into the glorious light of the sons of God,’ Rom. viii. 21; as in the Acts xxvi. 18, the Lord ‘sent him to bring them from darkness to light.’ Therefore the devil stirs up ‘unreasonable men,’ malicious men, that have hurtful and evil principles, to do hurt to them that seek their good, to requite good with ill; and therefore the apostle prayeth, ‘Lord let me be delivered from unreasonable men,’ ἀπο τῶν ἀτόπων, absurd men, greedy, that are so far from faith that they have not common reason, 2 Thes. iii. 2. Now considering God conveyeth all good, specially saving knowledge this way, desire God to preserve the ministers from unreasonable men; that God would let the gospel ‘run and be glorified,’ 2 Thes. iii. 1; and that the ministry may be glorious, that is, that the Spirit may accompany it to get a great deal of love and strength to bear afflictions. Where the ministry is rightly received it is a glorious thing. And therefore the apostle prays that the gospel may

have a free passage, and be glorified by the Spirit accompanying it, in the hearts of the people; and they that will profit most by it, must be so far from undermining it, that they must desire God to assist the teacher, that he being taught may teach others. Thus far it concerneth us all.

And this not only teacheth the ministers to shine to others, but every Christian is a prophet. And they that have the light of God shining on them are to give the light to others. We are all anointed of God, and like good Christians we have all received the anointing of the Spirit, and in our sphere we ought to do all the good we can to every one in his place. 'You have all knowledge,' saith the apostle, 'that you may exhort and edify one another,' 1 Thes. v. 11. This must be done by the public ordinance, and by every particular Christian. And therefore every Christian may shine to others, and open to others the mystery of salvation, according to their calling, specially in their families. Our Saviour saith, 'Admonish thy brother, and thou shalt save thy brother,' Mat. xviii. 15. God maketh common Christians saviours of others. And therefore as we believe communion of saints in the creed, so we ought to labour for the grace of communion of saints, that is, for ability and love, that we may be able to do good one to another. And no man is a Christian for himself alone. Every man hath grace for the good of the body. There is no idle member of the church's body. As soon as any one is a Christian, he is a profitable member. Onesimus, as soon as he is converted, 'he is profitable,' Philem. 11. By prayer, by advice, by comforting, and counsel, he hath ability to do something to the body of Christ. As he hath good by the graces of the body, so by God's grace he is able to do some good in the body: he is no dead member, but hath some grace of communion.

And it is no vain glory, if it be not done for ostentation; if for Christ, not for his own advantage or ostentation. Breasts may be opened to give milk, which otherwise would be shut; gifts may be opened to do good. If they know anything that is good they ought to infuse it to them, whom God hath made near and dear to them, for grace is communicable.

The sun shineth on the greater part of the world at once. The more communicable the better: the more near God and Christ.

And then we may think that we have all things, the benefit and comfort of any true gift, when we have spirits of love to communicate it to others. These be therefore two main graces of communion, humility, and love. And when we can sweetly, humbly, and by the spirit of love communicate it to

others, then we be masters of what we have, else it is not given for our good. God will blast it if we do not communicate it. God will take away that he hath from the idle servant, that will not employ his talent. I would to God more conscience were made of this, that not only ministers, but every one, would be first the cistern, and then the conduit, first get something in, and then put it out, when it is seasonable, and when we have a calling to do it.

How hath a Christian a calling to comfort others, to give seasonable reproofs, to give admonitions, to strengthen others, when no minister is by? He that is not able to do it in some measure, can he believe communion of saints? Therefore labour for some spiritual ability, that ye may not be dead and idle members of the body, but shine to others in giving example to others in the way to heaven, that others may have cause to bless God. O blessed be God that ever I was acquainted with such a one. As David said of Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 39, so such a one gave me counsel, and it came from love, from a sweet spirit, and I shall have cause to remember it while I live.

Consider it is our calling. We are all prophets, all anointed. A Christian hath an high calling; but specially consider what we do believe by the 'communion of saints and what we pray for, when we say, 'thy kingdom come,' that is, that faith may reign in our hearts and minds. Shall we say, let thy kingdom come, when we are enemies of the ministry and good communion? If we use this prayer thus, we mock God. I desire God to make these things effectual.

The apostle in the former chapter, as we have heard, raiseth up the soul to the chief cause of all heavenly light in the soul, which is God, by his almighty power shining in our hearts, as he caused the light to shine at the first. By how much that light is more excellent than that light of nature, by so much the greater power is put forth for the working of it, being so opposite thereunto.

The end of this shining in the hearts of the ministers especially, is to 'give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' God shineth on ministers that they may reflect that light upon others. As John Baptist saith, 'they be friends of the bride, that learn of the bridegroom,' Christ, what to do to help his spouse, John iii. 29. They labour to know the meaning of Christ, what his good will is to them that be his. They be friends on both sides, on Christ's, and the spouse's. They come between both, for the furthering of the blessed marriage between Christ and the soul.

I have spoken of the glory of God, which specially shines in his mercy and goodness. There is a greater lustre of God's attributes in the gospel than in the law.

Quest. It may be asked, Are not we for to preach the law as well as the glory of God in the face of Christ discovered in the gospel?

Ans. I yield there must be special care of that, even now in the days of the gospel; for you know there be three degrees, the state of nature, the state under the law, and the state under grace. Before we can come from nature to grace, we must come under the law; we must know ourselves thoroughly, and be humbled to purpose. Many live under the gospel, that were never yet under the law, that think themselves under Christ, and under grace, and yet were never humbled. Therefore in love to the souls of men, let the law be discovered; as God gave the law, not to damn men but in love to men, that thereby they might see the impurity of their natures, and lives, and the curse due to it, and so follow him forthwith to Christ, from Sinai to Sion, appealing from the throne of justice to the throne of grace and mercy, the Lord Christ. The Lord gave not the law purposely to damn men, but to drive them to an holy despair in themselves. They that despair in themselves, they come to see their whole hope of comfort to be in the face of God in Christ.

Therefore respectively to grace, we ought to force the law in these dull and drowsy times. For they that stick in the state of nature, as profane godless persons, swearers, loose persons, were never yet under the law. And what have they to do with Christ, that were never humbled? If their eyes were open to see what they are by nature, and what they would be if God should cut the thread of their lives, they would look about them then. The kingdom of heaven would suffer violence, if men understood their states thoroughly, that there is but a step between them and hell, nothing but a life full of uncertainties, without serious repentance.

Moses brought none into Canaan. That was Joshua's part. When Moses had brought them near, then he giveth up his office to Joshua. The law must give up its office to Christ. When men are cast down with apprehensions of sin, they must run into the bosom of the gospel, and shelter themselves under the wings of Jesus Christ. Though such persons may in the error of their conscience think themselves farthest off grace, yet they be nearest. For 'blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. v. 8. 'And come to me, all ye that be heavy laden, I will ease you,' Mat. xi. 28.

Quest. Again, some will object, we must teach moral duties, teach men not to be sottish and drunken and filthy in their lives.

Ans. It is very good. I would these abominations were reformed, but if there be not a better foundation laid for the knowledge of God in the face of Christ, by the discovery of the hidden face of nature, we should make them but hypocrites, and only civilize them. Therefore the right way to make them leave these abominations is, first, to get knowledge of themselves by nature, and of their original corruptions; and then, to lead them to the knowledge of God 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' that seeing love, love may kindle love, and alter their course, and make them study to please God. If duties spring not from love, they be dead duties, and but carcasses of duties. But love constraineth us to perform services by the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ.

Therefore if we will make men leave sin on good grounds, teach the gospel; else we shall bring them into a civil compass which is good, and I would there were more of it; but we should not rest there. Holy duties, and abstaining from gross sins, is a great deal more groundedly enforced from the gospel than the law. For the reasons from thence are very demonstrative, as Paul, Titus ii. 12, 'The grace of God hath appeared, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly to ourselves, righteous to others, holily to God.'

And therefore the apostle's method is first to lay the ground and foundation of Christian doctrine, and then to build upon it Christian duties in all his epistles; as in the Romans, after he had showed free justification, by the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and then sanctification of our nature, then he comes to the comforts of a Christian life in predestination, and God's free everlasting love. 'Then I beseech you, by the mercies of God in Christ, give up your bodies as reasonable sacrifices to God,' Rom. xii. 1. The ground of his exhortation is to devote and consecrate ourselves to God, and it is from the mercies of God. And so in all the rest of his epistles, he layeth foundation of a Christian life upon Christian doctrine, as Lactantius saith well, 'All morality without piety is a goodly statue without an head. It is the head that giveth life and influence into, all duties of a Christian and the knowledge of Christ. In a word, whatsoever we preach is either to drive to Christ, or is Christ himself, by his benefits unfolded, or an holy life, with this respect, that we may live answerable, and worthy of Christ; so that whatsoever we preach, it hath respect to Christ.'

And therefore the apostle speaking of the main duty saith, 'God hath shined in our hearts, to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Certainly all will follow where this is, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven,' Luke vii. 47. She had relished the sweet love of God in pardoning her, and therefore loved much. For what is love but all duty in the root? It is one in the root, and all in the branches. All sin is one in original corruption, the root which brancheth itself many ways into particulars. So love being one in the root, when the heart is filled with that, you shall not need to dictate to it, to do this or that. Love is an affection full of invention, to please, delight, and gratify the person loved, and sets the soul on fire to all duties whatsoever.

) 1. Again, the knowledge of God differenceth God's people from atheists, that know no God at all. So to know God in Christ, that differenceth them from those without the church, that know God, but not 'in the face of Christ.' To know God in the face of Christ as he should be known, differs true Christians from popish and rotten professors, and from an hypocrite within the church. The papists know God not in the face of Jesus Christ; only they go to him by other mediators, and they will have crucifixes, and many gods, never desiring to discover the face of Christ.

But the best discovery of God is to see him 'in the face of Christ.' The best sight of Christ is, not in a crucifix or the work of an idle painter, but to see him in the word and sacrament. You have seen Christ 'crucified before your eyes,' saith Paul to the Galatians, Gal. iii. 1. God worketh grace by his own means, and not by the bastardly means of man's invention. The knowledge of God is conveyed by Christ, and no other mediator. That knowledge which comes nearest the knowledge of God in Christ is not only disciplinary, but a sound saving knowledge, that sees things in their formal, proper, spiritual light, and not only in their shell.

2. This distinguisheth likewise them tinder the law. And they see the face of God under the law, poor distressed sinners. Ay, but they see an angry face there. But if they will see God as they should do, and as true Christians, they see not his angry countenance in Moses under the law, threatening men with hell and damnation; but they see him 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' reconciling the world to himself.

In the next verse, ver. 7, the apostle preventeth an objection, as he is very curious in prevention; for he was full of love, and desired to make way for himself in the hearts of them whom he taught. When he saw anything

between him and their hearts, he labours to remove it, by all the wit] and policy that he could; and therefore he now preventeth an objection from the meanness of his person and condition. You speak much of preaching the gospel, what doth the world esteem of you? you be a poor despised man. It is true, but I carry the excellent treasures of the love of God in Christ; nay, we carry it in earthen vessels; but it is a treasure, though in earthen vessels, though conveyed by despised persons. And God hath a wise end in it. I look to God's end; which is, that in the meanness of my condition the power and excellency of what I teach may come horn him, and not from me; therefore he useth mean instruments in his great work. So that the words have a prevention of an objection.

And there is a double answer to the objection.

1. We are 'earthen vessels,' but we carry a 'treasure' in them.

2. Again, God doth it 'that the excellency of the power' of my preaching 'may be of God, and not of us.' To come to the particulars.

1. That the gospel, and the knowledge of God in the face of Christ, it is a treasure.

2. And the way to come to it is by the ministry. Our ministerial dispensation of it is the way to convey it to others.

3. That ministers, as well as others, are but frail, empty vessels. Indeed, they have a treasure conveyed by the dispensation that God hath set upon his church, but it is all but by earthen vessels. These be the three things.

Then the next part is, 'that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' So that there is a power, and an excellent power, showed in the ministry to all them that shall be saved.

There is a power in them that be reprobate wretches, and they feel it at length, to harden them more and more, to make them more bitter and worse; but in them that be saved there is a power, and excellency of power, in the ordinances of God.

This power is of God, and not of men. It is conveyed by man, but the power originally, *tanquam à fonte*, cometh from God. These be the parts.

1. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,' the gospel, the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, it is a treasure.

What is a treasure? We all know. Experience showeth that it implieth plenty, and variety of things of price, and rare things, not common, and them of excellent and special use for the time present and to come, for ornament, or for security, or defence, or for discharge of debt and trouble, or for help and comfort. When any want lieth upon a man, he hath recourse to his treasure.

The gospel is a treasure in these and all other respects that may be comfortable.

For here is plenty, variety, rarity, price, usefulness in the highest degree; for in Christ, who is the chief thing in the gospel, we have all.

(1.) There is plenty in Christ, treasures of wisdom and of all good hidden in him for our good. The apostle saith, 'In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' Col. ii. 3; and he is all in all, he is our riches. The particulars I have unfolded out of a portion of Scripture heretofore. he is 'wisdom,' he is 'righteousness,' and 'sanctification,' and 'redemption,' 2 Cor. i. 30: wisdom to supply our ignorance, righteousness to supply the guilt which we stand charged before God with; and so he is righteousness to our consciences. He is sanctification to the defilement of our natures, our conditions and persons being miserable. He is redemption to us, partly of our souls in this life, and of soul and body in the life to come. He hath all by grace of union; for our natures being so near as to be hypostatically united, and taken into one person with God. . . .

As there be three ways of conveying excellency—union, revelation, and vision—so Christ hath it by union, we by revelation in this world, by vision in the world to come.

Now Christ hath a fulness in him, partly by virtue of this union, and partly *ratione officii*, as he is the head of the church; for where should we be but in the head? The head is wisdom for the body. All the senses are in the head. It sees, it hears, it understandeth for the body, it doth all for the body; so that the riches of a Christian is hid in Christ, but for the good of the body. Whatsoever we stand in need of, God is all-sufficient, and Christ is God-

man, and we are knit to Christ by faith, so that Christ and we are all one, and therefore a Christian hath a rich treasure in Christ.

(2.) And then he hath price and excellency in the things we have in him. If any things be excellent, these things are. They raise our condition above the common condition of the world; nay, above angels in some sort, making us heirs and fellow-heirs with Christ. It makes us the sons of God, sets us at liberty from our cursed condition, and not only at liberty, but in a state of advancement as high as our natures can reach unto. *Liberatio a summo inalo, summi honi habet rationem*, freedom from the greatest evil, which is damnation and destruction. It hath respect to the greatest good; but then, together with freedom from the greatest evil, we have advancement to the greatest good. Indeed, we can hardly conceive of the excellency of the things we have in Christ. Every grace is precious.

[1.] How precious is faith, that layeth hold of all the graces in Christ, and makes them our own!

[2.] What precious grace is love, that makes us to deny ourselves and communicate ourselves to the good of others! A world of good a loving soul can do.

[3.] And so the hope of life, what an anchor it is to stay the soul in all conditions patiently and contentedly!

And every grace is precious, and needs must every grace be precious, considering the price they cost. Things dearly bought are precious, and every grace of the Spirit, and the Spirit itself, is purchased by the blood of Christ. For the Spirit hath no communion with us till peace be made between God and us by Christ; but when God the Father is reconciled by Christ, then the Spirit, a friend of both, cometh from both, and assureth us of the love of both, discovering the secret love of God in Christ, and bestoweth all grace, to furnish and fit us for heaven. So that the graces of the Spirit are precious, and to be accounted precious, because they cost so dear as the blood of Christ.

(3.) And then for usefulness, what use have we of every grace? What were our lives without grace? What serve treasures for but to pay our debts? Christ paid all your debts to God the Father, to God's justice. We are all discharged. One red line of his blood drawn over the debt-book crosseth all the debt. Satan hath nothing to do with us. In him we have remission of sins,

and he is now in heaven to make intercession for us, and plead our cause as our friend. At God's right hand we have a friend and brother in our nature, that maintaineth the love of God constantly to us as his members and as his spouse.

Besides, we have comfort in all distresses; and we have strength in all our weaknesses; light and direction in all our perplexities, by the Spirit, and grace of the Spirit. So that in every respect Christ and the graces of the Spirit are satisfying treasures.

(4.) The gospel which revealeth this is a treasure specially for the time to come, for then is a treasure specially useful. Christ is a rich storehouse, and in him we have all. For the time to come we have more in Christ than here. When Christ shall he revealed, and we shall be revealed, then our treasure will appear. And before that, at the hour of death, when all comforts shall he taken from us, then comes in the treasure of a Christian, then he hath use of Christ, of the Spirit of Christ, to support him; and the spirit of faith and hope, to strengthen him with patience and willingness to go to Christ: then come in all the riches that he hath laid up, all the spiritual graces, for to help him at that hour. So that specially then in time of need comes in these treasures, Christ with his grace and Spirit. The best use of religion is in time to come. Now, we can make a shift with riches, and friends, and strength; but when all is done, we must have a better treasure, that is, Christ and the graces of Christ.

We may refer all to these two heads, Christ partly imparted and partly imputed. That that is imputed is his righteousness, by which we have freedom from hell, advancement to heaven; and the imparted and bestowed favours are the graces of his Spirit for all times and services. We have remedies for all maladies. And they are of a higher nature than all other treasures whatsoever.

Therefore, to show the difference between this and other treasures, to raise up the estimation of Christ, and the good things in him, these treasures we have in Christ imputed and imparted.

1. They are independent. The comfort of them doth not depend on any inferior comfort, or things in this world, but when all comforts are taken away, then they are of special use.

2. And as they be independent, so they be universal. Christ and the good things in him are universally good for all turns. There is no other treasure but is for particular ends, and cannot do all things. Riches can make a man as happy as riches can do; and dainties make a man as lively as such things can do; and friends can do what friends can do; but all is limited: they cannot do more than in the sphere of their activity. But what is said of money, that it is good for all things, I am sure it is true of the grace of God in Christ. It is good for all things and all conditions: it is a universal good.

8. Then it is a treasure that is proportionable to the dignity of a man. It is proportionable to the soul, to satisfy the desires thereof. A man's desire is larger than any pleasure in the world. A man can spend all his contentment in an earthly thing. In his thoughts and affections he runneth through the contentment of all earthly things presently. If a man had all earthly contentments, the soul would pass through them all and see beyond them; and when he hath done, he looks on them as soiled commodities and cast things; but the treasures of the gospel in Christ are proportion-able to the soul. They be spiritual, as the soul is spiritual; nay, likewise they be larger than the soul, the treasure is larger than the treasury. But of other things, the treasure is but little, the treasury large; but here the treasure is larger than the treasury, for our soul is not capable of the fulness of Christ. There is more in Christ, and more in our state of happiness than the soul can contain. The soul can never spend nor run through all the good we have, for there is still more and more. Therefore the apostle calls it, Eph. iii. 8, 'the unsearchable riches of grace.' Search more and more, and still they be unsearchable. 'Neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of the excellent things in Christ,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. They transcend the capacity of the soul, which no other treasure can do.

4. And then they have another excellency. They make the soul and the whole person a treasure; as God saith, Mal. iii. 17, 'I will make up my jewels.' The grace of God makes us gracious, turneth us into jewels. No other treasure can change the cask wherein it is; but these blessed things of God and of Christ, wheresoever he dwelleth, he makes the soul like himself, stamping his own image and likeness upon it. For such is the change of nature into grace that it makes us treasures.

Other treasures perhaps make us worse, as indeed they do, by reason of the proneness of our dispositions to earthly things, they soil and stain our natures. But these treasures of excellent things purify our natures, make us

better, and change us into the nature of themselves; nay more, grace changeth the worst things to be good to us: that is the excellency of its virtue. They talk of the philosopher's stone, and strange things, but I am sure the grace of God is so excellent a treasure that it extracts good out of every evil, and as grace, turneth all to good, and so the sanctifying Spirit concurring with it, draweth the greatest comforts out of the greatest crosses. And is not that a rich treasure, that turneth the worst things to good? It will make every thing to guide us to the main.

5. That our affections may be raised higher. All other treasures whatsoever they be, here we find them, and here we must leave them, whether we will or no, or they will leave us. As the wise man saith of riches, 'they have eagles' wings,' Prov. xxiii. 5. *Peritura perituris*, we must leave perishing earthly things to perishing men. But is this treasure of that nature or no? For it makes the soul eternal, it doth raise the soul to be spiritual, the soul carrieth them to heaven with it. The earthen vessel indeed is cracked to pieces, but the treasure remaineth. The soul goeth out of this earthen vessel to heaven, and thither carrieth all the love it had, and all the graces, and the image of Christ it had. All is there perfectly, nothing is taken away. As we say of an earnest, it is part of the bargain, and not taken away again. Luke x. 42, it was said of Mary's part, that 'her part shall never be taken from her.' All other things will be taken from us. We shall be stripped of all, and turned naked into our graves, we know not how soon. As we came naked, so must we be turned naked; but Mary's part, the interest in the treasure of the gospel and the good things of Christ, shall never be taken from us, but shall be perfected in heaven. When friends are taken away, and life taken away, and all comforts taken away, yet Mary's part endures for ever. When nothing will comfort, all our treasures fail, as at the hour of death, then comes in this treasure and comforts most. So that herein it differs from all treasures: it is never taken from us, and stands us in greatest use and stead in our greatest necessity.

G. And which is of special use, other treasures we cannot carry about us whithersoever we go. But this is like [a] pearl rather than treasure. A Christian carrieth this treasure wheresoever he goeth; nay, he carrieth it in his heart, it is hid there, and who can take it out thence? Can the devil? No. It is hid in his affections. His love, and choice, and judgment hath gotten it and mastered it. This I have, and this I must stick to in life and death; for having got it in his heart, judgment, and affection, he carrieth it wheresoever he goeth, maketh use of it wheresoever, in prison, at liberty, abroad or at home.

Let all the devils in hell conspire, they may take away his life, but not his treasure, they must leave him the gospel. Perhaps they may take it out of the hook, but can they get it out of the soul? Indeed, unless divine truths be gotten into the heart, the devil will come between us and our souls and rob us of them; but if it be in the judgment and heart, we carry it with us, and that continually and in all places, else it could not serve for all turns. You see then in what respect this treasure is so excellent.

First, that we may believe these things we must believe God, and believe his saints, and believe Christ.

(1.) God by his Spirit saith it is so, Prov. iii. 14, 15. The knowledge of Christ and the good things by him, nothing is to be compared to them, Mat. vi. 29. God's judgment is the rule of the goodness of things. If he saith it is so, it is so. Christ calleth it a treasure, that a wise man that hath God's Spirit in him will sell all for to obtain it. 'Lay up treasure in heaven,' Luke xii. 21. Labour to be rich in God, for that is 'true riches,' Luke xvi. 11.

(2.) And for the servants of God, take Moses and St Paul. What was the judgment of Moses? In comparison, the worst things that can be in Christ and religion are better than the best things that can be in the world. What are the worst things? Shame and reproach, together with poverty, and the like; but the 'reproach of Christ,' which is most insufferable to the disposition of one that is a man; but the rebukes of Christ are greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Nay, Moses balanceth them; he layeth the reproach of Christ in one scale, and the treasures of Egypt in the other, and the reproaches of Christ is the heavier scale, Heb. xii. 26. Take St Paul, Phil. iii. 7, 8. He puts into one scale all his excellencies whatsoever he had. He was a Jew 'of the tribe of Benjamin,' 'without reproof,' 'as to the law blameless;' after he was a Christian, he had excellent graces, abundance of the Spirit of God. No man, next to Christ, discovered a greater portion of the Spirit of Christ; and yet, not only 'I did' before my being in Christ, account of my Pharisaism, and righteousness of the law and civil life, but note, 'I do,' when I am well advised what I say, I do 'doubtless esteem all dung in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and to be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ.' *Διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου μου.* That is the jewel of jewels; the treasure of treasures; for thereby we come to have infused righteousness. Imputed is the most useful, and therefore the apostle so esteems that, that in regard of it he esteemed the other nothing, and thinks

he hath not done enough till he hath set disgraceful terms upon it, calling it dung, *offal*, that which is cast to dogs. He will suffer the loss of all righteousness, reputation, and all, that he may gain Christ. Thus, if we believe the judgment of God, and of men led by the Spirit, and of Christ, we must needs judge this an excellent treasure.

Use. Therefore let us labour to have our parts and shares in this excellent treasure of Christ, and the good things of Christ; to give no rest to our souls till we have union and communion with him, in whom 'all treasures are hid,' Col. ii. 3. Get the Spirit of Christ, whence all graces and comforts be derived; what will all other treasure do good, when we stand most in need? When we lie gasping for comfort, as we must ere long, what will friends and possessions do good? what will these farther you, when you go spelling and puffing against God's ministers, and truth, and them that be better than yourselves—What will they do you good that thus leave you? Alas! nothing at all. It will only fill your souls with despair and horror. The knowledge of God in Christ, and the Spirit of God to seal it, and to sanctify hard hearts, is the only thing that will comfort us. It will not comfort a man on his deathbed, that he hath worn gay apparel, or been acquainted with great persons, or borne so high a place, or tasted of so many dainties. Alas! when he reflecteth on these things, what good will they do? This will do him good; I remember such promises, such comforts, such precious mercies, that have been unfolded to me; the work of God's Spirit in me hath led me to such and such holy actions, as the fruits of his Spirit. I remember Christ hath been unfolded to me, that I might cast myself on his mercy. These things may comfort, but other things may be objects of discomfort, but comfort they can yield none. I beseech you, let us consider wherefore we came into the world, and wherefore God hath given men great parts. We are sent as factors into the world to trade, being all merchants. And what do we trade for? For this commodity that we should carry to heaven with us, that we may go stored to heaven with them. If a merchant send a factor into a foreign country, and he bring nothing but baubles and trifles, can he give a good account to him that sent him? Doth God send us into the world to get a great deal of 'hard clay,' Heb. ii. 6, and of ill-gotten goods for pleasures, and to deify ourselves and others, to make ourselves much more the children of the devil than we are by nature? No. We are factors for great matters, to get the knowledge of God in Christ, to get near acquaintance with God, to get out of the state of nature, to get near to heaven; these be the ends wherefore we live in the world. This earth and this church of God is a fit place, a seminary, a nursery, wherein we grow, and are fitted to be transplanted to the heavenly paradise. Wherefore

do we live, and wherefore doth God give these excellent parts by nature? Is our understanding to exercise itself in the dirt of the world? Is this heart, these wills, and affections given to cleave to baser things than ourselves? Hath he given love, so sweet, so large an affection, to cleave to things below?—which is capable of Christ, of heaven, of happiness. These excellent capacious souls of ours, which the world cannot contain, are they for anything that is meaner than ourselves? Oh no. They serve for Christ, and for these excellent treasures. Oh that we should forget the end of our creation, redemption, live here, and labour not for the things which we live in the world only to attain to but let the devil abuse us! As they catch whales, with casting empty barrels about them to play withal, so while we be playing about this and that vanity, we are made a prey to Satan. How few live to that purpose for which they are! Few fit themselves for their eternal condition, by heaping up comforts from these things, which may be true comforts. Lay these things to heart, that we may be wise to purpose, wise to salvation. This is our wisdom and our understanding.

Use 2. Quest. But how shall we know whether we have interest and portion in these excellent treasures, ay or no?

Ans. [1.] We may see our interest in them, especially by our esteem of them. If they be presentee! to our souls indeed as God doth, and as Christ and the word of Christ presents them, then it is an argument, that there is a tincture in our spirits whereby they are made suitable to the Spirit of Christ. If they be presented [as] excellent things—and beyond all comparison, all the things thou canst think of are not to be compared with them—do we so present them to ourselves, that we esteem of them as Moses, and Paul, and God's children do? Do we so esteem of grace, that if we were left to our wish, whether we will have anything in the world, or a greater measure of grace, of the love of God, of union with God, what choice would we make? Our estimation and choice will discover the frame of our hearts. As we esteem, so we be. If it were left to our own opinion, and wish, and desire, would we make David's choice, Ps. iv. 6, 'When many said, Who will show us any good?' A right temper of a worldling, 'Who? it is no matter who,' let any 'show me any good,' do but show it, I have ways enough to get it. But saith David, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.' Life is in the favour of God; nay, the favour of God is better than life itself. I had rather part with my life than the favour of God; saith Paul, 'My life is not dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy,' Acts xx. 24. Now do you esteem communion with God and peace of conscience higher than life? It is

a good sign of interest in Christ when you have this estimation and choice on him.

Ans. [2.] Again, a sign of interest in this treasure is, when we have grace to make use of it on all occasions; for together with graces the Lord gives his Spirit to make use of them, in our afflictions, in our troubles. And therefore they that make not use of the Scriptures, and promises of good things they have in Christ, have no part in this treasure. What is the use of a treasure if it be not applied to our occasions; if we run to earthly contentments, and never make use of our best grounds of comfort? Christ giveth an excellent note of discerning: 'Where the treasure is, there the heart will be,' Mat. vi. 21. Wouldst thou know whether thy treasure be in earth or heaven? Where is the heart? that is, where is thy love, thy joy, delight? Ask thy soul what thou lovest most? what thou most cleavest in affection to? what thou delightest most in? There is thy heart. And therefore they that have few thoughts, and very shallow and weak thoughts of the better state to come, and of the state that they have here in Christ, and the excellencies in Christ above the world, that do not think of these things with joy and love of God, their heart is not there; therefore their treasure is not there. They have hearts eaten out with the world, if they were anatomized, you should find nothing but projects for the world. Anatomize their affections, there is nothing but the love of the world, and vanity, and emptiness, and which is worse than emptiness, much sin and evil that Satan hath brought into the world. And if nothing be found in the soul but worldly vanities and profits, alas! where is our treasure? Our treasure certainly is here, and not in heaven; for 'where the heart is, there is our treasure.'

They that have treasures, Oh they mind them. Therefore we shall see worldly men, they have nothing in them. You shall not have a savoury word of goodness. Their minds are like mines of gold and silver. They say of them, that where they are the ground is always barren, because the metal sucketh out the juice that should cherish it. And so it is with all the minds of earthly men. Enter into an heavenly discourse, it is not for them. They have not a word with them, they have no savour, no relish of it, they show a distaste; yet if it be brought in by occasion of mortality, a short thing will serve. But they will quickly be in the old tract of the world. They be so unwilling to dwell in the meditation of these things, that they be mere strangers to them.

Ans. [3.] A man will think of his treasure and look on it, as a covetous man, that though he use not his gold, yet will open his chest to look on it; excellent is the colour of it.

Note. Shall a worldling joy in refined earth, and shall not a Christian delight to reflect on Christianity and his comforts in Christ, and his future estate, and what blessed conditions abide in him, and being for ever with the Lord, and having such rivers of pleasure? The oldest man, the dullest wit, will never forget where he layeth his treasure, and when we cannot call to mind this comfort, and that comfort, and things useful for us, it is a sign they be not treasures to us, for if they were we would make more of them.

I beseech you, therefore, labour more and more, that as things are in themselves, and as God who is the rule of all truth doth judge of things, so let us judge of things, let them be to us as they are to him, and as they are in themselves. If they be treasures, the blessings and comforts of God's Spirit and the good things of Christ, let them be so to us; never leave begging of God that we may have a sanctified judgment, to have the same mind of them that he hath; and to this end balance them often with other things. As Moses did, and as Paul did, lay them in the scale, and consider the emptiness and vanity of all things besides grace and the Spirit, and the good things of Christ, and what other comforts they will afford. God hath given wit and discourse, how shall we use them better than by comparing different things, and answerable to our comparing to make choice? We should show ourselves wise men in our wise choice, and good men in our good choice. How else should we show ourselves to be what we would be thought to be?

There be treasures in these poor vessels of bread and wine. Now what treasures are conveyed by them, if we look on themselves? Bread is an ordinary thing, but the good conveyed to us by God is conveyed by these common easy things. Thus God delights to show himself in common ordinary ways to us. Therefore raise up your thoughts from the commonness of the things to the excellency of the things conveyed. What is conveyed by bread? The body of Christ crucified. And what is conveyed by that? God reconciled in Jesus Christ, by the sufferings of Christ, the love of God, and mercies of God, and pardon of sins. Great good is conveyed by the bread broken, for Christ is conveyed with satisfaction to divine justice, and thence favour and reconciliation with him. And so when his comforts are represented by refreshing of our bodies, Christ's body 'is meat indeed,' Christ's blood 'is drink indeed,' John vi. 55. The benefit of Christ's blood and

satisfaction are great things that are conveyed by a reverent receiving of the sacrament. If we come preparedly we have communion with Christ, in whom are 'hid all treasures,' Col. ii. 3.

Verse 7

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We entered upon this verse the last day. 'But we have this treasure in earthen vessels;' where he answereth an objection, for the heart of man is full of objections against Scripture truths. God in manner of his dispensation pleaseth not the natural heart of man, especially -when it thinks itself most wise, but pleaseth itself in cavilling and expostulating against the worth or the dispensation of it; and therefore the apostle being desirous that these blessed things may come to the hearts of the people he hath dealt withal, takes away all objections that may stand between them and the truth.

The chief objection is the baseness of Paul's condition. He was scorned and persecuted in the world.

It is true we are 'earthen vessels,' but we have a 'treasure' in these vessels. And God is wise, and his end is good, 'that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.'

And then the treasurer, and the under-treasurer; Christ is the chief; we are the under-treasurers. And then the vessels which this treasure is contained in. 'Earthen vessels' are baser than the treasure itself; and then the reason of this seeming disproportion, that so excellent a treasure is in earthen vessels. These be the particulars that deserve to be unfolded. Some of them have been unfolded in part already.

I showed that the gospel was a treasure. Soul-saving truth is a treasure. It was compared to light, the most divine quality of all, fittest to set out divine truths, which hath influence conveyed from heaven with it; and which discovers itself and all excellencies in the world besides. And now it is set out by another borrowed speech, which we highly esteem in the world, that is, a treasure. Nothing more prized than light and treasure. God speaketh in our own language to us; not that heavenly things are not better than any earthly things, but we cannot understand God if he speaks in any other language.

And therefore he conveyeth the excellency of spiritual things under that which we most prize in the world, under light, and under treasure.

I came then to make a use of trial, whether we have this treasure or no.

Use 8. For further use, if so be Christ, and the good things by him discovered, are such a treasure, then we ought to be content with him, though God cut us short in regard of outward things; for we have a treasure, and this is one benefit we have by it. If we have Christ, we shall have all other things, as much as God shall see needful. They shall be east into the bargain, and that is one comfort.

The little we have we shall have with a blessing. And then though we be never so poor in the world, we are rich in promises. Which faith we have to make use of these rich promises. Precious faith, and precious promises. We have bills, and God is a good paymaster, and is content to be sued on his own bond. We cannot have a better debtor than God himself. Now, having the Spirit of God, to give us precious faith, to lay hold on the rich and precious promises we have in Jesus Christ, therefore we should not be much discontented with whatsoever befalls us in this world, for we have a rich portion.

Let us labour to understand this, and consider not only that we are rich in bills and promises, but in reversion. The best riches are laid up in heaven for us. We have some earnest and other tastes of them here, some grapes of Canaan, but the best is to come, the true treasures are laid up in heaven. What we have here, alas! is nothing to that we shall have hereafter. Therefore having a rich God, and a rich Saviour, God-man; God having enriched our natures, and willing to enrich our persons, so far as shall concern heaven; having rich faith, and rich promises, and rich reversions; for matters of this world let God deal as he pleaseth. God, that gave so rich a treasure as his own Son, cannot deny anything else, as the apostle reasoneth strongly: 'If he hath not spared his own Son, but given him to death for us all, how shall not he with him give us all things?' Rom. viii. 32. He wonders that any man should call it to question, 'How can it be?'

He stands not on petty commodities, which we stand in need of, that giveth treasures. It is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom: *Dabit regnum, et non dabit viaticum?* He will give you a kingdom, and will not he give you safe conduct and provision to bring you to heaven?

Consider this, and often examine your faith, whether ye believe these things or no. If you believe them, why are you discontented with every petty loss and cross in the world, as if there were no better things to depend upon?

(1.) Oh labour to bring your hearts to a holy contentment, and for a Spirit of wisdom to improve this treasure. What use is there of a treasure, if we do not employ it for a supply of our wants? And therefore make use of the riches we have in Jesus Christ. Are we sinful? He is gracious. Have we much guilt [that] lieth on our consciences? Christ hath a great deal of favour: he is 'the beloved Son of God,' Mat. iii. 17. Set that against conscience. Have we many enemies in the world? We have an intercessor in heaven. 'Doth sin abound? Grace aboundeth much more,' Rom. v. 20. Is there any want either in grace or in comfort in the things of this world? See a full and rich supply in Jesus Christ.

(2.) And then yet wisdom to make use of it. There is a special art to make use of the good things we have in Christ every day. For a man to famish at a feast, to starve and perish with thirst at the fountain's head, it is ignorance and want of wisdom. If we be in Christ, if we have a wellhead, whence we may fetch whatsoever we stand in need of, if we have faith, then to this end beg of God a spirit of wisdom and revelation to know the excellent things we have in Christ.

(3.) And likewise labour for a vessel of faith for to contain this treasure, and get enlargement of faith. The larger faith we bring, the larger measure we carry from Christ. As the poor woman, that had vessels of oil, had she had more vessels, she had more oil, 2 Kings iv. 6; for the oil increased as her vessels served. If we had more faith, we might have larger oil of grace, and larger oil of comfort from God's word in Christ, and God's riches in Christ. And therefore beg with the holy apostles, 'Lord, increase our faith,' Luke xvii. 5, that as we have rich promises, and a rich Christ, and rich comforts, so we [may] have rich faith.

(4.) And because Christ is rich, not to them that are without him, but within him, as they have union with Christ, labour therefore to strengthen this union with Christ, that we may be nearer and nearer the fountain, nearer and nearer the well-head, nearer and nearer the treasure of all. And therefore labour in use of the word and sacraments to increase union, and so to increase communion with Jesus Christ.

(5.) And for this purpose increase the sense of emptiness in ourselves, for as we grow empty in our conceits, so are we fitted to be full with God's goodness. 'He sends the rich empty away,' Luke i. 53, that be rich with the windy conceit of their own worthiness. Let us search deeply into our own hearts what we want, what sin lieth on us, that we may be pardoned. What is wanting we should know, that it might be supplied.

It should be our daily task to empty ourselves, by our daily consideration of our own wants and sinfulness, and then to fetch a fresh supply from the throne of grace.

It is with a Christian's heart, as a vessel that is full of something it should not be. So when men's hearts are full of windiness and what they should not have, the more we labour to set ourselves, the more God infuseth supernatural grace and knowledge into us. And therefore let these two go together. Know our riches in Christ, and know ourselves; know God in Christ, and Christ, and then our own baseness, and that is the way to make use of the treasure we have.

(6.) And likewise meditate and recollect our thoughts daily of the vanity of all things here, that our hearts run after so much. Alas, what is here we should stand so much upon as to neglect our treasure! what is here will induce the scanning of a wise man! what is worthy our spirits, our souls, our labours!

Let us wisely consider, and see through these things, and see beyond all things here, see them, and then see as much as we can into these treasures, which we can never see through, for they be larger than the soul. All other treasures are contained in a place, and the place larger than the treasure, but these riches be larger than the treasury. But see as far as we can into the dimension, and height, and depth, and breadth of these things, and seeing the vanity of all things below, the excellency of these things, using our wits this way, it will teach us how to improve this treasure.

I know these things be uncouth and strange to a carnal proud man, to advance things so much that they see not, to set such a price on things they understand not. But God is wiser than we, and if we take his word for truth, we must judge good, and conceive more than I relate to you. We must go to a skilful lapidary if we will know the price of a stone; and if we will know the price of a treasure, go to him that is able to judge. Consider not what vain

foolish men think of God's ways, but ask God and Christ. Foolish creatures prize a bastardly coral more than a precious stone. So much of that doctrine.

To proceed to the next point. We are the treasurers. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,' we apostles and ministers. So that the riches of the gospel, they are conveyed under dispensations ministerial. And then the conditions of these, namely, 'they be earthen vessels.' God is so good that he not only conveyeth treasure to us, and giveth us rich promises, but he giveth us those that shall help us to come to the possession of, and interest in them. All the riches that we can desire are in Christ and from Christ, but then Christ must be acknowledged, and these treasures must be conveyed, and brought in; and therefore God hath ordained an ordinance to us by way of entreaty, by way of persuasion, and by all the ways the Spirit of God in Scripture useth. And hereupon the ministry of the word, from the excellent use of it, is set out many ways.

(1.) As it is with the lifting up of the brazen serpent, Num. xxi. 9, if it had not been lift up, they could not have seen it to have healed them. The ministry of the word sets up Christ that all may behold for the healing of all their spiritual diseases.

(2.) It is the lifting up of a banner, that all may come under it. The gospel is this banner, as in Cant. ii. 4.

(3.) If treasures be never so rich and lie hid in the earth, there is no use of them. Now therefore is a calling appointed to dig out treasures, to spread them before God's people, to lay before them 'the unsearchable riches of the gospel,' Eph. iii. 8. The use of the ministry is to lay them open to the view of God's people.

(4.) Christ hath a great love to his people, but we must have somebody to woo for him. The ministry is a wooing for Christ. It discovers the excellency of Christ, and our want, and need to be enriched by Christ. Therefore they be called *παρανυμφίοι*, 'friends of the bride,' to show the riches of Christ, and the church's beggary, and so to procure the happy marriage between Christ and the church, John iii. 29, *ὁ δὲ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου*. That is the use of the ministry, to handfast Christ and the church together, to make up the marriage, that so 'the church may be presented a chaste virgin to Christ, so glorious a husband,' 2 Cor. xi. 2. By them God sends his jewels and treasures to the church in this time of contract, as this world is but a time of contract between Christ and his church. As Abraham sent his servant

to procure a marriage between Isaac and Rebecca, Gen. xxiv. 1, seq., the faithful servant carrieth jewels to enrich her, and make her more lovely in Isaac's sight, when she was brought to him; so ministers carry those treasures, open these jewels to overcome the church, that seeing the riches in Christ, she may be more in love with Christ, so rich a husband.

(5.) The ministry is 'the salt of the world,' Mat. v. 13. Without salt, things putrify. So salt preserveth them, and eats out the corruption. It hath a cleansing, purifying power. What were the souls of God's people without it? Rotten and stinking in God's nostrils, with pride and self-conceitedness.

(6.) So we are called 'the light of the world,' Mat. v. 14. We are in darkness, and were not God's light held out, what were the world but an Egypt? Nothing but palpable darkness. As in times of popery, when there was no ministry, but instead of it mass, and other empty things.

(7.) And therefore in the Revelations and other places they are compared to 'stars.' The church is as a firmament, and heaven. And antichrist, in opposition, is compared 'to earth.' And the 'stars in heaven' be those that be set to shine in the darkness of the night of the world, to give aim to others which way to walk.

But I might be large in this. I only speak of it for a general use to us all, that we may better conceive of God's love, not only to give to his church rich treasures, but likewise a calling whereby these things may be unfolded to us, that our love and affection may be stirred up to them. And therefore, Eph. iv. 8, when Christ ascended to heaven in triumph, intending to leave the richest things in the world (as emperors and kings in triumph scatter gold and silver), 'he gave gifts to men.' What were these gifts? petty mean things? No. But 'some evangelists, some prophets, pastors and teachers,' Eph. iv. 11. And how long? 'To the end of the world,' ver. 13. Not only for the laying of the foundation of religion (as some will have the word only used to lay the foundation, and then to leave them to I know not what), but to edify and build them up more and more.

Therefore the greatest gift Christ in triumph will scatter to his church, is gifts, and men furnished with gifts for the service of the church, Jer. iii. ver. 15. When God promiseth to bless his people, he saith, 'I will give you pastors according to mine own heart,' as if that were a blessing of blessings. And therefore, they that live under the ministry of the gospel, let them know the good things of the gospel are not only treasures, but the ordinances of God,

wherein that treasure is conveyed, it is a treasure. We ministers carry this treasure in earthen vessels.

The church where means are, is as it were Goshen, a place of light, and all other places are places of darkness, Exod. x. 22, 23. How pitiful is it to live in places where means of salvation are not, that have no light shining in their hearts at all? I would enforce this point if I were to speak in another place, and to another auditory; but I cannot unfold my text without opening it in some degrees, and therefore we will hasten.

‘We have these treasures in earthen vessels.’

The condition of all ministers, they be men, and carry these treasures in earthen vessels. In earthen vessels, in what sense?

First, It is true fundamentally. And for the matter whereof ministers and all other men consist, it is but earth.

Secondly, It is true of their condition. Earth is the basest of all elements, and they are counted of carnal foolish men, the basest callings of all. They be poor and despised, and thereupon ‘earthen vessels’ in the regard of the esteem of the world, and usage in the world. Earth in matter, earth in condition, earth in esteem, earth in usage suitable to their esteem, earthen vessels every way.

[1.] For the matter whereof we consist, the foundation of all the rest. It is the common condition of all. The rest are more peculiar to the ministers. We are all but ‘earthen vessels.’ You know the story of our creation, Gen. ii. 7. God made us of the earth; but if we had not sinned, though we had been made of the earth, we should never have been turned to the earth again, but our states should have been changed.

God’s gracious power would have suspended that mortality which our nature of itself was subject to; for man being made of earth, was subject to have turned to earth again, though he had not sinned. But by the door and gate of sin, death entered into the world.

The angels were subject to fall as well as the devils, for every created thing is changeable, and so the angels, only God suspendeth that possibility of sin, and establisheth them in grace, but he withdrew his support from the devils and suffered them to fall. So man, if he had not sinned, God would

have continued him in grace, that though mortal by nature, yet his mortality should have been so suspended, that the subjection to mortality should never have come to act. But since sin, the curse is on us, 'Of earth thou art, and to earth thou shalt return; dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return,' Gen. iii. 19. We he all 'earthen vessels' in our original, and in our end, 'earth to earth, dust to dust;' as we say of we, 'water thou art, and to water thou shalt return,' because it riseth of water, and is dissolved into water again. So a man that consisteth of earth, 'dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.' Thou shalt he resolved into thy first principle whereof thou wast made; so that we are but 'earthen vessels,' by reason of the curse inflicted on us since the fall.

[2.] An earthen vessel is but a weak frame; a little dirt concocted with the fire. And we are a more exquisite frame, knit together by a more singular art, of God, being made in a wonderful manner; and yet God compares his frame of us to our frame of earthen vessels, since the fall, Jer. xviii. 4.

Beloved, it is matter of experience which needeth no proof. I would we could make good use of it, rather than stand to prove it. Nothing is more apparent than the frailty of man, and yet nothing less made use of.

'The Lord remembers we are but dust,' Ps. ciii. 14, but we forget it. If we could remember we were dust, it were well, to make us less proud, and less presumptuous. The Lord knows we are but dust, to pity us, but we remember not that we are dust, to humble us. And therefore as God knows we are dust and earthen vessels, we should often think of it too, to make us humble and sober, and to take off our high thoughts from any excellency here.

And take heed lest by intemperance we break ourselves sooner than we should do. Many break themselves by intemperate courses, as candles that have thieves in them, as we say, that consume them before their ordinary time. So many by intemperate lusts and courses, they break the thread of their lives.

Indeed, let an earthen vessel be preserved never so, it will moulder to pieces, though it may be kept an hundred years, if preserved from knocks; so man will moulder of himself to an end; all the art and skill in the world cannot prevent it.

Yet notwithstanding there may be, and ought to be, care that we shorten not our own days, as many intemperate persons do, and that in sinful courses, which is more to be lamented.

Therefore let us often think of our condition, Jer. xviii. 2, 3, 4. God bids the prophet go to the potter's house and see his making of pots, and there he sees how he makes one to one use and another to another; and so we are but vessels of earth for several uses; and let us learn the use the prophet there was taught, to resign ourselves to God's dispensation. If he will make us longer or shorter, of this use or that use, let God have his will, and not quarrel with God; as the vessels never quarrel with the potter, who makes what vessels he pleaseth, and for what end he pleaseth, as the apostle makes use of it in the great point of predestination, Rom. ix. 23.

Use 1. And since the best ministers, magistrates, and all are but earthen vessels, make what use we can of them while we have them. Let us not rely on them. They be but 'earthen vessels;' but though we must not depend on them for our comfort, yet make use of them while we have them, for they may be knocked in pieces, we know not how soon, and then all the use we might have had is gone.

Use. 2. And to rise to a higher use, which concerneth us all, since ministers, kings, subjects, and all are but 'earthen vessels' in regard of the manner, and seeing they may be golden vessels in regard of grace and glory, as the apostle saith, 'in a great house are vessels of gold and silver,' 2 Tim. ii. 20, let us labour to have another manner of being than this, labour to be born again of 'the immortal seed of the word,' 1 Peter i. 23, and then in death we shall live, then these 'earthen vessels' shall be made golden vessels for ever; for God's second work is a great deal better than his first. Now we be in the first creation 'earthen vessels,' but when God reneweth us out of dust again, if we get into Christ we shall be golden vessels in heaven for ever, born and begotten of the seed of the word; as the apostle Peter saith, 'All flesh is grass,' he compares us not only to earthen vessels, but to grass, of less substance than earthen vessels, 'but the word of the Lord endureth for ever,' 1 Peter i. 25.

Labour that we may be golden vessels under a golden head. If we be Christians we have a golden head, though earthen vessels; and having a golden head, he will make all conformable to him ere long. We shall have bodies conformable to him, as Phil. iii. 21. He will make our earthen bodies,

vile bodies, base bodies, like his glorious body, by the power whereby he is able to subject all things to himself.

And this comes by hearing the word of the Lord. That word is the seed of the new birth. 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord,' Jer. xxii. 29, and consider we be earth, earth, nothing but earth; for he repeats it thrice together, 'Hear the word of the Lord,' that we of earthen vessels may be made vessels of everlasting continuance.

Use 3. And then it is no prejudice to us that we be earthen vessels, but rather a comfort; for death, whereby we shall be knocked in pieces, will be only a consummation of our grief and trouble here, and a beginning of the happiness in another world. In the grave dust lieth a while, but we shall be made of another fashion, and receive another kind of stamp in the world to come.

Use 4. And, I beseech you, forget not that which is the proper use of it for humility. You may differ in outward relations, but you be all of one stuff. You be all earth; judices term terrain judicant, the judges of the earth judge the earth. They judge other men that are earth, and they be earth themselves, and filii terae, that is, base men. The sons of the earth, and men of the earth, that is, great men, that account all as grasshoppers in regard of themselves; though they be men and giants, yet they be but earth. We should all therefore labour to have low conceits of this life, and of all comforts of it, as Austin saith well, Respice terrain, look to the dust; go to the grave and say, Here is the dust of the emperor, here is a rich man, here is a poor man; see if you can find them differ. Alas, no difference at all. Therefore make use of sobriety in regard of the use of things of this life, for we be all earthen vessels. And so much shall serve for this point.

But the apostle intendeth more than so, for he speaketh of their esteem; earthen vessels are not only broken, but contemptible. Look into the element, and you shall see every element and creature as the more light, it is more excellent, and as more earthly, it is more base, as the apostle before saith. We see now the water more lightsome than the earth, the air than the water, the fire more lightsome than it, and the element more pure than it, till we come to God himself, who is pure light. So everything as more light, is more excellent. What is the excellency of pearl? They have a sparkling light in them; but everything as it groweth near the earth is more base, for earth is the dregs of the world. Now ministers are more so than others, both in

esteem and in usage, which followeth esteem. And what is the reason of it? Surely,

Reason 1. Because that the world is foolish and childish, and liveth by sense and fancy; and the matters of the gospel and divine truths we speak of are spiritual things, matters of faith, far remote from sense and fancy, by which the world liveth.

When we preach spiritual things, what are these to honours, and to riches, and to dependence, and to the goodly things of this world? Thus the fools of the world undervalue the things of God, especially when they be in their gawdes. See a foolish man when he hath his riches, and clothes, and friends about him, his fancy is full of these things; tell him of spiritual things, what a loathing there is in the heart of a man! This is the proud carnal heart of a man, which the more carnal, the more it loatheth things of a higher nature, being besotted and drunken with worldly excellencies, as men's natures are.

Reason 2. Again, divine truth is a solid thing. Men naturally are given to superstitious conceits in religion. They will have one, but it shall be with this conceit or that conceit; as the apes, so they hug the brats of their own brains; they will have devices of their own. Religion is solid, and tells them this is God's way, and God's course; but the foolish heart of man will not yield to it. And that is the reason they cry down the solid things of God's word which have realities in them, and things to purpose. And then the world loveth their own courses, and are in love with their own way. Sin is a sweet morsel to them. Herodias is sweet to Herod. John Baptist was a good man till then, but when he meddled with that sweet morsel, then his head must off, Mat. xiv. 2, seq., Mark vi. 28. And so when Christ opposed the worldly courses of the Scribes and Pharisees, he was counted a demoniac, a wine-bibber, and an enemy to Caesar, and what not, when he took on him the office ministerial. When Paul calleth himself an 'earthen vessel,' how did they use Paul? Tertullus, a prating orator, counteth him a pestilent fellow, Acts xxiv. 5. And his usage was base. They whipped him, put him into the dungeon. The Corinthians, that were begotten by him, because he had not eloquence and gifts of ostentation, and fitting the stage, as their flaunting teachers had, they count him a mean person. The proud teachers brought him out of conceit with the Corinthians, and therefore he is fain to make apology for himself. 'He writes great letters indeed, but his presence is mean and base,' as in the 10th chapter of this Epistle, ver. 10.

There may be many reasons given why this calling is subject to base usage in the world, and esteem from the dispositions of men contrary to it, but indeed not much to follow the point. It is not so much at all times, nor in all places. God doth at some time give more liberty, and raise up a more excellent esteem of them than at other times; but ordinarily it is thus, the more faithful, the more despised of carnal people.

If you ask a reason what raised popery to be so gaudy as it is, they saw the people of the world fools, and knew that children must have baubles, and fools trifles, and empty men must have empty things; they saw what pleased them, and the cunning clergy thought, we will have religion fit for you. And because they would be somebody in the world, they devise a religion that is only outward, and such an one as dishonours God, by thinking him like to themselves, to delight in incense, and ornaments, and pictures, and the like; and hereupon came all the outside of popery, whereby they labour to ingratiate themselves to the world. They fool the world with all toys to please themselves, and they had suitable clergies: like lips, like lettuce; they had a religion suitable to their life. And hence came all that trash in popery to please the foolish heart of man. And because they will not be basely esteemed of, they get into the consciences of people by raising authority by false means and false conceits, that man can make his Maker, and turn bread into Christ's body by five words; and the pope cannot err, and whatsoever comes from him thou must obey, though with denied obedience to thy lawful prince; for they had seated themselves in the consciences of the people, and raised themselves by false means to avoid that which they saw would follow, the gospel. They knew the cross would follow the doctrine of the cross, the preaching of Christ crucified, and mortification and self-denial. And therefore they thought to take another way, and hence is all that forced respect they have in popery.

But it is clean contrary, where any that are won by God to the means, they have high esteems of it presently. As the jailor that had whipped and abused the apostles, Acts xvi. 33, used them very respectfully, and made them a feast. And so first [epistle of the] Cor. chap. xiv. 24, 25, When the simple man heareth the word open his sinful estate, he presently falls down at the apostles' feet, and saith. Certainly God is in you. No man is won by the blessed truth of God, but hath high conceits of the pure ordinances of God; and the more pure and close and home it is, the more he esteemeth of it. And therefore we may take an estimate of ourselves by our esteem of it.

A sanctified ear slieweth a sanctified heart, and a sanctified esteem of God's ordinance, as God's ordinance. From the power and virtue we find in it, working upon our souls, it is an argument we be wrought upon by the ministry; for though we be counted 'earthen vessels,' by base earthly-minded men, yet they that be wrought upon have other estimations of us.

Their calling is to bring men's souls to heaven, to be saviours of the people, to be God's own name, to be fathers. It is a calling that the angels may stoop under it. 'Who is sufficient for these things?' 2 Cor. ii. 16, and yet the base slight it; but I say, respect must not be won by forced means, as in popery, but by opening the mysteries of God, and the Spirit accompanying the outward ministry. This will work so effectually in the heart, as will raise the heart to a high esteem of these things, from the blessed experience they find of the Spirit of God working in them. But that will appear more in the next, where he saith, God's end of conveying heavenly things by earthen vessels is, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man.

The first part of the verse we have unfolded, and have showed,

1. That the gospel is 'a treasure.'
2. The 'treasurers,' they be the 'apostles and ministers.'

And then, 3. The 'vessels.' We carry it in 'earthen vessels,' earthly vessels for the matter and for their esteem.

Of this I will only say, that which concerneth every man.

1. It is not a severed condition, it is the condition of all. To be earth of itself is no such base condition. That it is a word of disgrace and frailty, it is from sin. For howsoever we be earthy, and of nothing, and so might fall to nothing, yet God would have suspended the inclination of the creature, which is prone to turn to its original, which is nothing, if Adam had not sinned. The heavens are made of nothing, and yet still continue their condition, because God preserveth them. And the angels made of nothing, and are subject to fall to nothing, as the angels that fell, they might have fallen. And they stand not by any strength of their own, but God's grace suspendeth that possibility of falling to nothing, and confirmeth them in that blessed condition. And so the baseness of the earthen vessels is from sin.

2. And add this by the way, see the marvellous power of God. At first, all things were nothing at all, then they were a chaos, a confused mass; out of a confused mass comes a heaven and earth, and all the creatures. Man himself falleth, and becomes worse than nothing, having sinned; and to be delivered out of that miserable condition he must be a new creature. Of an earthen vessel he makes him a vessel of glory, and never leaveth him till he be settled in a blessed everlasting condition. So that God brings man from nothing, and worse than nothing, to a blessed and glorious condition.

Let us often think of it, that we be earthen vessels. It is a strange thing that God hath joined body and soul together, which are so wonderfully different, the soul being spiritual, the body earthly. But that he hath joined this spirit with a sinful polluted soul, that is more wonderful. But to join the Godhead with earth, that the Virgin Mary being an 'earthen vessel,' should have Christ made of her substance, that he should set his own stamp and image in a piece of earth, and take a piece of earth into union of his person, that earth should be joined with God, here is a wonder of wonders.

3. Therefore let it tend to our humiliation, that we be but earthen vessels: and keep us in terms of subjection, that we dash not against God, being but earthen vessels; for he hath iron sceptres for proud earth, to dash them all to pieces, Ps. ii. 9.

4.. Let us be thankful for our protection and preservation, being earthly vessels. In the last visitation, how many of these earthen vessels were dashed to pieces in one day? Beyond the seas, in the wars, how many dashed together in a moment? We he so frail, that if the like judgment fall on us, we turn to nothing. We are proud, womanish, and lewd, and have high thoughts, as if not 'earthen vessels;' and therefore it is a great mercy that we have been thus long preserved.

As ministers are earthen vessels, so magistrates and great men. Their souls be knit to their bodies by no sounder bonds than the meanest man's. There is as little combination, and as weak, between the strongest and greatest men in the world, as between the poorest.

5. But as it concerneth ministers especially, let me make one use further to the people that are in any relation to the ministry or magistracy, that we do not refuse the treasure for the weakness or infirmity of the vessel. Elias had meat brought to him by a raven; did he refuse it because so poor a creature brought him his meat? 1 Kings xvii. 6. No. But took it as a special blessing of

God that he had meat at all, sent from God, to refresh him in his -weariness, and therefore stands not upon the vessel, but marks the treasure whence that came. Who would refuse a pardon, because he that bringeth it may be meaner than himself? Look to the prince's hand and seal. Is it a sealed truth? Doth conscience bear witness to it, being God's privy seal? It is no matter who bringeth it. Magnify God's ordinances, that not only giveth pardon, but giveth likewise a messenger to bring it. Therefore bless God rather for his ordinances, than stumble at the weakness of his ministers.

It is no matter what the hand is, if it give a treasure. We be wise in the things of this life, and so should we be in heavenly things, considering God doth this in a wise and gracious dispensation, condescending to our weakness. We bear no proportion to messengers of an higher nature. If we cannot endure the sight of an angel, we cannot endure God himself. You know the history of Moses. And therefore seeing God hath thus stooped to us, yield thankfully to this weak dispensation, that God conveyeth spiritual things to man by man.

Now what is the end of all this? 'that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' Wherein are these things observable.

First, That there is a power in the ministry and dispensation of the gospel, and an excellent power. The apostle cannot enlarge himself enough here, when he enters upon the argument of commending the gospel.

Secondly, This power, and excellency of power, it is of God, and not of man.

Thirdly, And that this may appear to be so, he useth the ministry of weak men, and earthen vessels, that by the disproportion between the excellency of the things and earthen vessels, they may know if any good be done, it comes from him who is the highest cause of all conversion of the soul. To bring the soul out of Satan's kingdom to the liberty of God's children, to be heirs of heaven, is so far above 'earthen vessels,' that it must needs appear to be God's work.

Doct. For the former, we shall put them both together, that there is an excellent power in the ordinances of God, as it is dispensed under the gospel. The Word itself, what power hath it? Are not all things by the Word in creation? Nay, is not the vigour and strength that every creature hath from the same Word? Is not the being and efficacy of all things, and the

continuance of things, from the Word? As Heb. i. 3, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, He upholds all things by his mighty power and word. Whence comes the support and continuance of the vigour of every creature, but from God? Who doth cause the sun to shine, and to give light to inferior things, that they may bring forth fruit, for the use of every creature?

And why is the sea, that vast and unruly creature, kept within its bounds that it cannot go an inch farther; is it not God's commanding word? At first God created it, and God made bounds that it cannot go beyond its due compass. Is not an eternal law set upon every creature by the word? This you are, this is your virtue, this is the extent of it, thus far you shall go, and no farther. 'God sent forth his word,' saith the psalmist, 'and they were created,' Ps. cxlviii. 8. I speak it but by way of illustration of the point in hand. And so the excellency of the power in the great work of redemption and salvation of man is from the word, as it will appear in particulars.

(1.) What a large power is put forth in the conversion of a man. For is it not the bringing a man out of Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of Christ? Col. i. 13. And will Satan let a man go willingly? Is not conversion a world of miracles? How many miracles hath that one work of conversion? It was a miracle when the blind man saw, and the deaf man had his hearing restored, when the dumb man began to speak, he that had his feet together so that he could not enlarge himself, to be able to run. But to give life to a dead man is a miracle indeed.

Now in the conversion of a sinner by the ordinance of God and the Spirit accompanying it, all these are in one; for what is conversion but the opening of the sight of the soul to see its misery by nature, and a better condition in Christ than ever; and the opening of the ear to hear and to taste heavenly discourse in another manner than before? What is it but restoring feet to run [in] God's commandments, to delight in the ways that were tedious before, and that the mouth that was used to swear and to curse, in the language of hell before, now do set forth the praises of God. Is there not a world of wonders in one work? Therefore there is a power, and an excellent power, put forth in conversion. Whatsoever Christ did in the gospel to the body, that he doth to the soul in conversion, and there is greater power put forth in the one than in the other.

To enter into the heart of man, that fenceth itself against all goodness, 'to pull down strongholds, high imaginations,' 2 Cor. x. 4, rebellious oppositions against God and goodness—do not you see daily such spirits under the gospel? Do but guess therefore what is in the whole mankind. What was it when Christ sent his apostles into the world? He sent his word accompanied with his Spirit, and that word should enter into the hearts of men, and cast all the proud, high, lofty imaginations, and lay all flat before Christ. 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Acts ii. 37. We have been vile wretches, and now we are convinced of it. Is not the word powerful to turn a man out of himself, clean to dash him to pieces, and then to make him up new again better than ever he was? This is power indeed.

There is an excellent power in the word. First, in the ministers themselves; and secondly, by them to the people.

[1.] There is an excellency of power to make them fit for the work, and then to go along with them in the working others' conversion. A great power wrought on Paul, and Peter, and the rest, and a great power wrought by them on all the rest. But because I speak not to ministers, but as it concerneth all, we will speak of the power in general.

[2.] I might be very large in showing the power of the ministry from the success of it. Look into the history of the church, mark Christ's time, the apostles' time, that strange fishermen, and men of low conditions, being furnished with commissions from heaven, and carried these treasures in earthen vessels; see what wonders they wrought in the world by spreading the sweet savour of the gospel. The fishermen cast their great nets into the great world, as Austin saith, and got in whole nations. And therefore Saint Paul magnificently speaks for himself and the rest of the apostles. 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation,' Rom. i. 16. As Isa. liii. 1, 'To whom is the Lord revealed and made bare?' as the word signifieth. That is, to whom is the power of the word in the ministry made bare? The ministry is the arm of God, whereby he pulleth man out of Satan's kingdom. Now God the Father draweth them to Christ in spite of corruption, in spite of sin and Satan, into his own kingdom. The cross was then set above princes' crowns, the greatest emperors that were, submitted themselves to the sceptre of Jesus Christ, and laid down their crowns at his feet. In the ten persecutions, 'was there not mighty power of the gospel, that when it had caught the hearts of women, young men, old men, or children, all conditions, all the fire, all the torments that tyrants could

devise, could not get Christ out of their hearts, but they were willing to sacrifice their lives, and found more comfort in the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ, that all the discouragements in the world could not make them forsake him. Such a fire was rooted in their hearts by the fire of God's word, that made them not care for all other fires whatsoever. Where this excellency of the power of the word appears in any, it armeth them against all oppositions whatsoever.

3. We will show the powerful work of the word in some branches of it.

(1.) That there is an excellency of power that enables a man against his own corruptions, against temptations from Satan, from the world, sometimes from God himself in a tray of trial. But this ordinance having God's Spirit accompanying it, enables a man against corruption, the most bosom corruptions, against all temptations whatsoever. It makes a man do that which is clean contrary to his nature. It will turn Jordan back, to make of Mary, a light woman, a blessed woman; to make of Paul a persecutor, Paul a preacher, to be able to subdue corruptions when they rise, that great persons lie under, to subdue their carnal wills. We see great persons are led by their wills, and countenanced by him that rules their wills, the evil spirit, and so they run rushing on, the devil joining with them, to destruction. The Christian having the power of the word and Spirit crossing his will, he is able to deny himself; and what an excellent power is that! Is it not an excellent power? Now the word giveth us strength and comfort against temptations to sin and for sin; and whether they come from Satan or from God, showing himself an enemy. The word teacheth how to oppose God himself, when he personates an enemy, as sometimes he doth. A poor Christian then can say, Lord, remember thy promise. Thou seemest to be mine enemy, and 'writest bitter things against me but I believe not thou art an enemy, thou hast made rich promises, and remember them, Lord, wherein thou hast caused me to trust, Ps. cxix. 49. God is content to be bound by his word; and is not that powerful that can bind God himself, when we can sue him by his bond? Thou seemest to be mine enemy, but I will not away, I will be at thy feet till I hear comfortable news from heaven.

For temptations on the right hand, allurements and promises, and on the left, as threats and afflictions and the like, the word sets other matters before us than these; and the word enables us to all kind of duty. A man that is tongue-tied, it enables him to call on God; and a man that hath naturally nothing to speak that is good, it enables him to speak a word of comfort to

others; it enableth him to every duty that God calls him to, to trust him, and to love him above all; it enables him to live well and to die well, to perform all duties God requires. The word with the Spirit enables us to manage all in a spiritual manner.

(2.) And so for bearing afflictions, how doth the psalmist speak in the Old Test[ament]? The word will direct and comfort for the carrying on of our souls in troubles of all sorts; as David, 'I had perished in mine affliction, if it had not been for thy word,' Ps. cxix. 92. No affliction can befall us but we have grand comforts to support us in it, when God hath promised his gracious assistance, that he will not fail us nor forsake us, when the sting is taken out by him that hath sanctified all afflictions in his own person, that as our crosses increase, so our comforts and consolation shall increase. And the afflictions of this world are not worthy the excellency that shall be revealed.

Then no wonder there is that strength in the word that it enables us to duties of our calling, public and private; it enables us to bear afflictions. And therefore the apostle may well say, 'That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.'

(3.) And so to enjoy all things that God giveth in a right manner. The word with the Spirit teacheth how to use the world as if not, to enjoy it as helps in our pilgrimage and way to heaven, that they be not snares to us, as they be to carnal men, who perish in these things, as wasps on gally-pots.

They are drowned in riches, and drowned in pleasures, but the word and the Spirit directs the children of God to use these things in an holy and sanctified manner, and to taste them as they ought, which no man can do but they that have the word engrafted by the Spirit in their hearts.

And there is a great reason; for what doth this word oppose? Doth it not oppose greater things than the world hath? What is all preferment here to heaven? And what is all discouragement of tyrants to hell? If any one saw the joys of heaven, would not he forsake ten thousand worlds rather than lose it? If a man saw with his eyes hell opened to swallow him up if he did not alter his courses, would not he leave his courses? Now, the Lord saith, it is true that these things shall be. Let a power go with the word, and is it a wonder that he will leave his sinful courses rather than have a curse? It is no wonder that Moses should leave 'the pleasures of a court, that saw him that was invisible,' Heb. xi. 26; and that Paul, that was lift up to the 'third heaven,' and saw things that could not be uttered, 2 Cor. xii. 4, regarded not the threats of

all tyrants, for he saw the right difference of things, he saw things in their right colours. So if the Lord lets us see spiritual things and earthly things in their colours, one will appear to be realities indeed, and other to be nothing but vanity. It is for want of faith and power accompanying the ordinance of God, to persuade ourselves that these things be as they are, and as we shall undoubtedly find them another day. And therefore it is no wonder the gospel findeth such power, where it is received and obeyed, because of the vast difference of conditions.

I beseech you, let us consider these things, and not be led away with a spirit of vanity and folly and error. So that there is a power, and an excellency of power, in the ministry; and you that have open understandings in the history of the church, know how it hath powerfully wrought in all times.

Quest. How do you know the word to be the word?

Ans. It carrieth proof and evidence in itself. It is an evidence that the fire is hot to him that feeleth it, and that the sun shineth to him that looks on it; how much more doth the word, that carrieth its own character and stamp with it, to them that be God's people; for it not only giveth light, but giveth that which is more than the sun can do. And that giveth light, but no eyes. The word giveth understanding to the simple, opens their eyes, Ps. cxix. 130; and a Christian can say, God hath not only shined upon me by the word, but hath wrought in my heart by it; so that in it I will live, and in it I will die. So that they need not seek arguments, for the word itself is stronger than all framed arguments. It hath a character of divine truth stamped upon it, in the heart of every believer, that mingleth it with faith that it is the word, though all the world preach the contrary, and the ministers that teach it apostatize from it. I am sure I felt it, it warmed my heart, and converted me. And that is the best trial of the word to be the word, because of the efficacy felt in the heart.

That Spirit that makes the word effectual, doth by that efficacy convince the soul that the word is the word. For the soul reasons thus: I have found this word casting me down, I have found this word lifting me up; I have found this word warming my heart when it was cold and dead. I found it enlarging my heart in loving God and praising God. I have found the Spirit of God in the word casting down strongholds, and Satan out of me, and setting up his kingdom in me, and ruling me by his Spirit, that I cannot but do what was irksome to me before, and can abstain from that which was sweet to me before; and all because I am convinced of another course than

before. The soul that can say thus, if objections come, he defieth the motion. My soul hath felt the strength of the word taking root downwards, bringing forth fruit upwards, 2 Kings xix. 30, and shall I doubt it to be the word? But to leave this.

Application. I beseech you, if there be such efficacy in the word, make a use of instruction of it, that we regard it more than we have done.

Use 1. And first of all, that we may make way for instruction, do but examine ourselves whether it be as a word of power to us, or any that have lived so long under the gospel? The trial is very easy.

[1.] If it be a word of power to us, certainly it will enable us to defend it, and maintain it in the worst times. St Paul saith, 1 Thes. i. 5, 'You received the word in much affliction.' If we should live in places where holy things are disclaimed and abandoned with Ishmael's persecutions, that is, the persecutions of these times, scoffings and scornings, yet hearing divine things unfolded, we receive them, and entertain them, and that with joy and comfort, with an opposition to the poison of the times, it is a good sign that the power of the word hath caught every one of our hearts. But if every taunt of Ishmael and poisonous spirits be regarded, when in times of poverty a little thing will discourage us and make us flinch, where is the power? Alas! whatsoever profession we make, we deny the power of it; for if it did work upon us, we should receive it, in the midst of opposition, with joy and comfort.

(2.) The apostle saith in another place, 'Receive the word, as the word of God,' 1 Thes. ii. 13. Now if a man receive divine truths, he will acknowledge that it is a word of power, and excellent power. What is it then to receive the word as the word? To receive divine truths with a great deal of reverence, as blessed truths, that come from the bosom of God, and likewise with a great deal of subjection, submitting the soul to them. It is God's truth delivered by Jesus Christ in the ministers, and therefore I do receive it as God's truth, and submit my conscience to it. Though there be discovery of some rebellion, yet if I allow of no risings against the power of the word, it is a sign we have felt the power of the word, when we regard it as the word.

You see then some particular evidence how we may know if the word hath wrought upon us.

Add the particulars named before, by way of trial.

(3.) What power have you to help you against temptations? What power have you against temptations from the word and divine truth? What power have you to bear crosses, and afflictions, to comfort you in sickness, losses, and crosses in the world? Can you fetch comfort from truths heard and read out of this book of God's word? It is a sign then that the Spirit of God, with the word, hath wrought a blessed change in your hearts. Can you use the world moderately? Can you perform duties in a spiritual manner? Undoubtedly, you may comfort yourselves, though with much conflicts and oppositions, both without and within.

If on trial we find these things not so, I beseech you own not yourselves one minute of an hour, for that minute may be the minute of our destruction, and may cut off the thread of our lives. Rest not one minute, for howsoever we may bless ourselves, as all proud hearts do against God, and the ordinances of God, and godly ways, in a scorn, as if they had a heart distinct from God and the word, and needed not to be beholding to God for direction! They can go home, and there they have means and friends, and they can do well enough. God sets himself to laugh at the destruction of such; and that word that they cast behind them, and would have nothing to do withal, now that will stick by them to the hour of death, and they shall carry it with them in their own consciences to hell, and their consciences shall say, God told these truths to thee, and I told them to thee; I heard this from God's word, and thou regardedst me not. And therefore when your consciences he awakened with divine truths, know, that conscience shall be one day revived, and you shall hear it. What you now slight, you shall regard. You regard now no command, no duty, but you shall think of them when it is too late. Therefore seeing this is the time, labour to find the power of God in the heart, rest not.

But how shall we carry ourselves, so that the word may be effectual to us?

[1.] Labour to have humble, teachable souls, attending on God's divine dispensation in his ordinances meekly. You know what David saith, Ps. xxv. 9, 'The humble he will teach.' Come with teachable hearts, and Godwin reveal mysteries to us. He will teach secrets, so that we shall say, I never thought there had been such light, such sweetness in the word. Come with humble souls, and you shall find him opening the secrets of heaven, especially if you desire the Lord to give the Spirit of revelation, and to take off this veil of darkness and corruption, that he would back his Spirit with his

own ordinance, and make it effectual, that as things are in themselves holy, and heavenly, and excellent, and as they are to God's children, so they may be to us. God's word is a word of power to all elect children. Oh that I might find it a word of power to me! that I might get myself to be God's elected child.

[2.] Join with the means a spirit of prayer, as God shall enable you, and 'to him that hath shall be given,' Mat. xiii. 12. Labour to wait for this. If God speak not at first, the good hour is not yet come; wait till the waters be stirred, as it was in the pool of Bethesda, John v. 3. Wait till he give the Spirit of revelation, and at length we shall find such a change as Isaiah speaks of, 'The lion and the lamb shall dwell together, and the leopard and the kid, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,' xi. 6. The knowledge of the Lord maketh lions lambs, and leopards kids, makes them fit to live together, though their dispositions be never so cross. If we have grace to wait God's leisure, we shall find a transforming, changing power in the word to alter us perfectly, and to mould us to a holy frame of spirit.

The apostle, as we heard heretofore, laboureth in the former chapter, as likewise in this, to set out the dignity of the ministry of the gospel above the ministry of the law, and answereth, as we have heard, all objections; and lest he should seem to savour of too high a spirit, as Saint Paul to attribute so much to his ministry, in the sixth verse, he giveth all to God; 'God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts.' So that -whatsoever light is conveyed by the ministry, is conveyed by God, and by an almighty power in God, even by the same that was used in the creation, and in some sort above it. Now the end of the knowledge kindled in the heart especially of the ministers is, 'that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God may be seen in the face of Jesus Christ.' God shineth on the ministers, not only upon their understandings, but upon their hearts; and to what end? Not to shine in ourselves only, but to reflect the light, whereby God shineth upon us, to others. Then he shows the end of the ministry is especially to set out God in Christ, and the glorious mercy and goodness and bounty of God in Christ Jesus.

And what is the end of this? That God will have such an excellent treasure, as is in the dispensing of the mysteries of Christ, out of earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

Wherein is considerable, first of all, that there is a power, and an excellency of the power, in the sweet truths of God, discovered in the gospel,

especially in the dispensation of it by weak vessels; so powerful, so excellently powerful it is, that it may be known that it is of God. It is of God, but that it may 'appear to be of God;' for things are said to be when they appear in regard of men. Now that it may appear to all, that the power and efficacy of the ministry of the gospel is of God, and not of man, God would have such a disproportion between the vessels and the treasure. The treasure shall be rich and heavenly, the vessels shall be earthly, that whatsoever is good, it may appear it cometh not from the vessels, but from the treasure itself.

That there is a power, and excellent power, in the truths of God, especially dispensed by the ministry, we have in part showed heretofore, but we will follow the point. God hath furnished everything in the world with power. Every creature hath power, together with being. The heavens have a power of influence; the dull earth hath a power to put forth what it receiveth from the influence of heaven, into this and that creature, being the common mother of many excellent things, but all the power is from God. God hath put a power into the creatures, which we call an eternal law. Besides the law made to man, there is a statute given to the creature. Heaven shall move, and by moving limit time, and heaven shall bestow influence upon inferior bodies. There is a law for the sea that it shall ebb and flow, and not pass the bounds God hath set it; and by the law of God there is a centre immoveable on which the earth shall stand. These keep the statutes and the laws that God hath given them eternally. God to show a miracle can make the sun stand still, or the earth move, or the sea to overflow. But the power we are to speak of is another manner of power, a spiritual power, and excellency of power.

There is a power, then, in the ordinance of God, and a spiritual power. There is in every ordinance of God something that hath an heavenly relish. There is in the word, in the sacraments, that that maketh a heavenly relish. And God, by the word and the ministry, doth create spiritual sense suitable to the relish that is in spiritual things. Had we not by the word created in us spiritual sense to relish those heavenly things in the ordinances, they were to no purpose; God should lose his glory, and man should lose his benefit thereof. God createth spiritual eyes to see, and spiritual taste connatural and homogeneal to spiritual things. As there is a sweet taste in the word, so God altereth the taste of the soul, that the word should be found hotter than the appointed food, sweeter than the honey-comb. Nothing so sweet as divine promises to a sanctified soul; because God, that hath put a sweet taste into the ordinances, altereth the relish of the soul, the taste, and sight, and spiritual feeling of all divine truths. The spiritual heart feeleth the comforts of

the sacrament in strengthening faith, and tasteth the goodness of God in Christ in giving his body and shedding his blood, so that there is a relish and virtue in the things themselves, and by them the soul is fitted to take the benefit that is hidden in the things.

There is in divine ordinances not only a light to convince, but likewise a power, together with the light, to open the eyes. There is light and power to open the eyes of the soul together. What if all were light? If there were not the eye to see, the light would be of no use at all. There is power in the ordinances not only to offer light, but it hath a spirit accompanying it to open the eyes of the soul to see that light, so that there is extraordinary power in God's ordinances. What light can give sight, and what moat can give relish to him that wanteth it? There is therefore an excellent power in the ordinances.

Now, there is a power $\phi\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\iota$ et $\phi\acute{\eta}\sigma\epsilon\iota$, there is a power of a thing in nature, and there is a power by institution. Now the power of the ordinances and the ministry is drawn from God's institution, who hath appointed it and sanctified it to have such power, where he will accompany them with his Holy Spirit.

Now this power that is in the ordinances of God, it is set out and illustrated by many speeches and comparisons that are very clear and excellent for that purpose.

(1.) As the word and ministry is called 'the salt,' Luke xiv. 34. Now the power of salt is to season, to make sweet, to relish, to consume the superfluous humours, to preserve, and keep long. So the word hath the power of salt to eat out the corruptions, and to preserve the soul to make it relish God. The souls of men, without divine truths accompanying them, they are, to speak with reverence, but carrion souls and dead souls, ever stinking in the nostrils of God; howsoever they hear it out in the world to be godly persons, yet if they have not souls sanctified by divine truths, they have but rotten hearts, and are good for nothing.

("2.) The dispensing of it is compared to 'the arm of God.' Isa. liii. 1, 'To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' Now a man's power is in his arm. The ordinance is not only 'the finger of God,' but 'the arm of God' to pull men out of Satan's kingdom and their wicked courses, by showing them the vengeance of God, and better things than the world can, or Satan can. The word, the power of the Spirit accompanying it, is the arm of God 'made

have,' as the word signifieth in the original. 'God revealeth and maketh bare his arm in the ministry when he pulleth men out of Satan's kingdom and their wicked courses.

(3.) And so likewise the truth of God in the dispensation of it is the 'sword of the Spirit,' Eph. vi. 7, and cuts on both sides. It is no leaden dagger, as the papists blasphemously term it. It hath a force in it to cut as it goeth, and they shall feel it one day that will not feel it now; and therefore it is compared, together with the Spirit, 'to wind,' which hath a mighty power to carry and transport things, John iii. 8.

(4.) And the ministers of God's holy truths, in regard of the efficacy of the ministry, have excellent terms. They are,

[1.] 'Stars,' because they give light, Rev. i. 16.

[2.] They are 'ambassadors,' as they have commission from God, Luke ix. 2.

[3.] They are, in regard of the excellency of the truth, 'angels,' Lev. ii. 1.

[4.] They are, in respect of the necessity of God's people, 'saviours.' So were Moses and Joshua.

God saveth by the ministry ordinarily those whom he doth save; so that there is a power and efficacy of power in the ministry, as appears by the terms by which it is set out.

(5.) Again, God is able to give efficacy to whatsoever he will. As he giveth power to every creature according to its own natural working, so he giveth power to those things that have institution from him. He is able to do it, to make them effectual for the end for which he hath appointed them, for he is the supreme power himself. All power is resident in him as the head; and therefore he furnisheth and clotheth this ordinance of his with a power.

(6.) The word is compared to 'seed,' Mat. xiii. 8, seq. Now, in seed there is a power to put forth itself, to grow and breed seed like itself, and it will break through clods till it comes to its ripeness and maturity. So there is a power in the word. When it is so in the believer's heart, it will bring forth a disposition like itself, as seed doth. As it is a holy word and a pure word, it will make the heart that receiveth it suitable. Therefore James calleth it the

‘engrafted word,’ James i. 4, comparing divine truths to a scion engrafted into a plant, that turns the juice of the plant into its own nature. So when the word is engrafted, it altereth the heart, that the inward man doth relish of divine things, thinketh in power of what he heareth, and speaks in power of what he heareth, and understandeth, and worketh, and doth in power of what he knoweth; so that divine truth is like a scion engrafted into the heart. Therefore there is a power, and an excellency of power in it, not only in truth itself, but in the dispensation of it. God setteth not up an ordinance but he giveth a blessing upon it. There is an excellency of power as a power. Is there not a power and excellency of power to level mountains and to fill up valleys? It filleth the valleys. Poor dejected souls are filled with comfort. Is there not power and excellency of power to make a camel to go through a needle’s eye? That is, to strip a man of self-conceitedness of his own worth, so far that being a camel, a swelling person before, he shall now be humble and low in his own sight. It is difficult as for a camel, so for a cable too. There needeth much extenuation to make a cable to go through a needle’s eye, and much to humble a Christian; and is not this an excellent power? Sure it is. Therefore there is a power, and an excellency of power.

I will show you this in particular.

1. The power of the ordinance of God is first seen in that it discovers to men their natural conditions, slieweth what they are by nature; for which end it useth the law, to show that we be dead men, carnal men, under a fearful bondage, and the Spirit going along with it, convinceth the soul that we are dead, and thereupon the soul is amazed and cast down with fear and terror.

2. And then the word hath a power likewise to show and discover the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, to pull us out of Satan’s kingdom, to drive the strong man out of our hearts by higher reasons, by higher comforts, Mat. xii. 29.

3. And then the word, together with the ministry of the Spirit, hath a converting power, a changing power, to alter the very frame of the soul. All the words in the world, all philosophy, all education, all the best helps that can be given, cannot stamp the image of God upon the soul, or frame holiness in the soul, but only the blessed truth of God, especially in the dispensation of it. So that the image of Christ in the ‘second Adam’ is stamped upon the soul, by the Spirit accompanying the ordinance.

And when the Spirit of God in the ordinance hath set a stamp of holiness in the soul, and made it like to Christ, it worketh in the soul, and by the soul. When the soul is altered and changed, it is a fit instrument of the Spirit, together with the ordinance, to pray, to do any service, to trust in God, to love God.

4. And to show more particularly wherein the power of God's word is seen after conversion, I will show it in four or five particulars.

(1.) First of all, when it hath altered and changed men's frame, and pulled them out of Satan's kingdom, it is seen in enabling them to perform duty in a right manner, which a natural man cannot reach unto; as the soul altered by the power of the word and Spirit, can love God, can deny itself, can hate that it formerly loved, can pray—which no carnal man can do—can have communion with God, can perform spiritual duties and actions above the rank of nature. This the Spirit of God, together with the ordinance, raiseth the soul to do. A man may do many things that a Christian man doth, a common Christian may do many things that a sincere Christian doth, but self-respect enters into all he doth. He doth it either of slavish fear and terror, or to be thought well of, or to redeem some inward quiet to his tormented conscience; but he hath not the Spirit of God altering the relish of his soul, to love divine truths, and out of love and obedience to do what he doth. An holy man, if there were no enforcement out of God's word, he loveth the truth because it is truth, and hath a suitableness to his sense. If there were no hell, no torment at all, yet there is that excellency in divine truths, his soul being altered and changed suitable to divine truths, that he obeyeth heavenly truths out of love to heavenly truths, and obeyeth God out of love to God, because it is best in his judgment to do so, and not only out of fear, though that is a useful way too.

(2.) Again, as there is a power enabling a man to do, so there is a power in the word enabling a man to resist temptation; for the word breedeth faith, and faith knitteth the soul to Christ, and draweth virtue from him to resist Satan. By faith we overcome the world, temptations of honours, pleasures, temptations from within and from without. The Spirit of God working faith to lay hold on better things, enableth us to resist all temptations on the right and on the left hand. 'This is your victory, even your faith,' 1 John v. 4. 'Faith cometh by hearing,' Rom. x. 11. Faith presenteth to the soul such excellent good things, such terrible evil things, that it overpowereth the soul to embrace better good, and to avoid greater evil, notwithstanding all

temptations from the world. The good the world affordeth is nothing so good, and for the evil there is nothing so evil. Now faith apprehending this by divine light, it overcometh the world.

(3.) And as the power is seen in enabling to do duties above another man, and enabling to resist temptations, so likewise it is seen in showing our corruptions that we he naturally prone to. A man by the power of grace is so altered that he falleth out with his most beloved sins, and laboureth to get strength against that above all other sins. The word maketh division between his Spirit and sin. Jordan is driven back with him. That stream of nature that was carried amain one way, now is carried another way. Though he hath corruptions which sometimes foil him, yet faith getteth spiritual strength, whereby he at last not only subdueth them, but at last expelleth them; and therefore the Scripture calls it self-denial. He hath a self that denieth itself, he hath a self wrought by the Spirit and word, by which he denieth himself, that is, his carnal self, Titus ii. 12. When his corruptions would have such a thing, his other self saith no, it shall not be; when it stirreth him up to revenge, no, it shall not be. I owe no service to my flesh. And he hath a principle in him, whereby he subdueth what before was wonderfully powerful in him, which setteth him above himself.

(4.) There is a power, and excellency of power, in the word, to comfort us, to raise the soul in all dejections, in all discomforts. Therefore it is called 'the word of faith,' 1 Tim. iv. 6, an instrument to beget faith in the promises. Faith relieth upon better things, and sets the soul above all inferior things. And so for comfort, it setteth the soul upon a rock, higher than all trouble; it setteth the soul upon God's infinite goodness and power and truth, and promises; it setteth the soul upon the things promised, heaven and happiness to come. What are these things to the glory to come?. So faith carrieth the soul to heaven, to God, to Christ, to the promises; it pitcheth the soul upon such a foundation, as no discomforts here below can shake the soul; it is above the reach of any trouble. A soul that pitcheth itself on the word and Spirit of God, and so upon God himself (for God and his word are one), it is above the reach of all discomforts whatsoever, so far as it believeth; and therefore it comforteth a man. The comforts of God's word, having the Spirit of God with them, are called 'the consolations of the Almighty.' 'Despisest thou the consolations of the Almighty?' Job xv. 11. We will instance a little in a few promises. Let the soul be in want, it pitcheth itself on the promises in the word. God hath promised 'he will not leave thee nor forsake thee,' Heb. xiii. 5. Let a man be in some weakness and disability, he

cannot perform his duty. God hath promised his 'Holy Spirit to them that beg it,' Luke xi. 13. We are in many miseries and crosses, 'all things shall work together for the best to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. God is working my good by this cross, and shall I be angry with God for working my good? No. Let me by faith see the issue of things in this promise. God will turn all to the best, and how will this stay the soul! God slieweth himself as a Father, and it is for my good, and I shall receive 'the quiet fruit of righteousness,' Heb. xii. 11. And so you may see how the soul is stayed in all afflictions whatsoever. 'I had perished,' saith the psalmist, 'in mine afflictions, but that thy statutes were my comforts,' Ps. cxix. 92. They were my supports. Thus you see in some particular things how there is a power in the word, and an excellent power many ways, enabling us to duty, sustaining us in all crosses whatsoever.

(5.) Again, there is a power, an excellency of power, in the ordinances, whereby we are above all good things that the world affords to us. By the word, we know we have lawful use of the blessings, prosperity, peace, and plenty, God giveth us. We may use them as God's creatures, being in covenant with God. And by the word we come to manage them, and not to be slaves to them, as to make them our masters that are our servants. By the word, and by the Spirit accompanying of it, we have a sanctified use of all. All conditions are sanctified to us, and we sanctified to all conditions; not only to afflictions, but to prosperity and everything. By the Spirit of God we are raised above prosperity, which subdueth more than adversity doth. There is an excellent place, Phil. iv. 12, 13: saith St Paul, 'I have learned'—in Christ's school, not at the feet of Gamaliel—'to want, and to abound; I can do all things in Christ that strengthens me.' But a carnal man, that hath not let the word into his heart by the Spirit of God, he can neither want without murmuring, nor abound without pride and licentiousness. Every thing turneth to his bane, because he giveth not way to the Spirit. But where the Spirit getteth place in the heart, it advanceth the heart above all conditions. Thus you see, in particular, wherein the excellency of the power in the ordinance of God appeareth.

Now all this is from God, not from us; and therefore saith the apostle excellently, 2 Cor. x. 4, 'The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to heat down strongholds' of corruptions, and to beat back temptations. So the weapons of the ministry of the word, they are 'mighty,' but 'through God;' being 'strong in the Lord, and by the power of his might.'

I have learned, saith Paul, 'to want and to abound,' but it is through Christ. The gospel is a dead letter, the word is dead letters without the Spirit, which is the infusion. Take water without infusion, it is dead; but a drop of aqua vita, which hath such spirits, is more than a pint without spirits: that is flat and dead. So take the Spirit from God's ordinances, they are the massy substance, but they want infusion. There is the bread, but the staff of bread is gone; the staff of all the infusion is from God, and not from us. You may see this in the Acts, chaps, i. ii. When the Spirit of God did fall down upon the apostles, what extraordinary men were they! It carried them through all oppositions, through all abasements, whips, scourges, imprisonments. It wrought mightily, nay, by help of the Spirit it did greater things than Christ. We may speak it with reverence, for Christ saith, 'You shall do greater things than these,' John xiv. 12, speaking of the mighty power of the Spirit, that should fall on them after his ascension. He never converted so many at once as Peter, who converted three thousand, and yet might have preached three thousand sermons and not have converted one man, if it had not the Spirit to accompany it. He cast the net, and caught three thousand souls, and all because the Spirit was mighty in the ordinance, Acts ii. 42. What maketh the age of the church bad or good, but because there is more and less of the Spirit? Why were the eight hundred, nine hundred, and thousand years so dead? Because Christ was not known as he should be; or so the Spirit was not given in that measure, and therefore they were dead and dull times. So that it is the Spirit of Christ accompanying the ordinance, that maketh it effectual. 'I, even I, am thy comforter,' saith the prophet, Isa. lvii. 15. Men must speak comfort, but God must comfort the heart. 'I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace,' ver. 19. The fruit of the lips it cometh by the ordinance, but I will create it, and make it to be so. What is the fruit of the lips, if God create it not? 'Paul may plant, and Apollos may water,' and if men had the tongue of men and angel, if the Spirit did not accompany them, all were nothing. 1 Cor. iii. 6. Nay, miracles are nothing without Christ. Israel saw the wonders of God in Egypt, yet because God gave them not an heart, they were not effectual. Nay, the miracles of Christ did no good. Nay, the doctrines of Christ did no good, without the Spirit. The Jews were not converted, because the Holy Ghost was not so abundantly given, as afterwards. Afflictions and crosses will not work without the Spirit. As it is said of Ahaz, 'This is Ahaz,' 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. The more God humbled him, the worse he was; and Pharaoh, after ten plagues, was ten times worse than before. Nothing will humble, neither word nor work, but by the power of the Spirit. Therefore as there is power and excellency of God in God's ordinance, so it is all from God, for all operation is from the Holy Ghost.

God the Father and the Son work by the Spirit. Power is originally in the Father, and it is conveyed to Christ God-man, mediator, for to be the treasure and fountain of all power, and riches, and goodness. But the Holy Spirit doth take it from the Father and the Son, as the third person being near to us, and working in us. And so by the Spirit is meant the Holy Ghost, which cometh from the Father and the Son.

Use 1. Is there such a power, and excellent power, in the ordinance of God, when the Spirit of God accompanieth it? Then make this use of it, for to depend on the ordinance of God with meekness and humility: and take heed of Naaman's pride. Naaman was self-conceited. He being put in mind of washing himself in Jordan, what saith he? What reason is there in this? Is there not as good rivers in our country as the river Jordan? 2 Kings v. 1, seq. But if Naaman had not hearkened to his servant's counsel, he had gone home as leprous as he came. Saith he, the prophet, he biddeth thee do thus, and therefore do it, or else return a leper as thou earnest; and then he hearkened to him. So many [are] of Naaman's conceitedness. Cannot I read a good hook in my chamber? Cannot I have good lessons out of philosophy and morality? It is true; this is Naaman's mind; are not other rivers as good as Jordan? But God hath sanctified his word, and the dispensation of his -word too. His word is holy, and the ordinance is holy, which holiness is in consideration distinct from the word. The very unfolding of the word hath a Spirit with it. God will not set up an ordinance in his church to no end. Therefore, if we will not stoop to it, as we he lepers by nature, so we may die as we are born, for anything I know. Therefore humbly depend on God's ordinances, and be thankful that God vouchsafeth to teach men by men. It is the most suitable teaching. We cannot endure the presence of an angel, nor an angel the presence of God. Therefore this is proportionable teaching, when God will teach man by man. If an angel were to administer it, the word would not be entertained for its own sake, but for the messenger's sake: but now God would have it regarded not for the vessel's sake, but for the treasure's sake. Whatsoever the vessel be, therefore, God will teach man by man. Therefore depend upon it. But if God hath not wrought this power and efficacy in our hearts, yet wait at the posts of wisdom, wait at the pool of Bethesda till the good hour come. Perhaps the good hour is not yet come, for the ordinance is the grand conduit that conveyeth all Spirit, and all grace, and all comfort in life [and] in death. And therefore, unless we will quarrel with our own comforts and salvation, and the kingdom of heaven, and life, do not despise 'the word of life,' 'the word of the kingdom,' 'the word of salvation,' 'the word of faith,' 'the word of reconciliation.' Despise that, and

despise all these, because God is pleased to convey these things no otherwise ordinarily, where he hath established a church; ordinarily I say, extraordinary things we leave. And therefore God styleth his word with these titles, 'the gospel of reconciliation and peace' and the 'word of the kingdom,' to show there is no way to come to grace, peace, and life, but by the word of grace, the word of peace, the word of reconciliation; and therefore be stirred up to attend upon it, to make the best use of it, even as we desire the good that is conveyed by it.

Use 2. Again, if the ordinance of God, in unfolding the truths of God, hath such a savour, and power, and relish in it, then examine ourselves whether we have found such power and efficacy or no. If not, then search what is the cause, what standeth between our souls and divine truth. And finding out the cause, be not more in love with our corruptions than with our souls. This word is able to save our souls, and therefore let us see whether there be stubbornness in our wills resisting the truth of God, withstanding it, rebelling against it. As the chiefest hindrance of divine truths is not so much the veil of ignorance in the glorious times of the gospel, as a kind of wilful stubbornness and pride, men will not stoop to God's ordinances, and when truths be revealed, men shake them off, as Stephen telleth them, 'You resisted the Holy Ghost,' Acts vii. 51; and as Christ telleth them, 'You would not come to me that you might have life,' John v. 40; and as he saith, 'I would have gathered you, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not,' Mat. xxiii. 37. We are in love with our corruptions more than with our souls; and therefore the word hath not that power, that efficacy, that excellency of power, that otherwise we should have experience of. And it is a pitiful thing indeed it hath not. We may justly take up lamentations over the times. What power hath the word, when it hath not power to make men leave fruitless sins? What fruit is in swearing? Declaring only frothy hearts and rebellious dispositions, that we get nothing, no other good by it, but only publishing our shame? God saith, 'the plague shall not depart from the house of swearers, and for oaths the land mourneth,' Zech. v. 3, 4; Jer. xxiii. 10. There is no good in the world by it. Every sin hath its aucto-ramentum, but this hath no end at all in it. The word hath not power to make men leave superfluity, to leave an ugly fashion, that becometh them not, but disgraceth them, serving only to discover that they desire to fashion themselves to the worst debauched persons.

Use 3. If this power hath not virtue one way, it will have virtue another; if it draws not and quicken, it will have virtue to confound. The threatenings

of God against sins, that they are willing to live in, was made good, as Zechariah, i. 6, saith, 'Where be your fathers and the prophets?' They are dead and gone, 'but their words catch hold' of your fathers. They be gone; they threatened for these and these sins, and their threats remain. Moses is dead, but the threats extend to the people of the Jews, and stick upon them. The prophets and apostles are dead, but the threatenings of the sins of the times light upon the people, and they feel them now in hell; as Rev. vi. 2, it is said 'that Christ, who rideth on the white horse of the gospel,' and goeth to conquer and to conquering, he 'goeth with his bow, and woundeth as he goes,' either to conversion, to alter their wicked course of life, or to confusion. There is an arrow shot in every man that heareth, and that either maketh him better or worse.

Obj. But you will say, What efficacy is there in the word, when men leave not off their swearing and debauched courses of life?

Ans. I answer, There is an efficacy on these very persons even before they come to hell, which doth as it were gape for them, unless they alter their ways. There is an efficacy in hardening their hearts for the present, for every sermon maketh them worse and worse; and is it not a terrible judgment to be hard-hearted? Son of man, 'harden this man's heart,' Isa. vi. 10. What! with preaching? That is the way to soften them; but if they stoop not to it, it shall harden them. Every sermon they hear striketh them more and more with hardness, till they have filled up the measure of their sins, and then God payeth them home with confusion in hell for ever. Is it not a judgment of God to sink deeper and deeper in sin? If you ask who is the most wretched man of all that liveth in the church? Surely those that will hear many things, and yet will go against them; that will set their wills against God's will, and set their authority against God's authority; that will live as they list, and live as they please; for every sin they commit is a step deeper to hell, and the more they have their wills, the more they shall be tormented against their wills.

No man so deeply tormented as they that will have their lusts most freely, for God will have his will first or last. And the deeper they fall into sin here, the deeper they shall be in hell hereafter. What is the punishment in hell? To suffer what they would not. Now, your wilful persons, of what rank soever, that despise the law of God and reason, though never so free and never so great, a wilful person is in the most dangerous condition; because he sinketh deeper and deeper in rebellious courses, and therefore his account will be heavier; and when conscience is awakened, it will charge sin on them

with more terror than on other men. Because he would have his will, God will pay him home with suffering that that shall be clean contrary to his will. And therefore learn to stoop to God, submit to the ordinances of God; and labour that it may be effectual, and that we may find it effectual, since all is of God.

Use 4. The power, and the efficacy, and the excellency of it; I join prayer together with the ordinance. Lift up the heart to God, that God would accompany what we hear with his own Spirit, and accompany the receiving of the sacrament and every ordinance with his own Spirit, to make it effectual, for they be dead ordinances without it. As food to a dead man, or cordials poured into a dead man's mouth, they have no efficacy; and therefore desire God to afford his Spirit, to quicken us by the ordinance. And if we have spiritual life, that he would more and more increase it by his ordinance, and make our studies oratoria, places of prayer, as well as studies; because the virtue of all is of God. And think not to break through things with your own wit, which is it that hath made all the heretics in the world. They will break through things with their own wit, and not submit to God's truth; and this makes profane men. They will not submit their profane wills to God's rule. Therefore know that thou canst not do it without the Spirit of God, joining prayer with the ordinance, for the Spirit.

I beseech, you, take those things to heart. I cannot enlarge them. That that hath been spoken may be sufficient to stir us up to a care of the ordinances. Let me say this and no more at this time: It will bring an ill report upon all God's ordinances, if we are not careful to get good by them. We bring reproach upon them. How? God saith his word is mighty to salvation, and it is his strong word to salvation, and his arm, but we by hearing and growing no better, show there is no such thing. Our lives deny it, and therefore the word will conclude it. Look upon many a Christian, he heareth the word, and converseth about it, but what power hath it in him? Surely, if there were any such power, it would appear in them that attend upon it. If there be such power in the ministry, why is their lives no better? And so the word is reproached to be a dead word, and the sacrament a dead ordinance. And therefore in honour of God, and the blessed things of God, I beseech you, labour to go to God by prayer, and attend on the means, and to find more virtue and power, and never give over till we find something in ourselves above the nature and course of other men. And then we shall honour the ordinances of God, and shall witness that they be powerful, that we have felt their power casting us down in ourselves and lifting us up in

God, resisting of temptations, subduing our corruptions, enabling us to go through adversity and all conditions. And then we credit and adorn our profession, and grace religion, when we find the Spirit of God making these things effectual to us, otherwise we bring reproach upon them, and bring discredit to them in the hearts of carnal men.

The holy apostle, as we have heard, after he had out of the fulness of his apprehension of the divine mysteries of the gospel set it out gloriously, cometh to avoid imputation of arrogancy, lest he should seem to advance his calling too far. The gospel is indeed a treasure, and the preaching of it is a treasure; the dispensation of it, being God's ordinance, is a treasure, because it hath a special virtue distinct. But we are but 'earthen vessels' though. The end why God would convey such excellent things as are in the gospel by such poor means, is, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We have spoken at large of the first part of the verse, wherein we showed, first of all, that the gospel is a treasure in the dispensation of it, so largely, that I will not now stand to repeat anything then delivered. The ministers are 'vessels,' and 'earthen vessels.'

Now the end is, 'that the excellency of power may be of God, and not of us,' wherein we propounded to speak of these particulars.

1. That there is a power, and an excellency of power, in the gospel, and in the dispensation of it. In divine truths dispensed, there is a power, and excellency of power. This power takes place even of God. It is not of the instrument that conveyeth truths to us, exclusively set down, and not of us. He strikes off us, because proud men will be ready to touch upon God's prerogative, if he had not an exclusive with it. And therefore he saith, it is of God, and not of us.' Now, the end of all is, that it may appear to be of God, and not of us. It is so; but it appears not to be so, unless there were such a disproportion between the vessels and the treasure. And therefore God would have the vessels that carry it to be earthly, the treasure to be excellent, that as there is a great difference in the reality of the things themselves, so it may appear to be so in regard of man. Non esse, et non apparere; it is all one; for if it appear not to be so, man will not believe it is so. And yet because God will have it appear to be so, therefore is that disproportion between the vessel and the treasure.

Because the point is not perfected, we must add a little.

Now, the power is wrought by degrees; as in the 14th chapter of Revelation, ver. 2, where St John 'heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters,' where heaven is taken for the church, because the church is from heaven, and begotten to heaven. Now, he heard a voice from heaven, 'as the voice of many waters, as the voice of great thunder; and I heard a voice of harpers, harping with their harps.'

1. The word in the dispensation of it is like 'the voice of many waters;' that is, it is confused, and raiseth a kind of wonder and astonishment, but the people know not why. Take an ignorant man that cometh to hear, and read the word and divine things, he is astonished at it, and filled with a kind of wonderment. So that it is as the noise of many waters to him, Mat. xxii. 22. You have the description of such persons, 'when they heard these words they marvelled, and left him, and went their ways.' Some will hear the word, and if there be any extraordinary parts, or extraordinary actions of a preacher, perhaps they will come and hear, and marvel, and leave him, and go their way. Many come to sermons, and hear, and marvel, and so away.

But the second effect that the word hath, 'it is as the voice of great thunder;' that is, where the word prevaieth a little more, it is as the voice of thunder. Now thunder astonisheth, and breedeth fear and terror. So they that wonder confusedly at first hearing, a while they hear as they heard it thunder; and therefore the thunder is called 'the Lord's voice,' Job xxxvii. 4, 5, because it breedeth fear and terror. So before the great work of conversion, the word, as thunder, terrifieth, and affrighteth, and casteth down.

But the word leaveth not the soul there. Therefore, saith he, 'I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps;' that is, the sweet tune of the gospel. As the sound of the harp is delightful to the ear, so the sweet tune of the gospel breedeth joy and peace to the soul. After thunder cometh the voice of harpers harping with their harps. So the power of divine truths is first a kind of marvel, confused wonderment, but then it hath the power of thunder and astonishment, then it endeth in the sweet voice of harping, in peace, and joy, and comfort. The Epistle to the Hebrews, 4th chapter, maketh an excellent description of the power of the word in the 12th verse, 'The word is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing and dividing asunder the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow, a discerner of the thoughts of the heart.' When the word is let into the soul, it is a discerner. It hath power to discern what is flesh in the word, and what is spirit. And likewise of all actions that proceed from contrary principles, it

hath power to tell when we do well, when ill; what will hold water, what not; what we may stand to, what not. And not only in actions, but in afflictions also; and therefore is the ‘discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,’ Heb. iv. 12; and thereupon rippeth up and anatomiseth the whole inward man when the Spirit of God accompanieth it.

Obj. Now, we will answer some cases and objections that may be made, and so proceed. Why is it not so powerful in some, say many, as in others? The apostle Paul telleth them, Heb. iv. 2.

Ans. 1. They do not ‘mingle the word with faith.’ You know physic must have nature to work with it. Physic will do no good to a dead man. No. They do not ‘mingle the word with faith,’ and therefore they feel not the virtue of it. They lift up their own conceits against the word, and hoar it, and know it, but yield not their hearts to believe and assent certainly to it, and therefore it worketh not. And,

Ans. 2. Then they let it not into the heart and affections. They give it room in the mouth to talk of it, but the word is never powerful till it hath its own seat and throne, till it getteth into the heart and affections, and alters the frame of the inward man. When it is not engrafted into the heart, it yieldeth not forth its virtue and power. Ans. 3. Again, there is a great deal of opposition. What is the hindrance of the power of the word? A foolish conceitedness and presumption. Men think they have enough already, and think they have a divinity point when they can talk of it. But, beloved, we know no more of religion than we love, and we love no more than we do. He that doth not, knoweth nothing as he ought to know. He may prate and talk for ostentation sake, and to satisfy conscience. But this conceit, that people have divinity when they can talk of it, it is a very destructive conceit that hindereth all the working of the word. Religion standeth not upon words, but it is a matter of power. Religion is not matter of fancy and imagination, faith is another thing.

You have many, especially great scholars, they think they have all they know, but they have nothing but what they love, and obey, and subject their hearts to. What they have more, it tendeth to damnation. ‘Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou faithless servant,’ Luke xix, 22; thou knowest this, and thy courses are contrary. Therefore, take heed of this conceitedness, I beseech you, for it overthroweth all.

But I would not have such absent from the word; for the word is able to remove all the obstacles and hindrances between the heart and it. Physic will not do a dead man good, but this physic will give life to dead men; for the power of the word is such, that it hath a quickening power, and a raising power, and a directing power; and therefore, though there be never such mountains of oppositions between the heart and divine truths, as indeed they that be given to a profane course of life, there is much opposition between their hearts and divine truths. ‘. . . They that be practisers of any profession called to great employments, they should be so far from absenting themselves from the means of salvation, that they should offer themselves the more carefully and diligently, that whatsoever is between their hearts and divine truths may do them good. When all other things will fail, this may be removed; and therefore the main thing hindering from doing them good. The word is able to make way for itself, by removing the hindrances upon the word by a careful and continual attendance upon it. There is an excellent place in this Epistle, chap. x. ver. 4, ‘The weapons of our warfare are not weak, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds, and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.’ It is an excellent portion of Scripture. There be three things in a man which much hinder and indispose a man from taking good.

(1) There be λογισμοῦς, ‘reasonings of flesh,’ as, Is not reading as good as preaching? which men that have much wisdom in them think. Then,

(2.) There be ὑψώματα.; that is, ‘exaltations of the heart.’ What! shall I stoop? Shall I be so base-minded as to regard what common persons do? I ever judged it more for my credit and reputation not to stoop than to yield up myself to be obedient to what they say. And when divine truths are propounded, seeming to be contrary to reason, though no truth be contrary to reason, but above it, as the great matters of predestination, and election, and free will, the pride of man’s heart seeing no great reason for this, being above reason, it riseth, and will not yield, but the divine truths beat down these, ὑψώματα, λογισμοῦς. There is,

(3.) A word, that is, νοήματα, ‘actions of the flesh against divine truths.’ As when a man is exhorted to be liberal, it suggesteth, I shall want myself, and it is good to look to a man’s self; and for suffering, it is good to sleep in a whole skin. Whatsoever the disputes or reasonings of flesh and blood there be, let a man attend upon the word, it will subject and subdue all in time, if a

man belong to God; therefore it is powerfully said to make way for itself. For God will let himself and his Spirit into the heart in spite of corruption, and in spite of Satan. Never despair of a man that hath care of God's ordinances.

Obj. 2. But you will say, How or by what means doth God make this word effectual?

Ans. I answer, this excellency of power in the word and his truth worketh in the heart by the Spirit.

(1.) By way of revelation. It revealeth to us excellent things above nature, and better things than corrupt nature can apprehend in the world —Christ, and all the good we have by him; and that is the first thing— a revelation of divine truths.

(2.) Then again, by the Spirit, as all this is offered to a soul that will receive it. There is not only a discovery, but an offer.

(3.) There is not only these discoveries and offers, but divine truth is the instrument that worketh faith to apprehend and lay hold upon this. And therefore it is called the 'word of faith.' And when faith is wrought by the Spirit, after revelation, and after offer of divine truths, then that faith draweth out of Christ. Faith hath a drawing and sucking power out of the word, and Christ revealed in the word, of whatsoever is necessary for grace and comfort, that may be needful to bring to heaven; for the Spirit of God worketh faith, and by faith bringeth all other graces in, and maketh them effectual in the soul. Faith is the grace of union, that knitteth us to the principle of life, Christ.

And therefore God, upon revelation and offer of divine truths, first worketh faith, and by faith knitteth us to the fountain of life, Christ; and it is a wise grace, teaching the soul to fetch sovereign advantages from Christ, as in nature there is an instinct in every creature to fetch nourishment from the dam. So when God hath wrought faith in the soul, God putteth this supernatural divine instinct into the soul, to fetch whatsoever is needful, all comfortable graces out of Christ. And thus it becomes an effectual word, an excellency in a believing soul. 'It is the power of God to salvation to all them that believe,' Rom. i. 16. When we believe, God showeth his power in the soul. God, by his almighty power, first worketh faith, and then faith layeth hold on that mighty power again. When God hath by the word wrought faith, we do apprehend the almighty power of God in Christ, and to make

use of it on all occasions. And therefore it is called, Col. ii. 12, 'The faith of the operation of God.'

Obj. 3. And by resolving of this question we may answer another.

Quest. That is, what degree of power is here meant, when he saith the excellent power that is of God? Whether it is only a revealing of divine truths, or likewise in working upon the soul effectually? For you know that distinctly there is a moral kind of working which is by persuasion, and entreaty, and efficacious working, which is more than entreaty, which worketh as the sun worketh upon inferior things, which is called a virtual working, and maketh an impression therein. Now whether doth the word by the Spirit only reveal, and offer divine truths, or have a work sometimes in the soul?

It is no nice question, as it is made. And I will give you the truth of it.

Ans. The excellency of the power is not only in revealing, but in working. The word and the Spirit not only reveal, but work something in the soul, and in every part of the soul.

(1.) In the understanding there is not only a revealing of truth, but a light. In the understanding he giveth not only life but sense.

(2.) So the will not only apprehendeth what is good, and excellently good, but God's power goeth, together with the revealing of things, to the will, and putteth a relish into the will to relish that good, else natural corruption will will above what is good, without power wrought in the will to clear itself, and bend itself, and weigh itself towards the best things.

(3.) And so for the affections; good things are not only revealed to love and joy, but the affections themselves are altered and changed. The corrupt natural affections have no proportion to supernatural objects, without an inward work, wrought in the heart, in the will and affections. So the power and efficacy of the word and Spirit is not only in presentation and offer, but in powerful working upon the soul, because there is no connaturalness, no proportion between a soul unturned, unchanged, and objects of a higher nature. Can an eye see things invisible? Can a natural soul apprehend and love things supernatural, above nature, before it be altered? It cannot. There is a vicious humour overspreadeth the soul, and therefore alters the taste of it, that we cannot naturally like nor approve the best things. And therefore

the taste must first be altered. Take a sick man, if he have never so much skill, the palate is vitiated, and he cannot relish the wholesomest thing in the world, but answerable to the corruption of his palate. So let a man have never so much knowledge, if the power of the soul be not altered, he relisheth divine truths only according to his corrupt fancy. And therefore there must be wise and powerful workings upon the soul, that as divine truths are savoury in themselves, so they may be savoury to us. Therefore they speak very shallowly of the work of grace, that take it only to be matter of entreaty, and leave the soul to its own liberty. *Nolo hanc gratiam*. I will not this grace (saith one of the ancients), that leaveth the will to be flexible, and at liberty. It is a dangerous thing when a man hath no more grace but what is left to himself. One mischief will necessarily follow, that God hath not so much power as the devil hath. If he propounds any motion, we have a corrupt heart that yieldeth to the temptation, and betrayeth the heart, but if God's persuasions be only moral, and alter not the frame of the heart, he findeth nothing of his own goodness in us, only he findeth in us what is contrary to God's Spirit. And therefore the devil hath the advantage of God, if God should not work in us powerfully. For supernatural things have no friends at all in us, but opposition and enmity. Propound the sweet truths of the gospel to a proud natural man, he hath no more relish in them than in the white of an egg, Job vi. 6, till his heart be humbled and subdued, for we have no friends within us to hold correspondency with such truths. But let the devil offer a temptation to any natural man, he is iron to God, and wax to the devil. And therefore of necessity there must be more than a moral work, by effectual persuasion. I speak it to advance the power of the word, that we may know what degree of grace to beg. What is suitable to the apprehension of these things prayer will be for. If we conceive grace to be only a motion and persuasion, and no powerful work upon the heart, we will beg no more. No man was ever brought to heaven with such a grace, but it is an altering, changing, converting grace that bringeth us to heaven.

I will name one reason out of the text. It is more than revealing, offering, and persuading by reason, because that is not the excellent manner of work. God in the gospel works in the most excellent manner, but working by persuasion is not the most excellent manner of working; but working powerfully and really and effectually. Now the excellentest manner of working belongeth to the most excellent worker, who worketh powerfully in the heart, which is the most excellent manner of working.

Now, how prove you that?

Ans. Is not he that is able to do stronger than he that persuadeth to do?

Therefore the most excellent manner of work is to work inwardly and effectually, not only by entreaty and persuasion, which is a weak and shallow kind of work, in regard of an efficacious work in the soul. Now God, the most excellent worker, worketh in the most excellent manner, and therefore works not only by persuasion, but worketh powerfully in the inward man. God made the soul, and framed the soul, and knoweth how to work upon the soul, and how to work upon it with preserving the liberty and power of it untouched. And therefore as they say very well, he worketh suaviter and fortiter: suaviter, by entreaty, agreeable to the nature of man; and fortiter, powerfully.

There are two things that are the principles of action in men working by reason, working by strength. When there is power to do a thing, and reason why to do it, they work like men. If a man had never so much reason, and not strength, he worketh not. If he hath strength and not reason and grace to guide the action, the action is common, and there is no religion. But when a man worketh by power from reason it is like a man. So there be excellent and strong reasons in the word to dissuade from sin, make us in love with heaven and happiness, if we were believers; and without a power accompanieth the reason secretly and sweetly, and altereth the soul powerfully, all will do the sold no good; and therefore together with reason goeth a divine power to the soul. So God at one time worketh powerfully and sweetly by entreaty. He works suitably to the nature of man, and powerfully to overcome that nature.

Obj. 4. I come now to answer this—How shall we know whether this virtue, and excellency of virtue, hath wrought on the soul by God and the Spirit of faith?

To give you some evidences; and first, you may know easily that it hath wrought, but we cannot tell the manner in working, because we will answer a secret objection.

Quest. I feel not how God works upon my spirit by his Spirit.

Ans. It is true, for the present you do not. For instance, grace is wrought in the heart, as the sun works on inferior bodies. Influence cometh from heaven to it, but who can tell you how influence entered into his body? Who can in spring-time see the manner how he is cheered? He seeth he is cheered, but to say exactly the time and measure, that is unknown. It is a sweet and

strong influence. We see there is a sweet influence in the working of things, but the very working is unperceivable; so the power of God's ordinances in the working is concealed, but presently after there is an alteration, as we know the spring is come when we see nature altered, and things flourishing and green, and a new face of things over there was in winter. So we know the Sun of righteousness hath shined on our souls in the ordinances and means of salvation, when there is a flourishingness and fruitfulness in our conversations. When our speeches and actions savour of the word and Spirit, we may know that the Sun of righteousness hath shined upon our souls, Ps. ex. 8. The church is compared to dew that falleth in the morning. 'The birth of thy womb is as the dew of the morning.' So the best translators have it. 'In the day of thy power;' that is, in the powerful work of thy ordinances, the word and sacraments. The birth of Christ, which is the church begotten by the Spirit, is as the womb of the morning; that is, the dew of the morning which falleth from heaven, but insensibly and unperceivably. It hath an high cause to draw it up, and let it fall, and to put virtue into it, to make things fruitful, but none perceiveth the falling of it. So grace is wrought in the heart, as dew falls from heaven; that is, we feel the power and virtue of it, but the manner how grace is wrought, and the church is begotten of God and Christ, is unperceivable. And therefore go to the fruits, where there is a power and excellency of power wrought, and a change is seen in life and conversation; for being a lion before, thou art a lamb, there is a triumphing and prevailing power over corruptions that they were enthralled to before, themselves are not themselves, and therefore judge by obedience.

Then there is a power and excellency of power in the soul, when we have turned by a natural power the nourishment into our constitutions; then we be strong, as Elias, that by strength of the nourishment sent from heaven walked forty days, 1 Kings xix. 8. So when we have received the sacraments, and heard as we should, we shall find more ability for duty, for fitness to die, more intercourse with God, more strength of faith against all temptations; and therefore if thou wouldst know what power and excellency of power is wrought in thy soul, examine it by thy strength derived thereby. If you find not strength to overcome temptations and resist corruptions, then you have not yet been good hearers, nor good readers, nor good receivers of the sacraments, as you should be. We know sheep and such creatures are judged of not by that they chew, but by their flesh and fleece, and so should a Christian by his life, his strength, what he is able to do.

And here we may take up just complaint, that many that have great knowledge of the gospel, and have been long professors of the truth, yet they fall before their spiritual enemies; as when Israel, falling before their enemies, complained, 'Lord what is it?' Josh. vii. 8. What is the reason that we fall before the enemy? So a man may complain, what is the reason a Christian should fall before his spiritual enemies? That every temptation should overturn him, every corruption and passion enslave him, why is he so enthralled to temptation? Certainly there hath not been that power and excellency of power in the soul that should be.

By these and the like circumstances, we may know whether we have felt this power and excellency of power or no.

There is, as we said before, a power in religion, if it be mingled with a believing heart; and till we find that power all will do us no good. Profession of religion and knowledge will be in the brain, therefore labour not to know but to feel divine truths. And when be they felt? When the virtue is felt. It is not enough scire seel sentire. It is not enough to know, but to feel. And when do we feel? When we find the virtue of the word in comforting, in raising and directing, in changing, in transforming.

We think we believe all things necessary, when we can say them and speak of them, but there is never an article of our creed, but being apprehended by faith, worketh mightily upon the soul in an excellent manner. As for example, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty,' how shall I know I believe? If the Spirit of God witness to my spirit that God is my Father, and teacheth me to go to him as a Father in all my necessities, I know he is Almighty. When I am under strength of temptation and oppositions whatsoever, he is able to raise my soul, and after death to give it a better being than in this world; and I believe in him as the Father Almighty, when I will not distrust him. He is my Father, and will do me good. He is Almighty, and can do all for my good. So 'I believe in Christ, born of the Virgin Mary.' This a man believeth not till Christ be born in the heart and the image be stamped upon his soul, and a disposition suitable to Christ; and so "for the death of Christ.' The cross of Christ, it is a crucifying knowledge. I know Christ died for my sins. The faith of this crucifieth this corruption for which Christ was crucified, when I look upon my corrupt nature, with that odium and detestation that Christ had when he suffered for them. So that I feel not things with power and efficacy, till something be wrought by them. So I believe not Christ 'is risen again,' unless I find that power that raised him

quicken my heart and raise me to heavenly-mindedness, to ascend with Christ, and sit in heaven with Christ. A man believeth not that Christ is in heaven unless he hath glorious thoughts. He doth but talk of them. He that believeth Christ his head is in heaven, Christ and he being all one, can he be much cast down with any trouble here, or be abased here when he believeth this? No. And therefore saith the apostle, 'If you be risen with Christ,' as you be, if you belong to Christ, and have the same Spirit that raised his body raising you, then 'seek the things above, and not the things beneath,' Col. iii. 1, and savour the things that be spiritual, and suitable to your condition. So a man cannot believe his 'sins be forgiven,' but he must love, he must have joy and peace: 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,' Rom. v. 1. He that findeth not peace in his conscience, how knoweth he that his sins are forgiven? 'Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven,'

Mat. ix. 2. A man that knows his sins are forgiven, he is comforted, for his debt is paid, and all discharged. And so 'the resurrection of the body and life everlasting,' what is the power of it? It maketh him as willing to die as when he goeth to sleep, for when he goeth to bed he knoweth he shall rise again, and rise better and more refreshed. So a man that is to die he resolveth, I lay down my body, and shall rise again, as sure as I shall rise out of my bed, and more sure, for many die in their sleep. So if we believe 'the coming of Christ to judgment,' the virtue of it will show itself in walking fruitfully and carefully. Christ must come again, and I must make account of all. And so 'life everlasting.' If a man believeth that, what courage will it infuse! There is never an article but if it be believed hath a spiritual infusion in it. Let a man believe life everlasting, he will not care to venture his life for religion and his country. What will he care to adventure a life [which] is nothing but vanity?

I do but touch these things, to show that out of the grounds of religion there is a power in them, if they be apprehended and believed; and if they have not this power, we believe them not. We talk of them, but are not moulded to them; as the apostle's phrase is, 'We are not fashioned to them,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. So that we may try whether the word hath wrought mightily on us, by the power we find in us altering our natures.

Quest. 5. Well, what course shall we take, that we may find this power of the ordinances and word, and an excellent power?

Ans. (1.) Remember all is of God, from God's Spirit. The third person in the Trinity is next to us, and next in working. God the Father and Son

work by the Spirit. For as it is in the body, there be the veins and arteries put together, the veins carry the blood, the arteries carry the spirits, the blood in the veins nourish the spirits in the arteries, the spirits in the arteries quicken and enliven the blood; [so] the word is as blood in the veins. For as blood spreads itself over all the body by the veins, and feedeth the several parts, so the word spreadeth itself over the whole man, over all the powers of man, over his understanding, will, and affection. It spreadeth itself over all the actions of man, for all must be done in virtue of some word. It spreadeth itself as blood spreadeth over the body, but together with the blood there must be spirits to quicken the blood; so there must be the Spirit with the word. The word is vehiculum Spiritus, the chariot which carrieth the Spirit. And therefore consider the concurrence of these two when ye come to God. They be coupled together as the veins and arteries; and when we have to do with divine truths, remember to beg for the Spirit, and therefore, Ps. cxix. 18, 'Open mine eyes, Lord, open mine eyes.' His eyes were opened, and yet 'Lord, reveal the wonders of thy law more.' So we must pray for a fresh, new revelation of truths to us. And are we quicker and better-sighted than he or Paul, that prayed so often for the Spirit of revelation, and that God would take off the veil of ignorance and unbelief from the heart? There is a natural veil upon divine things, that we cannot see them in their truths and excellency. Therefore pray to God by the Spirit to take away this veil.

Ans. (2.) And if we would feel the power, and the excellency of the power, of the word, enter into our own hearts, and see our own necessity every day, and see our own wants of God, who doth show his power in weakness, labour to see a necessity of divine power and divine truths, a necessity to do anything well, and that our callings are not sanctified unless we sanctify them in a morning by prayer, and direct them to ends above nature and above the world, and make them serviceable for the soul. See a necessity of grace and of the efficacy and power of the word, and necessity will enforce us out of ourselves to him, in whom is the fountain of all strength, that we maybe 'strong in the power of his might,' Eph. vi. 10, 2 Tim. ii. 1. Beloved, times are coming to every one of us that will enforce us to seek for strength and for power. Can we undergo afflictions when they come without spiritual strength? We may carry them as civil men, but great crosses may come above all morality and civility. Ahithophel had brains enough, but having no grace he sunk. Judas had much knowledge, but sunk under it. So though we have strong brains and great parts, we shall sink under them if we have not grace. A Christian must be more than a man, as grace raiseth a man above a man, makes him spiritual. By virtue of this power

we must be more than men, else we shall meet with things which are above a man, fiery temptations and Satan's darts, and if we are not more than a man, woe be to us. Therefore labour to feel and see our own wants; present and propound beforehand all possibilities. What if our lives should be questioned? Sickness will come, death will come. What strength have I? What faith have I? What have I lived upon before, and what do I know? So I believe all I know? As Joseph provided against hard times, Gen. xli. 48, times of spending will come, therefore lay up knowledge, and often examine if things be to us as to themselves. Divine truth is holy, full of majesty and power in itself. What is that to me if it be not so to me? It will do me no good, but help to damn me. Do I find that power and efficacy that is said to be in them? If not, never give over waiting on the means that God hath appointed for that purpose.

Beloved, it concerneth us nearly and very much, for if we do find the power of divine truths in our hearts, Oh happy men! If we find it hath wrought a change and alteration, it will make the weakest Christian stronger than all the gates of hell. Take a weak Christian that hath digested the word and mingled it with faith, a few divine truths digested and mingled with faith will stand out against the devil and all temptations, even at the hour of death, because they be divine truths, and God goeth with them; the truths being divine of themselves, and likewise divine power going with them, having the strength of God for every word. As a man is, the word of a man is. It is as powerful as himself, and the word of a noble man, the word of an honest man, is as the man is. Now consider what word it is, and what power is annexed to it. Labour to feel the power of these divine truths, and all hell let loose cannot overcome the weakest Christian, not a fool, not a novice, not a child in religion, much less a strong Christian. But the tongue of men and angels, if men will be drowsy, and lazy, and dead, will not make them affected with these things, but those that belong to God understand what these things mean.

We are speaking of the end of this dispensation of God, that he would have this blessed treasure of divine truths carried in 'earthen vessels,' that 'the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.' Now in the end three things are considerable.

1. First, That there is a 'power' in the ordinances of God, and an 'excellency of power.'

2. That this excellent power of the ordinances of God 'is of God.' It is not of the 'earthen vessel.' No. It is not in the treasure itself. It is not in the gospel, distinct and abstracted from divine power accompanying it, but it is of God, exclusively set down, and not of us.

3. The intention why God would have this power, and excellent power, to be in earthen vessels and not of us. See how he demonstrateth it, that it may appear that the power is of God and not of us. There is excellent power, and it is of God. How doth it appear? Compare the meanness of the vessel with the excellency of the treasure, and it shall appear that all the good done by the ordinance is not by the vessel, but from the treasure, or rather from God himself, whose treasure it is.

That there is a power, and an excellent power, of God's ordinance, we have showed at large.

We have showed wherein this power consisteth, and how it is of God. All the power is of God, else the ordinance is dead; and indeed unless God's virtue go along with it, what can do the soul good? Afflictions make men worse. The law hath only a power to harden us. The law by the power of God killeth, but it quickeneth not. Let not the power of God go with the ministry of Christ, it doth no good.

How many sermons did Christ preach which did no good? 'He piped and they would not dance.' They would not 'mourn' when he preached matter of humiliation, when he preached matter of comfort 'they would not dance,' Mat. xi. 17, but, like froward children, they were untractable, and nothing would work upon them; and therefore without God and the work of the Spirit, not man, not an angel, not Christ himself, can work upon an obstinate stubborn soul.

I showed that the excellency of this power must be of God and not of us. I propounded divers eases and questions, and answered some. I will briefly answer some now, as,

Quest. First, Not to speak of what I then delivered, if there be no power in the ordinances, why do we exhort people and stir them up to believe and to repent, if all power be conveyed from God, as we proved the last day at large, and that they have no power at all in themselves?

Ans. I answer, God's word in the ordinance is an operating word, a working word, as in the creation, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' Gen. i. 3. So in miracles, 'Lazarus, come forth,' John xi. 43. There went an almighty power with the word of Christ, and Lazarus comes out.

'Believe and repent.' There goeth out an almighty power with the ministerial word, and giveth power to believers. *Dam jubet jurat*, where God commandeth he helpeth. His word is clothed with an almighty power. And therefore though we exhort men to do so and so, we say not, they can do it themselves, but together with the speech there goeth a commanding power. The Spirit of God clotheth the word. *Loquitur Deus ad modum nostrum, agit ad modum suum*, God speaketh according to our measure, worketh according to his own. We are men, and are to do things by reason and understanding. God speaks to us by way of open reason, and showing grounds of reason, because *loquitur ad modum nostrum*. But when he comes to give strength and power to reason, all moral power or reason will do no good without inward strength, and therefore *agit ad modum suum*, mightily, powerfully, and by way of persuasion and reason, and all to condescend to our manner, yet still all the while as a God.

And therefore it is a childish thing for them to infer that there is power in man, because God persuadeth and exhorts. God with these infuseth his power, he conveyeth power into the will and affection this way. Then he works powerfully when he seemeth to condescend thus far, and this exhortation is but to drive us out of ourselves to the rock of our strength, and to the spring of all comfort. It is but to drive us to Christ, and therefore wheresoever you have a commandment in one place, ye have a promise in another. If you are commanded to turn to God, to mortify lusts, we have a promise of assistance that we shall do those things. The commandments may make us go out of ourselves with humility, the promise makes us go to God with confidence in him. And therefore it is ignorance of God's divine dispensations to enforce any power and strength in us from those sweet exhortations that are commended to us in Scripture.

Quest. 2. Secondly, If there be such power and efficacy in God's ordinances accompanied with the Spirit, as indeed there is, whence then cometh the resisting in men? It showeth there is more in man's malice than in God's ordinance. I answer thus,

Ans. That God intendeth to convert and put forth his strength that way. For those whom God intendeth to put forth his strength for, it tendeth to

conversion. He joineth such a strength with the ordinances, as overcometh all rebellion and resistance in them that he doth convert, as Augustine saith well, *volentem hominem salvum facere*, when God will save a man, no stubbornness of his will shall withstand, else the will of man were stronger than God's. And it is a high point of comfort that the goodness of God is above the malice of man, that there is a greater power in the ordinances and efficacy, than there can be indisposition in man, whatsoever it is in the party. For all things in the world, in the soul of man, which is the most rebellious, refractory, and stubborn thing, all things in the world are in obedience to the first worker. There is an aptness which is of purpose for this matter which we speak of. There is an active power in the creature, whereby it is ready to work, and this active power to do good we have none at all. There is a passive power, as in wax to receive impression. This we have not. We cannot so much as receive goodness. The reason is, because good things, so long as we be corrupted, be presented to us as folly. A wise man will never take that he apprehendeth [to be] folly. To a carnal wise man, the most excellent things in the world are presented as folly, and he will not subject to the impression of divine truths when they be presented. And therefore there is neither active nor mere passive power.

But there is *potentia obedientialis*, a power obediential. That is, in plain terms, there is such a subjection of the soul of man to God the first cause, that it yields to him when he worketh. He knoweth all the windings and turnings of it. He can deal as he pleaseth, preserving the liberty of it without prejudice of its liberty. For both things, and the manner of working things, are of God, and preserved by God. God he carrieth things so, as he preserveth *modum agendi*, the manner of working peculiar to things; so that all things are obedient to God's manner of working. For they cannot resist him: there is no question of that.

Obj. But we say, that as the Scripture speaks, there is resistance in things. Resistance is in them that belong not to God, or in them that belong to God, till he putteth forth an invisible strength to convert them. But if they resist, they may resist the work of God's Spirit. Then there is some excuse for them.

Ans. I answer, No. They may pretend the word is not powerful enough, the ordinance is not able enough; but let them leave secret things to God. There is no man converted, but his heart will tell him that God was beforehand with him. God enforceth goodness on men; they willingly resist

it. God is then before-hand with them, and there is no man that withstandeth God's workings, but his heart will tell him that the fault is altogether in himself; for God is willing to yield more power to him than he is willing to receive, and that maketh him afraid of the means of salvation. If I go to such, and converse with such, they will advise me to alter my course. They will put conceits in me, disquiet my mind, vex me and torment me. I shall hear what crosseth my old ways, and I am resolved still to walk in my old courses, and so their hearts tell them they willingly betray their own souls. So that they cannot pretend the weakness of the understanding, but strength of corruption, which declineth the ordinance.

The two witnesses, Rev. xi. 10, 'tormented the world;' and so the ordinances, the truths of God, torment some kind of men. But to let such go, I speak to them that belong to God. Here is our comfort, that the ordinances of God are powerful, 'and mighty, but through God, to beat down all strongholds,' 2 Cor. x. 4, and therefore come and attend upon the means of salvation. Come; though you be lions, you may go out lambs! Come; though you be wolves, you may go out sheep! For the knowledge of God, accompanied with the Spirit of God, as Isa. xi. 6, may alter and change your natures, transforming you to be like to Christ, whose word it is. It is a transforming, converting word.

Where it doth not convert the heart and conscience of men, or tell them that God was willing to convert them than they were willing to be converted, the fault is in themselves; but I will always hope well of them that carefully and diligently come within God's reach. The ministry of the gospel is said to be the power of God; and Isa. liii. 1, 'the arm of God.' 'To whom is the arm of God revealed?' that is, the power of God in the ordinance. Those that will come within the power and reach of God, never despair of them. They that will meekly subject to God's dispensation, and not proudly despise the powerful working of God, that attend 'at the posts of wisdom,' Prov. viii. 34, if not at one time, yet at another, there is a blessed hour to come for the angel to stir their waters; for the Holy Ghost to stir the waters to heal their souls. Therefore I speak to all them that love their own souls, never to weary of God's ordinances. Though the means be weak, yet the glory of God, and power of his Spirit, will be more eminently apparent in the weakness of the means, as the apostle saith here, 'The excellency of the power is of God, and not of man.'

Now, to make some further use of this: Is all the power of God?

1. Therefore observe another thing, we must not depend on the power of the ministry, and the excellency of the minister his parts and gifts. Why? The power and excellency is of God. And we may say by experience, that men that think themselves converted by some excellent parts of a rare man, it is usually but a shallow repentance. And they that be hanged by the ears upon men of good parts, they seldom hold out. But where the soul is wrought upon by grounds from the word, and evidence from the Spirit in the teacher But conversion wrought only by admiration of the parts of the teacher, it is with them as with them in the gospel: 'They marvelled at him, and stood astonished, but they left him, and went their ways,' Mat. xiii. 54. And therefore take heed of depending on men for the efficacy of the sacraments. Some are to blame that way. Unless they have such a preacher they will not receive it, as if the doing and efficacy of the sacrament depended on that, if they be placed in the office of the ministry and have a calling. Now look 'to the power of God, and the excellency of that power,' in his own ordinance by whomsoever. We will receive gold out of any hand, we will receive a pearl from a mean person. Do we regard the pardon itself, or the person that bringeth the pardon? No, we look to the pardon. If that be right, it is no matter who bringeth the pardon, who offers this treasure of life. Look to the excellency of the things themselves, and God, though in the course of means—we must add that,—God doth ordinarily convert by the best men, that can speak from the heart to the heart. He can kindle others best that is kindled in his own heart, begetting, being from a love in the teacher. They that are truly, sanctifiedly affected, they can beget others sooner than others. And therefore in the course and ways of means, God for the most part useth blessed and holy means for working of the great work of conversion for the most part.

Yet God tieth not himself to the excellency of means. Oftentimes the greatest men of all, God humbleth them, to do others good. As we see Isaiah, that great kingly prophet, saith he, 'We have laboured in vain,' Isa. xlix. 4, seq. I have laboured to subdue the people to God, but to no purpose. 'Son of man, go, harden the people's hearts.' So excellent a power, instead of converting, maketh them worse, and so it is, that the most excellent preacher, both for parts and likewise for graces, oftentimes doth harden and make them worse. God will have it so; it shall be the savour of death to some presumptuous proud persons, and not a savour of life, 2 Cor. ii. 16. And

therefore we must not look altogether on the excellency of the persons that preach, nor to their meanness, but to the ordinance of God.

2. Give me leave farther to add this thing: God showeth his power, and his excellent power, by his own ordinance; and therefore other courses are not sanctified for conversion, nor for spiritual good to the soul. This observe. There is a conceited superstitious generation of men, ill-bred for the most part, not for want of parts, but for superstitious breeding. They have great admiration of a bastardly means of good, what do I call them? Means they set up themselves, which God never sanctified. Oh, they will have crucifixes, and such and such helps. Who ever sanctified this? Every workman will work with his own tools and instruments. Did God ever sanctify crucifixes and the like to stir up devotion? What kind of devotion is like to come to that, that God never blessed to that end? A bastardly devotion from a bastardly means. And usually people give to those kind of things higher measure of admiration than to good and sanctified means.

I never knew, nor ever shall know, a superstitious person to like of things sanctified of God, but in that proportion he grew bitter against that which is indeed sound. See what religion popery is, their study being to weaken that powerful instrument that God hath sanctified to convey all saving power by. How do they weaken it? By all the means they can. They labour to take away the strength of it. They lock it up in an unknown tongue, in Latin; and not only so, but in a corrupt, vicious translation, and lest it should do much good, they add Apocryphal writings with it—many of which indeed are holy books, but yet they equal their authority with the Scriptures. Nay, that they may weaken the strength and efficacy of the blessed word by which is wrought whatsoever is savingly good, they make traditions of equal authority with the word. They make the present determination of the present pope of equal power with the word, nay, above it; for the life and soul of words is the sense and meaning of them. The meaning is the form, and being, and life of speech; the words are but husks. The kernel and life of words, is the meaning of them. Now they take upon them to give the sense and meaning of the Scriptures. But they go about to judge that, which will one day judge them; to keep under the word, that will keep them under, and blast them, and consume them, as 2 Thes. ii. 8, ‘Antichrist must be consumed with the breath of his mouth,’ that is, with the ordinance of God. It is such a wind as he cannot endure; it will consume him. There is no means sanctified of God to consume antichrist, but the ordinance. There be other civil and apparent ways to weaken him, but that that shall ‘consume’ him indeed, as he

'is antichrist,' is the powerful ordinance of God. And therefore blame them not for being such enemies to that which is such an enemy to them, that is, the powerful preaching of the word. But we must not dwell upon these things, only I thought it necessary to put you in mind of it, that our hearts may be brought to think highly of that which God so esteemeth, oven as we love our own souls.

Other truths may civilize, and other helps may be profitable; other books besides God's book may do us a great deal of good, and many holy treatises there are, in which the word is unfolded, and made familiar to us. The water in the spring, and water brought in a pipe, is the same water. So that The word in Scripture, and the word brought in preaching and holy treatises, is the same. But I speak of other truths we read of in human writers. God giveth a power to every truth, and there be inferior works of the Spirit. But this work of conversion, of setting the image of God upon us, is reserved especially for the ordinances of God. All the learning in the world will not set the image of God upon the soul, will not bring the soul out of darkness into the kingdom of Christ, but the powerful ordinance of God, and the powerful work of the Spirit accompanying it. It is not every work of the Spirit, but an almighty work. By embalming, a dead body may be preserved from putrefaction and annoyance a long time, but all the spices and embalmments in the world will not put life into a dead body. So the inferior works of the Spirit, by inferior means, may embalm the soul, that is, may make it civil, and it is very good conversing with civil men. You shall have them fair-conditioned men, and excellent things will break from them, but this is but embalming; the quickening of a dead soul, the putting of life into that, is reserved for the ordinance of God, and the power of the Spirit accompanying it. This is that the apostle speaks of, 'the excellency of the power of God.'

3. One thing give me leave to add more, That as God doth powerfully work by his ordinance in us, and in the church, so he doth powerfully work by his ordinance on others, by the church on others. To make it plain thus: There is an excellency of power in the word, in faith, in prayer, in fasting, in the sentence of the church; there is an excellent power in all these, not only on the soul, upon whom they work, but likewise on others. There is a power in the church and in the minister for to threaten; and God, to make good those threats to others, worketh on others. And there is a power in prayer, not only of grace to make us fit to pray, but a power by prayer, for God thereby to confound the enemies of the church. Therefore the phrase in the

psalms, is, 'God send thee help out of Sion,' Ps. xx. 2, that is, out of the church, by church means; and 'God is terrible in his holy place,' Ps. lxxviii. 35. What is the meaning of that? The meaning is: in the church, where God is truly worshipped, where the ordinances are in purity and power, there God is terrible out of his holy place. If there come forth prayers against the enemies of the church, God saith Amen to them. Woe be to the enemies of the church, when the church falleth a-praying and fasting. Woe be to Haman, when Esther, Mordecai, and the rest fall to this duty. And woe to popery! If all Christians would join in prayer and fasting, antichrist had been brought upon his knees, and to nothing ere this time. There is a power in God's ordinances, let them be used as they should be, with faith and persuasion, that God will say Amen to them all, they will work. What! Let a man pray with confidence, that God will bless it, though not in the particular that he desireth, yet you shall see what wonders God will work by it.

No question, but the humiliation of God's people brought antichrist so much upon his knees, as he hath in Germany. God's people humbled themselves, and believed the threatenings against antichrist, and believed the promises of the church, and laboured to have faith suitable to God's promises, suitable to God's threatenings; and in that faith, as an exercise of it, pray to God, we shall see God make good all his ordinances. 'God will be terrible out of his holy place, and he will send help out of Sion.' Pray therefore for the church and against the enemies, and we shall quickly see an end of them. And therefore you have 2 Cor. x. 6, that speaking of the power of the ordinances of God, he saith in the 6th verse, 'God is in readiness to revenge all disobedience.' There is a power in the ordinances of God to kill men, to send men to hell. You think the words of the ordinances are wind, but they are not; for as it is in Zech. i. 5, 6, 'the prophets be gone, and are dead, but their words are made good.' Whom we bind, God bindeth from heaven; whom we loose, God looseth from heaven. If we threaten the judgments of God, and punishment upon swearers, or profane persons, or despisers of the ordinances, do you think it doth them no harm? Beloved, they are struck, they be men under the sentence of damnation. They are not yet in hell, but the word hath damned them, the ordinance hath damned them, they be struck men. There is a power in God's ordinances to be revenged on the disobedience of men, when men will live in sins, threatened and condemned by the ministers. They go up and down like glorious men, but they be condemned and under sentence. There is but a step between them and hell. And they shall know one day God will make good every one of his threats in his ministry against their profane courses, though they make

slight of it. No! it shall not be made light off, when God cometh to execute it; when God shall come immediately from heaven, to execute the word he hath spoken mediately by the minister, as one day he will. What we speak mediately, he will immediately from heaven come to execute it. How will they shake off that, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire?' Mat. xxv. 41. You that have lived in sins against conscience, can you shake off that? God is now patient to them, if his patience can win them, but can they shake off God's immediate peremptory sentence from heaven? Oh no! And therefore I beseech you, labour to bring your souls to obedience of the ordinances of God, for it is mighty to take vengeance of all obstinate sinners. Therefore take heed of living in sin, condemned by the ordinance; for God will make good every word that he hath spoken.

The last thing I propounded in the words to show us is, that God doth show his power, and excellent power, by weak means, that it may appear by the disproportion that it is of God.

Boot. The point from hence is this, that God is wonderful curious, 'as we may with reverence speak; he is wonderful exact in this, that his glory may be advanced in all. And therefore he would have this carriage of things, that heavenly treasures should be carried in earthen vessels; not gold, not silver, but earth, that the good done may not be attributed to the vessels, being so base, but to him. God's aims and our aims must concur. God aimeth at his own glory, and it is no pride in him, because there is none above him, whose glory he should seek. And therefore it is natural for God to do all for his own glory, as it is natural for him to be holy, because he is the first cause, and the last end, of all things. It is fit the first cause and last end of all things should have all the glory: 'Of him, and through him, are all things: therefore to him be all the glory,' Rom. xi. 36. It is God's prerogative. The grace is ours. He giveth grace to us. but the glory is his own, and his glory he will not part withal.

To make this clear. God takes all the course he doth in the government of the world, in the ministry and church, that it may appear that the glory is his in all things. Look to his providence in governing the world. Doth not he do great things sometimes without means, and sometimes with poor weak means? What be the blowing of rams' horns to the fall of 'the walls of Jericho'? Josh. vi. 20. Was it not that it might appear that the falling of the walls was from God? What was Gideon's 'pitchers with lamps' for the confounding of the Midianites? Judges vii. 19. What was a victory to an

earthen pitcher? So what is the light of the gospel to an 'earthen vessel'? Doth the virtue come from these? No. God appointeth to us these means, that the glory and excellency of power may appear to be of him. The ministers are but Gideon's pitchers, with the light of the gospel in them. What was Shamgar's 'ox-goad' to the slaying of so many? Judges iii. 31; Samson's 'jaw-bone of an ass' to the slaying of so many Philistines? Judges xv. 15. It was to show that the glory was God's. What is the converting of so many souls by so mean fishermen, when ignorance overcame knowledge, folly overcame wisdom, weakness overcame strength? Fishermen and their consorts made the crown of the Roman empire stoop to them. The poor preachers of the gospel brought it to pass at length, that the great empire of Rome should subject to the gospel; and why is all this but that the power may appear to be of God?

I might with this truth go through all ages, from the beginning of the world to the end, and show how God hath done great things, sometimes by no means, sometimes by weak means, sometimes when means have been armed against him, in opposition of means. When others are opposite, then hath he got greatest glory. But it is so plain a truth, that I will not spend time to no purpose to declare the point; and therefore I will come more close, and bring the truth home to ourselves.

Now, because we are naturally forgetful of this, and so rob God of his glory, I will show you divers courses that God taketh with his children to train them up to learn this hard lesson, to give all the glory to God, which naturally they love to finger themselves. For man is naturally a proud creature, and would have all things to himself. Therefore observe in five or six particulars what course God taketh to teach men this lesson, 'that the excellency of power may be of God, and not of us.'

Reason 1. First of all, what is the reason why God deserts wen, his dearest children, oftentimes, leaveth them to terrible plunges, maketh them apprehend he is their enemy, and that they be none of God's, leaving them in a state of darkness, that they see no light? This is the state of God's dear children. The end of this is, that they may know they must needs go out of themselves if they will have any comfort: 'They are in darkness, and have no light; therefore let them trust in the name of God,' Isa. 1. 10. If it were not for these desertions, to see nothing but darkness in themselves, they would not fly to the rock of strength, they would not retire to their rock of defence, they would not trust God. Why do men suffer the sentence of death, and are

brought to death's door? No help, no physic will do them good. St Raul giveth the reason, that they may learn 'to trust in the living God,' 2 Cor. i. 9. What! Paul to learn this lesson? Yea, Paul had need to learn this lesson, to go out of himself, and give all the glory of all things to God. And therefore St Paul received 'sentence of death, that he might trust in the living God,' and perfectly go out of himself.

Reason 2. Again, what is the reason that sometimes the child of God is foiled very foul in little temptations, and standeth in great ones? Because indeed in these temptations he goeth on in his own strength, and in greater temptations he goeth out of himself and flieth to God. And therefore a good Christian sometimes is basely foiled in a little temptation, and standeth out like a man in a great one, because in the one he is confident of his own strength, in the other he is enforced to repair to God for assistance. That is the reason of it, to learn this doctrine, to give God the glory in all things.

Reason 3. Again, what is the reason that men are letter after a foil, after some base fall, than ever they were before—as oftentimes God suffers them to fall into foul faults—what is the reason of this strange dispensation of God? To show that they stood too much on their own bottoms. And why are they better after them? Because, seeing their own weakness and wilfulness, they are driven out of themselves. The sink of corruption was opened to them. They saw they had rebellious hearts. There was depth of corruption which they discerned not before; and now after a fall, that they see the depth of corruption more than before, they grow more humble, more wary in time to come, having more experience of God's infinite mercy in pardoning, of his infinite power in raising; and so in some measure they learn that lesson, to give all the glory to God. God sometimes sanctifieth a gross fall to make them strong. Peter learned to stand by his fall; and Christians once falling by presuming too much upon their own strength, are made to stand stronger for time to come.

Reason 4. Again, what is the reason that sometimes the church is foiled by weak enemies; and sometimes, when the church is very weak itself, it over-cometh strong enemies, as you have instances of both? It is that men may learn to know that God must be sought to in all things. When there be strong means, they place too much confidence in that strength; and when they offend God, though the means be never so strong, God curseth and lasteth all helps, as the prophet tolls them: 'You shall fight against the Chaldeans, but God will curse you,' Jer. xxxvii. 9. You that think you be

strong men, you shall fight against them, but they shall prevail. You have not made your peace with God; and if so, let all the best means be gathered together, God will blast them all. To teach us that whatsoever means we have, we must seek to God. There is an excellent place for this, Jer. xxxvii. 9, seq. The Jews thought they were stout men, but they had offended God. Therefore in the ninth hour saith God to them, 'Thus saith the Lord, Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall depart from us, we shall do well enough.' Saith he, 'Though you had smitten the whole number of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remain but wounded men amongst them, yet should they rob every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.' Though you had smitten them so, yet God is your enemy. It is no matter what weak men they are, what strong means you have. You have broken peace with God. God hath decreed and determined your ruin, and therefore your city must be burned with fire. Never therefore trust to any means if you have offended God, for God can do great things with small means if we please him. Gideon's three hundred can overcome the Midianites, though they cover the earth as grasshoppers, Judg. vii. 6. And if God be offended, though the enemies be all wounded men, yet they shall rise and burn the city. And therefore if God be our enemy, trust not to our walls, nor to the sea, nor to our strength and courage of men. All is nothing if we have not God our friend. And therefore it is true that is usually spoken, that where God will defend a city and country, a cobweb may be the walls thereof; but where God will not defend a city or country, a wall is but a cobweb. Why is all this but that all power may be known to be of God—that we may resign ourselves to him, make our peace with him? If he be our friend, it matters not who is our enemy; if he be our enemy, it matters not who is our friend. 'If God be for us, who is against us?' Rom. viii. 31. It is sin within the city, and sin within the land, doth more hurt than all enemies without it; because it estrangeth and animates God against the place and country.

Reason 5. And what is the reason likewise—to add one more instance—that he helpeth most in extremity, that he deferreth help till that time, that in the mount he is seen, and not till he be in the mount, as the proverb is?

Gen. xxii. 14. The reason is, that by this means he may mortify and subdue all confidence in the means, that there may be no spiritual adultery with the means. Then faith is stirred up, then prayer is set upon, then is more communion with God, the fountain of strength; and the more communion with God, the fountain of strength, the more strength; and the more

communion with God, the fountain of power, the more power. In extremity we have more communion with God's strength and power. Therefore God withdraweth help oftentimes, to wean us from the creature, and to train us up to trust in him.

Use 1. Now to make use of what I have spoken. Doth God take this course, to do great matters by weak means, that we should acknowledge the virtue of all to be from him? I beseech you, then, to learn this lesson. Mark the Scriptures, how curiously careful holy men have been not to finger anything of God's. They feared sacrilege, spiritual theft, and lies; that is, to attribute that to them which belongeth not to them. And therefore Saint Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'I have laboured more than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God within me.' Not the grace of God and I together, as two horses draw a coach, but grace with me did all. I was subordinate, not co-ordinate, with grace, but I under grace. We do but act as we are acted, move as we are moved, and therefore you see how careful he is, and you see the phrases of Scripture, of holy men. 'I am not worthy to loose his shoe latchet,' saith John the Baptist, John i. 27. 'I am not worthy to be called an apostle,' saith Saint Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 9. 'I am not worthy thou shouldst enter into my house,' Mat. viii. 8. Papists stand upon merit of congruity, but the phrase of Scripture saith, 'I am unworthy;'

'Not unto us, not unto us be the praise, but unto thy name.' And therefore give God all the glory of anything that is done. If any good thing be wrought, if any good news be heard from beyond the seas, be sure to advance the instrument so that we rob not God of his glory. 'And when God worketh in us anything that is gracious and beneficial, let God have all the glory. All cometh from him, therefore let all go to him again. You see in the Lord's prayer the connection of these two together; 'Thine is the power,' therefore 'thine is the glory,' Mat. vi. 13. The excellency of power is of God, both in governing the world and in governing the church, in subduing corruptions. If power be his, then let glory be his too, let them not be severed.

Use 2. Again, let this teach us to resign up ourselves to God in the use of all good means, give ourselves to him, for he doth all. Trust not in the means, rest not in confidence of wit and parts, but depend upon him. It is a lesson easily understood, but not so easily practised. Therefore look to God. All things belong to God. Art thou of God? Ministerial teaching is not enough. There be two teachers concur to save souls: ministers and God.

There are two to be preached to, the outward man and the inward. We speak to the outward man, God to the inward. Paul speaketh to Lydia's ear, but God openeth the heart, Acts xvi. 14. And we baptize with water, but Christ baptizeth 'with the Holy Ghost,' Luke iii. 16. And therefore in all the ordinances of God, see them administered by the outward man, but there is virtue from Christ and from God. He must baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He must open the heart, unlock that, and teach that. If this were experimentally known and practised, we should have greater exercise of grace than there is in people's hearts, but it is known as a notion, but not for matter of obedience and practice. The last thing we will speak of from the words is,

Use 3. That seeing all power and excellency is from God, then take heed we keep God our friend. Take heed we offend not this God, in whom is all power, our life, our strength. 'In him we live, move, and have our being,' Acts xvii. 28. Take heed we do not offend him. You know what the apostle saith, Phil. ii. 12, 'Make an end of your salvation in fear and trembling.' Why? 'It is God that giveth the will and the deed, and according to his good pleasure.' That is, God worketh all in matters of salvation. He giveth not power, if you will; but he giveth the will, he saveth us and converteth us, and maketh our will answerable to his will. He giveth the virtue τὸ θέλειν, and according to his good pleasure. As long as we submit to him he will work powerfully in us, and therefore 'make an end of your salvation with fear and trembling.' If we leave his Spirit, we be as air without light, presently dark, and as the earth without the sun. All things will decay and become dead, if the light and influence of heaven be withdrawn. Let God subtract the influence of grace, and we shall grow barren, and dead, and cold; and therefore fear him. No man is wise more than God maketh him wise upon every occasion, nor no man is stronger than on every occasion God strengthens him.

And, therefore, if at any time you have a distrusting heart to look to the creature, he withdraweth his strength, and then we are at a loss, and fall, and die; because we work not our own salvation. We are given to self-sufficiency and self-dependency, and therefore God oftentimes blasts our endeavours. 'Blessed is the man that feareth always,' Prov. xxviii. 14, not with a fear of distrust, but a fear of jealousy. Oh this fear of jealousy! We have false hearts, ready to trust in the creature, in wits, in friends. But all that be God's children must have this fear of jealousy, to make an end of salvation with fear and trembling, for God worketh both the will and the deed. He giveth a

power according to his good pleasure, and can suspend it when he list. So much shall serve for the unfolding of this verse, which I did specially intend; the other verses are but an application of this, 'We are troubled on every side, but not distressed,' &c.

Verses 7-9

That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, yet not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.

I have spoken largely of the verse before, wherein you may remember that the apostle might take away all suspicion of arrogance in taking too much upon himself, he saith, 'We carry treasures but in earthen vessels.' The end of which dispensation of God is, 'that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of man.' There we showed there is a 'power,' and an 'excellent power' in the ordinance of God. And that this is of God, and exclusively, not of us. All which we have propounded at large.

We showed, there is a blessed presence of God and of his power, and sweetness, and goodness, in all his ordinances. He distilleth and conveyeth whatsoever is in his Father's breast to us by his ordinance. He doth good to us by men like ourselves. As the devil conveyeth all his mischief by men unto men, so God conveyeth all his good by men to men. But they are but the conduits, for the virtue and excellency of the power is of God.

Things otherwise seeming alike differ in regard of virtue, as cold water differs from hot water. They differ not in colour but in virtue. It is the Spirit of God that accompanieth his ordinance, that giveth power, and virtue, and efficacy to it. For the ministers of the gospel are ministers, and no more nor no less, to be regarded as ministers and no farther. To regard them more is to make idols of them; to deny them less is to deny them due right. This should stir up a wonderful care of diligence in all the ways and courses that God hath sanctified to convey grace by. They that be God's children love God's presence wheresoever they find it; and because God vouch safteth his presence in his ordinance, therefore they regard it, and remember always to give the glory of all to God. For the power and excellency is of God, and not of us. 'Why gaze ye on us, as if we by our own power had cured the man?' Acts iii. 12. It is not from man, but from God.

Now to come to the 8th verse, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed,' &c.

The apostle's words have an elegant antithesis of things seeming-contrary. 'We are perplexed, not in despair; persecuted, not forsaken; cast off, but not destroyed.' There is a kind of elegancy in the dispensation of God. And this serveth to the former argument to show that we carry these treasures in 'earthen vessels.' That we should not despise the earthen vessels because they be weak, he sets down what befalls them in the world, and how God supports and giveth supply of comforts suitable to the distress. He grants 'we be troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair.' Those that are to deal with enemies, and are to prevent objections, they must grant the worst that may be granted, that so they may make their apology better. Saint Paul freely granteth all that can be objected by any that look on the outside of the professors and ministers of the gospel. I grant these fall out, and yet it must be granted God hath a special care likewise, as you shall see in the unfolding of the words, which we will particularly go over, and then jointly raise out of them some observations.

'We are troubled on every side,' The word signifieth pressed, ζιβόμενοι, but yet not oppressed. God suffers his children to be pressed. Afflictions, they are the wine-press of God, to press out of them all that is good, to the view and taste of others. They have liquor in them, but it is not tasted of, but by pressure. For the most part spices relish not, savour not, unless they be beaten. So it is with grapes unless they be pressed. The works the enemies of the church do to the children of God, is to press the ill that is in them, and to press out the ill that is in themselves. For at the same time they press out by trouble, and disgraceful usage, better men than themselves, at the same time they press out and make apparent their own malice and poison. So that afflictions are discoveries of their evil, and of good men's good. And it is helpful for the church, that there be both, that all men may be known, and the thoughts of men discovered; and that the graces of the good may be also manifested. And therefore he saith, 'We be troubled or pressed on every side.'

Indeed, ἐν παντί in the original signifieth 'in every place,' in every time, as here 'on every side,' for the children of God are on every side pressed. Sometimes from above, God seemeth to be their enemy; and sometimes from within, by the terror of conscience; and sometimes on the right hand vexed with their friends, and sometimes on the left hand vexed with their

enemies; and sometimes round about them with the states and conditions of the times; sometimes from beneath, with Satan's molestations and vexations; something before them, fear of hell, damnation, and trouble to come; and something behind them, remembrance of former sins. So that they be pressed on every side, 'yet not distressed,' στενοχωρούμενοι, or oppressed, or altogether distressed, as the word signifieth, not altogether in desperate straits; when the body is in straits and pinched, that it cannot tell what way to turn, and the mind in strait doth not know whither to retire. But God's children are not in such straits. For though they be 'troubled on every side,' yet they are not straitened in spirit, they have large hearts; as David saith, Ps. cxviii. 5, and xviii. 19, 'Thou hast set my feet at large;' and Ps. cxix. and ver. 92, he declares how God had enlarged his heart. And so God enlargeth the paths of his children. Though they be afflicted, yet they be not so straitened but they find inward enlargements; enlargedness of prayer to God. They can vent their desires to God largely; before men they are bold to maintain God's cause. They find a large heart in regard of inward peace and comfort; and indeed there is never a child of God but he hath incomparably a larger heart than wicked men. All wicked men are all vainly-hearted, base-spirited persons, but the child of God hath a large heart; for the grace of God and sense of heavenly comforts enlarge the heart, and so he hath a more heroic spirit than any worldling hath. So that though they be in pressure, yet they be not overpressed. Wicked men have a prison in their own breasts. Take a wicked man that is not besotted: when he understandeth himself, though he be never so free, though above all men, though a commander of the world, yet he is imprisoned and straitened in his own heart; his conscience upbraids him with his sins, commands him to come before the tribunal-seat of God. In greatest liberty he is oftentimes in straits for abusing that liberty. But a child of God can in all afflictions lay open his soul before God. So much for that particular.

'Perplexed, yet not in despair.' The word is elegant in the original: ἀπορούμενοι, we are perplexed, but not in extremity. The word in the original signifieth want of counsel, what course to take, when a man is in such difficulty for want. 'Want of things necessary, and then want of counsel to get them supplied, breedeth perplexity. Now, saith Paul, we want many things. And therefore among other troubles the apostle reckons hunger, thirst, fasting, 2 Cor. xi. 27. God's children are oftentimes in want, not only of outward things, but seemingly in want of counsel what course to take for a time. In regard of danger, what a difficulty was Abraham in when he was to offer his son Isaac, his eldest son, his only son, the son of the promise! Gen.

xxii. 1-8; and Jacob when he parted with Benjamin, and thought he had lost Joseph, Gen. xliii. 13, 14. Exod. xiv. 10-12, seq., Moses at the Bed Sea; present to yourselves what straits he was in. The mountains were on either side, the Bed Sea before them, the Egyptians behind them. In what strait was David when they were ready to stone him? 1 Sam. xxx. 6. Certainly exceedingly great. In what strait was Jonah in the belly of hell, the whale in the depth of the sea? Jonah i. 17. And so God's children are oftentimes not only in want of help, but in want of counsel. So they be almost at their wits' ends, not knowing what course to take.

'Yet we are not in despair,' ἄλλ' οὐχ ἔξαπορούμενοι. For God at the pinch of time cometh, and as it was in Abraham's case, in the mount, appeared. When the knife was ready to cut the throat of Isaac, then God showeth himself. So Moses at the Red Sea, he was in -wonderful straits perplexed. And he crieth to God. Why dost thou cry to me? saith God, though he said nothing, Exod. xiv. 15. God made way for him through the Red Sea. God makes his way -where he findeth none. He can divide the Red Sea, and cause Jordan to fly hack. When the ways be desperate, and the plunges extreme, then God makes way for his children. God is wonderful near to them in their extremities. He was nearer to Daniel than the teeth of the lion, Dan. vi. 16, seq., and nearer Moses than the water was, when he was swimming in his basket, Exod. ii. 3. God is nearest in danger -when it is nearest of all. When Jonah was in the whale's belly, he was in wonderful perplexity, Jonah ii. 1. It could not be otherwise; and yet at the same time God enlarged his heart that he did not despair. So that you see the words are true. Though God's children are perplexed, yet they be not in 'despair.' They have a God to go to at all times. At the worst they can send forth their sighs and groans, though they cannot speak; and those sighs and groans are great cries in God's ear. God knoweth the desires of their souls; God hath an ear in their very hearts, and knoweth the meaning of his own Spirit joining -with their spirits. No man is in desperate condition that can pray, and though he cannot pray in words, yet prayer being matter of affection and desires to God, and any man being in such extremity may do that. There is no prayer but it fetcheth help from heaven. There is not a groan lost that is sent to heaven, and therefore 'though they be perplexed, yet not in despair.'

The church seemed to be in a perishing condition, and David saith, 'I am cast out of thy sight, yet thou heardest the voice of my prayer,' Ps. xxxi. 22; yea, a prayer joined with such expressions that I said, 'God hath forsaken me.' The spirit sighs and groans, and God regardeth such a prayer. And so,

that howsoever in regard of the flesh we be in desperate conditions, yet the Spirit hath an eye to God, and moveth a sigh and tear to him, and at the same time fetcheth help from heaven. You see then the point is clear.

Verse 9. 'We are persecuted, but not forsaken.' The Greek word signifieth to pursue. God sometimes] personates an enemy, and seemeth to be against us, and that is a heavy case. It was Job's case: 'Thou writest bitter things against me,' Job xiii. 26. In divine temptations God seemeth to be our enemy. We are persecuted and pursued; sometimes by the arm of the Almighty, sometimes again by Satan, and by his instruments. When we have made by conversion to God escape from the world, the world sendeth hue and cry out after the saints, pursuing and labouring to bring them to their old conditions and labours, to trip them in their ways. The children of God have been from the beginning of the world so pursued, that they never leave pursuing them, till they have driven them to death, and even to hell itself. And this is the state of all God's children if once any will be righteous. 'Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.' He may be civil, and no man will say black is his eye; but if he have power of religion, and labour to express it in his conversation, he shall have persecution of the tongue or of the hand. Saint Austin saith well, 'Though we live well in times of peace, yet, audi, audi mi rater, begin to live as a Christian should live, and see if you be pursued; you shall find a Babylon in Jerusalem. And truly in times of peace a man will find enemies enough at home. For it is almost equally difficult to be truly righteous at all times. In the primitive church the doctrine of religion was opposed in applying the truth of doctrine. Now the power of practisers. At all times religion hath been so much persecuted, as may stand with salvation. The devil is content with profession. The thing may stand with lust and sin, but so much as is necessary to bring to heaven that hath been always under persecution in one kind or other'. 'Though persecuted, yet not forsaken,' viz., of God. No. So far from being forsaken of God, that God is never nearer them than when trouble is nearest of all. 'Be not far off,' saith the psalmist, 'for trouble is nigh,' Ps. xxii. 11. Then there is most use of God's presence and comfort. In persecution usually the souls of God's people fly under the shadow of his wings, and being driven to him they find more support and succour than at other times. It was a good speech of the Landgrave of Hesse, Philip the First, that was of fame and note, to Charles the Fifth, when not only the Duke of Saxony, but he, was taken prisoners, and a great while continued so. How did you all the time demean yourselves? Said he, 'I found those divine comforts that I never felt before.' So that there is certain evidence of God's presence in persecution and

standing out in a good cause, which God's children never felt before, as after. There is a hidden manna conveyed to them, which is appropriated to those times. So saith he, 'We be persecuted, but not forsaken;' nay, God is never nearer than at that time.

When there is a new moon, the space between the old and the new is interlunium, that it is as good as lost now, yet hath more light in itself than ever it had, for it is nearer the sun than ever, though it appears not to the world. And though the comforts of the soul appear not in afflictions, yet then God shineth more upon them than at any other time.

'Cast down, Yet not destroyed.' Cast down, by persecution prevailing. Persecution prevailing doth cast men down, and give them the worst in the eye of the world, but yet we are not destroyed. The children of God go masked, many thousands of them, to the sight of flesh and blood, and in appearance of flesh destroyed. But they be nothing less than destroyed. For to take it at the worst, though their meat is taken from them, yet they are not distressed.

(1.) For what is the worst the world can do? They take away their lives which they must leave ere long, and thereby they are made partakers of their wish, which every child of God hath, 'to depart and to be with Christ,' Phil. i. 23. Now when they drive them out of the world, they make them partakers of what they most desire, for they have more communion with God in heaven than ever they had before; they are in their seats and proper place.

(2.) Again, though in regard of some particulars the church may seem to be destroyed, some boughs are cut, yet the body remains, so in regard, of the whole body they are not destroyed.

(3.) In regard of the 'inward man,' they are not destroyed. They take courage still, and comfort still, while they are in the world. When they go out of the world they have accomplishment of all desires. Put case God deliver them not, but give them up to death: he delivereth them in not delivering them. For what is death but delivering them from all trouble? When he delivereth not in particular danger, he giveth them a general deliverance by death from all trouble whatsoever.

(4.) Again, there is a double deliverance. There is an inward secret deliverance, and an apparent open deliverance. Put case they be cast down, and not openly delivered, yet secretly they are delivered, that is, from fear and

despair. The soul is set at liberty within. So that though they be cast down, yet not destroyed.

(5.) If they be destroyed to the appearance of the world, it is but seed sown. Saints are the seeds out of which grow many other. The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. As often as we are mowed and cast down, saith Tertullian, by your cruelty, it is but an allurements to our profession. So when they seem to be destroyed, they be but seed sown, and out of their ashes many rise out of them. How much are we beholding to the bloody times in this kingdom, for this after-glorious church!

(6.) 'Not destroyed' in this world, while they have any work to do. You may imprison them, fetter them, but God will work a miracle rather than his children shall be taken out of the world before they have done their work. The three young men in the furnace, the fire shall cease to burn rather than they shall before their hour cometh, Dan. iii. 27. In the gospel Christ was not hurt by them, for his hour is not yet come; they cannot hurt one hair of the head. 'They are afflicted, but not oppressed; they are persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.'

From all which we may raise some general truths, and make use of all that hath been spoken.

Doct. First of all we may from hence observe, that troubles and afflictions of God's people in this world they are many, and they are great and growing. They wax greater and greater till God's time be appointed. Here is distress, persecution, perplexity, casting down, they be many and manifoldly different in their kind. And then they be great, for here he reckons the greatest troubles than can befall, except death itself, which is usually included. And then there be degrees of them; to be afflicted is less than to be perplexed, and persecution added to perplexity. Then to persecution without is added the trouble following. And not only afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, but cast down.

That is no matter, mille mail species, mille salutis erunt, if a thousand ways of trouble, there will be a thousand ways of deliverance. God is never at a loss to help his children. Therefore God grant we are so. So, but we are not in distress, we despair not, we are not forsaken, we are not destroyed.

'We,' that is, Paul, and not only we as men, and we as Christians, but we as eminent men. For the troubles of God's children happen to them as men.

Sometimes sickness, death, losses, crosses. Sometimes as Christians, as they be maligned and opposed by the wicked world. Sometimes in an eminent calling, as Pharaoh, that desired to slay the male children especially, that were strong and able to do service; they were objects of malice, Exod. i. 16. Now we are thus used not only as men and Christians, but as eminent men. So that it is the condition of the most eminent of all to be thus used. It pleaseth God to let his children endure many and manifold and great troubles. Now what is the reason of this? I might be large, but I will give a few.

Reason 1. Of necessity there must be a conformity between the members and the head. It behoved Christ to suffer, that he might enter into glory. And all we in our time must suffer, and so enter into glory. 'We are predestinate to conformity to our head,' Rom. viii. 29. We are not only predestinate to salvation, but to all between us and salvation. We are ordained to pass through such and such good actions, such and such turnings. There is no man but hath so many actions to perform, so many sufferings to endure, to which they be by God ordained.

Reason 2. And again, the best of God's children have something to be wrought out of them by a spirit of burning and affliction; the best need refining.

Reason 3. And again, grace needeth trials and exercise and increase. Now God sanctifieth all these, passing from 'vessel to vessel,' Jer. xlvi. 11. These transfusions [are] to work out what is evil, to try, exercise, and increase what is good.

Reason 4. And if there were no more but the malice of Satan and his cursed seed, the seed of the serpent, it is not possible to avoid the cross. And God, that his children may not love the world, hath made the world hate them. And it is safe for God's people to have the hatred of the worst people. Their hatred will do them more good than their love. Their hatred breeds a separation, and commands a separation in conclusion. For what shall we do with familiarity and acquaintance with them whose company we cannot enjoy in heaven? And therefore God will have his children exercised with the worst men; and then he desires to take them out of the world, and to set God up in his due place. God is God, and the Creator, when we be stripped of all worldly comforts. Then vanity is vanity. God will not have us idolize anything below, and therefore suffers us to fall into extreme wants and dangers. Many other reasons there be, which I do give you but a taste of.

You see then the state of God's children in regard of the world. But what is it in regard of him? They be not forsaken, they be not utterly cast off. So they are patient in both; patient in regard of the trouble they meet with in the world, patient in regard of God's dealing with them. God forsakes them not so as to destroy them. He leaveth them not in a desperate condition, as he doth the wicked.

Doct. 2. Again, observe this, that the life of God's children in this world is a mixed life, woven of afflictions and of comforts, intermixed of both. It tastes of both the malice of the world and the goodness of God.

They oftentimes enjoy sickness. They be sometimes in dumps and sadness. Their life is woven of comfort and discomfort, and it is good for them in this world to be so, till they be in their proper place in heaven. And this is our comfort always, though troubles be many, and manifold, and great, and growing, and the last day worst, yet as the waters of afflictions grow, so do their comforts and the graces of the Spirit grow like waters of the sanctuary; as troubles increase, so the waters of consolation increase. And it is better to be in trouble than to be kept from the trouble without the comfort. There is more sweetness in affliction than in freedom from it without the sweetness. If we look to the world, you see what we may look for. If we look to heaven, you may see what to expect thence.

Use. If this be so, that their condition is thus mixed, it is good in our prayers to allege to God our ill condition, to argue extremity. 'Help, Lord: for vain is the help of man,' Ps. lx. 11. 'Save, Lord: the water is entered into my soul,' Ps. lxxix. 1. Help, Lord: if thou wilt not, none will; if thou canst not, none can. God will be bound with these arguments. It was the speech of Philo, 'A man's help faileth, where God's begins'.

And it [is] a good argument to allege to God in matters of sin, 'Lord, pardon, Lord, forgive, for my sins are many and great,' Ps. xxv. 11. This is a good argument with God, for he is infinite in mercy; therefore allege it as a binding argument.

But if God himself seem to be our enemy, What course shall we take then? Sometimes God acts a part that is not his own, that he may show afterward a greater mercy. In such times we must get the eye of faith, and break through the clouds between the soul and God's face, and see his fatherly countenance in Jesus Christ. Faith hath piercing eyes, and breaks through the clouds between God and us, and bindeth him with his own

nature and promise, -whatsoever part he acts. 'Lord, howsoever thou dealest, thy nature in Christ is gracious, merciful.' 'Thou hast made rich promises that thou wilt not fall from.' 'Forsake me not.' Bind him with his word, with his nature; he cannot deny his word, his nature, himself; allege them to him in Christ, and allege his own promise, and they will be effectual.-

Use. Again, we see here that it is a good art, and needful in times of trouble, to look to the good, as well as to the ill. The apostle doth not only confess ingenuously all the ill that the enemies might object to weaken the reputation of the gospel, they are people cast down and despised. All this is true, but we are not forsaken, we are not in despair, not destroyed. This is a good art in every affliction. It is better to have our eyes on the good, than to have our eyes altogether upon the ill. God hath taken away one child, he might have taken many. God hath afflicted with sickness, but he might have taken away our wits. Therefore have not both eyes fixed upon the grief, for that is Satan's policy, to rob God of his glory, and our souls of comfort.

Use. Therefore learn a blessed skill from hence. When there is objected anything by Satan to disgrace the gospel or discourage it, reject the objections of Satan with better. It is so, I confess; but [while] God seemeth to be displeased, and I am afflicted, God is yet a gracious God, hath left many comforts, his word, and promises, and therein I will trust: he hath given me his Spirit to support me. Thus return all the temptations of Satan, learn to be as witty and ingenious to argue that, for the strengthening of our faith, which may drive us to the acknowledgment of God's goodness and mercy, as Satan is to do the contrary: Judges vi. 13, 'God be with thee, thou valiant man;' but if God be with us, 'why is it thus with us?' And so God's people look all to the grievance; why are we persecuted, and in distress, and want, and at our wits' end? Now, but consider the comfort as -well as the discomfort; learn that heavenly wisdom from St Paul.

Let no man be discouraged, if he findeth himself sensible of the grief he lieth under. We be flesh, not spirit. God knoweth whereof we are made; and therefore he layeth not whole loads upon us, but in anger he remembers mercy. You see how he deals with the apostle Paul, and others in his case. Therefore, if we be sensible of trouble, God can help. No man more sensible of grief than Christ, *Christi dolor, dolor maximus*. For he had perfect -wisdom to apprehend, and a sound body. St Paul speaks of these things as wonderfully sensible, but here is true patience, when we be sensible to the uttermost of the grievance, and yet withal are but sensible of the grievance.

‘Why should I smite them any more?’ Isa. i. 5, saith God to the prophet. It is not only sin, but judgment, to be given up to hard hearts, not to feel the condition. Well, St Paul was sensible of his condition.

Obj. Thou wilt object, What is this to us? We live in calm times, and enjoy health and prosperity, and know not what these things mean that Paul speaks of.

Ans. Beloved, the more we be beholding to God. But do we know to what times the Lord may call the best of us all? Therefore we must be prepared before hand. Comforts are not found in adversity that were not sought for in prosperity, as Austin saith. In times of peace, people should provide for war and defence; and so in times of peace let us think of these things. Our conditions may alter. Howsoever the state may continue, yet we that live under our vines and fig-trees, do we know how the Lord may exercise us? May not he exercise us with afflictions of mind and persecutions of body? May not he exercise us with trouble of conscience, and bring us into straits, which is a spiritual martyrdom too? In times of prosperity, God’s children know better what to do and whom to depend on, because then he keeps them off from inward troubles. And therefore, seeing we know not how long in our personal condition we may be as we are, it is not amiss to think on these things.

And to direct us a little what to do now in times of peace and quietness.

(1.) Labour to preserve our peace with God by all means, that when changes come, as changes may come, and will come one way or other, we may say with the apostle, ‘I am afflicted, but not forsaken.’ If we make not God now our friend; if we shall now multiply sin and guilt, and run into God’s books more and more, it will be a hell when trouble, and sickness, and persecution come. And therefore as we will have God our friend when we stand most in need of him, so let us labour to keep God our friend now at this time. The desperate course that many loose persons take: they run into an old course, they let the reins loose to licentiousness, let their tongue lie and swear, and deny nothing that they affect. ‘Is there not times and months for these wild asses to be taken in? In their months you may take them.’ There be months of trouble and months of sickness; and when their former courses have been nothing but a perpetual provoking of God, what comfort can these persons have? And therefore, as we desire to have God stand by us and help at every pinch, labour for peace with him now in time of prosperity.

(2.) Let vs be constant in his cause, in his religion, that is so constant to us. And this constancy of the Spirit and the best things will be an evidence to us that we have found him constant in his love to us.

(3.) And that we may quiet ourselves the better, if such times come, be careful, and treasure up promises for the time to come, that we may allege them to God. Get good liquor into our hearts, that when times of pressing come, there may be good wine. If good knowledge be not gotten beforehand, what will afflictions press out but murmurings and despair, and something that was there before. Therefore treasure up now all we can; there is a spending time will come. Joseph's hard years may overtake us; we know not into what distress we may be brought. And because God is the best friend in extremity, be sure we offend not him for any creature, because let the creature do his worst, yet God will always be sure to be our friend. And if God be our friend, it matters not who is our enemy. I cannot press all that may be pressed out of this point.

(4.) Labour at all times to maintain a good conceit of God and his goodness. If Satan suggest he will cast us off, and that there is no hopes for us in our God, answer again, It is not so. Labour to have a spirit of faith to beat back all such temptations. You shall see strange temptations, and yet excellently answered. 'Yet God is good to Israel,' Ps. lxxiii. 1. When the child of God is low, yet he keeps good conceits of God, though things go strangely. I know not what to make of my condition and of the churches, 'yet God is good.'

The reason is, when we be at worst, God can help us. And therefore come those comfortable exceptions in the Psalms. 'Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all,' Ps. xxxiv. 19. 'They were afflicted sore, but not delivered to death,' Ps. cxviii. 18. So here mark the exceptions: we be in straits, persecuted and cast down, but yet delivered.

Thus labour for a good conceit of God. The like things you may observe out of these words of the apostle; and I beseech you, let us make use of them for the right knowledge of these things. Hence it is said, Rom, viii. 37, 'That in all these we are more than conquerors;' a strange speech, in affliction, pressures, casting down, 'we are more than conquerors.' And how cometh this? 'We are more than conquerors in him that loved us, in Jesus Christ;' more than conquerors, because we are overcome! when we seem to be overcome; because religion hath grown even by blood and suffering. St

Austin saith, by straits and afflictions the church hath been delivered and spread abroad to the uttermost parts of the world.

‘We are more than conquerors’ in all these in a treble regard.

[1.] Specially in regard of ourselves; for the devil aimeth at separation between God and us. ‘Now, what shall separate us?’ saith the apostle, Rom. viii. 35.

The devil intends a divorcement; but when by a spirit of faith we draw near to God, and cleave fast to God, then the devil’s policy is overthrown. The more the world driveth us from God, the faster we cleave to God; and then we be more than conquerors.

[2.] In regard of spiritual courage. The more God’s Spirit is depressed, the higher it riseth. The enemy labours to quail the spirits of them that be good, but they cannot do it, for the Spirit of God is invincible. And the spirit of a Christian being supported by an higher Spirit than their own, ‘I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me,’ Philip, iv. 13. Therefore they are more than conquerors by the invincible Spirit of Christ.

[3.] And then they be more than conquerors in regard of the cause. The devil labours to drive men to the dislike of the cause and religion by suffering disgrace, but he cannot.

Use. Firstly. And therefore, I beseech you, let me conclude with a point of encouragement, considering it is spoken with a great deal of courage. ‘We are afflicted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;’ let it encourage us to take the cause of God in hand, and go through with it in spite of Satan and his instruments, and fear nothing that shall befall vs. Why should we fear the devil? Let no man think what the devil threatens, but what God promises. Therefore fear nothing, for God will make it good; he will be never nearer than when we stand most in need of help. And therefore set upon God’s cause with courage; and not only on the cause of religion, but cause of honesty and justice. The truth of God in any kind is dearer than our lives. The worst that can befall us is to be persecuted and distressed. You shall have more comfort from heaven than discomfort from the world; and what do you lose then?

Therefore let us all support ourselves with this. There is more force in God’s help from heaven to secure and support by an inward invincible

strength, than there is in the world, or Satan the prince of the world, to cast us down; we have more for us than against us. When we be stripped of all, yet know, that God is the God of all; when he hath taken all, yet he leaveth himself. We have all at the fountain, all at the spring. Therefore let that be ground of resolution; 'If I perish, I perish,' saith the good woman, Esther iv. 16. But never depart from God, from religion, from justice, from the cause of the church; because I know God will be like himself; he cannot deny himself, but constantly deals with his church and children, as in former, times. It cannot be otherwise with me, than Paul the great apostle of the church. If that befalls me that did befall Paul, as I am in Paul's distress, so I may look for Paul's support and comfort.

The apostle, to avoid the objection of the scandal of the cross, by which they were the less accepted in the hearts of many, sets down the state of the people of God in this world, take them at the worst. He speaks here of himself not only as a man (since the fall of our weak nature is subject to many calamities), but he speaks of himself as a Christian, opposing the sins of the world. And he grants what they may object. 'We are troubled on every side, but not in distress.' The apostles take advantage from the troubles they were in, to advance the love and mercy of God in those troubles. We lose nothing by them, for that which is gained in any trouble, is better than that that can be lost. 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed,' so as we know not what to do, when we are in such straits. Take a Christian at the worst, yet he hath freedom to the throne of grace by the spirit of prayer; and God looks upon him in the worst condition. The more strait his condition is, the more large his [supply of the] Spirit is; therefore though troubles increase, yet his comforts increase.

Secondly, 'We are persecuted with wants, and by reason of wants we know not what course to take,' so that we are oftentimes 'perplexed, but yet not in despair,' for God supplieth. This I unfolded before.

A Christian man hath some bottom, in his worst condition, to uphold him, but take a man out of the state of grace, and he hath no bottom to stand upon, but he sinks presently in any trouble of mind or conscience to hell, though never so strong in wit and parts. He cannot encounter with a divine temptation, he hath no power with him above himself. We see Ahithophel, that wise politician. He was a bad man; and what became of him? He hanged himself. 'So Cain, Judas, and Saul. What saith Saul in his perplexity? [The Philistines are upon me, trouble is upon me, and God hath forsaken me,' 1

Sam. xxviii. 15, a pitiful complaint; and this may be the complaint of all carnal men, 'The Philistines are upon me, trouble is upon me, and God hath forsaken me.' But the children of God, when they are perplexed, they do not despair. It is a pitiful case with those that shall desire the mountains to cover them, Rev. vi. 15. Your wicked persons that now outlook anybody, that despise every one but themselves, the time shall come when they shall desire the mountains to cover them, a pitiful strait that they cannot tell where to betake themselves, as Christ saith, Mat. xxiv. [throughout]. Oh, but the child of God in his worst he hath something to stay himself upon. Though he be in deep troubles, there is a help above him, a power of God to support him on the left hand and on the right. If there be a height and depth of troubles, there is a height and depth of mercy to support them.

Thirdly, 'Persecuted, but not forsaken.' Grant what is to be granted.

'We are persecuted.' How far? They will never leave us till they have taken us out of the world; and what hurt do they then? Drive us nearer to God. God owneth his children most when the world owneth them least, and there is a blessing pronounced upon all those that suffer for good causes. 'Blessed are you when men persecute you, for great is your reward in heaven,' Mat. v. 10. As he said, It is a kingly thing to suffer evil, Ac.. I am sure it is a Christian's condition to do good and suffer evil.

In sufferings let us look to three things.

(1.) First, To the came, considering that it be free from sin.

(2.) To look to our carriage in the cause, that we carry not ourselves tempestuously.

(3.) Look to those that persecute. Let them persecute; and though they do, you shall not be forsaken. Though a man may desert him that stands for him and his cause, yet when the children of God shall stand for God, he will not desert them in his cause; 'though persecuted, yet not forsaken.'

Fourthly, The fourth is, 'cast down, but not destroyed.' Persecution prevails sometimes to casting down, but 'yet we are not destroyed.' We are cast down, trodden down, insulted over, but not 'destroyed.' Beloved, you see the great persecution of the church. What a pitiful condition the church hath been brought unto within these late years: trodden down, 'yet not destroyed.' For they are partakers with Christ that is now in heaven, and they

are assured of a blessed resurrection; and therefore not destroyed, when they seem to be destroyed in the eyes of the world. As he said before, they 'are earthen vessels.' So every man is but an 'earthen vessel,' but it is much that an earthen vessel should be cast down and yet not broken; they may be cast down, but not destroyed. For when the enemies have done the worst they can to destroy them, that destruction is no destruction, but salvation.

Again, 'We are cast down, but not destroyed.' We see here is a kind of eloquence of things as well as words. Here is a sweet harmony of things: 'they are afflicted, but not in despair; perplexed, but not distressed; persecuted, but not forsaken.' Every one of these are greater than the former. I showed you God's children are troubled in this world, and their troubles grow more and more till they are scarce able to bear them, and then God giveth a gracious promise, 'that he will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength,' 1 Cor. x. 13. For God limits the time and the measure of all troubles in this world. He stands by and turneth the glass, 'and limits the measure. 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,' Job xxxviii. 11, as we may see in Job's case; and his promise is, 'that the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the back of the righteous,' Ps. cxxv. 3. This is one comfort, that a Christian's times are not in the enemies' hands, but 'our times,' as David saith, 'are in thy hands,' Ps. xxxi. 15. Our times of coming into trouble, and our times of going out of trouble, are in the hands of God. As he made all things, in the first creation, in number, weight, and measure, so he rules and governeth all things in number, weight, and measure, especially his church. He will not put in a dram too much; he weigheth their strength, and weigheth their crosses, and exactly observeth what their strength is able to bear. For he is a most wise father; and that is our comfort, whatsoever falls upon us. If troubles grow upon us, comforts shall grow; if they grow great in number and measure, comforts shall grow great in number and measure too; for he is a God of comfort. He comforts in every trouble, as we see here, 'perplexed, cast down, persecuted,' yet God hath comfort for every one of these.

Last Obs. Again, here see the comfortable condition of God's children in this world. All their happiness is not reserved for heaven, but they are happy in affliction itself. In them there is comfort. There is support not only in heaven, but in the very time of affliction, as we may see it in Ps. xciv. 19: 'According to the multitude of my thoughts, thy comforts delighted my soul.' According to my distracted thoughts, thy comforts have refreshed my soul. There be present comforts in troubles that keep God's children from despair. St Paul nameth the lowest comforts that God's children have here. Though

they are ‘persecuted, yet they are not forsaken;’ though they are ‘cast down, yet they perish not.’ He showeth here, that if we regard not the great matters that we shall have in heaven, yet God dispenseth his comforts here now in the time of troubles. Here is matter of comfort, and not of despair. Miserable heathens, that had not the knowledge of God in Christ, what condition were they in? As one saith, ‘I would pray, but my prayers are in vain’. They were in great misery. Wanting the knowledge of God in Christ, they fell into despair. So in the church: those that are not acquainted with God, in great troubles fall to despair; but you see the comfortable condition of a Christian, take him at the worst.

Ver. 10. It followeth, ‘Always bearing in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.’ Here he addeth a comfort to those that suffered before, showing the end of all that God intends. ‘We bear in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus.’ He calls all troubles by the name of dying. This is the first.

All the troubles God’s children are exercised with here, are named with the name of dying.

(1.) Because troubles are little deaths. Death is not the last parting of soul and body, but every separation from comfort is a kind of death. Therefore he calls afflictions dyings, because they make way for greater deaths. He calls afflictions dyings, from the intent and purpose of the persecutors, for their intent is, if it were in their power, to kill.

(2.) Likewise it is called a dying, because this is in. the preparation of spirit that they are ready to die; for no man is a true Christian but he labours to deny father and mother, and all comforts, and resigns himself to Christ. If I can serve him with mine honour, yea, with my life, he shall have it, so that I am ready to die upon all occasions, as you may see in the next verse. ‘We are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake,’ that is, the enemies expose us to death, and if it were in their power they would kill us.

Quest. But why doth he call his troubles a dying ‘of the Lord Jesus?’

Ans. [3.] There be some troubles that Christ suffered, which we cannot; as the curse of the law, and the wrath of God due to our sins. These Christ suffered alone. ‘He trod the wine-press of God’s wrath alone,’ Isa. lxiii. 3. In these there is no partaking.

Ans. [2.] There is another dying, a dying in his mystical body, his church. He suffers affliction in every Christian. He was stoned when Stephen was stoned, Acts vii. 59. Christ was beheaded when John Baptist was beheaded, and in prison when Paul was in prison. Christ suffered in all the martyrs, by reason of that union between him and his church. So that besides that, he suffers in every Christian, this is called ‘the dying of the Lord Jesus.’

Ans. [8.] Because he measures out to every one their cup. Afflictions are called a cup, and therefore they are his, because they are measured out by him.

Ans. [4.] And then they are his dyings, because by them they are made like unto him. He suffered first; and then every Christian must express that suffering. As he suffered and entered into glory, so ‘we must suffer with him, if we mean to reign with him,’ 2 Tim. ii. 12.

Ans. [5.] And then again, they are called the dying of the Lord Jesus, because Christ hath a fellowship and communion with them in all their dyings. As a Christian hath communion with Christ when he dieth, we ure ‘crucified with him;’ so Christ suffers with us. He is afflicted with us, reproached with us, as Moses, Hob. xi. 26, counted ‘the rebukes of Christ’ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Christ enters into prison with us, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ Acts ix. 4. Christ takes upon him all the wrongs done to his children as done to himself. As it argueth madness in those that persecute, so a sweet comfort to them that do suffer, that they have Christ to suffer with them. The presence of Christ so sweetens everything, as he said, ‘The presence of Christ made the gridiron sweet unto Lawrence’. A beam of Christ’s presence that is now in heaven scatters all troubles. The presence of Christ made Paul sing in prison, Acts xvi. 25. The presence of Christ sweetens all conditions and all places whatsoever, because our dyings are the dyings of Christ; Christ hath fellowship and communion with us in them.

Ans. [6.] Then again, they are the dyings of Christ, because they divorce and wean us from the world. Now we being separated from worldly comforts, are fitter for farther fellowship and communion with Christ, as you shall see afterward.

Thus we see some reasons why all the miseries of a Christian are called ‘the dyings of our Lord Jesus.’

We see then there must be a dying of the outward man; first there must be little dyings, and then a consummation of all. And why? Because sin is so invested and so sunk into our natures, that without death it cannot be divorced. Afflictions are to make a divorce between sin and our nature, for 'no unclean thing can enter into heaven,' Rev. xxi. 27. As the Spirit did separate sin in the nature of Christ, so doth the Spirit of God purify the nature of every man by afflictions. Because grace needs help, therefore afflictions join as fire with grace, to make a more perfect separation between the soul and sin. Together with the sanctified spirit there is a spirit of burning. When the canker hath seized deeply on metals, it must pass through the fire before it can be purged; so the nature of corruption hath so eaten into our natures, that we need fire to purge it out.

'Flesh and blood,' saith the apostle, 'shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,' 1 Cor. xv. 50. What is the meaning of that? That is, there be some remainders of corruption in it. Until this body be returned to dust, till the Lord make this body of ours new again, which is now so stained with sin, it shall never enter into heaven. Our blessed Saviour's body the third day, before he saw corruption, did rise again, because there was no sin in him, and therefore it was not necessary he should see corruption.

Now divers reasons there were why he should not see corruption. But all our bodies must be turned to dust, or changed, which shall have the force of a death, as 1 Cor. xv. 52: 'And therefore we bear in our bodies the dyings of the Lord Jesus.'

Use. This should sweeten all our afflictions, that we are dying with Christ, whereby Christ hath communion with us, and whereby we are fitted for communion with Christ; as put case we have sickness or trouble, &c. Christ took upon him flesh, but what? As it was in Adam impassible? Christ took upon him our passible nature, as subject to suffer cold, and hunger, and pain, of weariness, and it is fit our bodies should be conformable to the body of Christ, 'for we are predestinate to be conformed to Christ,' Rom. viii. 29, and therefore when we are put to pain in our callings, or troubled for good consciences, and thereby wear out our bodies, it is but as Christ's body was used. He took a body that he might suffer, and going about doing good, and be put to hardship. Therefore, if we be put to hardship, it is no more than our Lord Jesus Christ did. And therefore those that be so delicate that will take no pains, endure no sickness, the wind must not blow upon them, the sun must not shine upon them, they love no saving goodness, nothing of the

Spirit of Christ, who out of love took our nature upon him, obnoxious to all pain and labour; though not infirmities of our particular persons, yet of our nature. He took upon him our miserable nature, our passible nature, and then he hath our nature in heaven. If ever we will be glorified with him in heaven, we must be content to take upon us his miserable nature here, that our flesh may be used as his was, even to death if there were occasion. If we be humbled to death, happy is that mortification that brings us to conform with Christ, whatsoever it is. And therefore be not discouraged; let what will come, come on this body of ours.

Now if you ask me, who are the happy men in the world? Truly those that are most active in good, and suffer most for good, for they are the flesh of Christ. What did the flesh and nature of Christ? He did all the good he could, and suffered all the evil that the pride and malice of man's nature could possibly lay upon him. He therefore that doth most good, and suffers most ill, he cometh nearest to Christ, and carrieth about with him the 'marks of the Lord Jesus.'

To pass on in the words.

To what end is all this? 'That the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies.' What is the life of Jesus? You all know what life is. I will speak of it as a Divine especially.

(1.) You know that the life of Jesus is either the life secret in himself; and therefore he is called 'our life.' 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' John xiv. 6, when; Christ our life shall appear,' Col. iii. 4. Christ is life, as having life in himself as God. Or,

(2.) Else the life of Jesus as mediator, and as God and man; and so it is here meant. Life is first founded in the Godhead. He is the living God, and therefore wise and powerful, and all because he is living. But life as it is in God doth not comfort us a whit, but rather is a matter of terror, because we have no communion with God, considered absolutely, without a mediator. And therefore we must consider of life as derived to a middle person, a mediator, God-man. So that life is derived to us by Christ our brother, who hath taken our nature. Our Christ is derived to us in our nature. God alone doth not comfort us; mere man alone doth no good, John vi. 32, seq. The argument is profoundly followed by our Saviour. The flesh profiteth nothing. The human nature without the divine profiteth nothing. It is the Spirit that quickens. Look to the death of Christ. Consider Christ dying as man, he doth

us no good at all if he had not been God. As God he could not have died, but the person of God dying in our nature makes his flesh bread indeed, and his blood drink indeed; that is, the soul may feed upon the satisfaction, the sacrifice of God-man, as full satisfaction to God's divine justice. So that the Spirit and the flesh, the divine and human nature, is the ground of all life.

[1.] First, of the life of sentence, whereby we are freely acquitted from sin; for there is life of sentence when a malefactor waiteth for death, and hath a life of sentence given him. So Christ is the fountain and author of this life of sentence, for that God in our nature died to satisfy God, and therefore we be acquitted. The guilt of our soul is taken away, and a life of sentence is conveyed to us.

[2.] The life of Jesus is as the life of a head. We have not only life through Christ, but life in Christ; and not only life through Christ as mediator, but life in Christ as an head, conveying the same Spirit that is in himself to every member. So that if you will have the fountain of life, here it is. God is the first living, he is life itself. God conveyeth life to the mediator, God-man. He restores life to us, the life of sentence, and hath likewise conveyed the life of sanctification to us. Sometimes ye read both of God and Christ mediator. 'The Father liveth, and I live; and because I live, you shall live also,' John xiv. 19. But to come nearer to ourselves.

(3.) The life that cometh from Jesus, come in first upon his own person, then by the second on us. Christ exercised this life first upon himself in raising himself from the grave. Christ as God raised himself as man from the grave, and so he is called the Lord of life; He hath the key of hell and of the grave; Lord of life, Lord of death, because being dead he as Lord of life raised himself again.

Now after he had exercised this power in giving his body life again, so by the same power by which he raised his own dead body, by the same he raiseth every Christian's. So that every Christian is raised and quickened by the life of Jesus; that is, by the power by which Jesus quickened himself being dead in the grave; and that is St Paul's meaning, Phil. iii. 10, 'That we might find the power of his death, and the virtue of his resurrection.' There is virtue in Christ's resurrection. What is that? It is nothing but the quickening power whereby the body of Christ was raised out of the grave; and Paul desires to feel the power and virtue of that resurrection from the life of Jesus.

And therefore in particular, what is the virtue of Christ's resurrection, whereby Christ doth raise himself?

The virtue of it in us is, first of all, the same Spirit that raised his body out of the grave doth raise us out of any affliction, or quickens and strengthens us in it.

The argument is from the greater to the lesser. If Christ hath such an almighty power to quicken his own body when it is dead, hath not he power to quicken and strengthen a man in any poor and miserable condition in this world? Doubtless he hath; and therefore Paul desires the virtue of this in all his troubles and dying. And so the life of Jesus is manifested to a man in trouble, when he endeth divine power supporting him above nature in any trouble, or else bringing him out of that condition to a glorious one. Take a man in any uncomfortable condition of soul, perplexed, deserted, cast down by sense of sin: he may be raised to the divine power of Christ to comfort, and to stand stronger by his falls, grow better by his sins.

And because death is the consummation of all trouble, the life of Jesus is manifested there, when our bodies are in the grave, as Rom. viii. 11, 'If the Spirit, that raised Jesus from the grave, be in us,' the same shall raise up our bodies when they be turned to dust and rottenness.

So then, in a word, the life of Jesus is made manifest in us, when we find this life powerful in the midst of all our worst conditions, supporting us in our falls, and making us better and more comfortable afterward; and at length the spiritual life that raised him from the grave, shall raise up our bodies to be conformable to his glorious body now in heaven. St Paul was content to suffer the dyings of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in him; that is, the power of Jesus. To add another thing.

(1.) It is not only a manifestation of the divine power in our falls and raising us from the grave by the life of Jesus, but withal he infuseth a life to every one; he sanctifieth the soul and body, and worketh the same impression in others that is in him; that is, his life. When he is meek, we are framed to be meek; he obedient, we are framed to be obedient; he humbled, we are framed to be humbled; he is good and holy, we are framed to be answerable. This is the life of Jesus. And the more we bear in our bodies the life of the Lord Jesus, the more we are like to Jesus, and fashioned to him.

Therefore it may be well called his ‘power,’ and his ‘inward grace;’ because it cometh from him, and it makes us like to him altogether, and it tendeth to Jesus. It is from Christ, and maintained by Christ, and it carrieth the soul to Christ, makes us like to Christ; therefore it is called the life of Jesus.

We all know life is a sweet thing. We desire it above all, and fear the contrary, death, above all. Now blessed is that mortification, that dying, that makes us partakers of the life of Jesus. If life is sweet, what is this Me of Jesus? Alas! what is a life to the life of Jesus; that is, to the divine power showed in us, which was showed in him.

Use. You see then that dying to Jesus Christ makes way for the life of Christ. If we will live with Christ, then we must die first. You know all life springs from death, so the life of Christ springeth from death; his own life that he liveth, any spiritual life, it was after his death. And so spiritual life in us cometh after dying. The papists will have a life of their own; others will have power in corrupt nature; but there is no resurrection without death before; there must be dying before there is a living.

If we will feel the life of Christ, we must be content to carry bodies dying to Christ. If we will have strength and power and joy, and the presence of Christ, then endure the dying of the Lord Jesus. Endure whatsoever he will please to exercise us withal. And if we carry his dyings, we shall be sure to be partakers of his life.

Use 2. I beseech you, consider whether we be partakers of this life, strength, and power, and grace, and comfort. And let us be content then with any condition in the world wherein we may have communion with Christ by anything, that we may be subject to Christ; to be poor that we may be rich with Christ; to die to all, that so we may live to Christ; to be nothing to all others, that so we may be all in all to Christ. By dying to Christ we lose perhaps health, but we gain it in strength; we may lose countenance and friend, we gain it in spiritual things. God takes nothing from his children, but he giveth better in a better kind. And happy is that parting that is recompensed in an higher kind; happy is that death that is made good by a better life; happy that self-denial that is made up in Christ; happy that discomfort that is made up with comfort in Christ; and therefore let us not be against any suffering, fear nothing that God may call us to in this world; no, although death itself. Life with Christ is better incomparably than anything we lose. Our life is but a dying life, take it at the best; die we must.

Now if we die suffering afflictions, which are the passage to life, why then there is a benefit made of necessity. We owe to God a death by nature, and now we get an advantage by anything we suffer for Christ's sake. For we have a hundred fold for anything we suffer in this world. It is hard to persuade this reason to flesh and blood, but they that find experience in it once, as Christians 'do in sufferings, they find peace and comfort from the presence of Christ's Spirit in their souls; they know what a benefit it is to suffer for Christ's sake, though with loss of anything in this world. Would Saint Paul have wanted those whippings and imprisonments, or wanted his comforts of Christ's presence? Would the martyrs have wanted that sweet comfort they had for present life? Surely they had it offered, they might have entertained it if they would, but they would not. And if glimpses of glory, the little life derived to us now, supporteth under the troubles of the world, what is the 'exceeding weight of glory' reserved for us in another world? We can soon fathom and compass the things we suffer. We know what contempt meaneth, and poverty meaneth, but the life in this world passeth understanding. 'The peace of God passeth understanding,' Philip, iv. 7, and 'is joy unspeakable and glorious,' 1 Peter i. 8. Therefore if there be a measure and narrow measure of trouble in this world, and that there be inward peace and glory immeasurable, then we be gainers here, setting aside consideration of heaven.

Therefore, I beseech you, let us be willing to undergo anything God shall call us to; for,

(1.) We shall find a divine energy of God's Spirit, which we never perhaps had before, nor ever shall have hereafter. Therefore fear nothing God shall call us to. The comforts of God's Spirit, from the life of Christ manifested in the hearts of his children, are above the course of nature, for it is an high life. The life of Christ is above the life of reason or sense. Therefore suppose troubles lie in sense,, the large peace and enlargement of spirit is above them all.

Now as the life of reason is above the life of sense, so the life of grace is above all conditions whatsoever. No inferior subordinate condition can prejudice the life of grace and comfort. Therefore if all tyrants in the world conspire to make a man miserable, they vex his outward life, but there is a life of Jesus, and they cannot hinder the influence of grace and comfort to the soul. They cannot hinder the inward peace of inward joy, they be comforts of an higher rank. And therefore if ever God calleth us to stand in a

good cause, for justice, for religion, never go off: we shall have comforts of an higher rank.

(2.) Consider, the worst they can do is, to take this life of ours, which we cannot keep long. These things be easy to be known, for matter of understanding, but hard to practise upon occasion; therefore we ought to think of them beforehand, and to labour more and more, persuaded of the love of God in Christ. And to see the life of Christ quickening them to all holy actions and duty, this is a spiritual life. As Christ, when he rose, never dieth more, so he that hath this spiritual life hath an eternal life, he never dieth more. When Christ begins to quicken our souls by joining our spirits with his Spirit, that conjunction is everlasting. And it is nearer after death than before; when death separates the soul from the body, then cometh the conjunction of the soul to Christ. Therefore labour after the spiritual life that makes us happier and happier still. The longer we live the nearer we are to Christ, and when we die nearest of all. Labour to feel the power of Christ's Spirit quickening our spirit, putting life into them, vigour into them, beauty on them, strength into them by his Holy Spirit.

(3.) Again, when the body is severed from the life of the soul, we see how deformed it is, how stiff and inactive it is; we cannot endure the sight of our dearest friend if life be gone. If the life of Christ be severed from our souls, what carrion souls have we to God. There is no beauty on the soul, no strength to duty. But now if we enter upon the first degree of life here, and find the beginning of it in altering and changing our natures, we are sure to leave farther degrees of it in our death, and the consummation of it at our resurrection; then body and soul shall enjoy the same life that Jesus doth now. But the scope of the apostle, which I desire you mainly to remember, is this, that you should fear nothing; nothing can befall us, though never so grievous to the outward man.

I add, because we shall experimentally feel the life of Christ manifested to us. It is that that makes a Christian. Experience is the life of a Christian. What is all knowledge of Christ without experience, but a bare knowledge, if the power that raised Christ's body raise not our souls? This is to know-Christ to purpose, to know the virtue of Christ. We hear that Christ is powerful to quicken his own body. You hear that Christ is gracious, and good, and full of comfort; but what is this unless we feel it in ourselves? It is the experimental knowledge of Christ, and of the life of Christ, that doth us good, and makes us abound in all things. I suffer bonds, saith the apostle, for

the gospel, but I am not ashamed, Rom. i. 16. Why? 'I know whom I have believed.' He felt the power of Christ in all his tribulations and afflictions. When we find by experience Christ is a quickening Spirit, hath quickened our souls to grace, comforts, peace, joy in our worst condition, then we know Christ to purpose, and then are fit to be carried through all afflictions of the world, and beyond all, and above all, to bear us through all things we meet with in the world between us and heaven. The life of Christ being a divine life, without a little experience of it, all is to no purpose. And a little of this beareth down all that stands between us and glory.

Verse 10

Always bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our bodies.

The apostle, as before we have heard, labours to vindicate the credit of the gospel, and the ministry of it, preventing all objections that carnal men might make from the trouble that usually accompanieth both the preaching and profession of the blessed truths of God. And he setteth it down by way of opposition and contrariety. He grants all that the adversary can say, and then showeth on the contrary how God is present graciously in the midst of the troubles of his children. And this in five particulars.

1. 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed.'

2. 'Perplexed, yet not in despair.'

3. 'Persecuted, yet not forsaken.'

4. 'We are cast down, yet not destroyed altogether.' Every [one] of these is worse than [the] other. The waters of trouble do arise, but as the waters of trouble do arise, so comforts arise in every one, especially in the fifth, which is the worst of all.

5. 'Always bearing about in our bodies the dying of our Lord Jesus.' It is true, yet for all that 'the life of Jesus is made manifest in our bodies,' beside these unspeakable comforts that are [preserved for religion in the world to come, God doth not desert his children nor his cause even in this. It is a happy condition when they be at the worst; so that the blessed apostle, though he had something in the flesh to discourage him that he had no better in him than nature, yet notwithstanding, he had something whereby he

was encouraged, whereby he should be able to retort all upon any that should object anything in religion to his discouragement; a blessed art and skill which we should all learn, not to look altogether upon the grievances, but consider likewise what is in our condition wherein we may be comforted; nay, more comfort if we have spiritual eyes than grounds of discouragement. God is gracious; he never taketh anything from his children but he makes it up in a better kind.

We came the last day to the beginning of the 10th verse. 'We bear about in our bodies the dyings of the Lord Jesus'; the end of it is, 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.'

God afflicts not any one of his children but he makes it up by a gracious and blessed recompense; and what he takes away he maketh up; and in what measure the outward man decayeth by mortification, in that measure, in a more excellent kind, he makes it up in the life of Jesus; and what is the decay of the life of nature, or the life of condition, that stands in riches, and pleasures, and honours, suitable to the growth in a life of a higher kind, the life of Jesus?

'We always bear in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus.'

The words are a yielding to that objection that might be -made concerning the affliction of the outward man. It is true, 'we bear in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus.' We spake of that first part the last day.

That is, such afflictions whereby we are conformed to Christ, not only which Christ permits and suffers, and which are like to the dyings of Christ, and conformable to him, which is called the mortification of Christ and the dying of the Lord Jesus, but also such a dying wherein we have the Lord Jesus to be partners with us, and which is for his sake, and whereby we are framed to be like to him, and conformed to his image.

Obs. Whatsoever we suffer for Christ's sake, we have Christ a partner with us in it. Even as by virtue of communion with him we die with him and rise with him, so by virtue of communion with us he suffers with us and dieth with us. He was stoned in Stephen, he was beheaded in Paul, he was reproached in Moses. Christ suffers in all those that suffer for him. There is that near communion between Christ and his church. And therefore it is the mortification of Christ, because he bears part with his children in it, and likewise because we are framed thereby to be like unto him. For, beloved, not

to say any more in this, argument, there must be a great deal of alteration in the outward man before it will be like Christ. Our flesh and outward man is so tainted -with original corruption, that there must be a great deal of change to fashion it to be like to the pure nature of Christ. Ye know the nature that Christ took upon him. It was an afflicted nature, but a human nature, before it was a glorious nature in heaven. And so likewise this nature of ours, this outward man, before it can be a glorious nature, must be a human nature, it must be an afflicted nature. For sin hath eaten so deeply into our natures, that there needs, as it were, a spirit of burning to consume and waste the corruption that is in us; and therefore it is called the mortification of Jesus, because by it we are conformable to Jesus in our natures and dispositions, by little and little, till at length our bodies and souls be for ever conformable to him in the heavens, death being the accomplishing of mortification.

And then again, the mortification of Jesus is such a mortification whereby we are content our bodies should be like the body of Christ on earth, which is in all hardship, labour, affliction, weariness; and all God's people have such a spirit, all that come to heaven have such a spirit. They are not so dainty that their bodies should be better used than the body of Christ. Christ took upon him our flesh and our miserable condition, he took a nature subject to pain and labour. He took not our nature as in Adam, impassible, that could not suffer, but he took the weakness of our nature, and in our nature went about doing good, hungry, and thirsty and weary, and taking a great deal of pains; and shall any man that is a member of Christ be so dainty and delicate as not to be content to have his body like as Christ's body was? And therefore, the more that any man by Christ's Spirit is content, his body should take pains in any calling to do good, and the more he is content to suffer ill in doing good, the more he carrieth the mortification and dying of the Lord Jesus in him. And, beloved, so soon as ever a man is become a Christian, his life is no more his own; his health, his liberty is Christ's, not his own. Self-denial is the first lesson. There is a hatred, a not loving of anything in comparison of Christ, even of life itself, and whatsoever stands in the way; and therefore we must be content to be partakers of Christ's sufferings, that our bodies should be so used as Christ was; we must give up life and liberty and all to Christ; and that is 'the dying of the Lord Jesus.' This we showed more largely upon the last day; but I will now specially insist on the end and use of all this, 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.'

You see there is nothing lost by the dying of the Lord Jesus. It is made up in a better kind, being for this end, 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.' This is God's end, and this is Christ's end, and this is Paul's end. It is both the effect and issue that cometh of the dying of our bodies, and it is the end intended by Christ, -who will use our bodies in his service, so that his life may be made manifest in us. St Paul's end is suitable to Christ's in bearing the afflictions of the outward man, that the life of Christ may be made manifest in him; for being once in Christ, Christ's aims and ends are our aims and ends; and therefore saith Paul, we are content to 'bear in our bodies the dyings of the Lord Jesus,' so this be the issue of it, 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest.' Christ will have this end, and it is his end. He taketh away nothing but he makes it up in a better kind to the better man. It shall be supplied by a life of the Spirit, which shall be perfected in a life of glory in heaven.

Now what is this life of Jesus?

There is a life of Jesus whereby he liveth himself, as God, and as mediator, God-man. There is a life of Jesus whereby Christ was upheld while he lived upon the earth; for that Spirit that quickened the dead body of Jesus in the grave, that Spirit carried Christ along in all his lifetime, freed him from all dangers till he had done his work. There was a Spirit of life in Jesus that upheld him, and strengthened him to do the great work he took in hand, till at length he did a greater work than all before, that is, raised up his dead body. So that beside the life of Jesus enjoyed in heaven, a glorious life, there was a life that Jesus led on earth, which was carried by the Spirit, and acted by the Spirit of God in all things he did as mediator, God-man. And there is a life that he hath now in heaven, which is either the life that he enjoyeth himself and as our head, which we shall be conformed to when we die; for we shall enjoy the same life in our proportion and measure that he doth in heaven, the glorious life which is the life of Christ our head; that is, that life of Christ which is now hid, as the apostle saith, 'our life is hid with Christ in God,' Col. iii. 8; or else the life of Jesus is that quickening power which comes from Christ unto us.

Not to speak of higher matters, how God is life, which be speculations, not to the present purpose, the life of Jesus here, it is not the life of Jesus as it is and was in himself, but the life of Jesus as it is conveyed to us. The life of Jesus is derived to every Christian.

Not to speak of the life of justification, which is a life of sentence, and not here principally intended, though it be the spring of all the rest, for we are dead in law, and we must be quickened by sentence. We are dead in our sins. Guilt is upon us, and the guilt must be removed in justification. We must live in law, and in sentence, and in absolution. God must forgive our sins for Christ's sake, and remove the guilt of all death, before we can have inward grace, which is the life of sanctification. Though it be not here meant, it is supposed, as that which leadeth to all the rest. But here is meant the life of grace in us which is from the work and function of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit of every Christian. As there is one soul in the head and all the members, so there is one Spirit in Christ and all the members, and one spiritual life in Christ and all the members. Now this Spirit of Christ conveyeth to us the Spirit of life, and Christ is the life of our life, the soul of our soul, the union with our spirits. For even as the body liveth by fellowship and communion with the soul—for what is life but the vigour of the soul in the body by reason of union?—so doth our souls and bodies live a spiritual life by union and fellowship with Christ, [which] is the vigour of the Spirit in our souls by virtue of Christ. And therefore that spiritual life by which we live here is the life of Christ, not only exemplary, because it is like Christ's life, but by way of efficiency. Christ is the head of it, and conveyeth it to us. There is no better comparison than to express it by the life of the body which hath communion from the soul. The soul hath a distinct life of its own. It hath a life when it is out of the body. It hath reason, it hath discourse, it wills, it understandeth, it joyeth, it delighteth, yet notwithstanding, distinct from the body. That is not a life that it liveth in the body that is severed. The body's life is that that is communicated by conjunction and communion. So the life of Jesus [is] not the life that he liveth in himself, but in this place specially, the life that we have by communion and friendship with him.

And this life that we have, the life of Jesus, it admitteth of a double consideration.

First of all, it is that habitual life as we may call it, that inward frame of divine nature which is in us Christians, which raiseth us above other men, as other men by a rational life are raised above other creatures; that temper and composure of soul whereby they mind heavenly things, and have a supernatural end and aim in all things, have enlargements of understanding, enlargements of will and affections, larger souls than others. Narrow-spirited men they are that are carried only to the things of this life; and this is a

constant life, by reason of the constant dwelling of the Spirit in us, as there is constant life in the body by the constant dwelling of the soul in . it. And it is besides that, a perpetual influence of life from Christ, especially in dangerous and difficult times, as Saint Paul speaks of here. It is a power above nature conveyed to uphold and carry us along through all dangers till we come to heaven; so that it is a life first in us, and then the life of Christ drawing out the life in us to all kind of grace, and addeth a divine strength.

For, beloved, it is not that life that is in us doth all the great matters, but it is the life of Christ as it joineth with the life of grace, supporteth it, strengthens it, draweth it forth, increaseth it. For the life that is in us it is a created thing, it is a new creature, but a creature; but the life that maintaineth a Christian, that upholds him specially in the dangerous matter, ay, in the 'dyings of the Lord Jesus,' in great difficulty, that is not a thing created in us, but the life of Jesus as it hath influence from him, and is conveyed from him by a perpetual kind of derivation. For if troubles grow, then the quickening power must increase with them, and habitual grace in us must be raised, and strengthened, and quickened; and besides the graces formerly in us, there must be an addition of strength from the spring, still more and more. In natural life we do not only live in God, but move in God: 'In him we live, and move, and have our being,' Acts xvii. 28. So in regard of spiritual life, we not only live by Christ, but our motion and the prompting of our power being sanctified to any particular action, it is from the quickening power of Christ, which is a quickening Spirit quickening us. Sometimes this quickening power must be showed in way of strength, when the trouble is great that the strength may be suitable; sometimes by way of comfort, when the discouragement is great; sometimes by way of joy and peace, when the discouragement is to assault us with the contrary. So that perpetually there must be quickening power in our lives from Christ our quickening head, besides the habitual, constant grace we carry about with us always. We know, in the body, if there be obstructions that hinder the spirits from the brain, whence motions come, there is an apoplexy or lethargy, causing a cessation of motion. So if there be ceasing of the quickening powers continually derived from Christ our head, there would be an apoplexy or lethargy in our spiritual life, and a kind of death. Therefore when we speak of the life of Christ, we must not understand the life that he lived; 'because I live, therefore you shall live also;' but to think of the habitual grace wrought in ourselves, whereby we are conformed to Christ, and to think of a quickening power that Christ showeth continually, he being the Sun of this world. Though the things of this world, as plants and the like grow, yet let the sun

withdraw his vigour and efficacy, and they seem to die presently. The light of the air ceaseth when the sun ceaseth to shine. So besides that, in us habitually and continually, there must be influence of Christ into us answerable to the exigencies and occasions a Christian hath, either of peace, or joy, or comfort of some portion of spiritual life or other. Now this is called the life of Jesus, because it is radicated in him originally, as the 'second Adam.' We all derive it from him. The grace and quickening power we have continually, it is from him, the glory we look for is from him. He is the 'first-born' to whom we are predestinate to be conformed every way, in grace here, and glory hereafter; and therefore it is called the life of Jesus. That is specially herein meant. Both these lives, the inward frame of spiritual life and grace in us, and likewise a perpetual influence specially discovered and manifested then, when there is most need of it, in times of trouble, with the accomplishment of it in heaven. The life of Christ is manifested in his children here when they stand in most need of grace and comfort, and it is manifested continually to the day of judgment, when the life of Jesus shall indeed be manifested to the full, as it is manifested in him in heaven; for as Christ is glorious himself in heaven, so his mystical body shall be like himself too.

I need speak no more for the unfolding of the meaning of the words. The points considerable are these,

Obs. 1. That Christ is the foundation of all spiritual life that is in vs. He is the 'second Adam' that conveyeth all that is spiritually good. As the first Adam conveyeth all that is spiritually ill, it was his office so to do, to convey life. 'Because I live, you shall live also,' John xiv. 19; and he saith, John x. 10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have life abundant.' Christ came that we might have life, and that we might have abundance of life at the length. We have it by degrees here, but there is abundance of life preserved for us, such abundance as he enjoyeth himself in the heavens. So that Christ as the 'second Adam' conveyeth spiritual life to us, as the common root of all believers, as the 'first Adam' was the common root of all mankind, but more peculiarly by virtue of office as an head. As the head conveyeth spirit and life to all parts of the body, so doth Christ convey spiritual life to all his.

It is the end of his coming and incarnation, to procure life of sentence and reconciliation, which is the life of justification and freedom from condemnation, and the life of acceptation to life everlasting. He died that he might expiate God, and get the lives of men by getting them to be acquitted

from sin, and entitled to heaven; and thereupon he came to convey (as head unto all his members) life like his own, that the Spirit that is in him may quicken all his members. Therefore he hath taken upon him the sweet relation of an head, of a root, the Sun of righteousness, to show that he is a powerful head, a powerful root, a powerful husband that can alter and change by virtue of the Spirit of God, that he hath in abundance, all that belong to him, and be knit to him; and therefore our spiritual life is in Christ.

He first exercised this life on his own body by quickening that. As he was mightily declared to be the Son of God, by raising his own body, Eph. i. 19, 20, so he will be mightily declared to be the head of all his, by raising the bodies of his children out of the grave, and by raising them out of troubles, which are partial deaths, little deaths. So that all spiritual life comes from Christ, from union and communion with Christ.

Use. Therefore we roust labour to have union and communion with Christ strengthened by all means; by hearing, and by the sacraments, and by all means. For all our life is derived and fetched from Christ, as a 'second Adam,' who by virtue of his office deriveth life to all that be his. The more we know of Christ, the more experimentally we feel the power of Christ, the more we live.

Obs. 2. For the second point: As all life is from Christ, so (which is the main point of the text) this life is most discovered in afflictions and evil times, in the dying of the outward man.

Beloved, both the spiritual lives I speak of, both the inward frame of grace is made more manifest, and likewise the power of Christ in upholding a weak creature in such a condition; for all grace shineth most, and appears most in trouble; as obedience, courage, faith, love to God, love to others, love of the truth. I need not stand to particularize. And therefore the life of Christ is manifested in the decays of the outward man, whether by outward persecutions, or by sicknesses, and the like, that is the time of the discovery of grace; and likewise it is the time of the discovery of the power that Christ exercised and showed, the divine power that God declared in raising his body, that is, the time wherein he showeth that power in all his.

Reason 1. The reason is, things are best known by opposition. The decay of the outward man is a foil as it were to grace, to make it appear more clear and glorious, and the weakness of the outward man is a means to discover more the power of God's Spirit, and the power of the life of Christ in such a

weak body; for a weak man, or a weak woman, or a weak child, to be able to stand up for the truth, here is divine power showed, as the martyrs did not only show, but declare it gloriously. And for a sick body to believe, makes the soul glorious and comfortable. Here is divine power showed more gloriously by reason of the opposition of the outward man.

Reason 2. And then again, in this time the soul itself uniteth itself more unto God, and to divine things; and therefore the life of Christ is more manifested, because there is a near union between Christ and the soul. For the soul gathers itself from the sphere, down to worldly things, as in times of prosperity, ease, and plenty, when the soul scatters and looseth itself in the creature. Now there is a sweetening power in that which is inflictive, to make the soul gather itself to God, to the fountain of life; and so it is a means sanctified by the Spirit of God to procure union with the Spirit of Christ; and therefore the life of Christ is then more manifested in the flesh.

Reason 3. And then these things that befall the outward man, they are as it were *removentia prohibentia*, they remove the hindrances of the life of Christians; for what hinders the life of Christ from appearing in us, but that our affections are eaten up with the world and vanity, one way or other? For naturally we are not so vigorous in spirit when we have vigour in the outward man; and that which farders the life, and strength, and comfort of the outward man, will diminish the strength of the inward. It should not be so. It should be that the more vigorous in the outward man, the more vigorous we should be in the inward; but it is not so. Now suffering takes away that, when these be embittered by the cross, by some suffering that is against the feeling and sense of the outward man. Hereupon cometh a better relish of divine things, other things being embittered to the soul; and hereupon the soul, in times of any great pressure, doth hear with other ears, and doth see with other eyes heavenly things, and doth feel and judge after another manner than it did before. Take a man when he is under any thing that afflicts the outward man, for his body or condition, which are both called life, the life of body, and the life of condition, we shall fasten a few good things sooner on him than at another time. Speak ten times as much at another time, it shall have no passage, no entrance, but the state of all things without being made less delightful, his soul recovereth a spiritual taste, and relisheth heavenly company, and heavenly truths, as they be suggested by others or us. Experience sheweth this in David and other saints, and in every Christian; and therefore the blessed life of Christ, such a spiritual life as is in Christ, it is

his most of all glorious and conspicuous, specially in times of afflictions and crosses.

Reason 4. And then another reason may be, that the point may be clear. God doth delight, and Christ delighteth to show himself most glorious at such tunes, not only because his virtue and strength and power is most manifest then, but likewise out of tenderness to the condition of his children; for he sees they more need his presence, and they more need his immediate comforts. Then immediate comforts are specially desired of the soul. When outward comforts are taken away, there is a sweeter communion with Christ in any trouble than at other times. No communion in prosperity for the most part that is so sweet to a Christian as at that time, for the soul knoweth then it is most acceptable to the soul. The soul stands in need of it. Therefore comforts are immediate to the soul at this time, and immediate comforts that come from the fountain are pure. When the comforts derived from friends and outward helps be all taken away, there must be immediate comforts, or else the soul will sink. And now Christ, out of love to his children, comes forth to them and joineth with their spirits more than at other times; so that the sweetest communion any man hath with Christ is at the worst times. The martyrs verified it abundantly, for they never had the comforts before that then they had; for Christ came into the dungeon and supported them with strength above nature; and all this is horn the sweet love and mercy of Christ, that applied himself to the necessity of his children. These and the like reasons that the life of grace, the life of comfort, and the life derived immediately from Christ, is the most apparent in afflictions.

I will not press the point any further.

Use of trial. To make use of what is spoken. If it is true that there is a spiritual life, another life, and this is most manifested in affliction; how then shall we know whether we have this life of Christ or no? for Christ conveyeth a spiritual life to all his.

We will speak of the evidence of them both, whether is there a gracious frame of life in us from Christ or no.

If the life of Christ be not in us, beloved, we are stark dead in regard of a better life; and it is woeful to be in a dead condition. And therefore it behoveth us a little to take heed that we have the life of Christ, and if we have it, we may know it familiarly. I do but name the beads. Because it is a word borrowed from the life of nature, you may know it from proportion to

the life of nature. Where spiritual life is, there it is. As in the outward life you know there is sense and motion, appetite, and such like; so where the life of Jesus is, there be spiritual senses, eyes that see spiritual things, a taste that relishes spiritual things, a taste that can relish them above all other things, that can set the highest price upon the best things, that judgeth of things as they be. There is a spiritual taste and judgment suitable to the judgment of Christ. And so I might run through all the senses, if I would affect correspondency in this kind.

And as there is spiritual sense, so there is sensibleness. A natural life makes us sensible of any injury, of any comfort. So where there is the life of Jesus, it makes us sensible of anything that is suitable to nature, or contrary to it. Where there is life there is sympathy and antipathy.; sympathy, agreement with what is suitable to nature, and antipathy to what is contrary. So where there is the life of Jesus, there is a sympathy with all things that are Jesus his stamp upon them, to spiritual things and spiritual persons, and an antipathy to the contrary.

And here is the ground why a godly man may be known by his hatred of sin, because it showeth an antipathy; and antipathy showeth the kinds of life. Sin is contrary to union and communion with Christ, for it is a dissolving and divorcing nature.

Now the soul that liveth by Christ, and knoweth sin to be of a divorcing and separating nature, to sever his soul from his head and life, and so to cause apoplexies and death itself, if it be not looked to in time, hereupon comes the soul to hate sin to the death, and to seek the death of sin by all means, because sin seeketh the death of the soul; for what is sin but a separation of the soul from Christ, and a joining to the creature? Therefore wheresoever there is grace, there is antipathy to sin, not only as bringing damnation with it, but as contrary to the life of Christ; as every creature hath an antipathy to its enemy, as we see in doves and eagles; the dove is the prey. The tamer and wild creatures have an antipathy in them by nature. So the soul that hath the life of Christ hath an antipathy to sin. So far as the life of Christ prevaieth in him it must be so, for every life labours to preserve its being. We are bid to be wise as serpents, that wind and turn themselves about, that cover their heads and will suffer all manglings so the head be safe, because the life is in the head; so the Christian that hath the life of grace will endure anything, so the life of grace be not hurt. There be sympathies and antipathies, an inward joining to that that preserveth, and an inward hatred to

that that is destructive; and therefore they that live in sin against conscience, that divideth between God and them, I cannot see how they can think of spiritual life; for the soul liveth, and is swallowed up in base pleasures and in the creature. Now if they had spiritual life, it would preserve itself from breaches and all dangers.

Let us not deceive ourselves. Christ came not to free us from damnation only, but as an head, to infuse spiritual life into us, and to live in us by his Spirit. He came not only to purchase a life of glory for us, but likewise to live in us by his Spirit; and if he overcome for us, he will overcome in us; if he hath a life for us, he will have a life in us. The life of Jesus must be manifested in us. And therefore take heed of joining in affliction, to any sin; for it doth divorce the soul from God, and joins it to the creature. And so the soul becomes fading like the creature, and cometh to nothing; and indeed it is worse than nothing, to be for ever in hell. It comes to that degree in misery that it would otherwise have had in happiness.

Creatures have their instincts. There is a natural instinct in every creature to run to that that feeds it, as lambs and other creatures as soon as ever they are born run; they know whither to go to suck, because that is ordained by nature for its preservation. So there is an instinct in the soul to carry it to that that feedeth and maintains it. Bees go naturally to the flowers by an instinct; so the spiritual soul that hath the life of Christ runs to whatsoever may feed and maintain that life.

I beseech you, therefore, not to speak of the outward actions that are objected to hypocrites. Look therefore to the sympathy and antipathy of your souls and your instincts. Whither doth the bent of the soul lead you? Wherewith do you preserve the inward man? How is the soul taken up? And this will discover the frame of the soul more than anything else. Every creature that hath life, hath an element wherein it is preserved above another place, as the fish in the sea, the birds in the air. So the element of a Christian is holy, he is giscis in avido,— when he is in other courses and company. He walketh by the Spirit, he liveth by the Spirit, and he walks in the Spirit. He liveth in the Spirit as in his element. So that spiritual things and good company is his element. Till in heaven, indeed, he is never in his centre, in his proper place till he is in heaven. But in the mean time his element here is in heaven on earth; that is, spiritual actions wherein he walks and solaceth himself, as fish in the sea, wherein he draweth in the breath that is suitable to his disposition. Ill company or evil hearts will not suit with that spiritual life;

and by these ordinary. resemblances we may judge a little of the frame of our spirits, whether they be living souls or no.

But to go a little higher.

The life of Jesus, as it riseth from Jesus, from as high as heaven, so it leadeth to Jesus. It makes the soul to look to Jesus, to look to Christ. It subordinateth all things unto Christ. It takes all things in the way as furtherances for Christ, and considers of his hindrances as they hinder the main, and of furtherances as they further the main. It looks on all things below, as they further and do hinder the main. It is a life bred from heaven, and aims at heaven, and cares for no more of these things than can stand with a spiritual and eternal state. It considers of things, and reasoneth of things, how doth this help or hinder the main? And when it doth anything it fetcheth reasons for it from Christ, and from heaven, and from the main end. As a man that hath life of reason, that is adorned with policy and wisdom, it considers of things as they help his state; or if he be a man of narrow apprehension, as the sot with his particular good, and goeth no higher. So a man that hath the life of Christ, hath a larger soul than any of these, for he hath a larger end, and an higher end, because he hath a higher light to discover that end. Light is the first thing in life, and that discovers greater things than any other man can apprehend. His spirit is too narrow for them. And when by a supernatural light he apprehends a glorious condition in heaven, he makes that his aim. And as he hath large aims, so he hath large affections, and nothing below can satisfy him, because his soul is enlarged by the life of grace, and by the life of the Spirit to see better into things, and to have better aims. Therefore let every man look what his ordinary aims are, whether he rest in any thing below, whether he maketh things below serviceable to greater things. If he delight in inferior things, he hath but a common life. Many think their conditions good, because they attend religion, but there is false-

Look! in that; for a man that hath not the life of grace, that makes the practice of religion serviceable to his base ends, he makes heavenly things serviceable to his ends; that is, out of self-love, because he would not be damned, or he would be so reputed, but he hath not the aim of spiritual actions: he doth not spiritual things from a spiritual life, but from self-love, from a false principle within. Now where the life of Jesus is, it resteth not in anything but in Jesus, and makes all things serviceable to that. The skill of referring things to the main end is one main property of spiritual life.

Firstly, For a man may do the same thing, and yet from divers principles; one from flesh and blood, and vain-glory, and base ends, and the other from higher considerations, as men and beasts. A man hath a higher life than the other creature hath. Both may refresh themselves, but a man doth it as a man, and directs that strength of his to human actions. If he be a Christian, he directs not only human actions, but refers human actions and all to serve God in his place. He that he works like a man, though for the actions they be the same. So the shallow creatures that be determined to one, and have not latitude of reason to look to many things. Thus you see there is great difference between men and men.

Secondly, Men may do the same things, come to church, receive the sacrament. The one may have base, low ends, the other higher ends; nay, higher ends in civil actions than another in spiritual actions. For he doth holy actions with a carnal end; and the other having spiritual life; by virtue of that life carrieth his calling in the duties of it in a spiritual manner. I beseech you, therefore, let us examine our life of Jesus by the carriage of our souls towards Jesus; he never suffers us to rest in subordinate things. I might be very large on this point, but, I will name no more.

Consider what setteth you on work in all things you do. There be things we call ἀντόματα, ‘things that be moved by art.’ One would think they moved themselves; but they be moved by a weight, that is not seen presently, as in clocks and such like. In all frames of art that move, one would think it is from themselves, but there is no principle of life in them; an external thing, a weight without, sets all the wheels a going. But in living creatures that have principles of life within them, something within them guideth their life and sets them a-going. So a Christian and another man, he that hath the life of Christ, from the life within him, he is set on work with his actions. The other man moveth to the same thing, but he moveth from an extraneous principle. There is something or other that swayeth his course and biasseteth his actions, which is outward and not spiritual: either freedom from outward troubles, or to hold correspondency with others. I beseech you, look to our motives and to our aims in all our actions, for these will best distinguish.

But that is not the life mainly intended by the apostle, but the life that is with him, flowing and having influence from Jesus, specially in hard conditions. ‘The life of Jesus is manifested then.’ That is, both the inward frame it showeth itself then, and likewise the power that comes from Christ.

Now, how doth it appear that a man is upheld in every condition by a divine virtue, besides his inward frame of soul?

Beloved, when the state of spirit he is in is contrary to the outward condition and above it. When if a man looks to ordinary courses such a man should sink; and when he doth not, and that from supernatural principles and strength, that argueth there is a power in him above nature and above his own. As for a man in restraint, to have his soul at liberty; for a man disgraced in the world, to have a bold spirit to God-ward; for a man weak in outward show, to have strong courage, forcible courage, that all the enemies of truth cannot daunt; when a man is pining away, and is nothing but skin and bones, yet to have a heavenly soul that is in heaven before its time, and altogether in heavenly conversation; when the outward man is in great pain, and all confidence is to be cast away in regard of outward hopes, yet he is strong, and assures himself of a better condition afterward, and the very faith and hope, casting anchor in heaven, though they be not seen or felt, yet there is that power in spiritual things, laid hold on by faith, waited on by hope, that it supports a soul in such a condition; so that if it were not for these heavenly supports, by the Spirit of God, it would sink. If thou wouldst have the life of Jesus manifested, compare thy condition and thy strength. When a man can master all conditions, when a man can master imprisonment, disgrace, restraint, weakness, anything, from considerations above nature, and strength together with consideration; for the Spirit worketh not only by reason, but by an inward strength, it showeth there is something in a man above nature, that there is in him a life of Jesus. When nothing shall stand between a man and heaven, neither fears of great ones, nor frowns, nor hopes of preferment; when nothing below can stand in a man's way to heaven, but he will break through all by an invincible courage, it argueth he hath a frame of spirit above his own. There is not only a frame of grace, but a spirit of strength, to carry him through all conditions whatsoever. As St Paul, 'I am able to do all things through Christ that strengthens me,' Philip, iv. 13. 'I have learned to want and to abound,' to do all things through Christ that strengthens me, that supplieth me with perpetual strength from above.

Beloved, in a Christian, especially in evil times, there is more than a man, there is more than a holy man, there is something that floweth from this head, Christ, that doth administer supplies of comfort, and of peace, and of joy, and of friends, whereby he is carried through all. By these and such like particularities, we may discern whether there be the life of Jesus manifested in us or no.

Use 2. Of exhortation. Beloved, let us labour by all means therefore to have this spiritual life; to have a frame, to have the divine nature stamped upon our nature, the frame of grace; and let us not rest on that, but labour for a perpetual and continual stream of life from Christ, the fountain and the spring.

I speak of this the rather, because there is a main defect in this, and the cause of many foils. But our hearts be good, and we trust to the frame of life and grace that is in us, without looking to the supernatural spring and fountain of all grace out of ourselves; and we think to-morrow shall be as to-day, and by the same strength we do to-day, we shall stand against temptations to-morrow. Beloved, it will not be. There must be supplies not only of new strength, but also of greater strength, to new conflicts, to new oppositions, and new temptations. For as that strength will not carry a great burden that carrieth a little, they that carry burdens put forth greater strength to carry more than others. So in Christianity, when we meet with a strong temptation, we must not think to overcome it without setting upon it with spiritual strength. Lord, I need divine strength, else I shall sink under this temptation; this cross is too heavy for me, and so not going about to oppose any extraordinary thing with strength of nature, for nature will do nothing in great matters. It will make us do things comely to the outward eye. Nor common grace will not make us able to set upon great matters, but we must have a supply from grace, from heaven. And therefore a Christian is a depending creature. None is so dependent or independent. Certainly none so independent on the creature as a Christian, especially when he carrieth Christ in his heart by faith; but then he is continually depending upon Christ the head, who is the treasure and spring of all spiritual life, to convey to us on all occasions. 'Without me you can do nothing,' John xv. 5, much less suffer without me. And therefore, I beseech you, let it be a rule for us in our ordinary course, when we set upon any duty, withstand any temptation, conflict with any corruption, when we are to enjoy any prosperity above the common model of grace, to enjoy it without surfeiting of pride, security, or the sins that accompany prosperity. Consider with ourselves, Have I a frame of grace enough to set upon this? No, I have not. Surely that must be, there must be a power from Christ, a perpetual drawing of strength from Christ to master this, to meet with this, to bring it under. As a Christian is lord of all conditions, of prosperity and adversity, but not by an ordinary frame of grace, but that together with a divine strength and power, which is here called the life of Jesus, specially manifested by dependency. So let the life of a Christian be continually dependent. Peter by his ordinary graces could say,

‘Though all forsake thee, yet will not I,’ Mark xiv. 81. But that he may see he stands by his own strength, he falls foully. And why do so many fall foully, but because they undertake things with their own strength, with former strength, and not with dependency, or a supply suitable to present necessity, and thereby they learn to stand by falling? God sanctifieth their slips and falls, to teach them better dependency for time to come.

I beseech you, therefore, let this be a direction how to guide our lives; and that we may depend on Christ for strength in all courses, take heed of offending him, and grieving his Spirit, take heed that he suspendeth not his divine power. That strength obstructs this life, to call it home to himself, and then to leave us to our own principles, and then we fall presently. The life of a Christian is perpetually watchful, ‘to work out faith with fear and trembling,’ Philip, ii. 12. How? Not doubting of your salvation, but fear for offending Christ, ‘for he giveth the will and the deed he giveth will to supply, and the deed to perform. And it is ‘according to his good pleasure,’ Philip, ii. 18. You stand upon your good behaviour. If you work not your salvation with a holy jealousy over your corruptions, and with a holy trembling, he may suffer you to fall. Therefore consider our dependency is not in ourselves. Now, since the fall, God will not trust us with our own strength, but will lay up all in Christ. Therefore take occasion to go to Christ, and that he may be our friend, and have his Spirit, as he doth all by his Spirit as the sun doth all by his beams; take heed of grieving the Spirit, and giving it occasion to suspend its influency of grace and influence of comfort. For it is another thing than it is taken, to be lively Christians. We should not only labour to have lives, but to be lively, to have the life of Christ manifested in us, and not only for crosses; in that time God preserveth great comforts; but labour in time of prosperity for the life of Jesus. There is little life of Jesus in times of peace.

Security deadeth the life of Jesus. Sins of plenty, and sins of long peace, stick upon us, that there is not that vigour, that liveliness of Jesus in us that ought to be.

Now our endeavour should be to labour after an increase of this inward frame, and together with increase of grace in us, increase of continual dependency by faith, which fetcheth all from Christ. And why should we labour for it? For the credit of Christian profession. What a glory is it to have a company of lively professors, in whom the life of Jesus is manifested, that are above all conditions, that are thrall’d with no condition, that can bring

under all things, master their desires! 'The spiritual man judgeth all things,' 1 Cor. ii. 15, subdueth all things. He orders them so that he maketh them serviceable to his own ends. And what a glorious thing is it to be like a lion, bold in all conditions, to be afraid of nothing but of offending God! And then fear and tremble because God may suspend his Spirit. A wicked man may fear everything, but he feareth not God, which is to be feared above all. But a true Christian is a lord, a master above all other things, only he feareth to offend God, whereby this spiritual life may be obstructed. Now in regard it is such an excellent thing to be not only a living Christian but a lively Christian, and that it is for the honour of religion to be so, let us labour more and more for it, specially considering we know not with what dangers we may encounter, with what temptations and corruptions. Having now the life of Jesus, it will be manifested more and more till it end in glory. Is it not an excellent thing to have that in us, to have such a conquering principle in us, to have the Spirit of Christ in us, not only a frame of grace, but a Spirit enabling us, and acting us, and carrying us through all conditions?

Then this life of Jesus is a life that sets us in an order above all other lives. There is a great latitude of life from that plant, the powerful life to God, which is life itself. What a gradation is there of life! There is life of sense, and life of reason, and the spirit. Now a Christian that hath the life of Jesus, which is a spiritual life here, and will end in a glorious life in heaven, sets him in a glorious rank above all lives under him; for it makes him one with Jesus. The Spirit of Christ acteth in him, loveth in him, joys in him, delights in him, carrieth him through actions, hears him through crosses. Even as the soul acts his body, so the life of Jesus acts him, and sets him in a higher rank. Indeed, a spiritual man is as much above another man, as another man above another creature.

What excellency is there, you will say, of a man that hath the life of Jesus in him? What excellency! Beloved, this life makes him eternal. All other excellencies are but 'grass, and the flower of grass,' as the apostle speaks, 'but the word of life, begotten by the word, endures for ever,' 1 Pet. i. 25. Spiritual life endures for ever. He that believeth in Christ endures for ever; for it is an everlasting life. All other things perish and fall. Put case they be the flower of grass. The flower perisheth before the grass. They be of shorter continuance. Wit, and greatness, and honour, and the like, they are of shorter continuance than life. Life is but grass, and all the ornaments of life are but flowers of the grass. These be fading things, and they must all end in death. All honours are determined in death. All excellencies lie in the dust. And we

must rise up equally, all kings and subjects, great and small. But this life is a life that endures for ever, and therefore called an everlasting life. Then we live to purpose, and never till then, when we live the life of Jesus, when that is manifested in our souls, that is, *vita vitalis*; the other is, *βίος ἄβιος*, a life not worthy the name of life. The conditions of life, riches and nobility, which is a condition of life, all have their end; but this life of Jesus is begun in Christ, and ends in glory. And therefore it is worth labour to grow in it more and more, to have it more and more manifested in us above all conditions and life whatsoever.

I beseech you, let us not pass the time as careless, but labour to have something in us above nature, to have the life of Jesus to quicken our rational life, to sanctify all. The life of Jesus hinders us not of anything, but ennobles all other excellencies. A man that hath the life of Jesus may be as wise as he will, as learned as he will, he may be noble, this doth make him more noble, it doth dignify all. It is a diamond set in gold; it addeth excellency to all other excellencies. A Christian is truly noble. A man that hath the life of Jesus is truly rich, truly great, truly beautiful; he hath the image of Christ stamped upon the soul, and hath excellencies added to all other excellencies.

It is an unworthy thing that we should pass over this life, which is altogether to get into Christ, and to die before we begin to live. How many live a natural rational life, and live in an outward condition perhaps great in the world, and then all endeth in death; and they be out of the world before they come in. Here they come, here they live, and hence they go, and never do the work for which they came; which is, to get out of nature and to grow in grace; to get into the spirit of the life of Christ, who is the life of a Christian, the sun that quickens all. Instead of this, they go on from day to day, from year to year, and so die before they begin to live. And thousands do this in the bosom of the church.

This is a fearful condition. Therefore let this be the conclusion of this point.

Never rest till we find ourselves in a condition above nature, till we find ourselves in such a state that none can come to but a child of God. Let us enter into eternal life while we live. For none shall be transported into heaven that is not engrafted into Christ here. This is the entrance of heaven. Therefore begin the life here, get into the church here, else it shall never be

obtained hereafter. Labour for more and more experiment, that Christ is in us, that at the day of judgment Christ may know us, by his own stamp, and by his own life, that the life that raised him up out of the grave, may raise our bodies out of the dust. For this is our comfort we may have from the life of Jesus, efficacy to quicken us to duty. We shall find the life of Jesus to quicken us from troubles, and at the consummation of all, we shall find the Spirit that cometh from him powerfully able to raise our dead bodies. If the Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead be in us, it will raise up our bodies likewise. Indeed, I should never satisfy myself almost in this subject, but that the time is past, and you may in your own meditations work better upon that I have said, than I can by any strength of mine press at this present.

Verse 11

For we which live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

The holy apostle, by a more than ordinary wisdom, by a spirit enlightened from heaven, doth not only take benefit from the weak estate he was in with his fellows, but makes use likewise of such objections as were made against the profession of religion by such as looked on the outside. He grants to all that might be objected tending to the outward disparagement of religion, but then he retorteth all upon them, and makes a gracious and comfortable use of it. As you may see in these two verses: 'We bear in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, but the life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal bodies.' Of the tenth verse, we spake something largely the last day: 'Always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus, that,' &c.

We will now proceed to the next verse, which is but an illustration and exposition of the former. For what he said before, 'we bear in our bodies the dying of Christ,' here he saith, 'we are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake.' And where he saith there 'that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our bodies,' here by way of exposition and illustration, 'that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal life.' So that it is but an illustration and exposition of the former verse.

'For we which live,' saith he; we apostles and ministers, and it is true of all Christians, we which live, while we live, are in some sense always delivered from 'death for Jesus' sake.

Here is the circumstance of time, added to the condition they were in, and the aggravation of what they were delivered to. 'We are always delivered to death,' 'we are delivered to death, and always,' and 'for Jesus' sake.' These three things are a little considerable before we go further.

The condition is 'deliverance to death,' the circumstance 'always,' and 'for Jesus' sake.'

Obj. How could they die, being alive?

Ans. I answer, we are delivered to death, because God, by his permission, gave them over to Satan ruling in the children of obedience, to molest, and threaten, and deliver them, to death, in regard of the designing of cruel men of them to death, on all advantages they could take against them. And likewise delivered to death in their preparation for death continually, for they could make no other account every day they rose but that they might die before they slept again. And in this respect, they and every Christian ought to be a dying man to be delivered to death.

God is ready to permit them to die when they may honour him. God is not prodigal of our lives. When our lives may save his truth, he will permit our lives into the mercy of merciless men, and they have bloody minds. Their malice is more than their power; their cruelty is more than their ability oftentimes, but their hearts are altogether bloody. And so a Christian is always prepared for the worst, as the apostle saith. For, beloved, as soon as ever a Christian becomes a Christian, the first lesson in religion is self-denial. And in what respect must he deny himself? In regard of goods or honour? Not only so, but in the grand matter of life itself. He must hate, that is, not love, father, mother, not life itself, if the question be for God's glory and the good of the church; if they come in competition with divine truths of the gospel. We must give up our lives for Christ and his church; we must have resigned minds. This we must do in preparation of spirit. God indeed calleth not always for it. There be more difficult times sometimes than other, and the times of the gospel be sweet times of rest; for in the Acts it is said the churches had rest, ix. 31; but we must be prepared for it. St Paul saith to the Corinthians, that when they 'gave themselves to Christ,' they gave their goods to Christ, 2 Cor. viii. 5. And when a Christian giveth himself to Christ, he giveth his goods and himself to Christ. It is no hard matter, when a man hath given himself to Christ, to part with any things else that serve only for necessary comforts and provision, and then he takes all back again when he hath his life. Lord, it is thy life; thou hast bought me and my life, I am thine;

thou hast paid a dear price for me, and thine it shall be when thou callest for it. If thou wilt have my credit, my state, my liberty, thou shalt have it; if my life itself, thou shalt have it; of thee I have it, to thee I return it again, if it may be for thy glory and thy church's good. And this should be the disposition of every Christian, to count nothing his own so much as not to be ready to part with it when Christ calleth for it. Beloved, a Christian is a sacrifice, and the end of all the favours of Christ is, that from a free willing spirit 'he should offer himself a free willing sacrifice to God,' as the apostle speaks excellently, Rom. xii. 1. When he had spoken of all the favours of God in Christ, election, justification, sanctification, the comforts of his children in trouble, the end of all is, 'that we should offer ourselves as a willing, reasonable sacrifice to God' as the end of all. And therefore reservation in our spirits of anything that we will have limitations in: we profess religion, but with reservation of liberty, and not offend so and so, and not endanger their skin in hazard, or reputation, and life; it cannot stand with the truth of Christianity. No man is a true Christian that hath such reservation. He never knew what faith and implantation into Christ meant; he hath not entered into the first form of religion; he hath not learned to deny himself. 'Whoever will be a disciple of me, let him take up his cross,' Mat. xvi. 24. There be two hindrances of religion, one within, another without; within us ourselves, that we must deny; without us is the cross, and that we must take up; and he that doth both these, is fit to follow Christ. And none but those.

And therefore thou must be content, as the apostle saith, to be 'always delivered to death for Jesus' sake.' So is Christ himself our head. He was delivered to death, as I named before. God permitted them by little deaths to afflict him, and misuse him; at length God gave him up to death itself. They thought to have swallowed him up continually, and to have made an end of him; at length God gave him indeed. And he was himself a willing sacrifice, ready to die. So we must be as Christ was, ready to part with this life, as Christ did part with all for us; else we are not suitable members of so glorious and gracious a head. He gave himself for us, and shall not we give ourselves back again to him, specially when it is the only way to save ourselves? 'He that loseth life, shall get his life; and he that will spare his life, shall lose his life,' Mat. x. 39. It will prove so in the end. You will say these be good things, and true matters, but they be not for us in these times. The more we are to bless God, beloved. And yet we are delivered to death if we regard that sympathy that should be between us, and the mystical body of Christ. In France now and in Spain, and in many places of Germany, and

Italy, Christ hath a church. And are not the poor souls there continually, as it were, delivered to death? Are they not always between the block and the hatchet, either killed or ready for death, continually as sheep to the slaughter? The persecutor makes no more bones of killing them, than a butcher makes conscience of killing a sheep, or a man to eat bread when he is hungry.

‘They eat up my people, as they eat bread,’ Ps. xiv. 4, and ‘they think they do God good service,’ John xvi. 2. This is the state of all countries beyond the seas, except ours; and shall not we have actions of sympathy? That member that sympathized not with the body is a dead member. And therefore we cannot make it good to ourselves, that we are living members of a living and glorious head, except we sympathize with them. So that in regard of the body of Christ now in Europe, under the cross a long time, and under tyranny of crosses, we may say we are delivered to death continually. And it may be our portion and lot, before we go out of the world, for anything we know, and for anything we discern. That is the truth of it.

But what speak I of delivering to death, when some nice Christians will not endure a scorn, a frown, a reproach for Christ? They will not part with anything for Christ; how then will they part with their blood? Are those likely men to be ‘delivered to death for Christ’s sake,’ if times should be, that will not yield up anything they have?

Now that we be enabled to do it, I will not trouble you with many directions. I will give but one. When a Christian cometh to be a Christian, let him think he is not a man for this life, farther than God will suffer him to live for the good of others, and to get assurance of interest in another world. He is estated in heaven, therefore let him be at a point for this present life. And now he hath given himself to Christ, his life is Christ’s, and let him think his life is not his own. ‘If I live, I live to Christ; if I die, I die to Christ,’ Rom. xiv. 8, and be content that Christ should have what he hath bought so dearly, whensoever he will call for it. Be content with partial little deaths under them, for many of us die in times of peace, such partial deaths, as sickness, and infirmities. This life goes out many ways, sometimes by infirmities of body, sometimes by violence, at length by age. All partial deaths, we must learn to make use of them every day as we should, and in every of them some little part and glimpse of the light of Christ is manifested. And therefore labour every day to bear every day’s cross comely, and as Christians should do; and the bearing of partial crosses will enable us

to bear the grand crosses. The undergoing of little deaths will make us able to undergo the grand death, when the time cometh.

To go on: 'For we which live are always delivered to death for Christ's sake.' 'Always,' for anything we know. 'We die daily,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor xv. 31; in our expectation, and in our resignation of spirit; we die daily in the designs of malicious spirits. God and Christ may challenge our right in our life, when he will, in regard of that disposition of soul answerable to Christ's dispensation, which we are ignorant of, and answerable to the malice of wicked men, which we know not. When our humanity will vent itself, we are always 'delivered to death for Christ's sake.' It is not the life we are to make account of, not to reckon of. 'We are dead men,' as the apostle saith, Rom. viii. 10, 11. We are dead in sin, not only dead to sin, but in regard of the sentence of mortality pronounced on us, which I shall have occasion to touch when I come to 'mortal bodies.'

'Delivered to death for Jesus' sake.' Jesus' sake! What, will the enemies say so? No! it is for your heresy, schism, faction, unquiet spirit; it is that you be troublers of state, but by no means for Jesus' sake. But the course of the enemy is first of all to be liars, and then to be slanderers, to take away the good name of God's people, and then to take away their lives. They be serpents and dragons for cunning, and then to be lions to devour. That is their method, and the devil's method, when they cannot with colour execute their cruelty, but under lies and slanders. Therefore the course of [the] wicked is to devour them in their names, civilly 'to devour them first; and then they have afterwards better colour to show all the malice they can. And all that be led with cursed spirits at all times, their fashion is to disgrace them, that by it they may blemish them all they can, and then they shall be counted excellent men, for pursuing such men for such sins; they blast them, but in their reputation specially. Such as will take any leisure to examine things, may plainly see their malice against the life of Christ. And then they have glorious pretences to carry their malice, and cruelty which they list. But doth God interpret it so? No! He interprets it for Christ's sake; Christ interprets it for his own sake. They do for such and such ends, but Christ takes it as done for himself; his religion, his profession, for the cause of religion, and a good conscience. Whoever therefore do suffer for the discovery of a good conscience, if but in a civil matter, as John Baptist (it was not for a matter of religion), it is for God's sake, the truth of God, and justice of God; and we may suffer in way of justice, and rather than not stand out in a civil matter for Christ's sake. Therefore we count John among the martyrs. For religion,

in the profession of it in word, or the profession of it in life, or in discharge of a good conscience, any way, that is for Christ's sake. Christ will take it so, and that is our comfort; and if he take it so, surely he will be partner with us, he will suffer with us; and if he suffers with us, surely we shall be well borne out, and he will glorify us hereafter. 'Blessed are ye when men persecute and revile you for my name's sake,' Mat. v. 11; so did their fathers the prophets before you. Whatsoever the world makes pretence to, their wisdom, folly, thinking to daub things as they may well enough with the world, yet God will take it out otherwise. It is for his sake. He will revenge it, as done against his children, and afterward crown them.

They that be enemies to God's people for religion, either in the profession or practice of it, as upbraiding them with their loose practice, and their false opinion, they are not so much enemies of men as of Christ. And if Christ were on the earth, they that persecute anything for Christ's sake will persecute him more. If Christ were on the earth he should find like entertainment, as amongst the Jews; for the wicked would devise this and that pretence to put him to death.

This is a terrible consideration to wicked men; he that hateth good in any degree, because it is good, hateth the best good most of all. And he that hateth good men as good men, will hate him that is the head of all good men, Christ himself. And they that be malicious against good men, and carry matters cunningly, they would do the same to Christ, and much more. He that hateth any thing as it is such a thing, he hates it most of all; and he that hateth goodness as goodness, hateth it most of all where it is to be had in the fountain.

What can such people therefore look for, that be enemies to God's people, and cause, and religion, as far as they dare, when they would use him as ill, if he were upon the face of the earth? For if they malign and hate them for Christ's sake, surely they would more malign and hate Christ if he were here. But I have not much occasion to press this point. I only open it, hoping there will not be much need of pressing it in this place; but you may use it to help your judgments, how malice is dangerous, and how it is interpreted by Christ himself, what colour soever the -world sets upon it.

Now what is the event of this delivery to death? What is the issue and fruit of it in God's intendment? What is the event? Now God's intendment is, 'that the life of Jesus might he made manifest in our mortal flesh.'

The life of Jesus I spake of in the former verse, and some things lately. I will add some things, and so go on.

‘The life of Jesus is manifested to our mortal flesh.’ The life of Jesus is not only his glorious life, that he liveth in heaven himself, and that he liveth here on earth with a gracious person; but the life of Jesus is that quickening power that cometh from Christ our head, whereby he doth enliven and quicken all his members, and that with a double life.

First, A habitual and constant life, by reason of the constant dwelling of the Spirit in us.

And besides this, there is a quickening power, continually to act and draw forth this life of grace upon all occasions. But of this I have spoken largely heretofore.

I am willing to add something for the further clearing of this point, that you may better understand what the life of Jesus is.

Now, beloved, if we would know whether the life of Jesus be in us or no, I give you some evidences. And that I desire you specially at this time to take notice of is this: Observe the beating of the pulse; that is, holy desires to heavenly things. Where this life is, that is the lowest thing in this life of Jesus, that there be holy desires, which are the pulse. As, beating of the pulse is the liveliest life; where they beat there is hope of life; and then there is breath to take in fresh air, and to send out that that is taken in. So where there is grace there is breathing, receiving of new air, new strength from Christ, and sending out by contempt all that is naught. There is some little suitableness between the life of nature and the life of Jesus. And then there is spiritual sense, whereby we are able to feel, and taste, and see, and discern spiritual things in another manner than before; and answerable to spiritual sense there is spiritual motions to the things we are sensible of, and motion is always where senses are. For we have sense but to discover what is good or evil, and upon discovery of good or evil, power to move from what is evil to good; else senses were rather fit to torment us than anything. Therefore there is likewise a power to move in natural life. So in spiritual life, whereby we are enabled to taste and relish heavenly things, there is a power to move them, and carry the soul to them, and to remove from what is spiritually evil. And therefore together with the pulse, and breathing, and sense, and motion, usually there be sympathies and antipathies to what is suitable or contrary to their being. As spiritual life hath antipathy to sin, as the bane and the poison

of it; and works it out by little and little, being like the poison of nature, that when poison enters it works against the poison as much as it can to cast it up; so where there is spiritual life, it works against the sinfulness of corrupt nature, and whatsoever is opposite to it, and works it out by little and little, as a counter-poison to it. For this spiritual life is opposite, and contrarious every way to sin. And therefore they that cherish corruption by occasion, company, and objects, which they should mortify, alas! where is the life of grace in them?

But to leave these things, though they help our understanding in the mystery I speak of: the thing I would have you specially to discern in the spiritual life of Jesus is, that it leadeth a man higher than all other lives. It sets a man in a higher rank of creatures. It makes a man a spiritual man, and it guideth his life by reason above nature, by reason above common course; for it is called 'the life of Jesus,' because it comes from Jesus, and as it comes from Jesus it leadeth to Jesus.

Now, therefore, a man may know he liveth the life of Jesus, that cometh from Christ, if he hath such a spirit as leads him to Christ, that leads him to honour Christ. Though not immediately in his person, yet Christ hath in the world his religion, his children, his ordinances, and by these he is carried to Christ, and findeth Christ. So he that hath the life of Christ in him, he will relish Christ in all these, and in all these will be carried to Christ, and will honour Christ in all these, and will be a friend of the church, a friend of religion, a friend of all God's ordinances, not only as finding a relish in them, but he hath a life from Christ, that teaches us to refer all to him. And he will venture his natural life to save his spiritual life, because it is his best life. There is no man that is a sound Christian, and in a right frame as a Christian, but will adventure anything of his inferior life to maintain his head. (As it is one point of the wisdom of the serpent to maintain his head) he will maintain his union and communion with Christ, religion, and the ordinances, whereby he preserveth his life, though with some prejudice of the outward life.

Life is taken oftentimes not only for the life that cometh from the union with soul and body, but from the condition together with that, as to be rich, and poor, and in credit. So many, not only to maintain their natural life, but their life of condition; that is, to maintain an honourable condition in the world, to be of high esteem; they make the life of Jesus only to serve their turns. If they can keep their natures continually, and grow in favour with men, they think the life of Jesus is a hidden and secret thing, as indeed it is,

and they will not trouble themselves much about it. Oh, this is far from the disposition of a lively Christian that hath the life of Jesus, for he is ready to suffer in his natural life, in his condition of life whatsoever it be, rather than prejudice his best life, and he will consider and esteem of things, not so much as they further his natural condition in the world, or natural life, but how it stands with his spiritual life. Nothing against religion, nothing against grace, nothing against the Spirit. This is such a thing for his head, his religion; then he will consider things as they tend to that, though it be to the discredit of his person, though with loss of liberty, with peril of the decays of natural life, though with prejudice in worldly things whatsoever they be, rather than he will endanger his best life, the life of Jesus; and he will esteem of things suitable to that, that, shall be his glory, the life of Jesus. But whatsoever is between him and Jesus shall be lightly esteemed. Those that be in a true Christian frame of soul are thus disposed to God; and there is good reason for it, for it is the best life of all, and it is that for which we have natural lives. Beloved, if we have not the life of Jesus, we had better have no life at all. As it was said of Judas, 'better we had never been born,' Mat. xxvi. 24; if we have not a new life besides what we have by nature we had better not be born at all. Therefore, let us not deceive ourselves, but labour to have something above nature.

I will not trouble you with farther evidence in the point, because I desire that what I have spoken may sink into your souls.

And to stir you up after this life of Jesus, this frame of grace, this quickening from our head Christ, it is that for which we live, it is that which our life is decreed unto. You know there be three degrees of life: a life in the womb, a life in this world, and a life in heaven; the first for the second, the second for the third. The life in the womb is for civil life among men. The child hath not eyes and ears for that place where it is, for in that strait place it hath no use of eyes, or ears, or tongue, or anything. All the sense it hath there, is not for that life, but for a civil life amongst men, where there is use of eyes, and sense, and tongue, and all the members it hath. So high are a man's designs and large, vast things, that nothing will satisfy. When a man understandeth, he desires more; his affection is large, nothing will satisfy desire. There is large expectation and love, that nothing here will satisfy, but fresh, fresh, still for desire. Hath God given them vast understanding, and this vast will, and vast affections for that which will not remain with them? They are for another life. The very frame of our soul showeth it. As the frame of the infant in the womb showeth that that frame is for the life in the

world, so the life we live, in regard of the large capacity of our souls, is for another life in heaven.

Therefore, if we labour not for the life of Jesus to be begun here, which is called the life of grace, the beginning and infant of glory, we miss of our end. This life is for that life; we are not for this life. God ordained us not for this life. Therefore he will take this life away to advance it to a spiritual life. He takes liberty to take away our health and natural life, that he may advance our spiritual life, for he knoweth what is in this life is well lost, if it be gained in a better life, and it is for a better life. I beseech you, let us think seriously of these things.

What should I speak on the life of condition, that you may be moved to the excellent life of Jesus? There is a better condition together with it than any condition. For a natural life takes a condition with a king. A Christian is a king, and a king over that that is terrible, a king over death, and hell, and the world, and above all. Take our natural life with the condition of a rich man; there is better riches in the life of Jesus. The riches of heaven are his. Take the natural life with any outward condition, and there is better in grace, better in religion. The life of Jesus hath better endowments accompanying it. Is it not better to have the image of God stamped upon the soul? What better honour? Name you what you will, is there not a better condition in the life of Jesus? So as the life itself being a spiritual and divine thing, for the divine nature is most excellent; so the endowments and appurtenances that accompany the life of grace, are incomparably above all the endowments and appurtenances that is of natural life. Take it in the life of kings, emperors, or what you will, they are nothing to the life of Jesus.

Now this life of Jesus is manifested most when we are delivered to death. Both the frame of grace, and the quickening power of grace, they are both more manifest when we are delivered to death; that is, in trouble, sickness, or any cross whatsoever, there is more discovery of the life of Jesus than at other times. I have touched some reasons of it heretofore: I shall give some now, because the apostle repeateth the thing, and we will not pass it over, because the apostle doubles a little upon it.

Reason 1. Beloved, if we speak of the inward frame of grace, is not that most manifested when our outward man decayeth, and is afflicted? It is. For everything is increased by the exercise of it. 'When we are delivered to death,' that is, prepared for sufferings, or do suffer, there is opportunity of exercising all the branches of spiritual life. We put forth the exercise of

spiritual life. Then we pray more than at ordinary times. Then we exercise our faith and dependency upon God. Then we exercise our hope of life everlasting. Then we exercise our love to God, his church and people. Then we are advanced for exercising of all functions of spiritual life. Therefore the life of Jesus is most manifested in the dyings of Jesus.

Reason 2. Beloved, it is a clear point, if we take it for the quickening power of Christ, together with the inward frame that is most in the doings of Jesus. When we suffer any thing for God, it is his honour to be most present with us, and graciously present with us, when we stand most in need of his presence. But we stand most in need of his gracious presence at these times; therefore he, out of the bowels of pity and compassion, is nearest to us. 'I will be with thee in fire and water,' Isa. xliii. 2. The Spirit of God enters into all conditions, into prisons, into dungeons, into every condition whatsoever. The quickening power of Christ is as much manifested in the outward condition as in any kind of way. As now for Christ to make a weak man, a weak woman, or a weak child, an old man, one being weak, another by sex, a third by age, when these three shall be able to stand out for God, for Christ in times of persecution: when these shall in times of peace and prosperity hold out the profession of religion, there must needs be a manifestation of a power above nature. By nature children are tender, by nature women are fearful, by nature old men are timorous, and fearful too. I say, the disproportion of the condition to the grace and power that is showed, discovers the manifestation, that there is a quickening power more than ordinary. For the martyrs, when they were to seal the truth with their blood, to have a fire of love kindled in them, above the flames of fire, and the spiritual comforts kindled in them, here was manifestation of the life of Jesus, when they were delivered to death. Nay, a sick worn body; take it in times of peace, a good Christian that hath given himself to the study of mortification, and hath supplied the wants of affliction by mortification. . .

As that it is a gracious use of afflictions to supply the want of them by mortification, you shall see the life of Jesus in afflictions. A great deal of patience in a body tormented with sickness, a great deal of heavenly mindedness, when he is ready to go out of the world; a great deal of comfort in the midst of disgrace in a stout Christian; when the condition is one, and the strength another above it to master it, here is manifestation of power. Are the conditions so, that the manifestation of the life and quickening power of Jesus is most of all in such times when we stand most in need of it, times of suffering, times of sickness, hour of death?

Reason 3. Thirdly, Another main reason that the life of Jesus is more manifested then is, because Christ reserveth his comforts for the fittest times. Then is the fittest time for Christ to close with the soul, for then the soul stands most in need of grace. He is an head, and therefore wise, because an head. As all wisdom resteth in the head to guide the body, so all wisdom in Christ to guide his church. And he knoweth the fittest opportunity for the measure of grace and comfort. There is no comfort comparable to the comfort God's children find in the greatest abasement; for then they empty themselves, and therefore are most fit to be filled with the Spirit. Then God delighteth to have communion with them at all times. God draws them into the wilderness, and then speaks to their hearts, as the prophet saith, Hosea ii. 14: 'God will let the world know that he hath hidden manna for his children, which they know not, nor feel not.' And so God hath his hid manna, which he suffers them to taste more especially when they be distressed in the outward man, and then is the life of Jesus most manifested to them.

Use. And therefore, beloved, I beseech you, fear not any thing in the world that may befall us; fear nothing that may befall us in our own quarrel. Shall we fear our advancement in a better kind? What we lose in nature, we gain in grace; what we lose in outward comforts, we gain in spiritual. It is made up in a better kind, and shall we be discouraged for any thing that befalls us in this world? Shall not we give Christ liberty to take what he will, so he make it up in a better kind? Shall not we suffer him to take our credit, our liberty, our life, so he make it up in the life of Jesus? What damage is it if we be delivered to little deaths, to partial deaths, that is, to vexation, to restraint of liberty, to fall into disgrace with the world, if we gain as much in spiritual life? That is well parted withal, and lost in this world, that is made up in spiritual things; for the spiritual things are eternal. They make us good, they commend us to God, they be proportionable to us, they add a worth and value in themselves to us: whatsoever, therefore, we part with for God's cause, if we find access and increase of inward grace, and peace, and comfort, are we losers by it? Doth not God make sweet recompence to his children, according to that general rule, 'All things work together for the best to them that love God'? Rom. viii. 29. Let us remember this, and lay it up against times of trial. And when we are sick, shall we fear sickness? Oh, if we had the Spirit of faith then, Lord, now I am delivering up to death, and cease to live; Oh, as the life of nature decays, let me find the life of Jesus; let me find some drop of that life which Jesus lived. For the life of Jesus makes us like Christ in some measure; that is, full of grace, full of peace; full of glory; the life of Jesus in heaven is glorious, a gracious life. Now when drops of it are dropped

into a man in times of sickness or persecution, it will make a man forget all troubles whatsoever; as it is a saying in the Canticles, 'Thy love,' saith the spouse, 'is better than wine,' Cant. i. 2. Now what is wine? It will make a man forget his trouble. And so the love of Jesus, which is a principle of the life of Jesus, a distillation of the love of Jesus, is better than wine. It will make a man forget his disgrace, forget his afflictions, forget all, because it is a beam of such a sun, a drop of such an ocean. It is a supernatural, a commanding life, a life of a higher nature, above all things below, an independent life, which will be sufficient in heaven when we have neither meat, nor drink, nor conversation, nor converse with men; and if we have a little of this derived to us in any troubles, it will carry us through all. Therefore labour to think of these things. You see what need we have to be one with Jesus, who is the spring and Lord of life, that hath received life, to convey it to us, as the 'second Adam.' Therefore we had need of sacraments, to confirm and strengthen our union with this head, from whom we have spiritual life. Therefore come with joy, and comfort, and courage to the sacrament; the end whereof is to increase union and communion with the fountain of life, Jesus; who gave his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed, that he might give life to us, that he might by satisfaction in his death give us life of sentence, that we might be acquitted at the bar of God's justice.

'He died, and is risen again; who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's people?' Rom. viii. 38. Therefore come to the sacrament, that we may grow in assurance of the life of sentence, in removing the guilt of sin, because Christ died for us. And we shall likewise have great increase of the inward frame of life and grace. For the more we are assured of forgiveness of sins, and acceptation to life everlasting, the more we live; as, where many things are forgiven, there is much love, Luke vii. 47. And the more we love, the more willing and cheerful we shall be; for all obedience springs from love. When we love we are ready for all duties. And therefore come with encouragement to increase our union and communion with Jesus Christ, now at this time.

Verses 12, 13

So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, therefore have I spoken. We all believe, and therefore we speak.

In the former part of the chapter we have heard how the apostle doth grant freely what might he objected to the disparagement of the ministry of the gospel, in regard of many particulars, and then he retorts, and makes use of all; as you may see in the several particulars.

We spake the last time of the eleventh verse, which is but the same with the tenth, only a more full expression and exposition of it, by some addition.

I observed divers things from thence.

That God's children must make account of the worst in the world; 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.' Here is the event of the troubles God's children meet withal in this world, and the intendment on God's part.

'Made manifest in our mortal flesh.' I did not speak anything of that, therefore I will add something.

'The life of Jesus is made manifest in our flesh,' though mortal, and subject to death; and mortal, not only because subject to death, but also subject to miseries, which are little deaths. For, beloved, we do not only die when our lives are ended, when the last day of our life is cut off; but all that makes way to that is death. All the petty miseries, that by little and little unloose the affections from earthly things, that unloose the soul from the body, all those partial things, they are little degrees of that separation which is in death. So that in our mortal body, that is, our body that is subject to death, and to that that makes way for death.

'Our mortal flesh.' Flesh is a diminishing word in Scripture, implying mortal and frail nature. This is a matter of use, rather than to be unfolded; the best of us all carry but mortal flesh. We carry our deaths, and our hearts about us; our life is dying and mortal. It is a matter rather to be thought of to make us wise indeed; as Ps. xlix. 3, 'I will speak of wisdom.' What wisdom is it that he speaks of? He speaks of mortality and of death common to all, that is wisdom indeed. And therefore, Ps. xc. 12, the holy man with order teacheth us 'to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.' There be no wiser thoughts in this world than to judge aright of the condition of earthly things, and of our estate hereafter; for wisdom is in the judgment of things. When do we rightly judge of ourselves? When we judge this life to be a dying kind of life, and our estate to be a fading kind of

condition. Mortal flesh it is; 'we are but earthen vessels.' 'Dust we are, and to dust we shall return again,' Gen. iii. 19.

Beloved, think of this. It is but mortal flesh we carry; and therefore do not stand too much in adorning of it, in feeding of it, in providing for the lusts of it. How many betray their souls, their better part, by studying to give contentment to their mortal flesh! This is not the life for mortal flesh. The time for that is the life to come, at the resurrection. Then when we shall have other flesh, we shall be all spiritual, even our bodies spiritual, not maintained with meat and drink, as now they are. That is the life of the body, a glorious life. Now it is a mortal life, that must end in dust and rottenness.

It is the vanity, especially of the younger sort, as if all their commendation were in setting out their bodies in apparel, and such things. It is a poor thing for a man, that hath a reasonable soul, to fetch his commendations from his flesh, from that which is worms' meat. Hath he nothing else to fetch his commendations from but what covereth his body? What is the flesh but the garment of the soul, and a rotten one? And what are other garments but a covering of that? And for a man to seek commendations, which should arise from parts and worth within, to be studying to provide for this mortal flesh, is a course unworthy of them that prove themselves to be Christians.

And therefore we must labour not to value ourselves by the body, nor by any worth we have in the outward man neither. If we have diseased bodies, or weak bodies, more mortal than others, not to be cast down, even the best are but mortal flesh; let us value ourselves by that which is to eternity, by the life of Jesus. Learn humility hence, not to be proud of mortal flesh, and sobriety. Many wise observations are from hence, but they are so easy, that the meanest of them, the Spirit accompanying them, may be sufficient to you that be of understanding. Therefore I will not speak of it now, being more largely spoken of in the latter part of the chapter. 'So death works in us, but life in you.' That is the conclusion of the former comparison of Paul's suffering with the presence of God supporting him in his sufferings; he concludeth them all with this, 'So then death works in us, but life in you.'

Some take this for an irony, or a sarcasm, as we call it, a bitter kind of speech. You be free from the cross, and from death. But I take not that to be

the meaning of the place, but rather this: we die daily, we carry the death of Jesus about us, but life works in you. You have the good of all our deaths, not only we ourselves, that be apostles, but you have life by our death, glory by our shame, happiness by our misery; you are gainers by it. And indeed so it is. Those that be the grandees of the church, when they die, others live by them, as you shall see.

‘So that death works in us.’ How doth death work in us? Death works two ways at once.

It works in the outward man a decay. And then, by a command of a higher power, by God’s Spirit, death works life, the contrary in us. Death works in us; that is, we are subject to death, and dying. It -works in us a farther and farther disposition to death. And life is taken away continually by partial deaths, which lit us for the last death; death as a canker eateth out our life and natures. As he said before, death is not only the conclusion of our life, but it eateth into it continually. Every day taking away a piece of it, especially them that be under crosses, death by little and little worketh a separation of soul from the body. And then death works in us the life of Jesus, that is, not in itself—for it works nothing but dissolution, and turneth us to our dust out of which we were taken—but death works in us by the command of God, who can raise light out of darkness, and life out of death, and happiness out of misery. God, who hath all things in obedience to him, can raise contrary out of contrary. And therefore death works in us the life before spoken of, not of itself, but by the command of God himself, who extracteth out of death, and mortality, and misery we suffer, a farther degree of spiritual life. Beloved, it is a strange thing that death should work; but consider all things under heaven, even they work not in themselves, but under command and at obedience of the Supreme Worker, who is so excellent and powerful a worker, that he can raise contraries out of contrary, that cannot only raise from death, and make happy after misery, but make happy in misery, in life, in death, he is so powerful a worker.

Use. And of this make this use of it. We are in covenant with a powerful God, that can make any condition work to our good. He hath command over life, death, imprisonment, abasement whatsoever. He can raise out of them whatsoever is contrary, that no state shall he over-troublesome to us, that we shall not distaste of any condition. Shall we distaste of any conditions, when God can make that condition serve for our best good? Oh no.

Use 2. Comfort. And let this comfort us in the greatest misery. God works life in death. He giveth spiritual life, and makes it appear we are upheld by a divine power, another power than our own; therefore be not discouraged, and never despair.

But what benefit have they by it? Life works in you by our death; life works in him too. And the life of Jesus is manifested not only in him but them too. God bringeth his own children into great troubles for the good of others. They be the standard-bearers of the church, but he commands their lives to be manifested in their dyings, two or three ways.

(1.) The more he dies, the more death was wrought in him, the more the Spirit liveth in him, the more spiritual life was in him; that is, a divine power and strength of grace, to enable him in the inward man. And was not this for the church's good, being a public man, as he was? And therefore the church loseth nothing by the afflictions of their godly pastors. Oh your Christians, the more they be afflicted, the more free they be to comfort and instruct. Of all physicians the experienced physician is the best. And they be the best teachers, and do most good, that can speak from experience of the life of Christ manifested in them; in that regard life was theirs, by death working in him.

(2.) Then again, as death wrought in him, so life in them, that they might have good by his sufferings, and the presence of God's Spirit in his sufferings, to be less troubled with the cross. We see St Paul nevertheless hath his partial death, his abasement in the world, as an 'earthen vessel' despised of all; how straight he walks and comfortably he walks! how God is present with his Spirit! And surely if we suffer for a righteous cause, the same Spirit that was present with Paul shall be present with us. And thus by way of example life works in them, but death in him.

(3.) Life wrought in them, by death in him, that they might be in love more with religion, which is such as bringeth comfort and strength from heaven in the greatest sufferings for it. And that they might love the cause the better, God is present with the cause. If it were not God's cause, he would not accompany it with such increase of grace and comfort. Therefore, as death in Paul, so life in them; for they are more and more in love with religion. And so it was with the martyrs: when they saw it was such a cause, then they went cheerfully to suffer. They knew God had neither persons nor cause, that he was so present with all; and therefore they were encouraged themselves, because they saw others victoriously and triumphantly to suffer.

So we see that we ought not to take scandal at the sufferings of any for a good cause. Their death is our life. If we be of the same body, we may take good by it. We should be so far from taking scandal at them that suffer for justice or religion, that we should honour them the more. 'I Paul, a prisoner,' Eph. iii. 1. Is that a weakening of himself? No. As a prevailing argument, [he] here mentioneth his bonds and sufferings. It is so far therefore from being a matter of offence as to make us not to be ready to taunt them, as proud flesh is ready to do; and therefore they have counted crosses and suffering, a contemptible thing, that we should honour it the more. And therefore take no offence at them that suffer in the cause of religion; their sufferings is for the good of others. For this we have a more clear place in the latter part of this chapter.

Obj. But have not all God's children their death, without dying to you? Are not all God's children partakers of the cross?

An. Beloved, sometimes it is thus with God's church and children, that God to favour them doth give them an exemption from any great cross till they be trained up, and get fortitude and strength; not that God loveth them more than he loveth others that he exerciseth; but it is clean contrary, for where he causeth to suffer for a good cause, it is a privilege. 'To you it is given, not only to believe, but also to suffer,' Philip, i. 29. He favours them more, and tenders them more. The rest have not that strength of grace, and therefore God cherisheth them; as when plants be young, we set them about with bushes against excursion of outward causes; but when they have taken root, those be taken away. So God besets his children with props and comforts till they have gotten root; but afterwards exposeth them to storms and wind, that they may take root deeper. Therefore let none think they be better because they be free. God is preparing and fitting them for that which is prepared for them.

'We having the Spirit, as it is written, I believe, therefore have I spoken; we also believe, therefore we speak.'

The holy apostle doth here, as an entrance into this discourse, fully set forth his condition under the cross, and the sufferings as a believer; that is, he was bold and confident, notwithstanding all sufferings, in hope of the resurrection, and glory to come. And he sets out his faith by comparing his faith with them in former times. 'We having the same Spirit of faith' that they had before, as Abraham, and David, and others, we are not alone, neither in sufferings nor in our comforts. We have the same combats and the same

comforts, the same Spirit of comfort and grace, according 'as it is written, I believe, therefore I have spoken; we also believe, therefore do we speak.' He made David's case, Ps. cxvi. 10, parallel to his own. They were both in trouble and affliction, both confess to God in the midst of his congregation. Saint Paul had the same Spirit: 'we believe and speak,' as they believed and spake. I shall have the present life of Christ manifested in me. I know by experience that I shall be carried along by the life, and power, and Spirit of Christ, and afterward I look for a glorious resurrection, as is specified in the next verse.

'We having the same Spirit of faith,' not the same with you, and the rest of the members that now live. Now that I conceive is not so much his meaning, as we having the same Spirit of faith with David, and them before Christ died, with all the professors of religion from the beginning of the world to the end, the same Spirit with you. Now the same spirit with the church in former times, one Spirit runs through the veins of the church in all ages; having the same spirit of faith, he hath the same commanding act of faith. For there be two acts of faith: one we call elicited, which is, the inward proper act of faith; and there is aditus impetionis, whereby it commands the exercises of other graces. As I believe in the proper exercise of grace in itself, and I not only believe, but courageously confess; confession is not so much the proper act of faith, as it is commanded to be exercised by faith. Here is first the life of faith, and then the act and expression of faith with a parallel, David: as David believeth and speaks, so I believe and speak.

'We have the spirit of faith.' Faith is here the fundamental grace, the radical grace of all. We have faith, and a spirit of faith, and the same spirit of faith. So that faith is the radical grace, it being the grace that exercises all the rest. It is the grace of the new covenant, whereby we are knit to Christ: 'Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life,' John iii. 15. It is the grace of union that knits us to the root, the foundation of lively Christianity. And therefore he mentions faith in the first place.

Think of faith as the first grace of the Spirit, that acteth and stirs up all other graces. It is the first, because it is the grace of union that knits us to Christ. It is the grace required in the covenant of grace. It is the grace that giveth God all the glory, therefore fit to be the grace of the covenant. And [it] takes all from man, emptieth a man of all, and giveth all the glory to God, and Christ, whose righteousness we lay hold upon by faith; being therefore the grace of the covenant, the grace of union, the grace of abasing man and

glorifying God above all other graces, and the grace that acts and stirs up all other graces; and all other graces do increase, or decrease, as faith increaseth or decreaseth. Therefore 'having received the spirit of faith, we also believe,' &c. Therefore above all other graces labour for faith.

But now we have not only faith, but 'the same Spirit of faith,' which showeth the original whence faith cometh. The spirit of faith is an excellent attribute to faith, to show that faith as all other graces comes from the Spirit; and if all other graces come from the Spirit, then the grace of graces, faith especially. The Spirit is either the Holy Ghost himself, called the Spirit, partly passively, because the Holy Ghost is breathed from the Father and Soil, and partly actively, because the Spirit doth spirare, breathe into us. All the life and comforts we have is from the Spirit. The Holy Ghost comes a spirando, not a generando. He doth breathe all grace and comfort into God's children, and therefore [is] called the Spirit. Now as the Holy Ghost infuseth all grace and comfort, he works first a gracious disposition in God's children, which is called the Spirit. The Holy Ghost is called not only the Spirit, but a gracious disposition and temper of our soul, whereby our spirits are made suitable to the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost puts an impression upon every soul that comes to heaven, like itself, and sets a stamp of holiness upon it, and renews the image of Christ. Again, the Spirit is also called spirit, as to 'walk by the Spirit, and live by the Spirit;' that is, to live in an holy and gracious disposition wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. Now as in general a gracious frame of soul is called spirit, so every grace is called the grace of the Spirit; as the 'spirit of faith,' and the 'spirit of love,' and the 'spirit of a sound mind,' and the spirit of the 'fear of the Lord,' and the 'spirit of counsel,' because they issue immediately from the Spirit, and sanctification wrought in us by the Spirit of God. For the Spirit of God will infuse a divine nature into us, which we call the Spirit, being the seed of all grace. And then comes the spirit of all other graces. As in original sin there is the seed of all corruption, so in the Spirit the seed of regeneration is the seed of all grace, hope, and faith, and love, and whatsoever.

Now, as we say, though there be one general ocean, yet it hath several names according to the several coasts it washeth, and therefore called the British seas, the Irish seas, the Mediterranean seas, the French seas. There is but one sea, yet [it] hath its terms according to the several coasts. So the Spirit is one Spirit, but as it begets several graces, so it hath several names. As it giveth faith, it is called the spirit of faith; as it enableth us to suffer, the spirit of assistance, or supportation. There be also animal spirits in the veins,

and vital spirits in the liver and heart. So it is with the Spirit of God. It is the spirit of such a grace and such a grace as there is occasion to use it. So that the apostle terms the work of God's grace in the hearts of his children a spirit of faith; faith therefore is wrought by the Spirit of God, and that is the doctrine. The excellent grace of faith is from the Spirit. For it is called from the work of it, 'a spirit of faith.'

What need I prove it? For all things above faith are above nature. The objects of faith are above nature, which are merely mysteries. There is no seed of faith in us at all. It is harder to believe than to fulfil the law; for there are seed of all commandments of the moral law, some impressions of it are yet left in our natures to serve God in some measure, to do justice. So that the moral men and pagans have been excellent in that kind. But to believe requires the revelation of the objects, which are supernatural things, above nature, contrary to carnal reason. Faith hath no friend at all in us. There is a cursed enmity of nature against every article of faith to call the foundation itself into question; and we are prone to believe our own lying hearts and Satan in time of temptation, rather than divine truths. To believe the favour of God to a sinner, the heart will not conceive of it, unless the Spirit of God sets down to the soul that it is so. To believe life everlasting and glory, they he things above nature. Unless they were revealed by the Spirit, who would have believed these things? And therefore it must be power divine that must raise the heart above itself. Nothing can work above its own sphere. Nature cannot rise higher than nature; a river cannot rise higher than the spring from whence it ariseth; nothing can do above its activity. Natural things cannot apprehend spiritual things. The acts of faith are above nature. For a soul, a guilty soul, a soul under the guilt of sin, to apprehend the favour and mercy of a just and holy God, unless there be a Spirit to raise the soul above all guilt, and to see more mercy in God than sin in itself, it must be a supernatural act to do this. To overcome the world, all temptations on the right hand of pleasure and profit, and on the left hand fear and danger, is above nature. But faith enableth a man to overcome the world. Therefore it must be the spirit of faith that enables him to overcome himself, the world, and the prince of the world and his temptations, where the object and the act is supernatural. Therefore surely we must have a spirit above our own. A man must be more than a man, he must be a spiritual man, that doth the things that faith enableth him to do. Therefore faith is wrought by the Spirit; for a man to be able to conquer God himself, by his word and promise, it must be by God. And this must be by a spirit of faith.

As our Saviour Christ overcome by the woman of Canaan, 'O woman, great is thy faith,' Mat. xv. 28. And then Satan especially joineth against this grace of faith, because it most opposeth him in all his temptations and methods. Moreover, we must have a Spirit of faith not only to work faith in us, but likewise in every act and exercise of faith; for though we have the grace of faith, we cannot act and raise ourselves upon occasion, as the object is present, and duties to be done by the Spirit. 'He giveth both the will and the deed,' Phil. ii. 13. And for all these reasons there is a necessity of the Spirit to work faith.

Therefore faith is a gift of the Spirit. 'To you it is given to believe,' Mat. xiii. 11. 'Faith is not of ourselves, but the gift of God,' Eph. ii. 8, and a rare, excellent, and peculiar gift it is. The point is plain, that this excellent grace of faith, whereby we go out of ourselves and fetch all without, it is from the Spirit of God, which indeed is first a Spirit of faith before it is a Spirit of love and patience. This is the first work of the Spirit; the first work of the Spirit is a spirit of faith, and then of love, and patience, and contentation with the condition, but first the spirit of faith.

Use 1. And if it be so that faith comes from the Spirit of God, and groweth not in ourselves, then we must learn whither to go for it; to pray, 'Lord, increase our faith,' Luke xvii. 5. If we want it, to expect it in the use of sanctified means, even to look for it from above. 'Every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father of lights,' James i. 17, and therefore this excellent gift of all gifts. And account it an excellent grace, and that will make us sue more for it. We must have a Spirit of faith, else all things are nothing, for that is a fundamental grace. Therefore look to the power of the Spirit of God for it, the Spirit being the agent of the Father and the Son here below. As it proceeds from the father and the Son, so it works from the Father and the Son; and by faith assures us of the love of the Father and the Son, for it knoweth what is in the breast of the Father and the Son.

Use 2. And then if God doth give this act of faith, this supernatural eye of faith, this supernatural hand of faith to lay hold, eyes to see, this supernatural hand of faith to lay hold, and stomach of faith to digest, then it is not every one that hath it; all have not faith. And therefore if we have faith, if we can go out of ourselves and rely on the promise, thank God for it; thank God for it more than for any grace or gift in the world. For, beloved, we are stubborn, alike dead, dark, rebellious alike by nature; and for us that be all of the same condition by nature to be raised to a supernatural

condition, to have an eye and hand to see and reach to things above nature, and to make them our own, this is a peculiar grace; and therefore not unto us, but unto the Spirit of God, be all the glory and praise.

Use 3. And then let us take heed that we do not rashly or hastily attempt any suffering or doing, without looking to the Spirit of God for a new exercise of faith, that now being to use faith, we may have the Spirit to raise up the habit, which otherwise will be a dormant and sleepy habit; that as occasion is offered, so we may have fresh strength suitable to the fresh occasions. The same faith we had before will not serve for the present time, especially if there be increase of trouble. And if the actions to be performed be more difficult, according to the increase of trouble and hardness of business we are about, we must beg a greater measure of faith. So that indeed the life of a Christian is nothing but a dependency since the fall, under the covenant of grace. We are under guidance of the Spirit, not only to prop and strengthen us with habits, as we call them, but likewise on every occasion to raise and stir up our graces, and to persuade the soul to receive them. It is faith that stirs up all grace, and directs all grace, and holds every grace to its work, and, so long as it continueth, keepeth all other graces in exercise.

But more particularly, by the spirit of faith he meaneth the receipt of a powerful faith, because a spirit of faith; and a constant faith, because it is a spirit of faith; for the spirit is put to things that be strong and constant. And the Spirit is a strong worker, and it is the spirit of faith; and a free worker, because it is a spirit of faith that works more or less according as it seeth need. It is an holy grace, because it comes from the Holy Spirit; and therefore it is a grace indeed that makes us holy.

First, It is a spirit of faith, that is, a powerful work of faith. Now a spirit of faith doth overcome our unbelieving natures, a spirit works strongly, takes away actual resistance. Faith comes not by persuasion, but by a powerful waking strength; for if it came by persuasion, the devil would persuade to unbelief sooner than the Spirit should persuade to faith. For he hath more help for unbelief than there is for faith. We have in us more arguments against truth and against goodness than for it. And therefore if it were but a mere persuasion, and the soul not overpowered by the Holy Ghost to believe, it would never believe. So that it is not left indifferent to us to believe or not believe when God's Spirit comes. But the Spirit, as wind, is a powerful worker, and because it takes away all prevailing resistances from the soul, and makes way for itself, bringing an heavenly light into the

understanding, and a spiritual kind of reasoning, and an heavenly obedience into the will, bowing it to obedience of divine truths to yield to them, because by little and little it consumes corruption, it takes away prevailing corruption, and makes the soul believe, though there be roots of infidelity remaining.

The Spirit takes down the rebellion of nature so far that it shall not prevail. They never have the spirit of faith that think they can resist. When the Spirit comes it subjects all to its work. But I will not make a counterpoint of it. But, indeed, the spirit of faith takes away all resistances, which is to be observed, not only against divers heresies in this time, or opinions at least that tend that way, for they end in a little better than heresy; but likewise to think what an excellent grace it is, how much we are beholding to God for it, how to importune God for it, considering it is such a supernatural, holy, and powerful grace of the Spirit. And then it is a constant work. God's children do not only believe now and then, but they have a spirit of faith. Now spirit implieth a constant inclination, in the Scripture phrase, as a spirit of lying, of falsity, of envy, is an inclination that way; and a spirit of faith is a constant inclination wrought in the spirit to live by faith constantly, to depend upon God for all things, pardon of sins, life everlasting, provision and protection in this world.

Again, Because it is called the 'spirit of faith,' it showeth that it is a free grace, and the grounds why some have more or less faith, it is free for measure and free for time. They that have faith have the spirit of faith. They have not faith at command. No. The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, more or less. If you ask why some have great, some less, faith? It is because God seeth it needful for them in afflictions to have a great measure of faith, them that are wretched in the world, that have pre-encountered great dangers and afflictions, it is necessary to have a great measure of faith, and God giveth it. For the Spirit is a wise Spirit, and giveth faith according to the exigencies of particular persons more or less, for it is a Spirit.

The things God works by his Spirit, in regard of the freeness of them, are called graces; they as they are wrought by the Spirit are called the graces of the Spirit. The graces of the Scriptures are not like the graces of the heathens in their ethics and morals, who call them habits, but they have their names from their efficiency, the spirit of love, as they be from God's freeness; they are called the spirit of faith, as referring all to the work of

God's Spirit, because as we are saved by grace, so we must be ready to give all glory to the work of the Spirit.

And therefore we should not be much discontent if we have not so great a measure as others have, but thankful for the least properties of faith, for the measure of it comes from the Holy Ghost, who is a free worker. The Holy Ghost is not a natural worker, as fire burneth with extremity of its strength, because it is a natural agent, but the Holy Ghost being a wise and free agent, works according to his good will and pleasure. And therefore take heed how we grieve the Spirit of God, which is a Spirit of faith; but as the apostle giveth wise counsel, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,' Philip, ii. 12, because it is God that giveth the will and the deed of his good pleasure. If we esteem not the Spirit as we should, the Spirit may withdraw and suspend the sweet exercise of faith, though not wholly take it away, because it is a grace that proceeds from a free agent, the Holy Ghost.

And it is said likewise, we have the same spirit of faith, because the same Spirit of God works the same faith from Adam, the first believer, to the end of the world. Beloved, those before Christ, they were saved by Christ, as we read, Acts xv. 8, 9, 'When our hearts are purified, we are saved by faith as they were.' There is one Spirit breathed into all the children of God to the end of the world, the same Spirit is in the hidden members. What shall I say? The same Spirit with them, the same Spirit with Christ their head; one self-same Spirit is in Christ our head, and in all the members of Christ from the beginning to the end of the world. And as there is one Spirit, so one spirit of faith in regard of the object, the same things believed. For though faith be diverse, according to the diversity of belief, yet in regard of the things believed, and the cause of faith, the Spirit, they are all one: 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8.

There is nothing we believe in the gospel, but they did believe before Christ. Our faith is Abraham's faith and David's faith. I will give an instance before Christ. Abraham believed in Christ, 'and saw his day and rejoiced,' John viii. 56. And the sacrament of circumcision was 'a seal of the righteousness of faith,' Rom. iv. 11, as our sacraments are seals of our faith. And likewise they gave all to the Spirit of God. 'Breathe thy law into our hearts.' And Moses giveth the reason why they heard and saw in the wilderness, and profited not. God gave them not an heart. All was given to the Spirit, as now, and life everlasting.

They believed as well as we do now. 'At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. Christ was believed as well as now. He was Immanuel then, and with them as well as with us, though we have a farther measure of revelation. Christ is laid, Christ is a corner stone, 'and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed,' 1 Peter ii. 6. There was the same covenant of grace. 'Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life,' as now, John iii. 15. And therefore believers are called 'the children of Abraham,' Gal. iii. 7, heaven, 'the bosom of Abraham,' Luke xvi. 23. Women-believers are called 'the daughters of Abraham,' Luke xiii. 16, because there is one spirit of faith in believers from the beginning of the world to the end of it. Now the particulars are revealed more clearly, the canon is enlarged, the gospel is added to the precepts of the law, but notwithstanding, for fundamental points, they are the same from the beginning to the end of the church. The difference between them and us was in outward garments, in outward affections. As a man differs from a child in garments and outward habit, and yet is the same man, so the church of the Jews and our church are all one church, only differing in ceremonies and outward concernments, and yet still the same church. The difference is the accidental and outward; the essential main points are always the same. And therefore the grand point of faith, we believe, is not yesterday's faith, as the papists would make it, like the Gibeonites, that when they came but from hard by, came with mouldy bread and shoes, counterfeiting that they came from a far country. So you shall have it in every papist's mouth, Ours is the ancient religion, the fathers' religion, when it was but of yesterday, and of all novelties; but we are true catholics, because we believe an universal truth, the same spirit of faith which they had in ages of the church before. We believe nothing but what Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets believed. We are the catholics. We are not upstarts, and I prove it by this reason. There is nothing we believe but they believed; whatsoever we believe all the ancient fathers and patriarchs believed.

. Now that faith is most catholic that all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles believed, and that they themselves believe. They only add patcheries of their own, and therefore they have a new faith, but we the same. They believe the two sacraments, but they add their own. They believe the Scriptures, but they add traditions. They believe salvation from Christ, but they add works; believe we must call upon God, but they add saints to Christ in invocation and mediation. They have destructive additions of their own, which spoileth all in the conclusion. What they have we have; but their patcheries neither they nor we have; and therefore is not our faith more

catholic, that holds the same things with the patriarchs and prophets, more than they that have only mere additions of their own?

That wherein they differ from us is not catholic in their own confession, for they have it not out of Scripture, nor catholic with us in regard of the divided church that they had. It was neither the faith of the ancients, patriarchs, nor prophets before Christ, nor of the ancient fathers since Christ; and therefore they are fain to fly to traditions and their own devices, and to make articles of their own, as Pius IV. made not many years since as many articles of his own as there be articles in the creed. For they say the present church is led by the Spirit of God infallibly, and according to the present state of the church things must be expounded. Therefore they be true catholics that hold with the ancient church, and them too, in such things as be true. And therefore we deserve the name of catholics, and they of neutralists. For is not that more catholic which is the same with ancient patriarchs, with ancient fathers since Christ, and the same with them, than that wherein they differ from us? Indeed, that wherein they differ from us is merely the act of a private spirit of the one, not as if they did only add and still retain truth, but they defile whatsoever passeth from them. For they do change some things, add some things, take away some things. They change the government of Christ into a tyranny, making the pope head, the sacrament of the Lord's supper into a sacrifice, and transgress every article of religion. They take away the cup in the sacrament, and then their additions are destructive additions. If they add, they overthrow all. As Paul saith to the Galatians, 'If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing,' Gal. v. 2; and if you look to be saved by the law, you shall miss of salvation; and 'whosoever teacheth another doctrine different, is anathema, is accursed,' 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Their additions are destructive additions. If they were perfective, it were another matter, but they add something to faith which overthroweth faith, and something to Christ which takes away Christ. They do not hold to the head, but have another head than Christ, other mediators, and other rules of faith. They do not agree in the principles of faith. They agree that the word is the word; but then to take away the edge of it, they add something to weaken it: their own expositions, traditions, and applications. So that they have what we have, yet they change all points of religion; and the additions are against the foundation, and destructive. Not that but divers of them go to heaven, but it is not by their tenets. But they hold contradictions; and in the hour of death they cleave to the one, and forsake the other. Howsoever, for cavil sake, they hold merits and righteousness with obedience of Christ, yet they that belong to God amongst them, at time of death renounce that

religion, and cleave only to Christ and obedience of Christ by justification to faith. But my meaning is not to take up time in these things, but only to breed a love of the religion we have, that hath a justification in the main tenets we hold from the enemy, from the ancient church, from the Christian church, having one spirit of faith. And to say truth, they have the old spirit, as in Revelations, the spirit of Egypt, for so is Borne called, and the spirit of Sodom, and, as it is for the most part called, the spirit of Babylon; for they have a cruel and bloody spirit; and the filthy spirit of the Sodomites, and the idolatrous spirit of Egypt, and the tyrannical city of Babylon: for they have the same spirit with them. But for ancient tenets of religion, we may safely say, that in the main points of religion we have the same spirit of faithful Abraham, the patriarchs, David, the prophets, apostles, and ancient fathers; therefore we may be bold.

There is one faith from the beginning of the world to the end of the world, the faith of the elect: 'faith once given,' as Jude calls it, ver. 3.

I cannot press this point, but make this use further of it. We have the Spirit of faith, and the same Spirit of faith with them that were before. Therefore let this comfort us, that if we truly believe, we are brought into communion and fellowship with the church that hath been and shall be to the end of the world, that is now in heaven; for we have all one Spirit. Though instead of faith they have vision, yet we have all one Spirit. Is it not a sweet thing to have communion with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets and apostles? And so we have, if we be true believers, by the same Spirit of faith. Perhaps we differ in the measure and degree, because the necessities of one are more than the necessities of another; as in organ pipes the same breath is in all the pipes, but some sound little and some have a greater sound, answerable to the making of them, yet one breath makes them all sound. So there is the same Spirit in all the church, but some have little, some great measure, according as their necessities and places in the church are; and therefore it is of great comfort, and it may teach us, as a comfort, that we have communion of saints in this church, that the Spirit is in all, so to love communion of saints. We have 'one faith, one spirit, one baptism,' Eph. iv. 5.

That wherein Christians agree is bettor advantageous to this purpose to enforce unity and peace than anything wherein they disagree, to make a rupture and fraction. Perhaps they may disagree in ceremonies, in opinion of this or that; but if there be one faith, one baptism, if there be unity in the

main, shall other things of less concernment be of force to make a fraction in the church? Oh beloved, no! The church before Christ, and the church after Christ, for garments they did differ, for outward appurtenances. As a child and a man, it is the same person, yet he hath one apparel when young, another when a man; so the church when young had one kind of ceremony, when old another, yet at all times one Spirit. So one church may differ from another in this or that particular outward appendixes, but what is that to the spirit of faith? There is one Spirit of Christ in all; and is not that of greater force to knit together than other lesser matters to make a division? which should teach us more and more to study the unity of the Spirit. Were it not an excellent thing if all Christians in the world had the spirits to agree in the same things, and love the same things that shall be our life in heaven? And it were not heaven on earth if there were no agreement in the judgment and affections of Christians. Therefore study peace; and for other matters, they will follow. Let them not be of that concernment as to make any separation: Philip, ii. 1, 'If any consolation, if any peace, if any love,' &c., 'be of like mind one toward another.' Why, what is the cause they press union so much? Because our happiness is in it, and Christ in his excellency, to pray that 'Christ and all may be one,' John xvii. 11; because the same Spirit that knitteth to Christ knitteth to one another by love, and all grace and comforts are derived to Christians as knit to Christ by faith, and to others by love. If we be not knit to Christ, there is no derivation of grace from the head; where there is no derivation, there is decay of grace suitable. Therefore as we will grow in grace and comfort, there is more force in union than is thought of; and if it were seriously thought of, in regard of our own benefit, we should labour to maintain it.

Verse 13

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.

You have heard before at large how the apostle answers all discouragements, from God's gracious dealing with them.

Now, St Paul goeth forward with the words read to the end of the chapter, in setting down divers encouragements to help him to go on in his Christian course. One is in the verse I have read to you; 'We have the same spirit of faith, as it is written,' &c.

We must go through many afflictions, inward and outward, before we come to heaven. And therefore the apostle multiplies grounds of comfort, whereby he may be carried through all to the end of his race.

The first ground of comfort in these words is from the words, 'We have the same spirit of faith' that David and others had before, 'and therefore we speak;' therefore we are bold in our profession.

In these words we have already considered divers things. Of faith we shall have occasion to speak afterward.

Now whereas he comforts himself from the example of David: 'David believed and spake, and therefore I believe and speak.' We have a sweet pattern how to make use of the Scriptures; in reading of them, read ourselves in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are not only written for us, and written for them that lived in those times; but God, in his infinite wisdom and foresight, knew that whosoever was in Scripture should be applicable to all times and states of the church: for though it was written at divers times, yet nothing shall fall out to the end of the world, but there is something in Scripture to rule it, else there would need multiplication of Scriptures to the end of the world. And therefore the Scriptures contain necessary truths, both for the times wherein they were written, and for all times to the end of the world. As the apostle argues, 'David believed, and spake,' therefore we may, because the case is alike. The church in regard of prerogatives of salvation, and in regard of many duties and promises, hath the like command and interest from the beginning of the world; as we say of corpus homogeneum, every part of an homogeneal body hath respect to the whole. Every drop of water is water; every spark of fire is fire; but every piece of an arm is not an arm, because it is heterogeneal. I speak of it, because in many prerogatives and promises there is the like reason of every member, and of one member and another; as David speaks and believes, and therefore we speak. 'Abraham believed, and it was imputed for righteousness,' Rom. iv. 22; let us believe, and it shall be imputed for righteousness. I believed, and found mercy: if we believe, we shall have mercy. Peter, after he denied his Master, found mercy; if we do the same, we shall find the same, because there is the same reason for the whole church, and every particular member. And, therefore, when we read the Scripture, we should read to take something out for ourselves. When we read any promise, this is mine; and any privileges, these belong to me; when we read a good example, this concerns me; as I said before,

‘Whatsoever was before written was written for our learning, that through patience and learning of the Scripture we might have hope,’ Rom. xv. 4.

There is not anything that befalls a Christian in his life, but there is a rule or pattern for it in Scripture. If we were skilful to bring the places and rules together, we should see a ground in Scripture for everything, both for all duties and all things to be believed. And there be not only rules in Scripture, but also rules quickening by example; for divinity is of practical knowledge, and therefore it is enlivened and interlaced with examples, as here he makes use of the example of David. God doth not write us laws, and leave them barely in our possession as commands; but God quickens and enlivens all the rules and promises with the practice of some of the blessed saints. None can read David’s psalms but he shall read himself in them. He cannot undergo a trouble, but he shall find David under the same trouble; he shall not need a comfort, but he shall see David comforted with the same comfort; so that he is a pattern for them. It is a comfortable thing to read the Scriptures, because there we shall find whatsoever is useful for us. They that go into a garden that is beset with flowers, they cannot but receive a sweet spirit and breath from the flowers in the very walks; and so there is such a spirit in Scripture, that we cannot read the Scriptures with reverence but there is a sweet savour that springeth from them, which both delights and strengthens at once. No walk is so comfortable as the walk of Scripture; therefore, take our solace there, and we shall see the promises, and those enlivened with examples and patterns, and the Spirit of God bringing the like sweetness and the like strength into ourselves. Oh that we would be more in love with reading of Scripture. We see the apostle Paul, as great a man as he was, encourageth himself and strengthens himself with the pattern of holy David: ‘David believes and speaks, and I believe and speak.’ So that you see how you may make benefit of the Scripture.

From hence you have a rule of enlargement of the Scripture to you, and a rule likewise of application, that when we read the Scriptures we may enlarge them, and apply them to ourselves in particular. And so much for that point, we have faith, the spirit of faith. ‘And the same spirit of faith, according as it is written.’

The next thing observable is this, that after the spirit of faith he names belief; and after belief, he names speaking; whence observe the connection and knitting together of these things by God, the coherence that God hath made betwixt. First, there is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Spirit is

the agent that works all in the church, it being Christ's vicar on earth, and that Spirit works a spirit of grace in us, in particular a spirit of faith. When the Holy Ghost hath framed our hearts to believe, then we believe; and when we believe, then we speak. So that these go together, the Spirit of God, begetting in us a spirit of faith, and an act of believing answerable to the frame proceeding from a spirit of faith; and then, because faith is the spring and foundation of all other graces, 'we believe, therefore we speak.'

First of all, the Spirit of God works a blessed frame in our hearts, here called the 'Spirit of God.' The Holy Ghost doth not only work by a Christian as an instrument, but works in him as a subject. Our soul is altogether out of frame. The Holy Ghost, therefore, puts us in frame by a spirit of faith, infusing a spirit of knowledge into the understanding, a spirit of obedience into the will. He draweth the will and enlighteneth the understanding, and then we believe. All actions come from a fountain, and spring, and life, and frame within: the Holy Ghost worketh a holy frame, and then we act. We must not think of believing without a spirit of faith first, for that is to conceive of a river without a spring head, or a beam without a sun, or a branch without a root. And therefore, as faith cannot be without the Holy Ghost, so belief cannot be without the spirit of faith, which is only for the clear conceiving of the point. We shall make use of it afterwards.

First, a spirit of faith, and then we believe. So that the grace of faith cometh from the Spirit, but the act is ours, and comes immediately from us, which serveth to answer an idle objection against those that be all for grace. If we do all by the help of the Spirit, and we have no liberty, then the Holy Ghost believeth, and the Holy Ghost speaketh, and the Holy Ghost loveth, and not we. The objection is [not] idle against those that be all for free grace.

It is true, the grace is from the Spirit, but when the grace is received, the act is from ourselves, not only from ourselves, but immediately from ourselves. We cannot but confess it so.

For instance, a windy instrument is fit to sound, but it actually soundeth not till it be blown. So other instruments of hand are fit for music, but it makes not music till it be stricken by the hand. So we do not actually believe, but by an act of the Spirit; but yet the act of believing is our own. The wind in one instrument, and the hand on the other instrument, must make the sounds, and yet the instruments sound. And so, though we have the grace of faith, and faith is ours in believing, yet the very act of believing cometh from the Holy Ghost, though not immediately. We speak, but the Spirit opens our

mouth; and we believe, but the Holy Ghost inspires a spirit of faith; and we do, but as we are enabled to do; *acti agimur*, we move, but *mod movemur*. So that there is an action and passion in all the graces and exercises we do. We are first patients, and then agents; first the Spirit of God works on us, and then we work; not the Spirit immediately, but we by the Spirit.

So we see how these two are reconciled. We believe, we speak, we do good, and yet the Holy Ghost doth all. How? Thus; the Holy Ghost sets us in a holy frame, and then being in that frame, the Holy Ghost fits us to speak, to do, to work, to suffer, to do all that is to be done. We are the agents, and yet we do no further than as acted by a superior agent. As with the orbs, the inferior orbs move but as they are moved by an higher, except the highest of all: so all the subordinate agents under God, they are moved by God. For if the will were moved, and were not moved by God, then so many wills, so many gods, for there is nothing independent but God.

But to speak of the positive truth: all the frame of grace comes from the Spirit. We work, but by the Holy Ghost, as Ps. li. 15, 'Open my lips, my mouth shall show forth thy praise.' Now David saith here, 'We believe, therefore we speak, but it is God that opens our mouth.'

But I rather intend points of practice. For besides that proper act of faith to believe, there is a commanding act of faith, which stirs up the soul to do, for faith stirs up all other graces. The proper act is to believe, but by believing it stirs up and quickens all other graces of the soul. Therefore, Heb. xi. you see that all other graces are attributed to faith. By faith Enoch did walk with God, and by faith Noah prepared an ark, and by faith Moses was courageous and bold; and so you see all their excellent graces, they have their spring and stirring up from faith. So that having the same Spirit we not only believe but speak.

The next point observable hence is, that a Christian knows he doth believe.

'I believe, therefore I speak.' And a Christian knoweth his own faith, and by consequence he may know certainly his state in grace. It is not an idle, dormant, sleepy faith; but 'I believe, therefore I speak.' It makes them fix the eyes of their souls so much on their deserts and guilt, that they look all to that till they be surprised with horror, till God hath humbled them, though there be a striving of soul against despair, and striving for favour and mercy.

In these particular cases there may be faith without the knowledge of the act. But ordinarily the frame of a Christian is such, that he knoweth what he knows, and he doth know that he doth believe when he believeth; and thereupon he knoweth his state in grace. How else should he be thankful to God? how should he be pitiful? how should he be content and quiet in his condition? how should he be fruitful in his conversation? Beloved, the knowledge that we are in a good condition is a most fruitful knowledge. It is the best frame of the soul, when it hath grace, and knows it hath grace, and never hath a good frame till then. When we are in God's favour, and we know that we are in God's favour, it puts us in a holy disposition to God, to love him, to be thankful to him, and in a gracious disposition to him to be abundant in the work of the Lord. It works a sweet disposition in ourselves, begetting in us much patience, when we know we believe, and believing that we shall be saved, for salvation is the end of faith. Faith never endeth but in salvation.

And therefore it should be our main endeavour to believe, and then labour to know that we do believe, that Satan may not hide our evidences from us, and make us bear false witness against ourselves; and so when he cannot hinder our salvation, he hinders our comforts in the way to heaven, as it is his way, by casting a mist and cloud between our souls and God's favours. 'Therefore give all diligence to make our calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 10. The more we grow in assurance that we believe, and by believing our interest in Christ, the more we grow in grace, and in all comforts whatsoever. They pretend it is a way to bring to security. Indeed, of heavenly security it is. But who fears to displease God most? and who takes most care to please him? Is it not them that have sweet contentment in his favours? that be loath to displease him? And is it not their whole care to please him, and continue sweet communion with God? They speak against the nature of the things, and against experience. But how shall a Christian know that he doth believe? Will he think he doth not believe, when he cannot peremptorily conclude, I do believe? Though he cannot reflect upon himself strongly, yet he may reflect upon himself, especially by conference with them that can discern that he hath desires. There is afterwards in a Christian, Christian mourning, sighing, and groaning, and he will not deny but he desires to have faith, he mourns that he hath it not. Let them reflect on that, and bring the Scripture to that case. The Scripture speaks comfortably of desires, of parts, of the gracious desires; he that desires faith hath a measure of faith, if he desire it truly.

And therefore you say you have no faith. Your desires show you have. You can reflect, and know you desire, mourn, hunger, and thirst, and would have grace. Now are the promises made to this desire? 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the poor in spirit,' Mat. v. 6, seq.

Then again, there is a combat in them. They that have the main act of faith, they have strife between flesh and Spirit, between unbelief and faith. None will say but he striveth against unbelief, and endeavours against it. That very strife is an argument that there is a spirit of faith, an act of faith; and they may know that act of faith, if they will consider seriously. The very strife is a greater argument of comfort that they have faith, than the confidence of many carnal men that they have faith. For their confidence is a false argument; and then the others doubting, and striving against doubts and remainders of infidelity, is an argument of their having faith.

Again, they that have the least degree of faith, they look up to God, they never forsake God, they will die at his feet, and they will cast themselves down before his footstool, before his mercy; let him deal with me as he will, they resolve of that. And where this is, it argueth a spiritual act of faith. So that in some cases a man may have an act of faith, and yet not know it. And in some cases there may be a confidence of the presence of faith, when yet they have it not.

How shall I know false confidence? It is a large point, and I will name but two or three things.

(1.) False confidence is groundless, voluntarily taken up of themselves without the Scriptures, because they wish well to themselves; and out of self-love they think they have anything they want. If they go to the grounds of Scripture, they would rather despair, because there be many blasphemous, loose lives secure of goodness. Faith affirms he is not worthy to live that believeth not. If they did believe, they would believe their own damnation. They should believe there is nothing between them find hell, but a little uncertain life: for they live in the curse of God, and live in sin, damned by Scripture. And therefore their faith is not only a barren faith, but a presumptuous faith, and groundless.

(2.) And again, you may know false confidence, because as it is groundless, so it is careless in the use of good means. A confident spirit, out of self-love, will persuade itself all is well, and yet be bold in the use of

means. And so it is fearless till trouble comes; and when trouble comes, then they sink. He is confident, before trouble of conscience or outward troubles seize upon him; but when any trouble comes, then they see all was but a spirit of presumption and carnal confidence; then they see there was never sound peace between God and them, never sound union between Christ and them. For it is the nature of false confidence to be confident before, and to sink into despair in times of trouble.

(3.) And again, false confidence, as it is groundless in the use of means, and spiritless in danger, so it is fruitless. It brings not forth fruit of faith, it is barren. And therefore let people that be careless of the exercise of love and other graces in their conversation boast of faith what they will, it is but a confidence; they think they believe when they do not believe.

(4.) In the next place, faith is an exercising grace whose so ever it is. 'I believe, therefore I speak.' It is a working grace wheresoever it is. He shows his faith by obedience and practice, so that the truth of faith is an active and working grace. And therein it differs from the confidence spoken of before. It works in heaven, it works with God, it layeth hold upon him, wrestles with him for a blessing, and overcometh him; it works on earth, and overcomes all on the right hand and left, all temptations of prosperity, presenting better things than the world can; it overcometh all temptations on the left hand, all fears and threatenings, and presents to the soul worse dangers than anything here. What can be threatened comparable to hell? and what can be promised comparable to a good conscience and heaven hereafter? It works stronger than hell and temptations. And it must needs be so, because it is a grace of union that knits as to Christ. It is the fountain of life. We cannot touch Christ without life, virtue comes from him upon every touch; his grace, his union, and being. So it draweth virtue from Christ. The spirit of faith is a spirit of power, a spirit of vigour. Faith infuseth vigour into the whole soul, silencing all objections that the heart can make; answers all temptations that the devil can make; triumphs over all that can be presented to it, and draweth it from God. It is powerful with God himself. I will not enter into commonplaces of faith, but only as it comes in my way show that where belief is it will work, and the particular work of it is to 'speak.'

(5.) As it is a working grace, so it is a hold grace. 'I believe, therefore I speak.' If there be faith in the heart, it will express itself in the tongue. If the heart be a good treasure, it will vent that treasure. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak,' Mat. xii. 34. And therefore as there will be

encouragement and strength and vigour, so there will be boldness in speaking to God. Faith is a grace that hath liberty with it. Where the Spirit is there is liberty, specially where the spirit of faith is; because faith sets the soul at liberty from fear of guilt and damnation, and persuades the soul of contentment with God in Jesus Christ.

(6.) Where the spirit of faith is, there is boldness to the throne of grace; and therefore because we believe we speak. We speak to God in prayer, because we believe we are reconciled to God in Jesus Christ. Wheresoever faith is there is prayer. Speaking to God in prayer is the prime expression of faith; as faith is the birth of a Christian, for it knits him to Christ the fountain of life. A child as soon as it is born crieth, and a new-born child as soon as it is born crieth to God. He hath a familiar kind of boldness to go with reverence to God, and say, 'Abba, Father.' As soon as ever Paul was converted, 'behold, he prayeth,' Acts ix. 11. He might speak prayers before, but he never prayed till then. A man never prayeth till he believeth; and when he believeth, he prays presently with the spirit of faith. Therefore it is a spirit of supplication; they go always together.

And the reason is, because as soon as ever a Christian is new born, he is sensible of the root and spring whence he hath all his strength and all he hopes for. It is in Christ. And therefore as by faith he is knit to Christ, so by faith he makes use of Christ. Faith is an emptying grace of itself, and emptying the soul, sendeth forth his ambassador, prayer, to fetch all help from heaven. Prayer is the messenger, the ambassador of faith, the flame of faith. Where faith is kindled within, it flames out in prayer. Prayer, you know, showeth that there is nothing at home, for then we would not go abroad. Faith is a grace that goeth out of itself. It hath the greatest humility that can be, and is always seated in an humble soul, that despaireth of itself, and is emptied of itself; and therefore the first expression of faith out of itself must be to the fountain of help and fountain of strength and comfort together, and therefore sends forth prayer. Prayer and faith are all one, prayer being nothing but faith digested into words and conceptions. Faith prevails, so prayer prevails; and according to the measure of faith, so are the degrees of the spirit of prayer. And then again, our tongues being our 'glory,' Ps. xvi. 9, it hath a desire to glorify God, and that is in speaking, praising of God, and praying to God. And therefore those that do not pray, they have no faith. Little faith, little prayer; and great faith, great measure of prayer. And as faith groweth, so the spirit of prayer and supplication groweth. They increase and decrease in a proportion.

And therefore let us examine ourselves, if we believe, to pray; if we believe, to speak. A Christian is no still-born creature. He that is newborn, he is not still-born. He crieth to his Father for strength of grace. There is a spirit of boldness, together with the spirit of faith, whereby we can look God in the face reconciled in Jesus Christ. Now, looking upon God as a Father, we cannot but as to a Father repair to him in all our necessities. So you see the connection of these two, 'I believe, therefore I speak.'

And as it is true of prayer, so of praise, for that is also the language of the Spirit of God. God will have occasion, for our tongue is our glory; we glorify him in our whole man. The heart giveth him the glory of all his attributes; the speech giveth the glory of it to him. And therefore, Ps. lxxiii. 5, 'When I am filled with marrow and fatness,' the inward comforts of grace, 'then shall I praise thee with joyful lips;' that is, then shall he sound forth the praises of God in his speech. He praiseth God not only for what is past, but he praises him for what is to come. 'I believe, therefore I speak.' For if a man by the spirit of faith apprehend the resurrection of the body and glory in the world to come, that Spirit, apprehending the excellency to come, will stir him up to praise God beforehand; as by a spirit of faith we take things in trust, as if present; we see heaven, and glory to come, as if present: 'For faith is the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1. So it stirs up affections as if present. In heaven we shall praise God for ever, and therefore faith makes heaven and happiness as if present to the soul. It enlargeth the soul with thanks beforehand. Therefore when the apostles speak of the glorious condition to come, presently they break out into praises. As they believe, so they speak, as Peter prayeth, 'By the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that hath begotten us again to an inheritance immortal, undefiled, reserved for us in the heavens,' 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. He believeth heaven is kept for him, and he for heaven, and therefore he praiseth God for it. If we believe the blessed state to come, we will speak the praises of God before hand; and therefore it is the state of God's children in time to come, revealed now, that God may have present praise. Faith sets the soul in heaven in some sort, and as it setteth us in heaven where Christ is our head, so it setteth us into the employment of heaven; and what is that? To have a heart enlarged to praise God.

Likewise if we believe we will speak to men, not only to God in prayer, but of God to men, 'in the great congregation,' as the prophet speaks, Ps. xxii. 25; we will not be ashamed of God, but speak to him by prayer in all things, and of his truth; and speak for him too when religion is opposed, and his children disgraced. He that hath not a word to speak of God for the

benefit of others by way of edification, that hath not the spirit of prudence to speak a word in season, nor a spirit of courage to speak for God, I will never believe he will speak to God as he should, I will never believe he doth believe. For he that believeth, he will speak to God in prayer, and praises, and of God, and for God. Beloved, in this world God puts his cause and his truth, and the state of God's people, into our hands, and counts himself beholding to us if we will stand for him, and trieth what we will do for him, whether help him in his church and people or no. He crieth, Who will be on his side, who? as Jehu said, 2 Kings ix. 32. Specially in times of opposition and lukewarm times, when there is a clouding of religion, men will be of all sides, and no side to serve their turn. Therefore 'Curse ye Meroz, for he helped not the Lord,' Judges v. 23. God thinks himself helped by us when we speak for a good cause, for a good person, for justice, for truth; and if we will not own the cause of God in doubtfuls, God will never own us. Doth God honour us so far as to put his cause into our hands, making himself beholding to us for his word? And shall not we speak a word for his church, his children, but rather join with backbiters, and slanderers, and secret papists? All slander her religion, her faith. What saith our Saviour Christ? Is not that an idle thing? 'He that is ashamed of me before men, I will be ashamed of him before my Father which is in heaven,' Mat. x. 32, 33. They have the name of God in their foreheads. As the antichristian limbs carry his mark, so they that belong to Christ carry his mark; that is, they are bold for the Lord, known of their Master, to speak as to him, so for him, when occasion is offered. 'Wisdom will be justified of her children,' Mat. xi. 19, and therefore they that believe will justify wisdom, will justify the cause of religion. And they that do it not do not believe, for he that believeth will speak. Christ is called Nyog, the speech, the word, because as a word expresseth the mind, so Christ expresseth what is in the bosom and heart of God towards us. And as he hath truly expressed from God to us what is the Father's good pleasure to us, being the word, so every Christian must be the word to express what Christ hath done for him and for the church. And we must do this bodily, sincerely, freely, and roundly, without tergiversation, equivocation, or delusion; we must be bold for a better Master. It is true out of the nature of the thing we cannot but speak. A convinced understanding and sanctified heart cannot but speak when an opportunity is offered. I wonder any should ever think to look the blessed Saviour in the face with comfort, and yet notwithstanding betray his cause, betray religion here. And therefore, I beseech you, consider the connection of these two together, 'I believe, therefore I speak.'

By this therefore I have spoken, you may learn what to judge of your natures. Those that are partial of both sides, and of neither, that count it a policy to conceal themselves, they think whatsoever shall fall out they will be sure to displease no party beforehand, that so they may have friends; and so, to redeem a peace to themselves, they betray religion and the cause of Christ. You may say, What wisdom is that? It is a wisdom of the flesh, and a plain discovery they have no faith at all, or at the least a very weak faith, no faith at all.

And therefore they are called Nicodemites; that is, such as keep religion to themselves; it is a false means. For Nicodemus at first indeed so came for Christ, but after he defended him against the Scribes and Pharisees. And at his death, when all forsook him, then Nicodemus and Joseph appeared. So it was a growing faith. And therefore let no man that conceals religion pretend Nicodemus. If they mean to be in that condition they are in, if they will sleep in whole skins, then it argueth they have no faith at all; but if they are ashamed of it, and grow, and by falls learn to stand strongly, and find their weakness sanctified to get more strength, it is a good sign. But those that are neuters, and for all turns, you may say they have no faith. He is not worthy of a tongue that will not speak for Christ, that will not speak for the giver of speech. He is unworthy to speak that will not speak for him that hath enabled him to speak. You are more like the Samaritans, that would be of no certain religion. They would worship God, and they would worship the gods of their country likewise; they would be of the Jewish religion when the Jews flourished, and against the Jews when the Jews were down. So that they would be of all religions and of no religion. And so you have some that have their religion to choose for all turns; so far as stands with outward conveniences they will appear, and when it doth not, they will betray it; *vespertiliones in fide*, as he calls them, bats, that will neither be amongst the birds or other creatures, but doubtful creatures, you cannot tell what to make of them. So there will be always some doubtful persons that you cannot tell what to conceive of them in religion; but this you may make out, they do not believe, for if they did believe, they would speak.

And therefore let us be stirred up to speak in the cause of Christ as occasion serveth. There must be a spirit of discretion and wisdom when and how to speak, of which I have spoken at large heretofore out of Rom. x. Only, I beseech you, if occasion be, be entreated to be as bold for Christ as others against Christ, as bold for religion as others against religion. I am sure we serve a better Master. It is a shame to hear papists, and popish spirits, and

half atheists speak dangerously to the destruction of youth, that they may be saved in any religion if we believe in God and keep his commandments; and so run to some few generals, whereas the will in the mean time falls a-swelling and breaks the commandments. They bring all to a few heads, and shuffle off all with a generality in any religion; if you live well you may be saved. Therefore let us be as bold and impudent for Christ as his enemies shall be against him. And because we see that boldness in the cause of Christ comes from a spirit of faith, as all other graces come from faith, let us be stirred up to labour for faith above all other graces, that that may be planted in our hearts. And that it may be so, do but observe these directions.

First of all, consider who it is that giveth us comfort and giveth us promises; dwell much in the consideration of the loving faithful nature of God, and then consider former experiences, how God hath made good all things to us; consider what pure and glorious pledges and promises we have for time to come. Peace of conscience is pledge of the peace which is heaven; joy in the Holy Ghost, a pledge of the joy in heaven. And then consider the excellency of the things we are to believe. The objects of faith, the promises, are surpassing things, even surpassing admiration. Oh the excellent things laid up in another world! If we cannot express the first fruits, the earnest here, what shall we do with the fulness of happiness that we shall enjoy hereafter? A probability of excellent things will set men more to endeavour than a certainty of petty and base things.

Now that we have offered to us things above admiration, we may stand in wonderment at the love of God, that hath laid up things 'that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. And shall not these things stir up the spirit of faith and endeavours suitable, whereas a probability of excellent things, though earthly, will stir up endeavours? Therefore, where there is no endeavour against earthly things, we do not believe a whit. The evil things we be forced from are so terrible, and the good things present to faith so excellent, that if they were but probable conjectures, they would be better than they were. Therefore many are so far from faith, that they have not conjectures there be such things, for infidelity reigneth in their hearts. If faith set up a kingdom in their hearts never so little, it would stir up boldness; and therefore consider of all the sweet natures of God reconciled, and approve but the excellency of the things, which if we have the apprehension of in weak measure, they will make us better than most of your common blasphemers, and swearers, and scorners of goodness. He inwardly laugheth and scorns at all parts of

religion. Though for shame of men he comforteth himself something, yet notwithstanding, infidelity reigneth in his heart.

Second. Again, that faith may set up a regiment in the soul, consider now that this is the grace that infuseth vigour and strength into all our graces; all are nothing without faith. Faith must fetch from Christ strength for patience and contentation. There is no other grace but hath his vigour from faith, as faith from the Spirit of God. Therefore pour water upon the root, water the root of all other graces, cherish faith. Oh, this consideration that all springeth and have their life and vigour from faith, and that now the government of the church, by the Spirit of God under covenant of grace, is to fetch all out of ourselves! We must have a supernatural eye, and a supernatural hand to reach to heaven and fetch treasure out of Christ, and spiritual virtue to draw out of Christ and his promises, and have all. Every time, every thing, every word, every action whatsoever, is out of ourselves, and cometh from a principle that is in Christ. And therefore, considering the excellency and necessity of grace, labour for it, and let it be more and more planted in us, that according to our apprehension of the excellency and necessity of it, and misery without it, we may earnestly endeavour after it.

Verse 14

Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall be present with you.

The apostle, in the former words, as we heard at large, sets down the afflicted and comfortable condition of God's people; and because our nature is very unlit as to do good, so to suffer evil, therefore he opens a further spring of comfort to the end of the chapter.

Among others, as you heard the last day, this in the 13th verse is one. 'We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore I have spoken.' Here is a double comfort in whatsoever we suffer. 'We have a spirit of faith,' which is a spirit of strength wrought by the power of God itself, and laying hold likewise upon divine power.

And another ground of comfort is, 'We have the same spirit of faith,' and faith stirs up not only to believe,—the proper act of it,—but it stirs up speaking both to God in prayer and of God in praises, and for God in times of opposition. These things were more enlarged. I pass on now, only I add this, that before we speak we must believe. Mark the method, 'I believe,

therefore I speak.' A man cannot speak to God in prayer, in praises, or speak of God aright, but he must believe what bespeaks. You know it is monstrous that there should be a birth without conception, that a man should speak of that he doth not know, or speak of that he doth not believe. And we must labour to know and believe things in their own light by the Spirit. We must have a spirit of faith before we speak of spiritual things. This is a careless neglect that sometimes people will speak of good things, but they will speak of them in an human spirit, others in a diabolical spirit, by way of scoffing or blaspheming, as some never speak of God but they blaspheme and swear, nor ever speak of religion but with scorn, as if not grave enough for them; or if they speak sadly, they speak of holy things with human spirits, not truly believing, as their hearts tell them, what they speak. Now the tongue must be the true messenger of the heart. The heart must indite, and the tongue write. And therefore we must endeavour by all means to have a spirit of faith, and labour with these false hearts of ours to believe, and thou to speak. Our hearts else will give the tongue the lie. Thou speakest these things, but thou dost not believe them. And indeed a man may see by the manner of men's speaking of holy things that they believe not what they speak. As he said, 'If thou didst believe these things, wouldst thou speak so of them?'. So if a man did believe divine things, would he speak so irreverently, so slightly of them as they do? And therefore we must labour to believe what we speak. If we speak to God or others of the state of grace, or the like, we must first have the Spirit of God; we must know the meaning of God, to speak of holy things in God's meanings. Were it not a bold part for a man to speak of another man's meaning, and never know his meaning? God discovers his meaning in the Scripture, and if we do not know his meaning; if we speak of certainty of salvation and of such matters, and of great spiritual things, and of knowing them by the Spirit of God, by his own Spirit; we speak of the love of God, and care and providence of God, and know not by his Spirit that he is this to us. Indeed, it is presumption for us to speak anything of God, unless God discover it at first; to speak anything of our own condition in an intimate manner, as if we were so and so, when the Spirit of God doth not truly dictate so much to our souls. We see spiritual things with spiritual light, and we must speak of spiritual things with help of the Spirit, and must judge of spiritual things by the discovery of the Spirit, or else we had better say nothing all than speak presumptuously. 'We believe, and then we speak.'

Obj. But you will say, Many divines speak excellent well for points of religion, and hold them, and yet their lives discover they have no faith. And therefore there may be a spirit without faith.

Ans. Beloved, mark what I said before. They may speak of religious things in a human manner, and see spiritual things with a common light, but they cannot see spiritual things in their proper light without the Spirit of God. And they cannot speak of spiritual things in a spiritual manner without the Spirit of God. We must first believe, and then speak. Therefore our labour should be in the ground-work, to get faith in the heart. And when faith is gotten into the heart, it will quickly overpower all fears and doubts and despairings, and all rebellion. It is a victorious and conquering grace. If we can get that, it will subdue the heart unto itself. And it will make us speak boldly, and speak of holy things, and to purpose; to speak to God and of God in divine things, and of God in oppositions. So we must speak likewise for the good of others, by way of edification. And we must speak to our own hearts in times of temptation, speak to Satan by his solicitations. When Satan and our hearts shall speak to us, and judge us to be thus and thus, Thou art thus, and thus God saith by his Spirit, for saith faith, thus he hath told me, 'I am thy salvation,' he saith in Scripture, Ps. xxxv. 3. 'If I believe, I shall not perish, but have everlasting life,' John iii. 15. And he saith in particular to me by his Spirit, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' Mat. ix. 2. Therefore care not what our doubtful hearts, or Satan joined with them, saith. God saith thus, and the spirit of faith saith thus; 'and as I believe, so I speak.' So that if there be a spirit of faith, we shall speak to our own hearts, 'Why art thou so disquiet, O my soul; and why art thou troubled in me? trust in God,' Ps. xlii. 5. Faith will quail all the rising doubts of our own hearts and temptations of Satan. Satan saith thus 'and thus, but what saith God? what saith the spirit of faith in me? That saith thus. Alas! when our hearts shall rise against us, and Satan shall join with our accusing consciences and have not a spirit of faith to speak against our hearts, and against our hearts accusing us, guilt is a clamorous thing. Oh, the conscience and Satan makes great ado. When he getteth guilt he is an excellent rhetorician and orator, to set colours on things. If we have not something to still our clamorous consciences, and to quiet the accusation of conscience, what will become of us? And therefore labour so to believe that we may speak, not only to God, but for God and profitably to us; but in defence of ourselves, against our own unbelieving hearts and Satan's temptations.

What is the reason that poor souls yield themselves to despair, and so to a desperate conclusion of themselves oftentimes? Oh they labour not for the Spirit of God to believe first in their own hearts, and to have a word to answer Satan's temptations. And therefore, of all things, labour for the spirit

of faith, that we may believe, and believing, may be able to speak, to speak every way, to express ourselves for God, for ourselves, for the truth.

The next verse is, 'Knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up with Jesus, and present us with him.'

Here is farther grounds of comfort, that God will raise us up by Christ, and present us with him. Paul comforted himself with this, that God should raise him by Christ, and present him with the believing Corinthians. Now this hath a double meaning: first, that God should raise him out of troubles, which are a kind of deaths, as in the beginning of the chapter he calls the troubles he was in 'a great death;' and then, that God would raise him at length out of the grave, and present him and them at the day of judgment, as his crown before the Lord.

This was his comfort. Now, for aught I see, the apostle may mean both subordinate one to another; for God doth raise us out of trouble by Jesus, and present us one to another in this world for our comfort, and at length raise us out of the dust, and present us altogether, to be for ever together with the Lord. His comfort then is, that God will raise us up, and then he will present us with you. This is set down by the effect. 'God will do it; God that raised up Jesus will do it.' And the cause why God will do it is, because he hath raised up Jesus. First, God that hath raised up Jesus will by Jesus raise up us, and present us with you. So that here is the comfort and the ground of it. The comfort is double. God will raise us up, and then God will present us with you. The ground of it is this, why he will do it, because he hath raised up Christ. God is the author of it, and he that hath raised up Christ will raise up you. There is such a connection and blessed union between Christ and us, that the same power that raised up Jesus out of the grave will raise us up likewise.

So that here is a comfort above comfort; but yet 'knowing' is prefixed.

'Knowing that God will raise us up, because he hath raised up Jesus.' So that I may observe in the passage of it, that all comfort cometh into the soul by knowledge. God not only raiseth us up, and presents us one with another, by the same power that he hath raised up Jesus by, but we must know that it must be so, if we will have comfort. Whatsoever cometh into the soul to strengthen it cometh through knowledge. As from the heavens come light, and through light all influences, and whatsoever is sweet from heaven, to make things flourish, comes with light, so all things that come to the soul to

make it comfortable and cheerful, comes with the light of knowledge. Indeed, all graces are nothing but knowledge digested, knowledge turned into affection and practice. What is anything but knowledge? any grace, but the performance of such a thing from such and such grounds? As we see in fruit, all that is in the fruit cometh from the juice that is [in] the root. And so the vigour and strength of everything is knowledge; I mean knowledge and a spirit of faith to believe what we know, to assent to it, and acknowledge it.

Light, you know, is very comfortable. Darkness is a state of fear. So ignorance is a state of doubting and fear. There is no good where ignorance is; but light and knowledge is a state of boldness. We believe, and speak, and are bold. Why? 'We know.'

And therefore the people that be careless of growing in knowledge, they be enemies of comfort and of grace. 'Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 2 Pet. iii. 18. The most knowing Christian is the most constant, courageous, comfortable, fruitful Christian, because together with divine light enlightening the soul, there goeth divine heat, enlarging the soul to every duty, and to all comforts whatsoever. So much for that.

We will speak a little of the comforts and places of the ground of the comfort. 'He will raise us up, and present us with you.' Troubles that be greater are called death, as in the first chapter of this epistle. The Lord that delivered me from so great a death, and why? Specially for this end; because, as they be partial deaths, so likewise they agree with death. In this we despair of life and recovery. So when a trouble is great, as when a man is dead, the trouble is desperate. It is a death, there is no hope of recovery again. Now, saith Paul, though my troubles be great, yet notwithstanding God will raise me up, even out of death, and present me with you.

Quest. How knew Paul that God would do this?

Ans. It is like he knew it by a spirit of revelation, having nearer communion with God, as a more public person, than we have. But what is that to us? Can we say God will raise us up, and present us one to another, as Paul did? No, beloved, we cannot say so; but this we can say, God will raise me up out of this trouble, or if I die in it, God will raise me out of the grave. This is the happy condition of a Christian. He is sure, if he be in trouble, either to be raised for the good of the church, if he hath any service for him to do; else if I die, he will raise me up at the last day with all his people, to be for ever with him. If it be for the good of the church, and mine own good to

live, I shall live still; if not, I shall be sure to be raised at the latter day; fall out what will fall out, all falleth out well for the children of God.

Now the holy apostle no question had reference to both. He had both in his view, raising out of trouble, and raising to eternal life; because he could never speak of any inferior deliverances but his mind would run on the future, and that did terminate all comforts. All comforts end in the resurrection. Usually when Paul maketh mention of an inferior thing, he mounteth higher, he mounts to the highest of all; he resteth not his thoughts till he hath thought of that, as in the end of this chapter he endeth in the resurrection, and endeth in comfort, speaking gloriously of it. So at this time no question but there was present all deliverances in this world, but especially eternal deliverance in the world to come. As 2 Tim. iv. 17, 'The Lord delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, and can and will deliver for the time to come, and present me to his heavenly kingdom,' that I am sure of.

So that it were a very heavenly course for Christians, if they think of anything that cometh from the love of God to them, to take hints from that, to take notice of the issue of all. All deliverances are terminated in their last deliverance out of the grave, and all blessings are terminated in the last blessing, life everlasting. And take every thing as a pawn, a pledge, a beginning of that, for the same love that giveth eternal comforts, giveth comforts in this world; and the same God that delivers out of the grave, delivers us out of troubles; and the same God that will bring us all to heaven, will bring friends together in this world, if it be for their good. And therefore if we will comfort ourselves solidly in any condition, extend our thoughts to the time to come. Was it David's comfort when he said, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord?' Ps. xxvii. 4. Was it his meaning to confine his thoughts on that only desire, and to dwell in the church for ever? No; 'that I dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' here while I live, and in heaven for ever when I am gone, Ps. xxiii. 6: 'Doubtless I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever;' here while I live, and for ever in heaven. Then they will be solid comforts. If the drops of comfort we have in holy things be carried on to the end of all, everlasting deliverance, by the resurrection, and eternal comforts in heaven, then they would be comforts indeed. It is a good disjunction when friends promise to meet again. Well, we shall meet either here or in heaven, and perhaps here and in heaven. The same God that will comfort us in heaven, if he seeth it good for us, he will comfort us here with the presence of one another.

‘He will raise us up, and present us with you.’ That is another of his comforts. But what comfort is that in this world, if he meaneth only the joy in the world to come? as I am persuaded it is that he mainly aims at, the other was but that that by meditation he raised his thoughts to. What comfort is it that friend shall be presented to friend, pastor to people, believers among friends!

There be divers kinds of communion, if absent, by letters, by-real tokens, by;message; but what are these to presence? Presence is the sweetest kind of communion that can be. Communion one with another in presence is in deed, in word, of communion in presence. And therefore God will deliver us from trouble, and present us with you; for in presence every thing speaks comfort. Without discourse the very presence of a friend comforts. There is a quick and living power in the very face of a friend. The eye comforts, the speech comforts, all comforts, and nothing but comforts if they be hearty friends in the Lord.

And therefore saith Paul, this shall be my comfort and your comfort, that I shall be delivered out of this death, and presented with you, for your good, for my own comfort. And no question this is a beginning of heaven in this world. If there be any heaven on earth, it is the communion of saints; it is when many join together in an holy affection, that have not only general likings of the same things, but have the same spirit acting and living in them all, one and the same Spirit of God stirring up approbation and dislike of the same thing, the same end for good causes. This is a special comfort, if there be any comfort in this world. And so Paul meaneth, when he saith, ‘I shall be delivered, and presented to you.’ And therefore we should take special care to improve communion by all means, considering it was so sweet a thing. *O qui congressus, et gloria quanta fuerunt!* when Paul was severed a great while. Paul came with abundance of blessings of God, and they came with abundance of desire to have heavenly discourse with St Paul.

Thus while we be in this world we must be exercised with these intermitting comforts. This is a life of separation; we shall enjoy a while, and then part, till we be in heaven, ‘and then we shall be for ever with the Lord,’ 1 Thess. iv. 18. ‘Therefore comfort one another with these words.’ What is the comfort? ‘We shall be for ever with the Lord.’ If it be such a comfort to enjoy communion one with another, what is it to enjoy communion for ever with the Lord in heaven? That is the meeting time, when body and soul shall meet, when Christ and all his members shall meet, when all the members of

the church from the first to the last shall all meet. These three blessed meetings shall be, Christ and we, and we one with another, and body and soul. Then is the meeting, then is the presenting. But all other meetings together are comfortable, as they be tastes of the last and everlasting meeting that shall be revealed. This may comfort us in the parting of friends, in the loss of friends by death. There will be a time of meeting again. Our head will bring all the members together, as it is said of Christ, 'that he shall gather all to a head,' Eph. iv. 15: that being Christ's office, to gather all the children of God together, from whom they were fallen; to gather them to the angels in 'whom they were in terms of difference; to gather them together, one to another in love, and gathering to themselves in peace. This is Christ's work. This gathering together to a head belongeth to Christ. And though we be not together now, yet in heaven we shall be.

Now the ground of this is, God that hath raised up Jesus, will by Jesus do this. He considers of God as serveth his purpose. It is an act of a Christian, of a discreet and wise soul, to single out of God those attributes and those actions that suit to his present distress or present condition; as if a man be in perplexity, think of him as a God strong and wise; if a man be in any trouble, think of him as a good and powerful God; if a man be wronged, think of him as a God of vengeance. Thou God of vengeance, show thyself! And when we be in any trouble and cast down, and dead, as troubled by others' deaths, then can God raise Christ out of the grave, who is our head. And out of the love that he loveth both mystical Christ and natural Christ, the Lord is gracious to all for his sake. He that loveth Christ as his own natural son loveth Christ mystical, all that be Christ's, with the same love that he loved Christ. As Christ himself prayeth he will embrace all such with the same love he loved himself withal, John xvii. 24, so God is well pleased and rests in his love, not only in his natural Son, but all that be his; and therefore out of love to his own Son, as he hath raised up him and set him in heavenly places, he will raise up all them that be his, and are engrafted into him. He that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also. What is the consequence? Because he hath raised up Jesus, therefore by Jesus he will raise us out of trouble. The ground is, Christ is a public person, and so in heaven is a public person, a second Adam, and raised up as a second Adam; and therefore be raised up as [a] public person, and as a second Adam, and a root of all believers. He hath taken heaven in our place as our husband, and we sit in heavenly places with him; and therefore God that raised up him will raise us up also. 'If Christ be risen, we shall rise.' There is no question of it, as he proveth at large, 'because I live ye shall live also,' John xiv. 19. I cannot

follow the point, but it is a point you are acquainted with all, being an article of faith. Therefore see the ground of this comfort. God will raise up us and bring us together, because he hath raised Jesus. He is the first-fruits of them that slept. Now all the harvest is blessed in the first-fruits. Our first-fruits is Christ now. And therefore we shall be hero raised out of little deaths, and at the resurrection out of the great death, and be for ever with the Lord, which may teach us this comfortable observation; to see all our comforts in Christ first; to see all we look for from God, first in Christ and then in ourselves. If we look for love from God, see his love on Christ first: 'He loveth us because he loveth him first,' and he loveth us in him. If we look to resurrection, ascension, or glory, see it in Christ first. If we look for the performance of any promise, see that promise in Christ first, for all are made for his sake, and made good in him, to Christ first and then to us. If we want any grace, see it in Christ first, for he hath fulness of the Spirit for our sakes: 'And of his fulness we have received, and grace for grace,' John i. 10. So that in both estates of humiliation and exaltation severally, see all first in Christ and then in ourselves. Look on Christ in state of humiliation, and see ourselves there. 'Christ was a curse for us,' died for us. All this is for us. And see all the evil that belongeth to us taken away by him in his state of humiliation. He humbled himself to death, and became a curse for us. And so in his state of exaltation in several degrees. See our resurrection in his resurrection, our ascension in his ascension, our sitting in heavenly places by his sitting in heavenly places. The ground is, the union I spake of before. And then God hath decreed that we shall be made conformable to his Son. 'We must be conformable to Christ our elder brother.' We are chosen to be conformable to him. And therefore whatsoever was in him, there will be a conformableness in us thereunto. And we must be content to go to heaven as Christ went. 'He first suffered and then entered into glory,' 1 Peter i. 10, 11, he rose again, but he died first. We must be content to go to heaven by that way that our blessed head and Saviour hath gone before us. And if we do so, surely that God that raised him will raise us up too.

I beseech you, therefore, when we are to consider of any comfort, see it in Christ first, not only as a pattern to whom we must be conformed, but see it in Christ as a cause, because Christ will raise us up. We shall not only be raised because he is raised, and ascend because he is ascended, but God will raise us up with Jesus. Between God and us cometh Jesus, for all that comes from God comes from Jesus. So all that cometh from us to God must go through the mediation of Jesus. 'He that raised up Jesus will by Jesus raise us up.' Christ is not only a pattern of conformity, but likewise a cause. And it is

an improvement of the favour, that God doth us favour through such a one that standeth between him and us; that there should be so excellent a person as Christ to do all, to be a pattern of all, and cause of all. For can there be a better than he to raise us out of trouble here, and to heaven hereafter? Then he that is our own head, will he suffer his members to perish? And he that is so favourable with God, and one with God, that as a man layeth hold on us, and as God layeth hold on God, as a friend to him, being between both as a friend of both. As God, so we must trust him with all, with our rising again, with our ascension, with our glory in heaven. He is the Joseph between God and us. As he conveyed all favour to the patriarchs, from Egypt through Pharaoh, so Christ is the high steward of all, that hath the dispensing of all his comforts by our sweet head, that is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, to make us for ever one with him. So that there is comfort in the deriving of comfort by so sweet, so loving, so gracious a head as Jesus is.

But you will say, Will Christ raise us out of trouble likewise? Yes, by the same power and virtue. For the virtue of Christ's resurrection reacheth farther than to raise us from death, for it extendeth itself to all abasements in the world. God raiseth us out of all abasements by the power that he raised up Christ, and by the power that Christ raised up himself. And therefore we should comfort ourselves in the distress of the church and personal distresses. And first for the church. God raised up Christ the head of the church after three days, and when they had rolled a stone upon the grave, and set a watch too, and when Christ had been a surety to bear the sins of all the elect of the world from the beginning to the end; Christ having a stone upon his grave, so much mould, and such a stone, and his grave watched and sealed; and then having as a public person the sins of all the world, yet Christ rose up again for all this.

Beloved, Satan and his instruments labour to bury the church if they can, and to roll a stone on the church, that it should never rise up again. It was their plot of late, and it is their purpose now, but that their power is a little broken. They would bury Christ and his church altogether, roll a stone on him, watch him that he should never rise again. This they do; and now in the third day he shall rise again. There may be a limited time of Jacob's sorrow, but there will be a day of deliverance. He that raised up the head of the church, after the time he had appointed he should lie there under the bondage and captivity of death, he will raise up the body of Christ. Our times are not in our hands, nor in the devil's time, nor in man's time, but in God's time. Man may oppose his time, and be against his time. 'They shall cast you

into prison for ten days.' It is certain and sure, which may be a comfort to the church. The church beyond seas was lately under hatches, and the enemy had got her into the grave, and thought to have rolled the stone upon the church; but God, that raised up Jesus, hath raised up the church in some comfortable measure, which may put us in hope, that now there is time to set prayer on work. It puts encouragement into our hands. That that God hath done, encourages us to pray to God for the finishing of his own good work. We have not only faith and promises, but performances to encourage us. We see the stone is rolled off as it were. This is our comfort, and this is the church's comfort to the end of the world. She may be for a while under the grave, but God will send his angels, his messengers, one or another, to take away the stone, and raise up the church, as in the parable of the dry bones, Ezek. xxxvii. 1, seq. 'The church was 'as dry bones,' but 'the Spirit entered into them, and made them live.' So at length a spirit shall enter into the church, and it shall live. Babylon must fall; the church must rise. Christ will enlarge his church to the end [of] the world. Heaven hath said it, and hell cannot disannul what God hath concluded. He that raised up Jesus will raise up the church out of all its troubles. And for ourselves, in all deaths and all our desperate troubles, sink not under them. Make use of the articles of faith. They are of wonderful enlarged sweetness. The sweet article of the resurrection and life everlasting have influence into all our lives. Make use of that; God, that doth the greater, will not he do the less, if for our good? Will God raise my body out of the grave, and not out of this sickness? God that can raise me out of dust, cannot he raise me out of this trouble, and present me to my friends again? If for my good, he can do it.

And rise from inferior things to strengthen our faith, and the greatest things we have in faith for the time to come. Will God give me life everlasting, and not daily bread? Will God give heaven, and not provision to bring me thither? Will God raise me out of the dust, when it is scattered I know not where, and get all my dust together, and quicken that dust, and not quicken me out of this, if it be for my good and the good of others? If he have any service to do for me, he will do it. And therefore, I beseech you, beloved, let us labour to strengthen our faith in the way to heaven, by that which is to come. What made the apostles pass through thick and thin, break through all troubles between them and heaven, but [that] they thought God would deliver them? If he did not deliver them, he would deliver them to heaven, and present them to his heavenly kingdom. Having heaven in their eyes, time to come in heaven, resurrection in their eyes, and glorious times in their eyes, it will be of such force and influence into their hearts, that they

shall go through all things between, and make this disjunction; either God will raise me out of this, or out of the grave, and present me to his heavenly kingdom. I beseech you, therefore, learn this, that in all our dejections we make use of that last and powerful work of God in raising from the dead. Raising comforteth for what is past. Our Saviour Christ, our best part, our head, is in heaven, and we shall all draw to him in time. Let us not lose the benefit of such a meditation, of such a ground as this. See all in Christ beforehand; all is done in Christ. Beloved, can we have a better pledge and pattern, than to see all we look for done in Christ beforehand? We look for the resurrection, Christ is raised; and ascension, Christ is ascended. We look for glory in heaven: Christ is glorified, Christ, and we in Christ; for when we think of Christ, we must think of ourselves in Christ. And therefore, when we hear the creed repeated, and the articles of religion, or anything of Christ, let us wrap up ourselves by the spirit of faith in Christ, see ourselves crucified in Christ, and dead in Christ, and raised in Christ, and set in heavenly places with Christ.

I but administer the heads to you, for your meditations to work upon. You see what excellent use the apostle maketh of his faith. It made him believe, speak confidently for the present. And therefore, with cheerfulness attend upon the blessed means of the word and sacrament, that God hath appointed to strengthen our union and communion with Christ. Christ is our life, and the nearer communion with him, the more life we have. And the sacrament is appointed for to seal to us this communion, to strengthen this near union, and receive with the spring and fountain of life, Jesus Christ. And therefore, come with exceeding comfort; and the more our union with Christ, the more our comforts in life or death. All depends on that: as we see hope of resurrection, hope of deliverance, hope of glory, doth all depend upon that, union first in Christ, then in us, and in us because in Christ. Therefore, strengthen union with Christ, and strengthen all. For matter of the sacrament, you are acquainted with the doctrinal part of it, have this conceit of it. It is a high ordinance of God, which strengthens faith, which being strengthened, strengthens all the powers of soul.

Verse 15

For all things are for your sakes, that, most plenteous grace, by the thanksgiving of many, may redound to the praise of God.

The holy apostle, as we heard, labours to arm himself and all others against all discouragements in religion, by comforts fetched from religion.

He bringeth in divers springs of comfort in this latter part of the chapter.

'I believe, and therefore I have spoken; as David believed, and therefore he spake.' It is no otherwise with us than with David and other saints before us, as we showed at large.

The last day this comfort was handled, that God -would raise him out of his trouble, and present him together with the Corinthians in his life, and at the last in the world to come. And from this ground, 'Because God raised up Jesus.' 'Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up by Jesus, and shall present us with him.' Of this I have spoken at large already.

I beseech you, before I leave this point, learn this, that in all our dejections, we make use of that last and powerful work of God, in raising from the dead.

I now proceed to what followeth.

'For all things are for your sakes.' Here is a farther ground of comfort, both of present deliverance, as for their sakes.

The second ground is, 'All is for the glory of God.'

And the means of that glory 'Because the grace aboundeth,' that these deliverances spring from, 'thanksgiving abound to the glory of God.' Why should we be discouraged in suffering, since God will be presented with us in sufferings, delivering us in time, considering it is for the church's good, and for the glory of God? And for the glory of God in this way, because it will minister matter of praise, not of one, but of many, out of which praise God will be glorified. This is the scope of the words.

The first ground of comfort is, 'All are for your sakes,' both our sufferings, and assistance, and presence of God in them, and deliverance out of them, all is for you, 2 Tim. ii. 10: 'We suffer for the elect's sake,' all is for your sake. Indeed, beloved, it is a large diffused consideration, for all is for the church's sake, the world itself. The standing of the world is for the church's sake. If God had gathered his elect, there would be an end of these

sinful days. Another sinful generation, God would not suffer the world to stand for a company of wretches, that daily blaspheme his name, that pollute and defile their souls and bodies, that oppose his truth like rebels.

That the world continueth, it is for the elect's sake, that they may be gathered out [of] the world. The world is as it were reprieved, because many are to be born in the world; as lewd women are reprieved, being with child, for that's sake that is to be born. He the world continueth because there is a generation to come; the number of the elect is not yet accomplished.

Thus you see the very world, and the standing of the world, is for the church's sake. The world is elect; and so are things in the world, in heaven or earth, in some sort. They are for the church's sake. 'To us a child is born, to us a son is given,' Isa. ix. 6; for the church he died, for the church he rose again, for the church 'he appears in heaven and makes intercession,' as Rom. viii. 34. He sits at God's right hand making intercession for us. John xvii. 17, 19, 'I sanctify myself;' that is, I prepare myself as a sacrifice to suffer for them. 'I pray not for the world, but for them thou hast given me out of the world.' All that Christ did suffer, enjoy, and do in heaven, as our head, it is for the church's sake. That he giveth gifts to wicked men, that they continue, it is for the church's sake, that they may be instruments and servants of the church. In that sense they be redeemed by Christ as servants of the church. We see in nature that summer and winter serveth for vines, and fruitful trees, and plants, for the good corn. Cold weather and warm weather, they have the leaves to cover them. And every thing serveth to bring forth the fruit; all these circumstantial things. So whatsoever is circumstantial in the world, as kingdoms, states, government, they think to tumble in the world for their own ends, and to toss the world as they list. It is for a number of men unregarded, unknown, that pass here as unknown men, hidden men for the most part, it is for the church's sake that they continue, that they have any favours. They are beholden to the church for their lives, to the church for their standing, and for the gifts they have, though they think not so. God, the great God of heaven and earth and Christ the great king of the church, in reference to his church, giveth gifts to men, magistrates, ministers, people, yea, even to them that be not good men, and all for the good of his church. So that 'all is for you,' word, sacraments, every thing.

I might make a large dispute here, but that I unfolded it at large out of that place in Corinthians, 'All is yours,' which is the general. The church is yours, 'whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or things present, or things to

come, or life, or death, or the world, all is yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'

And from this general truth the apostle deducts this, 'it is for your sake.' All things that we suffer, all things that are done to us is for your sake. If so be all things are for the church's sake, beloved, we ought to join with God, us Paul doth here. Christ hath passed as it were a deed of gift of all things to the church, to serve her turn, to bring the church to heaven. Shall not God's intent, and Christ's intent, be ours? Saith he, all that I do and suffer is for your sake. It is a happy thing when God's intentions and ends, and our ends, shall meet in one, beloved, voluntarily. And God will bring all men's ends to serve his against their wills. Oh but happy are we if we can make our ends meet with God's ends willingly and cheerfully.

Quest.. What is the ground of this, 'that all things are for the church's sake'?

Season 1. The ground of it is, that covenant, wherein God passeth over himself as it were to the church, 'I will be your God.' And Christ he is as it were not his own; he is the church's. Christ is the church's. Therefore all are the church's. All the three persons of the Trinity have their title of excellency from relation to the church. God a Father in regard of the church; Christ a redeemer in regard of the church; the Holy Ghost a comforter in regard of the church. So God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they are in covenant with the church. And they are the church's, as it were making themselves the church's, out of that infinite bottomless love; being God, they have made themselves the church's.

Now if God himself be the church's, and in covenant with it, that the church may improve him, and whatsoever is in him, all his excellent attributes for their comfort and good, shall not all other things be the church's? If God himself be reconciled to the church, shall not all things else be reconciled? If God be in covenant, shall not every thing? 'The stones in the street be in covenant with him,' as Job saith, v. 23.

Reason 2. A second subordinate ground to this is, the union with Christ the king of the church. Now all things serve Christ, who is the king of heaven and earth; his kingdom reaches from heaven to the bottom of hell; he overruleth cursed devils and wicked spirits. Who is he whom the devils obey? saith God. Now if all things serve Christ, they serve his spouse, by reason of the union and spiritual commerce with Christ, to whom God hath dedicated

and committed the rule and government of heaven and earth. All things are mine in heaven and earth, committed to me, saith Christ, when he ascended into heaven; and therefore as Christ is the great Lord of the world, so the church is the great queen and empress of the world. All things serve Christ the husband, and all things must serve the church his spouse. It must be so. God is in covenant with the church, and Christ is hers by union with the church. 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm,' Ps. cv. 15. Withhold the hand of violence from them, they are mine. So Christ is head, king, and husband of the church, and will not suffer her to be wronged in his sight, but all things shall serve for the church's good.

Reason 3. Again, to come nearer and lower to us. If you look to us, all is for the church's sake, the children of God too; because God hath put a Spirit into his church to extract good out of all. 'All is for your sakes.' The Spirit of God shall teach you to see God seeking your good in all things. God puts it into the spirit of his children to seek the good of his church in all things. Paul had the Spirit of God to direct his aims, as none but the child of God hath right aims to seek God in all things, and his glory.

The church hath the Spirit of God to see God seeking their good in all things. 'This shall turn to my good,' saith Paul, 'through the supplies of the Spirit and your prayers,' Philip, i. 19. The church prayeth that all things may serve for his good; that God would sanctify all his crosses and afflictions; that God would bless magistrates, ministers, and all ordinances for their good; that, with the Spirit of God, and this action's 'exercise of the Spirit of thanksgiving and prayer, all things are made for the church's good, because they have a spirit specially showing itself in a spirit of prayer, to work good out of everything. Therefore the children of God pray that God would bless his sufferings and deliverances, and all things, not for his own good, but for the church's good. And the church itself and every good Christian labours to see God, seeking and deriving good to themselves out of everything; for the covenant of God, being friends of God; and they are near to Christ, and near to God in Christ. And they labour to see the love of God and the love of Christ in all things, that so the sweetness and communion of the love may be increased. God acquaints them with his secrets in everything, so much as may be for their eternal good; and with the secrets of his election, how he directeth and ordereth all things to their good. He never corrects but lie instructs with it; he never afflicteth but they know the ground of it; and so by the Spirit of God are enabled to draw good out of everything. In prosperity they see God seeking their encouragement; in crosses they see God seeking

their humility and repentance. So that on these and other grounds which I might name, all things are for the church's sake. Why do the children of God look for the good of the church?

The reason why Saint Paul as a minister sought the good of the church, was the relation between a master and a people, between an apostle and people, called and gathered by him; and in relation as a Christian, because fellow-members with them.

If I were to speak to ministers, I would speak of the relation between pastors and people, how they should seek the good one of another; but as a Christian, all is for your sake. No Christian but as soon as [he is] a Christian hath a public mind inspired into him to seek the good of others; he concurs with God willingly. As soon as ever he is a Christian, he learneth self-denial; He knows he hath given up himself and all to God, to the church, and he is become a servant to others for Christ's sake. As soon as ever a man begins to be a Christian he hath a spirit of love, and seeketh not his own good. As soon as ever a man becomes a Christian, he hath a spirit enlarged, he hath higher and farther aims, and large affections towards God and the church; his soul is large. All other men are straitened in their affections, and strengthened in their aims. They have poor aims and ends of their own. And in their affections they be straitened; they cannot love, nor long after good things, yea, they be straitened to their own in all things. He is within his own circumference, within his own term; his terminus reductivus is himself. He reduceth all to himself, and seeks himself in all things. He thinks not that he doth sin, but he doth, for it is impossible any but a Christian should seek the good of others as they should; but as soon as [he is] a Christian, the Spirit of God maketh the heart public to seek the good of others. And the more Spirit of Christ, the more they seek the good of others; and they that be greatest in heaven are the greatest servants. Christ is greatest in heaven, and who was more made a servant? He became a curse to make us blessed: poor to make us rich. As he was the greatest servant that died for others, so they that be the greatest next to him have learned self-denial.

Not they that heap up great states, and are put into great places, but they that have-public minds and public spirits, that seek the good of others, and abase themselves for the good of others, such as Paul is here, 'All is for you, and for your sake.'

I beseech you, therefore, make this use of it; learn of so excellent an apostle as Saint Paul was, to have large affections and public aims and ends.

Labour to discern of your conditions and states by this, that you have the Spirit of Christ in you; because to do good to others you can deny yourselves. 'All things are for your sake.'

This should teach us likewise to have honourable and high esteems of God's people. Are they such whom Christ gave himself for, and made himself of no reputation and power for? Are they such as heaven and earth serve, and shall we despise them? Are they God's darlings, as dear to him as the apple of his eye? Are they the jewels, as the Scripture sets them out in such excellent terms? Are they his friends? are they his heirs and fellow-heirs with Christ? Are they such as the Holy Scriptures sets them down? Are 'all things for their sakes?' and shall not we have honourable esteems of them? Let this rectify our conceits of them, that they be not worthy to live in the world, when indeed the world is not worthy of them, 'All things are for your sake.' Suppose they have nothing in possession, yet in use and service all things serve them to bring them to heaven, and direct them for their good.

They are here as princes in a strange country, that must be honoured for their father's sake, and for their country's sake. They shall be great men when they come home; and therefore howsoever the world valueth and esteemeth them, when we see any price of grace and of the Spirit of God, think that these be yours, for the present all things be theirs. Oh but how great will they be? These shall be Christ's, not the world's; these shall sit and judge the world; they shall judge me, if I be not a Christian, ere long. Now, therefore, let me take heed how I despise one of Christ's little ones, how I debase such a one that is so great in God's esteem, for whose sake the world stands; and let this respect to them evidence to us that have another spirit than the world hath, that we know another Christ.

And again, let it comfort God's people, who have some testimony that they are his, in their losses, in their crosses, in their misuse in the world. Let them consider, are they so to God, are they so to Christ? Oh no! Let them labour therefore for a spirit of patience and courage to go through good reports, bad reports; good usage, bad usage; for the worst thing that befalls them hath a command to do them good. 'Do the young man no harm,' saith David of Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 5. And so all things have a command to do God's people no harm. Kings have a prohibition: 'Touch not mine anointed,' Ps. cv. 1-5. There is a prohibition given that no hurt shall be done. They may kill them, but not hurt them; imprison them, but not hurt them; they may wrong them, but not hurt them; that is, they cannot hinder

their everlasting good, they cannot take away their Christ, their comfort, their peace, or touch them in their names; but oftentimes, against their wills, do them most good when they think to do them most harm. And therefore, I beseech you, labour for a spirit of comfort, considering all things are for our sakes, if we be Christ's.

I have been something long in the point, but it is comfortable and useful.

I will now haste to that which followeth.

‘All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace, through the thanksgiving of many, may redound to the glory of God.’

The second ground of comfort is from the main end of all, which is the glory of God. Here is a sweet combination of the grace of God and the glory of God, ‘that abundant grace, through the thanksgiving of many, might redound to the glory of God.’ The links of this chain are these:— God suffers his children in this world to be exercised; in the exercise he giveth evidence of his presence, by grace and by comfort; and after all delivers them, giving them cause and matter of praise; and that praise is the praise not only of themselves, but of many. The praise of themselves and many, returneth to the glory of God. Here is grace breedeth praise, praise breedeth glory.

We will handle the words as they lie: ‘that the abundant grace, through the thanksgiving of many, may redound to the glory of God.’

‘The abundant grace.’ What doth he mean by abundant grace? We shall know it a little by distinguishing a little the word of grace in the Scripture.

Primitive grace is the free favour of God in forgiving of sins, and access to life everlasting.

Secondly, The next grace that springs from that is grace whereby we are sanctified, usually called habitual grace, whereby our natures have a stamp of Christ on them, and we are transformed into his image.

Thirdly, Grace is the stirring of in up, exciting grace stirring up that grace that is in us; and draws it forth to particular actions, of doing, and suffering, and resisting, and carrying ourselves as Christians should do. For

besides the favour of God, and the fruit of that favour, which is of our nature, there must be spiritual stirring grace to act and stir up the grace which would otherwise lie sleeping in us; there must be new grace on all occasions. 'God must give the will and the deed,' Philip, ii. 13. God must stir us up to every good action, as I have showed at large heretofore. A man cannot do the good he is enabled to do by an habitual grace, unless he have grace to stir him up to do. As he hath all graces in general to enable him, so he must have new graces for every new act; he must have constancy of spirit. And if the troubles be great, there he enlargements of grace; as if a man carries a greater burden, he must have more strength. But,

Fourthly, Grace is any favour that cometh from the primitive grace and favour of God. As we say of a great man, when he giveth a petty thing to an inferior person, This is such [a] man's grace.

Or grace is such a thing that springeth from his love and favour to us. So not only the favour of God that accepts to life everlasting, and that inward grace of God's Spirit, and that actual grace that stirs to every good action, but everything that comes from God is grace.

When God once enters into covenant with us, to become our God, to love us in Christ, whatsoever befalls us comes to us as a fruit of that love; for he being Lord of heaven and earth, and having all things at command, will not suffer the wind to blow upon his church, will not suffer the waves to beat upon it, but out of love, and for the good of the church; for otherwise his government and wisdom would be impeached. And,

Fifthly and lastly, By abundant grace is meant the presence of God, the assistance of God unto Paul in suffering, and God's delivering him out of trouble. These two things he specially means. God's presence in troubles, and delivering him out of them.

It is a grace of God that we have faith. It is a grace of God that we have strength to suffer for that faith. To endure anything is a special grace. 'To you it is given to suffer,' Philip, i. 29. It is a more special grace when we have not only grace to believe, and grace to suffer, but strength of faith. And therefore 'it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer.' It is grace to have special peace, and joy, and comfort in the midst of all spiritual contrary conditions. And therefore God's presence and comfort in the midst of his disconsolate estate was a grace; and not only the doctrine of suffering for Christ [is] a grace, but whatsoever comes from the presence of God is a grace

likewise. And likewise his deliverance out is a grace. For as gold comes purer out of the furnace, so Paul comes richer in experience out of trouble; rich in faith, rich in love, rich in mortification; more heavenly-minded in the experience of God and his ways, and every way; and therefore it is an exceeding grace. And then [it is] a grace that God will bound and limit the malice of the devil and his instruments, that thus long they shall trouble them, and then set them at liberty. So that hereby we may plainly see, that all is done in favour of the church.

So it is a grace, that God hath put bounds and limits to the boundless malice of Satan and his instruments, to deliver the church, or any poor member of the church, as Paul was, at any time; and therefore they were to reckon all graces that they were to praise God for, both for his trouble and for his deliverance out of trouble, they being both graces.

Quest. But why doth he call it 'abundant grace?'

Ans. This St Paul doth out of his abundant humility, and out of his abundant love to God; out of his abundant measure of knowledge of the love of God towards him; for Paul's seeing and knowing were his own; want of worth in himself and his own weakness in himself, at the best, are nothing in themselves. And St Paul, weighing and considering the mighty power and malice of the enemy, the devil and his instruments, that laboured to trouble him and oppose the gospel,—when Paul saw that opposition and his own weakness; when Paul saw likewise the evidence and demonstration of the excellency of God in being present with him in trouble, and delivering him out of trouble, saw the power, and goodness, and mercy of God, here was an abundant grace, here was a spring-tide of grace, as an overflowing, as he saith, 'My cup overfloweth,' Ps. xxiii. 5. I have not only for necessity, but something for abundance: 'My cup overfloweth, and thou hast spread my table in the sight of mine enemies.' David considered the circumstances of God's bounty, for it was abundant. And Paul considering the great comforts that he had in the Lord, his great enemies and God's, and the malice of them against him and his God; here was an abundant grace.

Beloved, let us learn from hence, first of all, to see God in everything that befalls us: in sufferings, deliverance, the dealing of others towards us. See the grace of God in it. There is, you know, in things in this world, the bulk and surplus, or body of things; and then there is the spirit, and quintessence, and vigour of things: an extract, the vigour and quintessence of things. What are they? They are next to nothing. Take out God's grace,

God's mercy out of things, what are things? what is the world? Take away God's love, what is riches? what is honour and worth? Therefore, in every thing, see it as a grace, see it as derived from the primitive grace, from the favour and mercy of God in Jesus Christ. And then we cannot but be thankful, for we shall see the sweetness of grace. Every little gift, though by the hand of man, nay, every injury that is sanctified, he seeth it as a grace of God, looks to see God in it, his free love and grace among men. What is that that commends any thing to us that comes from another? Not the thing, but the mind of the person that sends it; not the bringer, but the sender. So when we have anything, look to God the sender. Look not to the thing, but to the love of God in the thing, which is the spirit, and quintessence, and vigour of the thing, the best thing. Nay, anything in the world is the love of God in it, derived to us through it. Let the grace of God be derived through losses, crosses, injuries; they be sweet. 'It is given to suffer,' Philip, i. 29. Every one is not partaker of such a favour. See the grace and favour of God in health, and wealth, and strength, and riches, the life and quintessence of all, which commends all to a Christian soul. God deriveth and conveyeth his grace and love to men through this. This is a little drop of that great love that he beareth to me in Jesus Christ. This cometh from that love by which he intends heaven to me. And when God intends heaven and happiness, and to be with him for ever, everything that befalls us by the way hath something of that love, as it were dipped in that love. Whatsoever befalls us between this and heaven, if we be God's children, it hath a tincture of that love, to make him keep heaven for us. And therefore labour to see the grace and love of God in everything, see the language of Canaan, the language of the Spirit of God. That that puts the style upon grace, a free gift, an undeserved thing issuing from love, it implieth love and freeness and undeserving in the person that hath it. Therefore, conceive of every thing, we have it first from it; is undeserved on my part, comes from love. This will make us use things as we should, to the glory of the Giver, and it will make us comfortable in all conditions, as grace. And labour, as the apostle doth here, to see them abundant graces, to raise the favours of God to an high esteem, as Paul doth here: 'It is abundant grace.' And that we may think the grace of God is great, considering to whom he hath denied it. Hath not he denied it to thousands? Therefore we have abundant grace in us, with great opposition; therefore an abundant grace. Consider the designs of the devil and devilish-minded men, who would have the church trampled under foot. Is it not above our worth? Do we deserve so much? Oh no! Then it is 'abundant grace.' We that deserve nothing should be thankful for everything, as a beggar that deserveth nothing

is thankful for every little gift. Labour thus to see a grace in everything, and labour to see an abundant grace.

The graces of God bestowed on St Paul raiseth up thankfulness of many, and that tendeth to the glory of God. Many had the prayers of St Paul, for he had commended himself to their prayers: Rom. xv. 30, 'Strive with God for me by prayer;' and so the Philippians and others, 'I shall be delivered by your prayers,' Philem. ver. 22. It was usual with Paul to commend himself to the church and people of God; and having done so, he knew that of course they would praise God. As he desires them to pray for him, that God would be present with him in trouble, and deliver him out, so he knew they would praise God. And as many prayers for him, so many praises for him; and therefore, 'through the thanksgiving of many,' &c.

Beloved, here see that the blessing of God bestowed upon public persons, or upon the church, or public persons in the church, should stir up thanks, and many thanks of many persons. Many thanks were given for the grace of God showed to St Paul.

Reason 1. I said before, that a Christian, when he becometh a true Christian, hath the Spirit of Christ in him, and hath learned self-denial. He can love others, especially public persons that be eminent in their standing for the good of the church, upon whom the good and honour of the church dependeth in a great measure. And therefore you see the Corinthians praise God for St Paul.

We should therefore labour for to consider what favours God showeth to his church, to any public person in the church, magistrates, ministers, or any notable Christian or friend; praise God for his benefits to others. Thus, in the prophet David's time, the good people made a circle as it were; 'The righteous shall come about me,' and were glad and joyful, and gave praise for his sake, and this made him, Ps. lxxvi. 16, say, 'Come hither, ye children, and I will teach you what the Lord hath done for my soul.' He inviteth them to come, and tells them what the Lord hath done for him, that they may praise God. 'The righteous shall hear it and be glad,' Ps. lxxiv. 10. And therefore, in the communion of saints, the sweetest communion is the rejoicing and giving of thanks for the good that God doth to others, especially those that be eminent in the church.

Reason 2. Another reason that concerns ourselves is this: Our good is laid up in the good and prosperity of others; our good is in the communion-

ship of the church and commonwealth; our private welfare in the public. As it is in the state, so especially in that heavenly commonwealth of the church, the communion of saints, the good of one dependeth on the good of the other. Why? Because God deriveth and conveyeth all good to man by man. It is his ordinance, he will have it so. And therefore, considering he deriveth good to men by men, therefore, when he showeth any favour unto men, we ought to praise God for it, because God deriveth good by that man to us. A Christian is a public good, because he hath a public mind. When any favour he hath of God, he is sure the public shall be the better for it, he will be useful, he will be serviceable. As soon as ever a man is a Christian, he becomes as a tree of righteousness; and therefore, if you see favours bestowed upon any good man, thank God for it, especially if it be a Paul, a blessed instrument on whom the good of many dependeth.

Therefore, what shall we say of them that be led by the spirit of envy, that think they have the less the more others have, that have an ill eye? Oh, beloved, take away that cursed spirit of envy! That that I have is thine, and that that thou hast is mine; in religion, there is a kind of blessed community. The more thou hast the more I have. If thy envy binder thee not, and if envy be taken away, the more thou hast the more I have. Oh take heed of this cursed spirit, that binders us from praising God for the good of others; as Paul doth here, that saith, God shall have praise, and many praises for his goodness showed to me.

Now, he saith many praises, because many had prayed. When they receive the harvest of prayers, they are thankful. You know prayer is a sowing in God's bosom. Prayer is a seed. So many prayers, so many seeds sown in heaven. When the harvest comes, when they see the fruit and issue of their prayers, then they praise God.

If we will therefore praise God, learn this one thing, for to observe what we pray for; not to pray at random and never to observe whether God answers or no, that we may be able to render his tribute due to him. How he answers our prayers for the church, for the special instruments of the church's good, king, and state; how he answers our prayers for our particular friends; and then let him have the tribute that he requires of every one, which is only praise. There is a kind of friendship between God and us, by which we enter into covenant with him; and friendship is maintained by duty, by returning of whatsoever we receive. Now, when we pray to God, and have this blessing, and that blessing, and give nothing to God again, friendship will

not be maintained without. When men are graves for benefits, to bury them, and return nothing again, this dissolveth the bonds of friendship among men, and it dissolveth also that bond with God, when they derive blessed benefits and return nothing back again. Thanks is nothing but a reflection to the favours wherein he hath shined on us first. It is his due, and an echo; therefore, give thanks for blessings to ourselves and others. And to that end, observe how he hears our prayers for ourselves and others.

But how doth the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God? Certainly it doth, 'that the thanksgiving of many may redound to the glory of God.' The more heart, the better music in God's ears, the better music and the louder music; the more the prayers are, the more are the praises, Prov. xiv. 28. The wise man saith, 'The glory of a king is in the multitude of his subjects,' and the glory of God is in the multitude of subjects, thankful subjects, that will return praise to him, give him the tribute he requires at our hands; the wages and service is to him the more the better. When a company can, as it were, levy an army, not only in prayers, to offer an holy violence to God, to get a blessing, but when it is gotten to join in company to praise God, Oh it is a blessed sound, a blessed noise in God's ears, when many do it.

Henson. The reason is this, because there is more abundance of incense. Prayers and praises be incense, and if the prayer of any one man be powerful with God, of one righteous man, what is the prayer of many righteous men? If the praise of one man be incense, what are the praises of many? 'If where two or three be gathered together, Christ is in the midst of them,' Mat. xviii. 20, what will he do where two or three thousand be gathered? will not he be much more in the midst of them? O beloved, company is excellent here, and therefore as you have it recited well in the psalms, stir up one another to praise the Lord, 'Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his holy name,' Ps. ciii. 1. But that is not enough, 'Praise the Lord all his angels, all the creatures.' The holy prophet, he puts a voice into hills, dragons, mountains, rivers, and every creature, that they may praise the Lord, Ps. cxlviii. 7.

But fearing he should not have heart and spirit enough to praise God enough, he stirs up 'sons of Levi, sons of Aaron, angels of heaven, to praise God.' So large was the heart of that blessed man, because he knew if the praises of one would be acceptable, what would the praises of many be? Why have we such narrow hearts? Indeed, God intends our good, God intendeth

it, for to make us heavenly-minded, who would otherwise have been like moles in the earth, but in regard of God, that we may think of God, and praise God, and therefore, Ps. xcii., there is a psalm of the Sabbath, wherein is a high exaltation of God's works. And we have the sacrament. Why is it called eucharist, the Greek word, but because it is a praising of God? We having the, sacrament are to praise God for the good we have by his body broken, his blood shed; and therefore have cause of the greatest praise that ever was, for the greatest gift that ever was given, 'the Son of man.' It is God's end in Sabbaths, in sacraments, his end in all his favours and blessings both in this and a better life; and therefore let us stir up our hearts, and stir up others to praise God, that thanksgiving may abound by many. But I cannot finish this argument so necessary.

For some rules how to do it I will not go out of the text, because I have spoken of thanksgiving upon every occasion.

If we will praise God, see that everything be a grace, he a grace and abundant grace, answerable to the degrees of goodness. The abundant grace indeed is Jesus Christ, who is the gift of gifts, and cause of all gifts, and the good we have by him. The abundant mercy in God is, new birth in Christ. There is the abundant grace. But even in the things of this life, that we have sacraments, ministers, helps to heaven, is abundant grace. Beloved, whatsoever we have more than hell by nature, it is all grace; and when we be Christians, and delivered from fear of hell, whatsoever is overplus is a grace. If we were poor all our life, and miserable all our life, what were it? But when to our way to heaven God giveth double portions, mercy here, and abundant hereafter, here is 'abundant redundant grace.' Therefore if we will be thankful, see grace and abundant love in everything. And consider the circumstances that increase the favours of God in Christ towards us, when we were unworthy, when we deserved the contrary. It came in opposition of the enemy; it came when we had much comfort in it, being stripped of all other comforts. See it come from the spring of God's favour, and see all the sweet circumstances of it, and that will make us thankful.

And then consider it is all we can do or need to do. It is just we should do it. God needeth not our thanks or praises, but it is justice on our part. Is it not just that we should return praise, 'that rivers should run into the sea, from whence they came?' that beams should reflect to the sun, from whence they came? An unthankful person is an unjust person. Therefore stir up others, that the thanksgiving may be by many.

But now ye see what cause he gave the church to be thankful. Beloved, if we have the Spirit of God; and if we consider the churches abroad to whom is not only grace, but to us also, we being all the spouse of one husband, branches of one root, heirs of one inheritance, sheep of one flock and pasture, all as from one head; whatsoever God doth, and whatsoever favours he showeth to our brethren beyond the seas, there is grace, and abundant grace showed. And now there ought to be thanksgiving, and ‘thanksgiving of many,’ if there were many prayers, and for the church. Every one that hath the spirit of prayer, hath many prayers for the church of God. And so much humiliation for the misery of the church, that, as the psalmist saith, ‘lay among the pots,’ Ps. lxxviii. 13, as scullions do, all besmeared and all bedaubed with misery. But now God hath brought it from ‘among the pots, and covered it with silver wings,’ the wings of a dove, and begins to restore beauty and excellency to the church. As we were then ready to pour forth our prayers in the behalf of the church, now let us labour to have our hearts enlarged for his mercy to the church, that there may be thanksgiving, and thanksgiving of many. This is our duty, and all that have the Spirit of God will do it.

Thus the saints of God have done at all times. You see when the ark was brought into Jerusalem, how David forgot himself and kingly state, and danced before the ark, so far that Michal his wife scoffed at him, 2 Sam. vi. 14, seq. And so we should rejoice so, as if we had forgot ourselves, especially them that it nearly concerneth; as it concerneth us all, indeed, as if we were in their case, we would desire others to rejoice in our behalf. Prayers went ‘out of Zion.’ God blessed the church out of our Church of England; our prayers did help them. An army of prayers is as good as an army of fighters. Now as an army of prayers went out of our Zion, so let an army of praises go out of our Zion: ‘Praises wait for thee in Zion,’ saith the psalmist, Ps. lxxv. 1.

When there is matter of praise, make the best use of it. We have waited for matter of praise, we have waited for good news, and we have news. Now as God hath helped out of Zion, so let us help with our praises, for praises help as well as prayer. As in the story of Jehoshaphat, after they had praised God in solemn special manner, the victory came, 2 Chron. xx. 21. Now praises prevail more than prayers, for there is more self-denial in praises than in prayer. God hath more honour, and all his attributes to him, whereas self-love may move a man to pray. Therefore, I beseech you, as we have helped them with our prayers, so help them with our praises to God, for that will help them still farther and farther. When God sees he gaineth a return by our

praises, we shall have matter of praise more and more, and still cause to pray that we have an heart to praise; and praises shall be evermore a pleasing obligation to God. But a place of all places is, Rev. xix., where you see a voice in heaven crying to God to avenge the blood of his saints, on that man of sin, and that cursed seat there; how all creatures in heaven and earth, they have their alleluiahs against these things. 'I heard a great voice and much people in heaven,' that is, the church, say, 'Alleluiahs! Salvation, glory, and honour, and power, be given to the Lord our God,' much people. Here is many thanksgiving. When antichrist begins to fall, Babylon to fall, we that belong to the people of God, if we have part in heaven, or any portion in heaven, we will praise God, we will have our alleluiahs. And now because the work is beginning we should join with a choir of heaven, join with the people of God, join with angels, join with all God's people. 'Alleluia! Salvation, glory, honour, and power, be to the Lord our God.' Why, what is the reason? 'For true and righteous are his judgments; he hath judged the great whore, which corrupted the earth with her abominations.' And again 'they cried, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever and so 'the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped God. Alleluia. Praise God all ye servants, ye that fear him, both small and great,' praise and glorify God, and let all, small and great, in heaven and earth, join in praises. If we had any wise consideration what God is working now in heaven, how he exalts himself, what excellent attributes he showeth in delivering his church, of power, and justice, and mercy in destroying his enemies; if we have divine spirits, let us sing forth praises to God, expecting by God's blessing more matter to praise God, to sing alleluiahs as the church did there.

Verses 16-18

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

A little to touch the two former verses, for they are a part of that heavenly comfort whereby the holy apostle raiseth up his spirit in the midst of all discouragements, multiplying comfort upon comfort, as trouble upon trouble.

Verse 16, 'But we do not faint; though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.' 'We do not faint.' Indeed, if we look upon outward causes, there is great reason why we should faint. For if we look within, nature is weak, the suggestions of the flesh strong since the fall; and then we are usually beset with temptations of discouragements in our particular calling, thinking we could do anything better than that we are called unto. This is a heavy temptation. And if it were to do such a thing, or such a thing, it might more easily be done. And then hard usage from the ungrateful world; when a man doth any good he receiveth ill for it.

These are great grounds of fainting, but the apostle saith he faints not for all this, 'though our outward man perish.' He grants that the outward man, body and condition, strength and health, may grow more and more downward; but the inward man, the soul, is under the guidance of the Spirit of God, that is, renewed day by day. The outward man consumes continually, death and life work together, we die as soon as we live. As he that hath a lease, every day it is shorter and shorter, and while we live we die, and the more we live the more we die. Death is at the last moment, the candle is going out continually till it be spent. Nay, more, let a man use his body never so holily, let him endure many crosses, the outward man will perish; it must be so.

But where is the comfort? 'The inward man is renewed day by day.' The inward man is the sanctified soul. All the graces of God are renewed, they are upheld under a consuming condition of the outward man. This is the blessed condition of a true Christian, that when he groweth downward he groweth another way. He doth not wholly perish as a base wretch doth, but as he decayeth in one part he reneweth in another. God by his Spirit reneweth him. For as in the body the Spirit is that which giveth a life to what we do, so the Spirit of God giveth a vigour to the inward man day by day.

But when is this, that the inward man is renewed day by day? In the time of affliction, for then we grow most; for in time of prosperity, then we grow backward. Usually in time of prosperity, when all things are according to our will and desire, we go backwards; but when the outward man decayeth, the inward man is renewed day by day. We decay in prosperity, but we grow in adversity; as a body shoots out more after sickness than before. Why should we then be afraid of sickness and weakness of body, considering it is a time of growth of the inward man? Mark the gracious goodness of God. When he takes away strength, because we are not for this life, he makes it up, working

strength and vigour in the inward man. We owe God a death. Since we must die, is it not better the decay be made up in the inward man? If we gain that which is gain to the soul, though with weakness and sickness to the outward man, it is well gained, because that is for eternity.

But this is a constant course with God. He is so good, he never takes away anything from his children, but he giveth it another away. Shall we then be discouraged when God takes strength, and he makes it up in the inward man? If anything be a ground of patience, this is. Whatsoever God doth to his children, there is love hid in the doing of it. If he give comfort, it is to encourage. Doth he follow us with crosses? It is that we may grow in the inward man. If we had hearts to follow God in his dealing, we should lose nothing but that he takes away.

Verse 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works a far more exceeding weight of glory.' Here is a ground of comfort to those that are in any crosses and afflictions. Whatsoever they suffer, it works glory, it works happiness; it is set out by glory. Now the Spirit of God sets out this estate of a Christian to come by way of comparison to anything that we suffer. Here are afflictions, here is glory; momentary afflictions, eternal glory; light afflictions, a weight of glory; and not only a weight, but a superlative, an exceeding weight of glory. So the Spirit of God meets with all discouragements here, for we can suffer nothing here, but we shall have better for it after. Grace is glory, but mixed with imperfection. What are those things we suffer here in this world, to glory, and eternal glory, and excessive glory? What cause have we to be discouraged for anything we suffer here?

But he saith afterwards, 'causeth unto us an eternal weight of glory.' That is more than to say glory follows afflictions; but there is at causal virtue in that we suffer, to work glory. We know the working by way of merit and desert, that is done by Christ; we have right to glory only by Christ. And it is sacrilege to attribute it to any creature, but when there is a working power fitting us. Now afflictions working by way of fitting us to that glory, whereto we have title by Christ, as soon as a man is a Christian, he hath title to heaven. But how doth God fit us for heaven? One way is by crosses and afflictions. He fits us for heaven, as the winter fitteth the ground for the spring, by killing the weeds, and mellowing the ground. So that whatsoever we suffer here, fits us for heaven, and that many ways.

(1.) Weaning our hearts from the love of these things, upon which we are desperately set. When we see what they are, we see they are vanity.

(2.) And then again, they exercise and try our graces, and they increase a desire of heaven; and we know the more hardly we are used here, the more we desire to be at home. And usually God reveals himself more sweetly and more comfortably in these hard times. We feel more of heaven in our worst times. Therefore they have fitting power.

Quest. How comes this to pass? Are crosses, losses, curses, and such things naturally?

Arts. God by his Spirit doth overpower and overrule these things, and there is a sanctified use of them, that helps them to work. 'All things work together for the best to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28; that is, God's power so overruleth them, that it makes them advantageous to his children. And they by the grace of God's Spirit, draw a sanctified use out of everything. So that by the grace of God the worst things work an eternal weight of glory.

As God prepares heaven for us, so he prepares us for heaven: he prepares us by Christ, but by the cross and affliction. So you may see the truth of the point.

Use 1. But what shall I speak of popish merits? For in merits there must be a proportion to the things we suffer. We receive glory for ever, and suffer afflictions for a time; a weight of glory. This overthroweth popish conceits.

Use 2. Beloved, are they not out of their wits, that add vexation to God's children? What is the worst they do? They work their good, they vex them; ay, but they work their happiness, as if a man would hurt a fish by casting him into the sea, or a bird into the air. And a Christian being vexed, it driveth him nearer to heaven. It is his best condition. Compare our secure estate with our afflicted condition, and see which is best. There is no man that is a Christian but will say, there is more in the cross than in prosperity; the one duller, but the other sharper.

Use 3. Be not discouraged, whatsoever befalls us in this world. While Satan works our hurt, God is then working our good at the same time. When the outward man is wronged by the world, at the same time the inward man is set at liberty. So much for that.

But how cometh it to pass that these things we suffer, fit us for glory?

Verse 18. It is wrought by grace, enabling us to eye things that are not seen. And then we reason, 'because the things that are seen, are temporal, but the things that are not seen, are eternal,' 2 Cor. iv. 18.

To omit divers things, I hasten to other things.

But you see the things we suffer do work unto us an eternal weight of glory, as physic doth upon the body. That that we suffer doth no good unless we use those parts and graces that God hath given us. And therefore he saith, whilst our minds are occupied, and 'looking on things that are not seen,' God having made man a reasonable creature. And so in way to salvation he sanctifieth those principles he hath given him to bring him to heaven, by way of discourse and reason. And as a Christian is saved, so is he saved by something in his understanding. As we see in this world, man worketh by principles in him, so in the way of Christianity. Some things are hindrances to heaven and happiness, as conceitedness and self-sufficiency. Therefore the apostle saith these things 'work an eternal weight of glory,' not whether we think of them or no; but these things do so because God giveth a sanctified understanding, to see the difference of heavenly things from earthly, when we do not look upon things that are seen.

So much shall serve to give you a reason how to see the inward man groweth more and more, and we faint not; because we look upon things that are not seen.

That which I will speak of at this time is this.

That the best things in this world are not seen; the meanest things are those that are seen. The best things are to come; the meanest things are present. The best things are such as are eternal; the meanest things are temporal.

And when I have unfolded these, then I will show you a wise and gracious use the sanctified soul makes of looking upon things that are not seen, and how his sight worketh, what use we are to make of it.

Doct. The observation is, that a Christian is to look to the things not seen, for things seen are not the object of a Christian's eye. The best things

are not seen; the meanest things are such as are seen. I will not stand to unfold the negative part much, because I have spoken of that before.

But to speak especially, What are the things that are not seen?

Beloved, if you labour to be good Christians, you shall better feel them than I can tell you what they are; you shall better know them by experience than by discourse here.

(1.) We cannot see God face to face. We have not immediate communion with God here. We have it in the word and sacraments; but in heaven we shall see all things that are good. Here we may see God in everything; there we shall see everything in God. There we shall see health, and strength, and comfort in God.

(2.) The things not seen here is Christ in our flesh. The heavens are between us and him now. The sight of him is the happiness of a Christian, for the head and members to be together, husband and wife together. Ay, but here we are severed. Here is a spiritual communion; but that is not that that the soul looks for.

(3.) Neither have we full communion of saints; for here is a mixture of good and bad, and here the best have their imperfections. If here an holy joining together of two or three wise Christians be so sweet, what shall it be when we all meet together in heaven? Now we see not God, and Christ, and the blessed souls in heaven.

(4.) Here we see not our perfect liberty.

(5.) Here we see not that eternal Sabbath we shall have there.

(6.) Here we see not that perfection of grace.

(7.) Here we see not that comfort we shall have there. Here we have a taste and the beginning, but what is this to that there? Therefore let us think of what is not seen.

Obj. But why do we not see them here?

Reason 1. You may as well ask me, Why is not heaven upon earth? God will lucre a difference between heaven and earth; he will have us to walk by

faith and not by sight. Heaven is a place for sight: if we will have happiness in sight, it is in heaven. But here we have hope, and faith, and some feeling of comfort; and therefore, considering our condition is by faith, therefore God preserveth matter of sight for another world.

Reason 2. Again, the best things are not seen, because we have not proportionable parts. Our parts are not fitted for that glory. Peter, James, and John, they were as it were drunken with this sight, so that Peter speaks he knows not what, Mat. ix. 33. And Moses, when he came from God, he was fain to cover his face, 2 Cor. iii. 13. If these glimpses were such as people could not endure them, how could we endure a full manifestation of glory, when Christ saith, 'No man can see God and live'? Exod. xxxiii. 20. Therefore let us be content to die to have this sight. Our understandings here are too shallow, our hearts too narrow, our imperfections too many: darkness cannot conceive of light. So no soul can see what is in heaven.

And so here we cannot tell what happiness there is, till we be there. That is the reason why the best things are not seen. And these are the proper objects of a Christian. For things seen are exposed to the outward man; they are not fitting for the soul. The soul will soon spend all the good that are in things seen. Take all the beauty, and all the riches, and all the honour that can be, and the soul will be quickly weary of it. The soul will draw out all the good. We see those that are in great place, within a little while grow weary of them.

But there is an everlasting spring of comfort and contentment in things not seen. They are larger than the soul. The more we see of them, the more we may see; the communion with God, joys in heaven, and such things. Alas! the soul is a very capacious thing, yet the joys in heaven are larger than it; therefore things seen are not the object of the soul.

Quest. But doth the soul never look upon things that are seen?

Ans. Yes; but if the soul look upon them, it looks also beyond them.

If it look upon them, it looks upon them as in a glass, to see farther. It looketh not upon them as clouds to stay our sight from the sun, or as placing contentment in them. For the soul taketh no rest here. The things seen 'are vanity and vexation of spirit,' Eccles. i. 14; 'unrighteous mammon,' Luke xvi. 11. We may and ought to look upon them as helps and comforts in our pilgrimage. If there be such comforts here, what is in heaven? Both God

convoy such sweetness in outward things, that castaways have with us? What are those then that he hath reserved for his friends? And so by way of a gracious use we ought to look upon things seen; but to pitch upon them, and make them our bottom to stand upon, they are no fit objects for the soul. But is there no way to see things that are not seen?

Quest. But have we nothing of them here?

Ans. Yes; there is nothing seen but we have some little taste of it here. For full peace to come, we have peace of conscience here. For full joy to come, we have joy in the Holy Ghost here. For full communion of saints to come, we have some communion of saints here. If there be any heaven upon earth, it is in the meeting of two or throe judicious, wise, gracious persons; and our employment here in hearing, praying, and conference with God is but a taste beforehand of that in heaven. So that God doth not reserve all for the time to come. But in regard of the full accomplishment he doth. But those that have not the first-fruits here shall never have heaven in the harvest. Those that have not the earnest here shall never have the bargain hereafter. But that which is the full satisfaction of the soul is for hereafter. Therefore, whatsoever sweet employment is here, it is not like to that the soul shall have hereafter. Therefore rest not in them, but rather let them set an edge upon us, to desire it more and more, till we have it fully in heaven.

Reason 3. Why these objects are things not seen. Things that are not seen are eternal, things that are seen are temporal. No man that hath an eternal soul, and knoweth it, will make that his object that is temporal. Therefore the soul must look upon things that are of equal excellency with it, and that is, things not seen. For things that are seen are temporal: riches are fading, honours are but blazing comets, pleasures are but worm-eaten vanities. So for the ill we suffer, it is but temporal; all determined in death. The grave makes an end of all things that are seen. This should be a comfort to us when we are under any sickness. It is a seen thing. This sickness I feel, and this I taste, it is but for a time. The thing I look at is that which is not seen, and which lasteth to eternity. So the good not seen is eternal in the cause of it. It is in Christ, who is for ever in the heavens; and God is for ever in the heavens: and Christ reconcileth the Father. And then the place is eternal. Heaven is eternal.

Now the influence from which all good comes being eternal, the soul being itself a spiritual, eternal substance, the influence of grace and comfort being eternal from God, and Christ, who is an head for ever and a husband

for ever; and heaven being an inheritance immortal, undefiled, continuing for ever; and the soul being an everlasting substance, the joy and comforts of it are eternal. Whom God loveth, he loveth for ever; whom he makes happy, he makes happy for ever. 'He is life everlasting.' It is a kingdom 'that cannot be shaken,' Heb. xii. 27. 'It is an inheritance that fadeth not,' 1 Peter i. 4. It is not only everlasting, but everlastingly fresh. It is not only immortal, but it keeps its beauty still, eternal joy, eternal peace, eternal communion one with another in the heavens, everlasting Sabbath, everlasting triumph over all enemies. There is no end of this joy, no cessation of this comfort.

I come now to the wise improvement that the soul makes of beholding the things that are not seen, because they be eternal, and neglecteth the sight of things that be present and temporal. You see the wise use the blessed apostle maketh of it. For he bringeth it as a reason why he faints not, but is renewed day by day in the inward man. You wonder why I faint not, and why day by day I grow fresher and fresher, and still fitter and fitter for heaven; and that all things I endure here fit me for heaven. All is because I have an eye to things that are not seen, not regarding things that be present. So that if we will find a difference of the things, we may easily understand, some things be fading, and some things eternal. If we will get comfort in this, that our portion is not only in fading things, we must have grace to consider of it, and not to look on the other overmuch.

To give trial, whether we look at the things that be seen or no.

(1.) If we look to things not seen, because they be eternal, this is a sight that ravisheth the soul, that lifteth the soul above itself. Things above be so exceeding above things below, that it makes the soul almost forget itself; it worketh an high esteem of heaven, of heavenly things. For as it is said of knowledge, it hath no enemy but the ignorant, so there is no enemy of grace but they that feel it not from conscience. All that see it have a high admiration of it, which appeareth by the mean esteem of all things else. When the sun riseth, the stars hide themselves. And when these comforts rise in the soul, upon the apprehension of the glory in the glass of the word and promise, and a little feeling here, all earthly comforts are gone. When Moses saw God that was invisible, what cares he to look for Pharaoh? Heb. xi. 27. And when Micah had seen God sitting on the throne, what cares he for Ahab? 1 Kings xxii. 14. We have seen the Lord, and what have we to do with base idols? Not anything in the world must be co-rival with God. What have I to do with pride, with riches, with honour? I have seen God, I have

seen heaven. When the patriarchs had with the eye of faith seen the excellency of the world to come, what cared they for banishment or death? When Paul had seen Christ, all things else were 'dung and dross,' Philip, iii. 8. Therefore your great admirers, that admire worldly things, it is a sign they never saw better. They that dote upon worldly things, it is an argument of spiritual folly.

(2.) Again, the consideration of things spiritual, it is a purifying sight, a purging sight, that makes the soul fit for the object. A man cannot with the eye of faith apprehend things to come, nor by hope wait for them, but that hope will be effectual to purify the soul. They that have any faith, any hope of good to come, they will prepare their souls suitable to that condition, 1 John iii. 3. And therefore where the apprehension of these things hath not a purging power in some degree, it is but a conceit. We do not so see them as that we be convinced that they are so excellent as they be.

(3.) Again, this is a sight that doth marvellously affect. Love comes of sight. Sight is the most affecting sense. That which moveth the affection most is sight. Feeling is but dull. And therefore if we have the eagle's eye, a sharp-sighted faith, to see things which are not to be seen with the eye of reason and flesh, then certainly this sight will quicken and affect a man greatly; move to joy and move to delight, move to the love of God and heavenly things. A man cannot see any excellency but his heart embraceth it; as the patriarchs, Heb. xi. 2, seq., saw the promises afar off, and their hearts did join with them; they did embrace them, grasping as it were the things they saw in the arms of their affections. In what measure that I apprehend and see things, in that measure the heart lets in the things to embrace them and close with them. Therefore where no love is there is no sight. And the reason why affections are so flat and dead is, because they do not exercise this sight of faith. Let us examine ourselves by these things, whether we have spiritual sight of the things we see. Do they affect us? Do they quicken us? And do they put into our hearts holiness? Do they raise our hearts to a holy admiration? If so, certainly we have seen them.

I will give you a familiar comparison. The nearer the object is to any man, the more glorious it seemeth; the farther off anything is, the less it seemeth. The stars are bigger than the world, and yet appear to us little.

Now, ask our souls how great things are in comparison of former times. Are heavenly things greater? And for earthly pomp and state, have they less esteemed them than in former times? It is a sign we are nearer heaven, and

heaven nearer us. When we can look upon earthly things in a distance, it is a sign we are removed from them, and drawn nearer to the best things. And then the best things seem to be great to us, when we conceive of them in their own magnitude.

Quest. But how shall we come to look on things not seen, and things eternal, according to their own worth?

Ans. (1.) First of all, labour every day more and more to be purged and purified, and then we shall have delight to look upon that which is proportionable. The holier a man is, the more delight he hath in holy and heavenly objects, and laboureth to grow in grace more and more. The more we see, the more gracious we are; the more gracious we are, the more desire we shall have to behold with the eye of faith these excellencies.

There is no apprehension without light. We cannot see light without light; we cannot see heavenly things without heavenly faculties. And therefore labour for something within gracious, which may have correspondency and harmony with what is in heaven, else contraries will not apprehend contraries. But heaven and a sanctified soul have some proportion and co-naturalness; and therefore never rest till we have something like that which is in heaven, though not in degree, yet in quality.

Ans. (2.) Again, labour to yet the eye of the soul clear, that the dust of the world may not be in it. Satan's policy is to cast, pleasure and profit into the eye of the soul; and then corruption raiseth a foggy mist in the soul, that we should have natural love to present things. And present things raise a cloud in the soul, and that cloud doth interpose itself between heaven and us. Labour therefore for mortification more and more.

That the eye may be clear, consider seriously they be temporal things; shorter than the soul, meaner than the soul, not fit for it. We shall outlive them all. And when base affections rise in the soul to cast a mist thereupon, consider what a foolish thing it is for us to dote upon things meaner than ourselves. Why should such affections intercept this heavenly sight from us?

The dignity of the soul is an excellent substance. The whole world is not worth a soul. The soul is between heaven and earth, and all earthly things are meaner than itself. Shall the soul marry itself and join itself with things baser than itself? Doth it not then debase itself? And therefore keep the eye of the

soul clear from impediments within and without; labour to have true judgment of things in their own nature.

Ans. (3.) And then let us dwell often in the consideration of things to come; have serious considerations of it, and every day redeem some time to think we cannot live here for ever. We have an immortal soul, that must be immortal in misery or immortal in happiness. If we be not good, heaven will not take us, and nothing but hell will receive us. And these things may quicken us. I have an immortal soul, I must not stay long, I must give account; and how shall I appear?

Get these and the like considerations every day. We live as we see; and considering life is guided by inward notions and apprehensions of soul, labour to have apprehensions of soul, that may guide the life as it should be. Labour to see what is reserved in the heavens; consider how we be assured for it; what ground we have; what assurance we have if we should die presently, for we have not the certainty of a minute. These be wakening considerations. And these will be a means that we should look on things not seen. And when we do take liberty to think upon these things, dwell upon them till the heart be warmed. The sun doth not heat without some staying. Those beams that are broken, they do not gather themselves to heat by reflection. So let the soul stay a while in consideration of these things. Our soul is unstable naturally; and therefore labour by grace to settle the soul till the affections be warm, till the resolutions be pitched; for then we shall see to purpose when we resolve to take this course, else we see not to purpose. And therefore because we know not in morning what will befall us before night, never rest till we be set in heaven by faith. And consider the condition there, so far forth as shall be effectual to guide our lives suitable to what we see. This were a wise course indeed, to guide our courses suitable to eternity, and to fetch reasons for a holy and good life from eternity, and not from pleasing this body and that body. I will do this, because I shall get riches, because I shall satisfy my flesh, and raise myself. Are these reasons for a Christian to work by? Let a Christian work like a Christian, having his reason raised by faith higher than himself, to consider of things as they are in themselves, and as they shall be hereafter. This is temporal, my soul is eternal; and I will fetch my reasons of my course from eternity. What if I should have all the world and die, what will the satisfying of the carnal desires of others do me good? And therefore I will sway my actions by rule that shall hold to eternity. Is not a man wise that doth thus? and is any man wise that doth not thus? He is wise that guideth his life to the last end, how

he shall be happy hereafter, how he shall avoid torments for ever. He that is wise to get preferment, to undermine others, to flatter and insinuate, to give contentment against conscience to the carnal humours of others; is he a wise man that is penny wise and pound foolish? He is wise in a particular, he is wise in a little.

But what is this particular wisdom, when in the general scope of his life he is foolish, not considering what is good for him as a Christian? None is wise but a Christian. Every man else is a mad man, or a fool. What are all other things but straw and baubles to eternity? Therefore regard the things that he beyond the soul, and more excellent than the soul.

I beseech you, take this course. It will make us wise and diligent in our place and calling; for we should eye what is to eternity, notwithstanding all discouragements. Many have fainted and given over, because they be unthankful persons, and they grow cold in doing good. What is the reason? They look not to eternity. It is good sometimes to meet with ill usage from unthankful persons, for God will make amends, though we deserve well of ungrateful persons. And sometimes again I will do them good, and let the glory alone to God. It is good to meet with ill usage in the world; for there is sufficient amends made in the world to come. Wilt thou have all thy wages here? And therefore do as St Paul did, get into heaven in our thoughts by faith, and meditation how it will be with us ere long; and that will set us in such a frame of conversation as shall tit us for Christ, and only that. It will keep us in a growing condition, in a fruitful condition, in a constant courageous condition.

And when we do not so we fall into discouragements. The cause of sin, is it not some present temporal thing we dote upon? So sin is nothing but placing that affection on that which is temporal, which should be on that which is eternal.

Now when doth a man sin, but when he lets go his object? As long as a man keeps his eye on heaven he is well enough; but when he looks to discouragements, to the arm of flesh, then he is discouraged. But when is he not discouraged? When he hath heaven in his eye, and God in his eye, and spiritual things in his eye. And now in this pitch he is neither sinful nor discouraged; and then he is as well as he can wish in this world. Therefore labour with Paul to have the eyes of your souls exercised about these spiritual things. Look on things that be not seen, because they be eternal; and be not

carried away with outward things, nor dazzled with them, because they be temporal.

The Church's Riches

To the Reader

The highest points of Christian religion, and such as are most above the reach of human wisdom, are those that lie below, in the foundation; and therefore are they called the 'mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. xiii. 11; and the 'deep things of God,' 1 Cor. ii. 10. And the knowledge of these things is termed an ascending into heaven, John iii. 13; a knowledge of such things 'as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor would ever have entered into the heart of man,' had they not been revealed to us by him that came down from heaven, even the Son of man that is in heaven. That blessed apostle St Paul, that was rapt up into the third heaven, did yet chiefly desire to study and teach these principles of the doctrine of Christ. 'I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' 1 Cor. ii. 2. Yea, and after all his study and teaching, was not ashamed to confess of himself that he was not yet perfect in the knowledge of Christ, nor had attained so much as might be attained, but was still therefore looking upward, and pressing forward to that which was before, Phil. iii. 12, 13. And indeed what David acknowledged, concerning his searching the Scriptures in general, that though he had proceeded further in the discovery of divine truths than those that went before him (Ps. cxix. 99), 'I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy 'testimonies are my meditation;' yet he was still to seek of that which might be known; ver. 96, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.' Even as those great discoverers of the new-found lands in America, at their return, were wont to confess that there was still a plus ultra, more might be descried than was yet seen, that may we say concerning those glorious things revealed unto us in the gospel concerning Christ. Proceed we as far as we can in the study of them; that, we know, will be nothing, to that which is still to be learned; for the riches of Christ herein discovered are indeed unsearchable, Eph. iii. 8.

It is no disparagement therefore at all, either to those that are the chief masters of the assemblies, Eccles. xii. 11, to teach, or those that are of the highest form 'in Christ's school, to learn, yea, and that again and again, 'the first principles of the oracles of God,' Heb. v. 12. Sure I am, however others puffed up with an opinion of their own worth may be otherwise minded, the reverend and learned author of these ensuing treatises was of this judgment,

who, though he were a wise master-builder, yet according to the grace that was given unto him (which was indeed like that of Elisha in regard of the other prophets, 2 Kings ii. 9, the elder brother's privilege, a double portion), he was still taking all occasions to lay well the foundation, and that in one of the most eminent authorities for learning and piety that are in the kingdom.

They that were his constant hearers know this well. They that were not, may see it by those his sermons now published, reduced, as was deemed most fit, into four several treatises; wherein, as the season required, he still took the opportunity of instructing his hearers in this great mystery of our religion, the incarnation of the Son of God, one of the chief fundamentals of our faith; one of the chief of those wonders in the mercy-seat, which the cherubins gaze at, which the angels desire to pry into, 1 Peter i. 12. And, indeed, by reason he spake at several times, and by occasion of so many several texts of Scripture concerning this subject, there is scarce any one of those incomparable benefits which accrue to us thereby; nor any of those holy impressions which the meditation hereof ought to work in our hearts, which is not in some place or other sweetly unfolded. In the first treatise the mystery itself is indeed chiefly opened, and is therefore called, The Fountain Unsealed; the rest, as in so many streams, convoy to us that water of life which is issued from thence, teaching us how to improve the knowledge hereof to the glory of God, and the spiritual enriching of our own souls. The noted humility of the author I now the less wonder at, finding how often his thoughts dwelt on the humiliation of Christ. If we that now read them be not changed into the same image from glory to glory, it will be our own fault. This take from me; the treatises following are published by copies of his sermons which himself approved and appointed, and that by subscribing his own hand, purposely to prevent imperfect copies. Embrace them, therefore, as truly his; and the Lord so raise up thy heart in the careful perusal hereof, that 'thy profiting may be seen of all,' 1 Tim. iv. 15.

Thine in the Lord Jesus,
A. Jackson,
London, Wood street, April 18. 1638.

The Church's Riches by Christ's Poverty

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet he became poor for your sakes, that ye through his poverty might be rich.— 2 Cor. VIII. 9.

The nature of man is very backward to do good; our hearts being like to green wood that hath but a little fire under it, that must be continually blown up: so those sparks of grace that are in us must be stirred up. Therefore the apostle being to stir up these Corinthians to beneficence, and bounty towards the poor, he labours to enforce it by many reasons, in this and the next chapter. Man being an understanding creature, God would have what we do in matters of religion to proceed from principles, becoming men and Christians. Therefore he sets us upon duties from reasons. And because examples together with reasons are very forcible, therefore the apostle, after many forcible reasons to be liberal to the saints, he joins examples: first, of the Macedonians that were a poorer people, 2 Cor. viii. 2; then the Corinthians, to whom the apostle now wrote. But because people are not so comfortably led by the example of equals and inferiors (they think it a kind of upbraiding of them, accounting themselves as good or better than they); therefore the apostle leaves exhorting them from the example of the Macedonians that were poorer, and propounds an example beyond all exception, the example of Christ himself. He stirs them up to bounty and goodness, by the example of him who is goodness itself. 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he were rich, he became poor,' &c. As if he should have said, if the example of the poor Macedonians will not move you to give bountifully, yet let the example of our Saviour; he was rich, yet he became poor to enrich you; therefore you must not think much to bestow somewhat on his poor members.

Examples have a very great force in moving, especially if they be examples of great persons, and those that love us, and we them, and that are near us. The example of Christ, it is the example of a great person, and one that loves us, and whom we ought to love again; therefore the apostle propounds that.

He might have alleged the precept of Christ. There are many commands that Christ gives of bounty and liberality to the poor: 'Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful,' Luke vi. 36; and 'give freely, looking for nothing again,' vi. 85; and 'the poor ye shall have always with you,' Mat. xxvi. 11. But because example hath a more alluring power, it moves more freely (precepts have a more compelling force); therefore herein he follows the stream of our disposition, which rather desires to be easily drawn than to be forced and pressed; he brings not the precept but the example of Christ: 'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c.

The points considerable in the words are, first of all, that Doct. 1. Christ was rich.

There is no question to be made of this truth, 'Christ was rich,' because he was the second person in Trinity, the Son of God, the heir of heaven and earth, rich every way. When he was poor, he was God then. Though he covered his Godhead with the veil of humanity, with our base and beggarly nature that he took upon him, he was always rich. But especially this hath reference to what he was before he took our nature: he was rich, because he was God; and indeed God only is rich to purpose, independently and eternally rich. Riches imply, among other things, plenty; and plenty of precious and good things, and propriety. They must be good things that are our own. Christ had plenty of excellent things, and they were his own. He was not only rich in treasure, as he saith, 'Gold is mine, and silver is mine,' Hag. ii. 8, but heaven and earth, that contains all treasures, are his. 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,' Ps. xxiv. 1; and it is he that made the heavens. He that made heaven and earth must needs be rich; nay, if there were need, he can make a thousand heavens and earths. He is not only mighty, but almighty; not only sufficient, but all-sufficient. He can do what may be done; he can do what he hath done, and more than he hath done, and more than we can conceive; he can remove all difficulties that hinder him; he is rich in power and wisdom every way. The point is very large, but it is not so pertinent to the text to show what he was in himself, but what he was for our sakes; therefore I will be shorter in it.

Hence then you see that Christ was, before he was exhibited. He did good before he appeared. He was rich before he took our nature upon him. He was God before he was man. [I say this] against the cursed heresy of Arius, which I will not now rake up again. But undoubtedly you see here a good ground of that grand article of our faith—Christ was God before he took our nature. He came; therefore he was before he came. He was sent; therefore he was before he was sent. He was God, before he was God 'manifest in the flesh.' In Philip, ii. 6, it is largely and excellently set down: 'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but he was made of no reputation; he took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man: he was found in the fashion of man; he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even to the death of the cross; therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above all names.' It is a large

comment and explication upon this text, 'he was God; he thought it no robbery to be equal with God.'

The devils, which were angels before they fell, would be gods by usurpation and robbery. They were not content in the place they were in, but they would be gods, independent, of themselves. It was robbery for them to do it; therefore from that high place of excellency they were thrown down to the lowest hell; of angels they became devils. But Christ was God, not by usurpation and robbery against God's will, but he was God by nature. He was rich by nature. He thought it no robbery, no disparagement, nor usurpation to be equal with God; he did God no wrong in it. Therefore when he became man, he was not cast into these inferior parts of the world, to punish him, as if he had been an usurper; but it was a voluntary taking of our nature on him, 'being rich, he became poor,' and 'being in the form of God, he made himself of no reputation.' If he had usurped his divinity, his abasement had been violent, against his will. You see then that Christ was rich, as God.

Therefore, before he took our nature upon him, he was mediator from the beginning; he was 'yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, and the same for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8, as the apostle saith; 'he was, and is, and is to come,' Rev. i. 8; he was the 'Lamb slain from the beginning of the world,' Rev. v. 12. For howsoever he took our nature upon him, and paid the debt, yet he undertook the payment before the beginning of the world. A man may let a prisoner loose now, upon the promise to pay the debt a year after; so Christ undertook to take our nature and to pay our debt in the fulness of time. By virtue, therefore, of his future incarnation, he was an effectual mediator from the beginning of the world: as we have now the fruit of his mediation though his death be past. The act is past, but the fruit remains. So that he was a mediator before he came in the flesh, because he undertook to his Father to discharge the office.

Quest. But Christ being God, was it needful that he should become poor? Might not an angel, or some other creature, have served for the work?

Ans. No. God being rich must become poor, or else he had not been able to bring us back again to God. It is an act of divine power to bring us back again to God; and he that shall settle us in a firmer state than we had in Adam, must be God. To stablish us stronger, and to convey grace to us, to make our state firm, only God can do it. There are some things in the mediation of Christ that belongs to ministry, and some things to authority.

Those that belong to ministry, are to be a servant, and to die; and that he must be man for. But there are some things that belong to authority and power, as to bring us back to God, to convey his Spirit, to preserve us from Satan our great enemy. For these works of authority it was requisite he should be God. In a word,

1. The greatness of the ill we were in required it. Who could deliver us from the bondage of Satan but God? He must be stronger than the 'strong man,' that must drive him out. Who could know our spiritual wants, the terrors of our conscience, and heal and comfort them, but God by his Spirit? Who could free us from the wrath of the great God, but he that was equal with God?

2. And then in regard of the great good we have by him. To restore us to friendship with God, and to preserve us in that state; to convey all necessary grace here, and to bring us to glory after,—it was necessary he should be God. Therefore he was rich, and became poor. It is rather to be admired than expressed, the infinite comfort that springs hence; that he hath undertaken to reconcile us, to make our peace, to bring us to heaven, is God the second person in Trinity.

All the three persons had a hand in this work. God the Father sent him, and the Holy Ghost sanctified that mass that his body was made of, but he himself wore the body. The Father gives his Son in marriage; the Son married our nature; and the Holy Ghost brings them together. He sanctified our nature, and fitted it for Christ to take. So though all three persons had a work in it, yet God the second person of rich became poor. And indeed who was fitter to bring us to the love of God, than he that was his beloved Son? Who was fitter to restore us to the image of God, than he that was the image of God himself? and to make us wise, than he that was the Wisdom of God himself? There was infinite wisdom in this. I will not be larger in that point—Christ was rich.

The next thing I observe is this, that Doct. 2. Christ became poor.

The poverty of Christ reacheth from his incarnation to his resurrection. All the state of his humiliation, it goes under the name of his poverty. The resurrection was the first step or degree of his exaltation. He wrought our salvation in the state of humiliation, but he applies it in the state of exaltation.

1. The incarnation of Christ it was an exaltation to our nature, to be united to God, to the second person in Trinity. It was a humiliation of God, for the divine nature to stoop so low as to be veiled under our poor nature. So that God could stoop no lower than to become man, and man could be advanced no higher than to be united to God; so that in regard of God, the very taking upon him of our nature, it was the first degree and passage of his humiliation.

2. But when did he take upon him our nature? He took, - it upon him after it was fallen; when it was possible, obnoxious to suffering; not as it was in innocency, free from all misery and calamity, but when it was at the worst. And,

3. He not only took our nature, but our condition. 'He took upon him the form of a servant,' Phil. ii. 7. He was not only a servant in regard of God, but in regard of us; for he came into the world not to be 'ministered unto,' but to 'minister.' He took upon him our nature when it was most beggarly, and with our nature he took our base condition. Nay, that is not all.

4. He took upon him our miseries; all that are natural, not personal. He took not the leprosy and the gout, &c., but he took all the infirmities that are common to the nature of man, as hunger, and thirst, and weariness; he was sensible of grief.

5. He took upon him likewise our sins, so far as there is anything penal in sin in respect of punishment. You know there is two things in guilt; there is the demerit and desert of it; and there is an obligation to punishment. Now the obligation to punishment he took upon him, though the merit and desert he took not: 'He became sin,' Phil. ii. 8; that is, by sin, he became bound to the punishment for sin. He took not the demerit; for in respect of himself he deserved no such death as he underwent. To clear this a little further. He took upon him our nature, that he might become sin for us; he took upon him the guilt as far as guilt is an obligation to punishment. The son of a traitor, he loseth his father's lands, not by any communion of fault, but by communion of nature, because he is part of his father. So Christ took the communion of our nature, that he might take the communion of our punishment, not of our fault; as the son is no traitor, but because he is part of his father that was a traitor, by his Dearness and communion with his father he is wrapped in the same-punishment.

In a city that is obnoxious to the king's displeasure, perhaps there are some that are not guilty of the offence that the body of the city is, yet being all citizens, they are all punished by reason of their communion; so in this respect Christ became poor; he took upon him our nature, and by communion with that nature, he took upon him whatsoever -was penal, that belonged to sin, though he took not, nor could take, the demerit of sin.

'He was made sin for us.' We cannot have a greater argument of Christ's poverty than to be made sin for us. Sin is the poorest thing in the world, and the cause of all beggary and poverty and misery He was made under the law, and so became a curse for us; he was made sin, a sacrifice for our sin. In particular, he was born of a poor virgin, and instead of a better place, he was laid in an inn, and in the basest place in the inn, in the manger. As soon as he was born, his birth was revealed to poor shepherds, not to emperors and kings; not to Caesar at Rome. Then presently after his birth he was banished together with his mother into Egypt, Mat. ii. 19. When he came home again, he was fain to be beholding to a poor woman for a cup of water when he was thirsty, John iv. 7, seq. Again, when he was to pay tribute, he had not wherewith to pay it, but was fain, as it were, to be beholding to a fish for it, Mat. xvii. 27. And though he made heaven and earth, yet he had no habitation of his own.

'The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay his head,' Mat. viii. 20. When he was to ride in pomp to Jerusalem, he had not a beast of his own; he was fain to send for and ride upon another man's ass. All his life was a state of poverty.

He was poor in death especially, for when life is gone all is gone. 'He gave himself to death for us.' In death he was poor every way. They stripped him of all his clothes; he had not so much as a garment to cover him. He was poor and destitute in regard of friends. They all forsook him when he had need of them most of all, as he foretold that they all should leave him, John xvi. 32. And as he was thus poor in respect of his body and condition, so he was poor in soul in some respects; and indeed the greatest poverty was there. For the greatest riches that Christ esteemed, it was the blessed communion that he had with his Father, which was sweeter to him than all things in heaven and earth. When his Father hid his face from him, that he felt his displeasure, becoming our surety, in the garden before his death, the sense of God's displeasure against sin affected him so deeply that he sweat water and blood, Luke xxii. 44. He was so poor, wanting the comfort of his Father's

love, that an angel, his own creature, was fain to come and comfort him, Luke xxii. 43. And at his death, when he hung upon the cross, besides the want of all earthly comforts, wanting the sense of their sweet love that he always enjoyed before, it made him cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mark xv. 34; not that indeed God had forsaken him in regard of protection and support, or in regard of love and favour, but, in regard of solace and comfort that he felt before, in regard of the sense of divine justice being then upon him that stood surety for sin. When he was dead he had no tomb of his own to lie in; he was fain to lie in another man's tomb, Mat. xxvii. 60; and then he was held under the captivity of the grave three days. So that, from his birth to his death, there is nothing but a race of poverty.

And which adds to this abasement of Christ, it was from an excellent condition to so low a state; as we say it is a miserable thing for a man to have been happy; it makes him more sensible of his misery than in other men. For Christ, who was always in the presence and favour of heaven, to come into the virgin's womb; for him to stand in need of the necessities of this life; for life to die; for riches to become poor; for the glory of heaven and earth to be abased; for the Lord of all to become a servant to his own servants—it must needs be a great abasement to him that was so highly advanced to become so poor.

But though Christ became thus poor, yet he ceased not then to be rich, but that his riches was veiled with our flesh. The sun, though he he kept from our sight by clouds, he is the sun still, and hath his own proper lustre still. He is as glorious in himself as ever he was, though he be not so to us. So Christ veiled his divinity under our human nature and under our misery; he became man and a curse; therefore though he -were 'the Son of righteousness,' glorious in himself, yet to appearance he was otherwise, 'he became poor.'

The papist would have him a beggar. Bellarmine, to countenance begging friars, would have Christ to be so. It is a disgraceful false conceit. If we divide his life before he was thirty years old that he was invested into his office, he lived with his parents in that calling and submitted to them; he was no beggar. Afterward he lived by ministering the word of God, and this was not eleemosynary, but honour. It is not charity that is given to governors, especially ministers. It is not alms to receive temporal things for spiritual, but it is due. Besides, he had somewhat of his own. He had a bag, and Judas was

good enough to carry it, John xii. G. He gave to the poor; therefore he was not a beggar. For he that came to fulfil the law would not break the law. The law forbids beggars. It was one of Moses's laws, 'There shall not be a beggar among you,' Deut. xv. 4. So much briefly for that, 'Christ was rich, and became poor.'

The next point is, the parties for whom this was.

Doct. 3. For your sakes.

Why doth not the apostle say 'for our sakes,' and so take himself in the number. He applies it to serve the argument in hand, being to stir up the Corinthians to bounty. He tells them 'Christ was poor for their sakes;' that they might be assured of their salvation by Christ, that his example might be more effectual. The example of those whom we have interest in is effectual; therefore he saith, 'for your sakes he became poor.' This should teach us, when we speak of Christ, to labour for a spirit of application, to appropriate Christ unto ourselves, or else his example will not move us.

As without application we can have no good by him, so we can have no comfort by his example. It is not prevalent, unless we can say as the apostle to the Corinthians here, 'for your sakes.'

Again, 'for your sakes, not for himself.' He became not poor to make himself richer; he did not merit for himself. What need he? For by virtue of the union of the human nature with the Godhead, heaven was due to him at the first moment, as soon as he was born. What should hinder him? Had he any sin of his own? No. There was nothing to keep him from heaven, and all the joy that could be, in respect of himself. But he had our salvation to work; he had many things to do and suffer, and therefore of his infinite goodness he was content that that glory that was due to him should be stayed. He became a servant to appease his Father's wrath for us, and procure heaven for us; for us men, for us sinners, as it is in the ancient creed, and as the prophet saith, 'To us a child is born, to us a Son is given,' Isa. ix. 6. For us he was horn; for us he was given; for us he lived; for us he died; for us he is now in heaven; for us he humbled himself to death, even to the death of the cross, to a cursed death,' Philip, ii. 8. Therefore when we hear of Christ's poverty, let us think, this is for me, not for himself; and this will increase our love and our thankfulness to him.

Again, it was for us, for mankind, not for angels. For when they fell they continue in that lapsed state for ever. This advanceth God's love to us more than to those noble creatures the angels, who remain in their cursed condition to all eternity.

The end of Christ's becoming poor.

'That we through his poverty might be made rich.'

Quest. How are we made rich by the poverty and abasement of Christ?

Ans. By the merit of it, and by efficacy flowing from Christ; for by the merit of Christ's poverty there issued satisfaction to divine justice, and the obtaining of the favour of God, not only for the pardon of our sins, but favour and grace to be entitled to life everlasting. And then by efficacy; we are enriched by the power of his Spirit, who altereth and changeth our natures, and makes them like to the divine nature.

Quest. But more particularly, what be the riches that we have by the poverty of Christ?

Ans. (1.) First, Our debt must be paid before we could be enriched. We are indebted for our souls and bodies. We did owe more than we were worth. We were under Satan's kingdom. Therefore Christ discharged our debt. There is a double debt that he discharged, the debt of obedience and the debt of punishment. Christ satisfied both. For the debt of obedience, he fulfilled the law perfectly and exactly for us; and for the debt of punishment, he suffered death for us, and satisfied divine justice. So by his poverty we are made rich, by way of satisfaction for our debts.

(2.) And not only we are made rich by Christ paying our debts, but he invests its into all his own riches. He makes us rich, partly by imputation, partly by infusion.

[1.] By imputation; his righteousness and obedience is ours. His discharge for our debts is imputed to us, and likewise his righteousness for the attaining of heaven. He having satisfied for our sins, God is reconciled to us; and thereupon we are justified and freed from all our sins, because they are punished in Christ. For the justice of God cannot punish one sin twice. So we come to be reconciled because we are justified; and we are justified from our sins, because Christ, as a surety, hath discharged the full debt.

And hence it is that we are freed from all that is truly ill; from the wrath of God and eternal damnation; and freedom from the greatest ill hath respect of the greatest good. For what had we been had we lain under that cursed condition? But God's works are complete. He works like a God. Therefore we are not only freed from evil in justification, but entitled to heaven and life everlasting.

[2.] And then he makes rich by infusion of his Holy Spirit, by working all needful graces of sanctification in us. For by the virtue of Christ's death the Spirit is obtained, and by the Spirit our natures are changed. So we have the riches of holiness from Christ, the graces of love, of contentment, of patience, and courage, &c. 'Of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John i. 16; grace answerable to the grace that is in him. The same Spirit that sanctified his human nature and knit it to his divine, it sanctifieth his members, and makes them rich in grace and sanctification, which is the best riches.

[3.] Then again, we are rich in prerogatives. We are the sons of God by adoption. 'What love,' saith the apostle, 'hath the Father showed, that we should be called the sons of God,' 1 John iii. 1. And this we have by the poverty of Christ. Whatsoever Christ is by nature, we are by grace. He is the Son of God by nature, we are his sons by grace; and being sons, we are heirs, heirs of heaven, and heirs of the world as much as shall serve for our good. All things are ours by virtue of our adoption, because we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. There is a world of riches in this, to be the sons of God.

And what a prerogative is this, that we have liberty and boldness to the throne of grace, as it is Eph. iii. 12; that we have boldness to appear before God, to call him Father, to open our necessities, to fetch all things needful, to have the ear of the King of heaven and earth, to be favourites in the court of heaven! Every Christian may now go boldly to God, because the matter of distance, our sins, which make a separation between God and us, they are taken away, and the mercy of God runs amain to us, our nature in Christ standing pure and holy before God.

And then we have this grand prerogative, that all things shall turn to the best to us, Rom. viii. 28. What a privilege is this, that there should be a blessing in the worst things! that the worst things to a child of God should be better than the best things to others! that the want and poverty of a Christian should be better than the riches of the world, because there is riches hid in his worst condition! Moses esteemed the rebuke of Christ greater riches than

the treasures of Egypt, Heb. xi. 26. A cross, or the want of any blessing sanctified, is better than the thing enjoyed that hath not God's blessing with it. A Christian is so rich, that he is blessed in his very afflictions and sufferings. It is a greater prerogative to have ill turned to our good than not to have the ill at all. It is an argument of greater power and of greater goodness, that God should turn the greatest ills, the greatest wrongs and discomforts, to the greatest good, as he doth to his children, for by them he draws them nearer to himself. Hereupon the apostle saith, 'All things are yours, things present and things to come,' &c., 1 Cor. iii. 22; reductively they are ours: God turns them to our good. He extracts good to us by them. All good things are ours in a direct course; and other things, by an overruling power, are deduced to our good contrary to the nature of the things themselves. What! did I say all things are ours? Yea, God himself is ours; and he hath all things, that hath Him that hath all things. Now, in Christ, God himself is become ours; 'All things are yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' Rom. v. 2. 'We rejoice in God as ours.' If God be ours, his all-sufficiency is ours; his power is ours, his wisdom, all is ours for our comfort.

[4.] Again, for glory, the riches of heaven, which are especially here meant; for however the riches of heaven be kept for the time to come, yet faith makes them present. When by faith we look upon the promises, we see ourselves in heaven, not only in Christ our head, but in our own persons, because we are as sure to be there as if we were there already. But for the joys of heaven, they are unutterable. The apostle calls them, Eph. iii. 8, 'unsearchable riches.' 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard, or hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.' There shall be fulness of glory in soul and body; both shall be conformable to Christ. 'At the right hand of God there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11.

Nay, the first fruits, the earnest, the beginnings of heaven here are unsearchable to human reason, the riches of Christ's righteousness imputed to us, the glorious riches of his Spirit in inward peace of conscience 'and joy in the Holy Ghost.' The comfort and enlargement of heart in all conditions, 'it is peace that passeth understanding,' and 'joy unspeakable and glorious.' It is not only unsearchable to human reason, but Christians themselves, that have the Spirit of God in them, cannot search the depth of them, because we have the Spirit but in measure. We see then what excellent riches we have by the poverty of Christ.

Quest. Was there no other way to make us rich but by Christ's becoming poor?

Ans. God in his infinite wisdom ordained this way. He thought it best. We may rest in that. But besides, to stay our minds the better, we were to be restored by a way contrary to that we fell.

(1.) If we fell by pride, we must be restored by humility. We would be like God; God to expiate it must become like us, and take our nature, and suffer in it.

(2.) Then again, God would restore us by a way suitable to his own excellency every way, wherein no attribute of his might be a loser. He would bring us to riches and friendship with him by a way of satisfaction to his justice, that we may see his justice shine in our salvation (though indeed grace and mercy triumph most of all, yet notwithstanding) justice must be fully contented. There was no other way wherein we could magnify so much the unsearchable and infinite wisdom of God (that the angels themselves 'pry into,' 1 Peter i. 12), whereby justice and mercy, seeming contrary attributes in God, are reconciled in Christ. By infinite wisdom, justice and mercy meet together and kiss one another. Justice being satisfied, wisdom is exalted. But what set wisdom on work to devise this way to satisfy justice? The grace, and love, and mercy of God. It could not have been done any other way; for before we could be made rich, God must be satisfied. Reconciliation supposeth satisfaction, and there could be no satisfaction but by blood; and there could be no equal satisfaction but by the blood of such a person as was God. Therefore Christ must become poor to make us rich, because there must be full satisfaction to divine justice, and all his precious poverty before his death. His incarnation, his want, his being a servant, &c., all was part of his general humiliation. But it was but to prepare him for his last work, the upshot of all, his death, which was the work of satisfaction.

(3.) Again, all the inherent part of our riches infused into our nature, it comes by the Spirit of God. Now the Spirit of God had not been sent, if God had not been satisfied and appeased first, because the Holy Ghost is the gift of the Father and the Son. He comes from both. Therefore there must be satisfaction and reconciliation before the Holy Ghost could be given, which enricheth our nature immediately. The immediate cause of sending the Holy Ghost, it is Christ's coming in our nature. Now, if God had not been satisfied in his justice, he would never have given the Holy Ghost, which is

the greatest gift next to Christ. Therefore 'Christ became poor to make us rich,' that we might have the Holy Ghost shed in our hearts.

(4.) Now all these riches that we have by Christ, it supposeth union with him by faith, as the riches of the wife supposeth marriage. Union is the ground of all the comfort we have by Christ. Our communion springs from union with him, which is begun in effectual calling. As soon as we are taken out of old Adam and engrafted into him, all becomes ours. Christ procures the Spirit, the Spirit works faith, faith knits us to Christ, and by this union we have communion of all the favours of this life and the life to come. Therefore, I say, all is grounded upon union by the grace of faith. Christ married our nature that we might be married to him by his Spirit; and until there be a union, there is no derivation of grace and comfort. The head only hath influence to the members that are knit unto it. Therefore Christ took our nature, that he might not only be a head of eminency, as he is to angels, but a head of influence. Now, there must be a knitting of the members to the head before any spirits can be derived from the head to the members. Therefore the apostle saith that Christ is our riches. But it is as he is in us, 'To whom God would make known what is the riches of this mystery among the Gentiles; Christ in you, the hope of glory,' Col. i. 27. Christ is all to us, but it is as he is in us and we in him. We must be in him as the branches in the vine, and he in us as the vine in the branches. So Christ is 'the hope of glory,' as he is in us. We must labour therefore by faith to be made one with Christ, before we can think of these things with comfort.

And when by faith we are made one with Christ, then there is a spiritual communion of all things. Now, upon our union with Christ, it is good to think what ill Christ hath taken upon him for me; and then to think myself freed from it, because Christ that took it on him hath freed himself from it. Whatsoever he is freed from, I am freed from it. It can no more hurt me than it can hurt him now in heaven. Therefore, when I think of sin, and hell, and damnation, and wrath, I see myself freed from it in Christ.

'He became poor' to take this away from me. My sins were laid on him, and he is justified and acquitted from them all, and from death and the wrath of God that he underwent; and I am acquitted in him by virtue of my union with him; and the devil can no more prejudice the salvation of a believer, than he can pull Christ out of heaven.

And as we see ourselves freed from all ill in Christ, so for all good: see it in him first, and conveyed by him to us. Whatsoever he hath, I shall have. He

is risen and ascended; I shall therefore rise and ascend, and sit at the right hand of God for ever with him: 'We shall be for ever with the Lord.' Let us see our riches in him. He is rich first as the head or first fruits, and then we as the lump afterwards. The first fruits were sanctified, and then the lump. The first fruits are glorious, and then the rest after. Whatsoever we look for in ourselves, see it in him first; and then the consideration of a Christian condition is a comfortable consideration. Take a Christian in all conditions whatsoever. If he be poor, Christ was poor for him, that his poverty might not be a curse to him. If he be poor, Christ was rich to make him rich in the best riches, and to take the sting out of poverty, and to turn it to his good. If he be abased, Christ was abased for him to sanctify his abasement. Let us labour to see the curse taken away in everything, and not only so, but to see a blessing in all, being made ours; and then it will be a comfortable consideration.

Obj. But it may be objected, We see no such thing; we see Christians are as poor as others.

Ans. The best riches of a Christian are unseen. They are unknown men; as we say of a rich man that makes no show of his riches, he is an unknown man. It is said of Christ, 'All the riches of wisdom are hid in Christ,' Col. ii. 3. That that is hidden is not seen. So the riches of a Christian they are hidden. As Christ was rich when he was upon earth; he was rich in his Father's love and in all graces, but it was a hidden riches; they took him to be a poor ordinary man. So a Christian he is a hidden man; his riches are hid; he hath an excellent life, but it is a hidden life. 'Our life is hid with Christ in God,' Col. iii. 3. It is not obvious to the eye of the world, nor to himself oftentimes in the time of desertion and temptation.

Obj. But you will say, For outward things we see Christians are poor now, as there were poor Christians in St Paul's time.

Ans. It is no great matter. The riches we have especially by Christ are spiritual, in grace here and glory hereafter. He came to redeem our souls here from sin and misery; and he will hereafter come to redeem our bodies and invest them into the glory that we have title to now by him.

Yet also for outward things a Christian is rich. Though they be not the main, yet they are the viaticum, provision in his journey; and he shall have enough to bring him to heaven. 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's will to give you a kingdom,' Luke xii. 32. Surely if he will give them a kingdom,

they shall not want daily bread; upon seeking the kingdom of God, these things shall be cast in unto them.

Again, put case a Christian be poor, he is rich in Christ, and he bears the purse. What if a child have no money in his purse, his father provides all necessaries for him. He is rich as long as his father is rich. And can we be poor as long as Christ is rich, being so near us, being our head? We shall want nothing that is needful; and when it is not needful and for our good, we were better be without it.

Again, he must needs be rich whose poverty and crosses are made riches to him. God never takes away or withholds outward blessings from his children, but he makes it up in better, in inward. They gain by all their losses, and grow rich by their wants. For how many are there in the world that had not been so rich in grace, if they had had abundance of earthly things? So that though they be poor in the world, they are rich to God, rich in grace, 'rich in faith,' as St James saith, James ii. 5. The greatest grievances and ills in the world turn to a Christian's [benefit]: sickness and shame and death. The Spirit of God is like the stone that men talk so of, that turns all into gold. It teacheth us to make a spiritual use, and to extract comfort out of everything. The worst things we can suffer in the world, 'All things are ours,' as I said before, even Satan himself. The Spirit of God helps us to make good use of his temptations, to cleave faster to the fountain of good.

Again, though a Christian be poor, yet he hath rich promises; and faith puts those promises in suit, and presseth God with them. If a man have bonds and obligations of a rich man, he thinks himself as rich as those bonds amount to. There is no Christian but hath a rich faith, and rich promises from God; and when he stirs up his faith, he can put those promises in suit (if it be not his own fault) in all his necessities. Therefore a Christian cannot be so poor as to be miserable. I know flesh and blood measureth riches after another manner. But is not he richer that hath a fountain than he that hath but a cistern? A man that is not a Christian, though he be never so rich, he hath but a cistern; his riches are but few; they are soon searched. But a Christian, though he be poor, his riches are unsearchable. Another man, though he be a monarch, his riches may be reckoned and cast up; it is but a cistern, and such riches as he cannot carry with him. But a Christian hath a fountain; a mine that is unsearchable, in the rich promises of God.

Again, a Christian, though he be never so poor, yet he hath a rich pawn. Saith St Paul, 'If he spared not his own Son, but gave him to death for us all,

how shall he not with him give us all things?' Rom. viii. 32. If he have given us such a pawn as Christ, who is riches itself, shall he not with him give us all other things? We have a pawn that is a thousand times better than that we need. We want poor outward things, but we have Christ himself for a pawn.

Lastly, Sometimes God sees that poverty and want in this world is part of our riches, that it is good for us; and what is good for me is my riches. If poverty be good for me, I will be poor that I may be humble; humility is better than riches. If I be in any want, if I have contentment, it is better than riches. If I fall into trouble, he will give me patience, that is better than friends. A man may have outward things, and be naught, But he that wants outward comfort, and hath supply in his soul, is it not better? Therefore take a Christian in any condition, he is a rich man; and this riches we have by the poverty of Christ. 'He became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.'

Use 1. We see here then that a Christian's estate is carried under contraries, as Christ was. 'He was rich, and became poor.' He carried his riches under poverty. He was glorious, but his glory was covered under shame and disgrace. So it is with a Christian. He goes for a poor man in the world, but he is rich; he dies, but yet he lives; he is disgraced in the world, but yet he is glorious. As Christ came from heaven in a way of contraries, so we must be content to go to heaven in a seeming contrary way. Take no scandal therefore at the seeming poverty and disgrace and want of a Christian. Christ himself seemed to be otherwise to the world than he was. When he was poor, he was rich; and sometimes he discovered his riches. There were beams brake forth even in his basest estate. When he died, there was nothing stronger than Christ's seeming weakness. In his lowest abasement he discovered the greatest power of his Godhead. For he satisfied the justice of God; he overcame death and his Father's wrath; he triumphed over Satan; he trod on his head (what hath Satan to do with us when God's justice is satisfied?); so that his hidden glory was discovered sometimes. So there is that appears in the children of God that others may see them to be rich, if they did not close their eyes. But we must be content to pass to heaven as Christ our head did, as concealed men.

Use 2. Again, here is matter not only for us men, but for the angels of heaven to admire and wonder at this depth of goodness and mercy in Christ; that he would become poor to make us rich by his poverty. See the exaltation of his love in this. Saith St Bernard well, 'O love, that art so sweet, why

becamest thou so bitter to thyself?. Whence flowed Christ's love and mercy, that was so sweet in itself, that it should be only sour and bitter to him from whence it had its rise and spring? His love that is so sweet to us, it became bitter to him; he endured and did that that we should have done and suffered. There be some men that will do kindnesses, so that themselves may not be the worse, so that they may not be the poorer, that they may not be disgraced, or adventure the displeasure of others. But Christ hath done all this great kindness for us by being poor for us; by taking our nature, our poverty, our misery. He doth us good in such a way as that he parted with heaven itself for a time, and with that sweet communion that he had with his Father, the dearest thing to him in the world. He parted with it for our sakes, that made him cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mark xv. 34. Hereupon he made us rich in a way that cost him something.

And let us be thankful to him in a way that may cost us something; let us be content to be abased for him; to do anything for him. He descended from heaven to the grave, as low as he could for us; let us descend from our conceited greatness for him. Can we lose so much for him as he hath done for us? What are our bodies and souls in comparison of God? It was God that became poor for us. We cannot part with so much for him as he did for us. And then we are gainers by him if we part with all the world, whatsoever we do for him. 'I will be yet more vile for the Lord,' saith David, 2 Sam. vi. 22. He became vile for us; he became a sinner, and 'of no reputation and shall not we be vile and empty for him? Certainly we shall. If we have the Spirit of Christ in us, it will work a conformity. If he had stood upon terms and disdained the virgin's womb, and to become poor for us, where had our salvation been? And if we stand upon terms when we are to suffer for him or to stand for his cause, where will our comfort be? Surely it is a sign that we have no right by the poverty of Christ, unless we be content to part with our Isaac, with the best things we have, when he calls for it.

Use. 8. Again, hath the poverty of Christ made us rich; what trill his riches do Could he save us when he was at the lowest, when he was on the cross, and satisfied divine justice by his death; what can he do for us now he is in heaven, and hath triumphed over all his enemies? What can we look for now by his riches, that have so much by his poverty? Therefore we may reason with the apostle, Rom. v. 10, 'If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?' It is a strong argument, not only as it hath respect to us (because there is more likelihood that any good should

be done for us now when we are reconciled to God, than before when we were enemies); but also as it hath respect to Christ; since he that stuck not to reconcile us to God by his death, cannot be unwilling to save us by his life; and he that was able to redeem us by dying for us, is more clearly and evidently powerful to save us, now he lives and reigns triumphantly in heaven. For is not he able to preserve us, to protect us, and invest us into the glory that he hath purchased for us? He that did so much for us in the time of his abasement, will he not preserve the riches he hath gotten for us? Is he not in heaven in majesty, to apply all that he hath gotten? Is he not our intercessor at the right hand of God, to appear before God for us to make all good? Certainly he will preserve that which he hath procured by his death.

It is a disabling of Christ to think of falling away from grace. He is able to maintain us in that glorious condition that he hath advanced us to; especially considering that he is now in heaven, and hath laid aside the form of a servant; all his humiliation, except our human nature. That for ever he hath united to his person; but all other things of his abasement he hath laid them aside; he is able perfectly, not only to save us, as by his death, but to apply all that he hath gotten, and preserve us to life everlasting. We are kept by the power of God, to that glory that Christ hath purchased by his death. Therefore why should we fear for the time to come, falling from grace, or the want of that that is good? Is not Christ able to maintain that that he hath gotten? Let us raise our hearts with this consideration, what Christ can do now in glory, when his poverty could do this much.

Use 4. Again, let us despise no man for his poverty; for Christ was poor to make us rich. And as those that despise Christ, and esteem him not, but 'hid their faces from him,' because he grew up 'as a root out of a dry ground, because there was no beauty in him,' Isa. liii. 2; that is, because of his poverty, because he was a carpenter's son; they despised by this means the Lord of glory; so those that despised his poor members afterward that 'wandered up and down in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute and afflicted,' Heb. xi. 38, they despised God's jewels, his choice favourites, 'of whom the world was not worthy.' Let not the brother of low degree be cast down because he is poor, nor let the brother of high degree be lifted up because he is rich; for if riches had been the best thing, Christ would have been outwardly rich. But Christ was poor, to show us what are the best riches; and that the riches of this world are but things by the by: 'Seek the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be cast on you,' Mat. vi. 33, by way of addition and supplement. The true riches of a Christian are spiritual.

Christ did not become poor to make us rich in this world, to make us kings and emperors, and great men here, but to make us rich spiritually, and to have such a moiety of earthly things as may serve as a viaticum to bring us to heaven. The main riches of a Christian are spiritual and eternal in grace and glory. In popery they live as if Christ came to make them lords of the world; to usurp jurisdiction over kings and princes. Christ came to make us rich in another manner. St Peter saith, 'Silver and gold have I none,' Acts iii. 6, but his successors cannot say so. Christ came not as a servant to make us lords here, much less to set us at liberty to live after the flesh, and to do what we list. No; the end of Christ's coming was to take away sin, 'to destroy the works of the devil,' 1 John iii. 8. The common course at this time, and devilish practice of many, overturns the end of Christ's coming, as if he came not to destroy, but to let loose the works of the devil; to let us loose to all licentiousness, he came to bring us to God, and not to give us liberty in courses to run further from God. But that by the way. Christ, as I said, came not to make us rich in the things of this life; for do but consider a little of outward riches, what be they?

(1.) They are not our own, as Christ saith, Luke xvi. 1, seq., 'We are but stewards,' and we must give a strict account ere long how we have used them.

(2.) And as they are not our own, so they are not true riches, because they make not us rich. We usually call a poor man a poor soul. A poor soul may be a rich Christian, and a rich man may have a poor soul, naked and empty of spiritual riches. These are not true riches, because they make not a man better. They may be a snare to him, and make him worse, and puff him up; as every grain of riches hath a vermin of pride and ambition in it. 'Charge rich men that they be not high-minded,' Rom. xi. 20. They may make a man worse; they cannot make him better. Can that be true riches that makes a man poorer, that hath not a gracious heart? Surely no. These riches oftentimes are for the hurt of the owners. Men are filled as sponges, and then squeezed again. Are these true riches that expose a man to danger? True riches are such as not only we may do good by, but they make us good. Grace makes us better; it commends us to God. All the riches in the world do not commend us to God. It is said of Antiochus, a great monarch, he was a vile and base person, because he was a wicked man. There is no earthly thing can commend a man to God, if he be naught, if he have a rotten profane heart.

(3.) Again, they are not true riches, because a man outlives them. Death screws him out of all; death comes and examines him when he goes out of the world, and will suffer him to carry nothing with him. If a man come to another man's table, and think to carry away his plate, or anything else, he will be stayed at the gate, and have it taken from him. Nothing we brought into this world, and with nothing we must go out; and are they true riches that determine in this life?

(4.) Then again, these riches, they are not proportionable to the soul of man. When the soul of man hath the image of Christ on it, nothing will satisfy it but spiritual things. There is nothing in the world will satisfy a gracious soul but grace and glory. It is only grace and the spiritual things by Christ that are the true riches, that make us good, and continue us good, and continue with us. We carry thorn to heaven with us. Therefore, as the apostle saith, we should desire the 'best things,' 1 Cor. xii. 31; labour for the best portion, that shall never be taken from us. When we have many things in this world set before us, shall we make a base choice? as the Gadarenes, to save their hogs, they would lose Christ, Luke viii. 37. Shall we make choice of poor things, and leave grace and Christ? No. Since we have judgment to make a difference, let us make a wise choice. Judgment is seen in choice of different things; for though these things be good, yet they are inferior goods; and we lose not these things by labouring for grace and the best things. The best way to have these things is to labour for the best things. Solomon desired wisdom, and he had riches too.

'Let us seek the kingdom of God, and these things' (as far as they be needful) shall be 'cast on us,' Mat. vi. 33. These are the truths of God. Therefore let us be ashamed that we discover our ignorance by making a base choice, and let us labour to choose the best things. Christ became poor to make us rich in the best things, to make us rich in grace, in joy, in peace, and comfort, Ac.

Therefore let us esteem ourselves and others highly from hence, and let us not judge by appearance. When Christ was put to death, how did the world judge him? A miserable man, a sinner, because they judged by appearance. So it is the lot of God's children. Though they be never so rich, yet those that look upon their outward condition, that judge by appearance, because they are outwardly poor, they think they have no riches at all. 'But judge not by appearance,' as Christ saith, John vii. 24. The life that we have is hidden, our happiness and riches are hidden with God. Yet those that we

have now are worth all the world. Is not a little peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and assurance that God is ours, worth all worldly things? The least measure of grace and comfort is worth all, and yet what we have here is nothing to that we shall have in heaven.

We may be ashamed, the best of us all, that we live not answerable to our estate. We are oftentimes poorer in grace than we need to be. Having such a fountain so near us, to perish for thirst; to be at a feast, and to perish for hunger; to be at a mine, and to come away beggars: it is a sign we want spiritual senses; it is a sign of infidelity, that we are not capable of our spiritual wants. That we should profess ourselves to be Christians, to be members of Christ, and yet have no grace, no spiritual ornaments, no garments to hang on our souls; it is a sign there is no union because there is no communion. We draw nothing from Christ, we are Christians without Christ, we have no anointing from Christ. Let us take heed that we be not titular Christians, to have only the name of Christians. Let us labour to be Christians indeed. And for that end consider what was the end why Christ became poor? To 'make us rich.' Why should we frustrate his end?

Therefore let us search what riches we have from Christ; whether our debts be paid; whether our sins be forgiven. We may know we have our sins forgiven if we have sanctifying grace. God never pays our debts but he gives us a stock of grace. Let us examine therefore what riches we have. Some Christians are rich, but they are deceived in their own condition. They think they are poor and beggarly, and have nothing, when they are rich. What is it that deceives them? Sometimes it is because they have not so much as others; therefore they think they have nothing, not considering the degrees in Christianity.

Or because they have not so much as they would have. As a covetous man, he always looks forward, he is never satisfied; so a Christian, out of a spiritual covetousness, by looking to that he wants, forgets that he hath.

Sometimes a Christian in case of temptations and desertion, conscience may suggest his wants altogether. God will humble him this way. Though it may be an error in conscience, yet I would there were more of this kind. Such people are to be encouraged, as in Rev. ii. 13, 'Thou sayest thou art poor' (and the world thinks so), 'but thou art rich.' So there are many that are poor in their own conceits, that think they have nothing, but indeed they are rich; and they discover their interest in the true riches by their desire, and hungering, and thirsting after grace; by their care to please God in all things,

to approve themselves to God, to do nothing against conscience; by their care in using the means of salvation, and their walking circumspectly. A man may see and discover their riches in their carriage. And if there be the least degree of grace, it is great riches in regard of inferior things, though it be little in regard of that we shall have in heaven. Let us search what we have, that we may walk thankfully and comfortably. We see worldly men, how they set themselves out in a little riches, and swell in their own conceits. A Christian hath that that is infinitely better, and shall he always droop and be cast down? If he be a sound Christian that hath any goodness in him, let him walk a comfortable and cheerful life answerable to his riches. We account them base-minded men, that being very rich, yet they live as if they had nothing. So Christians are to blame, that having great riches in Christ, they live as uncomfortably as if they had none. What is the reason, Christ being so rich, that Christians have no more grace? Sometimes it is because they search not their own estates for good as well as bad. And then they do not empty themselves enough that Christ may fill them. They are not thankful enough for that they have, for thankfulness is the way to get more.

Quest. How shall we carry ourselves that we may improve Christ's riches; to be made rich in grace by him?

Ans. 1. First, Let us labour for the emptying grace of humility, which will empty the soul and make it of a large capacity to contain a great measure of grace. God 'fills the hungry with good things,' Luke i. 53; he 'resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble,' James iv. G. Let us labour to see our wants and necessities, and the vanity of all earthly things, and then we shall be fit to receive grace.

2. And then labour to see the excellency of the grace we want, and that will stretch and enlarge our desires. And withal see the necessity of grace. We must have faith, hope, and love. We cannot live as Christians else. We must have contentation. We shall live miserably else. We cannot be like Christ without grace.

3. And withal know that Christ is rich for us. He hath not only abundance of the Spirit, but redundance, to overflow to us his members. As the head hath redundance of spirits, and senses for the use of the whole body; it sees, and feels, and smells, for the use of the whole body; whatsoever Christ hath, he hath for us. Let us labour to know our riches as we are Christians, as we grow in other things, so to be acquainted with that we have in Christ's. As children that are heirs to great things, at the first they are

ignorant of what they have, but as they grow in years so they grow in further knowledge of that that belongs to them; and they grow in spirit answerable and suitable to that they shall have. Let grace agree with nature in this, let us desire to know our riches in Jesus Christ.

4. And not only know that they are ours, but use ours to our own good and benefit upon all occasions. If we offend God, as every day we do, make use of our riches in Christ for the pardon of our sins. He is full of favour, he is our High Priest, he makes intercession for us. If we want knowledge he is a Prophet to teach us by' his Spirit. If we find our natures defiled, and want power over our corruptions, he is a King to guide and lead us, in the midst of all our enemies, to heaven. If we find our consciences troubled, consider what peace we have in Christ. If we want outward things, let us consider we are under age. Great persons enjoy not their inheritances when they are under years. If God dispense outward things to us, it is for our good. If he send poverty and disgrace, it is for our good, to fit us for a better state. God in his infinite wisdom knows better what is good for us than we do for ourselves. In the want of anything let us believe that Christ is given as a public treasure to the church. Thus we may improve the grace and riches we have in Christ.

5. Again, let us labour to make a good use of every favour we enjoy; of our liberties and recreations. We have all by the poverty of Christ. Therefore let us use them in a sober manner, not as the fashion is, to cast off all care of Christ; to pour out ourselves to all licentiousness. Let us consider, this liberty and refreshing that I have, it is from the blood of Christ; as David's worthies, when they brake through with the danger of their lives to get him water, 'Oh,' saith he, 'I will not drink it, it is the blood of these men,' 2 Sam. xxiii. 15, seq. So whatsoever liberties and good things I have, I have it by the poverty of Christ, by the blood of Christ; and shall I misuse it?

And certainly it will make us esteem more highly of our spiritual privileges than of outward, considering they cost Christ so dear. He became poor to set us up when we were utterly bankrupt. He stripped himself of all, to make us rich. Shall we not therefore esteem and use these things well? And when we are tempted to sin, this will be a great means to restrain us; I am freed from sin by the blood of Christ; shall I make him poor again by committing sin? Shall I wrong him now he is in heaven? The Jews despited him on earth in the form of a servant; but our sins are of a higher nature, of a deeper double dye; we sin against Christ in heaven in glory.

When we are tempted to sin, this consideration will make us ashamed to sin: Since Christ hath bought our liberty from sin at such a rate, shall we make light of sin that cost him his dear blood, and the sense of his Father's wrath? that made him cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' It is impossible that any man should pour out himself to sin that hath this consideration. Christ became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.

The next thing is the ground or spring from whence all this comes; it is from grace. 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It was his mere grace. There was nothing that could compel him. God the Father could not compel him, because he was equal with his Father; being God, there was an equality of essence.

And then, what was there in us that should move him to abase himself so low? Was there any worth in us? No. We were dead. Was there any strength in us? No. We were dead in sins. Was any goodness in us? No. We were Christ's enemies. Was there any desire in us? No. We were opposite to all goodness in ourselves; there was no desire in us to be better than we were. If God should have let us alone to our own desires, we were posting to hell. It is the greatest misery in the world, next to hell itself, to be given up to our own desires. A man were better to be given up to the devil than to his own desires. He may torment him, and perhaps bring him to repentance; but to be given up to his own desires, leads to hell. It is merely of grace, grace. It was the grace of God the Father that gave his Son; and it was grace that the Son gave himself.

What is grace? It is a principle from whence all good comes from God to us. As God loves us men, and not angels, it is philanthropia; 'as God's affection is beneficial to our nature, so it is love; as it is to persons in misery, so it is mercy; as it is free, without any worth in us procuring it, so it is grace. It is the same affection; only it differs outwardly in regard of the object. Hence we see that Christ must be considered as a joint cause of our salvation with the Father. 'It is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' You see here he became poor to make us rich. Indeed, he was sent and anointed and sealed, and had authority of his Father; yet notwithstanding his joint grace and consent went with it. Therefore he was a principal, as Chrysostom speaks, with a principal. He differs nothing at all from his Father, but in order of persons; first the Father and then the Son, both being jointly God, and both joint causes of the salvation of mankind. The Father chose us to salvation;

the Son paid the price for us; and the Holy Ghost applies it and sanctifies our natures. God the Father loved the world, and gave his Son. Christ loved the world, and gave himself: 'He loved me, and gave himself for me,' saith St Paul, Gal. ii. 20. Therefore we should think of the sweet consent of the Trinity, in their love to mankind. So the Father loved us, that he gave his Son; so the Son loved us, that he gave himself; so the Holy Ghost loves us, that he conveys all grace to us, and dwells in us, and assures us of God's love.

We must not think of Christ as an underling in the work of salvation. He is a principal, in the work, from his Father. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ it is the cause of all. It was the cause why he was man. It is the cause of all grace that is in us. That that is the cause of the cause, is the cause of the thing caused. The grace of Christ is the cause of all in us; because it was the cause of Christ's suffering from whence we have grace. Grace was the cause that Christ was man, and that he suffered; therefore it is the cause of grace in us. Christ was a gift; the Father gave him, and he gave himself. 'If thou hadst known the gift of God,' saith Christ to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 10. Oh it is the greatest gift that ever was!

Therefore when we think of any one of the persons in the Trinity, we must not exclude the rest, but include all, which is a comfortable consideration; because there is a sweet union of all the three persons in the great work of salvation. As Christ saith, 'I in the Father, and the Father in me,' John xvii. 21: not in essence alone—he is God, and I am God—but I am in the Father, and he in me. I consent with the Father, and the Father with me. We both agree in the great work of salvation.

Therefore we should return the glory of all the good we have to God the Father, and to Christ; and as it is in Rev. v. 12, 'Worthy is the Lamb, because he hath redeemed us.' When we think of the good we have by Christ, 'Worthy is the Lamb, because he shed his blood for us.' 'The Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,' he is worthy of all praise and honour. We should honour the Father, and honour the Son, and the Holy Spirit that applies the good we have by Christ to us. When we glorify God, let us glorify Christ too, 'who together with the Father is to be glorified,' because it was his grace to give himself; he made himself poor for us. We cannot honour the Father more than by honouring the Son; for God the Father will be seen in his Son, as the apostle saith, 'In Christ we behold the glory of God,' Eph. iii. 21. Therefore what he saith of Christ here tends to the glory of the Father.

Christ not only as God is gracious, and was willing to the work of salvation, but as the meritorious cause of the grace of his Father; for grace should not have been derived to us from the Father, unless first it had been seated on Christ in our nature, and in him derived to us.

The work of salvation, as it is from Christ, so it is from the grace of Christ; therefore it was free and voluntary. What so free as grace? Therefore Christ's abasement and poverty, it was merely voluntary. If it had not been voluntary, it had not been meritorious and satisfactory. It was a free-will offering; it was of grace, not forced and commanded without his own consent. It was merely of grace, for our good and salvation; that we might have the more comfort. It was a free-will offering. Pie seemed as man to decline death, to show the truth of his manhood; but when again he considered wherefore his Father sent him, 'Not my will, but thine be done,' Mat. xxvi. 42; and with joy, 'With a desire have I desired to eat my last passover with you; and I have a baptism, and how am I pained till I be baptized with it?' Luke xxii. 15. However, to show the truth of his manhood, he feared death; yet, when he considered what he was sent for, it was with a resignation on the divine nature. So it was a free-will offering, and a sacrifice 'of a sweet smell to God the Father,' Philip, iv. 18.

Therefore when we think of Christ, let us think of nothing but grace; or when we think of heaven or of any blessing by Christ, all comes under the notion of grace, because all comes from mere favour. There are four descents of grace:—

[1.] First, Grace as it is in God and Christ in their own breasts; the favour of God resting in his own bosom.

[2.] And then this grace and favour showed in grace; that is, in habitual grace; in bestowing grace upon our nature, to sweeten and sanctify it, to fit it for communion with God.

[3.] And then actual grace; the movings of the Spirit to every good work; to every action of grace.

[4.] And then every gift of God, every blessing is a grace; because it riseth from grace. As we say of the gifts of a great person, this is his grace or favour; so every good thing we have is a grace. It is the favour of God in Christ that sweeteneth all. Let us labour to see grace in all, especially the fundamental grace, the favour of God and of Christ, the cause of all. And let

us see any grace in us as from that grace, and every good act we do, a grace, from mere favour; and every blessing we have is a grace, if our hearts be good: as the apostle calls the Macedonians' benevolence a grace, 2 Cor. viii. 2. Everything that is good is a grace. 'Therefore, not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory,' Ps. cxv. 1, both of thy favour and of all that comes from it; all that we have is sweet, because it issues from grace. The favour in the thing is better than the thing itself. As we say of gifts, we care not for the gift, but for the love of him that gave it; so the good things that we have are not so sweet as the favour of him that gives it, when we deserve not so much as daily bread, but that also is of grace. The source and spring of all that is in us, is free grace in the breast of God and Christ.

In the controversy between us and the papists, when we say we are justified by grace, we must not understand it of inherent grace, whereby our natures are sanctified, and that but in part; but it is meant of the free grace and mercy of God in Christ, and the free grace of Christ in his own breast. Let us take heed that we build not our justification and salvation upon a false title. The title is the grace of Christ, and of God the Father.

Now the grace we have in Christ in the breast of God is, either the good will of God, whereby he is disposed to give Christ, and to do all good to us . . . There is no cause of that at all. Christ as God joins with the Father in that grace, which is amor benevolentice, the grace of good will. Christ as mediator is the effect of that grace. But then there is the grace of complacency, whereby God delights in us. This is bestowed upon the creature in effectual calling. Then God shows the grace of delighting in us, engrafting us into Christ by faith; for though before all worlds God had a purpose to do good to us, yet that is concealed till we believe. As water that runs under ground, it is hid a long time till it break out suddenly; and then we discover that there was a stream run under ground, as Arethusa, and other rivers; so it is with the favour of God from eternity: it runs under ground. Till we be called we see not Christ's good will to us; but when we believe and become one with Christ, God looks upon us with the love of complacency; with the same love wherewith he loves Christ; because we are in Christ, as it is in John xvii. 23, 'I in them, and they in me.' God loves the head and members with the same love. Christ as God was freely disposed to choose men; but Christ as mediator continues this favour and mercy of God, when we are grafted into him, to shine on us continually. It is this second that we must labour for as a fruit of the first. Let us labour not only to know that there was an eternal love of God to some that are his; but labour by faith in Christ, to know that

he shines upon us in Christ; and all other graces within us, and all other gifts, are from this first grace. Therefore they have the name. Why do we call faith, hope, and love graces, but because they issue from the mercy and favour and love of God in Christ? And, as I said before, why do we call any benefit we have a grace? Because it comes from grace. All good things have the term of grace on them, to show the spring from whence they come.

I will not enter into dispute with points of popery, that stinks now in the nostrils of every man that hath but the use of ordinary reason, it is so full of folly and blasphemy. I rather speak of positive truths, to see God's grace and favour, and bless God for it in every thing we have.

Doth all that we have in Christ come from grace, the grace in us, and comforts and outward things merely from grace? Then esteem them more from the spring from whence they come than for themselves. The necessaries of this life, food and raiment, they are but mean things in themselves; but if we consider what spring they come from—from the blood of Christ that hath purchased them, and from the grace and love of Christ—grace will add value to them. Grace will make all sweet that we have; when we can say, I have this from the grace of God, as Jacob said, 'These are the children that God hath given me of his bounty and grace,' Gen. xxxiii. 5. This is the provision, the help and comfort that I have from the grace of Christ; for the same grace that gives heaven gives necessaries and daily bread. Let us look on every thing, and put the respect of grace upon every thing. It is grace that we meet with afflictions whereby we are corrected. God might have let us go on in the hardness of our hearts. Look upon every thing as a fruit of God's grace and favour. What is the reason that we are no more thankful for common benefits? Because we look not on them as issuing from grace. Take away grace, the free favour of God, extract this quintessence, take the love of God out of things—what are they? Let a man be rich, if he have it not from the love and mercy of God, what will all be in time but snares? Let a man be great in the world, if it be not from the grace of God, what is it? As God saith, 'I will curse you in your blessings,' Deut. xxviii. 17. Without grace we are cursed in those things that else are blessings. Take grace from Adam in paradise, and Adam is afraid in paradise, and hides his head. Take the favour of the king from Haman, and nothing will do him good. Take the favour of the king from Absalom, and all other liberties that he had are nothing worth, when he must not go to the court, 2 Sam. xiv. 24, seq. So take the grace and favour of God away that sweetens all, they will prove snares, and we shall find by experience that God will curse us in all our

blessings. Let us labour therefore to have a sensible feeling of this free grace and mercy of God in Christ.

And, to add this further, the grace of Christ, it is a fruitful grace, it is a rich grace, as the apostle saith here. 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who became poor to make us rich by his poverty.' The favour of God and Christ, it is no empty favour. It is not like the winter sun, that casts a goodly countenance when it shines, but gives little comfort and heat. Many men give sweet and comfortable words, but there is nothing follows, it is but a barren favour. It is not so with God's favour, to give only a shining countenance but no warmth. No; saith the apostle, 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he were rich, he became poor.' It was a grace that made him empty himself of himself, to make us full; it made him poor to make us rich; he abased himself to make us glorious. As is the man, so is his strength, saith the proverb: so, as is the person, such is the favour and good-will we expect from him. Now Christ being so potent a person, being God and man, his grace must needs be wondrous rich, suitable to his greatness. If God will free a man, he will free him from all miseries; if he advance a man, he will advance him to heaven; if he will punish a man, he will punish him to hell; his wrath shall seize on him for ever; what he doth, he will do like a God. The grace of Christ, it is a powerful rich grace.

Therefore let us examine ourselves, am I in the favour of God and of Christ? If I be, surely it is a rich favour, it tends to the best riches; he became poor to make me rich. Where is my faith, my love, my hope, my contentation, my patience and victory over temptations and lusts? Is it a dead favour? Am I in the favour of Christ, and find no fruits of it? Certainly it is but an illusion: therefore as yet I am not in the compass of Christ's favour. Therefore I must wait in the use of means, and humbling myself; 'he gives grace to the humble,' James iv. G. And with a sense of our spiritual poverty, let us pray to God to shine on us in Christ, that we may find the fruit of his love enriching us with grace. Oh that my faith, and hope, and grace, were more! Oh let this evidence that I am in thy favour [be revealed] by the fruits of it, that I may find those riches that thou hast procured by thy poverty. And let us not rest till we find the fruits of this grace, though not always in the comfort, yet in the strength and ability, that we may perform, in some measure, what is required. Though we have not much of the comfort that we desire, yet if we have strength we have that that is better. It is better to have grace than comfort here. God reserves that for another world. But let us always look for one of them, either sensible peace and joy; or if not that, yet

strength against our corruptions, and ability to do God service in some measure; to do something above nature. Holy desires, and ability, and strength, they come not from nature, but from the favour of Christ. Therefore having these, I know I am in the love of Christ. These are favours that he bestows only upon his own. Favours of the left hand he gives to castaways; but his special favours, the riches of grace, he gives only to his children. Therefore let us labour to find somewhat wrought in our natures, that may evidence to us that we are in this rich favour of God.

Lastly, This grace of Christ being free, that we neither desired it nor deserved it, why may not Manasseh take hope as well as David, if he submit himself, though he were so horrible a sinner as he was? Why may not Paul, a persecutor, find mercy as well as Timothy, that was brought up to goodness from his youth? It is free. Therefore let no man despair that hath been a wicked liver in former time. The best stand in need of grace, and it is of grace that they are what they are; as St Paul saith, 'By grace I am that I am,' 1 Cor. xv. 10; and the worst, if they come in and submit themselves, and take Christ for their Lord, and submit to his government, and will be ruled by his word and Spirit, and not continue to live in rebellious courses, they may partake of this grace.

But again, let none presume. For though it be free grace, yet we must confess our sins and forsake them, or else we shall find no grace. We must be poor in spirit, and sensible of our misery; for God enricheth those that are empty and poor, 'the rich he sends empty away,' Luke i. 58. We must sue to God for grace by the Spirit of grace, and take heed that we turn not these offers of grace to occasions of wantonness, and so divide Christ; to take out of Christ what we list, and leave what we list. We must know that Christ, as he is our Jesus to save us, so he is our Lord; as he saith here, the Lord Jesus Christ. We must submit to him for the time to come, and then we shall find experience of his sweet grace.

The next thing I observe briefly is, that Doct. 5. This grace must be known.

Saith the apostle here, 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' A man may know his riches, he may know his interest in Christ. The apostle useth it here as an argument to persuade them to good works. That that is used as an argument must be known before the thing can be persuaded. A thing cannot be made light by that which is darker than itself. But the apostle here useth this as an argument, 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ,' so that these truths are taken for granted, that all grace comes by the poverty of Christ. And then, that we may know ourselves to be interested in it, that Christ's poverty was for us. A man that is a true Christian may know his share and interest in the grace of Christ, or else how should he be persuaded by this as an argument if he know it not? Or how shall he be comfortable except he know that he hath interest in Christ? It may be known out of the Scriptures, as a history, that Christ is gracious for matter of fact. The devils know it as well as we; and Judas knew it. But he speaks here of a knowledge with interest. You know it by experience; 'the Spirit witnesseth to your spirits' so much, that Christ gave himself for you. I know the grace of Christ as mine, as belonging to me, as if there were no man in the world besides. And as this knowledge is with interest, so it stirs up to do. All other knowledge but knowledge with interest may stand with desperation; and what good will it do to know in general that Christ came to save sinners, and yet go to hell for ail that? It is the knowledge that applies Christ in particular that saves a man; that knowledge that determines the general to my own person. Therefore we must labour for this. Christ was poor for me; 'he loved me and gave himself for me,' Oral. ii. 20. The love and free grace of Christ, it may and it ought to be known. 'We ought to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 10. It may be known, but it cannot be known without a great deal of diligence and self-denial. This knowledge is a super-added grace. It is one thing to be a sound Christian, and another thing to know it. A man cannot know it by reflection, but he must first be good in exercise; he must find grace working, he must give all diligence to make his calling and election sure to him. It may be sure in itself, but it cannot be sure to him without diligence. Therefore those that know their estate in grace, they are fruitful, growing, careful, watchful Christians.

It is no wonder that in those secure times, if we ask many whether they know themselves to be in the state of grace upon sound grounds, they wish well, and they have many doubtings. There are many that have the seeds and the work of grace in them, but the times are so secure, that they know it not. Usually it is made known to us in the worst times, either in the time of affliction, and temptation, and trial, or after, when we have 'fought the good fight,' 1 Tim. vi. 12, and overcome our corruptions. 'To him that overcometh will I give of the hidden manna,' Rev. ii. 17; that is, he shall have a sweet sense of Christ to be manna, to be bread of life to him, to him that conflicts and gets the victory over his corruptions. The reason why many feel not that sweet comfort from the 'grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' it is because either

they do not conflict with their base corruptions, or if they do strive, they get but a little ground of them.

And let us take heed of that cold and injurious conceit, as if it were a thing not to be known whether we belong to Christ or no. What! Do we think that Christ would come in the flesh and become poor, nay, become a curse for us, and that he is now in heaven for us, and all that we should doubt whether we be in his love or no, and that we should not labour to find our portion in that love? What a wrong is this to the grace of Christ. Is not all his dealing towards us that we might be joyful in ourselves, and thankful and fruitful to him; and how can this be without some knowledge that our state is good? How can we live well and die comfortably without it? Therefore let us make it the main scope and aim of our endeavour. Oh, the happiness of that Christian that is good, and knows himself to be so! What in this world can fall very uncomfortably to such a man? Nothing in the world can take down his courage much; whereas another man that doubts of this can never be comfortable in any condition: he cannot be joyful and thankful in prosperity; he cannot be comfortable in adversity, for he knows not from what ground this comes, whether it be in love to him or no.

You see from hence, likewise, that grace is no enemy to good works, neither the freedom of God's favour, being without any merit on our part; nor the knowledge and assurance of salvation. It is no enemy to diligence and to good works; nay, it is the foundation of them. The apostle doth not use it here as an argument to neglect good works. No. He stirs them up by it. If anything in the world will work upon a heart that hath any ingenuity, it is the love, and favour, and grace of God.

'The love of Christ constraineth,' 2 Cor. v. 14. The love of Christ, as known, it melts the heart. The knowledge of the grace of Christ, it is very effectual to stir us up, as to all duties, so especially to the duty of bounty and mercy; for experience of grace it will make us gracious, and kind, and loving, and sweet to others. Those that have felt mercy will be ready to show mercy. Those that have felt grace and love, they will be ready to reflect, and show that to others that they have felt themselves. Those that are hard-hearted and barren in their lives and conversations, it is a sign that the Sun of righteousness never yet shined on them. There is a power in grace, and grace known, to assimilate the soul to be like unto Christ; it hath a force to stir us up to that that is good, Titus ii. 11, 12. The apostle enforceth self-denial, a hard lesson; and holiness to God, justice to others, and sobriety to ourselves.

What is the argument he useth? 'The grace of God hath appeared I The grace of God hath shined, as the word signifieth. He means Christ appeared, but he saith, 'The grace of God hath appeared when Christ appeared, grace appeared. Christ is nothing but pure grace clothed with our nature. What doth this appearing of grace teach us? 'To deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live holily, and righteously, and soberly,' &c. Holily and religiously in regard of God; justly in regard of men, and not only justly, but bountifully, for bounty is justice. It is justice to give to the poor. 'Withhold not good from the owners.' They have right to that we have. Grace, when it appears in any soul, it is a teacher; it teacheth to deny all that is naught, and it teacheth to practise all that is good. It teacheth to live holily and righteously in this present evil world. Many men like the text thus far, 'The grace of God bringeth salvation.' Oh it is a sweet text! Ay, but what follows? What doth that grace teach thee? It teacheth to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; it doth not teach men to follow and set themselves upon the works of the devil, but to live soberly and justly and righteously in this present evil world. It is said of the woman in the gospel. 'She loved much, because much was forgiven her,' Luke vii. 47. What made that blessed woman so enlarged in her affection and love to Christ? She had experience of the pardon of many sins, and having felt the love of Christ, she loved him again. And what is the reason that those that are converted from dangerous courses of life, do often prove the most fruitful Christians? Because they have felt most love and mercy. Who was more zealous than the blessed apostle St Paul? Oh, he found rich and abundant love! How large is he in setting forth the mercy of God: 'Oh the height, and breadth, and depth!' Rom. xi. 33. Nothing contents him, no expressions, when he speaks of God's mercy; because he had been a wicked man, and found mercy. Let no man be discouraged, if he have been never so sinful, if he come in. The more need he hath of mercy, the more abundant God is, as the apostle saith here, 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And those that have felt most grace will be most wrought on, to show the fruits of that grace in all good works, in duties towards God and men.

And if we find not our hearts wrought on, by the consideration of the grace of Christ apprehended and known to this end, 'we turn the grace of God into wantonness,' Jude iv. It is a sign of an ill condition. The Scripture speaks nothing but discomfort to such that take occasion from the free grace and infinite and boundless mercy of God, to be loose and careless in their lives and conversations; that think it is a time of liberty, and we may do what we list. Though the tongues of men say not so, nor they dare not for shame,

yet their lives speak it. Would men else live in swearing, and other debauched carriage, that is offensive to God and men? Do they know that there is a God, a Christ, and mercy? Doth mercy and grace teach them that lesson? No. It teacheth us to deny such base lives and lusts, and to live holily, and soberly, and justly in this world. Therefore such men are atheists. Either they must not believe the Scriptures, or else exclude themselves from interest in mercy; for as yet they are not in the state of grace, in whom the consideration of mercy and grace doth not work better effects than these.

The gospel hath as strong encouragements, and stronger, to be good and gracious, than the law. Grace enforceth strictness of life more sweetly and strongly than the law. The law saith, 'We must not take the name of God in vain,' Exod. xx. 7; and we must be subject to our superiors, and to live chastely, &c., under a curse. Doth not the grace of God teach this as well as the law, and from a higher ground? It teacheth the same thing by arguments taken from love and grace. A man perisheth by the law in such sins, but then there is a pardon offered, if men will come under the government of Christ, and lead new lives. But if men refuse, there is a super-added guilt. Not only justice condemns such wretches, but mercy itself; because they refuse mercy upon these terms rather than they will leave their sinful courses. Mercy and justice both meet to condemn such persons. Let us take heed therefore of abusing the mercy and love of God. For then we quite overthrow God's end in the gospel. For why doth he convey all to us by love and mercy and grace, but that it may work the same disposition again in us to him? Or else we overturn the end of the gospel. Let us take heed of this, as ever we will find interest in this grace, without which we are the miserablest wretches that live. It were better for us that we had never heard of Christ and the gospel, than to live in sins against conscience, under the manifestation and publication of grace.

Doct. 6. Now, together with the grace of Christ, the apostle brings the example of Christ, that both may stir them up to the ditties of mercy and bounty and fruitfulness. Indeed, the grace of Christ makes his example more sweet. Men willingly look upon examples.

The examples of great and excellent persons; the example of loving and bountiful persons; the example of such as are loving and bountiful to us in particular; the example of such as we have interest in, that are near and dear to us, and we to them—these four things commend examples. Now is there any greater or more excellent person than Christ? Is there any fuller of love

and mercy and grace than he, that hath made himself poor to make us rich? And all of us, if we be Christians indeed, we have interest in this. Our hearts and consciences by the Spirit of God have some persuasion of this. And then again he is dear and near unto us. He is our head and husband; he is 'all in all unto us,' 1 Cor. xv. 28. Therefore the example of Christ joined with his grace, it is a wondrous forcible example.

Quest. How shall we make this example of Christ profitable to us?

An. (1.) First of all, let us look often into the grace of Christ; the grace and free mercy of God in giving Christ. Consider how God hath laid forth all his riches in Christ, and consider how miserable we had been without Christ, even next unto devils in misery. A man is the most miserable creature under heaven if he have not interest in Christ; he is a lost creature. Let us dwell upon the meditation and consideration of this till we feel our hearts warmed. If one pass through the sunshine, it doth not much heat; but if the sun beat upon a thing, there will be a reflection of heat. So let us stay upon this consideration of the infinite love and mercy of Christ to us wretches, and this warming the heart, it will transform us to the likeness of Christ; as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all as in [a] mirror beholding the glory of God' (he means the glory of God's mercy in Christ), 'we are transformed and changed from glory to glory,' from one degree of grace to another. The serious consideration of the love and mercy of God in Christ, it is a wondrous sweet thing, and it hath a transforming power with it. And that is the reason why the gospel converts men, and not the law. The law never converts a man; but, together with the Spirit, it will cast him down. But the gospel, which is the promulgation of grace and mercy to penitent sinners, that confess their sins and forsake them, and come under a new government of grace, the publishing of this hath the Spirit of grace with it to work conversion. Therefore it is called the ministry of the Spirit; because the Spirit goes with the doctrine of grace, to change us and make us gracious, to persuade us that God loves us, and to stir us up to perform all duties in that sweet affection that God requires in the gospel, the affection of love. Therefore if we be or ever were converted, it is this way. Our hearts are wrought on by the consideration of the love and mercy of God in Christ; so that love begets love, and mercy begets a sweetness in us to God again. In the nature of the thing it cannot be otherwise, when the soul stands convinced of the sweet mercy of God in Christ, and of the sweet love of Christ, who being God became man, to take our nature, and suffer the punishment that was due to us, and is now in heaven appearing and making intercession for us, it cannot

be but the soul will be stirred up to a desire of conformity to this blessed Saviour. Therefore let us let go all disputings of election, concerning God's decree, and let us do our duty, and depend upon God in the use of means. Let us labour to see the love of God in Christ, and that will put all questions out of question (though in some cases we must labour to know how to vindicate the truth, but when it comes to our own particular), lay other things aside, let us do our duty in the use of means, and think of the end of the gospel, of the end of Christ's incarnation and death, namely, to reveal the bowels of God's mercy to sinners; and then we shall find the intendment of all working upon us, that God had an eternal purpose to save us.

(2.) Again, if we would make good use of the example of Christ, we must converse with those that have the Spirit of Christ in them, as Christ is in every good Christian, and see what lovely things the Spirit of Christ discovers in them. That will have a transforming power likewise. And certainly next to the meditation of Christ, and the excellencies that are in him, I know no way more effectual than holy communion with those that are led with the Spirit of Christ, when we see the sweet fruit of it in others. It hath been a means sanctified to do a great deal of good to many; and those that delight not in it, they never knew what the likeness of Christ meant; for those that desire to be like to Christ, they love the shining of Christ in any. In these careless times, all companies are alike one with another. Indeed, when men's callings thrust them upon it, they must be allowed to converse with all men; but in familiar and intimate society, those that do not make choice of those that find some work of grace on their hearts by the Spirit of God, they may well doubt of their condition; for grace it will make us love the like. As we see creatures of the same kind, they love and company one with another; doves with doves, and lambs with lambs; so it must be with the children of God, or else we do not know what the communion of saints means, which indeed is a thing little understood in the world. These times of security are times of confusion. Affliction will make us know one another better.

(3.) Again, if we would make use of the example of Christ, let us put cases sometimes to ourselves, what Christ could do or not do in such a case. I profess myself to be a member of Christ, to be one with him, and he one with me. Would Christ be cruel if he were on earth? would he swear, and look scornfully upon others? would he undermine others, and cover all with a pretence of justice? Oh no! It is the devil's work to do so. If we be not members of Christ, woo unto us! And if we be, do such courses suit with such a nearness to Christ? Either let us be religious to purpose, or else

disclaim all; for it is better a great deal never to own religion, than to own it and to live graceless lives under the profession of Christ.

Now to stir us up to express Christ in our lives and conversations let us consider, the more like we are to Christ, the more he delights in us; for every one delights in those that are like them. And what a sweet state is it for God and Christ to delight in us. God the Father will delight in us because we are like the Son of his delight. Whom doth God delight most in? In his own blessed Son. And who come nearest in his delight to his Son? Those that express him in their lives and conversations.

The more like we are to Christ, the more like we shall be one to another. As if there be one statue, or picture, or effigies, that is set for the first sample, the nearer the rest come to that, the more like they are one to another; so I say, the nearer Christians come to the first pattern of goodness, Christ himself, who is God's master-piece as it were, that which he glories in, the more we come to be like one another, and love and joy one in another. What is the sweet communion that we shall have one with another for ever in heaven? Is it not that the Spirit shall be all in all in every one, and each shall look upon another as perfect in grace and love, and so shall solace and delight themselves, first in God and Christ, and then in one another, admiring and reverencing the graces and sweetness one of another. This is the very joy of heaven itself, and it is the heaven upon earth, when we can joy and solace ourselves one in another as we are good. Now the nearer we come to Christ, who is the image of God, the more we shall attain this. Therefore let us labour that Christ may be all in all in us; that as the soul doth act the body, so the Spirit of Christ may act us, that Christ may speak in us, and think in us, and love in us by his Spirit; that he may dwell in us, and joy, and hate in us by his Spirit; that we may put off ourselves, and our carnal affections, and the spirit of the world, and that we may 'put on' Christ, and be clothed with him, that we may say with St Paul, 'I live not, but Christ lives in me' by his Spirit. Whence was Paul stirred up to that? Oh, saith he, 'Christ loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. The grace of Christ stirred him up, 'Christ loved me, and gave himself for me,' and by his Spirit he witnesseth to my soul that he did so. Therefore the life that I live is by the Spirit of Christ; Christ lives in me.

But to come to the particular duty whereunto the grace and example of Christ should stir us up to be like him; that is, in kindness, and mercy, and bounty, to the poor saints; for that is the scope of the apostle here, in this

and the next chapter. 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, he became poor,' &c. Wherefore doth the apostle bring all this? To move them to the duty of bounty and liberality. This duty it is legal from the example of Christ; it is a thing that hath much equity in it; and it is enough to a Christian heart, that hath the love of God, to put him in mind of the grace of God to him. You need not beat upon him, or press him further than thus, 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus.' Remember you are a Christian. You have felt the experience of God's love in Christ. Every man will judge of the equity, that we should therefore be gracious and kind and loving to others, in imitation of Christ; because he hath been so to us. Wherein stands the equity?

First, It may appear in this, if we consider in how near a relation those that need our help are to us, and likewise to Christ?

First, What is their relation to us? Not only that they are our flesh, for so are all men; but they are heirs of the same salvation, bought with the death of the same Christ; such as Christ feeds with his own body and blood; such as he clothes with his own righteousness. They are fellow-members with us, fellow-heirs of heaven, and members of Christ; such as he died for, to redeem with the price of his own blood. There is an undeniable equity, if we consider their condition, their relation to Christ, and to us. Second. Again, there is a marvellous binding equity, to see the grace of God to us in particular. Christ became poor, to make us rich in grace here, and in glory hereafter. And shall not I out of my riches give somewhat to the poor? Is it not equal? Christ from heaven came in my nature and flesh to visit me; as it is in the song of Zacharias, 'The dayspring from on high hath visited us,' Luke i. 78; and shall not I visit Christ in his members? He came from heaven to earth to take notice of my wants and miseries, to do and suffer that that I should have done and suffered. He feeds me with his body and blood, that is, with his satisfaction to divine justice by his death; and shall not I feed his poor members? Christ clothes me with his righteousness, and shall not I clothe Christ in his poor members? In the consideration of these things the Spirit of God will be effectual to stir us up to this marvellous neglected duty, of kindness and mercy to those that stand in need.

And because Christ is our pattern herein, let us labour to imitate Christ in the manner of relieving, and showing kindness, and communicating to others, that we may do it as Christ hath done.

How is that?

First, Christ prevented us when we never desired him; so we should prevent others. Sometimes the modesty of those that want is such that they will not lay open their wants. We should see it and prevent it. He gives too late oftentimes that gives to a man that asks him. Therefore herein let us imitate Christ, to consider of the miseries of others. He looked on and considered the miseries of mankind, and it drew him from heaven to the virgin's womb; from thence to the cross, to the grave, even as low as hell, in his preventing love and mercy. Therefore, when we see any need, especially if there be any worth in them in any kind, let us not stay till it be wrested from us by entreaty, for it is dearly bought oftentimes that comes that way; but prevent them in mercy, as Christ hath done to us.

Secondly, What Christ did for us, he did marvellous cheerfully and readily. O what a desire he had to eat his last passover, a little before he was crucified! 'With a desire have I desired to eat this passover with you,'

Luke xxii. 15. He was cheerful in it; he had a great desire to do us good; and, as he saith, John iv. 32, when his disciples put him in mind of eating, when he had not eat in a long time before, saith he, 'It is meat and drink to me to do the will of my Father.' So whatsoever we do to others, we should do it cheerfully and readily, as he did.

Third, Again, whatsoever Christ did for us, he did it out of love, and grace, and mercy; he did it inwardly from his very bowels: so when we do anything for others, we should not only do the deed, but do it from an inward principle of love and mercy. Therefore the Scripture phrase is, pour 'out thy bowels;' and saith St John, if a man see his brother in need, and pretend he loves God, and yet relieves him not, 'how is there bowels in such a man?' 1 John iii. 17; and so in Micah vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, to love mercy;' not only to be merciful, to do works of mercy, but to love it; to do what we do out of love and affection; and 'pour out thy heart to thy flesh,' as it is in Isaiah, to give the heart and affection when we do anything; or else we may give with the hand and deny with the heart. A man may give a thing so untowardly that one may see it comes against his heart and will. Therefore let us labour to do that we do with our whole man, especially from our heart, and affection, and bowels. It is said of Christ in the Gospel, when he saw the people in misery, his bowels yearned within him; the works of grace and mercy in Christ, they came from his bowels first. Let us work our hearts to pity, and love, and mercy first, that it may come from the soul as well as from the outward man.

Fourth, Again, Christ gave that that was his own, his own body, his own life, for his sheep; and his own endeavour, whatsoever he gave, was his own. So if we will be kind to others, we must do it of our own; we must not do good with that that we have gotten from others by unjust means. For the 'sacrifice of the wicked,' in this kind, 'is an abomination to the Lord,' Isa. i. 13. Let us have interest in that we give. Christ gave his own life, and God gave his own Son for us.

Fifth, And as Christ gave his own self, so he gave himself in life and death for us; he did not reserve all for his death; but for us he was born, for us he lived, for us he died; he deferred not all till his death. Christ did us wondrous good by his death; and men may do much good when they die. But let us endeavour to be like Christ in both; to do good while we live, and do good when we die likewise. The common speech is, the gifts of dying men are dying, dead gifts. It is a speech tending to the disparagement of gifts in that kind, because they are not so acceptable as the gifts of living men in many respects; notwithstanding, let not men be discouraged from doing good even when they die. Indeed, it is most comfortable to do it while they live, because,

(1.) It is an evidence then that they have a spirit of faith, to depend upon the promise of God. It is no exercise of faith, to give when a man can keep it no longer.

(2.) Again, he that doth good while he liveth, he hath the prayers of others; he is under the blessing of the poor; and that is a sweet thing. Suppose the poor he barbarous base people, that they bless not a man with their words, yet their 'sides bless him.' Now those that defer all till they die, they want this comfort; they are not under the blessing of the poor. The rule of our religion is, that we have no good]; by the prayers of others. I will not discuss that point now. But undoubtedly it is a sweet comfort that we have of that we do while we live, by the blessing and prayers of the poor, to whom we do good.

(8.) Then again, in civil respects, it is our own, and we are sure it is well bestowed. When we are dead, the propriety is gone from us. It comes into the possession of another man, and we know not how he will dispose of it. Perhaps he may die before thee that needs thy help; or thou mayest die; or thou mayest not have the same mind. Therefore while thou hast a heart and opportunity to do good, forget not to do it presently. We have need to be urged in these cold dead times, to labour that the grace of Christ may be

effectual in our hearts, to do all the good we can, in our life time, as Christ did.

Sixth, And let us labour to do it as he did, constantly, that we may “never be weary of well-doing,” Gal. vi. 9. ‘In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening let not thy hand rest,’ Eccles. xi. 6. It is comfort enough that it is called seed. Who grieves to cast his seed into the ground? He knows he shall have a plentiful return. So all that we give, it is seed. We see it not for the present. No more we do the seed that is sown. But ‘cast thy bread upon the water, and after many days thou shalt find it,’ Eccles. xi. 1. Though we see not this seed for the present, yet we shall have a plentiful harvest. Only labour to do it with discretion. For men do not sow upon the stones, nor upon the billow ground; they do not scatter their seed in any place. Sowing is a regular thing. Men cast seed into ground that is prepared. Therefore there must be spiritual discretion, the wisdom of a steward in this kind: Ps. cxii. 5, ‘The just man doth all things with wisdom and discretion.’

Quest. But must we not be liberal, and kind, and bountiful to all?

Ans. Yes, in case of necessity. Then we are to look to man’s nature, because he is a partaker of our nature. And he is such an one as may he a member of Christ, and one for whom Christ died. For aught we know, he now bears the image of Christ; and he may come to the obedience of Christ; and our kindness may be effectual to bring him to goodness. Therefore, as we, if we be in need, do not stand upon it, but receive kindness from wicked men, so when wicked men are in need, we must not stand upon it, but give to wicked men. We must do as we would be done by, in such cases, in necessity.

But our kindness must be most to those that are nearest God, to those of the family ‘and household of faith,’ Gal. vi. 10. To those that God loves most we must be most kind; to whom God hath dispensed the greatest things, we should not deny the less.

Indeed, it is a hard matter to give wisely in these times, and not to abuse the sweet affection and grace of pity (it is an affection in all, but it is a grace in them that are good), because there are so many wretched people that live without God, without church, without commonwealth, without marriage, without baptism, like beasts. If anything be an object of pity, certainly this is, that there are so many that carry God’s image on them, that are God’s creatures, and for aught we know, such as Christ died for, that they should be

suffered to live irregular, debauched, and base lives, scandalous to the church and state. And without question, if things be not better looked into, these will be instruments of much mischief by God's just judgment; because there be good laws that are not executed. The best mercy to such, is to see them set on work and to give them correction. But then for such as are beginning the world, that are poor, and cannot set up, and those that have the church of God in their families, that are ready to fall, and a little relief would keep them, that they fall not into inordinate courses, it is mercy to set them up and maintain them; and also by upholding those that are in the ministry. There are many ways in the church and state. A wise man can never want objects of mercy and charity: as Christ saith, 'The poor you shall have alway with you,' Mat. xxvi. 11; but, as I said, we must labour for a spirit of wisdom to do good as we should, and not to feed drones, instead of bees.

The Spirit of God is frequent in pressing this point; but this argument in the text, it may melt any man's heart, and take away all objections, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

If a man object, he that I should give to is an unworthy person; do but think how worthy we were of the favour of Christ to us? And then again, consider if there be any goodness in them, we give it to Christ in them, as Salvianus saith well, Christ doth hide himself under the person of the poor. The poor man reacheth out his hand indeed, but Christ receives that that we give, and they are Christ's exchangers; for they take from us, and Christ rewards us with grace and increase of our substance here, and with glory hereafter. They receive it instead of Christ, and Christ begs in the person of the poor, in all jointly, and in every one particularly. Think of the grace of Christ to us, and then think Christ comes to me in the person of this or that poor man, and it will stir us up to this duty.

Obj. But some wall say, If Christ were on earth himself, I should be ready to do it to him.

Ans. Certainly thou wouldst not. You know the place, Mat. xxv. 45: 'Inasmuch as you have not relieved these, you have denied it to me,' saith Christ. Let us not deceive ourselves; for even as we would do to Christ if he were on earth, we will do to his poor members; he hath made them his receivers.

Obj. But I shall want myself: I have a family and children.

Ans. It is the best way to provide for thy children, Ps. cxii. 8. God provides for the posterity of the righteous bounteous man. A man is not the poorer for discreet mercy. It is seed, as I said before. A poor man labours to have his seed sown, because it returns plentifully. Let us be sober, and abate of our superfluous expenses. Pride is an expender. And superfluous lusts, let us cut off from them, that we may have somewhat for seed. Let us labour in an honest calling, that we may have somewhat to give. Oh, it is a blessed thing to give! It is a thing that must be gotten by use. Our souls must be exercised to it. And when we have gotten it, learn an art of giving; we must exercise faith in it. And when we come to die, it will make us die wondrous sweetly; for when a man hath depended by faith and trust upon God's promise, that 'he that gives to the poor lends to the Lord,' Prov. xix. 17, and other like promises; I have exercised liberality, and now I come to give up my soul to God, I believe that God will make good the promise of life everlasting; I have believed his other promises before, and though I have cast my seed into the ground, that I saw it not, yet I have found that God hath blessed me the better in a way that I know not; and now I depend upon the same gracious God, in the promise of life everlasting. We should labour to do this, that we may die with comfort. What is it that troubles many when they come to die? Oh, they have not wrought out their 'salvation with fear and trembling,' Philip, ii. 12. They have neglected this duty and that duty; they have been careless in the works of mercy, &c. The time will come that that which we have given will comfort us more than that we have; we shall always have that which we give, for that goes in bank: many prayers are made for us. We have the comfort of it here and when we die. What we leave, we know not what becomes of it.

Therefore let us labour to be discreetly large and bountiful, as we desire to die with comfort; as we would make it good that we know 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' with interest in it; and as we would make it good to our souls that the example of Christ is a thing that hath any efficacy with us; or else we show that we have no interest in the grace of Christ; and then how miserable are we! We shall wish ere long that we had part in this grace and love of Christ; that he would speak comfortably to us at the latter day, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit a kingdom,' Mat. xxv. 34. Our life is short and uncertain; as we shall desire it then, so labour to be assured of it now; and let us be stirred up from this 'grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he were rich, became poor for our sakes, that we through his poverty might be made rich.'

