



THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL

A DISCOURSE ON COLOSSIANS 1:26-27

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Chapter I: The words of the text (Col. 1:26, 27) explained.—Though God had before by various ways discovered the glorious mysteries of his grace, yet the revelation of them by the gospel excels all the other.

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.—COL. 1:26, 27.

THE apostle, in this chapter, from the 13th verse to the end, draws a lively character of Christ and his gospel.

1. He describes Jesus Christ in all that fulness of the riches of his glory wherewith he is arrayed and represented in the gospel, from the 13th verse to the 23d.
2. He falls into a commendation of the gospel, which is that mystery wherein is made known the rich glory of Christ, who is the glory of this mystery. And if the story that makes Christ known be so full of riches and glory, what then is Christ himself, the subject of it?

The apostle doth both these on set purpose (as in the 4th and 8th verses of chap. 2, he professeth), to divert and take off these Colossians, mind from those vain, deceitful speculations of philosophy, and the ceremonial law, and traditions of men, gaudily and speciously set out with enticing words, 'philosophy and vain deceit.' He exposeth the beggarly condition of those rudiments (as he names the best of them, Gal. 4:9); and to display the glory and riches of the mystery of Christ in all its brightness, he makes the enticing lustre of all other wisdom, which had almost

spoiled that glory of Christ (Col. 2:8), to vanish.

In the words of my text, Col. 1:26, 27, the current of his praise of the gospel's glory swells highest, and runs with the deepest and strongest stream; within the limits of which, therefore, I will confine myself (though much might be added from other Scriptures) as affording matter abundant to set forth the glory of the gospel, by all that doth commend unto us any other knowledge.

1. You have here the rise and original of it, as withal of man's salvation; how, and for what ends God contrived it and revealed it, and to whom. The great God (says he) took up a mind and purpose to reveal unto his saints infinite riches of his glory in it, and by it: and to that end framed this wisdom on purpose for them, and them alone. 'It is made manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known his riches and glory by it.'

2. You have the subject of it, and common treasury of all that riches and glory discovered in it, which is Christ, God's Son. 'Which riches is Christ,' says the apostle by way of explanation. Now Christ's riches are unsearchable (Eph. 3:8), and this doctrine of the gospel is the field this treasure is hid in; and Christ being also 'the Lord of glory' (1 Cor. 2:8), hath filled it with a glory answerable, with 'riches of glory.'

3. You have the gain and benefit of it. For it reveals God and Christ, and all his riches and glory; so being received and entertained by spiritual knowledge and manifestation in the hearts of men, it makes those saints possessors thereof, by giving them a possession of Christ. And for your further security, you have them in you, by having him in you (who is the treasury of all those riches) at the present. But then, the glorious knowledge of this Christ, as he is in you, is yet a future pledge of a greater and more transcendent glory to come, greater than this gospel can reveal, or can be made known to you. 'Christ is in you the hope of glory.'

4. You have added hereunto all sorts of excelling properties and royalties to commend the glory of the gospel, above all that are or can be supposed to be in any other knowledge. (1.) If depth and profoundness sets a value, this is a mystery in every line of it. (2.) If preciousness and abundance makes any knowledge estimable, this is full of riches and glory. (3.) If

secrecy puts an esteem on any science, this 'hath been hid from ages and generations, but now made manifest.' (4.) If it recommend any knowledge, that when the secret is revealed, yet still it be not made common to the ordinary sort of men, then the gospel is most excellent; for though God hath revealed it, yet he retaineth and useth that art in revealing of it, that he makes known the riches and glory of it only to 'his saints;' others know it but in the outward letter of it.

1. I shall take a view of the rise and original of the revelation of this glorious mystery. I cast the brief story thereof into this frame.

(1.) Our all-wise and infinitely blessed God, possessing in himself infinite riches of glory, he thinks of ways to make them known, and that to some reasonable intelligent creatures, which by knowing of them might be made partakers thereof, and have their bosoms filled with all his riches; for both to make them known, and withal to make them possessors thereof, are in the text: the one in these words, 'make known;' the other in those, 'Christ in you the hope of glory.' The text says, ἠθέλησεν, 'he would,' he had a mind and a will, a longing desire to do it, and communicate it to us, to make us blessed. That is the first thing. 'He would make known,' &c.

(2.) The second thing to be considered is the persons, to whom. The text says, 'to his saint.' His, that is, his elect, whom he hath chosen to be holy, his saints, who are first his own by election, and then made saints.

[1.] They are his, singled out from all the rest to be his peculiar, his elect. 'The Lord knows who are his.' 'Thine they were,' (says Christ, John 17:6), 'and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.' And 'Father' (says Christ, Mat. 11:25), 'I thank thee thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so it pleased thee.'

Yet [2.] he makes them saints, to whom he communicates himself: yea, he makes them saints by making himself known to them. Judas (not Iscariot) asked Christ, John 14:22, this bold question, 'How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world.' Christ there mentions not the first part of this account here, namely, that they were

his peculiarly, and not the world (which yet being alone with his Father in his prayer, he then takes occasion to mention, to move him) but he gives them this other part of the account here. Because (says he) I manifest myself to saints, which you are, and I will cause you to be. His words afore (in which Judas interrupted him) were these, at ver. 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' And his words in answer to Judas fully import it, ver. 23. 'Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' This answer was needful for their quickening to obedience.

(3.) The third thing I add to this head is, that God had afore the discovery of this gospel, taken other ways to make known something of the riches of this glory by them; but yet had all that while kept and retained this knowledge of the gospel as the last, to excel, and exceed, and to put down all the former; which yet is but a preparation to that other discovery in the heavens, as all those former were to this.

Both these assertions are clear. The first is evident from those words, 'he now hath made manifest,' that which was hidden from all ages, &c. And yet we know that former ages had much of the wisdom of God among them, both Jew and Gentiles.

The other assertion is evident from this, that the utmost discovery of this mystery, and of Christ now, is but the hope; and so not the possession of that glory which is to come. We are led therefore to consider a little those other ways God had already taken to manifest the riches of his glory by, as an ante-masque to this that followed.

[1.] One way by which he began to manifest his glorious back-parts (Exod. 33:23), both to angels and men, was by the first creation and the works thereof, and in the law and covenant of works. Whereof the first holds forth his eternal power and Godhead, 'because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and

Godhead; so that they are without excuse,' Rom. 1:19, 20. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work,' Ps. 19:1. And the angels, that were spectators of every day's work, were infinitely taken with it: 'Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?' Job 38:6, 7. They shouted for joy to see him finish every day's work. Then his wisdom also is displayed in governing so great a host, an army of several creatures, to several ends, by perpetual laws. I instance but in one, the placing of the sun in the heavens and the motion of it, so disposed and ordered as it could nowhere else be placed therein without an apparent inconvenience to some parts of the habitable world. But he hath made a tabernacle for it, and set out the course thereof to visit all the earth. It goes to its tropics, and misseth not a hair's breadth. There is infinite justice also apparent in his righteous law, and withal infinite holiness in so exact a rule of righteousness, which was the Jews wisdom and glory in the sight of all nations. For the delivery of which law God come down, and made a heaven upon a dirty mole-hill, Mount Sinai, and constituted Moses a mediator, and put a glory upon his face, and then dressed up a high priest gloriously for his worship, and erected a tabernacle, and after that a temple admirably magnificent. How did the Jews boast of all these things! Rom. 2.

[2.] But all this contented not our God, who would make known a further mystery, viz., of the redemption of fallen man by Christ, which he kept hid and close in his own breast, and not a creature knew it, no, not his angels (not as we now know it in the gospel), which were his nearest courtiers and dearest favourites. It lay hid in God, Eph. 3:9, hid even from them, ver. 10. It was a mystery which, when revealed, should amaze the world, and put the angels to school again; as if they had known nothing in comparison of this, wherein they know over again all those glorious riches which are in God, and that more perfectly and fully than ever before. Such is the mystery of Christ revealed in the gospel, which is the last edition also that ever shall come forth in this world, and is now set out, enlarged, and perfected; wherein that large inventory of God's glorious perfections is more fully set down, with addition.

The reasons why God did by two ways intend to manifest himself thus variously are:

First; Because he would shew forth his manifold wisdom, which is the reason given of revealing the gospel, Eph. 3:10, 'that to the angels might appear the manifold wisdom of God.' His wisdom is so vast and large, that he could vary, and take more ways than one to display it. And as he had two sorts of reasonable creatures to shew himself unto, so he had a double way, a double sample, and double method.

Secondly; God did so, because indeed that other way was of itself too obscure and too imperfect.

First, It was too obscure; for in the gospel and works of redemption, the angels came to see all that they saw before, and that more clearly and largely. They see more power in Christ, 'the power of God,' 1 Cor. 1:24, in raising himself up from death to life, 'declared with power thereby to be the Son of God,' Rom. 1:4. And they see also the exceeding greatness of his power in raising us up also, Eph. 1:19, more than they did in the creation. They likewise see a greater and clearer instance and manifesto of his justice in putting to death his own Son, taking on him to be a surety for sinners, than if a world of worlds should have been damned for ever. And in Christ his Son also they came to see a greater and far more transcendent righteousness than ever appeared either in the law or inherent in themselves.

Secondly, That other way was but imperfect.

For those attributes which God accounts his greatest riches and greatest glory, Rom. 9:23, even his mercy and free grace, which he intends most to exalt, never saw light till now.

But not only more of his attributes come thus to be discovered, but further, the glorious mystery of the Trinity come thereby to be more clearly unfolded, if not the first discovery made of the three persons; there being scarce the footsteps of them distinctly to be seen in the works of creation or in the law. But now, when the gospel comes to be revealed, and the work of salvation in it, then they were discovered to be 'three

witnesses in heaven,' 1 John 5:7, witnesses to our salvation. And their several witnessing comes to be known by their several seals and hand-works, set severally to our salvation, bearing the stamp and similitude of their three several subsistences; so as by those three seals of the election of Christ and us, of our redemption and of our sanctification, we may know there are three persons, and how they do subsist; even as in men's seals their several arms being engraven, their houses and antiquity are known.

(4.) The fourth thing is, what new model or means it was which God singled forth to print and publish his whole and utmost counsel to us by, after all those other; the edition of which should thus excel all the former, and alone be full and adequate, and commensurable to his whole design; even to manifest and communicate the whole, the full of all those riches of glory in himself, but once for all, and no more, that he shall not need to superadd any other, until himself immediately communicates himself face to face. The text tells us that this excellent way of discovery is Christ communicated to us, it is 'Christ in us, the hope of glory.' Which notes out, not only Christ to be the revealer, 'the prophet' (as Moses styles him) who by word of mouth or way of doctrine should discover the glory of God (which the apostle fully renders to the scope I have driven at, Heb. 1:1, 'God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son'). Whereas aforetimes God by degrees and by piecemeal, *πολυμερῶς*, uttered himself, one truth at one time, another at another, by drops; so it was for the matter; and *πολυτρόπως*, after sundry fashions and forms and shapes, such as were dreams, visions, types, &c.; so for the manner. This God hath now (as the opposition imports) once for all, in the last days and by wholesale, uttered his whole counsel, and this uniformly after one only plain and clear manner and way, by word of mouth from his Son, spoken by his Son, as the revealer. So it follows, chap. 2 ver. 3, 'Which at first began to be spoken by the Lord' (namely, Christ), but not only so, but that which the text here holds forth is, that Christ, as the argument, subject, matter, is the thing revealed. That alone takes up and fills up the whole of this new doctrine; which mystery (says he) is Christ, namely, subjective. It is Christ known and communicated; and in him all God's riches and glory.

1. In him all the riches of God and the knowledge of him are laid up, as the treasury and subject of them; and so discovered and communicated to us objectively in the knowledge of him. Thus, chap. 2 ver. 2, 3, the apostle further explains it. For having termed the gospel (as here) the mystery of God and of Christ, he adds, 'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;' not only to be revealed by him, or subjectively known in and by himself; but (which is the proper scope of the apostle) objectively set forth, and contained in him alone, and in the knowledge of him made known to us.

2. In him shines 'the glory of God' (2 Cor. 4:6, 'The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'), as the lively image of all his features and perfections, and evidences of his inward counsels and affections. That therefore which I here insist upon is, that Jesus Christ in all his glories is the great and eminent subject of the gospel, Rev. 1:1.

3. It is the gospel of God (namely, as the author of it), but it is concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. God had but one Son, and he made this gospel on purpose to honour him, and set him forth. It is all, and every word of it, some way or other concerning him, or about him. God made it purposely to set his Son Christ forth to us; and in setting forth his Son, himself also. It is therefore termed (chap. 2 of this epistle, ver. 2) 'the mystery of God the Father, and of Christ,' Christ, in that series of truths about him held forth in the whole New Testament, is the sum of this newly revealed wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1:24.

So then, God's Son, first made our Christ, and that by being made man, is thereby further made a complete body and system of a new wisdom or knowledge of the glory of God. And correspondently is that speech of the apostle, chap. 2 ver. 2, to be understood, 'that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.' This was that subject which terminated the apostle's thoughts, as the horizon doth the eye; he regarded not to look beyond it to anything else. And surely, if unto God himself his Christ is an aboundary, a sum of that wisdom manifestative, whereby he would make himself known to us, and rest contented therein, as the last and fullest till we come to glory, then he may well be so to us,

and may we reckon ourselves complete in him, as Col. 2:10. How complete and lively a representation Christ, as revealed in the gospel, is of the riches of the glory of God to be manifested to us, in comparison with all other, I shall shew by and by, when,

4. In the fourth place, I have added this, how real and lively a demonstration or setting forth of Christ this our gospel, the mystery here is. The story of that is this: the apostles that lived and conversed with Jesus Christ saw with their own eyes. He dwelt amongst us (says the apostle), John 1:14: God wearing flesh and blood about him and appearing in it, was God manifest in the flesh personally, 1 Tim. 3:16. And so they had the privilege in his person to behold his glory. 'And we beheld his glory' (says he), 'the glory as of the only begotten of the Father;' so lively representing the glory of the Father, that if they knew him, they must needs know the Father; John 14:9, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?' They beheld it also in his doctrine, in his works and words, and gracious converse, full of grace in his converse, and truth in his doctrine, as it follows there. 'That which we (says John) have seen with our eyes (1 John 1:1), which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life.' Ver. 2, 'For Christ our life was manifested,' &c. And when he was gone to heaven, the Holy Ghost came down and caused them to understand the end and intent, the use to us, the benefits and the full meaning of all he did and said. He turned and translated to them the dark mystery of his sufferings written in blood, which they understood not, his resurrection, &c., into a familiar language to be understood and learned by lost sinners, of remissions of sins; redemption through his blood; dying, rising for them, in their stead; and a thousand such glories redounding to us, and in us, that are the fruits and results, and reverberations of all he did and acted. The Holy Ghost came and took of his, even all that he had done, and unciphered and unriddled it, shewed it to them (as Christ says, John 16:14); and so glorified Christ afresh in that comment of gospel light he caused to shine in their hearts. 'He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.' And by them were all these things in their sermons reported; as Peter speaks, 1 Pet. 1:12, 'These things which are now reported by them (said he) that

have preached the gospel to you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.' And whilst they thus preached him, God gave forth by their ministry 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' 2 Cor. 4:6, even 'the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God,' ver. 4.

But, alas! as Christ himself was gone to heaven, and had taken up his glory with him; and those that were eye-witnesses of it, and should report it unto us, are likewise gone off the stage: the Holy Ghost therefore caused them to leave a frame and doctrine of the gospel in their writings, both the story of his life and death by the evangelists, which is but Christ written in ciphers; and in their epistles, which give that story forth in plainer letters, opening the use, and end, and intent of all. And these writings opened by the Holy Ghost, and the ministers of the gospel hold forth all pieces of it, and being set all together, make an express picture and image of Christ, and all his glories, who is the express image of the glory of God; and is therefore called the glorious gospel of Christ, the subject of it, who is the image of God, and whose glory this holds forth. Thus (as Paul preached to the Galatians, Gal. 3:1), before our eyes Jesus Christ hath been pictured, προέγραφη, depictus fuit; and that so really and lively, that he is bold to affirm, he was crucified among them, even as well as at Jerusalem. The Holy Ghost did set them down (as it were) at Jerusalem by the cross, and brought him forth crucified before the very eyes of their faith, as really and expressly as if they had seen it done with their bodily eyes. Let any other tragic story be told by the quickest and most poetic fancy, and it cannot be said that it was done or perpetrated among them to whom it was told. But the story of Christ and his truths, and all that is told, is said to be done among them, whilst it is a-telling. Yea, further, the glorious gospel, accompanied with the Spirit, is not only compared to a picturing or painting by colours, the most lively and artificial that can be supposed, as in that Gal. 3:1; but further, it is compared to the real image of a person in a glass, in which you see his soul shines out in all the casts of his eyes, in all the postures of his demeanour, and all this in that sparkling manner, as if all the angels would limn or draw a picture, they could not come near it. This you have in 2 Cor. 3:18, compared with 2 Cor. 4:4, 6. In the one he says, 'We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, in and by the glorious gospel.'

In the other he compareth the other to a glass, 'We all behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.' That look, how far more lovely* the representation of a person is seen in a glass, above what in a picture; so is Christ in this gospel. Let all the curious artists in the world conspire to paint the sun, and bring all their orient brightest colours, and let a child but come and bring a looking-glass; and what a wan, pale thing is the one, to the glory, splendour, and reality of the other. The riches of the glory of the sun, no painting or colours can ever render; but a looking-glass doth. And such is the revelation in the gospel made to believers. 'We therein behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord;' and therefore he calls it the glorious gospel of Christ, even as in the text.

If you ask how this comes to pass? I answer, By the Spirit that accompanies it. So in that 2 Cor. 3:18, 'Even as by the Spirit of the Lord,' it is added. If the Spirit of revelation, as it is called, Eph. 1:17, accompany not this ministry and descriptions of Christ, they are but as pictures, or as dead words used to set forth any other narration. But the gospel being the ministration of the Spirit, he hath a peculiar act to bring down the real subsistence, (as Heb. 11:1), of the things themselves uttered about Christ, which put together make up this image of Christ, in the understanding and spirit of the soul and mind. Can Satan make a lively shadow of a person long since dead, by condensation of colours, and his light shining therein, appear to the eye? The Spirit can do this much more of Christ, so as though you see him not in that glory as he is (1 John 3:2), in heaven, yet the spiritual glory of Christ you see in every truth the gospel utters of him; and have real communion with him thereby, 1 John 1:2, 3, even as by laying your eye to the least beam of light that comes in at a cranny in a dark room, you see the glory of the whole sun. And as you cannot see the sun, but by its own light, so, nor Christ, but by a light let down from himself, which the Spirit that is in his heart, and in ours, gives.

If you will ask how? I answer, By creation. So in that 2 Cor. 4:6. God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' The words we speak and utter of his glory are but words, and would be no more, though we were able to set them out with the tongues of angels. But if that Spirit that is in Christ's heart, and lies hid in

this word (as the promise is, 'My Spirit and my word shall not depart out of thy mouth'), if he accompanies it to our hearts, he presents the things, and the real images thereof to our souls in and through those words. He turns verba in res, as that philosopher when converted acknowledged. Which he doth to no other men but to his saints, 'to whom he would make known,' &c.

So then to shut up this; suppose you had an absent friend alive, whom loving, you desire at times to behold in his converse and behaviour, and loving aspect to you; and a picture of him did not content you, but you had a glass, into which at times the lively image came, and in which he appeared to you really in such and such deportments: such is the gospel when the Spirit accompanies it, and conveys Christ spiritually, and with the sight of faith to the soul. And this will help us to understand why he is called 'Christ in us;' of which hereafter.

How should we prize and value such a glass as this, preserve it from soiling, spots, or breaking, and suffer it not to be perverted! You reject such as are false and misrepresent; you affect pure and clear ones; oh then, keep to and preserve the gospel in its purity. You see your husband in it, and his beauty, every day.

5. How completely doth this gospel hold forth the riches of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, as a redeemer and crucified, 2 Cor. 4:4, and 6, compared with 1 Cor. 1:23, 24. The word is ἕν προσώπῳ, 2 Cor. 4:6. John 1:18, 'No man hath seen God at any time' (John 1:18), 'the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,' ἐξηγήσατο, which word (as your late critics* observe) Enarrationem notat, non tam sermone aut prædicatione, quàm expressione et repræsentatione factam. It expressed him to the life, and brought God forth out of his invisibility, Christ being (Col. 1:15) 'The image of the invisible God.' There is indeed a full and complete image of the glory of God, which shineth in his person, as he appears in heaven, whereof John, James, and Peter had a glimpse, which transcends infinitely all that which the gospel can, or the Spirit of the gospel doth reveal of him. And by this glory (John 17, 'That they may be where I am, and see my glory') we shall see and understand by converse with him in heaven more, infinitely more, of the glory of God in and by him. But this glory the

gospel treats not of, but only hints; we discern it but by collecting what glory must needs be due to that man in whom the fulness of the Godhead personally dwells. But that image of God which in Christ this gospel holds forth, is but the hopes of that other glory, and is a lower thing than that which his person wears in heaven.

And yet this discovery of God in Christ transcends whatever any way was or could otherwise have been made. The 'back-parts' of God, which we call his attributes, his power, wisdom, truth, justice, which God calls his glory to Moses, Exod. 36, and which we cannot see and live: these are infinitely more really and substantially, and to the life, set forth to us, by what we know of Christ as a redeemer in the gospel; and do infinitely transcend whatever of them either was, or could have been expressed in millions of several worlds, filled all of them with several sorts of intelligent creatures, such as angels and men, to never so great a variety, as the πολυποίκιλος σοφία of God could have diversified the natures of them into.

There is a threefold image of God in Christ.

1. As he is his Son, without the consideration of his dwelling in an human nature; and so he is unto God the Father that image of himself by whom he understands himself. And were he not equal with himself, he should not understand or behold himself by him fully and perfectly. And Christ thus is in that respect as invisible, as incomprehensible as God himself. For, so considered, he is God, and dwells in light inaccessible.

2. There is an image of the glory of God shining in his person in heaven, such as all that shall see it shall say (as they did, Mat. 17, upon a glimpse of it) that it is proper only to the only begotten Son of God.

But, 3. There is a glorious image of all God's attributes, which shines in the person of Christ (as he conversed here), and in the works which Christ hath done for us, and in the fruits and benefits that redound thereby to us: or in the works of Christ (which are the beams whereof this sun is the body) in us, now he is in heaven, leading us into communion with himself. And they all make a complete image, and that more perfect, of the riches of God's glory: and this the gospel treats of. The first of these

is the foundation of the second, the second of this third: and do each exceed the other. There is a new and complete edition of all the attributes of God, which results out of the story of what he is, hath done, and is made to us.

In the 1 Cor. 1:24, Christ is termed 'the power of God, and the wisdom of God.' He calls him by terms of the attributes of God in abstracto. And if the question be, How we are to understand it? Not of what Christ is essentially merely as God, or simply as the Son of God, Which was the first, nor yet as in his person as God-man, he hath an infinite wisdom and power inherent in him, which was the second; but as he is made to us by his works of mediation for us, and the like, and in respect of what his person is made to us. Which is clear by the context: for he speaks of Christ as he is crucified, and of the power of God shewn, and put forth in calling and converting our souls by the foolishness of preaching. 'It pleased God, through the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe,' ver. 21. And so it follows, ver. 23, 'We preach Christ crucified, unto them which are called, the power of God.'

The like is as clear to be understood of Christ's being the wisdom of God, which is attributed to him in respect of what he is made to us; so, ver. 30, 'who is made unto us wisdom,' &c. And both these, the power and wisdom of God, appeared in Christ, in what he did and suffered. And therefore Paul subjoins, chap. 2:2, 'As to know nothing but Christ' (of which I spake afore), so he adds, 'as crucified.' So then Christ as crucified, and by the like reason made flesh, and walking holily, dying, overcoming sin, wrath, Satan, hell, rising, ascending, and then converting, justifying, glorifying us. In all and each of these works performed by him he is the power of God, the wisdom of God; and so even in these a perfect edition of all those attributes. And for the same, and by the like reason, he may be entitled the truth, the life, the love of God, as he is in other scriptures. The truth of God, because he ratified all the promises, and confirmed them true. The faithful witness, God's Amen. So he is to* the love of God, 1 John 4:16, where God is said to be love, not in respect of what he is in himself, but in what he is to us in giving his Son; 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.' And not only so, but he who himself was God 'laid down his life for us' (chap. 3:16), sinners, enemies, which

all commend that love, Rom. 5. And thus is the love of God made manifest to the utmost, 1 John 4:9, that whereas none could see the infinite love of God as it is in himself;—thus John in that very place, 'no man hath seen God at any time,' ver. 18,—nor can, nor could ever have come to have fathomed the infinite sweetnesses of love and kindnesses that lie at the bottom of that heart; therefore God, to express the utmost of it, gave Christ, that in the love of Christ we might comprehend the height, the breadth, the depth of that love that yet passeth knowledge, as Eph. 3:19. Then to instance again in power; Adam and the angels saw God's power in the creation of the world, Rom. 1:20. But in Christ's, and his work of redemption, he came to see infinitely far greater works than these, as Christ speaks. Look upon him in the womb, and see God and man's nature united into one person, 'the power of the most High overshadowing his mother,' Luke 1:35. Which word was sought out to shew how great and incomprehensible a power, mysteriously and secretly wrought within that veil, in the framing and then uniting that human nature to the Son of God. As great artists, as curious limners, &c., work within doors, conceal their work whilst a-doing, so the Spirit doth his power. And if the framing the body of man, and the union of the body and soul, is wondered at by David, as so curious a piece of workmanship, and therefore wrought, as it were, underground—'I am wonderfully made,' says he, 'in the lower parts of the earth'—how much more wonderful was the framing of an habitation for the fulness of the Godhead to dwell in, and uniting God personally thereunto! Look again upon him, on the cross, a weak and sorry man. For, as 2 Cor. 13:4, 'he was crucified in weakness,' and yet left and found in that weakness, but on purpose to make an infinite power of God appear; his power was perfected in that weakness; look on him as a poor man made up of flesh and blood, bearing the wrath of God and all the sins of the world. He bore that wrath that brake the back of men and angels, and crushed the strongest creatures to hell, and brake their bones without recovery. But this weak drop of flesh and blood is backed and steeled with so great and infinite a power, as he eluctates and overcomes it. Yea, and it is impossible that he should be held under it, Acts 2:24. Then see him rising and flinging open the gates of death, the grave, and hell, 'declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead,' Rom. 1:4, like another Sampson taking these gates of brass off their hinges, and carrying them on his back to the

top of the hill he ascended from into heaven. Measure but the distance between the low estate of his body in the grave, and of his soul on the cross, and that superexalted estate of glory in the highest heavens; and what compasses our* mathematic instruments can the most enlarged understandings frame within their own thoughts to take this elevation? So transcendent a power appears in raising up this Christ from death to glory, which the apostle doth greaten accordingly, Eph. 1:19, and makes it the highest pattern of power that God ever put forth, 'According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, whom he raised from the dead (so low), and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places (so high), far above all principalities and powers,' &c. View the like in holiness. The glory of God's holiness is so great, and his eyes so pure, that when he beheld the holiness of his best creatures, the angels (and in any other that had been mere creatures, if supposed greater than they, it had been all one), his critical curious eyes reckon it but folly. The angels, the inhabitants of heaven, are not clean in his sight. But here is a holiness of a man in whom God dwells, satisfies his curiosity, and though indeed it cannot profit him (as Ps. 16:1, Christ confesseth), yet he can find no fault with it. It cannot but fully please him, for it is the righteousness of God. See the difference of the strength, the efficacy of these two holinesses, and by that guess at the transcendent excellency and virtue of the one above the other. Sin, the least sin, is stronger than all the holiness in men or angels. For the guilt of one sin no sooner arrested an angel, but it instantly expelled all holiness out of his heart, and wiped out the memory of all his righteous works. And no sooner seized it on Adam, but it drave out of his heart, as his person out of paradise, all that stock of holiness was laid up in him for all mankind, forced it forth of his and all our hearts, being but imputed to us. And yet, lo! the holiness of Christ is such, that when the guilt of sin of all the elect were thrown upon him, and reckoned by God and himself as his own, yet his holiness is of such a sovereignty that it preserves him from the infection thereof, overcometh sin, death, hell, the law; and triumphing, cries out, 'Oh death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God, who hath not only given Christ, but this Christ the victory.' For the strength of his holiness is such, that though it preserved not him from being hurt by the imputation of our sins, but laid hold on by us, and imputed by God unto us, it expels

all the virulent poison and venom of the deadliest sins out of our hearts. Yet, oh! what a demonstration of an infinite holiness is here?

4. There is the greatest of justice and wrath against sin. That God should put to death his own Son for sin, when he became but a surety for it, was a clearer manifestation of his anger, and a higher piece of justice against sin, than if he had made and there sacrificed millions of worlds.

5. There is the clearest brightness of his righteousness, such as is not found shining in the law or in their hearts; I mean of Adam or the angels. For this, at the utmost, serves but to justify themselves, and there is little enough of it too; the weight of the least dust in their balance would cause a rejection of them as too light. And if the righteousness of them all by a general contribution were contracted into any one of them, it could not serve to free one sinner from one sin. Yea, only one sinful act in themselves would make a forfeiture of all the good in them, or that had come from them. But here is a righteousness of that efficacy as serves for millions of sinners; of that breadth, as is able to cover worlds of sins and millions of worlds; of that length, that it reacheth to eternity, an everlasting righteousness; and no sin in God's people can wear it out, or evacuate and lessen the virtue of it. All the divine perfections mentioned before; and,

6. Not only all before are more gloriously and perspicuously set forth in a new edition of them, but with addition also of the discovery of some perfections in God, which no way else had come forth unto our comprehensions. Yea, those attributes which God accounts his greatest riches and highest glory, as, Rom. 9:23, his mercy and free grace, which he desired most of all to exalt in the manifestation of himself, never saw light till now. That great love wherewith he loved us, hidden in his heart, now brake forth, as Joseph's to his brethren. His love to Adam, and mankind in him, was but providential, founded on the law of creation, whereby he loveth the works of his hands as such; and whilst they should love God, God would love them. But here is a love issuing from what is in his own heart as the fountain of it, and a spring, yea, a sea, to feed it, a love in Christ founded on him, and in nothing in the creature, the same wherewith he loves him to everlasting, peremptory, unchangeable. Mercy and free grace, which are the richest jewels in his crown, had never else

appeared; the doctrine of salvation through Christ being the stage set up on purpose whereon only it is represented, and off from which it is nowhere else seen, upon which it acts itself the greatest part and gives all the other their parts, and manageth, ordereth the whole scenes. All passages begin and end with it, and tend to this, that 'by grace we are saved.' The saints' title is, 'vessels of mercy,' Rom. 9:23. The whole plot and frame is made up of mercy, and is so called, 1 Pet. 2:10. The doctrine itself that brings this salvation is termed 'grace,' Titus 2:10, 11. It begins, sets all a-work, and ends all in glory.

Use. Let us, then, both ministers and people, be exhorted to study and search into this gospel. My brethren, whatever other knowledge we may pride ourselves in, and wear out our brains about the searching into, yet this is that which is the riches of the Gentiles and saints, as this text hath it, the pearls of the world, Mat. 13:45, the glory of the ministry, 1 Cor. 2:7, which God ordained for our glory, namely, apostles' and ministers', the preachers of it, the clear revealing of which was the desire and longing of the patriarchs and prophets, who, though they knew the legal covenant as well as we, yet this doctrine of salvation, Christ's sufferings, God's grace, was it they inquired into, 1 Pet. 1:10–12, that is, sought to God by prayer and searched diligently, searched, using all the means of reading, meditating to attain to the knowledge of it, and all this diligently spent, and thought it worthy of the chiefest of their pains. And all the answer they could get was this, that they delivered these things for us, it being ordained for our glory; which Paul, therefore, that had profited so much in the knowledge of the Jews' religion, Gal. 1:14, professeth, Phil. 3:8, that he 'accounted all dross and dung, for this excellent knowledge of Christ.' For he makes his knowledge therein his chiefest excellency, Eph. 3:4. There is a parenthesis, wherein you would think he boasted, speaking of his own writings, whereby, 'when ye read,' saith he, 'ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.' The first obscure dawning made John the Baptist, who did but point at Christ, greater than all the prophets that were afore him.

What do I speak of the study and glory of prophets and apostles? It is the study of the angels, and which they think worth their greatest intention. Look into those two places, 1 Pet. 1:10, Eph. 3:10, 'Which things the

angels desire to pry into.' Those glorious creatures that knew God in his legal covenant and work of creation (and those in heaven saw it more glorious than this visible world) more fully than ever Adam did, that have the immediate participation of God himself, have his face to read lectures in day and night, are yet glad if they can get but a peep and glimpse of the way of saving men by Jesus Christ, as being a knowledge of a greater excellency than otherwise they have any. Yea, and so desirous are they to learn it, that they are content to go to school to the church, Eph. 3:9, 10, 'that to principalities and powers might be made known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.'

But what need I speak of angels, prophets, or apostles? It is the great study (I may so speak with reverence), the wisdom and great learning of God himself, who was the first professor of it, called so, κατ' ἔξοχὴν. 1 Cor. 2:7, speaking of the gospel, says he, 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,' and that a hidden wisdom before the world was, 'hid in God,' Eph. 3:9. It is God's art, and peculiar to himself, whereas of other knowledge men and angels have common notions infused at first creation, to attain to and pick out of themselves. But this is his wisdom, which he alone had studied, and which none knows but those to whom he reveals it.

Chapter II: The excellency of the gospel proved from the profoundness of the knowledge revealed in it.

I shall now go on to discourse the excellency of the knowledge of the gospel by those properties that do lie in order in the 26th verse.

In this 26th verse, as I have told you, there are three properties ascribed to this knowledge of the gospel which God hath made known himself by.

1. Here is the depth and profoundness of it, in that it is called a mystery.

2. Here is the secrecy and hiddenness of it; it was hidden from all ages and from generations, till the apostles' time and till Christ came.

3. Here is the rareness of the revealing of it, now when it is revealed; it is revealed only to his saints, 'Even that mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.'

I shall open these three heads to you in their order.

1. First, It is called a mystery. That word importeth more eminently these two things:

(1.) A profoundness and a depth of knowledge.

(2.) A secret and a hidden knowledge.

Now because this second is contained in the words afterward—'hidden from ages and generations'—therefore I shall only speak to the first.

(1.) The knowledge, I say, of the gospel, and the things that are known therein, they are all deep, they are profound, they are mysteries—mysteries for their depth. In 1 Cor. 2, the apostle, speaking of this wisdom of the gospel, he calleth it a mystery, as he doth here, and he calleth it a mystery for its hiddenness too. So ver. 7, 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world,' &c. But if you read ver. 10, you shall find that he calleth the things revealed in the gospel, 'the deep things of God.' 'The Spirit' (saith he) 'searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;' meaning the things contained in this mystery. And hence, therefore, it is called a great mystery, 1 Tim. 3:16, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifesteth in the flesh,' &c. Now when it is called a great mystery, it is not in respect of its being hidden, but in respect of the depth and profoundness of it. Things may be carried hiddenly and secretly, that have no great depth in them; therefore now mystery imports more than merely a being hidden.

And, my brethren, in the general, how can it be otherwise, but that all the things the gospel revealeth, every one should be depths and mysteries? For it is the wisdom of God, called so in a special manner. So in that 1

Cor. 2:7, 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.' It is therefore a mystery, because it is a wisdom of his inventing; and therefore containeth nothing but depth in it. What saith the apostle in Rom. 11:33? (It is a place full to this purpose.) 'Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' And of what wisdom and knowledge doth he speak? You must know that, of all epistles, that of the Romans is a system of divinity methodically laid down; and the apostle having in the latter chapters uttered those great and glorious things of the gospel, and fetched them all out from the very bottom of God's breast—he having handled election and reprobation just before, and the calling of the Jews, and how that God had shut up all under sin, that at last he might have mercy upon all—when he had waded now so far into all these depths, that he felt himself as it were over head and ears, he breaks off abruptly that whole discourse, and cries out, 'Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' Like one that is wading into the sea, when he is gone so far that he begins to be up to the neck, to the chin, he then cries out, 'Oh the depth!' and comes back again; so doth Paul here. It is as if he had said, 'O ye Romans, I have gone as far as I can, and now I am even swallowed up, I can go no farther. Oh the depth!' The things of the gospel are depths (for that is the thing I quote this place for). It is a deep knowledge, because it is that knowledge which God appropriates unto himself as his invention.

Which may easily be made out by a small degree of comparison. Solomon, in Prov. 18:4, saith, that 'the words of a wise man are as deep waters;' but yet, though the words of a wise man are as deep waters, another wise man may fetch it out. So he tells us in Prov. 20:5, 'Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.' But now take kings amongst men, and of all others, if they be wise (for that is Solomon's supposition), their hearts are unsearchable; so he saith in Prov. 25:3, where he compares the heart of a wise king, such as he himself was, to the heavens for height, and to the earth for deepness: 'The heaven for height (saith he), and the earth for depth, and the heart of a king is unsearchable.' And the reason is, because that they deal with metaphysical things (as I may so call them), that is, they deal with generals, as with all states and nations about them, and what their interests are with them, and their animosities against them; and they deal

with all the factions of their own people, and they know all the provocations of them; there are a thousand such secret things by which their actions are guided that the people know not; they having therefore such a mighty compass in all their transactions, their subjects cannot search into their hearts. Now then, if the heart of a king be thus unsearchable, what think you is the heart of God, who had in his eye all souls in all ages, who hath had millions of worlds in his thoughts, which he could have made, afore this world was? In that 1 Cor. 2, when the apostle would commend the gospel, because it is the wisdom of God, what doth he do? He sets by it the wisdom (which is the greatest wisdom in this world) of princes, and of the great ones of the world; 'We speak wisdom' (saith he, ver. 6), 'yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God,' &c. He instanceth, you see, in the wisdom of princes, as the greatest wisdom of all the rest; and he makes that to vanish, and to come to nought before the deep things that are in the heart of God (as he expresseth it, ver. 10), before the depth of this wisdom which God himself hath revealed. In Ps. 36:6, David makes the judgments of God to be a great deep. By the judgments of God there he means the works of his common providence, his ways of governing this world, whether in ways of mercy or of judgment, for he doth not mean merely ways of judgment strictly taken for justice; for in the Scripture phrase, the judgments of God are as well his works of mercy, as of justice; and the works of his common providence are meant, which appeareth likewise by what followeth in the next words, 'He preserveth man and beast;' that is, his ways whereby he preserveth man and beast, and governs all the world, they are a great deep. But if you come to the salvation of men, he is the saviour of all men, by common providence, but especially of those that believe; if you come to those judgments, 'Oh, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' saith the apostle in that Rom. 11:33, when he had spoken of his ways of saving men.

The greatest wisdom that was ever set up in this world by the princes of it, is the kingdom of popery; it is a composition of all sorts of policies, called therefore a mystery of iniquity by the apostle in 2 Thess. 2:7, and you shall find in Rev. 17:5, that the whore that rideth upon the beast hath this name written in her forehead, 'Mystery, Babylon the great,' &c., It is a

very strange thing, that God in his providence should so order it, that in the old mitres that the popes used to wear, there was engraven in the inside *Mysterium*; but since they were challenged out of the Revelation to be that great antichrist and whore, they have left it out. It is a wonderful thing to read their schoolmen and casuists in their prosecution of what concerned the frame of religion they have invented, what great depths (but depths of Satan, which he hath helped men to invent), what harmony one head hath in it answering to another, what a great deal of profoundness of learning there is in that system and fabric. Now this great mystery I may call the gospel of antichrist, it is another gospel made on purpose, and set up by Satan to advance his eldest son antichrist. And as Satan did make a gospel for his eldest son, a wisdom which the world never knew before, and which for the depths of it is called a mystery of iniquity, surely, my brethren, when God himself shall go and make a gospel for his Son Jesus Christ, to reveal by it the riches of his glory unto the saints, what depths, think you, must needs be in his glorious gospel? It is called 'the mystery of Christ,' in Eph. 3:4. And when Paul boasteth of the profoundness of his knowledge, he doth it of his 'knowledge in the mystery of Christ,' Col. 4:3. And as was said before, 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh,' 1 Tim. 3:16.

The mystery of Christ's incarnation for the reconciling of the world (to instance but in that) was such a mystery, as all created understandings could never have brought forth. For consider but this, how things did stand between God and man, (let me but state the difference and the controversy, as I may say, between God and man). First, God laid this for a conclusion, that he would not put up the least wrong from his creature, but he would have full satisfaction from the sinner. In the second place, it was as clear and as apparent, that no creature could satisfy him, neither the sinner nor any for him. And yet, thirdly, God stood upon this too, he would have satisfaction from a creature, and that nature that had sinned should satisfy. Do but lay all these three things together. If God now should have gone and referred the untying of this knot to a consultation of all intelligible* natures, angels and men, that ever were or shall be, it would have wildered, plunged their thoughts unto eternity; and after millions of years of consultation they would have returned this answer,

they could think and find out no way. Therefore, saith he, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh;' and it is without controversy so too, that is, it is such a mystery, as whoever understandeth the state of the controversy before between God and man, and this to be the answer, he must needs acknowledge, that there are depths of God in it, and that no other could have invented it. It carries its own testimony of divinity with it. Without controversy, saith he, or universally, must this be received to be a great mystery, 'God manifested in the flesh.'

That is a deep knowledge, and containeth depths in it, which contains nothing but the reconciliation of contradictions, to make things, which in appearance are seeming contradictions, meet. But so the gospel doth all along. I shall give you instances, and some scriptures for them too.

Take the doctrine of God's election and free grace. That at once a creature should be loved with the greatest love of God, and yet be a child of wrath at the same time (as before conversion he is), can you solve me this? That he should be a son, and an enemy; the apostle hath it, Rom. 11, where he tells you (speaking of the Jews in the root), that 'they are beloved for the fathers' sake, and yet enemies for the gospel's sake.' And in Eph. 2:3, he hath it plainly, 'We' (that is, I Paul and the rest) 'were by nature the children of wrath;' and yet Paul was a chosen vessel, beloved of God, even from everlasting, with the highest and greatest love. So were the Ephesians he speaks this of; and it was therefore a love borne to them afore, which was the cause of this their quickening and bringing out of that estate. That one and the same man should at the same time be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places—that you have in the very next words, 'But God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us;' namely, then, when we were thus children of wrath, as is evident by that which follows after that, 'even when we were yet dead in sins,' out of that love 'hath he quickened us,' as it is Eph. 2:5—and yet be cursed with all the curses written in this book, and stand under them, what an amazing wonder is this! It is plain that every man is so; for 'cursed is every one that continueth not in everything that is written in this book to do it.' It is applicable unto all. The reconciliation is easy, the gospel makes these seeming contradictions meet: for if you take man's person as considered in Christ, he is thus loved and blessed; but if you

take his person as considered in himself, without any to stand between God and his sin and guilt, he standeth under the curse of it. So that both these are true of him, one in the one sense, and the other in the other.

So likewise, when the prophet considered in Isa. 53, that God had a Son as old as himself (as I may so speak) and equal to himself, he breaks out, 'Who can declare his generation?' Here is a depth.

Our Saviour Christ himself puts some of these riddles to the Pharisees. Saith he to them, in Matt. 22:43, Solve me this: 'If David call Christ Lord, how is he his son?' The gospel solveth this.

That a virgin should conceive a son, this was a riddle to Mary herself. 'How shall this be?' saith she to the angel in Luke. 1:34? The gospel revealeth this.

That this man Jesus Christ should be in heaven when he was on earth, and should be said to descend from heaven as man, and yet never was there then when he said it;* this was a riddle that Christ posed Nicodemus with. He stood wondering at the doctrine of regeneration, that a man must be born again. What! saith Christ, do you wonder at that? I'll tell you a higher riddle than that: 'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven,' John. 3:13. And if you mark the coherence of this with the verse before, you shall see he utters this as an heavenly mystery, beyond that which he had expressed of regeneration, which he saith was but an earthly thing in comparison of this; 'If,' saith he, 'I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how will ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?' So you have it likewise in John 6. When Christ had told them that they must eat his flesh, and drink his blood, they strove amongst themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' And many of his disciples when they heard it said, 'This is a hard saying, who can bear it?' When Jesus (saith the text) 'knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it' (they were those that were not believers, though disciples), 'he said unto them, Doth this offend you?' Can you not understand this? I'll give you a harder thing: 'What, and if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?' And yet he was but the son of a virgin, and was (as man) never but in her womb.

These riddles the gospel, you see, unfoldeth. Now as the person of Christ affords all these mysteries and depths, so his obedience affords more. That that God that made the law should be subject to the law, and fulfil it himself, this you have in Gal. 4:4, 'He was made of a woman, and made under the law.' That God, who is nothing but spirit, should have blood to redeem men by, this you have in Acts 20:28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' That he, that is God blessed for ever, should be made a curse, this you have in Gal. 3:13. That he, that is, 'the Holy One of Israel,' should be made sin, aye, and what is more, he that cannot endure sin, for nothing is more contrary to the holiness of God than sin, and yet 'he that knew no sin was made sin,' this you have in 2 Cor. 5:21. That God should never be more angry with his Son than when he was most pleased with him, for so it was when Christ hung upon the cross, God did find a sweet-smelling savour of rest and satisfaction even then when he cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Again, that God should be free in pardoning, and yet notwithstanding receive the fullest satisfaction, even to the rigour of justice, here is a riddle to all the world, yet you have it in Rom. 3:23, 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace;' but how? 'Through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' Why, if there were a price by way of redemption paid, how was it freely by grace? Yet it is both. And that it should ever be said that 'God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus,' so it follows, ver. 2; that though he doth justify out of the freest grace, yet he is in the most absolute manner just in doing of it; thus to bring mercy and the extremity of justice to meet, what a reconciliation is this! I'll give you another, for indeed the doctrine of the gospel is nothing else, it is made up of these. God requires satisfaction of his Son Jesus Christ in his human nature, and God must be satisfied with something that is not his own, for you can never satisfy any one with what is his own already. How can this be reconciled? Why, my brethren, the human nature being joined to the second person, he hath that right in it that the Father and the Holy Ghost hath not, it is his own in a more peculiar manner; for it is one person with him, which it is not with the other two persons. No creature could have made satisfaction unto God, for whatsoever the creature had was God's own already; but this second person, Jesus Christ, he could say to the Father, I will give you that which is mine own, I have such a propriety in it as you have not; and yet all things are God's. This you see is

reconciled in Christ, and therefore it is put upon redeeming us with his own blood.

To come to justification. What an amazing wonder is it that a man should be ungodly at the same time that he is justified, and at the same time that he is sanctified too. The Scripture is clear for this, Rom. 4:5. Abraham, not only at his first conversion, but a long time afterward, yea, in his whole life, looked upon himself as a person ungodly, and to be justified by God as ungodly, considered in himself.

So if you come to conversion, there is no man that truly turns to God, but he turns freely to him; it is the freest act that ever man did, or else he will never be saved; yet notwithstanding, though it hath the highest freedom in it, it is wrought in him by an almighty power, even the same power that raised up Christ from death to life. Here is the highest freedom of will, and God's everlasting purpose and power mixed together.

Come to the life of a Christian after conversion; take it as the gospel hath revealed it, and it consisteth of nothing but seeming contradictions. The apostle, in Gal. 2:20, reckons up together two contradictions in appearance; saith he, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live;' well, 'yet not I'—this is strange—but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.' My brethren, for one soul to live in another, and by another one's living in him, and that should be his life, it is only the doctrine of the gospel that makes these things true. Adam knew no such thing, there was no such art and skill in his life. That likewise in Phil. 2:13, God should work in a man all, both the will and the deed, and yet the man work freely with God, this is a seeming contradiction, and yet made good by the gospel.

I have mentioned these, and have given you Scriptures which hold them forth to you in very terms. I might mention a thousand others, and I'll give you the reason why I mention them: it is not only to confirm the point in hand, but let me tell you this, and know it for a truth, the cause of all the errors that have been in the world hath been the want of reconciling these things together.

The Arians found great things spoken of the manhood of Christ, as of a

divine man, and therefore they denied that he was God. They could not reconcile these two, how God should be man, and man should be God, that both should be joined together; therefore, taking part with one, they exclude the other.

Our Lord and Saviour Christ is God blessed for ever; therefore, say the papists, he did not suffer the displeasure of God in his soul. Why, say they, can God love his Son and be angry with him at the same time? And he that is God blessed for ever, can he be made a curse in his soul? Yes, take him as a surety. They take part with one truth of the gospel to exclude the other, whereas the gospel is a reconciliation of both these, and therein lies the depth of it.

So in point of justification. Say the papists, Can a man be justified by the righteousness of another? Are not the saints holy in themselves? And doth not that make them holy? Is not the wall white with the whiteness that is in the wall? It is the want of reconciling these seeming contradictions that is the ground of that error. I will give you a greater contradiction in appearance to human reason: a man is ungodly and godly, a sinner and justified at the same time. This is true, the Scripture holds it forth to be so.

As for the Socinians, they say there is no satisfaction for sin; for if God pardon freely, how can he pardon for a satisfaction? Whereas the Scripture is clear, that there may be the freest grace in it, and yet satisfaction too; and the truth of the gospel lies in reconciling these two, and that is the depth of it; but they take part with one truth to exclude another.

Take Antinomianism, as you call it. All those glorious truths of the gospel, that a man is justified from all eternity, yea, and glorified from all eternity too, &c.; men cleave to all these truths, whereas other truths are to be joined with them. A man, before he believeth, is unjustified, therefore he is said to be justified by faith; and he is a child of wrath until he believe. All believers are now glorified, and sit now in heavenly places with Christ, considered in their head, Christ; yet notwithstanding, what poor miserable creatures are they here below. Take believers in their own person, they are not so; but considered in Christ, they are thus. I am

perfectly sanctified, and perfectly holy, considered in him, and I was crucified with him, yea, but the remainders of corruptions are still. All men would desire to be more glorified than they are here, yet they are perfectly glorified in Christ, considered in him. Here is still taking part with one truth to exclude another, whereas both must be taken in. So others object they cannot conceive that God should be angry with his elect, and chastise for sin; for if he nothing but love me, how can that be? It is easily answered: there is anger that proceeds from love. Though men's sins are forgiven without interruption, yet there is a binding of sins in heaven, so saith Mat. 18:18 expressly.

Take Arminianism. What is the foundation of their error? It is merely a want of reconciling seeming, though not real, contradictions in the gospel. As, for example, they know not how to reconcile man's free will with God's peremptory decree. Say they, If God, out of his unchangeable peremptory love to a man, work irresistibly upon his will, how can his will be free? Why, the freest that can be for all this. For consider this, who hath more freedom of will than the human nature of Jesus Christ? For if he had not had the height of freedom of will, we could never have been saved by him. Yet infallibly and irresistibly, and with the greatest necessity that ever could be, was his will carried on always unto good. I say, the taking part with one truth, without reconciling it to another, hath been the foundation of many errors, and therein lies the depth of the gospel, in reconciling all seeming contradictions whatsoever.

All these mysteries, I say, hath God knit up in the gospel, to shew his own wisdom, and to befool the wise men of the world. So that now, considering all those poor and petty plots of reconciling nations and kingdoms, all the ways of accommodation, whereby the greatest difficulties are resolved between men and men, and kingdom and kingdom, wherein the wise men and the princes of the world so glory (for their wisdom lies in ways of accommodation, and reconciling things, and in them they spend their thoughts, and in them they pride and magnify themselves)—I say, take all those depths of state, and the least of these depths that are in the gospel makes all the wisdom and policy of the world to vanish before it as mere folly. It 'confoundeth the wisdom of the wise, and brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent;' so the

apostle saith, 1 Cor. 1:19.

I might likewise shew you that the gospel, in the knowledge of it, is excellent in respect of the depths that are in it, so in respect of all that harmony and correspondency that there is in the gospel of one truth with another. The excellency of knowledge lies as well in the suiting of one thing with another, as in the profoundness of the things themselves. Now there was never such an invention as this, that as it is said in Ecclesiastes, 'God hath set one thing against another,' so the harmony, the suiting of all truths one with another here, in that glorious manner, is nowhere to be found in any wisdom or art whatsoever. The philosophers found a great deal of harmony in the things of this world, for the skill and art that God hath stamped upon the creatures consisteth in the harmony that is between one thing and another.

Now the observations would be infinite that might be made of this kind. How our sinfulness and Christ's satisfaction and obedience answers one another: there is nothing in thy soul that thou canst object, but there is that in the gospel which will answer it particularly. And so of all other truths, it may be said they kiss each other. My brethren, it is the thread that runs through all divinity; therefore a man must make a whole body, a system of divinity, that will do this, and when it is done, there is nothing more glorious.

Now, the gospel is not only a mystery and a depth in respect of wisdom, but let me give you another depth, and that is a depth of love, which is laid up and revealed in this doctrine and knowledge of the gospel, Eph. 3:18, 19, 'That you may comprehend, with all saints, the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, of the love of God, which passeth knowledge.' Sin is a great depth, which the law lays open; therefore, saith Jeremiah, chap. 17:9, 'The heart of man is desperately wicked, who can know it?' And Solomon saith, in Eccles. 7:25, 'I thought myself wise enough, I set myself to find out and to know the wickedness of folly.' But he could not find out that depth of wickedness that is in man's heart, or make an anatomy of the heart. And poor souls, when they are humbled, find it so, and the damned spirits in hell find it so; for what is it they study, and shall do to everlasting? Their own sinfulness and God's wrath, their parts being extended and set upon the utmost tenter-hooks, and

their sins being set in order before them, they study nothing but their sins, and meditate nothing but terror; and this is hell. But now there is a mystery of love as well as of wisdom revealed in the gospel, a depth that swalloweth up all the depths of sinfulness that is in the elect, yea, and if they were a thousand times vaster than they are. The apostle, in that place I quoted even now, Eph. 3:18, speaks of heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths in the love of God; he compares it to a mighty sea, which swalloweth up hills like molehills, a sea which is of that depth that the thoughts of men, though they shall be diving to all eternity to the bottom of it, shall never come thither, a sea of that length and breadth, that though they are sailing over it to everlasting, yet they shall never come to shore. It passeth knowledge, saith he. God's heart, my brethren, is as deep in love as it is in wisdom; yea, and his love was it that set his wisdom to work, to find out all those depths whereby to shew his love. And, therefore, it is an observable place in Rom. 11:33, which I quoted at the first, 'O the depth,' saith he, 'of the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of God!' You would think that the apostle there speaks only of the knowledge and wisdom of God. No; he means mercy and love, as well as wisdom, or rather, wisdom set a-work by love. And it is clear by the context, for he had spoken in the words before of God's shewing mercy to the elect, 'That through your mercy,' saith he, 'they might obtain mercy;' 'For God hath concluded all under unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all;' 'O the depth,' &c. Having spoken of love and mercy, which God intends to his elect, and the ways and contrivances that wisdom hath to shew mercy, he cries out, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' And there, in Rom. 12:1, where he comes to make application to all, what saith he? 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you' do so and so. We have two gulfs in us, two vessels, understanding and will, and both these must be filled. Why, the gospel contains two depths in it, the one to fill your understanding, the other to fill your will and affections for ever. It contains a depth of wisdom, and it contains a depth of love; it is a mystery of wisdom, and it is a mystery of love. And so now I have despatched the first property of the excellency of the gospel, that it is a mystery.

I shall but make a short use of it, and that is only this. These are great invitements unto men to become saints, and being so, to search in a more

especial manner into the things of the gospel. You know great understandings seek after depths, as good swimmers do after great rivers, and will not go to shallows. It is said of the leviathan, that he plays in the sea. There is room enough to do so. If anything invites the understanding of man to be searching and prying, the depths of the gospel will do it.

And let me add this to it, which, as it enhanceth the worth of the gospel, so it should set on our spirits after the knowledge of it, and the knowledge of it as saints, the depths of it are so great that it will always produce new knowledge; though you know but the same things again, yet your knowledge shall be always new. Why? Because 'it passeth knowledge.' Go, take all other things that are the greatest riddles and secrets in the world, and when you once know them, you know them, and they become trivial when you once know them. There was a secret in nature which the world almost for three thousand years did not know—I am sure the heathens did not—and that was the cause of the eclipse of the sun and the moon, and they stood all wondering, as of late the West Indians did, when such a thing happened. Now, we know that the moon's coming between the sun eclipseth it, and the shadow of earth coming between the moon and the sun eclipseth it; and this great riddle that amazed the world, we count it, now we know it, but a trivial thing; and who almost, when the sun or moon are eclipsed, thinks of it with any admiration? But when the depths of the gospel are unfolded to you, you may still search into them, and search further with new pleasure, and to a renewed understanding they are always new and fresh. There is no new thing under the sun, saith Solomon in Eccles. 1. And he speaks of natural, moral knowledge. But there it nothing but new things which are above the sun, which believers know. Therefore, as the mercies of God are new every morning, so the thoughts of these mercies, they are to an holy heart precious, sweet, new every morning. And you shall find this, that as you grow up more in holiness, still the things you knew before will be new to you, the very same things, besides your enlargement in other things that you did not know before. So the apostle clearly saith, in 1 Cor. 13:10, 'When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I understood as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' Every new degree of spiritual light swallowed up what he knew before, that he thinketh that he did not know it before, the

knowledge of it, or that new light, being so pleasant to him.

Now, my brethren, to have the mind of man not only to have depths made the object of it, but the holier he grows to be carried on to further depths, to be led along thus with continual new knowledge, there is nothing more pleasant; and yet this the gospel is, and all the depths of it. And then, when you shall have depths of love added, a sea of love breaking in upon your hearts at every thought (if the apprehension be wound up high), to fill a man's will and affection, as the other filled his understanding, this most needs fill the heart with unspeakable pleasure and joy and contentment in the view and contemplation of this great and high mystery. Now, if we had holiness enough, and love enough, and faith enough, and grew in these, this would certainly be our case. And so much now for this first property of the gospel that is here mentioned, that it is called a mystery.

Chapter III: Another demonstration of the excellency of the gospel, that it is a secret mystery, a hidden and concealed wisdom.

'Which hath been hidden from ages and from generations,' &c.—
COL. 1:26.

2. I come now to the second of those properties or adjuncts that are attributed or ascribed unto the gospel, mentioned in this 26th verse, to set forth the glory of it, and that is the secrecy and hiddenness of it. 'Hidden,' saith he, 'from ages and from generations.'

That which is here translated hid is, in Rom. 16:25, silent, not spoken of; it was kept secret, at least the mystery of it. 'Now to him,' saith he, 'that is of power to stablish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.' The apostle Paul, in all the foregoing part of

the epistle, had laid open the great things of this gospel, and now at the latter end of all, in the conclusion of it, because that it is the revelation of the gospel for which we are most of all to bless God, he makes that doxology, or closeth it with this praise and thanksgiving unto God, 'Now, to him that is of power to stablish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, to God only wise be glory, through Jesus Christ. Amen.' He doth involve and interweave the mention of the glory and excellency of this gospel as that for which there is glory to be given to God in all ages and by all nations (for so the doxology runs), and this for ever.

It is said here to be 'hid from ages and from generations.' Interpreters, some of them, do make a difference between these two, namely, ages and generations, that the one doth import all those times of eternity (if they may be called times) before the world was; and the other all the times that have been since God made this world, since indeed time was. I shall give you the sense in which the gospel may be said to be hid in both respects.

If, in the first place, we take from ages to be all the time before the world was; as in Acts 15 it is, 'Known unto God' (saith he) 'are his works, even from everlasting;' then this gospel was hid with God, even from everlasting. In 1 Cor. 2:7, he saith, it is the 'mystery and hidden wisdom which God hath ordained before the world;' and in Rev. 14:6, it is called 'the everlasting gospel.' And therefore you shall observe likewise in the place quoted even now, Rom. 16:25, 26, he saith, it is 'a mystery, which was kept secret since the world began'—so our translators read it; it is the same word which is used here for ages—'and is now made manifest, according to the commandment of the everlasting God.' Why comes in the epithet of that God which hath been from everlasting, but because the gospel hath been so too, and hath been kept secret, not only from the time since the world began, but from everlasting also?

You will say unto me, In what respect should the gospel be said to be hid even from everlasting, when there was no creature to know it?

I answer, because it was that knowledge which in God's esteem, even

from everlasting, he resolved he would be sparing of, and ordained to reserve to himself. The things of the gospel they were (as the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 2:10) 'the deep things of God,' that lay (as I may so speak) at the bottom of his heart, the great secrets, which he esteemed such even from everlasting. And whereas for other kind of knowledge he had but a common regard, not much caring or standing upon it, when he should reveal it, and so thought with himself. As for the knowledge of other things, I can set no time for the revelation of them (that is, in respect of any peculiar account or value I have of them, though all things fall within my decree), but I will give means to mankind to know anything else presently; but this of the gospel, saith he, I will reserve. Other things in God that he meant to reveal, they lay uppermost in his thoughts, &c., they were common, he cared not how soon they were known. But these were the deep things of God; God hath not been sparing or nice (as I may express it) of any other knowledge whatsoever, that in this world he meant to reveal to the sons of men, either the knowledge of the creature, or of his law; but this of the gospel he locked up in his own breast, he had a peculiar cabinet for it, and it lay under a lock of his own decree not to manifest it till the fulness of time should come. And therefore it is said to be 'hid in God, even from everlasting.' There is a phrase in 1 Cor. 2:10. Speaking of this gospel (as in that chapter he doth), he saith, 'The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.' It is expressed after the manner of men, and that phrase with that emphasis, 'Yea, the deep things of God,' implies that God, as other artists, and those that are wise, when he hath anything that is rare, and which he cares not to let every one see, keeps it close. In the like manner, you have a phrase at the 9th verse of that chapter, 'Eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things' (the things of the gospel, namely, for he speaks of the gospel in that chapter) 'which God hath prepared for them that love him.' Prepared, when? Why, prepared even from everlasting, for, as Austin well expresseth it, the decrees of God (saith he) they are but the preparations, the contrivements of all those benefits and mercies which God intended to bestow upon us.

Secondly, It is said to be hidden also from generations, that is, from ages since the world began. So the apostle speaks, looking backward to former times. I shall give you the particulars, in respect of which it was said to be

hidden from all generations past.

The gospel, as it is now revealed, was hid from all nations.

(1.) It was hid from the Gentiles, so as it was new to them; and that is plainly one of the apostle's scopes here. He writes to Gentiles, and he would magnify the mercy of the revelation of the gospel unto them; and therefore if you mark it, he saith, ver. 27, 'To whom' (namely, the saints) 'God would make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles.' And so likewise you have it in Eph. 3:8, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery' (namely, to the Gentiles, that they should partake of it), 'which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God;' insomuch, as some interpreters would make in all these places, both that in Rom. 16:25, and this place in the Ephesians, and likewise this text in the Colossians, the mystery intended to be the revealing of the gospel unto the Gentiles. But it is clear that is not the meaning. The mystery that was kept hid is not only that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, but it is the things of the gospel itself; it is the mystery of the glory of it; it is 'Christ the hope of glory;' and it is, in the Ephesians, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ;' and more plain, in 1 Pet. 1, the things concealed to former times there, are not only said to be the revelation of these things to the Gentiles, but the things themselves, the salvation itself, as you shall find if you read the 10th, 11th, and 12th verses of that chapter.

(2.) It was kept hid even from the Jews also; it is therefore indeed called a mystery; for what is properly a mystery? It is not the thing merely hid, wholly kept so close as that there is nothing said about it, but when there is that said about it which doth obscurely and darkly reveal it, and yet hath a further meaning, which afterwards cometh to be opened. Even thus as to the words that Adam spoke concerning his wife, that 'they two should be one flesh,' what saith the apostle of it, in Eph. 5:32? 'This is a great mystery,' saith he. Why? Because darkly under the union of man and wife was intended the union of Christ and his church. 'I speak,' saith he, 'concerning Christ and his church.'

Now it is therefore called a mystery even to the Jews, because although they had the gospel, the substance of it, yet it was veiled, and the carnal Jew he understood all in the letter, and looked to nothing in the gospel; and as you have it in 2 Cor. 3:13, 'there was a veil put over Moses his face, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished,' namely, to what was revealed unto them under the law. But now the gospel is come, all is open (as if you should speak of a riddle, and when you have done, give the meaning of it), and then they saw that all that the prophets and Moses had written was written concerning Christ. But I say, the Jews in the time of the law saw not this mystery intended in it. You shall find this in that place of the Romans I quoted even now, chap. 16, ver. 25, 26, 'According to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets'—mark that expression—'according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations.' Would you know, saith he, why the gospel is called a mystery? God hath hid a great deal of it obscurely up and down among the prophets, and Christ hath sent out his apostles to make known and reveal what all those prophets intended, which they themselves did not know, not in the clearness of it as we do; they had as it were the letter, we have the mystery unfolded. Therefore says the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 1:10), 'Of which salvation the prophets inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things that are now reported unto you,' &c. So that indeed the mystery, and the meaning, and the end at which all those things aimed that the prophets delivered, they themselves fully knew not; they were to write the Scriptures, and they inquired after, and searched diligently what those things which they wrote did signify; but it was answered them, that 'not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things that are now reported.' But now in the times of the gospel (saith he in Rom. 16.) 'By the scriptures of the prophets, it is made known unto all nations.' Men had only hints before, but now by opening the prophets, and laying things together, the whole business is unfolded, and this mystery is come out. And this is properly a mystery, and in this respect the gospel was a mystery, hidden even from the Jews themselves. Therefore, to give you another place, there is a little particle in Eph. 3:5, very observable, 'By

revelation he made known unto me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men.' What, did they know nothing of the gospel? Yes, saith the apostle, they might, but it was in a mystery, it was not made known to them, saith he, 'as it is now revealed;' mark that particle, 'made known as it is now,' to his holy apostles and prophets, that is, the prophets of the New Testament, upon whom the Holy Ghost fell, who opened unto them all those prophecies of the Old Testament, and they saw clearly nothing but Jesus Christ in them. Hid it was, you see, from the Gentiles; hid it was also from the Jews, in respect of the revelation of it. Hid it was also,

(3.) From the angels, and from Adam in innocency. The angels might know that they were to have a head, in whom God did unite them unto himself, and they might know it as the fathers of the Old Testament knew there should be a Messiah, by whom they should be redeemed; but how, and who, and what he was, they knew not; and in that respect they are said, in 1 Pet. 1:10, 11, to pry into these things, which place I shall not mention much, but I shall give you another place, which will comprehend both, namely, that the great things of the gospel were kept hidden from angels and from man also. And it is in 1 Cor. 2:9, compared with Isa. 64:4 (out of which the words in the Corinthians are taken), 'As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.' Now in Isaiah it is thus, 'Since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, nor hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.' To open these words a little. When he saith there in the Corinthians, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,' &c., it hath reference to what was said, ver. 7, 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained afore the world.' And it hath reference also to ver. 8, where it is said, 'which wisdom none of the princes of this world knew;' and he brings a proof why none of the princes, none of the corrupt men of the world ever knew it, a majore, from a far greater argument; for, saith he, these great things which the gospel reveals for the salvation of the elect, have not only not entered into the heart of corrupt men, but they have not entered into the heart of innocent man, not into the heart of Adam himself. How do I prove that? From that in Isa. 64:4, 'Since the beginning

of the world,' saith he, 'men have not heard,' &c., which phrase the apostles often use, when they speak of the gospel being hidden, as in Eph. 3:9, he saith, 'It hath been hid from the beginning of the world.' But you will say, he excludes not angels. Why, truly, if you consult the place in Isaiah, he saith, that 'none hath seen, O God, besides thee.' Who doth he speak to? To Jesus Christ, as a distinct person from his Father. Why? It is clear by this, because he changeth the phrase, 'None hath seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared;' not what thou hast prepared, but what he hath prepared; as if he had said, besides thee, O God the Son, knewest what God the Father hath prepared for those that love him, none else but only Jesus Christ, which was in God's bosom, knew it. 'Neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man.' There is but those three ways of knowing, either from the inward natural principles, which are in the heart of man; and so a thing enters into a man's heart from the principles of reason, which are in a man's self. Why, saith he, all the principles that were sown in Adam's heart, or in any man's heart else, would not have afforded this knowledge, it would not have entered into a man's heart. And then all the way of knowledge by the eye, or observation of the creatures, could never have afforded this knowledge, or the least jot of it. No; all the hearing by the ear, all the communication that God should have made to Adam, would not have laid open these things to him. And it is plain, that Isaiah speaks of the things of the gospel, not only by the quotation of his words by the apostle Paul, but from the desire of the church there, that God would bow the heavens and come down, and reveal these things to them. 'Bow the heavens,' saith he, 'and come down, touch the mountains,' &c. Even as the mountains, when God gave the law, bowed down before him, so he expresseth the revealing of the gospel under the same terms.

Having gone over all these places, there is one place more, in which all that I have said out of the Romans, and out of the Corinthians, and out of the Colossians, and out of the Ephesians, concerning the hiddenness of this wisdom, is in a manner contained, and it is in the Old Testament, and for aught I know, in the oldest book of the Old Testament, even in Job, chap. 28, which I shall open to you as clearly as I can; the truth is, I had not thought it had lain in that place, till I found the learned Ainsworth refer to it, though but in a word.

Most interpreters, I find, refer all the matter in that 28th chapter to the 12th verse of the 27th chapter, and that there Job begins his preface to all the discourse that follows. 'I will teach you,' saith he—it is translated—'by the hand of God;' but Piscator reads it, 'Of the hand of God,' that is, that shall be the subject I speak of, 'and that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal,' that which is secret and laid up with him. Where he professeth to hint to them a secret counsel and wisdom, which was in God beyond what they had spoken, a wisdom which they knew little of, and which God kept secret from all living. All the discourses of Job's friends, what had they been about? They had been about God's outward dispensations, how God punisheth wicked men for their sins, and they confine themselves to that discourse, to the works of God's providence, and an enumeration of his legal proceedings in a way of justice to sinners, which was a common ordinary notion then in the world, and which suited those times under the law of nature, under which it is thought Job lived. Now in this they prided themselves in their discourse; therefore Job, to confound them, and not only to confute them, but shame them too, he professeth to hint to them another wisdom, which they did not exercise their thoughts about. Why, saith he, ver. 12, you speak nothing but what is ordinary, 'Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; why then are ye thus altogether vain?' or boast yourselves of such a knowledge as you have uttered, by which you condemn me, as if I were a wicked man? For by it they had condemned him, because God punished wicked men according to their works; and so Job goes on to repeat what they had said, as you will see if you compare the 13th verse to the end with the 20th chapter. But, saith he, whereas you think that this knowledge you have uttered hath such a great deal of depth in it, I will tell you, or teach you of the hand of God, that is, of God's eternal purpose, for so you shall find it (as Piscator well observeth) in Acts 4 interpreted; 'They were gathered together,' saith he, 'to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done.' 'I will not conceal' (saith Job) 'that which is with the Almighty;' there is a higher wisdom, which he in his eternal purpose hath ordered, beyond that which you see in the works of his ordinary providence, which you neither mind nor search into. Having thus prefaced his following discourse, he doth in the 28th chapter, as both Beza and Jansonius observeth, begin to speak of this wisdom, and to commend it to them. And see how he sets it out, you shall see it will fall in

and open all the scriptures I have already mentioned.

First, He compares that wisdom, which he would set their thoughts a-work upon, which they neglected, and out of the rigour of their legal spirits condemned him, he compares it, I say, first, with all human wisdom, and he tells them plainly this, that there is a great deal of wisdom in the hearts of men; and instanceth in the art that men have to find out all the precious things that are hid in the bowels of the earth; so ver 1, 'He findeth out where there is a vein for silver, and a place for gold;' he taketh iron out of the earth, and he hath such skill as he can make brass out of a stone; and if a flood break out while he is digging under the earth, he can overcome that difficulty and remove it; and he digs up stones out of the earth where bread grows. One would have thought man should have been contented with bread. No; but he digs up the earth, where he finds stones that are the place of sapphires, and which hath dust of gold; and, ver. 10, says he, 'He is able to cut out rivers among the rocks,' for he speaks of man and his wisdom, which God hath given him in all this, 'and his eye seeth every precious thing.' Well, but when he had thus described the art of man, from the first verse to the 12th, saith he, though men have all this skill and this art, 'Yet where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?' And by wisdom here he means the same that Solomon doth in the Proverbs, viz., that wisdom that shall save men, as appears in the last verse; for Job interlaceth many discourse of Christ, speaks of him as 'the Redeemer:' 'I shall see him with these eyes,' saith he; and he whom he calleth the Redeemer elsewhere, in this chapter he calls wisdom, which was to be the ordinary phrase of the Old Testament, and so of those times, by which they did call the Messiah. He complains in the 13th verse, that man, who had all this art and skill to find out all things else, yet he sought not after this; 'Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living;' you may go almost all the world over and hear no man speak of it, no man values it. He speaks not of that wisdom which is in God infinitely, for that is not a thing for man to obtain, and so under that consideration to value it as Paul did, when he esteemed all as dung in comparison of it. Man knows it not, saith he, he would never have enhanced the price of it (as afterward, ver. 16, 'It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire'), but to raise up the hearts to seek it. He speaks just

as Solomon doth in Prov. 8, when he speaks of Christ.

Secondly, As he compares it with all the knowledge that man hath, so with all the knowledge that the creatures materially can afford. Go over all the creatures, they all do not contain one jot of that wisdom: so saith the 14th verse, 'The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not in me;' for they do afford to man's understanding no hint at all of any such thing, not a whit to be known of the knowledge of God in Christ is in the whole frame of nature. 'Whence cometh wisdom then?' (ver. 20) and where is the place of understanding? seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of heaven.' Whence comes it? That is, Who is the author of it? And where is it to be found? That is, What is the subject matter of it? The depth affordeth it not, it is not to be found there; the creatures, though they hold forth the footsteps of God, yet they do not hold forth this wisdom. He tells us afterward, in ver. 23, that 'God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof,' for (as the apostle saith, in Eph 5) it lies hid in God; and Job saith, that God had kept it close, and doth keep it close from all; and so he reckons up all things that are to be reckoned up, he reckons up the sons of men. 'It is hid,' saith he, 'from the eyes of all living,' that is, of mankind, 'and kept close from the fowls of heaven' (as you have it in your margins), as metaphorically he calleth angels; for otherwise, why would he ascend from the eyes of all living, speaking of man, to the fowls of heaven, unless he spake of such creatures as have more understanding than man, namely, angels, for so in Scripture they are called? And, saith he, ver. 22, 'Go down to destruction and death,' and they will say, 'We have heard the fame thereof with our ears;' all our forefathers that are dead, they knew not the way of it neither, though they have heard the fame of it. The devil heard it when he was cursed, he heard it with a witness, that both his ears tingled when he heard it; and all our fathers that are dead heard the fame of it, knew there was such a thing, as Job also did, but they had not that clear revelation of it. It being hidden therefore from all these, 'it is God,' saith he, 'that understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof; that God that looks to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; that God that makes a weight for the winds, and that weigheth the waters by measure; that God, when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then did he see it,' and

(as your margin hath it) 'did number it,' or resolved it in his mind; he recounted it, he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. He saw it; that is, he had it in his view, as the chiefest wisdom of all else, greater than whatever else he was a-doing in making the world. And he numbered it; that is, he accounted it as the choicest of all knowledge else. And he prepared it, as a further thing than the wisdom he stamped upon the creature, and he did as it were by study search it out. You find these phrases fall in with what the apostles themselves use of it.

If you ask me what wisdom this is that Job speaks thus of, it is (as I hinted afore) that wisdom whereby men are saved, which was the title that then in those old times they gave to the Messiah, and the fear of him, and the knowledge of him, and of God. If you look in Prov. 8 (and this book of Job was written long afore that of the Proverbs), you shall find that Solomon useth the same expressions that Job here doth, and he makes a description of Jesus Christ under the title of Wisdom, and of that way of salvation that was then but obscurely revealed, and afterward more fully manifested in the times of the gospel, even 'the hidden wisdom of God,' as the apostle calls it. Solomon, in that 8th of the Proverbs, ver. 11, saith that 'the knowledge of it is better than rubies, and that all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.' Job useth the same expression, ver. 18, 'No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls, for the price of wisdom is above rubies.' Had it been the wisdom of God himself, which God everlastingly keepeth to himself, and is not to be pried into, Job would not have put that price upon it to incite men to the search of it. So likewise you shall find that Solomon makes the same complaints that Job doth, that the sons of men receive it not, value it not. And as Job saith, that 'God, when he made a decree for the rain,' then did he see that wisdom and prepared it, and searched it out; so Solomon useth the same expressions also, 'When he established the clouds above' (it is the same expression), 'when he strengthened the fountains of the deep, when he gave to the sea his decree,' &c., Prov. 8:28; then saith Wisdom, 'I was there, and was daily his delight,' &c. And that you may see how one Scripture openeth another, you shall find in Eph. 3, where it is called a hidden wisdom, he saith, 'To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world was hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.' Now, what saith Job, and

what saith Prov. 8? Saith Job, 'When God did give a decree for the rain,' 'when he established the clouds above,' saith Solomon, then did he see this, he had this in his eye; but he kept it close as a further wisdom than what he was a-making, and stamping upon the creatures. 'It was hid in God,' saith the apostle, 'who created all things by Jesus Christ.' In the strength of Christ, God-man, did he create all things, and had then in his eye the Lord Jesus, whom he meant to propound to the creature as the head of the creation. It is a wisdom also which is not in nature, but distinct from it; for Job saith, 'When he made the world, he saw this.' And then he useth the very same phrases that are used of the gospel.

There are four things said of it: (1.) he saw it; (2.) recensuit (so Piscator translates it), he numbered it with himself, recounted it; (3.) he did prepare it; (4.) he searched it out. Now, do but look in 1 Cor. 2:9, 10, where the apostle speaks of this hidden wisdom, and you have the very same phrases, 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which God ordained before the world.' 'The things which God hath prepared' (the Septuagint useth the very same words in the Greek which the apostle doth here)—and then he searcheth it out; 'the Spirit,' saith he, 'searcheth the deep things of God.' And, my brethren, to add this as the conclusion, it is that wisdom by which men were then saved that Job had here in his eye. Now, what wisdom was it that men were saved by then? It was by that obscure knowledge they had of God in Christ held forth in the promise, which did cause them to cleave to him, and to fear him, and to worship him, and to depart from evil. Now, look in Prov. 8, and compare it with the last verse of this 28th of Job. Saith he there, ver. 12, speaking of wisdom, 'I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil,' &c.; and, ver. 20, 'I lead in the way of righteousness,' &c. And so he goes on, and in the conclusion shews how that the knowledge of Christ, and of the gospel as it was then revealed, did work men to cleave unto God, to fear God, and to depart from evil; that was the way whereby men were saved then. So Job tells his friends here; you tell me, saith he, of God's dealings with me in an outward way of providence, but you mind not the wisdom of God. What is that? 'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.' Now, in the Jewish language, the piety of those times, by which they are said to believe in God and to be religious, is still expressed

by 'the fear of the Lord.' And he in the New Testament that is called a believer, in the Old is called a man that feareth God, for that was the wisdom Christ was made into men in the Old Testament. I say, as faith is the great thing on which the language of the New Testament runs, so the fear of the Lord is the language of the Old. There is a world of places for it. 'Come, ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord,' Ps. 34:11. Therefore it is called the beginning of wisdom when they come thus to know God; for it is called the fear of the Lord, because it was that by which they were to fear God and come to the Messiah, a fear which made them wise unto salvation. The same Christ, by teaching them his fear then, made them wise to salvation, which teacheth us now; only our religion is expressed by faith, theirs by fear, because there was little gospel mixed with it; it wrought in a legal way, in a way of bondage then, ours in a way of adoption. So that it is clear that Job speaks of that wisdom whereby men are saved, according to the notion of those times, having some hint of some further wisdom which was hid in God, which was not in angels nor in men, and which God himself in the end would reveal. And so you have, as I conceive, truly the meaning of that place in Job.

Use.—Is the gospel thus a hidden wisdom, hidden from ages and from generations? This should cause us to value and put the highest worth and esteem upon it. Amongst all other considerations that should move us to it, this is not the least. We see the greatest wits of the world, and the greatest understandings, have still been taken with antiquity, with any learning and knowledge that is ancient, especially when it is hidden too. How do men prize an old copy of a father (as they are called), which hath lain hidden in some hole in a manuscript, and is now revealed! How doth a great scholar value such a thing! They think it a glory to be the publisher of such a thing. To have an old copy of the New Testament, though it doth not differ three words throughout the whole from what we commonly have, yet if it be an old copy (as lately one of the Septuagint, written thirteen hundred years ago, was sent over*), what a value is there set upon it! If the prophecy of Enoch, which Jude quoteth (and such a thing they say is extant in Africa[†]), were now found out, how would it be valued! If it were common here, how would it be esteemed! Solomon, you know, wrote of herbs and plants, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop

that springs out of the wall; if these books that are lost were now found, what a price would we set upon them! O my brethren, a far greater than the wisdom of Solomon is here, and far more ancient; for here is the wisdom that was hid in God from ages and generations, even before the world was, which lay at the bottom of his heart, which are the deep things of God, Here is a whole edition (for so the gospel is) of a new testament, of a new knowledge of God, in comparison of what the fathers had. Here is the wisdom of God himself, which was kept close from the Gentiles, from all nations, four thousand years, kept hid from Adam in innocency, kept hid from angels, kept hid from all, that his own Spirit even searcheth into these deep things of God. How should this whet on our souls to be skilful in, and to study this gospel, and to know all the secrets of it; to seek unto God for that holy and blessed Spirit who writ this word, and hath hid herein all the treasures of knowledge which are to be revealed to us. This did commend it to the primitive times. Paul still in all his epistles, as you have seen in that of the Romans, in this of the Colossians, in that of the Ephesians, in that of the Corinthians, makes it a mighty matter, that unto them this gospel was revealed that was hid before, that God had broke up a new treasury, not of notional divinity, but of the knowledge of himself, even the mystery of the Father and of Christ, as it is called in Col. 2:1.

But you will say unto me, this indeed did mightily commend it to our forefathers, that lived in the primitive times, to whom it was first made known. In regard to them it was admirable, that it should be four thousand years before it was revealed, and then made known unto them, and that they should be the first; but for us, we are born under it, and it hath now been sixteen hundred years since it was made manifest. Therefore, what is this to commend it to us?

I answer first, It did lie hid, however, four thousand years afore the world knew it; and that thou shouldst have thy lot to be born in the days of the revealing of this gospel, and shouldst come to know these things which were hid to the ages before, is a favour; for thou mightest have been, born in the midst of those four thousand years.

But, secondly, so did God order it in his great wisdom, that though the law was given (I parallel it so) in Moses his time, yet there was a time (as

that of Manasseh's, and of other of those kings) in which the law was in a manner lost, and the priest searching in the temple doth by chance find it. This hath been the case of the gospel since God delivered it to these times; for this doctrine of the gospel in the greatest glory, and the riches of the secrets of it, was obscured for more than a thousand years, yea, from the very apostles' time a mystery of iniquity began to work, and another gospel to be raised up that darkened the true one by degrees, till antichristianism overspread the world; whenas all the world, and the learned men of the world, ran after the rudiments of the world, and not after Jesus Christ; and the world was spoiled through school divinity, and through philosophy, as the apostle speaks, Col. 2:8. And it is not many years since that great and glorious breaking forth of the gospel began in the time of Luther, when God did break up another Indies. He gave the pope a world, the Spanish world, the West Indies; he set them a-work about the first part of the wisdom spoken of in that 28th of Job, to find out a vein for the silver, and a place for the gold. And he gave another Indies of the gospel unto us of the protestant churches, and it had been happy for us to have kept ours, and to improve it as they have done theirs. But, my brethren, thought God began and renewed the knowledge of this gospel, yet the saints will find digging work enough in it, even to the end of the world. You shall find in the very midst of the book of Revelation, when fourteen chapters of it were spent, that it is there said, ver. 6, 'I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth.' He speaks of the time of antichrist, for in the 13th chapter he describeth the beast, how he ascendeth out of the sea; and in the 14th, he describes the saints under antichrist, and how he tyrannized over them, especially at the latter end, when the light of the glorious gospel of Christ breaks forth. And whereas they accuse the gospel of novelty; no, it is an everlasting gospel, saith he. And God did set a-work many before us to preach this gospel; and how did they begin to preach it? for it went on by degrees. They fell upon images first, they bade people take heed. 'Fear God, and give glory to him, and worship him, that made heaven and earth;' that was the first great thing which the protestants laid open, when they first began to preach the gospel. Afterwards they began to challenge Rome with being the antichrist, that was the second angel. And then a third comes, and saith, that 'whosoever drinks of her waters, and of her cup, shall everlastingly

be tormented;' so that men that are learned and knowing men, living in that religion, cannot be saved. And then in the 15th and 16th chapters, there come seven angels out of the temple, and they still reveal more and more. Thus doth God by degrees go on, so that within these hundred years, we in our age, ever since that great light first broke out (especially here in this kingdom), have had the light of the gospel rising still clearer and clearer, and so it will do till antichrist be destroyed, for he is to be destroyed, to be melted (so the word is) by the dawning of the Sun of righteousness, who is coming upon the world. Therefore in Isa. 11:8 he saith, 'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;' he hath the like expression in Hab. 2. And he speaks of the latter times, for he speaks of those times before, and upon the calling of the Jews; and that is clear by ver. 11 of that Isa. 11., 'It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time, to recover the remnant of his people;' he had delivered them out of captivity once, and he shall do it again the second time, saith he. Now go take Ezekiel: he prophesieth likewise of those latter times, and he useth the same expression of the overflowing of waters by degrees, in Ezek. 47. Speaking of a glorious temple, that was to be set up in the latter days (that is clear by all the passages of that prophecy), he saith, 'he saw waters issue from under the threshold of the house,' that is, of the church; and saith he, first I was led through waters, and the waters came up to the ankles; afterwards the waters were to the knees, and then to the loins, and at length a river that could not be passed over, for the waters were risen, waters to swim in; and when he was returned to the brink of the river (that you may know what times he speaks of), he saith, 'There were very many trees on the one side, and on the other.' Now compare this with Rev. 22. There you have the same trees and the same waters (speaking of the latter times of the gospel too, as Ezekiel doth), whose leaves did heal the nations every month. So that he speaks of the growing of the knowledge of the gospel by degrees, which should be as waters that cover the sea. The like you have in Zechariah, where he prophesieth, that in the latter times there should come a day, which should be clearer towards evening. In the times before this, saith he, it shall be neither light nor dark (which I believe are our times), and it shall begin to clear up towards evening (it is in Zech. 14:6, 7); and he useth the same expression concerning water, ver. 8, 'Living waters,' saith he, 'shall go out from

Jerusalem,' &c. And Dan. 12:4, 'Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.'

I speak it for this, that although the gospel was revealed to the apostles so long ago, yet God hath so ordered it, that to us now it is new again. My brethren, let me say this to you, it is 'a faith once given,' so Jude tells us. When the apostles had given it out of their hands, what, will God send apostles to recover this gospel again? No; it is a greater glory for God by degrees, and by ordinary light in the hearts of his ministers and his people, to recover this gospel (which was thus blasted by antichrist in the latter days), that it shall have the same purity in doctrine and government that was in the primitive times; I say, for God to do this by degrees and by ordinary means, it is a greater glory than to send apostles. It were an easy matter for him to pour out his Spirit upon men immediately, as he did then; but he chooseth rather to do it by ordinary means, as he hath done, yea, and will go on to do it, and will never leave to do it, till he hath brought it to that height, when Jesus Christ shall come to possess his kingdom, the brightness of whose coming, the dawnings of it, shall consume antichristian doctrine and worship. It is a greater matter for him to work a miracle by ordinary means in a way of ordinary providence, than to shew these great miracles that he did among the Jews, and the like; as indeed he hath in an ordinary way done as great matters for this kingdom, as ever he did in Egypt for the bringing of his people out of that bondage. It is, I say, an easy matter for God to go and create a new world, and the like; but therein lies his glory, that he will restore things, and reduce them to the primitive purity, by ordinary means, and not send extraordinary persons to do it.

Antichrist brought in all his darkness by degrees, and it shall go out by degrees. The mystery of iniquity began to work in the hearts of men in the apostles' times, and darkness grew more and more till midnight. So the mystery of the gospel works likewise, and these dawnings shall increase more and more till the perfect day; and the issue of all these confusions that are now, when Jesus Christ hath done his work, will be some glorious thing. God hath given pastors and teachers (as the apostle saith), to all ages, and one age doth teach another, and they all tend to the edifying of the body of Christ, till we come unto a perfect man, unto a

measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. All the light of the former ages is drawn down to this age, and in this age men suck in their very education the light of the former ages, and so are prepared for a further growth; and so in the end, the latter age of the world will have a fulness of stature again. And the scope of all this is, though it is a mystery, yet God hath so ordered it in his providence, to endear it to us, to make it a new mystery to us, even as if he had had apostles afresh; for it was obscured, and it hath broke out afresh after it lay hid a thousand years.

Chapter IV: That the knowledge of the gospel is a most excellent wisdom, because, as a peculiar favour, it is communicated by God only to some persons.

But now is made manifest to his saints.—COL. 1:26.

Here is the rarity and scarceness of it, when it cometh to be revealed; 'but now is made manifest to his saints.' And this is the subject which I shall insist upon.

In the handling of this, I shall do two things.

1. Give you an explication of the words.
2. Enlarge upon that theme, to shew from thence the excellency of the gospel.

1. For explication. If you mark it, the apostle doth not say, which is now made manifest to me, although Paul makes the manifestation of it unto him to be the means to manifest it to all the saints; for as elsewhere he saith, it was a treasure in an earthen vessel committed unto him; and therefore, in the 23d verse, and the last words, he saith, 'Whereof I Paul am made a minister;' and in the 25th verse, the first words, 'Whereof I am made a minister.' But how is he made a minister? For to reveal it to the saints. Therefore he doth not only say, is revealed unto me, but, 'now is made manifest in the saints.'

The gospel, although it was at first revealed unto apostles and prophets, yet the end and intent of it was, that it should be revealed to all the saints. You have this expressly in Eph. 3:5, comparing it with this. In the 4th verse he had called it (as here) 'the mystery of Christ;' in the 5th verse, he saith, 'which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.' One would think now that the apostle here should only intend, that this gospel

is revealed to the doctors and teachers of the church, to the holy apostles and prophets. No; read the 9th verse. It is (saith he) 'to make all men see' (that is, as these words restrain it, all the saints see) 'what is the fellowship of the mystery, which hath been from the beginning of the world hid in God.' It was not revealed only to apostles and prophets, 'but now,' saith he, 'is made manifest to the saints.' And therefore in the 23d verse of this chapter, saith he, 'If you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven.' So that not only the holy apostles and prophets of the New Testament received it, and it was manifested unto them, but to the saints also. Therefore in the 25th verse of this chapter, 'I am made a minister of it,' saith he, 'according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you.' So that indeed it was given to the apostles, but only that they might make it manifest to the saints; and hence therefore he saith, 'But now is made manifest to his saints.' I shall not need to enlarge more upon this, in the way of opening it.

2. I shall come therefore to the thing itself, viz., the rarity of this gospel, and of the mysteries of it, and shew you the excellency of it in this respect. 'But is now,' saith he, 'made manifest to his saints.'

He speaks as if God were dainty of this knowledge. He reveals it to saints, and to saints only; and to his saints. There is a revelation of it, which the saints only have, as I shall shew you anon, and answer objections to the contrary. In 1 Cor. 1:24 he saith, that 'to them that are called, both Jew and Greek, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. We all say that he is the power of God only to them that are called, for he only works effectually in them: but that scripture also tells us that he is the wisdom of God only to them that are called; they so understand the mystery of it as none else.

And then, if you mark it, he commends the knowledge of the gospel to us by this, that it is revealed to his saints; his whom he had chosen, whom he had singled out. Certainly, if there had been any knowledge better than another, he would have reserved it for his saints. There is an emphasis in that. You know God chose a man beloved of him (for so Solomon was called), and as a testimony of his love to him, he gave him, above all

things else, knowledge; so that he abounded therein above all that were before him, or shall be after him. And Daniel, that had great mysteries opened to him, is called, 'a man greatly beloved.' I quote these examples for this, to shew that that which is a more special excellent knowledge of all others, God would reserve it for them. 'To you,' saith Christ, 'it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,' speaking to his disciples; 'to you it is given,' it was a gift, and a special gift. And therefore in Mat. 11:25, we read of that great thanksgiving which Christ makes to his Father, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' He revealed them to his saints, and those whom he had chosen.

My brethren, God reserved the gospel to reveal it first unto his Son (you shall see the order of it), so you read, in John 1:17, 18, 'The law came by Moses, but grace and truth,' that is, the gospel, 'came by Jesus Christ.' 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him.' The Lord reserved this knowledge, which was hid from ages and generations, for his Son to declare it first; it came by him, he brought out the gospel first. And you have the like in Heb. 2:3, 'Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.' You see that God prized this gospel so much, as he revealeth it first to his Son.

And then, next to his Son he chose out holy apostles. Had not they been holy men, he would not have revealed it to them, to be the broachers of it, as they were: 'Holy apostles and prophets,' saith he, Eph. 3.

And then, lastly, the end of the revealing of it to all these, is that his saints may know it. It is to his saints in distinction now under the gospel from the saints in the Old Testament. The saints then were infants in knowledge, and they took up their faith much upon trust. But God under the gospel doth so reveal the gospel by his Spirit, that saints themselves see into the mystery of it, understand it, take in the comfort of it. And I take that to be the meaning of the promise of that covenant, in Heb. 8:11, where he saith, 'They shall not need every man to teach his neighbour, but they shall all know me, saith the Lord, from the least to the greatest.'

Now then, to answer some objections that will be brought about this; by which this truth will be the more clear.

Obj. first, You will say unto me, Is this knowledge so much commended to us, that it is reserved thus, and made manifest to his saints? Why doth not all the world know it? Is not the gospel preached to every creature under heaven? There is an objection lies not far off the text, for, ver. 23, he saith, 'It hath been preached to every creature under heaven.'

I answer, When our Saviour Christ, in that Mat. 11:25, 'gave thanks to his Father, that he had hid these things from the wise and prudent of the world, and revealed them unto babes;' yet in the verses before you shall read that these things had been revealed to the wise men of the world, and yet hid. Read ver. 23: 'And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted up to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell.' Christ had preached to Capernaum more than to all the cities that were in Judea or belonging to it. It was Capernaum in Galilee of which the prophecy went, that Galilee should see a great light. It is recorded by the evangelist Matthew, upon Christ's going to Capernaum, because he made that the principal seat of all his preaching. But yet, though Capernaum were lifted up to heaven, in respect of all those glorious truths of the gospel that were preached by Jesus Christ thereunto, there were but a few babes that were therein that did receive it; and he thanks his Father that he had concealed it from all the wise and prudent, and revealed it only unto those babes. It is true, indeed, that the gospel is preached unto every creature, and God is free* of it; insomuch as the apostle saith, Rom. 10., 'Have not they all heard?' But then he asketh withal another question, 'Have they all believed?' And therefore saith Christ in Mat. 13:11, 'To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to them it is not given,' though they heard it. And therefore I may say of the gospel, as the great philosopher Aristotle spake of his writings. When he had published the lectures which he had read to his scholars unto the world, Alexander found fault with him; for now, saith he, you have debased all your knowledge by making it common. No, saith Aristotle, for they are edita, non edita, though they are published, yet they are not published; for none will understand them now they are published, but only my scholars whom I have read them unto, and are privy to my scope in them. So it is true of the gospel, that though

the mystery of it is made known unto every creature, yet it is editum, non editum; though it be published, yet it is so published as only those that are taught of God understand it in the mystery of it.

Again, to answer this, that you may see the privilege of the saints herein. Although the gospel is published unto every creature under heaven, yet it was the manifestation of it to his saints that was the motive and ground of publishing it. The world should never have known one tittle of it, had it not been for his saints in the world, unto whom he meant to convey his mind and meaning. And therefore you read in Jude, ver. 2, that it is called, 'the faith once delivered unto the saints.' It was delivered unto them, and delivered for their sakes; the world had never known it else. And therefore the apostles themselves, so far as they knew it, are called holy apostles; they had not thus known it else. And when they did know it more than other men, they were but stewards, for so you know they are called in 1 Cor. 4:1, 'Let every man account of us as stewards of the mysteries of God.' Now, though the steward receive money for his own expenses, yet the chief of the money he receiveth is for the expense of the household. Go, take St Paul, with all his knowledge, and the most of that knowledge he did receive, it was not for his own sake chiefly, it was for the saints; and therefore he saith, 'To me it is given, who am less than the least of all the saints, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' To what end? 'To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,' &c. Hence, therefore, you shall find in Scripture that where God had abundance of people, there the apostles were guided and instructed by the Holy Ghost to stay long. 'I have much people in this city,' saith God unto Paul, when he came to Corinth, and therefore he continueth there a year and six months, teaching the word of God amongst them; and when he would have gone unto one place, he was hindered, and carried unto another. Why? Because still the preaching of the gospel went where God had his elect saints. Therefore, in the words before my text, he saith, 'According to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you.' The apostle had a great deal of knowledge, but, saith he, 'I am a debtor;' so he calls himself in Rom. 1:14, I am but a steward, I have received it for you. It is the saints that God principally aimeth at. Therefore, if he did give it to the apostles but for the saints, then the world, carnal men, come only to hear of it by the saints, because the

saints are amongst them, unto whom God would make it known.

Obj. second. But again, you will say unto me, Do not carnal men know it as well as the saints? Why, then, is it made their privilege?

Ans. first. I answer, first, that carnal men do know the gospel, and know much of it, and they know it to their cost. Say the Pharisees unto Christ, 'Are we blind also?' Aye, saith Christ, 'If ye were blind, you had no sin.'

Ans. second. But, secondly, the knowledge that carnal men have of the gospel is by hearsay. There is no truth of much moment, if you take the matter of truth, that is revealed first to them. You shall find, in Eph. 3:5, that the men that God revealed it first unto were the holy apostles and prophets; and in Peter it is said the Scripture was written by holy men. Had they not been saints, holy men, God had not revealed it unto them. Others may receive it as by tradition from hand to hand, but the men to whom God doth reveal any further light of the gospel are holy men.

But you will say unto me, Now it is given by those holy apostles and prophets, and laid up in the Scriptures, may not all men, or any man, understand it? No; for, as you have it in 2 Pet. 1:20, the Scripture is not of private interpretation (and he speaks especially of the gospel), that is, it is not in the power of any man's understanding to apprehend or know the meaning of the word. 'But,' saith he, 'holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;' and, therefore, as the Scripture was written by the Holy Ghost, so it must be the Holy Ghost that must interpret it. Take all the wise men in the world, they are not able to understand one Scripture: it is but private interpretation. The Holy Ghost, therefore, the same Spirit that guided the holy apostles and prophets to write it, must guide the people of God to know the meaning of it; and as he first delivered it, so he must help men to understand it.

But you will say yet further, Do not carnal men understand the mysteries of the gospel, and that by the Spirit of God?

I answer, Yet still there is a mystery that all the carnal men in the world do not understand. In 1 Cor. 2:7, 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.' He doth not only say it is a mystery in itself, but he saith it is

still spoken in a mystery. And what is the reason? Because that carnal men, even when it is spoken, yea, when it is apprehended by themselves in a notional way, yet they do not know and apprehend that mystery that still is in it. You shall find that the Scripture speaketh of all the knowledge that carnal men have of the truths of the gospel as of no knowledge. In 1 Cor. 8:1, 2, speaking to those among the Corinthians that were puffed up, carnal spirits that thought they knew all things, saith he, 'We know that we all have knowledge,' so ver. 1; but what saith ver. 2? 'If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' So that now a man may have all knowledge, and yet, notwithstanding, he may know nothing as he ought to know. In Prov. 9:10, he had spoken before of Wisdom (and by Wisdom still is meant Jesus Christ revealed, for that was the title they gave the Messiah in those times), now saith he, 'the knowledge of the holy is understanding;' there is no knowledge or true understanding in the matters of the gospel, but only the knowledge of the holy. You know there is a form of godliness in the world; so you have it in 2 Tim. 3:5, 'Men shall come having a form of godliness, and deny the power of it.' As there is a form of godliness that is not true godliness, so it is as certain there is a form of knowledge that is not true knowledge. I will give you a Scripture that is fully answerable to it, it is in Rom. 2; saith he, 'Thou knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed in the law;' and ver. 20, 'hast a form of knowledge, and of the truth.' Mark the expression; as there is a form of godliness which is not true godliness, so there is a form of knowledge that is not true knowledge, that is but the picture of it.

And therefore, my brethren, know this, that there is no man that is become a saint, but as for the truths he doth know out of the gospel, knows that of them which no carnal man in the world knows. I will give you but this instance for it. Go take any man that hath never so much knowledge both in law and gospel, and if God turn this man to him, you shall have him say, that all things he knew before are known anew by him; he that had all knowledge before, he now professeth he had none as he ought to have had. And therefore, by the way, will you know what it is to be converted? It is to know over all anew, that you knew by education. It is plain by that of the apostle, in 2 Cor. 5:17, 'If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things

are become new.' What doth he speak this of? He speaks it especially of knowledge, and that is clear by the verses before, for saith he, 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth we know him no more so;' all our knowledge of him is new, 'therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' What is the effect of that? 'Old things are passed away, all things are become new;' old things become new in this knowledge.

But you will say unto me, How can this be? for carnal men speak the same things of the gospel that others do.

But yet let me say this unto you, although a godly man can express no more in words than the other doth, yet he knows that of the gospel which the other doth not; yea he hath such a knowledge of it, as, in comparison of his, the other's is no knowledge. I shall first say this, that the notions and apprehensions that are in the heart of a saint of spiritual things, never entered into the heart of any carnal man in the world. It is the apostle's expression in 1 Cor. 2, and I will give you the reason of it. It is a received truth and acknowledged by all, that we have no knowledge in our minds, but that which we receive, and which we have by the images of things which our mind conceiveth. All knowledge which the mind hath, it is by forming of some image of a thing within itself. Now if the image which is formed up in the mind differ in one man and in another, then the knowledge differeth. As, for example, if I have seen the picture of a man, I have an image in my mind of that man according to his picture; but if I have seen the man himself, why, here is another manner of image formed up in my mind that have seen him, which is not formed up in the mind of any man else, which hath but seen his picture. Now all the knowledge that carnal men have of the gospel, is but by images received from the hearsay of it only; but the knowledge which holy men have, is by the impress and image received from the thing itself made known unto them by the Holy Ghost. I remember one once said of the late Queen Elizabeth, I have seen her picture, saith he, but I have one picture of her that I will not sell for all the pictures of her in the world. And what was that? I saw her but once, saith he, and the image of her remains still in me; which image he could convey to no man living. Even so the image and impress, that which entereth into the heart of a spiritual man of the things of the gospel, is a different image to what is in the heart of a carnal

man. And yet now, if the one should go and describe, and speak of the things of the gospel, he would express it no otherwise than the other, for there is something still that cannot be expressed. As, for example, take the sun, there is something in the sun that can never be pictured. And what is that? The life, and glory, and heat of it, and yet therein lies the excellency of the sun. So there are those things in Christ, and in the gospel, which can never be pictured out by words, that unless Jesus Christ hath by his Spirit manifested himself to a man's heart, he is never able to take it in. And therefore, now when a carnal man, and a godly man speak both of the same thing, he that is a godly man can speak no more than what the other can take in notionally; yet he understandeth further, he hath seen that which no words can paint out or picture forth. Therefore, now, if you ask me what it is the saints know, which another man knows not? I answer you fully, he himself cannot tell you, for it is certain, as to that impression which the Holy Ghost leaves upon the heart of a man, that man can never make the like impression on another; he may describe it to you, but he cannot convey the same image and impression upon the heart of any man else. Therefore two men shall talk of the same things, and yet mean different things in matters spiritual. Why? Because the gospel runs in a mystery, revealed to his saints, and to none else.

Ans. third. But further, in answer to this objection. Though carnal men do know the gospel, yet you shall still find that they will divert to other things, and not make this the main of their knowledge. You shall find (and it is a thing to be wondered at) that in the times of the gospel, when it shone most gloriously, still men that were of corrupt minds they diverted to questions about the law, and to chronologies and genealogies, and to a thousand other such things. So you find it in Tit. 3:9, and 1 Tim. 6:4, and 1 Tim. 1:7; and this, I say, they did when the gospel did shine most gloriously about them. Men will run out into criticisms, and the duties of the law, and knowledge of sin, and a thousand such things; they will tithe mint and cummin, but the great things of the gospel they neglect. Our Saviour Christ, therefore, doth tell it as a wonder in his answer to John the Baptist, 'the lame are healed, the blind restored to sight, and the poor receive the gospel;' for men's spirits to be taken by the gospel, he makes it a mighty thing. You shall find, if you compare Mat.

11:12 with Luke 16:16, that when the gospel began to be preached, all those good souls that were holy and godly were infinitely fired with it. Saith he in Luke 16:16, 'The law and the prophets were until John, but since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth unto it,' that is, the saints did. Now compare it with Mat. 11, and he tells us there, that 'from the days of John, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' That is, the gospel did so mightily fire the spirits of men, of those that were holy and godly, that they did climb up, for so the word signifies; it is the same word that is used in Exodus, forbidding the people to climb up to the mount when the law was given. Now, saith he, since the gospel is preached, they climb up to it with all violence—so he expresseth it, both in respect of multitudes that press to it, and in respect of the fire in their spirits.

Again, though carnal men do take in the gospel, and many of the truths of it, yet they are apt to mingle it, and embase it, and practically in their own hearts to turn it to another gospel, as the expression of the apostle Paul is, Gal. 1; when their notions and speculative judgments are orthodox about it, they will build their faith and their hope as well upon what is in themselves, as upon what is in Christ. You shall therefore find in men that profess the gospel (as the Jews and the Gentiles did), those of the circumcision and uncircumcision, that as 'those that are after the flesh savour the things of the flesh, and those that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit' (as the apostle elsewhere speaks), so those that have legal spirits and are still carnal, they savour the things of the law. Therefore in Gal. 3 7th, 9th, and 10th verses compared, you shall find that the apostle gives a different title in respect of their cleaving to the gospel. Saith he, ver. 7, 'They which are of faith,' that is his phrase; and so, ver. 9, 'They which are of faith.' He names them as if they were a sect, a different kind and strain of men. He means those which follow the gospel, and their hearts closed with it; for, saith he, ver. 2, 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' that is, by the hearing of the gospel. And hence he denominateth a company of men, 'they which are of faith,' saith he, ver. 7; and oppositely he describeth another gang of men, ver. 10, 'As many as are of the law,' that is, that are of that strain; let them know never so much of the gospel, yet still (as the apostle saith, Rom. 9:32) they will seek righteousness, as it were, by the works of the law.

They will turn the gospel into law, and turn faith and all duties else into a form, and make it as a law; that as the Jews of old, that had the gospel given them in types and sacrifices, turned all that gospel into mere law, as merely commanded as duties of works, not viewing Christ in them, so will carnal men do with the things of the gospel, and will do it to the end of the world. They desire (as he saith. Gal. 4:21) to be under the law; they will run that way still, and nothing but the grace of God can draw them off.

It is a great matter, my brethren, what truths they are that a man's heart closeth with and pitcheth upon, and maketh the eminent and top of his religion. Mark what I say, it is the greatest thing in the world, and doth as much distinguish carnal men and spiritual men as anything whatsoever. I shall give you but an instance or two. In Mark 12:31, there comes a scribe unto Christ, and he doth express the height of his religion, and Christ acknowledged that he went very far, and he expresseth it with a great deal of difference from the common gang of men in the world. 'Master,' saith he, 'thou hast said the truth' (for he asked Christ which was the first commandment of all); for, saith he, 'there is but one God, and there is no other but he; and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love a man's neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' Here is a man now that, being under the law, doth pitch upon the most inward spiritualness of it; whereas the common ordinary Pharisees put all their religion in fasting twice a week, in paying tithes, in offering sacrifices when they sinned, and all this they did in a formal way. Why, saith this scribe, they are all deceived in this. The main of religion lies not in this; but, Master, I say as thou dost, the main of religion lies in loving God with all a man's soul; and although it is true a man must offer sacrifices, yet here lies that which I pursue after. What saith Christ upon it? He doth not give such a testimony of all the Pharisees or of that sort of men, the scribes, as he doth of this man. 'When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he saith unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven.' It is pity now; he pitched upon the most spiritual part of the law, to the height of it, but wanted the gospel; yet Christ told him that he was not far from the kingdom of heaven. I quote it for this, that this man he was so far enlightened, that he knew where to put the

height of the legal religion, and he put it right; to love God, saith he, is more than all sacrifices. Now as this man doth pitch upon that which is the most spiritual part of the law to put religion in it, so the saints are taught to do in matters of the gospel. There is an outward form, as it were, of the gospel, you may easily turn it into a form. But see what Paul saith, and what the height of his gospel religion was. Phil. 3:3, 'We are the circumcision,' saith he. Who? 'Which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' We are taken off of anything in ourselves. This is my religion, and this is the true circumcision; let them pursue after the other circumcision that will, I pitch upon this. Therefore it is a great thing to see what it is that men contend for in their own spirits, as the main, and spirit, and life of religion. When the apostle Paul did come to Corinth, he tells us, that he 'determined not to know anything among them save Jesus Christ, and him crucified' (so you have it in 1 Cor. 2:2); and he would have spent the main of his epistle (and so likewise when he wrote this to the Colossians) in holding forth the gospel to them; but he was put by his scope, for, he saith, they were carnal, and they put him upon deciding of I know not how many things, about covering and uncovering, and about all the orders of the church, which they had either violated or neglected; but, saith he, 'I determined to know nothing save Christ and him crucified,' for here lies the height of my religion. And he complains that he was forced to spend a whole epistle (as he doth the main of that) in nothing but in resolving such cases. And therefore, my brethren, the saints still close most with Christ and the pure gospel, make that the height, the top of their religion; and though they may be put upon other things in the several times they live in, various duties that are to be done, yet there is something else in their eye which is more than burnt-offerings and sacrifices, namely, the knowledge of Christ and him crucified; and to worship the Lord in the Spirit is more than all these, though religious duties are evangelical too.

Ans. fourth. Again, to add an answer or two more which are in the text, Col. 1:27, and in the context, the saints only know the gospel in the riches and in the glory of it. They only know it so as to value it; 1 Pet. 2:7, 'To you, therefore, which believe, he is precious.' They only know the riches and the preciousness of it. Go bring a jewel to a child and to a jeweller;

they both know it, but the jeweller only is able to value it; and so are the saints only capable of prizing the gospel. And therefore in Mat. 13:25, he only is said to be the wise merchantman, that, when he hath seen the pearl, knoweth the worth and value of it, so as that he sells all for it.

Ans. fifth. In the fifth place, The saints only know it so as to have their hearts comforted by it, and by all the riches in it. You have thus much expressed in the next chapter, Col. 2:2. He desired, he saith, 'to see them, and those of Laodicea, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.' Though others are brought to see the mystery in the letter of it, yet none else but the saints come so to see the riches of the glory of it, as to have their hearts comforted thereby. And what is the reason? Because the saints, when they know the mystery of the gospel and the riches of it, do but know what themselves are worth. All the riches which they see to be in it, they see to be their own, and if they attain to the riches of assurance of the understanding of this mystery, they attain to the assurance of the knowing of their own comforts and of their own riches; and so (as the apostle saith) their hearts are comforted. Go take other men, though they are able to count and cast up these riches, yet they are but as learned lawyers that study other men's estates; or as surveyors of lands that set out what other men possess, and what their titles are to them, or cash-keepers for merchants that tell over other men's moneys; but for the heir, the possessor himself, for him to tell over all this, is all the while to study his own riches; and so his heart is comforted according to the value that is in them. And therefore, saith the apostle here, 'which riches is Christ in you,' it is your Christ. Therefore now a believer, the more knowledge he hath of the gospel, the more his heart is comforted. To another man all the truths of the gospel are but as flowers plucked off the stalks, they do not grow upon his heart, therefore they die and wither; but a saint hath a root within, upon which all these are engrafted, and therefore he continually feels the fresh savour of them, there is still a fresh scent and verdure and sweet arising from them, whereby his heart is comforted.

Ans. sixth. And then, again, though other men may know the mysteries of

the gospel, yet the saints only know them with the riches of assurance. 'That your hearts,' saith the apostle, 'may be comforted, being knit together in love, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God and of Christ.' If other men do know and understand the mysteries of the gospel, and the harmony and correspondency of one thing with another therein, it is but as the knowledge of mathematicians, as I may so express it. You shall have in the mathematics a supposition given, that if this and this be true, then all the following conclusions do harmoniously and naturally follow thereupon, and answer thereunto. As to give you an instance. There are two sorts of opinions: the one holds that the earth standeth still, and the heavens move; and another opinion, that the earth moves about continually, but the heavens, the sun and moon, and all these stand still. Now suppose which you will of them, the one makes out their opinion in a way of harmony and correspondency as rationally as the other. So now carnal men, that want faith in the principles and foundations of Christianity, can yet say with themselves, if these principles be true, why there is a glorious correspondency of one truth with another, all truths do harmoniously kiss each other. But now a saint, he hath riches of assurance of understanding of the principles themselves; he apprehends them by faith, and doing so, he vieweth all the conclusions that are built thereupon with an assurance of faith, and this no carnal heart in the world doth.

Ans. seventh. Lastly, The saints do so know the mysteries of the gospel, that the things they know of it are to them the hope of glory. This also the text suggesteth, 'which is Christ,' saith he, 'in you, the hope of glory.' They do begin to know, and to conceive what heaven will be by that prelibation, by that taste which they have of what truths and things the gospel reveals to their faith. The savour and relish they have of communion with God and with Jesus Christ, and the things revealed in and by the gospel, doth give them a hope of that great glory which shall be revealed. And so much now for those differences that are between the knowledge of the saints, and the knowledge of carnal men, of the things of the gospel.

Use. My exhortation shall be unto all, to procure and heap up to themselves what of spiritual knowledge possibly they can in these

mysteries of the gospel, for you increase your riches. The truth which by it I speak unto all, but especially unto you that are scholars, who come* hither to furnish yourselves as scribes fitted for the kingdom of heaven, to bring forth out of your treasures and store acquired here both new and old, as Christ speaks, to buy the truth, as Solomon, so as to be able to teach it to others; you come as wholesale men to buy by the great. Therefore treasure up as much and as many precious truths as you can, and grace withal to vent by retail in the country, when you are sent abroad.

First, Inquire and learn where these treasures are to be had, even in the Scriptures. The merchant who knew the pearl was fain to buy the field, there the pearl lay. Timothy from a child had read the Scriptures, and so should you do; they are 'able to make a man wise unto salvation,' and 'make the man of God perfect.' As the book of nature, when thoroughly known, makes a perfect physician for the body, so doth this book of the Scriptures make a perfect divine. 'Search the Scripture,' says Christ, 'for they speak of me;' as Christ is the treasury of all knowledge, so the Scriptures of Christ. These scriptures lie scattered in all the veins of the prophets and apostles; dig for them as for silver, take pains and travel to understand them: as Daniel's phrase is (Dan. 12) 'Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' Do as merchants, who travel from place to place, so do you from scripture to scripture, comparing one with another; and knowledge will be increased.

Secondly, Go to the markets and warehouses of those that have laid in or discovered much of this treasure; that is, use the helps of godly men's writings and conferences, the help of saints both dead and alive. Why? Because it is made manifest to the saints. The angels do learn of the church, and why not we? Even Paul desires to see them at Rome, that they and he might be mutually comforted by their mutual faith; therefore exchange and truck one with another. The knowledge of any one man is imperfect; some have more skill in one point, some in another, and so in several ages several truths have been delivered and revealed *πολυμερῶς*, by fragments and pieces; therefore use the help of all. Why? Because it is 'made manifest to his saints;' and it is not made manifest in all points unto all saints, but they have it amongst them. 'We know but in part,'

saith the apostle, much more thou. Therefore saints should truck and exchange one with another. There is no man in the world that is as Paul was, whom the apostles themselves could add nothing unto, who yet professeth that he knew but in part. The angels themselves they learn of the saints, they learn of the church, therefore do thou so too. In Eph. 4:11–13, and so ver. 16, a place that falls fully in with this, he saith that Christ hath given to the body—and he speaks of the universal church—apostles and prophets, and teachers and pastors, from his time to the end of the world. For it is until all be come to keep to the unity of the faith, and to cause them to grow up to a fulness of stature in Christ; the meaning of which to me is this, that the whole body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every part supplieth the whole universal church, from the times of the apostles downwards to this very day; the ministers and the saints that have been in former ages being tied unto us by bands and ligaments, have propagated the truth unto us. So as indeed it is every part of the church that helpeth forward the other; it is the church in one age that helpeth forward the church in another, and one soweth and another reapeth. And the body (take the whole compass of it in all ages) is fitly joined together, that it may cause every age and every saint to increase according to his proportion. Therefore if God have revealed this mystery unto his saints, we must acquaint ourselves with saints, not only with saints living, but dead; and we may have a great deal of knowledge from their writings, for it is the ordinance of God that the body in all ages fitly joined together should increase by that which every part supplieth. We have had a great deal of knowledge from the age before, and that which is coming shall have much knowledge from us; and so one age being fitly joined to another, doth cause the body to grow to the fulness of the stature of Christ. And this is that which Christ also says, John 4:37, one age sows and another reaps, that all may be one together.

Thirdly, Go to him above all, who hath the key of knowledge, Jesus Christ, Rev. 3:7. Pray to him, as you have it, 1 Pet. 1:10, 'They searched and inquired; i.e., they studied and prayed. Use both, as the apostles were to spend the time in both, Acts 6. It is a mystery which God only makes known, and you know how to deal with him; James 1:4, 5, 'If any lack wisdom, let him ask it of God,' whose special promise in the New

Testament is to teach all that are his to know him. As you cannot see the sun without the light of itself, so not the riches of the glory of Christ without his Spirit, who is called the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who only knows these deep things of God, 1 Cor. 2:11, as the mysteries of the gospel are, that lie at the bottom of his breast. The well is deep, we have nothing to draw with.

But you will say, God hath revealed himself in the Scriptures, and it is but reading them, and I have wit enough to understand them.

I answer, it was the Spirit that wrote that word, which is not therefore (says Peter) of any private interpretation; that is, no man's or men's private understandings, without the assistance of that public secretary of heaven, can understand them: *optimus mentis suæ quisque est interpres*, he only hid the treasures of knowledge in that field, and he only knows where they lie; what an advantage is it then by prayer to unlock God's breast, to obtain the key of knowledge that unlocks God's study, and can direct to all his notes and his papers!

Fourthly, Look to it that thou art a saint, to whom 'God will make known the riches,' &c., otherwise you cannot receive them; you will count them foolishness, as has been shewed, you will take them but as upon trust, you will not be able to see the particular secrets that are revealed in the gospel. The saints are they that first find out and do preserve the truths of the gospel in the world. It is certain, if there were none but carnal professors in the world, this gospel would soon be lost, 1 Tim. 3:9. The mystery of the faith is preserved in a good conscience, and without a good conscience it leaks out. And, 2 Tim. 2:13, 14, 'If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.' It was once delivered unto the saints, and it is the saints that preserve it, and shall do to the end of the world. In Isa. 35 you have a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ and of the times of the gospel (as you shall find it to be by reading that chapter), and he says that there shall be a highway, and it shall be called the way of holiness, and the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be a way for wayfaring men, and, though fools, yet they shall not err therein; that is, if they be men that have a mind to go to heaven, whose

hearts God doth sanctify, though otherwise they are men of low parts and mean understandings, they shall not err. Why? Because they are holy, they are saints, and he hath made manifest this gospel of his unto his saints, whereas the unclean shall not so much as cross the way, nor pass over it.

The apostles and prophets themselves were men of holiness, or God had not revealed the gospel mysteries to them, as the first publication of it by them. It is therefore emphatically said, Eph. 3:5, 'As now it is revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets.' It will, however, to be sure, help you to get the start of any other, and grace will do this. 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God,' 1 Cor. 2:12. A godly man hath a renewed principle, is made a spiritual man; a natural man brings only natural parts; a regenerate man, supposed to have as good, hath a further power of discerning given him; 'the spiritual man discerneth all things,' 1 Cor. 2:15. 'Tis his own art, and as wicked men are often wiser in their art and generation than a 'child of light,' the reason will stronglier hold that a child of light may easier be wiser in his; and therefore Solomon says, 'The understanding of the holy is understanding.' Trust not the judgments of unclean men, though ministers, in the matters of grace. This is a godly man's art, not a wicked man's, though never so learned; and a man will trust an artist in his own trade rather than another. 'The understanding of the holy is understanding,' says Solomon, Prov. 9:10, especially in the ways of holiness.

Chapter V: The excellency of the gospel consists in the riches of spiritual knowledge manifested in it.

To whom (viz., his saints) God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery, &c.—COL. 1:27.

Though others know the things of the gospel, yet those to whom God intends the intimate knowledge of it are the saints. All God's care and contrivance is, that his saints may know it; and that he may so reveal it that all his saints shall know it, he hath taken a sure course for that; and as for others, he leaves them to the darkness and blindness of their own minds. 'To whom God would make known,' &c.

The greatest controversy now on foot is this, who they are that are the supreme judge now upon earth of all the mysteries of the gospel.

1. The Socinians, they would have human reason to be the judge; that God should have so writ the Scripture, that it should be made known to all men's understandings, that have but human reason in them, and that God would make known to human reason, instead of making known to his saints, what is his meaning in all the things delivered in the gospel. Now I confess, that what they say hath the greatest reason in the world in it, if God had intended that the gospel should be made known, in the spiritualness of it, unto all mankind. But they do not consider, both that it is a mystery, and that God would have it so made known only to his saints. Indeed, if God had meant to satisfy all mankind, then the Scripture and all these mysteries would have been so delivered, as reason should have subdued them, and been able to have been master of them, and taken them in. But the care God took in writing the Scripture, was to have his saints satisfied, and they to take in the mysteries of it. These, I say, would bring all the Scripture to the bar of human reason, and would have the Holy Ghost's meaning, in all the places of Scripture, concluded within the circle of a syllogism, and believe no more than the power of reason can convince them of. Reason indeed subserveth, for this is a certain truth, that there is nothing that a saint by faith apprehendeth, but when he apprehends it, he sees the greatest reason, from the harmony of one truth with another fall* in with it, that may be. One scripture doth suit so with another, and one theological truth so with another, that there is nothing more agreeable to spiritual reason, than what in the mysteries of the gospel are held forth. But, my brethren, reason will never alone work out these mysteries. There are two principles in the heart of man (and you would wonder they should be the greatest enemies, either of them, that can be), the one is natural conscience, and the other is human

reason. They were the two principles that were set up in Adam, and therefore they would be the predominant principles still. Now God hath set faith over them both. He will have faith subdue conscience; my meaning is this, conscience shall subserve faith, it shall serve to give directions to a believer how he shall walk; so the law doth, and so conscience doth; but if you will make that the eminent principle, a man will fall into a legal temper, and all his comfort will come from his conscience, and not from his faith. So on the other side, if you will make reason the predominant principle, when you come to judge of the matters of religion, it is a good servant indeed; but if you will make that the supreme judge, you will understand nothing, or little, of the mysteries of salvation, for God hath appointed faith, and faith in the saints to receive them all.

2. The papists make a pope that shall determine all controversies, as our infallible and standing judge, led into all truth. And, I confess, had God meant in delivering the mysteries of the gospel to have satisfied all mankind, and to have resolved all their consciences, and all their scruples in interpreting scriptures, he would have had some such judge. He would have had either an internal judge common to all mankind, which human reason is, or an external judge which all mankind should submit unto as to an oracle. But, my brethren, whatsoever power on earth shall be set up, the great end and scope of God in writing the Scriptures, is to make things known to his saints, and he hath taken a course, and made provision for them beyond all these. And what is that?

(1.) He hath given to his saints his Spirit, who writ the Scripture, who knows the meaning of all the mysteries therein, and he is the supreme judge; and to be sure he gives this Spirit unto his saints: 'We have not received the spirit of the world' (1 Cor. 2:12), 'but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.' Here is my word, here is my Spirit, saith he. Wherever God hath a saint, he doth by the ministry of the word convey his Spirit into that saint's heart, and teacheth him this mystery; and let the world quarrel, that they have not an infallible rule to judge by; God never meant to satisfy the world; he meant to make this mystery known to his saints. 'We have not received the spirit of the world,' saith he, that is, we have not only received that

principle, or that ability to judge of things which the world hath, which carnal men in the world have, and whereby worldly things are judged, which is that of human reason, &c., to beat out truths that way only, 'but we have received the Spirit which is of God.' Here then lies the great wisdom, and love, and favour of God to his children, that he hath taken a course and made provision for them; he hath given them his Spirit (for he can give his Spirit to whom he will), and he will certainly lead all those he means to save, into so much truth as shall save them.

(2.) As God hath given to his saints his Spirit, so he doth give to them alone an understanding on purpose to know the things of the gospel; 1 John 5:20, 'We know that the Son of God is come, and he hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.' As they have the Holy Ghost as a guide, so they have an understanding created on purpose for to know him that is true; and therefore you may observe, that still the apostles in their writings pray 'that the eyes of their mind may be enlightened,' &c.

(3.) As he hath given them a renewed understanding, so he hath put a new creature, his own image, into the whole man. And what is the image of God, that he thus puts in the whole man? It is a thing suited to all truths more or less. And because this image is imperfect, hence therefore it is, that there being corruption and darkness in the holiest men, they cannot relish all truths; darkness prevailing in respect of some truths, more than the light of God's image in them; even as it doth in respect of ignorance of some sins. But yet I say, as he hath given them his Spirit, as he hath given them a renewed understanding on purpose, a new eye, so he hath given them a new creature, his own image stamped upon their wills and affections, which savoureth and relisheth what is true, as what is agreeable unto it. God hath put into every creature a taste, and a discerning of what shall nourish it. A man by his taste discerneth what is good and what is ill for him in a great measure, what agreeth with his stomach and with his nature, finds what inflames him, what poisoneth him, what comforts him, the whole man feels it. So is it here. God hath suited all the truths of the gospel to the regenerate part, that, as some philosophers said, all truth is interwoven in the soul of man; so, to be sure, all truth is interwoven in the image of God in a man. And as the

senses in a man are suited to objects in the world, a man's eye to colours, his ear to sounds, his stomach to meats, so hath God made the things of the gospel to suit the regenerate part, and the regenerate part to suit them. And therefore in that 1 Cor. 2:9, the things of the gospel are called things 'prepared for them that love him;' they are suited, suited on purpose as it were to them; and in Philip. 1:9, the knowledge of the saints it is called sense, 'This I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all sense,' so the word is in the original, and in your margins. We translate it 'in all judgment,' but it is a judgment which ariseth from, or at least is joined with sense, a taste, a suitableness that the soul hath to the things revealed. And so much now for the clearing of that also, 'To whom God would make known,' &c.

I come now to those two other properties that, in this 27th verse, are attributed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The one, that it is a rich mystery; and the second, that it is a glorious mystery. 'To whom,' saith he, 'God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery,' &c.

Riches and glory here doth not only refer to Christ himself, though mainly to him as the subject of the gospel—as those next words, 'which is Christ in you,' &c., imply—as if that Jesus Christ only were the riches, and the glory that the apostle here intended; but it refers to the mystery, to the doctrine that reveals this Christ also, which by reason of the riches that are in him, which it revealeth, is a rich mystery and glorious. It refers therefore both objectively unto Christ, and likewise to the gospel that reveals him; because that Christ himself is so rich and glorious, therefore is the gospel which reveals this Christ rich and glorious also. And indeed, according to the Hebraism, that is, that phrase that the Jews use to speak in, which the apostles do likewise often use in writing the New Testament, these two 'riches of glory' are terms convertible, and his meaning is this, that the gospel it is either rich in respect of the glory of it, or glorious in respect of the riches of it; so as none knows whether the riches or the glory of it be greater. I shall first of all, therefore, open to you the riches of this mystery.

Obs. The gospel itself, which revealeth the Lord Jesus Christ, and the free grace of God in him, is a most rich gospel.

In 2 Cor. 4, the apostle having spoken of the gospel (as you shall find he doth all along in that chapter, from the 1st verse to the 7th), and laid open the excellency of it in the glory thereof, what saith he when he hath done? 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power might be of God, and not of us.' I am (saith Paul) but a poor man, I am but an earthen vessel, made of the same clay mingled with sin, that other men are made of, yet God hath been pleased to betrust me with a world of treasure. What a world of treasure was lost—though it was not lost, for he had preached it out, and writ it—but what a world of treasure was broken when that earthen vessel was broken. And what was that treasure? It was (as the coherence evidently carries it) the gospel. Hence is it that every believer, that believeth this gospel and the truths of it, is said to be 'rich in faith,' James 2:5, and in 1 Cor. 1:5, to be 'rich in all knowledge.' The knowledge of the gospel is a rich knowledge, and the faith of the gospel is a rich faith, and the gospel itself is a treasure, saith Paul, which poor earthen vessels carry about with them. Now riches imply these three things—

1. A preciousness.

2. Abundance.

3. Profitableness and gain.

And the things the gospel revealeth, and the truths contained therein, and the knowledge thereof unto those that are the true owners and professors of them, and do make them theirs, are rich in all these respects.

1. First, There is a preciousness in all the truths the gospel doth reveal. Not only Jesus Christ is said to be precious, as the foundation and corner-stone (that you have in 1 Peter 2:6, 'I will lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect and precious'), but the truths that are built upon Christ are all precious too; so you have it in 1 Cor. 3:10, 'I,' saith he, 'as a wise master-builder have laid the foundation, which is Jesus Christ,' the great precious stone of all the rest; 'now if any man shall build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones,' so he calls all the truths that are built upon this foundation—there is not a truth of the gospel but it is more worth than gold, more rich than precious stones; and then he

expresseth all the falsehoods that men build thereupon by wood, and hay, and stubble that will be burnt up, but by gold and precious stones, he means those truths that will abide the fire. So that every truth of the gospel that is built upon Jesus Christ, that is the superstructure of it, are all pearls and precious stones, and gold, and silver; they have degrees of excellencies indeed, but they all have a preciousness in them. I shall not need to enlarge more about it, I will only quote one place, and so open the particulars in which the gospel is precious. Prov. 3:14; speaking there of wisdom, he saith, 'The merchandise of it is better than the merchandises of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold;' and if there be anything better than these (and yet the world hath turned these up as the great things that should master all the rest), he prefers it before them. Precious stones, you know, are more precious than silver and gold. Why, saith he, 'Wisdom is more precious than rubies;' and yet because the hearts of men imagine there is something more precious than these, he addeth, 'All the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.' This he speaks of wisdom, which is the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and he speaks of it as he knew it even under the time of the law; he valued every truth, and every part of it, above gold, and silver, and rubies, and whatever the heart of man could think precious.

Every truth of the gospel is precious in these five respects:—

(1.) Antiquity makes things precious. Small pieces of coin that contain not much in value, if they be old, are prized; any old medal, or old pieces of brass, or of gold, and silver coined in the time of the Roman emperors, or in the time of the Grecian, any piece that hath Alexander's image and stamp upon it, and the like, how do your antiquaries esteem it! How more precious do they think it than a great deal of gold! Now if antiquity commend anything to you, why, there is never a truth of the gospel but was coined in heaven, and coined from everlasting. It is 'the everlasting gospel,' and it bears the image of God upon it.

(2.) Things far fetched are precious. 'She fetcheth her merchandise from afar,' saith Solomon, Prov. 31. There is not a word of this gospel, but it came from afar, it came from heaven. Jesus Christ came himself from heaven on purpose to reveal it. Heb. 12:25, comparing law and gospel together, says the apostle, 'If they escape not that refused him that spake

from earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven.' Who doth he mean by him that speaks from earth, and who by him that spake from heaven? Why, Moses and Christ. Moses gave the law, 'the law came by Moses,' and the law came but from earth; but the gospel, every tittle of it, came from heaven. The law comes out of a man's own heart, it was written in man's heart on earth, namely, in Adam's innocency, and there is a great deal of it written even in the hearts of wicked men; 'they do the things of the law, which are written in their hearts,' saith the apostle, Rom. 2. But not a word of this truth of the gospel was written in Adam's heart; no, it was written in God's heart, it was hid in God, it came from heaven.

(3.) Things that are dearly bought you account precious. There is not one truth of the gospel, but it cost the blood of Jesus Christ. You will easily grant, there is no grace you have but it cost Christ's blood; why, my brethren, there is no truth you have that is a gospel truth, but it cost the blood of Christ. The law did not cost Christ's blood, for the law was written in Adam's heart, and without the supposition of his death, it was given to Adam in paradise; but not a tittle of the gospel, not a promise of it, but depends upon the blood of Christ. 'In him all the promises are yea and amen,' 2 Cor. 1:20, and they are therefore 'exceeding precious promises;' so Peter calls them, 2 Pet. 1:4, for they all cost the blood of Christ. We could have had no promise if Christ had not paid the thing promised; not a promise had been written if Jesus Christ had not died to make it so; they had all been blanks but for his death.

(4.) Things charily and warily laid up are precious. The gospel and all the truths of it have had the richest cabinet that ever was. First, it had God's heart, it was hid in God (as I said afore), Eph. 3:9. Then there was a copy of it transcribed into Christ's heart, and he came into this world full of grace and truth, as full of the truths of the gospel as he could hold. Then doth God transcribe it out of Christ's heart into the hearts of his elect; 2 Cor. 3:3, 'Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.'

(5.) Things that perish not, but still do vindicate themselves from corruption, they also are precious. Why is gold and silver precious?

Because that gold if put into the fire, though it will melt, yet it will not be lost, it will not be consumed. But, 1 Pet. 1:7, 'faith is more precious than gold.' Why? Because it perisheth not, though it be tried in the fire. Gold in time will perish; if you try it too often, it will come to nothing; but faith, the more you try it, the more precious it is, there is not a dram of it lost at any time. And the doctrine of faith, and of the gospel, is of the same nature, it will never perish, and it will still vindicate itself from corruption; though men mingle it, as always in the bringing forth of truths certainly men mingle a great deal of dross, and of their own wisdom and artifice, but that Spirit that is in the truth itself will work out all that dross in time. Never take care* to have the truth of God clear. We may be doubtful of it in many things in our age; it is certain the next age, or an age after, will clear it; the truth hath a spirit in it that will still purify it. In 1 Cor. 3:13, saith the apostle there, where he calls truth gold, and silver, and precious stones, 'Every man's work,' saith he, namely, every minister's work, whether he preach truth or whether he preach falsehood, whether he preacheth gold, silver, precious stones (so he calls the truths of the gospel), or whether he preach wood, hay, stubble, 'it shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it,' whether it be precious stones or no, 'because,' saith he, 'it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.' He speaks evidently of the doctrines men preach or hold forth in the world; still there will come a more clear daylight that shall reveal them, and there will come a fire, and if it be hay or stubble, or whatever it is that is dross, or falsehood, or error mingled with the truth, it shall be burnt up. As when you go and burn cloth of silver or of gold, all the cloth is burnt up, but the silver and gold remains, so it is here; and the Holy Ghost will never leave till he hath purified his truth thoroughly. Therefore the psalmist saith, 'The words of the Lord are pure words' (Ps. 12:6), 'as silver tried in a furnace, purified seven times.' You know, they that purify silver to the purpose use to put it in the fire again and again that it may be thoroughly tried. So is the truth of God; there is scarce any truth but hath been tried over and over again, and still if any dross happen to mingle with it, then God calls it in question again. If in former times there have been scriptures alleged that have not been pertinent to prove it, that truth shall into the fire again, that what is dross may be burnt up; the Holy Ghost is so curious, so delicate, so exact, he cannot bear that falsehood should be mingled with the truths of the

gospel. That is the reason, therefore, why that God doth still, age after age, call former things in question, because that there is still some dross one way or other mingled with it; either in the stating of the opinions themselves, or else in the scriptures that are brought and alleged for them, that have passed for current, for he will never leave till he hath purified it. The doctrine of God's free grace hath been tried over, and over, and over again. Pelagius he begins and he mingles his dross with it: he saith, grace is nothing but nature in man. Well, his doctrine was purified, and a great deal of dross purged out. Then comes the semi-Pelagians, and they part stakes; they say, nature can do nothing without grace, but they make nature to concur with grace, and to have an influence as well as grace; and the dross of that was burnt up. The papists they take up the same quarrel, but will neither be Pelagians nor semi-Pelagians, yet still mingle dross. The Arminians, they come and they refine popery in that point anew; still they mingle dross. God will have this truth tried seven times in the fire, till he hath brought it forth as pure as pure may be. And I say it is, because that truth is thus precious. And so much now for that first head, that it is a rich gospel in regard of the preciousness of the truths that are therein.

2. The second thing that is proper to riches is abundance. Now the doctrine of the gospel hath abundance of truth and knowledge in it. Take all philosophy, all the books of human wisdom and learning, if they were all distilled, if you could extract the quintessence of them all, there is not so much knowledge as one book of the New Testament contains. In this Col. 2:3, saith this apostle there, do you stick to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and do not leave that, 'for in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' There is all sorts, both wisdom and knowledge, and there is all wisdom and knowledge, and there are all treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in this Christ, who is revealed to you in this gospel. It is all knowledge by way of eminency, as they use to say metaphysics are: it contains all knowledge, because it swallows up all the axioms of all other sciences. I may say of all other learning and knowledge whatsoever, they are all by way of eminency swallowed up in the truths of the gospel. As the person of Jesus Christ contains by way of eminency all the excellencies in the creature, so the knowledge of Jesus Christ contains all the excellency of whatsoever knowledge can be had,

the knowledge of governing kingdoms, the knowledge of nature, or the things of nature, or the knowledge of the law, or of whatever else. Our Saviour Christ, as he was full of grace, so he was full of truth; John 1:14, 'We saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.' He came so rich into this world, he had such abundance of treasures, that he brought forth continually some truths or other. He was full of grace to fill the will and affection, and full of truth to fill the understanding and judgment; and those truths did comprehensively take in all sorts of truths that ever were uttered, in a transcendent manner. Solomon he had a heart as large for knowledge in natural things, as the sea is full of sands; he had as many notions in his head as there be sands upon the sea-shore. This Solomon, Jesus Christ that came from heaven, he had his heart larger than the sea, as large as heaven itself, he was full of truth. Saith David, who knew but the law (I mean the law in distinction from the gospel, as we know it, and as it is now revealed), yet saith he in Ps. 119, 'I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy law is exceeding broad;' he saw such a vastness in the knowledge of the law as he stood aghast at it; as if a man should stand in the midst of the sea, it is so broad, so vast, he cannot see where it ends; I can see to the end (saith he) of all perfection else, but I cannot see to the end of thy law, it is so full, so broad. And therefore in 2 Cor. 3 the apostle tells us they did not see to the end of his ministry; ay, but, my brethren, the gospel is much more endless, for what doth John say in that place quoted even now, when he said Christ was full of grace and truth, he speaks in opposition to the law, 'The law came by Moses,' saith he, 'but grace and truth by Jesus Christ;' and we saw his glory, and we saw him full of grace and truth. Moses his law was but a scanty business, though it was exceeding broad, and David saw an end of it; but the knowledge of Christ, and of what is contained in the gospel, they do so abound as they are unsearchable. So the apostle saith, Eph. 3:8, 'That I may preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;' and Paul himself, though he had abundance of revelations (as he saith in 2 Cor. 12), yet he professeth that he knew but in part, such abundance is there in the truths of the gospel. The times of the gospel therefore, they are like the times of Solomon, in which the scripture saith, silver was as the stones in the street; so Jesus Christ hath filled the world with the riches of the gospel, for so the gospel is called, 'The riches of the Gentiles,' and the riches of the world, wherein the

precious truths revealed concerning him, they are as common as the stones in the streets, and as many for number, if men had eyes to see them, and hearts, and heads, and hands to dig for them, and search them out of the mines in which they lie. And so much now for the second head, viz., that the gospel is a rich gospel, in regard of the abundance of truth and knowledge contained in it.

3. Thirdly, All the truths of the gospel are likewise rich in regard of the gain and profitableness of them; they do make those rich that are the possessors of them. There are in the world a great many curiosities of knowledge, which men do pride and boast themselves in; the trial of the secrets of nature, and the experiments thereof. But usually all such knowledge doth impoverish all those that are retainers to it. But the knowledge of the gospel is clean otherwise, it possesseth them that know it by faith of all the treasure it revealeth. It is not like stories that do set forth glorious and rich things to you, yet when stories do so they do mightily take you, but you may read such stories and be poor men still. But the gospel, as it reveals to you infinite riches, so it possesseth you of them; therefore what doth the Holy Ghost say here? 'Which riches is Christ in you,' saith he, for the particle which refers to riches as well as to mystery, and indeed to both. And therefore in Prov. 3, a place I quoted afore for the preciousness of wisdom and all the wares thereof, it is not only compared to rubies for the worth and preciousness of it, but for the gain and profitableness of it also; 'Happy is the man that findeth understanding, for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than of fine gold.' And if the heart of man in its vast desires could think of any more precious things unknown, stretch the compass of your desires to the utmost, yet saith he, 'All the things thou canst desire cannot be compared to her:' so ver. 15.

If you ask me, wherein lies this riches? It lies in wisdom, says Solomon, and that wisdom is Christ, says the text. 'Which riches,' saith he, 'is Christ in you.' We all acknowledge that God is infinitely rich and blessed in himself, Philip. 4:19, 'My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ;' riches in glory, for God's riches lie in glory most, and he communicateth them to all believers in and by Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ's becoming yours—('Which is Christ in you,' saith the

text)—hence you come to have a title and interest in all those riches of God that God himself possesseth. This is certain, that Jesus Christ is worth all that God is worth. He is God's only Son, and he is his heir (he is said to be the heir of all things, Heb. 1:2); and God will not give one penny from him, as I may so express it to you. Now this glorious gospel which we preach, if received and entertained, makes Jesus Christ yours, and all his riches. And therefore in 1 Cor. 3:22, the apostle thus pleads the title of a Christian, '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.' Here I say you have, as the inventory of a Christian, so the title by which all things are derived to him. 'All things are yours,' saith he, why God himself is worth but all things, and Jesus Christ (as I said) is worth all that God is worth; 'All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' And therefore, in Rom. 8:17, we are said to be 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;' not only heirs of God, as a son is said to be the heir of his father, that is, that he is the bequeather, but we are said to be heirs of God materially, heirs of God himself, for he is our inheritance, and we are joint-heirs with Christ; we are so put into God's will, that as men are said to be joint purchasers with another, so we are said to be 'joint-heirs with Christ.' Joint purchasers we are not, that is Christ's prerogative alone, but when it comes to matter of inheritance, then we are joint-heirs with Christ.

And that which we are to possess is a free estate, Rom. 8:32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' There is not only all things that you possess, and the title, as joint-heirs with Christ, but you have it freely; there is no debts to pay out of it, no portions, no legacies, but you are heirs of all things, and of all things freely.

And then do but consider what the revenues of Christ's blood are. Look what both Christ's personal interest in all things would convey to you: so much is a Christian worth; and look what the purchase of Christ's blood is: so rich is a Christian also that entertains the gospel. I say two things. First, Our Saviour Christ is personally the heir of all things, and you have the same title he hath, being joint-heirs with him. Then this heir laid all that he was heir of down again to make a further purchase; and do but

think now what a purchase this must needs be, what riches it must needs arise to. In 2 Cor. 8:9, 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich' (for he was rich, as he was the heir of all things), 'yet for your sakes he became poor.' Why? 'That ye through his poverty might be rich.' Jesus Christ is first rich as the heir, and ye are ordained joint-heirs with him, by that title. But he that is the heir of all things becomes poor, and poor on purpose to purchase, if it be possible, more riches, or the same over and over again. As it is in Philip. 1:8, 'He thought it no robbery to be equal with God.' As in glory, so in riches, he had as great and as good an estate as God himself hath, and it was no robbery, it was no stealth. He came not by it by any such course or way, it is no unjust claim that he laid to it; yet he emptied himself, he left himself not worth one farthing. He emptied himself, so saith the text, as in respect of glory, so in respect of riches. He became poor, and as we may express it, not worth the ground he went on, for he had not a hole to hide his head in; women ministered unto him. Now I say, this heir of all things made over all his riches, and did it all for you; it is said in that Prov. 3, 'The merchandise of wisdom is better than that of fine gold.' When Wisdom, Christ himself (I do not say that is the meaning of the place, only I allude to it, and speak in the expression of it), shall put forth all the riches he hath in a way of merchandise to have it returned again, and become poor to make us rich, do but think now what riches this must needs amount unto.

Now the gospel therefore is a rich gospel, not only because it doth reveal and is the story of all these riches, but because it possesseth you of them, and is your bond for it. The gospel, I say, and all the promises of it, are the bond that you have to shew for all these riches, and in that respect it is rich. When our Lord and Saviour Christ laid down all his riches, and laid down his blood to purchase riches for us, what is it that he hath to shew for it? He hath but the promises of the gospel, which God hath made to him, and made to us in and through him; therefore as a man is said to be rich, though he be rich but in bonds, if they be sure bonds, so is a Christian, he is rich in promises. Compare for this Eph. 3 ver. 6 with ver. 8. At the 6th verse, saith he, 'That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel.' Now what is it the gospel containeth? Read ver. 8: 'That I should preach among the Gentiles

the unsearchable riches of Christ.' Where lie all these riches? They lie in the promises; we are now partakers but of the promises of the gospel. They are unsearchable riches, which cannot be told over to eternity, and the promises are the conveyers of them, and in these promises do our estates lie for the present, but it is a sure estate; and in this respect Peter calleth them 'exceeding great and precious promises,' 2 Pet. 1:4. And, therefore, although you will say a Christian hath nothing, it is true, but he is rich in promises; and our apostle answers it in that 2 Cor. 6:10, 'As having nothing, yet possessing all things.' Why? Because a Christian possesseth Christ; 'which riches is Christ in you,' saith the text here. It is all one to be rich in bonds, and rich in money told by you, and that is all the difference between your estate here and in heaven: in heaven you have the money, the thing itself; and here you have the possession of the bonds themselves.

It were infinite to go over all the inventory of a Christian; I have therefore done it in a short, brief sum. Here are riches in Christ to pay all thy debts the first day thou comest in; and to pay all thy debts thou shalt run into God (and it would have beggared all the angels in heaven to pay for one sin), and when that is done, thou hast a righteousness so rich as the angels never possessed, a robe stuck so full of jewels (for such is every action of Christ, and all his sufficiency) as never came upon the angels' back. Every grace thou hast is a rich thing; 'rich in faith,' James 2; 'rich in assurance,' Col. 2:2. In a word, hath God any more riches? His Spirit is as rich as Christ too, and thou hast him. It is a phrase used in Tit. 3:6, 'He hath poured his Spirit richly on us;' so it is in the original and in your margins. And then thou hast all the riches of glory in the world to come, when thou art to be the possessor of all this. And this the gospel reveals to thee, and makes thee possessor of it that art a believer; and although the meanest Christian, if he have but the least knowledge of the gospel, is possessed of this, yet the more he comes to know the gospel, the more he comes to know his own riches.

First, Therefore, my brethren (that I may make a use or two of this, and so pass on to the next), it is a very great invitement to us to be acquainted with all the things of the gospel of Christ; for still what dost thou do? Thou dost but study over thine own riches, and increase thine own

inventory, comest to the knowledge of things thou never dreamedst of should be thine. The angels do study the gospel, and pry into it, but it is not their riches; it is not 'which riches is Christ in angels,' but it is, 'which riches is Christ in you.' It is a thing worth your observation, that in Eph. 3, speaking of the excellency of the gospel, and the riches of it, he saith, that it is made manifest to all men, and likewise to angels, but with this difference, unto men it is called the unsearchable riches of Christ; so ver. 8, 'That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;' but when he speaks of the angels knowing of it, he calls it wisdom: so ver. 10. 'To the intent,' saith he, 'that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' The angels are taken with the wisdom of it, but thou mayest be taken with the riches that are in it; not only with the wisdom of it, though that takes the angels, and may take thee; but it is riches to thee, but wisdom only unto them.

Secondly, Is the gospel thus rich in its preciousness and abundance? Then let us take heed that we do not sell any part of the truths of the gospel which have been revealed to us. 'Buy the truth,' saith Solomon, Prov. 23:22, 'but sell it not;' for if you do you sell your riches, you part with your estates. This kingdom, and this city (for aught I know) hath been the greatest mart of truth for this last age, of any part of the world, and Wisdom hath cried her wares here more than in any other place. There is nothing more the riches of a kingdom or a city than the gospel; it is the expression the Holy Ghost hath in Rom. 11:12, where, speaking of the gospel, when it was revealed to the Gentiles, he calls it, 'the riches of the Gentiles and the riches of the world,' in the same place. Take heed, therefore, of parting with any of the truths of the gospel, those truths that have been cried,* that have run through the fire so much in all ages, for let me tell you this, that when God did first deliver to the saints in the primitive times, all that the apostles said went then for current in a manner; but when they were gone, God presently went and began to put every truth to a trial, first one and then another.

That there is one God, and one Christ his Son, and that he is God as well as man, and hath a true human nature; all these fundamental truths were the exercise and conflicts against heretics and heathens, that the holy

Christians in the primitive times suffered for. Then God put this truth into the fire, whether Christ was God or no, and all the world turned Arian; but he tried it, and it hath stood, and doth stand, and is continued to this day. He hath likewise put the doctrine of free grace into the fire. He began to do it presently after Arianism was down; he hath tried it over, and over, and over, and it is still propagated purer and purer. Now I say, all those truths that God hath thus suffered to run through the fire, which we now possess by the blood of Jesus Christ, and by the blood of martyrs, and the conflicts of the saints in all ages, should be preserved by us. I beseech you, give not up those truths, for they are your riches. Shall we now in this age question the foundation of religion? for so some do. Will you sell away those things that have been derived to us age after age at such cost? Oh let us possess them as our dearest treasures. Let us value the truths of the gospel as Paul did. 'I profited,' saith he, 'in knowledge more than any of my brethren, equals,' or as much as any. Oh, thought he once, when he had got a form of the knowledge of the law in his head, what a treasure have I! But, saith he, Phil. 3:7, 8, 'The things I counted gain to me,' thought myself rich by them, 'I esteemed all to be but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.' My brethren, let us not sell the truth. God never takes it away from a nation or a people till they sell it, as Esau did his birthright. The Lord had made the Jews his market for truth; to them were committed the oracles of God, Rom. 3:2, and therefore because he had committed to them the truth, and they had been the pillar of it, when the gospel came to be preached, they must have the first offer of it, they must have the refusal of it before God would carry it to another market. 'It was necessary,' saith Paul and Barnabas, preaching to the Jews, Acts 13:46, 'that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing you put it from you, seeing you refuse it, carry yourselves unworthy of it, we will go to the Gentiles.'

And, last of all, let the doctrine of the gospel dwell plenteously in you; 'let it dwell richly in you,' for so the expression is, Col. 3:16. And let us labour to be enriched with all the knowledge of; as it is in 1 Cor. 2:5, let us grow rich in faith, for the more you know, the richer you are.

But you will say, I am estated into all the riches of the gospel, if I have but

the least spark of faith, and all the riches of Christ are mine.

I confess that all the riches of Christ are thine. But let me tell thee this, the more thou growest, after thou believest, in the knowledge of the gospel, the more thou growest in the knowledge of thine own riches; and what a happiness is that! And though thou hast all the riches of Christ, and all the promises, and all the truths of the gospel tend for to comfort thee, and to make thee happy and rich, and will one day make thee so; yet in the mean time, till thou increasest in the knowledge of it, till thou hast assurance of the things thou knowest, thou art in thine own apprehension but a poor man. 'There is that maketh himself poor, but is rich,' saith Solomon; which is the case of many poor souls, who either want assurance, or else do content themselves with a little knowledge, only so much as may save them. So that now here is the advantage of a man growing in knowledge, that the more he knows of the gospel of Christ, the more he knoweth his own riches; and if a man had no other work but to tell over money newly given him every day, he would surely count it the pleasantest work in the world. If thou couldst grow every day in a new degree of knowledge, whilst thou dost thereby grow the more in the knowledge of thine own riches, how happy must thou needs be! And so much now for that attribute that is here given to the gospel, it is a mystery, and it is a rich mystery.

Chapter VI: That the gospel is most excellent, because it is a most glorious revelation of God and Christ to us.

The next thing that is (in Col. 1:27) attributed to the gospel is, that it is a glorious gospel. The apostle, when he speaks of the glory of things spiritual, usually gives the title of riches to them; thus, in Rom. 9:23, when he speaks of the glory that is in God, he calleth it 'riches of glory;' so in Eph. 1:18, when he speaks of heaven, he calleth it 'riches of glory;' and here, when he speaks of the gospel of Christ, he calleth it likewise 'riches

of glory.'

I need not stand to give you many Scriptures in which the gospel is called glorious. I shall quote you but one or two. First, that in 1 Tim. 1:11, 'according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God,' and he speaks it in opposition to the law clearly. He saith that the law is good, ver. 8; but when he comes to speak of the gospel, he calls that glorious, for glory is the super-excellency and superlative of goodness. You have one whole chapter (viz., 2 Cor. 3) that shews the glory of this gospel; and indeed more than that one chapter, for the apostle doth enlarge his discourse of it to the 6th verse of the 4th chapter. And there also he calls it treasure (as in ver. 7), as he had called it glory in all the discourse before; and as he had done in Timothy, so here in this chapter of the Corinthians, he compares it with the law. He doth acknowledge that the law had a kind of glory in it; so ver. 7, 'If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.' I shall take all these arguments afore I have done, to shew how glorious the gospel is, both because it is the ministration of the Spirit, and because it is the ministration of a glorious righteousness; but now I only quote it for this in the general, that the apostle, though he attributeth a glory to the law, yet in comparison of the gospel he makes it no glory; for so it follows, verse 10, 'Even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.'

The law was glorious (and yet that glory which it had, he saith, was but a made glory), first, in the promulgation of it, which indeed was a very resemblance of the day of judgment; for God, when he came to give the law to sinners, came down from heaven and placed his tabernacle upon Mount Sinai, like unto a judge, attended with glorious angels (for 'the law was given by angels'), and with many glorious miracles, thunder, and earthquake, and fire, and smoke, and the sound of a trumpet. Even as the glory of a kingdom is most seen when they go to enact laws, for then the king and all the nobles go in their parliament robes; and so your judges,

when they go to execute the laws, to condemn men, go attended with the sound of a trumpet, and halberds, &c. So God, when he came to give the law, came attended with all this glory.

And then, secondly, as the law was glorious in respect of the promulgation of it, so in respect of the matter of it. For the moral law, of which the apostle specially speaks, for he speaks of that law which was written and engraven in stones, had a glory in it. Why? This is a certain rule, whatsoever holds forth the image of God hath a glory in it, for the least ray or beam of God hath glory in it; and if the law be the image of God, if God be glorious, that must be glorious too. Now, the law holds forth the image of God's mind. Therefore it is, that man in his first creation is called the glory of God, because he was the image of God, and hence therefore the grace in Adam was called glory; and so I think it is the best interpretation, or at leastwise one great part of the meaning of that in Rom. 3:23, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' It is meant of the image of God plainly; for in 1 Cor. 11:7, the glory of God and his image are made all one. They are fallen from that grace and righteousness which at first God did implant in them, by which they were justified, and so are come short of the favour of God, which did shine upon them. And hence likewise in 2 Cor. 4:4, the gospel is said to be glorious, because it holds forth Jesus Christ, the image of God. Now the law, therefore, containing the image of God, had a glory in it materially. In these two respects, I say, the law was glorious: 1. In the promulgation of it, God put a state upon it when he delivered it; and, 2. in respect of the matter of it, because it contains the image of God.

But now, my brethren, the gospel infinitely excelleth in glory in both these respects. I will not stand so much upon the first, because it is not so proper to the text, yet somewhat I will say of it. The gospel, in the promulgation of it, had all the glory that could be put upon it. What greater glory than for a king, before he comes himself in state, to have a train of men of four thousand years? So had Jesus Christ. Before he came into the world to give the gospel, what a long train had he! For all the patriarchs and prophets were but his forerunners, his train, men that went before him; and at last came John the Baptist, who was greater than all those patriarchs and prophets, because he came next to Jesus Christ,

and because he spake more gospel than all of them had done. You have an express place for it in Isa. 40, 3d, 4th, and 5th verses compared, where the glory of the gospel is held forth by this, that it had this forerunner, 'The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God,' &c.; and saith he, ver. 5, 'The glory of the Lord shall be revealed.' Because it was so great a glory, he ushereth it in thus by John Baptist. It is true indeed, there was no sound of a trumpet, nor no earthquakes; but you shall see there was as much, for after all this train was past, and all these forerunners gone by, comes Jesus Christ himself, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, 'whose shoe-latchet,' saith John Baptist, who was yet more than a prophet, 'I am not worthy to unloose.' Compare for this but the first chapter of the Hebrews, and the third verse of the second chapter together. In the first chapter, he saith, 'That in these last days God hath spoken unto us by his Son,' and then he sheweth what a Son this was, that 'he was heir of all things, and that by him also God made the worlds,' that he was the express image of his Father's person; and all this to the end, that he might shew forth the glory of the gospel; as appears, chap. 2 ver. 2. For, saith he, 'If the word spoken by angels was so stedfast and excellent,' how much more shall that word be which was spoken by so great a Lord; so ver. 3. And when Jesus did first come to be inaugurated, before he preached one sermon (for his inauguration is recorded by the evangelists before he preached one sermon) it was by a voice coming immediately from heaven, saying, 'This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' You have the same afterwards in Luke 17 when he was transfigured, when he appeared all in his glory. Moses his face did but shine, but Jesus Christ's face, clothes, and all shone all over; and then cometh a voice from heaven too, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him.' It is a preface to the gospel. Here is a Lord of glory, saith he, when he had shewn him in all his glory; here he is, hear him, take that gospel that he delivereth from his mouth, for here is the reality of Moses his shadow. There was a voice came from the excellent glory, so Peter hath it, which is more than the sound of a trumpet which angels made upon the mount at the promulgation of the law. Here when this gospel came to be delivered, when it was first begun to be spoken by the Lord, all the three persons give witness and testimony, and instead of angels the Holy Ghost cometh down; and

instead of the voice of angels, here is a voice from heaven, even the voice of God himself; and instead of Moses shining with his face, here is Moses and Elias both appearing in glory with Jesus Christ, who put them down clean; for, saith John, speaking of his transfiguration, 'We saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God;' which glory of his was as evidently to be distinguished from the glory of Moses and Elias, as the glory of the sun is from that of the stars. And, my brethren, what was the purpose of presenting Christ in that glory upon the mount? It is evident, it was in answer to the glory of Moses his face, who was the deliverer of the law, and that upon this ground; because there is a voice come from heaven, from the excellent glory, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, hear him.'

And then when Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, that first gave this gospel, went to heaven, what follows? Why, a world of glories, beams of glories, were still scattered to confirm it; 1 Peter 1:10, 'Of which salvation the prophets did prophesy, and of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glories that should follow,' (so it is in the original). For when Jesus Christ himself ascended and entered into glory, he poured down glorious gifts, he poured down a glorious Spirit, he poured down this gospel, whereof he had but the substance of it in brief sayings, which the apostles delivered to us. So you have it in Heb. 2:3. As it was first preached by the Lord, so he saith it was confirmed by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and by giving of the Holy Ghost. And this was the glory of the gospel in respect of the promulgation of it, which indeed is not so much the scope of the text, yet because the apostle in that 2 Cor. 3 speaks of the promulgation of the law, and of the glory of it in that respect, when he compares it with the gospel and the glory of it, I thought good a little to handle it. But,

Secondly, As the gospel exceeded the law in glory, in respect of the promulgation of it; so let us compare the matter of the gospel with that of the law, and we shall find it likewise to be transcendently glorious in that respect also. The law, I told you, was a glorious law, because it contained the image of God, so far as dead letters could hold forth that image. The law written in Adam's heart was the image of God, and that being blotted out, God took a copy of what was in Adam's heart, so that indeed the law

is rather an image of the image of God, than the image of God properly; it is but the image of the image that was in Adam's heart, and but a literal picture of it. But now the gospel must needs be much more glorious, because,

First, It is the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the express image of the person of his Father, so you have it, Heb. 1:2, 3, 'who is the heir of all things' (speaking of Christ), 'the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.' Now do but look how more glorious the image of a man in his son like himself, who hath the same reason in him, and properties of all kinds that himself hath, excelleth the image of his mind, or of his thoughts delivered in writing; so doth Jesus Christ excel that image of God expressed in the law. And it is this which makes the gospel so glorious, because it is the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God; so the apostle saith in 2 Cor. 4:4, 'Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;' hence therefore in Isa. 40:4, Christ is called, 'the glory of the Lord.' Therefore look how far the image of God stamped upon Jesus Christ exceeds the image of God in Adam's heart, and therefore must needs excel the image of God in the law, which is indeed but the copy of the image, so much doth the gospel exceed the law in glory, and all the knowledge of it. The law, I say, is the copy of the image of God in man's heart, but the gospel is the glass in which the image of God in Christ, and the glory of Christ, appeareth.

I will not stand to enlarge much upon that subject, to shew you how transcendent an image there is stamped upon Christ; I have done it elsewhere, in opening the 18th and 19th verses of this chapter. And that Jesus Christ is the great subject of the gospel, I intend, by the blessing of God, to speak of that, taking chap. 2 ver. 2, where the gospel is called 'the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;' these being the subject of the gospel. I will now only shew you, how glorious the gospel must needs be, that doth hold forth the glory of Christ, and how lively it holds it forth.

My brethren, let me tell you the story of it a little. The apostles that lived with Jesus Christ, 'they saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God;' so you have it in John 1:14. And as John's expression is (and he speaks feelingly) in 1 John 1:1, 'That which we have heard, which we

have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled;' they handled him, that is, they had a sensible knowledge of him, their ears took in his gracious words, their eyes beheld him, beheld his glorious miracles, beheld the glory that God stamped upon him when he was in the mount, and had that voice from the excellent glory. Well, but Jesus Christ is gone to heaven, and all his glory is taken up with him; and these apostles that saw his glory were all to leave the earth, and therefore though it is true that we shall one day be where he is, according to his prayer, John 17:24, 'that we may behold his glory,' yet how in the mean time should we come to see this image of God, and the glory of Jesus Christ, who in that place of Isaiah is called 'the glory of the Lord'? Jesus Christ therefore did by his apostles frame up a doctrine of the gospel, which is left written by them; for he having delivered it unto them, they have declared it unto us; so you have it in the forementioned place, 1 John 1:3, 'That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.' He declared it first to them, and they while they lived preached the same gospel by word of mouth, and then left it unto us in writing, that so in the opening of it by pastors and teachers to the end of the world, we may come to see Christ, as the apostles did, in respect of his glorious excellencies. Now this glorious gospel which the apostles have thus left in writing, and which we poor ministers in all ages do expound as well as we can unto you, what is it? It is the lively image or picture of Jesus Christ, who is the express image of the great God, and of all his glory; and hence is it a glorious gospel. When the apostle Paul preached to the Galatians, what saith he of the gospel he preached? Gal. 3:1, 'Before whose eyes,' saith he, 'Jesus Christ was pictured,' so the word signifies, or painted, written out. The gospel, my brethren, is the liveliest picture of Christ that could be. But you will say, pictures do not represent the glory of a thing. No more they do not. If you would picture the sun with the liveliest colours that could be, you could not picture the glory of it; what hath God done therefore? He hath made his gospel not only a picture of Christ, but he hath made it a glass. the apostle saith in that 2 Cor. 3:18, compared with chap. 4 ver. 4, 'we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,' namely, of Jesus Christ, 'who is the image of the invisible God.' What is the reason he calls the gospel glorious? Because it is the image of Jesus Christ. And how doth the gospel hold that forth? Not only as a picture, but as a glass; and a glass, if the thing be glorious that shines

upon it, will represent not the thing only, but the glory of it too. As if you hold a looking-glass to the sun, you shall not only see the picture of the sun in it, but the glory of the sun, and the sun in his glory. Now the glory of God that shineth upon the face of Jesus Christ (and therefore ver. 6, we are said to have 'the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ), and the face of Christ shineth in the gospel as in a glass. Hence we come by looking into the gospel to see his glory, and therefore the gospel it is a glorious gospel. To open this a little to you. A glass it is the most lively way of representing things absent that can be invented, for it doth not represent things in dead, lifeless, and wan colours, as pictures do, but really. It is a middle way of representing a man, between seeing a man's picture and seeing the man himself. It doth represent him so lively and clearly, that though indeed it is not so comfortable as seeing the man himself, yet it is much more comfortable than seeing the picture of the man drawn by all the art in the world. Therefore it is said here, 'we behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord.' Now it is a rule in optics, and a true one, *quod videtur in speculo, non est imago*, that which is seen in a glass is not a mere picture, but it is the thing itself; if you see a man in a glass, though you do not look directly upon the man, yet you see the man himself. Only with this difference, that when you look upon the man himself you see him by a direct act, and you see him by an image taken off from the man himself, coming into your eye; but when you look upon him in a glass, you see him by a reverberation, as I may so express it, the image of the man is beaten back again. That I may express this thing to you: the eye of a man sees nothing, but by the image of the thing some way or other coming into it, and therefore now when you behold any man, if your eye be looked upon, there is the image of that man in your eye. Now if a glass doth take that image (and a glass it is an artificial eye, as I may call it, and the eye is a natural glass), I say, if a glass doth take in that image, it beats it back again, and that is seeing a man in a glass; whereas, if you see the man face to face, his image is conveyed immediately into your eye; but go now and hold a glass before that man, and the same image which you received directly into your eye by seeing him immediately, is in the glass, which if you behold, that image is reverberated or beaten back again to you. As an echo is your own voice beaten back again, so is a man's image which you behold in a glass. And therefore it is the most lively way of seeing and beholding a thing that can

be. Why? Because you do not see a mere picture, but you see the man himself by a reverberated species, that is, by the likeness of him beaten back again to your eye. And thus, my brethren, doth the knowledge of Christ in the gospel, and in heaven, differ. In heaven, there you see him by sight. Why? Because, as the apostle saith, 'we see him there face to face;' but in the gospel, 'we see him as in a glass,' but still the same Christ, really represented in the glass of the gospel, above all pictures whatsoever, whom one day we shall see face to face in heaven. For the sight we have of Christ in the gospel, is not merely notional or literal, but it hath a reality in it; and therefore are said to see the glory of the Lord in this glass. This glory could never have been painted, for the glory of Christ it must be beams shed immediately from himself, and to see Jesus Christ with his own beams, though shining in the glass of the gospel, is to see Christ himself. And therefore you see how the apostles speak, as they compare the thing we see Christ in, to a glass; so they compare the faith we see him by, to sight plainly, Heb. 2:8, 'We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour.' Alas! they had not eyes of their bodies to look up into heaven, but their sight of Christ was so lively, as he was represented in the glass of the gospel, that the apostle saith, 'we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour.' So that, my brethren, suppose that you had a glass that did perpetually retain the image of an absent friend, suppose you had not only a picture of him, but a glass, that look what image he had when he looked upon it when he was present, that image sticks in it still. What would you give for such a glass? Some nations do use to keep their dead in a glass, which being artificially closed up, preserves them from stench; but, alas! it is but a dead friend in a case of glass. But here is another artifice that Jesus Christ useth: he hath framed by his Spirit a doctrine of the gospel, which is delivered to us in the writings of the apostles, which doth retain a lively image of Jesus Christ; and if men, when they come to hear it preached, or when they look into it, bring the Spirit with them, they see the glory of the Lord there.

But now you will say unto me, How can this be? How comes this to pass? Is not the word preached, or read, or thought upon, not merely words, and so the picture of things, and of Christ, as all other stories of men are? They are better, indeed, than emblems are; the ceremonial law was nothing but emblems of Christ, but the gospel is a plain describing of him

in words, but yet as he said, poetry and oratory is but the picture of things, how should this word, written and preached, come to be a glass to represent Christ thus lively?

I will give you the reason of it, for the apostle doth it in that 2 Cor. 3:4, he saith, 'that it is the ministration not of the letter, but of the Spirit.' The gospel, my brethren, hath a Spirit lying hid in it, and which goes along with it; and if the Holy Ghost did not accompany it to the heart of a believer, it would but speak mere words of Christ, even as the law spake but mere words. It would be but a mere letter, for, indeed, the gospel of itself is but the ministration of the letter to worldly and carnal men, whose eyes God doth not open (so saith the 4th verse of the 4th chapter of that 2d Corinthians), 'It is hid,' saith he, 'to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.' But it is called spirit, and there is a Spirit that doth accompany it, and as he saith, in Isa. 59:21, 'the word and the Spirit shall not depart out of thy mouth.' And the Holy Ghost thus accompanying all that is said of Christ and his glory in the gospel, he createth (let me say it, for it is true) such apprehensions of Christ, and of all the things spoken of him, which never entered into the heart of any carnal man in the world. He createth a new light, by which you do really view Jesus Christ, although by faith, and though as in a glass, yet a real sight you have of him beyond all the story of words and hearsay whatsoever. It were indeed but the ministration of the letter, if there were only but a verbal and hearsay knowledge of him. No; but whilst you read words in the Scripture, or hear but words in the preaching of the gospel, there is a spirit goes along with it, whose peculiar artifice it is to make it to be as a glass, to see Jesus Christ in the doctrine of it, as you see a man in a glass, and that sight is a lively and real sight of his image. Whilst we do limn out Jesus Christ by words as well as we can (for what we express is still but literal, in comparison of what a man, if he be a believer, apprehendeth while it is expressed, and we are to use all the art we can to express things to you; whilst, I say, we are doing this), the Holy Ghost, that dwelleth in the word, and dwelleth in the heart of believers, begetteth such a real image of Christ by that which is spoken, that they behold the glory of the Lord as in a glass, and are 'changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.' It is compared to the seeing in a glass, because there is a subsistence given by

the Holy Ghost to the things spoken of, beyond all pictures, or words, or notions. And hence do but observe what follows in the text (which I shall afterwards more distinctly open); 'Which,' saith he, 'is Christ in you,' which importeth thus much, that while that Jesus Christ is known by a believer in the doctrine of the gospel, he becometh Christ in him; he is not only known by him as a man knows the king, but he is known as when a man knows the sun, the beams of it cometh into his eye. So that the apprehensional knowledge that a saint hath of Jesus Christ by faith, the taking in of Christ by faith, is so real a thing that it is called Christ in a man. And I take that to be the meaning of that in Gal. 3 (which I shall further open anon), where he saith, 'Till Christ be formed in you,' and so Piscator takes it.

I shall, endeavour to make this further plain to you thus. You may see an imitation of this work of the Holy Ghost in this. Suppose there were a man standing two or three houses off from your house; it is possible by the reflection of looking-glasses set one against another, to see the image of this man in a glass in your own room. Is the art of man able to do this? The art of the Holy Ghost is able to do it much more. You see Satan, what doth he do that is a spirit? Whereas men can make but the picture of a man, what can Satan do? Absolutely he will make a man appear before one as a man, in lively colours, not a bare picture. This artifice Satan hath. My brethren, the Holy Ghost accompanying the doctrine of the gospel, hath a further artifice: though you see not Christ face to face (that is reserved for heaven), yet you shall see him in a spiritual glass, you shall not only see him as described by words, but you shall have those lively, real apprehensions of him created in your mind (and you have so, if Christ be in you), as puts down all the literal and hearsay knowledge in the world; it is like the seeing of a man's image in a glass. And therefore, now observe it, in that 2 Cor. 4 (for I have still recourse to that), the apostle hints how it cometh to pass that you come to see thus by the Spirit. He gives the reason there, why that the gospel that is thus glorious is hid from the eyes of the world; saith he of some, ver. 4, 'Whom the God of this world hath blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.' But how is that light wrought? Read on. Ver. 6, '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.' It is done, you see, plainly by a creation. He createth a light in the soul of a man, out of that darkness that is in him. And without this, let a man stand under the gospel a thousand years together, he would only know Christ by hearsay. But if the Spirit cometh and createth a light, this light shall carry the image of Christ to the soul, such an image of him as never entered into the heart of any carnal man, though he knows never so much of the gospel. I shall make it plain by opening the apostle's comparison. Every beam of light always carries with it the thing which it is the beam of. If you do behold a little beam of the sun coming through a pin-hole in a dark room, run to the beam, lay your eye to it; that beam conveys to you the image of the whole sun. So whenas there cometh a created light into a man's soul by the Holy Ghost, joining with the gospel which speaks of Christ, he who is a believer, by his eye of faith taking in that beam of light, beholdeth Jesus Christ, that image of God, beholdeth the glory of Christ in the gospel thus described, in such a manner as no creature else is able to apprehend. It is, I say, because the light of the glorious gospel is commanded to shine out of darkness. It is a light that is given; so saith the apostle, 'He hath given us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' And therefore now in Isa. 60:1, 2, 3, where he speaks of the glory of the gospel, which shall one day break forth to the Jews, he expresseth it in these very terms: 'Arise,' saith he, 'for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' Whenas the light of the gospel cometh and shineth into a man's soul by the creation of the Holy Ghost, the glory of the Lord cometh into him too; he beholdeth the glory of the Lord as in a glass. And hence, my brethren, it comes to pass, that a man doth see the Lord Jesus Christ really in the glass of the gospel. The understanding understandeth everything per phantasma, as we say, the fancy of a man. Still when the understanding works to understand anything, the fancy of a man begets the image of the thing in his mind. Whenever you hear a story told of a thing done in such a place, by such or such a person, still your fancy will be working the image of that thing or person in your mind, though it be a story told you never heard before; for God hath appointed the fancy to give the mind a subsistence of what it understandeth. Now when God cometh to reveal spiritual things, the fancy could never take them in, it could never give any subsistence to them, it hath no images to make of them. What therefore doth God do?

He createth faith. And what is faith? It is not phantasia, but hypostasia; it gives a subsistence (so the apostle saith, Heb. 11), a reality to the things we understand, even as the image of a man in a glass is a real thing, it is a subsistence; so God and Christ, they have a subsistence, a reality in a man's spirit. And hence, my brethren, it comes to pass, that the soul doth form up out of the gospel glorious apprehensions of Christ, for as the gospel holds forth Jesus Christ in his glory really, so by the help of the Spirit, the same image that is in the gospel is begot in my heart of this Jesus Christ; that is, real and glorious apprehensions I have of him, which are wrought in me in and by the gospel, and according to what the gospel describeth of him. And as I said afore, it is part of the apostle's meaning in that place of the Galatians, when he tells them, 'I am in travail, till Christ be formed in you;' he doth not speak in respect of sanctification, that he laboured to have the image of Christ formed in them in that respect, for they were sanctified and had not fallen from that; but saith he, I endeavour, till such time as those apprehensions you have had of Christ, which you have lost, be formed in your hearts again, and that your understanding take him in aright.

So then to close up this first thing, of the glory of the gospel in respect of the matter of it, here is the sum of all that that I have said. First, Here is Jesus Christ; he is the image of God, the most glorious image of God that ever was. Here is the gospel appointed to be a glass to represent this glory of Christ, describing him not by words only and in a literal way, or by a picture, but in a glass, lively and really, and so the gospel becometh a glorious image of Christ; even as if you hold a glass to the sun, there is a glorious image of the sun in the glass; and hold your eye to that glorious image of the sun in the glass, and that image is begotten in your eye: so is it here, the gospel being the image of the glory of Christ, having the Holy Ghost in it, the heart of a believer coming to it by faith, takes in all that glory, so far as it is revealed to him, and so having further and larger apprehensions of Christ, he is formed in him, and as the gospel hath Christ's image in it, so he hath Christ's image in his heart. So the apostle indeed tells us, in that 2 Cor. 3:18, 'We are changed into that image from glory to glory.' To see a thing, my brethren, that is glorious, by its own light, it always makes a glorious sight, a real sight. The least beam of Christ it helps you to the sight of him, if it be a beam of himself. You may

hear of him by hearsay, as of other things, but if (as the apostle's expression is) there shine into your hearts but a beam from himself by his Spirit, it doth convey the reality of Christ to you, it makes Christ to be in you, as the text saith, although you do not see him face to face. If the sun were down at this instant, if there were a glass that took in the beams of it above the earth, I might always see the sun in that glass. So though Jesus Christ be in heaven now, yet the gospel being that glass in which the image of Christ is, I may have a real and lively representation of him, so far as the gospel reveals him. And so much now for that first thing, in respect of the matter.

I will but add a comparison to shew you how much the glory of the gospel exceedeth that of the law in this respect. Compare it either with the moral law, or with the ceremonial law.

1. Go, take the moral law. Why? The moral law it is a glass too, and a glass that revealeth God, or rather, what the image of the mind of God is. Yet it is merely a glass of the image of God in Adam's heart, it is but a copy of the image of God in man, and so it is rather a glass to shew man to himself than God to him; you have it in James 1 (for it is good to compare the similitudes the Scripture useth, one with another), 'If any man be a hearer of the word,' saith he, 'and not a doer, he is like to a man beholding his natural face in a glass, but he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was.' Whilst you look into the law, you see what an image of God was once in you, and by comparing yourselves with it, you see your own deformity now; and so I know not how far, by a remote consequence, you see what a holy God he is that gave such a law. But it is not a glass that represented God, but a glass that representeth yourselves, and representeth that image that was in man by nature. And therefore the apostle calleth it only a dead letter written upon stones, rather than a glass, when he makes a comparison of it with the glorious gospel.

2. Go, take the ceremonial law, that was joined to it, and that reveals more of the gospel,—for indeed that was nothing else but gospel in shadows,—and you shall find that, because it had gospel in it, it is called glorious too; there is glory attributed to it more than to the moral law simply or alone considered. Hence the ark, which was Jesus Christ in a

shadow, is called 'the glory of Israel,' in 1 Sam. 4:22; and so in Rom. 9:4, 'To them belonged the adoption and the glory,' namely, the ark. And so the temple is called a 'glorious high throne,' in Jer. 17:12. And in 1 Kings 8:11, 'The glory of the Lord filled it' at the dedication. Yet what is all this now in comparison of the gospel, this gospel that is now revealed, the glass that we see Christ in? The law is called glorious, only because, as if the sun should shine upon a cloud in a rainbow, it took in the sun that was arising before we saw it. All this in comparison of the gospel is but a shadow, it is but as the glory of the sun in a cloud; but the gospel is a glass, that look as you would think, what a great deal of difference there is between the seeing of a man in a glass, and seeing his mere shadow, such a difference is there between that knowledge of Christ which the ceremonial law afforded, and this which the gospel now affordeth. You have it expressly in Heb. 10:1. (Let us go up and down still, and examine the Scriptures which speak to this comparison.) 'The law,' saith he, 'having a shadow of good things to come' (he speaks expressly of the ceremonial law, for the moral law had it not), 'and not,' saith he, 'the very image of the things.' It was so far off from having the image of it, saith he, that it had but the shadow of it. But now what saith he of the gospel? 'We behold as in a glass,' saith he, 'the glory of the Lord.' It is more than a shadow, nay, more than an image or picture, you see the thing in a reality. The glory of the Lord that filled that same first temple, what was it? A cloud, a mere mist, it was no more; yet it is called 'the glory of the Lord.' But what is it that appeareth in this glass? Read Mal. 4:2, 'The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.' He speaks of the coming of Christ, for he was the last that prophesied, he had said at the 3d chapter, ver. 1, 'The Lord shall suddenly come to his temple;' and presently in chapter 4 he saith, that 'he is the Sun of righteousness that shall arise with healing under his wings,' Nay, further, that you may see how the Scripture still speaks in this language, the apostle, in Col. 2:17, speaking of the ceremonial law, saith, 'They are the shadow,' which, saith he, vanisheth when the body is come. You will say, the shadow doth never use to arise till the body comes. Yea, but if the body be the sun itself, if that come, all the other vanish; so they did when the Sun of righteousness did arise. Hence therefore, in Hag. 2:7, 9, it is said, that 'the glory of the second temple should be more than the first.' Why? Because Christ the Sun of righteousness is the glory of it. He is called the 'Glory of Israel' in

the song of Simeon, Luke 2:32. And the gospel is the glass in which we see this sun.

And so now I have done with this first thing, in respect of the matter of it, that the gospel is thus glorious, because that Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of glory, shineth in it thus really, and clearly, and fully, as in a glass, and that compared with the knowledge that the Old Testament afforded. I might also compare it with that knowledge which may be had by the creatures, which is a glass too, for you may behold God in the creatures; but the truth is, they hold forth merely the handiwork of God, you do not see God there as in a glass. But I will not stand upon that.

Secondly, The gospel is glorious in respect of the matter of it, because the riches of the glory of God shineth in Christ revealed in this gospel. This is intimated too in that 2 Cor. 4:6, where he endeth the discourse of the glory of the gospel, 'He hath shined in our hearts,' saith he, 'to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' But to give you a scripture or two more for it in a word, 1 Tim. 1:11, I quoted it before, to prove that the gospel is a glorious gospel, for so it is called there; but mark what follows, it is called, 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God.' Observe that expression; there is a connection between those two, why he should give that attribute to God, when he calleth it his gospel, and a glorious gospel. Why, it is not only a glorious gospel, because it holds forth all the glory of God, but because it doth communicate; and God's end in revealing it is to communicate his glory, and to make men blessed. And the plain meaning of it is this, as if he had said, the Lord, that great God, being so blessed in himself, having such riches of happiness and glory in himself, he did so overflow, he did so overbound in himself, that he meant to make others happy with this happiness in himself, for he is God all-sufficient; and being so full of blessedness, and his blessedness consisting in his own glory, he inventeth the gospel, contriveth in his own glorious wisdom the great design of his Son Christ, in whom he would reveal himself, who is the subject of the gospel, that by revealing of it he might communicate that blessedness unto others. He did it not only to hold forth his own glory, and to manifest how great a God he is, but he did it as a blessed God, that delighteth to communicate that glory unto others; and he doth it by the gospel, that so as he was blessed in himself,

he might by the gospel communicate his glory, and bless others. For, my brethren, look as envy ariseth in a sinful creature that is miserable, when he sees another happy, and he doth it naturally; so doth the desire of communicating what happiness one hath, arise in the heart of him that is truly noble, and perfectly happy and blessed. And so it did in God. Am I thus blessed in myself? saith he; I will have others blessed by me, to whom I will communicate this happiness and glory; and he therefore inventeth this gospel, which is therefore called the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

Of all things God's mercy is his glory; and while you look upon the face of Jesus Christ, you there behold nothing but grace and mercy shine in the gospel. 'We behold,' saith he, 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' that as in the face of a man you behold his disposition toward you, so you see the disposition of God in the face of Christ, you see his mercy, you see his glory. Not a whit of this did shine in the law, not a whit of mercy or free grace, and yet that is the glory of God. In Exod. 33:18, 19, 20, Moses there desired to see the glory of God: 'I beseech thee,' saith he, 'shew me thy glory.' Saith God, ver. 19, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.' But how should all his goodness appear? Clothed all in mercy; for it follows, 'I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.' The law speaks not such a word; no, my brethren, this is the very bottom of the gospel, the bottom of God's heart; here is his glory, 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.' It is the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that being blessed in himself, thus resolveth to be gracious and good to poor creatures, to such sinners as we are. Moses had seen the glory of God upon the mount; he had seen the glory of God in delivering the law in a great deal of state; after all this, 'Lord,' saith he, 'let me see thy glory.' What is God's answer? 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,' &c. Here is my glory. And this glory shineth in the gospel, and if you will see it, look upon the face of Jesus Christ. You may see Jesus Christ's face in the glass of the gospel, and in that face you may see all this grace and mercy shine. And so I have done with the second thing, namely, the chief and principal matter of the gospel. It revealeth, 1, Jesus Christ in his glory; and, 2, it reveals the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and all

this as in a glass. I come now to the third.

3. The things that the gospel communicateth and conveyeth are all glorious. The apostle compares it with the law too in this respect, in that 2 Cor. 3:6, 7, &c., 'God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. If the ministration of the letter, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth;' that is, the gospel.

In the first place, he tells you that the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit of God. 'It is not the ministration of the letter only,' saith he, 'but the Spirit,' and he meaneth the Holy Ghost plainly, for in the last verse of that chapter he saith, that 'by beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, even by the Spirit of the Lord,' that is, by the Holy Ghost.

Now do but lay these two things together. First, that the gospel only communicateth the Holy Ghost to you. And, secondly, that the Spirit is a Spirit of glory upon whomsoever he resteth: and then the gospel must needs be, in respect of its communication, a glorious gospel. To make out both these to you.

First, Look, as when Jesus Christ was baptized, that excellent glory opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him; so when the gospel is preached, doth the Holy Ghost descend upon the elect, and look upon whom the Holy Ghost resteth, he is the Son of God. As he said to John, John 1:33, 'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he;' so it is here. In the primitive times, when they heard the gospel preached, the Holy Ghost did visibly, and apparently, and instantly fall down upon them. And now he falls upon them so as to turn their hearts, and to enable them to see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is more than falling down upon men in extraordinary gifts, simply considered, if there were nothing else. For to have the Holy Ghost to fall upon a man so as to dwell in him for ever, to

take possession of his heart, and to bring him to glory, is more than to have extraordinary gifts, which many had who never were saved. Now it is the gospel only which helps you to the Holy Ghost, and not the law. What saith the apostle in Gal. 3:2, 'This only I would learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the work of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' No; it was only by the hearing of faith, only by the hearing of the doctrine of the gospel, that is, the doctrine of faith, for that is meant by faith there, as in many other places of Scripture. The law indeed, as the apostle saith, Rom. 7, is holy and spiritual, but it is not the conveyer of the Spirit; though it be a spiritual thing, it is but a spiritual letter, saith he, it is not the ministration of the Spirit itself, but so is the gospel.

Now as the gospel only conveyeth the Holy Ghost to men, and the knowledge of it, so the receiving of the Holy Ghost is to receive all glory. For the Holy Ghost will never rest till he hath glorified you fully and perfectly. As Jesus Christ's work was to redeem you, so the Holy Ghost's work is to work all grace and glory into you; therefore when you receive the Holy Ghost you receive all glory in the seed and foundation of it. It is the foundation of our union with Christ; 'they that are joined to the Lord are one spirit;' it is by the Holy Ghost. To give you an express scripture for it, 1 Pet 4:14, 'The Spirit of glory shall rest upon you.' And the giving of this Spirit of the Holy Ghost unto you is more than all grace and glory that ever you shall have. If you would ask now what is the substantial glory of a man, that is the foundation of all his parts and wit, and makes him capable of the glory the world puts upon him, without which he would lose all in an instant, what is it? It is his soul that dwelleth in his body; take that away and he is a beast; nay, take that away and he is a dead carcase, he is sown in dishonour instantly as soon as that is gone. Therefore, in Gen. 49, the soul of man is called his glory, 'Into his secret,' saith he, 'let not my glory enter.' Now look, what the soul is to a man, that is the Holy Ghost to a holy man. He is the foundation of all glory, of all grace. When he hath given you the Spirit, he hath given you all the grace and glory in the foundation that ever you shall have, for he will never leave you till he hath wrought you up to glory; and the gift of him is the earnest of glory; so he is called expressly in 2 Cor. 5:5. Jesus Christ is the glory of the Lord to you objectively, but the Holy Ghost is all grace and glory efficiently, yea in heaven; and when you receive him, you receive

glory, because you receive a Spirit that will never rest till he hath made you glorious; and this Spirit you receive by the gospel, and by nothing else, by no knowledge else, either of the law or whatever else. Hence therefore the gospel that communicateth this is called a glorious gospel, in respect of what it ministereth; for, saith he, 'if the ministration of the letter was glorious,' which did give nothing else but the literal knowledge of the law in men's heads, then the ministration of the Spirit is much more glorious. That is the first thing the apostle saith.

The second thing the apostle saith here in this 2 Cor. 3 is, in respect of a righteousness which the gospel doth convey. You shall find it at the 9th verse of that chapter, 'If the ministration of condemnation be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.' By righteousness here he means the righteousness of justification clearly. Why? Because he doth oppose it to condemnation. He doth not mean the righteousness of sanctification; no, he means the righteousness whereby we are justified, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why, saith he, what doth the law do? Alas, saith he, the law, although it be a glorious thing, for it reveals the image and mind of God, yet it doth but shew you your own unrighteousness, and leaveth you where it found you. A man sees his own face as in a glass, and soon forgets what image he had, sees his spots and deformity, and sees the sentence of death written in his own countenance, and in the threatenings of the law. He sees himself look like a dead man, guilty of death, and that is all the law holds forth. But, saith he, the gospel is the ministration of righteousness, and that righteousness is glorious, and therefore the gospel is such which ministereth it; for that is the thing he aims at.

Will you know what righteousness it is? Why it is the righteousness of Christ; and in the last verse of that 3d chapter of the Corinthians, that righteousness of Christ is called his glory clearly; 'We behold,' saith he, 'as in a glass the glory of the Lord.' As he means the personal glory of Christ, so he also means his holiness and righteousness for justification. How prove you that? Because it is that into which we are changed into the same image by beholding it. For whilst a man eyes Christ to be justified by him, look what righteousness he lays hold upon by faith, the image of that righteousness is wrought in his heart. And therefore the apostle here

speaks in a more special manner of the righteousness of Christ, which the gospel is the ministration of; 'it is a ministration of righteousness, and of the glory of the Lord,' saith he.

Now then do but think what a glorious righteousness the gospel reveals and offers to men. It is the righteousness of Christ, and the righteousness of Christ must needs be glorious. Why? He is the Lord of glory. The righteousness of the angels is not glorious in this respect, They are glorious creatures, but they are not lords of glory. When you speak of the will of a king, what do you call it? His royal pleasure. If you speak of a message he sendeth, what is it? A gracious message, be it what it will be. Why? Because you put these titles upon his person, therefore you put the same upon whatsoever he doth or thinketh. This is the manner of men. My brethren, Jesus Christ is the Lord of glory. Did he work upon a trade as a carpenter? It was a glorious action, it was a glorious part of that righteousness which he performed in obedience to his Father; for he was the Lord of glory, and therefore I say his righteousness is called, 'The glory of the Lord.'

But besides this, it is glorious also in another respect, viz., because he, to perform this righteousness, and in performing of it, laid all his glory down, and therefore it is as much worth as the glory he left. His death is valued at the rate that the life which he might have led in heaven is worth. 'They crucified the Lord of life,' saith he. And the obedience he performed hath the value and the stamp upon it of that glory he might have had. He was equal with the Father in glory, and in all things else; and he emptied himself of it all, laid it all aside, and took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient even to the death. His righteousness is therefore a glorious righteousness, because it is to be valued by that glory he laid aside, and might have had, to perform it; so much as he forewent to do it, so much it is to be valued at. God the Father was sensible of it. 'Father,' saith he, 'glorify me, as I have glorified thee on earth!' I will give you one scripture more for it, it is in John 1:14, 'We saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God.' What was that glory? In a special manner his grace and holiness. How do you prove that? It follows in the text, 'Full of grace and truth.' Now, my brethren, it is the gospel that doth communicate to sinners, to men condemned to die everlastingly of

themselves in hell, all this righteousness of the Lord of glory makes it theirs. If they get but this righteousness upon their backs, what glorious creatures, think you, must they be! Yet it is the gospel that communicateth it to them, and puts it on, through the Holy Ghost by faith, as the apostle in Gal. 5:5, 'We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.' In Rev. 12:1, you have 'a woman clothed with the sun.' Is not here a glorious clothing? What is that sun? It is the Sun of righteousness; it is the Lord made our righteousness; it is the Lord Jesus Christ and his glory; it is his righteousness which a man is clothed withal. Is not this a glorious gospel then, that doth not only shew you the glory of this Sun, but wrappeth you about with the beams of it, clotheth you with it? The angels are poor, beggarly creatures, that is the truth of it, as we may so speak, to* a poor sinner clothed with this righteousness. The text saith, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like to the lilies of the field; so the angels in heaven, in all their glory, are not clothed like one sinner here upon earth, that is clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This Sun of righteousness was never put upon their backs, not to be righteousness to them. He is a means of conveying grace and good to them, but to be 'the Lord our righteousness,' so he is only to sinners; and thus he is only revealed and communicated in the gospel. What is it that makes you glorious in God's eyes? It is not your own inherent grace, in any comparison; it vanisheth, it is nothing. No; it is your being clothed with Christ, with this Sun, this is it which makes the foulest creature, an ugly toad (for so a sinner is of himself), thus glorious in the eyes of God. A wife shineth with her husband's beams, and so doth every believer with the righteousness of Christ. As the moon shineth with a borrowed light that the sun clotheth her with; and her own entire light, without that of the sun's (as you see it in an eclipse), it looks like the bottom of red brass, such is your own inherent righteousness if Jesus Christ take his away from you. But take the moon out of an eclipse, when she is clothed with the light of the sun, what a glorious creature is she! So is every believer when he is clothed with this Sun of righteousness.

Thirdly, When a soul is thus, by means of the gospel, clothed with his glorious righteousness, which the gospel revealeth, he is able, with open face, to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Whenas Moses his face did shine, which was a type of the law, they could not behold the

glory of it, there was a terror in it; it was the glory of a judge condemning which did shine in Moses, for he had the law in his hands. But when the Holy Ghost hath once communicated to you, and you come by faith to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and appear before God, then you dare (as the text saith) with open face behold and look God in the face. Why? Because you behold the glorious mercy and favour of God in the face of Jesus Christ, which is called the light of his countenance, that is lift up upon you too; that as the favour of a man is seen in his looks, shines more there than in all other parts of his body, so is the glory and the mercy of God, it is seen in his face, even in the face of Christ. Therefore in Psalm 90:16, the favour of God is called his glory: 'Let thy glory,' saith he, 'be upon thy servants.' This the gospel revealeth to you; you behold the glory of God, that is, his favour, in the face of Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, The gospel doth not only thus convey the Holy Ghost to you, to dwell in you for ever, clotheth you with this righteousness, enableth you with open face to behold God—and the more glorious God is, when you see him nothing but love and favour, you will never be dazzled with that sight; that is the reason you are not terrified, because all his attributes appear in love; 'God is love,' saith the apostle—I say the gospel doth not only do all this, but it changeth you into the same image, from glory to glory; so saith the last verse of that third chapter. You might look in the law long enough, even look your eyes out, and never be changed. In the law you may see your spots, but you go away as full of corruption as you were before. You may there see and read your own destiny, and read your own duty, but it will not change you one whit. 'A man beholdeth his natural face in a glass,' saith James, 'and goes his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.' If it have an impression in his memory, that is all; but, saith the apostle, we in this glass of the gospel 'behold the glory of the Lord,' and are thereby changed into the same image. If that an ugly and deformed woman or man could have a glass that if they see but a beautiful person in it, they should be changed into the same image, what would they give for it? My brethren, this doth the gospel do.

But you will say, If it doth change me into the same image, is that image glory too? Yes, so it followeth, 'We are changed into the same image, from

glory to glory;' that is, from one degree of grace to another. All the grace the gospel works in you is glorious, for it is the image of Christ, in whom shineth the glory of God. And therefore in Eph. 5:26 the apostle, there speaking of sanctification (for to me it is clear he speaks of it, both by the words before and after), he saith that he hath 'cleansed us and washed us with water by the word, that he might present us to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle;' for when he hath done (he speaks of what he will do at the latter day, when he hath fully sanctified us), he will present us to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that we should be holy and without blemish. I quote it for this, that every degree of grace is glory, and when that is filled up, there is a glory in it which Jesus Christ reckoneth such, is pleased to look upon as such, for it is his image. 'He shall greatly delight in thy beauty,' saith he, Psalm 45. What is that beauty? 'She is all glorious within;' so it follows there in that Psalm. And, my brethren, let me tell you this, so far you are changed into his image, that you never look upon him in the glass of the gospel, but you go away with some further degree of holiness wrought in you, if you see him really as in a glass. You may come to a sermon and hear notions indeed, but if you get a real sight of Christ, you will be changed; and, I say, so far as we see him, so far we are changed. Here we seeing of him but as in a glass, in his holiness, and in his righteousness, as he is described in the gospel, how he walked while he was here below (for so the gospel represents him), we are changed into the same image, into the same image of holiness and righteousness, from one degree to another. But now, at the latter day, when he shall appear, we shall then be changed into his image too, for we shall see him as he is; and when we see him as he is, we shall be as he is, in his glory in heaven.

I will add but one more; it doth not only change us into a glorious image, which is called glory, but it doth work also in the hearts of believers a joy that is glorious. And this, although it be but the hope of glory, yet that hope of glory works a glorious joy in the hearts of the people of God. It is a known place that in 1 Pet. 1:8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' 'Whom having not seen,' that is, face to face, but having seen him in that glass of the gospel—for to the sight of things in a glass is the sight of Christ in the gospel compared, even the

sight of faith—yet because it is not seeing him face to face, the apostle saith, 'Whom having not seen,' &c.

It is not every act of faith that works this joy, but faith may be so elevated as it will work and bring in 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.' That phrase is it I quote it for. It is called unspeakable, because it exceeds the sense and the understanding; that is, the understanding cannot naturally take in such joy, or apprehend what it should be; as in Philip. 4:7, 'The peace of God' is said to 'pass all understanding.' The pleasures of the senses are great, but the pleasures of the understanding are far greater; but, saith he, this is a peace, and this is a joy, that passeth all understanding. We read in John 20:20, that 'when they saw the Lord they rejoiced;' so when a believer, though but by faith, seeth the Lord Jesus Christ, though but in this glass, and that but darkly, hath but a glimpse of him, yet it begets a joy which is unspeakable. And it is not only said to be unspeakable, but to be glorious. All the joys in this world are mean things, things that men shall be ashamed of, but this, saith he, is a magnificent joy. True joy is a solid thing, but you see the apostle riseth higher; it is, saith he, full of glory; or, as the word implies, it is dipped, it is steeped, in glory. Now, I say, it is not always thus, that whensoever any one seeth Christ by faith, that this joy is wrought; but it is by faith though, that is, faith elevated, yet so as it is but a sight of Christ in the gospel, and that by faith, whenever it is wrought. It doth not, I say, always accompany an act of faith, that is plain and clear from the next words, 'receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.' You see here that joy unspeakable and glorious, which God sometimes works in the hearts of his people, is called 'the end,' the reward of their faith (for so in Prov. 16:25 the word end there signifies reward); and the meaning is this, that when a man hath a long while believed and glorified God by a way of sheer faith of recumbency, then God doth reward him, gives him a reward of his faith by giving him joy unspeakable and glorious, which is called the salvation of the soul. And that that is the meaning of it is plain by this, because he speaks in the present tense, 'receiving;' he saith not, 'ye shall receive,' but 'receiving the reward of your faith, the salvation of your souls.' And if you mark it, it is called likewise the salvation of your souls. Now, the reward which we shall receive at the latter day, will be the salvation both of soul and body; and of that the apostle speaks in Rom. 8:23, which he saith there we wait

for. But there is a salvation of the soul which a man receiveth now, and therefore in the 24th verse of that Romans 8 he saith, 'We are saved by hope,' by hope of that glory at present. And so in Eph. 2:8, 'By grace ye are saved.' Now, then, our eyes beholding this salvation of the Lord, having the evidence of it, the soul is filled with it, it is saved, it receiveth the reward of its faith, the salvation of the soul. And thus, my brethren, it is full of glory, the least dram of it is like elixir, it expelleth all trouble. 'We rejoice,' saith the apostle in Rom. 8, 'in the hope of the glory of God.' It exceeds and weigheth down all the good things here. And this the gospel communicateth to us.

I will mention no more particulars whereby the glory of this gospel is held forth to us, but proceed to the next particle, passing by such uses as I might make of what I have said of this glory.

That which is next to be considered is, that the glory of this mystery shines among the Gentiles. There is never a word but it doth hold forth something of the excellency of this gospel. You know I have made a comparison of this gospel with the law, and shewed you how the law had a glory in it, which yet was no glory in comparison of that which the gospel hath, which I have opened in divers particulars. Let us now compare the law and the gospel together in another respect also. When God did give the law, he gave it but to one nation, the Jews, whose land was no bigger than the dominion of Wales. Ps. 147:19, 'He shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel, but he hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments they have not known them.' But now, what saith the apostle? He did keep from ages and from generations a further glorious mystery to be made known among the Gentiles, that is, to all nations. You have a place in Num. 14:21 (that I may speak coherently to the point of glory, the gospel is a glorious gospel, and it is glorious in this respect), when the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord, against the law that was newly given, God doth at Moses his entreaty pardon them for the present: 'I will pardon them according to thy word, but as truly as I live,' saith he, 'all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.' I know that many interpreters do interpret this to be meant thus, that God would take a course, that his justice in punishing of this people should be known to all the world, and

so he would fill the whole earth with his glory. But I take it (and I shall give you Scripture for it) that he here makes known and manifest his own counsels of his one day rejecting of the Jews, to the end he might provoke them to jealousy, as the apostle saith, he having given them a law, and they sinning thus against it; well, saith he, I will not contain myself within this nation, but I have a glory which I will fill all the earth withal; and that indeed is the knowledge of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. I shall give you a scripture for this interpretation; it is in Is. 6:3. For there the phrase of filling the earth with his glory is again used, and nowhere else that I know of in the whole Scripture, answering to that phrase that God had used in that place of Numbers afore-mentioned. Now, whenas it is said here in Isaiah, 'the whole earth is full of his glory,' what do you think is spoken of? Why, it is Jesus Christ revealed sitting upon his throne, with his train filling the temple, hardening the hearts of the Jews, and giving commission to his apostles to go and preach to all nations. How is that manifest? Look in John 12:40, where Christ himself quoteth this very chapter in Isaiah, ver. 10 and 11. 'Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.' And upon that follows their casting off, 'Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.' But is this spoken of Christ? Yes; read John 12:40. 'He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them; these things (saith he) said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.' Here is plainly, in this prophecy of Isaiah, the oath fulfilled that God sware in that place of Numbers. And God swears it in that sense (as I said even now) that Paul speaks in Rom. 11; when he lays open the riches of the gospel, he says he did it that he might provoke to emulation them which were of his own nation; so doth God here. Have they indeed sinned thus against my law, which also typically holds forth Christ? Well, though I pardon them for the present, yet I have a glory beyond all this, which I will fill the earth with, when I send my Son into the world, and which I have reserved for the Gentiles and for all nations. And therefore this gospel must needs be infinitely more glorious

than the law, God now breaking up his treasures, and fulfilling his oath, to provoke the Jews if possible unto jealousy. He reserved some better things for us, as the phrase is, Heb. 11:40.

And as he reserved a greater glory for us than that of the law, so, to speak to the other property (for the gospel is called both rich and glorious), he reserved a greater treasury of riches whenas he would break open his mind to the Gentiles. You have it under these very terms expressed in Eph. 3:8, 9, 'To me is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,' &c. When all men, all sorts of men, were to see it, and God meant to communicate it to the world, then he brings forth his riches, the unsearchable riches of Christ, 'which had been hid,' as it is here, 'from all ages and generations.'

So that now this particle in this text, 'among the Gentiles,' it is not idle, it hath an emphasis in it, it hath this emphasis in it, that God did reserve the fulness of his glory, and the riches of Christ, till such time as all the world was to come in. He would have all the world to be spectators, and he would have all men know what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; and therefore, I say, he reserved the revelation of it till then. And so much now for that particle.

I shall only here, as the coronis of all, spread before you this great truth which concerns us: that though God's primary aim in giving the gospel is to make it known to his saints, yet because the elect of nations in the succession of ages are infinitely numerous, and none knows where this inheritance will fall, or upon whose posterity, therefore the gift of the gospel unto the several nations of the Gentiles was, and is, indefinitely bequeathed to the Gentiles by God as a national endowment, as a national inheritance to every nation it takes place in. It is not to be judged given to the saints of a present age that enjoy it, but indefinitely to the whole lump of a nation, even as you call the proper native commodity of a nation a staple commodity to the nation. Although every man in that nation trades not in it, yet it is national as proper to that nation, as benefiting the nation, and no man is excluded from traffic in it. Because in process of time none knows upon whom in that nation it may fall; therefore every nation is to look upon it as a national interest and

concernment.

Chapter VII: How it is the glory of the gospel, that Christ is not only revealed in it, but Christ so known by the believer is in him.

Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.—COL. 1:27.

The apostle, in the former words, having laid open the glory and excellency of the gospel, the riches of the glory, saith he, of this mystery among the Gentiles, he closeth up all that he had said of it with this short application, 'which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.' He doth not only hold forth Jesus Christ as the subject of the gospel (and yet the highest glory the gospel hath is that Christ is the subject of it); he doth not content himself to say the riches of which mystery is Christ, as he saith afterwards, chap. 2:3, where he calls the gospel 'the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;' but he addeth, 'which is Christ in you.' How excellent the gospel is, because Christ is the subject of it, I have partly shewn you all along; I shall therefore now shew you why this cometh in here, 'which is Christ in you;' and what is the apostle's meaning thereby.

In the first place, I take it, the apostle brings this in here by way of application, for their comfort. When he had shewn them all these glories which the gospel holds forth, by holding forth of Christ, he tells them, this Christ is in you if you be saints; he is your Christ, by whom you have possession of all these riches, and that in so intimate a manner, that they are not only without you, but you have them all within you by having Christ, 'which is Christ in you,' saith he, and with this addition, 'the hope of glory,' of a greater glory than yet you have received.

And when he saith, 'which is Christ in you,' the least of his meaning, if at

all, is that the image of Christ is in them, as some would have it. Though 'we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory,' yet I know no place where the image of Christ is called Christ, or Christ in us. There are many places where the image of God is said to be in Christ, but nowhere the image of Christ is called Christ. He that is in Christ is a new creature; and in Jesus Christ there is neither bond nor free, but the new creature; and we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works; so the apostle still expresseth himself. There is one place indeed which hath a seeming show of it, that Christ in us should be put for the image of Christ in us, and that is that in Gal. 4:19, 'That Christ may be again formed in you;' but that is not the meaning of that place, as I shall shew anon. However, it cannot be the meaning here, at least-wise not the only meaning, for it is too narrow, too poor a thing, that after he had spoken such great and glorious things of the gospel of Christ, he should go and contract all the riches and glory of it to the new creature which is in us, to the image of Christ in us; no, it is Christ personally, Christ himself certainly that is here meant,

I shall as briefly as I can give you all the interpretations of this clause that have fallen into my thoughts. My scope is not to go and handle how many ways Christ is in you, but in relation to the context, to the coherence, to the gospel which he had commended before.

First, Therefore, 'Christ in you' implies that that knowledge which they had of the Lord Jesus Christ, take the object of that knowledge, it is Christ. I appeal, saith he, to your own consciences, you Colossians that have taken in the gospel as you have done, taken in Christ, in the knowledge of him, whether yea or no, there is not abundance both of riches and glory hath been manifested to you concerning Jesus Christ; and this knowledge which you have of Christ here in this life begotten by the gospel, I appeal to you, whether it be not the greatest evidence of a future glory. It is impossible it should rest here, but as this Christ, in whom you know so much riches of glory, is now in you the hope of glory, so when you come to be with him for ever, do but think what a glory you will be filled withal then. I take this, I say, to be the first part of the meaning, that it is Christ in you, objective. And this is to me clearly one part of his scope, for he speaks in respect of the gospel revealing Christ to them, whereby they behold the glory of Christ, which gives them hope of

that glory afterwards with him.

That which must make good this interpretation is this, that the knowledge which the saints have of Jesus Christ is called Christ, and Christ in you. I told you before that the gospel is compared to a glass, and it is called the gospel of Christ, because it representeth him; and the doctrine of the gospel is ordinarily and familiarly called Christ in the Scripture. Now that knowledge, that representation which is taken from Christ himself in the gospel, by the eye and faith of a believer, is called Christ in him. And as the gospel itself, being the glass of Christ, is called Christ, so the sight of Christ, that image of Christ (I call it now image, as being an objective image, as I may so express it, not subjective, the grace that is in you, but), that knowledge that is in you of him, taken from himself in the gospel, which a believer hath, is called Christ in him. In Gal. 1:16, Paul, speaking there of the revelation of the gospel to him, at the 12th verse, saith, 'I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ;' Christ himself revealed it; now at the 16th verse he saith, 'It pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen.' The knowledge that he had of Jesus Christ by revelation in the 12th verse is called in the 16th verse the revealing of Christ in him; mark the expression; and it is the revealing of Christ in him, that he might preach him to others. God gave him an intimate knowledge of Christ in his own heart, the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ did shine in his heart, that so he might preach it unto others; and therefore when he saith, 'He revealed his Son in me,' it is all one as if he had said, 'He revealed the gospel,' for it was that he might preach the gospel. And he speaks not only of an experimental knowledge; I mean, that is not all the purport of it, that he had experience of it, and what it wrought, for that he might have had without revelation. Neither doth he mean only that the image of Christ was in him, and that God revealed his Son in him by enabling him to walk as Christ walked, for it was not the image of Christ only which he preached, but it was Christ himself. Therefore now it is the gospel, and the knowledge of Christ in the gospel, that is called the revealing of his Son in him; and it is said to be revealed in him, because he had it immediately; that is the reason why it is said so here of Paul, in opposition to other apostles.

There is another place that I shall give you for this, and that is Gal. 4:19, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.' They had not lost the image of Christ in respect of sanctification in their hearts, for certainly they were men that were holy, but the truth was this, they had been diverted from the knowledge of Christ which at first they had received, they were diverted to another gospel, as he saith, chap. 1, and so to another Christ; Moses had been formed in them. He doth not say, until you are formed in Christ, but until Christ be formed in you. He cannot mean the person of Christ dwelling in them. Why? Because that is not formed, that was formed in the womb of the virgin, and now is glorious in heaven; therefore it must be the right notion and apprehension of Christ in the gospel that he meaneth. It is as if he had said, till you be fully evangelised; and as both Piscator and Pareus interpret it, till you be fully restored to your former true knowledge of Christ; now you are full of Moses, he is formed in you; that appears by the 21st verse, for there were some amongst them that were so full of the law, that there was nothing but law almost in them; now in opposition to this, saith he, I long till such time as Christ be formed in you, till there be a complete knowledge of Christ, according to the nature and genius of the gospel begotten in you. And this is called Christ.

Now, why should the knowledge of Christ in the gospel be called Christ in us, speaking of spiritual knowledge?

1. The reason is clearly this, there is no knowledge else in the world can be called the thing that is known.

2. I shall shew you that Christ as thus revealed in the soul may truly be called Christ. There is no knowledge else in the world can be termed the thing that is known. When a man hath the species or image of an horse or man in his mind, or the thought thereof, you cannot call that image a man or a horse, because all natural knowledge is but a mere phantasm; but the knowledge of Jesus Christ in the heart of a Christian is Christ in him. Why? Because that faith which we know Christ by doth give a being, a reality, and a subsistence to the thing that is known. I mentioned it upon another occasion, in opening that place, 'Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord;' and I shall enlarge upon it now, that you may still see how one thing follows another. In Heb. 11:1, faith is there called hypostasis,

that which doth give a subsistence to the things hoped for; so as indeed in the beholding of Christ, and by beholding of Christ, he is in me, there is a reality, a subsistence to me of him. To open and explain this to you a little, the difference of the spiritual knowledge of Christ, and of all natural knowledge whatsoever, I hall give it you as briefly and as plainly as I can. You must know this, and you do know it, for you feel it within yourselves, that God hath annexed to the understanding of a man a fancy, which we call phantasia, I speak it in opposition to that other phrase in the Hebrews, where faith is called hypostasis. Now the other word, phantasia, cometh from phanos and stasia, it sheweth its office, for it makes things absent from the mind to appear, and yet but to appear; it doth not give a subsistence to them, it is but phanos stasia. Think where you will of any thing; if you hear a story told you of a thing done at Rome in a church, of such a person, or the like, your mind will be thinking of a church, or framing the image of some person of whom the story is told, though you were never there. This is natural to the mind of man to do it. This is the work of the fancy, which is annexed and joined to the understanding of man in his natural knowledge. And the reason why God did annex to the understanding of man that faculty of the fancy, which makes things which the understanding would understand appear to it (for so the word implies), is because the mind of man would still behold something; and because the thing is not present itself, hence therefore God hath made the fancy to give an appearance, still to feed the mind with a view of the thing it would understand, and so the mind is supported in the understanding of what it doth understand by the assistance of the fancy. Now the Lord having prepared for his people and children spiritual objects of another world, himself and Christ; alas, the fancy is not able to take in the image of himself and of Christ; it will not serve the understanding to any other knowledge of him than merely notional or literal, hence therefore he hath put in that grace of faith, which is not phantasia to the understanding, but it is hypostasis, so the word is, Heb. 11:1. It doth not give an appearance, but a real subsistence to the things the mind would know; and as the fancy helpeth natural knowledge in the understanding of natural things, so doth faith spiritual knowledge, and indeed is all one with it. And hence therefore the beholding of Christ, and of the glory of God by a believer, is not by way of fancy merely, but it is by way of subsistence; the heart findeth a reality in what it believeth, and it hath so

great an impression, as it changeth the heart into the same image, which all the fancies of natural knowledge in the world will never do. And, my brethren, this is Plainly 'Jesus Christ in you,' in one sense; and therefore now we find in Eph. 3:17, that Christ is said to 'dwell in our hearts by faith;' for faith hath, by the help of the Holy Ghost, that sight of him that makes him real to a man's soul. As now how doth the sun dwell in the eye, or in a house? The sun is in the heavens; so is Jesus Christ, as Acts 3 hath it, 'the heavens must receive him, until the times of restitution of all things;' and yet he is in the heart of a Christian, 'Christ in you,' saith the apostle. How comes this to pass? Why, look as though the sun is in heaven; if it shine into the eye, it dwells there, for there is the real image of the sun begotten in the eye; and as it is said to be in the house, when it comes in with its beams and its light, which if a man put his eye to he may see the sun; so is it here, there is the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, that shines into the heart. And I say, this is the first thing that is here intended, when he saith, 'which is Christ in you;' he doth appeal to those that had known Christ in the gospel, if there were not an unsearchable riches of glory, a vast glory in him, even so far as they had known him, which did give them a hope of infinite glory yet to come, though this knowledge was yet imperfect, and therefore was ordained to be built up in the world to come; for (as I hope to make plain and clear to you) there is nothing is a greater evidence of a hope of glory to come in heaven, than that knowledge we have now of so great a glory in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ in us now is an imperfect thing, and yet hath so much riches and glory in the sight of him, as gives us a certain hope that there is a perfection of it to be one day. So you have it in 1 Cor. 13:12, 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now we know but in part; it is an imperfection which must be built up; but, saith he, 'then shall we know, even as we are known.' So now that is the first meaning of this phrase, why it is that he having spoken of the riches of the glory of the gospel in itself afore, addeth, 'which is Christ in you;' that is, that knowledge which the gospel hath begotten of Jesus Christ in you, I appeal to you how rich and glorious it is, though you do not see all of it, and it doth give you a hope of a future glory to come.

Now to cast in other additional imports, which will come in and stand with this, and help to fill up the meaning of it.

Secondly, It is 'Christ in you;' that is (he speaks still by way of application to them for their comfort), this is for your comfort, that whatsoever glory, and whatsoever riches of Jesus Christ the gospel lays open, it is all yours, it is all in you, and for you. Which riches of glory, and which mystery, and all, is 'Christ in you,' and in you the hope of a further glory. When Marcion the heretic had wrote a gospel, as the rest of the evangelists had done, said an orthodox Christian of him, it is my Christ that is in your gospel; implying, that he had no part in him, though he had written so of him. But all that this gospel saith of Christ is your Christ, it is Christ in you; as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. 3:23, 'All is yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. The gospel (saith he) which I commend to you, it doth not only tell you of riches and glory, it doth not only talk of it as other stories do, but it makes all this yours; 'The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which riches is Christ in you,' Christ made yours. It is a deep phrase this, and it imports the possession that a Christian hath of Christ, and of all riches of glory in him.

I shall open, as parallel to my text, another scripture, Col. 3:11, 'Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision; Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all.' His scope is this, as Rollock hath well observed upon the place, that all outward external privileges, belonging to the new creature, were nothing at all valued by him; it is not the privilege of any nation that is so much to be considered, therefore, saith he, 'it is neither Greek nor Jew.' It is not the privilege of any profession of religion, that a man is of this opinion, or of that opinion, that he is circumcised or uncircumcised. It is not the privilege of tongues, or learning, or wit, 'neither Greek nor Barbarian.' The Greeks were a wise and learned people, the Barbarians rude, but men of spirit, as the Turkish nation now. It is not riches or honour, or any external condition, that is valued by the new creature, 'there is neither bond nor free,' saith he. But then what hath the new creature, that undervalueth all these privileges, in lieu of them? He hath Christ, who is all in himself, and is in all. He doth not only say, that Jews Christ alone is all, the meaning whereof is this: Go take the old man, though it hath a thousand things to make it happy, yet it hath not one thing alone that is instead of all to make it happy, but it hath several thousand things that must always go to make a creature happy; but saith he, one Jesus Christ

doth it, 'Jesus Christ is all.' But that I note it for is this, to remark the phrase in all; he is not only said to be all unto all, but he is all in them all, 'He is all, and in all,' saith the apostle. He puts an emphasis upon it by way of difference from all outward things whatsoever. He is not only instead of all to Christians, but he is all in all Christians, and in every Christian. He is ail in them, that is, they may find Jesus Christ in themselves to be that to them which all things else are. As for example, go take a king, or any great person in the world, though he hath all things that this world can afford him, yet all these things are but all to him; they are not all in him, for all that goes to make them comfortable are out of himself: honour is out of himself, riches out of himself, dainty fare and beauty all out of himself, the wisdom he hath, indeed, that is in himself. But now take a Christian, as Jesus Christ is all things to him, so Jesus Christ is in him. All other things and a man may be severed, because they are but all to a man, but if all things were all in a man, a man could never be but completely happy. But so it is here, 'which is Christ in you.' He is not only all to you, but all in you; go whither you will go, you carry him about with you, that is all to you. And so now, that is a second thing which this phrase importeth, why the apostle addeth it here; saith he, if you have Christ in you, you carry about with you, wherever you go, him that is all to you; come what will to you, you can never be parted from this Christ, for he is in you. He is Christ in you, all these riches, and the hope of glory likewise.

Again, this phrase, 'which is Christ in you,' is thus added upon the commendation of the gospel; because, when a man comes fully to know the gospel, the more still he knows of the gospel and of Jesus Christ savingly, the more he comes to be nothing else in himself, and to himself, but Christ. My meaning is this: take a man that hath his spirit evangelised (as the Scripture phrase is), that is, that is gospelised, the more his spirit takes the gospel in, the more all he is, and all he hath, and all he doth, becomes to him nothing but Christ. Let the gospel have its full and perfect work, and Jesus Christ full admission into your hearts by faith, if he be fully formed in you, you shall see neither law nor nothing else in comparison of Christ, he will swallow up all; that though other things be in you, the law is written in your hearts, and the image of Christ is in you, yea, but Christ is all; 'Christ in you,' saith the apostle, all things are turned

into Christ, and he gives the glory of all to Christ, all is Christ in you. 'I live,' saith the apostle, 'and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,' Gal. 2:20. He doth not only say, he lived a life to Christ, as you have it in 2 Cor. 5:15, 'that we should not live to ourselves, but to him that died for us,' but he saith, that 'Christ liveth in him.' What life is it that is in title branch or in the buds? It is the life of the root. So saith he, 'It is not I that live,' I am but a branch, 'it is Christ that liveth in me.' Jesus Christ converteth the life of nature, the civil life, assimilateth all the actions of a Christian to himself, he liveth in him. When a man cometh to be perfectly evangelised, it is Christ in him. Even as the members of the body do live a reasonable life, but the reasonable life they live is merely from the head, it is the life of the head in the members. The tongue talketh reason. Where hath the tongue that reason? It is the life of the head in the tongue. That these dull members of ours live rationally, it is because they live the life of the reasonable soul. So now thus doth Jesus Christ to me, he liveth in me; it is not I that lives that spiritual life that I have in all that I do in matters of religion, it is Christ that liveth in me. He doth not only say that he liveth with Christ, as if Christ was the author of his life (and so it is, for I having had a life from him, I live with him), no; but he is the author of my life, as he is the root of my life, and he liveth in me, rather than I live, as having had life from him. And his scope was to shew that he was dead to the law; saith he, I can never be a Jew again while I live. Why? Because I have received Christ into me, and there is a life of Christ in me, so that I can never return to my works, return to the law again. That is his scope in that coherence. And therefore, you know, he defineth one that is of the true circumcision, that he rejoiceth in the Lord Jesus Christ: Philip. 3:3, 'And God forbid that I should rejoice in anything, saving in the cross of Christ;' so Gal. 6:14. Why? If I live, it is Christ that liveth in me; and if I die, to me to die is Jesus Christ, is gain; if I act anything, it is not I, but the grace of Jesus Christ in me; if I have any strength, it is the strength of Christ, 'Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,' 2 Tim. 2:1. If I be sanctified, it is not grace, so much as Christ, is made sanctification. The truth is, that as a man still grows up more and more gospelised in his spirit, so Jesus Christ is in him, and works out all things else, till there be nothing but Christ in him, melteth the soul into Christ as sugar is melted into wine. All a man's graces, whatsoever he doth, he turns it all into Christ, as it is all from Christ. As a beam is nothing if it be cut off from the

sun, so there is nothing in what the soul is, or desireth to be, but so far forth as it is knit to Christ, and cometh from him, and is received from him. My brethren, I use to say that grace is nothing but a company of nothings, and a company of alls, as I may so express it to you. It makes the heart to be nothing in its own righteousness, but Jesus Christ to be all. It makes the heart to be nothing in its own abilities to do anything, but Jesus Christ to be all. It makes the heart to be nothing in its own ends, but to set up Jesus Christ in all. It makes the heart to be nothing, in respect of being accepted for anything in itself, but to be graciously accepted in the beloved, to be all in that respect. It brings the heart to be nothing in comfort, to seek for nothing of comfort, but what is to be had in Christ, in the face of Christ. It makes the heart to be nothing in valuation of itself, but Jesus Christ to be all. These things indeed we all fall short of, but this will be your pitch, that there shall be nothing but Christ in you, not you in Christ, but Christ in you, if your spirits be truly and fully turned to the gospel, if they be evangelised. 'That you may know,' saith he, 'the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you.'

Lastly, It may also come in here by way of special instance, to shew that that union which Jesus Christ hath with the saints, and in the saints, whereby he and they are all one, and by which all the glory he hath, and riches in him, are made theirs; that that union, I say, of Jesus Christ and his saints, 'Christ in them,' is one great and eminent mystery of the gospel, and the greatest hope of glory. There are, saith he, a world of glorious riches and mysteries in the gospel, but I will give you one instance, which of all other is the greatest, or at least the comfortablest to you, and that is this, that Christ and you are one, that Jesus Christ is in you, and so the hope of glory. So that he speaks, I say, of the union that is between Jesus Christ and believers, as of all other the greatest and the richest mystery, at least the most comfortable into as which the gospel holds forth, and is the foundation of all glory and of all grace, it is the hope of glory.

He instanceth, I say, in that, both because it so much concerned them, and their comfort by way of application; and also, because in itself it is one of the greatest mysteries, and a thing of the greatest moment for

believers to know.

First, It is one of the greatest mysteries of the gospel.

I observe this, that all divines, when they come to speak of the union that we have with Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ with us, they do generally make this apology, if they handle it anything largely, that of all others it is one of the greatest mysteries. Still, I say, they make that apology, that great is the mystery of our union with Christ, and Christ with us. Therefore the apostle might well, in the close of all, say, by way of one instance of the greatness of this mystery, 'which is Christ in you.'

There are two things in the New Testament which the Holy Ghost doth put an emphasis upon, and calleth them great mysteries, and they are two unions. The first is, the union of the human nature with the Godhead in the person of Christ, 1 Tim. 3:16, 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.' What is that mystery? 'God manifest in the flesh,' that is, the Godhead was manifested in the human nature of Christ, uniting it to itself, and in that human nature shining gloriously as God. This thing, that God was made flesh, that the Son of God was made man, he saith, is a great mystery. The second great mystery is, that this Son of God made man should be united to a body of men, his church, his saints; that Christ should be in them as God is in Christ; and for that you have Eph. 5:32, 'This is a great mystery,' saith he, having discoursed before of the union of Christ and his church under the representation of the first marriage of Adam and his wife in paradise, and so he interpreteth himself; and saith he, 'I speak of Christ and his church,' for the but there is not adversative, but explicative, that is, when I speak of a great mystery, I mean the union of Christ and his church. It was a mystery that that union should be infolded in Adam's marriage, and it is a great mystery in respect of the thing itself. To give you a scripture or two for this.

The mystery of the union of Christ with his church is so great, that Christ himself parallels it, and setteth it out by the union which the Godhead had with him, and his union with the Father. So you have it in John 6:56, 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, he dwelleth in me, and I in him.' Here is now the union between us and Christ, here is 'Christ in

us.' How doth he parallel this union? Read ver. 57, 'As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.' The scope is plainly this, All life, saith he, is by union with the fountain of life. I being united to my Father, who is the living Father, do live by my Father. He speaks of himself as he is sent, as he is man, as he took up a human nature. 'The living Father,' saith he, 'hath sent me,' and so knit and united me to himself, and to the Godhead, and as thus sent, 'I live by him;' and you, saith he, 'do live by me,' and (as he saith elsewhere) 'because I live, you shall live also.' Why? Because, as it is John 14:20, 'I, am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.' That which I quote it for at this time is this, that he parallels our union, and the life we have by virtue of our union with him, with that union of his human nature with the Godhead, and with the Father.

And because I am fallen upon this place of John 6, I shall a little open it to you. You shall find that this is the great mystery that stumbled the world, yea, that stumbled his very disciples, many of them, so that they went and left him. In that chapter you have a sermon of his, in which he told them that they must, by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, come to be united to him, and whosoever did so was united to him. Now saith ver. 60, 'Many of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can bear it?' It is a hard saying, for how can one believe it? Nay, say they, it is an intolerable, an insufferable saying; whose ears can bear it? And they were disciples too, 'many of his disciples said.' And the saying is not only the eating his flesh, but it is all his whole sermon about it, that he would dwell in them, and they should dwell in him, by eating of his flesh. Saith Christ, 'Doth this offend you?' I will make the wonder yet greater; ver. 62, 'What and if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?' He poseth them with a greater mystery, and that is the near union of the human nature with the divine, so near that he that is now on earth is also in heaven by communion of properties, though all those that were reprobates did not see him ascend with bodily eyes, nor all the saints neither; but I am gone, saith he, and when ye hear that I am gone to heaven, verily you will think then that there can be no union between me and those that believe in me, for there can be no eating of my flesh or drinking of my blood. If therefore you wonder at it now, how will you conceive of it when I am gone up to

heaven? But, saith he, I will solve the mystery to you, if you will understand it; 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.' I have a Godhead in me, a divine nature (for that is meant by Spirit often, when Christ is spoken of, as, 'He was put to death in the flesh,' that is, in his human nature, 'but quickened by the Spirit,' that is, by his Godhead), I have, saith he, a Godhead dwelling in this human nature, though this flesh you cannot eat; and though, if I have nothing else but flesh, I could not dwell in you, nor quicken you, nor give life to you, yet having a Spirit, a Godhead in me, it is that which quickeneth. And how doth he quicken? And how doth he cause you to dwell in him, and himself in you? Why, saith he, by the words which I speak unto you, while you by faith chew upon the word that describeth me, as I am the Saviour of the world, as I give my flesh for the salvation of the world, the Godhead that is in me, and the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in me, causeth me by faith to dwell in you, and so to give you life; for so it follows in that 63d verse 'The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit,' and spiritually to be understood; and saith he, 'they are life.'

There is a great question amongst divines, whether we are first united to the human nature of Christ, and by it to the Godhead, or immediately to the Godhead? For my part, this place mightily helpeth me to resolve the question. 'It is the Spirit,' saith he, 'that quickeneth,' that is, the Godhead (now he had spoke of union before); and so by virtue of uniting to the Godhead of Christ, there is a quickening of us, and though we are united to whole Christ, yet to the Godhead first.

I shall give you another scripture that this is the great mystery of the gospel, it is in John 14:20 (a place I named afore, and did but name it). The greatest mystery that is in the gospel was reserved for the apostles to know it, when Jesus Christ should be ascended, for then the Holy Ghost fell upon them, for to reveal to them the great and glorious things of the gospel. Now what saith Christ there? 'At that day,' saith he, (namely, when the Holy Ghost if come, for he had promised to send the Comforter in the words before) 'ye shall know that I am in my Father, and yon in me, and I in you.' These two are made parallels. The apostles had had their union with the Father and with Christ before now, they had it at this time when he spake unto them; but saith he, then you shall know it, you shall

understand it, both experimentally in your own hearts, and you shall know the mystery of it, so as to teach it unto others; for so the apostles did, they received this knowledge by the Holy Ghost to communicate it to others. And this great mystery (which the apostles then did not so clearly understand, but should fully know it when they received the Holy Ghost) he reduceth, you see, to three heads, and all are matters of union, and indeed the one dependeth upon the other. First, saith he, you shall understand this great mystery, that there is an union between me and my Father, and the human nature and the Son of God, and so that I am one with him, and that is the foundation of all your comfort. This they understood not at first. 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me,' saith he. Secondly, You shall know that as I am in my Father, so you are in me; that is, that God the Father did from everlasting make me a public person for you, and I stood in your stead, and you all were in me, when I did whatsoever I did here upon the earth, and you are in me when I go to heaven; it is an union representative between you and me. And thirdly, you shall know that I am in you, and you shall feel it; and that is a communicative union, as I may so express it. And every one of these is the foundation of the other; you shall find, saith he, that as the union of myself with the Father, and the union of the human nature with the Son of God, is the foundation of my being a public person for you, why I was able to die, and my death to be effectual, so you shall find the power and virtue of all these communicated to you by my being in you; you shall be sensible of this union. This, I say, is the great mystery, which was reserved for the Holy Ghost to reveal unto the apostles themselves. And because that the comfort of all lies in this latter, to feel Christ is in me, for by that I climb up to the other, hence the apostle singleth it out, when he would hold forth and bring home to their hearts the riches of the glory of the gospel as theirs, and that Christ is theirs, and that they are one with the Father, and that Christ did represent them from everlasting, &c. He instanceth only in the latter, 'which is Christ in you.'

My brethren, this is so great a mystery, as that the angels do not know it as we do, for they are not united with so near an union to Jesus Christ as we are. As he took up our nature into a greater nearness with God, and did not take up the nature of angels, so he takes us up into a nearer union with himself, and so with God. It is a mystery indeed, that the angels

stand and admire at; 'seen of angels,' saith the apostle, and so it is admired by them, that Christ should be in us; but they do not feel it as we do, and therefore of all mysteries it is the greatest.

Chapter VIII: The glory of the gospel farther manifested, forasmuch as Christ, the great subject of it, is, in the work of God upon us, revealed in the soul.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, &c.—Gal. 1:15, 16.

My designed subject is, the application of Christ to us, or, the appearing of Christ in us. There is Christ in redemption, which work was wholly transacted out of us, between him and his Father. And the work thereof I have handled. But this is Christ in application, or as brought home to our hearts, which is as necessary for our salvation as that other of redemption.

You hear a great deal of talk of Christ within us. But as that talk runs, truly another Christ is meant thereby than that Christ, God-man, that Jesus who was crucified at Jerusalem. But, indeed, Christ within us is no other than that very same Jesus who was and is out of us; and both one and the same, even Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, and manifested in us and to us.

Brethren, there is the work of election, which is the Father's; there is the work of redemption: and both these wholly are performed without us. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world;' that is the Father and Christ giving himself for us a ransom. It was he that died and offered a sacrifice, and now is risen and ascended long afore we were, and it is he that now intercedes in heaven, and transacts all with his Father for us; and thus indeed considered, he is a Christ without us; but the same Christ is in you

when you are turned to God (or rather, that turns you to God, Acts 3:26), and are called by his grace, as the apostle saith here, 'when it pleased God to call me by his grace, and reveal his Son in me,' then you have the same Christ that is without you, revealed in you, and brought home to you; you have the whole of him first and last within you, according to what measure God hath appointed you in Christ, as you had the whole of himself given as a price for you, Eph. 5:2. It is the same Christ without us, and the same Christ within us; only what he is, or did for us without us, the same is applied to us. And it is this Christ in application (which is the very word the schoolmen use, of this matter) I would make my subject. And as concerning that, the doctrine with which I shall centre in is, that Christ revealed in us comprehends the whole of that work of application, first and last. Or thus, that the whole bulk and sum of our practical religion, as you use to call it, is resolved into God's revealing Christ, and Christ's revealing himself within us, from first to last, throughout our whole lives. Which comprehensiveness Paul surely intends here; for, in saying, 'when God revealed his Son in me,' though his first calling was the first beginning thereof, yet he withal took in what from thence he had gone on to do throughout the rest of his life, for the same end that at first; for that revelation at first was, that he might preach what was revealed unto the Gentiles. God, as he had begun, went on still to reveal him more in me, that I, knowing more and more of him, might be enabled to reveal more of him to others to whom I was sent; only then he began with me.

This phrase, 'revealing Christ within me,' hath made a great deal of do among interpreters, as well as amongst us of late days. It is a strange thing that Hierome, so long ago, should unluckily stumble upon the very notion of the Quakers, or that which in those days the Pelagians held, namely, that what light of God was in nature, or light of moral good in the conscience, was the grace of Christ, which is all one with what our Quakers' foundation is. And he fell upon this in opening this text: When it pleased God to reveal Christ in me, saith he, doth imply and suppose that Christ was in him before his calling, and his calling was but a revealing, a discovery of what was by nature in him: *Revelatur quod prius fuit in eo*; and plainly and boldly he saith, *Perspicuum est*, it is plain from hence, that by nature there is the knowledge of God, and that no man is born without Christ. This is the language that this man stumbled then upon.

And truly, this interpretation of Hierome's so scared many interpreters, as it diverted them from the true sense (though it be plain enough), though not to his sense, to say, that Christ was revealed in him, this phrase they knew not what to make of it, taken in the plain expression: Therefore,

Some interpreted it thus: 'When it pleased God to reveal his Son by me,' In me they turned to per me. Voluit per me filium cognitum facere, so Grotius took it. Brethren, there is an apparent contradiction to this in the text; for he makes the end of God's revealing him in him to be, that he might preach him to others, which denotes that to have been the final cause of God's revealing him first in himself. Therefore there can be no other meaning than this, that God was pleased first to reveal his Son in him, when he called him, that is, in the person of Paul himself; that he having the experimental knowledge of this Christ within himself, in his own heart, and his own soul, for his own salvation, he might be able to reveal him to others the more effectually, suitable to that in 2 Cor. 1:4, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we might be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' 'When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me;' to make him known sensibly unto me, and to apply him experimentally in and to my soul. He did this, that I might (having the knowledge of him for myself as the truth is in Jesus) make him known to others. And the words afore, 'He called me by his grace,' shew that he speaks of his first conversion, which was the fruit of his election, 'when it pleased God,' &c. And it was then that God began to reveal Christ savingly unto him, or any man, as the main intention of God's calling a man, and as the chief thing above all others revealed, or to be revealed at a man's conversion; though God reveals sin (you will say), he convinceth the world of sin, and of judgment, and holiness. Yea, but he revealeth Christ ordinarily above all, and in all. But of all saints that ever were or shall be, God pitched Paul's heart upon Christ at first, though he saw his sin too, Rom. 7, and the sin of unbelief especially, as he saith in Timothy. And the knowledge of Christ was the eminent work of Paul's conversion, and gave him a complete knowledge of him at first, because of the eminent present service God had for him to do. For immediately (he says) he consulted not, but fell to preach Christ instantly, whom he thus knew.

Calvin interprets it mihi, 'revealed Christ to me,' which he would carry into the revelation of the doctrine of Christ in the gospel, whereof he had said, ver. 11 and 12, 'The gospel which was preached of me is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ,' And he and the former have their criticisms and Hebraisms for this.

Beza* indeed admits of that reading; to repeal it to me, mihi (for so Calvin had afore expounded it:), but says, that it signified some further and larger matter; and that from the like Hebrew propriety, being all one with מן על, and so signifies the grace of God to have come down from heaven into his very soul in the revelation of Christ.

And Cornelius à Lapide, among the papists, says, some indeed read it he revealed it to me; but the word is, he revealed it in me, that he might signify that his spirit drank in this revelation of Christ into himself, within the very intimacy of his heart; so that Christ should be in him, and speak in him, when he preached to others. And he hath his Hebraism far this too.

The main sum and substance of Christianity them is, that Christ be revealed in us, and not only to us; that you come to have Christ by application in and to your souls; Christ brought down into your heart. Yea, and this is the design of election: 'When it pleased God,' saith he, 'who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me.' It was the design of God's good pleasure towards him from eternity, as the word imports.

But you will say, Why do you bring in Paul an instance to make this generally the sum of our Christianity first and last? You will say, This instance shews it to have been Paul's condition in and after his conversion; but what is this to us inferior Christians, to propound his example to us? Truly, because take but the substance of religion and of true conversion, and it is common to Paul and us. Indeed, Paul differed from us in some particular privileges about this matter. He differed from us herein, [1.] In the manner of having this revealed; for he had it by immediate revelation, as the 12th verse tells you, 'I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it,' i.e. by the ministry of men, 'but by the

revelation of Jesus Christ.' Where 'of Christ' notes not out Christ as the object of the revelation, but as the worker. Christ himself converted him, and Christ himself revealed himself to him, and the Father likewise, as the text here hath it; but as for us, we have it by man. Ours is by means of instruction; and yet that knowledge of faith which we have of Christ is called a revelation: Eph. 1:17, speaking of ordinary Christians, he prays that they may have 'the spirit of revelation' in the knowledge of him, that is, of Christ. Thus, as Adam was made a man, flesh and bone as we have, but he was made immediately by God; take other men, they have the same members of body and faculties of soul like, and answerable unto what Adam had, but we have them immediately by generation from man: so it was with Paul. Again, [2.] Paul and we differ in the measure; Paul had it by wholesale, as Adam was made a perfect man the first moment, and Paul had the whole system of the revelation of Christ in himself to his soul. He knew whole Christ at first, more or less. He might know more of him by degrees afterwards, but at that present he had a whole knowledge of him; and the reason is apparent from the end of it, which was, that he might preach Christ immediately. He had that in three days which others grow unto in many years. He was so fully instructed, and made the man of God so perfect, as in the 2d chapter of this epistle he says, that the other apostles, that were pillars, and had lived long with Christ, and had the Spirit come down upon them, to enlighten them in what Christ had taught them, Added nothing to him.

All, then, that God works upon you savingly, from first to last, is a discovery of Christ, some way or other, in you. It is either the knowledge of his person, or it is a conformity to him, or it is dispositions suited to what you know of him; workings upon us, and operations of God upon us suitable to what is in him; and this I call the sum or substance of our religion.

Even as to the first work upon a man when he is humbled for sin, my opinion thereof is, that in a man that shall be saved it is a different work from what is in wicked men, that have terrors of conscience, and shall not be saved; and that accordingly there is in it a part of conformity to Christ crucified; and I shall give you scriptures for it. Gal. 2:19, he speaks of being dead to the law through the law, which is to be convinced of sin;

and it is effected by the power of Christ crucified, so as if you ask, How came Paul to be thus dead to the law? he tells you, Rom. 7:4, that it was 'by the body of Christ.'

The very work of humiliation is a conformity to Christ; and it is a beginning of revealing Christ in us. And if a man will look back upon all hath been wrought in him, he shall see that it is all Christ.

But however, that which is the eminency of Christianity, the bulk and substance of it, that, to be sure, is, all of it, Christ in us. It was Paul's eminency that Christ was the sum of all he had and did, to the end that he might know and preach Christ; and it is the whole of Christ that God reveals sooner or later, more or less, in and to all Christians, whether they know it or no.

If any ask, Why, when he speaks of revealing Christ in us, he should rather say, revealing his Son in us? my answer is, The word Son comprehends the whole of Christ.

I shall give you but an observation or two more.

1. Happy is that soul that in conversion or calling was pitched first on Christ, or soon upon his conversion. If you that are now converted had lived in our younger days, you would have seen that we were held under John Baptist's water, of being humbled for sin, and the work of sanctification. But now, happy it is with some whose lot it is that their conversion work begins with Christ. Next after their humiliation for sin, they are pitched upon Christ. The work upon Paul was in this manner, who had the advantage of us this way, for Christ himself appeared to him, and yet he was humbled, and saw sin to be above measure sinful, Rom. 7, and therefore the work of humiliation is necessary unto faith in Christ.

2. Another observation is, that whoever of you will be preachers of the word, get Christ revealed in you, that you may preach him unto others, out of the experience of that revelation. John ate the book, and then wrote it, as you have it in Rev. 10:10.

3. Blessed is he that from his first conversion was pitched upon reaching

out the experiences he had to others. Some men have, as Paul had, their inward motion to be ministers upon their being called; as Paul had it conjoined therewith. And as God separated Paul from the womb for both, so he hath separated such.

FINIS

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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions February 2019 Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, OR 97068