

Monergism

# AN EXPOSITION OF 2 CORINTHIANS 4

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**by Richard Sibbes**

Sometimes Master of Catherine Hall in Cambridge, and Preacher to  
that Honourable Society of Grayes-Inne.

Psalmes 37:30. The mouth of the righteous will speak of wisdom,  
and his tongue will talk of judgement.

Vers. 31. For the Law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not  
slide.

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## **TO THE READER**

CHRISTIAN READER, there are three ways by which a minister preaches: by doctrine, life, and writing. It may be questioned which is the hardest.

1. Truly for preaching,—the apostle's *τις ἰκανός*, 2 Cor. 2:16, 'who is sufficient?' may correct the slight apprehensions of hearers, and the hasty intrusion of teachers. Luther was wont to say, If he were to choose his calling, he would dig with his hands rather than be a minister (a). The disposition both of speakers and hearers, saith Chrysostom, makes this work difficult (b). In regard of hearers, scarce any member groans under more moral diseases than the ear. We read of an 'uncircumcised ear,' Acts. 7:51; 'deaf ears,' Rom. 11:8,

Micah. 7:16; 'itching ears,' 2 Tim. 4:2; 'ears that are dull of hearing,' Mat. 13:15. Most people come to hear as men do to a theatre, non utilitatem sed voluptatem percepturi, not so much to feed their faith as please their fancy. And for teachers, how many dangers do they lie open to! If they do not preach novelties, falsities, yet to preach sana, sanè, sound things soundly; to deliver the word, ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι, Col. 4:4, 'as it ought to be spoken.' To 'speak a word in season,' Isa. 50:4; to 'approve' themselves to God workmen that need not be ashamed; ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, rightly cutting the word into parts, giving every one his portion, 2 Tim. 2:15.\* And when a man hath done God's work in God's strength, to go away, with a humble heart, hic labor:—such a one is an 'interpreter,' 'one among a thousand,' Job 33:23.

2. But then for the life. Alas! how many think the work is done when the glass is out (c); how many are good in the doctrine, bad in the application, especially to themselves; how hard is it to have life in doctrine, and doctrine in life! It is easier to preach twenty sermons than to mortify one lust. It was a harder task Paul set Timothy, 2 Tim. 4:12, when he bids him be an example to believers, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, &c., than when he bids him 'give attendance to reading, exhortation, doctrine,' ver. 13. Yet we shall often hear ministers say, They must study to preach, then study to practise. God would have the very snuffers in the tabernacle pure gold (d), to shew they that purge others must shine themselves. Surely they must needs be 'unclean,' that chew the cud by meditation, but divide not the hoof by practice. Lastly,

3. For writing—that hath more pre-eminency, though the two former have more vivacity. There is, saith a good man, as much difference between a sermon in the pulpit and printed in a book, as between milk in the warm breast and in the sucking bottle. Yet the

convenience of it is very great. Good books are the baskets that preserve excellent lessons that they be not lost. This also wants not its difficulty; for what censures, impostures, contempt, wrestings, have the labours of the most eminent saints been exposed to, yea, the Scriptures themselves—the pandect of all truth, the testament of our Lord Jesus—how much have they suffered in all ages, besides the great difficulty, that is in other men's spirits to write truth. Yet let us bless God for the writings of his servants, for by these, 'being dead, they yet speak to us,' Heb. 11:4. We have the prophets and apostles, in their writings, preaching to us. Their sermons were like a running banquet, refreshed many; their writings were a standing dish. Sermons are like showers of rain, wet for the present. Books are like snow-banks, lie longer upon the earth, and keep it warm in winter. It might be a problem whether professors preaching and writing, or confessors dying, have most profited the church.

Some have thought it preposterous in times of reformation to shut the pulpit against erroneous persons, and leave the press open to them, that being so compendious a way to propagate and to multiply errors; and the liberty, used more to condemn truths received, than to debate in a friendly way things indifferent. Indeed, it must be acknowledged a very sad thing, the multitude not only of vain but blasphemous treatises this age hath produced, and the great mischief they have done. But blessed be God, the press is as open to truth as error, and truth has been as nimble heeled as error. God never yet suffered any Goliath to defy him, but he raised up a David to encounter him. Though error, like Esau, hath come out first, yet truth, like Jacob, hath caught it by the heel, and wrestled with it, Gen. 25:26. If God hath suffered any horn to push at his Israel, he hath presently raised a carpenter to knock it off. Let us bless God for the witnessing spirit that is abroad, though it go in sackcloth, Rev.

11:3. Think how great a mercy it is to keep ground, though we cannot gain ground.

Let none complain of the multitude of good books. Though one bad one be too many, yet many good ones are too few; or, as one saith, 'one useless or erroneous book is too many. Many useful orthodox books are but one.' All the prophets and apostles make but one Bible, upon which account we may say all the books that faithfully interpret that are but one book.

All these ways this reverend author was serviceable to the church of God while he lived; and, since his decease, the providence of God hath brought to light several tracts of his, some sooner, some later. And that in great wisdom; for our foolish nature doth many times prize the labours of those dead, whom we despised living, as the Jews, 'Their fathers killed the prophets, and their sons builded their tombs,' Matt. 23:29. We may have such in these days. The spirit of man hath a more reverent opinion of things past than present, of things ancient than modern, of things farther off than near at hand. Another thing wherein the wisdom of God appears in the multitude of books, is, not only a discovery of the manifold gifts of the Spirit, that he pours on his servants (which could not well be seen but in variety and diversity), but also to invite us to the farther study of them by change; for the best of us have some seeds of curiosity. Now God, by the variety of gifts and graces in his servants, invites us to pass from one to another.

We shall say no more, but entreat thee to consider this treatise as a posthume.\* The notes were taken from his mouth by the pen of a ready writer, and a person of note and integrity, whose design is not to forge a piece under the author's name. The very style and matter is so like his other pieces, we hope the legitimacy of it will not be

questioned. It is easier to counterfeit another man's name than another man's gifts. Had the author lived to supervise his own work, no question but it would have passed his hand with more authority and more politeness. Thou wilt sometimes meet with some repetitions, yet with the addition of new matter. When thou meetest with it, read it as an impression which may carry force, and work more upon thy heart. In a word, the 'earthen vessel' is broken, the 'heavenly treasure' is preserved for thy use, and here offered to thee.

Now that God hath caused light to shine out of darkness, cause the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, to shine in thine and our hearts, more and more to the perfect day!  
So pray,

Thy souls' and thy faiths' servants in the Lord's work,

SIMEON ASH.

JA. NALTON.

JOSEPH CHURCH.



**A LEARNED COMMENTARY OR  
EXPOSITION**

**UPON**

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF THE  
SECOND EPISTLE OF ST PAUL TO THE  
CORINTHIANS**

## VERSE 6

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—2 COR. 4:6.

IN the last verse of the former chapter, the blessed apostle sets out the dignity of the gospel above the things of Moses and the things of the law. 'We all,' saith he, 'with open face, as in a glass, behold the glory of God, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory,' &c. And hereupon, in the beginning of the next chapter, he sets out the excellency of the gospel ministry, being conversant about so excellent a mystery, and sheweth his fidelity in it. 'Therefore,' saith he, 'we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commend ourselves to the consciences of all men in the sight of God.' Here he sheweth his fidelity in the ministry, and his courage, 'he fainteth not;' and likewise his sincerity, he 'labours to approve himself to the consciences of them in the sight of God.' Perhaps he had not all their good words; but it is better to have the consciences of people to give testimony of us than their words, their hearts than their mouths. Therefore the apostle knew not what they censured, but knew he had got some authority in their consciences; and therefore labours 'to approve himself to them in the sight of God,' which sheweth his sincerity. For this is the property of sincerity, to do all as 'in the sight of God;' to do good at all times, in all places, to all persons, in all actions. He that is sincere honours God in all.

Obj. Well, it might be objected, 'Many care not for the ministry nor the gospel, it is too obscure,' &c.; as it is the common course of the popish Jesuits to fall to accusation of Scripture as dark.

Ans. But, saith he, 'If the gospel be hid, it is hid to them whom the god of this world hath blinded.' And for further answer of the objection, 'If the gospel be hid from any, it is from them that perish.' And what is the cause? It is in regard of their own hardness of heart, joined with the malice of Satan. The god of the world hath thrown dust in their eyes, otherwise the gospel is clear enough. The blessed apostle was so privy to his own fair, open, free-dealing, that he dares freely say, 'If the gospel be hid, it is to them that perish.' There is no unfaithfulness, no obscurity in me. Satan hath an hand in it: 'the god of this world hath blinded their eyes.'

The god of this world. What! doth he put God out of his place? No; but the world maketh him so, namely, a god, by doing that to Satan, partly in himself and partly to his instruments, that they should do to God. They are at his beck, and run at his command; he leadeth them by worldly profits and pleasures, as a sheep is led by a green pasture. His influence acts. Wicked men are rightly styled 'men of the world,' Ps. 17:14; and Satan is truly called, by our apostle, 'the god of the world,' for they make him so by yielding to him in his designs.

Satan hath ruled in the church for many hundred years, yet more formerly than he doth in these times; but he did it subtilly. Great persons ruled by their friends, their friends were ruled by popish spirits; they by Jesuits, and the Jesuits by the man of sin, and he by Satan. So you see all resolved to the first principle. Satan hath a great hand in the government of the world. Doubtless the frogs that came out of the mouth of the beast, Rev. 16:13, are Jesuits and irksome

devilish spirits. He lieth hid in a corner, and is not seen; but he is the god of the world, because by his subordination he ruleth as he list.

Use. Here you see the malice of man, justice of God, and usurpation of Satan. Man is the delinquent, God the judge, Satan the executioner. Man hath a hard and malicious heart against the light, he swelleth against it, and hateth nothing so much as the light. Take a worldly man that hath great parts, offer him the world,\* contrary to his lusts and preferment, he will swell. Satan cavils against it. Indeed, men hate nothing so deadly as light, and this is the procuring cause of all mischief. When the truth is forced on you, and you will have none, then God as a just judge saith, Take him, Satan; take him, Jesuit; take him, this or that profane person or vice; and how can such persons escape the blackness of darkness for ever?

And, beloved, can a man receive this glorious light of the Lord Jesus, when men are so dull and ignorant in the great point of religion? not only because they hate the light, and put off God's just judgments, but also from Satan's temptations, either immediately from himself or his instruments. And lest this should seem to be spoken something too high, 'the gospel is hid to them that perish,' &c., therefore, saith he, 'we preach not ourselves, but Christ; and ourselves your servants for his sake.' He did not speak this arrogantly, for all his ministerial function. He aimeth not at himself, but 'I serve Christ; and am your servant for his sake.' Not the servant of your lusts, for had he been the servant of men he had not been the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ; but the servant of their souls, one that would have laid his hands at their feet to serve them, and would have been their servant indeed for their souls' good.

Now, the words that I have read to you shew the chief and principal cause of the glorious light of the gospel, and the means both to

remove the cause of obscurity from the Scripture, and from St Paul's ministry, and shew where it is indeed.

The principal cause of all light is God: 'God, that hath commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,' not only outwardly in his word, but in our hearts. And to that end he gave the word, &c. So here is the chief cause of the chief end.

First, The chief cause of all saving light that we have in the ministry of the word is God, that shineth in our hearts by the ministry of the gospel. And,

Secondly, The chief end is to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; not obscurely, like popish spirits, to impose darkness upon the Scriptures. Darkness is not from them; for the subject of the Scriptures declareth the image of God, not the accidental, but the real image of God the Father, who is light; and then they\* oppose God, who is light in himself. But the end of the gospel is to give light, and 'the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' If therefore the cause and matter and end be light, where is the cause of obscurity?

To come to the words:

First, You see the cause of light, of inward light in the heart. There is a double light—a light in the air and a light in the eye. So there is a light in the heart and a light in the truths themselves. Now, God is the cause of that inward light: 'God hath shined in our hearts;' not only to us, but in our hearts, by his Holy Spirit.

Second, The end of this light is, not to shine in our hearts to no purpose, but to shine in our hearts that we may shine to others; that we may prove the light we have, that shineth to us in darkness, to

convey the knowledge of God to all. What knowledge? The knowledge of Christ, and saving knowledge 'in the face of Christ.' And why doth God enlighten the ministers that they may convey light to others? That God's glory may be manifested. All is for his glory. The glory of his goodness, and justice, and his sweet attributes are manifested in Christ, which I shall speak of when I come to them.

Here he sets out God shining in the hearts of his ministers and children, by comparing of the light shining in darkness and God's commanding of light to shine out of darkness in the creation together. He ariseth from works of nature to works of grace, and from earthly things leads the Corinthians to spiritual things, in shewing an exact proportion between the things of nature and the things of grace; and therefore so should we in the matter of grace and glory.

This he doth to help our apprehensions of heavenly things, by these kind of glasses.

Therefore look how he takes things of nature to this end, and mark what he saith. He saith not Almighty God hath shined in our hearts, but he sets down that glorious attribute of God's almightiness by a word more familiar to our understandings: 'He that hath commanded light to shine out of darkness.' And thereupon sheweth the almighty power, wisdom, and goodness, that God graciously hath shined in our hearts. It is a wonderful comfort to the soul to single out of God what is fittest, either out of his attributes, his word, his works, or his creation.

But here we will speak first of that whence he raiseth his proportion, of God's commanding light to shine out of darkness; secondly, and then will shew the proportion between outward and spiritual light.

1. The proportion of God's commanding light to shine out of darkness, and of light to shine in the soul. The rise whence he fetcheth this is from the creation: 'God commanded light to shine out of darkness.' You know there was a primitive light; *lux primogenita*, as Basil calls it (e); the first light, which was before the body of the sun, and after was put into the body of the sun, at the fourth day. He created the light first. God 'commanded that light to shine out of darkness.' Now, there is much ado, to no great purpose, what that light was that was created out of darkness, before the sun was made the receptacle of light. The time is short, and to spend it in unnecessary speculations is curious to search, and too rash to determine what that light was, whence it was taken, whether out of the confused mass or the purest part of it, and so lifted up to shine in the world; or whether he did create light out of darkness, taking darkness for the terminus, and not for the matter, to create light out of darkness, because there was nothing but darkness before; or whether God created this primitive light out of any body in the mass, or it was created Out of darkness as out of a mass. But the Scripture determines it not, and therefore we will not meddle with anything in these matters without light of Scripture. Certain it is, that this light did distinguish day and night, and afterward was carried to the body of the sun. And it was created by God's commandment; for it is said, 'He that commanded light out of darkness hath shined in our hearts.'

Now, it is said here that light is God's creature. It is out of darkness, and it is by God's command. It was but his word *fiat et fuit*, a word and a world; as it was spoken it was made, Gen. 1:3.

1. The thing created was light; 2. The manner how, by the word; 3. Out of what? From darkness. I will not speak distinctly\* of them—it were to little purpose—but altogether: 'God hath commanded light to shine out of darkness.'

This command shews that God did it quickly and easily. It was but a word, a command; and he did it without any influence at all, by a mere word.

It was independently done of God. There was no matter to make it of, at least as good as nothing; for it was made of the mass. The mass was made of nothing.

Reason 1. Now, if you ask, Why God did create light in the first place? I answer, It was because he might distinguish his six days' works. If there had not been [light] to distinguish day and night, where had that distinction been?

Reason 2. And then again, God had lost the glory of his works if he had not created light. Light hath a heavenly quality, the principal of all qualities, the most excellent part of all.

Reason 3. And God created it first, that it might discover itself and all other things. It was *primum visibile*, that made all others seen. What had the beauty of the creatures been if light had not been created? They had all been covered in darkness. What end had there been of the eye and colours? Indeed, there is no quality that so much resembles God and divine things as light. The Scripture is exceedingly delighted in the using of this term light: 'God is the light of the world,' John 1:4, seq. 'Christ is the light of the world, that lighteth every one that cometh into the world,' John 1:9. The Holy Ghost is light, the angels light, the saints are the children of light. So that God taketh from hence those terms by which he sets out the dignity and excellency of himself, his children, and servants; and shews you the reasons of that light 'that enlightens every one that cometh into the world.'



Light sheweth and discovereth all the excellency of things, and distinguished one thing from another, and therefore Ambrose calleth it *lux prima gratia mundi* (f), the first grace of the world, and that ornament of the creature which sets out all other ornaments, that distinguisheth one from another.

Reason 4. Again, it is that quality that doth quicken and enliven, and therefore the things that do quicken and enliven are lightsome; a lively quality that puts life and cheerfulness into things. Light is sweet, Eccles. 11:7. And it hath a quality likewise that it is not alone, for it is *vehiculum*, a conveyer of all influence from heaven. The virtue of conveying life into things on the earth is the light. Heat is but a connection. Heat cometh with light; and heat together with light, fosters and cherisheth all things in the world; as in nature, if there were not fire and heat, what could be good in nature? and if not heat and light, what would become of the world? All progressions and motions come from hence; and when light discovers good or ill, danger or commodity, this or that, thereupon the creature moves or removes from things hurtful, by benefit of the light. To be in darkness is a most hideous and irksome condition. Darkness breeds nothing but fear and terror, which weakeneth the spirit, and doth whatsoever is contrary to light. *Lux gloria creationis, tenebræ sunt opprobria.*

I might be very large in setting out the excellency of it, and all to good purpose, that we might see the excellency of the benefit thereof.

O beloved, what were our lives without it! We forget common benefits. How dark, disconsolate, fearful, terrible, and uncomfortable were our lives if they were without this quickening and solacing quality of light! and therefore we ought to take notice even of the rise of St Paul. I do but give a taste, 'For God who commanded the light to

shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

We see then that God by his authority commanded light to shine out of darkness. But what God? God the Father or God the Son? I answer, Elohim, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. All things were first from the Father, but the Son was Λόγος, and it was the Word that gave this command, Heb. 1:3. But the will of God is his word. The will of Christ is λόγος; for God created all things by the Son, who is the Wisdom of the Father. Therefore this word, 'Let there be light,' came from that Word, that Λόγος, which is the cause of all things, as John 1:3, 'By him were all things made that were made.' And the Spirit was an immediate cause; for the Spirit of God lay upon the waters. It lay upon the chaos. By it all things were made. It brooded as a hen upon the chickens, and as an eagle fluttereth upon her young ones.\* The Holy Ghost did cherish and foster the primitive matter, on which all things were made. But they all agree in one.

You have the story in the first of Genesis. Elohim did it, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I would willingly come to some observation that may make it useful to us. Before I come to the main thing, this is worth our observing.

Obs. 1. That God commanded light out of darkness, to shew that God is the Almighty God, gracious, wise. We see that all things came from an almighty power. So the use of everything, the connection and subordination of one thing to another, it sheweth that all things came from a wise and gracious beginning. For we see that in the earth there are many beautiful things. The heavens, how glorious are they! and in the world how many excellent beauties! What were these if there were no light? and what were light if there were not an eye? Now, where there is a reference of one thing to another, and a

connection of things, and a use of one thing to serve another, it sheweth that he was a God, and a wise God, that made all. This principle cannot be too much stood upon, because the weight of Christianity lieth upon it. The order, and use, and goodness of things, and connection of things, shew there is a good and a wise God. Take that for granted.

So you see what manner of worker God is in the creation, although independent, that can do all things at a word, with ease, without influence, without help. He dependeth not on matter as we do, that can do nothing without matter and subject to work upon, but he can work his own matter, can raise things out of nothing.

Use. And it is very observable, for to help us in the dealings of our lives, to have such a conceit\* of God that we should not limit God in our thoughts; when we are in any extremity to tie him to this thing or to that thing. He can make matter out of nothing. Why should we limit the unlimited God, and so hinder our own comfort? Therefore we should infer hence, that God commandeth light to shine out of darkness. Observe that, when we be in dark conditions, and dark in sin, whatsoever sin and dark conditions we are in, as Isa. 45:7, 'I the Lord create light out of darkness,' that is, out of a darksome condition. Now light is taken for a comfortable condition, Esther 8:16. When we be in any dark condition, limit not God. He is an independent worker. Question not how this may be and that may be. We must not bring God within the compass of our conceits and reasons. God is not as man; and therefore whatsoever our condition be, let us never limit God. God's people should never be better, the times were never worse. Where we be bad, God is good. Times are bad, God is good. He can alter all. When there is no hope of escaping, no likely issue, God can make it good. In the hardships, the exigencies of the soul, God takes occasion to shew the glory of his

power, as Isa. 4:5, God, saith he, 'created a pillar of fire, to go before the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan.' If we want any comfort in any condition, being in covenant with such a God, if we be his children, he can create light, and can make a pillar of fire to go before his people to bring them to Canaan. See what the apostle saith, 2 Cor. 1:3, 'He is the God of all consolations;' not of this or that consolation, but the God of all consolations; that if we want he can work good out of the contrary, light out of darkness; he can draw matter of comfort out of discomfort; he can make every condition serve to his own ends; he can make 'all things work together for the good of his children,' Rom. 8:28. The greater the power of this great God is, the greater is our comfort. We serve a God that can 'command light to shine out of darkness,' and shall we despair in any condition whatsoever? He can give rest without sleep, and strength without meat. He cannot be limited. Therefore let us not limit him.

Use 2. So again, for the state of the church, whatsoever condition it is in, consider the creation. 'God commands light to shine out of darkness.' The church being in darkness, God can command the light presently to shine out of darkness, as in Esther's time, Esther 6:3, seq. What terrible darkness was the church in, when Haman was commanded to destroy all the Jews! and what a terrible case was the church in in Egypt and Babylon! In a most darksome condition; and yet God brought light out of darkness, as in Esther's time.

And so of latter times; a little before Luther's time, was not the church brought low, so that darkness overspread the world? and cannot God raise up the blessed light of the truth? And also of latter times, look but the last year,\* in what a dark condition the church was. But God begins to do for his church again. Who would have thought this the other year, when the enemy began to be so insolent? But God can fetch Cyrus from the east and from the north to help his

people, Isa. 44:28; 45:1. God can fetch a man from the north, from this place and that place, to help his church. Therefore in no condition of the church despair; for we are in covenant with God, that can 'command light out of darkness.' 'He that is in darkness, and hath no light,' let him trust in the name of his God, Isa. 50:10. We must cast anchor at midnight, and trust in the midst of darkness. We see darkness is hideous, yet a little spark of light doth banish it, and overcome it, as a little rotten wood expelleth it in some measure, that hath shining in it. Now, beloved, is this darkness in the world, this lower darkness, driven away by a spark of light in some proportion? and shall not we think that great Light, the Father of lights, God, when he shines on the soul, will quickly banish away all darkness? It must needs be so.

Use 3. This may help us likewise for time to come. Great things are promised for time to come. We must help ourselves by this former work of creation. God that 'commanded light to shine out of darkness' will restore the Jews his ancient people again. St Paul calleth it the resurrection from the dead, Rom. 11:15. It shall be a raising from the dead, as it were. He that 'commanded light to shine out of darkness' can do it, and will do it. He that did make all things out of nothing, can cause that that which is less, a resurrection. And so the fulness of the Gentiles, they be now in darkness, and in the shadow of death. What pitiful darkness are the East and West Indies in, and many of the southern countries, that serve the devil, not God? Better times are coming. The converting of the Gentiles will come, and in due time we may expect that the 'man of sin' shall be laid flat in the dust. Babylon shall fall. It is fallen exceedingly much, specially in the hearts of the people, which is the way to the last fall; but antichrist must fall together, and then the church will be glorious, Rev. 14:8. He that made all things out of nothing, can make great things out of nothing. He that made of nothing glorious things, can

make glorious things nothing. It is the same power to annihilate that it is to create. God, that made all things out of nothing, can bring all things to nothing. God will consume, and blast, and blow upon that 'man of sin.' Jehovah is mighty, and doth mightily. Therefore the vast world shall be consumed ere long. Comfort yourselves therefore with these things from hence, that God that made all things of nothing, can turn those things that are into nothing again.

Would you know how? 'Strong is the Lord that judgeth his,' Rev. 18:8. He answereth an objection. Oh, but she flourisheth, and hath many princes, emperors, potentates, and strong arms of flesh to support her. 'But strong is the Lord that hath spoken it,' and can do it. If God will consume her, who can support her? Thus we see what use to make of the foundation of St Paul: he fetcheth it from God's commanding light out of darkness.

It is a very sweet use to search the former works of God, to look back and consider what God hath done in former times. You may see in Isa. 27:3, and Ps. 74:16, 'The day is thine, the night is thine.' Thou hast made distinctions between day and night: thou canst deliver thy church. It is a singular grace to make use of common things, even of the works of creation; for herein a child of God differs from another. Another takes God's common mercies, and sees the works of God, and goeth on brutishly. A fool considers not these things. Oh, but the intelligent Christian considers the great work of creation, of his commanding of all things out of nothing, and he can make no common use of things. And that is the excellency of a Christian; to support his faith, he can make use of sacraments, and word, and creation. Therefore, let us know we be God's children, by gaining glory to God by our gracious spirits, by shewing our skill by the Spirit, to let nothing pass without observing, which may support our faith and encourage our souls, as the apostle fetcheth comfort from

the work of creation. Let us make use of this so great a God, who can do great things, and you can do great things with him. If a company would join in an army of prayers, it were worth all the armies in the world; it would set the great God on work. He that can raise light out of darkness, what cannot he do to his poor church, if they had a spirit of prayer to set him on work! Let us pray for the things we have promises for with much confidence: for the conversion of the Jews, and confusion of the 'man of sin.' We have the word for it. God goeth before it. The enemies begin to fall before the church. Follow God wheresoever he goeth. There is something for faith to lay hold upon, and encouragement, that he is mighty; and whatsoever he can do, he will do for the good of the church; and you see how he can do it. He doth but command, and it is done. God with his beck commands all. He can hiss for an enemy from the farthest part of the world, and have them come presently, Isa. 5:26. His finger will do great matters: what will his arm do then? When our blessed Saviour was in the days of his flesh, and said, 'Avoid, Satan,'\* he must be gone presently. He commanded away the devil at a word; he rebuked fevers, sicknesses, waves, tempests: he spake but the word, and all was quiet and still; the devil and all, at his command. And is not he as strong in heaven as on earth? It is but a word, out of doubt, to deliver his church, and restore lightsome times again.

'What aileth thee, O thou Jordan, that thou gatherest thyself on heaps? The sea fell back at thy rebuke, O Lord,' Ps. 114:5. He hath all things at command. A whale is commanded to receive Jonah, 1:17; a fish was at his command to bring tribute, Mat. 17:27; and all things in heaven and earth. Oh what a God we serve, who as he can bring out of darkness, so he can do it by his word.

Use 4. Therefore, labour from hence for perfect resignation of our souls, and bodies, and conditions, into the hands of this God that can

do all with his word, as those three men did in Dan. 8:16, 'God can deliver us if he will,' but we will resign ourselves into his hands. What lost they by that? And the poor man in the gospel: 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,' Mat. 8:2. Presently, 'I will, be thou clean.' If we can, in any disconsolate condition, say, If thou wilt, Lord, thou canst, we shall, in God's blessed time, have an answer, I will; therefore thou shalt be in a better condition. Leave it to him that knoweth better what is for the good of us, than ourselves do.

And therefore, I beseech you, make this use of it. Give up yourselves to God, and serve him exactly and perfectly. Will you have a rule and a ground to serve God exactly at every beck and command? Remember you have such a God as commands light out of darkness, and shall not we serve him? Shall we be slack in obedience to him that can create comforts when we want? that can bring us out of any condition, or at least, can make any condition comfortable? He can enter into dungeons, prisons, and make prisons paradises; he can by his Spirit do immediately what the creature doth; for what command is in the creature but it is in him? And he can speak that comfort to the soul that the creature can;\* and therefore, shall we not walk perfectly with him that is an independent worker, that can work above means, against means, that can do all he hath done, and more than he hath done, can do all that he will do, and will do more than we can conceive he can? And shall not we resign ourselves to him, and walk perfectly with him? shall we displease him, to please men? shall we leave his subjects and children, for this and that fear? Let our condition be never so uncomfortable, he can make it comfortable, and he can make the greatest and most glorious condition in the world a hell; and therefore, let us make use of these in all the extremities of the church.



## VERSE 6, Part II

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The apostle labours, in the beginning of the chapter, to remove an imputation cast upon the gospel, as if it were not true doctrine. But if it be so, it is to them 'in whom the god of this world hath blinded their eyes.'

Secondly, he labours to remove the imputation of vain-glory, as if his preaching did such great wonders; and sheweth that the efficacy of all is from above, from God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness; and for this end, 'to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

The words have these two parts: the chief and principal cause of all heavenly light in us—ministerial will not serve the turn—'God commanded light to shine,' &c.

For the first, 'God hath commanded light to shine out of darkness.' There is no less work to shine in that dark heart of man, than to create the world, to create light out of darkness. So much harder than that (though not in regard of an omnipotent power, for to that nothing is hard, but in regard of the thing itself), because there is much obscurity and rebellion in the heart. There is no help at all.

To add a little—that we may be raised up to admiration of the excellency of the new creature. There is nothing at all of it in our nature. There is something in nature to join with duty; there is a seed of it in us. But for heavenly light, for knowledge of God in Christ,

there is nothing at all of it in nature. It must not be repairing and piercing, but a whole creation. And therefore there be more good lessons in the gospel than in the law, because the law hath something in it that accordeth with us, for the law and the law in our hearts agree; but the gospel is altogether from without, both the truth itself, and the special grace wrought by the gospel. And therefore the proud and vain hearts of men make this and that conceit of Christ and his offices, because nature will not submit to it, it having nothing of it in itself; and therefore the gospel must raise oppositions. It bringeth in self-denial, being the first doctrine, so contrary to the will, which turneth a man out of himself. Therefore God that created light out of darkness must shine in our hearts.

And yet let me add this, we should not despair, for it is God that shineth. Come under the means wherewith God is pleased to be effectual, attend on the posts of wisdom, and God will stir the waters in his good time, John 5:3, will convey an almighty power in the use of the ordinances. Let no man therefore despair, because it is in God's power to shine in our hearts, and it is well for us that it is in the power of God to work grace, for now it is out of our own. And all immediately depend on God. Meet him, attend him there, and he will meet us; depend on him, and undoubtedly he will work grace first or last. This is God's way, and you shall find God in it.

Secondly, the end of this light that God commandeth to shine in our hearts, not in our brains. God's illumination goeth through the whole soul, alters the will and affection. They that are not altered in the course of their hearts and souls, as well as their understandings, in Scripture they are said to know nothing at all. He that knoweth not Christ so as to put off the old man, and put on the new, that hath not divine light passing through the understanding to the will, and

through the whole man, he knoweth nothing in religion but what may stand with damnation.

When the light presseth on him in his courses, he is always reproving it, and therefore they be never quiet. It is a vexing light, an unprofitable light, nay, a light whereby damnation is increased, if it be not joined with sanctification and illumination overspreading the whole soul.

And the end of it is to give the 'light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

God's children they have light shining on them. No man hath grace in themselves alone; and specially it is true of ministers, who besides personal graces, have graces of office for others. And therefore 'God shineth in their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' He shineth on them that they may reflect their light on others, as the moon and stars, that have their light from the sun, that they may reflect on the earth, and inferior bodies.

1. The particulars are these: the knowledge of God is the end of all. Now that God will be glorified, especially in his attributes of mercy and love, wisdom and justice, and holiness, all these are seen specially in the gospel, but most of all the sweet attributes of grace and mercy. The glory of God is his aim, and his glory shines in these attributes, and they shine in the face of Christ.

Now Christ must be made known, his face must be shewed, and therefore there must be a light to make known the face of God in Jesus Christ. Religion is the way of God, the end especially in these sweet attributes, and these must have a ministry. God hath ability at call, to give the light of the knowledge of these excellencies in Christ.

Of the first we spake. There is one first cause of all things, and one last end, that is God; all for his glory. All things come from God, and all things must terminate and end in him. Now this glory is victorious, excellent, and manifested, and so manifested as it is apprehended by others. Now God's glory is wisdom, mercy, holiness, goodness. They are excellent in God, and excellently victorious over the contrary; for he is so good that his goodness is above our ill, and it is with a glorious discovery, and it is glorious that we do apprehend it. For if we be Christians, our eyes be opened by the Spirit to apprehend the glory that shineth in the gospel. Therefore God sets down this excellency by way of glory. It is not ordinary grace, but glorious grace, glorious love, and glorious wisdom, to reconcile mercy and justice. It is glorious, and eminently victorious. And all Christians have eyes to see that it is no ordinary excellency, but glory in God. When God will have it excellently set out by the word, he calls it 'glory,' to satisfy a conscience awakened, which will not be satisfied but by glorious mercy and infinite mercy. When we be in health and strong to sin (as many, the Lord be merciful to them, use their wits and strength and policy to offend, running in a course of sin, and never think of these); but Satan is a cunning rhetorician; he will amplify bitter things against us at the hour of death and time of temptation. And unless we have something that is above all his rhetoric and high mercies, victorious mercies, glorious mercies above all our sins, and above Satan's malice, the conscience will not be satisfied.

And let no man object his sins at such times, for God is glorified when his mercy is received, and his goodness entertained. 'Where sin aboundeth, grace aboundeth much more,' Rom. 5:20. Where sin aboundeth in the conscience that is guilty and groaneth under it, oh grace aboundeth in such a man; grace is glorious grace to such a

man. The more thy sin is, the more is the glory of grace in pardoning it.

But how is this glorious mercy and goodness of God derived\* to us, God being so pure and holy, and we so unholy?

Therefore in the next place, it is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God will not suffer the glory of one of his attributes to devour and consume another, but he will have his justice fully satisfied. And therefore this glorious mercy is to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ, who was made a curse for us, Gal. 3:13.

'In the face of Jesus Christ.' It is a borrowed speech, and all one with that which went before, 'Christ who is the image of God,' in the 4th verse of this chapter. He meaneth the person of Christ, incarnate, and living, and dying, and being made a curse for us: Christ made man.

Face is the person described by that face; for the face is the most known part of a man. It is the glass of the soul, wherein we may see a man's inside, his affections, love, hatred, and whatsoever is in the inward man. And so God discovers himself, and whatsoever is in him, 'in the face of Jesus Christ.' We may see his hatred of sin, his love of the elect, and whatsoever is in God. Whatsoever we see in Christ, it is in God originally.

We will unfold the point in three particulars.

1. First, We will shew that in the gospel we see the face of Christ, that is, more familiarly than others. It is a speech appropriated in some manner to the gospel.

Secondly, We see the face of God in Christ.

Thirdly, That this seeing of the face of God in Christ is a most comfortable and excellent sight and knowledge.

First of all, in the gospel, we see the face of Christ. Moses, and all before Christ, saw Christ, but not the face of Christ. They saw him not so plainly, clearly, distinctly, and comfortably as we do in times of the gospel.

Now we see Christ incarnate, and Christ sacrificed for us; Christ dead, risen, ascended, and sitting on the right hand of God. They did not. And therefore Saint Ambrose saith well, *Christus umbra in lege, imago in evangelio, veritas in cœlo*; in the law he was a shadow, the image of God in the gospel, but in heaven he is the truth (g). And there we shall see him most lively of all.

Now there be five or six ways of God's manifesting of himself.

1. One is more excellent than the other, that is, by speech, which is an excellent manifestation.
2. And then by vision.
3. And then by dreams, as in old time.
4. And then by miracles, of which he wrought many.
5. And by sacrifices, as the passover.
6. And last of all, by types.

All these ways God manifested himself before Christ. But, as Heb. 1:2, now God speaks to us in his own Son, that is, more familiarly, even by God in our nature; and therefore the manifestation by Christ is more excellent than all former manifestations.

Then his three offices were shadowed out by king, priest, and prophet. All the kings, priests, and prophets were shadows of this great prophet, priest, and king. And all the benefits of salvation were shadowed darkly: his election, by singling Abraham out of his father's house, Gen. 12:1; the Israelites out of the world; his vocation, by calling of Abraham and his people, Gen. 17:5; his justification, by divers sacrifices, which were types of Christ; by the paschal lamb, Ex. 12:3, seq.; by the brazen serpent, Num. 21:9, the propitiatory and the mercy seat, Ex. 25:17. The great work of redemption shadowed out, by their redeeming out of Babylon and Egypt, Ex. 12:31, seq.; the great works of sanctification, by their washing and cleansings, Lev. 14:8, which were the shadow of the inward purity of the soul; and glorification, the consummation of all blessings, by the land of Canaan, Josh. 1:2, seq., and 'the holy of holies,' which was the type of heaven, Ex. 26:33. So that all the benefits we have of salvation were shadowed out then, but they be clear in the gospel; we see the face of Christ. In the gospel we hear Christ speaking himself. God in our nature discovers all these things to us.

Obj. But you will say, We cannot see the face of Christ, for it is gone, we cannot see him now.

Sol. No. But when we preach the gospel, receive the sacraments, hear the word, we see Christ. We see Christ in the gospel, the word is the glass of Christ; and so are the sacraments, wherein you may see the face of Christ. *Fides est spiritualis oculus*; faith is a spiritual eye, and seeth Christ.

But Abraham saw Christ and was glad. True. But now faith sees Christ more clearly than ever before. Nay, it is in some sort better for us to see Christ with the eye of faith in heaven than to see him on the earth walking up and down. Many reprobates saw him on earth, but

now none can see him but with eyes of faith; none can speak to Christ but those that have learned his language.

And it is for our advantage that we see not Christ now. He doth more good in heaven than he could do on the earth. He is now at the right hand of God, and hath all power in heaven and earth. The sun, if it were lower, would consume the world, but it is high, that it may shine over more than half the world at once. So Christ, for the good of the church, is gone to heaven, and we have more good from him by the Spirit than if he were on earth.

Obj. But you will say, We shall not see his face till we see him in heaven.

Ans. True. Therefore, mark, 1, the diversity of the phrase in comparing it to former times.

We see his face in the gospel. But if we compare these times to the glorious times when he will come gloriously to judgment, we saw him but in the glass, then we shall see him face to face. So you see in what sense we see the face of Christ. What they expected and looked for, that we see. Beloved, it is happiness for us to live in these times of the church. We see Christ clearly. All the happiness of the church dependeth on the Scripture and knowledge of Christ; for he is the glory of the church, and the happiness of the church. And those times that have most of Christ are the most happy times. Now, considering we in the latter age of the world know Christ most, we are most happy. Wherein was the first temple glorious above the second? The second temple had not many things the other had. Ay, but Christ came into the second temple, and that made it glorious: 'Blessed is the eye that seeth the things that you see, and the ears that hear what you hear,' Mat. 13:16.



So it is our happiness that we live in a second spring of the gospel, and not when it was covered not only with Jewish ceremonies, but with fond\* superstitions of their own. But now we see Christ face to face. His excellency is unveiled. It is our happiness if we be better for it, or else it will increase our damnation.

2. But it is not sufficient, unless we see God in Christ, and the glory of God 'in the face of Jesus Christ.' For the soul will not rest but in God. God is the last rest and stay of the soul. As 1 Peter. 1:21, Christ was raised again from the dead, 'that your faith and hope might be in God.' God is the stay, and rest, and subsistence of the soul; it cannot rest but in God. So that we must see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, else the soul will not be sufficiently stayed. Therefore consider in what sense 'the glory of God shineth in the face of Jesus Christ.' You must know first that Christ is the perfect image of his Father; his Father shineth in him.

There be three or four things in the Scripture that set out this great mystery. As, 1, Christ is called the character of the Father, χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως, Heb. 1:3. They differ in this, that they be not the same in personal subsistence. They be Father and Son, one in essence; in love to mankind all one; only in personal subsistence they differ, the Father is not the Son.

2. Then he is the Wisdom of the Father.

3. Then he is the Word, shewing the likeness. The word is but the image of the soul. There is the inward word and the outward word; the inward is nothing but the expression of the soul, and when it is outwardly expressed, it is but the soul conveying itself outwardly. And therefore in the original tongue, we shewed that one word sheweth both reason and speech, because speech should be nothing but the issue of reason. And therefore Christ is called λόγος.

It is not enough that the glory of God appeareth in the second person of the Trinity, that he is the character of God, and the image of God, and the Word, but we must see what he is to us, and how he discovers the word to us.

So that he is the image of God in a double sense.

1. As an invisible image of his invisible Father.
2. To us-ward, he sheweth to us what the Father is; so that he is the image of God, in regard of God, and in regard of us.

We see by his discovery the wisdom of God in him, and so he is the hidden word, that is, the expression of the Father. But what is that to us, without expression to us? So that he is made to us. As a man knows what is hidden in a man's mind, by his words, so by Christ we know the hidden meaning, and good will of the Father to us, because Christ is the word in a double sense, as an expression of the Father's image, and his discovering to us the words of the Father.

So that the glory of God, especially God the Father, is now to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ, not only as Christ is the second person, God, but as Mediator, God-man. Now Christ is the image of God to us, the wisdom of God to us, and the character of the Father to us.

To come to it more particularly. 'In the glory of God to us, shining in the face of Jesus Christ.' Everything in the Father is comfortable to us, shining in Christ. God as discovered in Scripture is not comfortable to us, but as discovered to us in him.

1. As the sweet sovereignty of God over all in Christ. He is made King of kings, Lord of lords. So in the face of Christ we see God Lord over

all, for our good, committing all to Jesus Christ: 'All power is given me from my Father,' Mat. 28:18.

2. And all the graces that are in God. You may term them so, for indeed all the sweet excellencies in God are seen in Christ, as the wisdom of God, the justice of God. All the sweet affections of God are seen in Christ. What are those that in a high sense may be attributed to God? That is, his love and mercy; God is love, but he is so in Christ, he is 'the Father of mercy,' but it is for Christ's sake that he is so. His sweet love to mankind, see it in Christ.

3. And then the relation he stands in. Take one, his being our Father. How is God our Father in a comfortable sense? He is a Father to Christ; and what Christ is by nature, we are by adoption. 'I go to my Father and your Father;' therefore to your Father, because my Father, 'to your God and my God;' therefore to your God, because my God, John. 20:17.

4. Now, to go on farther, take Christ in all his states and offices, take him in his whole dispensation of salvation, and you shall see something of the glory of the Father in all. The Father, by his Spirit, sanctified him in the womb, gave his only begotten Son to death for us, made him a curse for us. 'To us a Son is given,' Isa. 9:6. The Father raised him up again. See the Father in his humiliation and exaltation, see him in all the sweet offices he hath taken upon him to accomplish our salvation. The Father hath anointed him by the Spirit to be king, and priest, and prophet. Him hath the Father sealed, setting his stamp on him, to be our Saviour. The Father hath sent him; he hath his warrant and commission from the Father. The Father hath set him forth to be a propitiation, Rom. 3:25. So that all the authority he hath in all his offices it is from the Father.

5. But more specially, we see the love of the Father in Christ crucified and made a curse for us. For there, as it were, the Father poured out his bowels. For how could the mercy and goodness of God appear, more than to give his own Son, equal with him? as it is at large set down, Phil. 2:6, seq. That God should give his Son, the greatest gift that ever could be thought of, that could make ten thousand worlds of nothing, that he should give him to us, and take our nature into unity with his divine nature, that he might suffer in it; how could the glory of mercy shine more than to give him to be a curse for us, to satisfy his justice in that manner? It is a mystery that requireth a large time, for herein shineth the glorious mercy of God, but especially Christ's love in giving of himself, and the Father's in giving him. So you see how the glory of God shineth in Jesus Christ.

Quest. But how doth Christ discover the Father to us?

Ans. 1. He discovers his Father to us, in opening his Father's meaning, as a prophet teaching us, coming to be a minister of the circumcision to teach in our nature; and to teach by his Spirit in his apostles and ministers, to the end of the world. Therefore, John 1:18, it is said, that 'the only begotten Son of God, that lieth in the bosom of the Father, hath revealed him to us.' Christ is the ἐξηγήτης, the great expositor of the Father, the λόγος, for he lieth in the bosom of his Father, which implieth an intimate knowledge, because he lieth in the bosom, he knows the secrets of God's love to every particular believing soul. It implieth likewise a high valuation of Christ, to shew that the Father loveth him and honours him.

Now 'lying in the Father's bosom,' that is, the Father being so intimate and familiar with his Son, there is knowledge of union (different from our knowledge of faith) which the human nature hath from the divine, by virtue of union, and he is fit to discover it,

because he is in the bosom of the Father, highly valued and prized by the Father.

2. Again, Christ is discovered not only as lying in his bosom, as an expositor and prophet; but Christ discovers what his Father is by his whole life and conversation. For see Christ, and see the Father. See his meekness and humility in stooping low, his love, his fruitfulness, his goodness, as a man; for so he resembleth God, as his human nature could do, every way shewing forth the grace of God in his whole course, disposition, and conversation, he carrieth himself as the Son of God.

3. But the main way whereby Christ layeth open God the Father to us, was in his suffering. The Father was discovered in all that Christ did and suffered. For it was all done by the Father's authority. Christ did not only speak by words shewing what the Father was (as the son when he resembleth the disposition of the father, we say, you may in him see his father), but you may see the Father's authority in everything. So 'God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,' John 3:16. It pleased the Father to reconcile the world to himself. So you see how the face of God is discovered in Christ, and how Christ discovers himself, John 1:18; it is an excellent place. 'No man hath seen the Father at any time, but the only begotten Son he hath revealed him;' and John 14:11, "Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.' They both agree about the salvation of mankind. You not only see the love of the Son in our salvation, but the love of the Father in the Son. In Eph. 1, Gal. 1, these great mysteries are at large unfolded.

4. But one other way, and the most sweet of all, whereby Christ revealeth his Father to us, is by his Spirit, together with the means of salvation; for as it is excellently set down in Mat. 11:27, 'No man

knoweth the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son revealeth him,' that is, by the Spirit. None knoweth the Father to be his Father but by the Son, who 'hath begot him by the Spirit. None knoweth the Son but they that be begotten by the Spirit. We must have the Spirit both from the Father and the Son before we can have the Father and the Son, and therefore it is called communion of the Spirit; because the Spirit of the Father and Son discovers the Father to be our Father, and the Son to be our Saviour. So that add this to all other discoveries, and you have a full discovery of Christ, as the Father is laid open by Christ to every particular Christian. You see then that God the Father hath shined in the face of Jesus Christ. God the Father liveth in light that no soul can approach to but only the Son. He is come out of his hidden light. Nay, the Father hath discovered the bowels of good will to mankind, and in his Son he discovers by his Spirit his particular good will to every particular Christian. So that we may with boldness go to the Father in the name of Christ.

Three things beget boldness:

First, When the matter of disagreement is taken away.

Secondly, Likeness of disposition.

Thirdly, Acquaintance and familiarity.

1. Now Christ, by his death and suffering, hath taken away the disagreement, that is, our sins. He hath borne our sins, and borne them away as the scape-goat did, Lev. 16:8. When we believe in him, he takes our sins and carrieth them away: *Christus tibi crucifixus est, cum credis in Christum crucifixum*, Christ is then crucified to thee, when thou believest in Christ crucified. So that the sluice of mercy being open, it runneth amain on us.

2. There must be a likeness; because by Christ we have the Spirit to renew us, to make us savour the things of God, to love the things God loveth, to hate the things God hates. Now, a sanctified soul delights in communion with God, a carnal man hates it; the more holy anything is, the more he distastes it.

3. Again, from likeness of disposition comes familiarity and acquaintance with God, cherished by love, devotion, and piety; and all this we have in Christ. And therefore we go boldly, having God's justice fully satisfied, and finding the Spirit renewing our natures, and claim acquaintance with God, and pour out our souls to him as to a Father in Christ Jesus. Oh the wonderfulness of this privilege, that now in Christ we can call God Father, his Father and our Father; that we can pour out our complaints before him, as to a gracious Father, in all our necessities! The world is not worthy of this privilege that we enjoy, who in all distresses and wants can go boldly to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and call him our Father.

Use 1. We should value these privileges more than we do, and improve them more than we do. Are we in God or in Christ? Then glory in God—Rom. 5:3—whence the apostle Paul makes a threefold glorying:

1. A glorying in affliction under the cross.

2. He glorieth in the hope of glory; and not only so, but

3. 'We glory in God.' How is that? That God the Father is ours. If Christ be in me, I have God with Christ: 'God is with Christ reconciling the world to himself,' 2 Cor. 5:19. 'All things are yours; you are Christ's; and Christ is God's,' 1 Cor. 3:21, 23. If we are Christ's we have God, and all; and can we have more? 'Shew us the Father,' saith Philip, 'and it sufficeth us,' John 14:8; that is, shew the

Father to be our Father, bring us into acquaintance with him, and what need we more? Let it be discovered to our souls that God is our Father, and that will suffice, or nothing.

Use 2. Labour therefore to joy in this prerogative; and when we think of God, let us not think of Deus absolutus, of an absolute God distinguished from Christ. If ever we go to God in prayer, look up to him 'in the face of Christ.' We must ascend to him as he descended to us. How is that? Doth not he descend and convey all his favours in God incarnate, nay, God in our flesh? He came down in our nature, and we must go back again to him in our nature, in Christ; and therefore it is not only fruitless, but dangerous presumption, to go directly to God without a mediator. In the Law nothing must be done without a priest, who must offer all our sacrifices, and so all that are between God and us must be by mediation of our high priest Jesus Christ.

And then present ourselves to God in his name: Lord, I offer thy own Son unto thee, a Son of thine own sending, sealed, appointed, elected, and predestinated to be my Saviour. Thou canst not refuse the righteousness of thy own Son, thou gavest him to be my Saviour. Therefore taking Christ along with us, we may break through the very justice of God; for, Lord, I bring one with me that hath satisfied thy justice; therefore I go through thy justice to thy mercy-seat in Christ, in whom thy mercy is glorified. I go not with my own righteousness, but clothed with Christ.

3. And will not this answer Satan's temptations? Send thy soul to God in Christ, the glory of God, and he will shine in Christ. Christ is ordained to be my Saviour, and I cast myself into his arms, and put myself in the bowels of Christ.



So in all temptation I beseech you make use of this grand comfort, that the glory of God may shine in the face of Christ.

There be three of the sweetest sights that ever were thought of for poor Christians.

That is, God the Father's sight of us in his Son Christ, as members of him whom he loveth. Absolutely\* we are miserable.

Again, we see God 'in the face of Christ,' and Christ sees us in his Father's good pleasure, as given to him in charge of the Father; 'Thine they were, thou gavest them me,' John 17:24. Christ seeth us in God's eternal purpose to save, for Christ saveth none but them whom God gave. 'All that thou gavest come to me, and thou castest them not away,' John 17:2. God's choice and Christ's salvation run parallel. So God's choice saveth none but such as Christ is anointed to save, and God seeth us to be saved. As he gave us to Christ, and as Christ died for us, so we by spiritual faith see ourselves in Christ, as our Father. These do so arm the soul against all discouragements, that nothing can separate it, for God's love to me is bounded in his love to Christ. God looks on me, but he looks on Christ first. Now God's love is eternally founded on Christ, therefore eternally founded on me to be one with Christ. It is excellently set down: Rom. 8:35, 'What shall separate me from the love of Christ?' for it is a love of God founded on Christ. God loveth Christ, and so likewise he will love me. As Christ is his 'Son in whom he is well pleased,' Mat. 3:17; so he loveth whole Christ mystical, for he gave his Son for the body of Christ the church; and therefore whensoever we hear of the love of Christ, go to the love of the Father. Hath Christ loved me? Then see the Father's love in that love. You may enlarge these things in your own meditations, they being wonderful useful.

'The glory of God that shineth in the face of Jesus Christ.' Therefore, I beseech you, let us now value and esteem the great mystery of the incarnation and Christ crucified, because Christ is the common centre of heaven and earth, in whom we all centre: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost meet in Christ the Mediator. The first person sees us in Christ, the second person took our nature into union with himself, and the Holy Ghost sanctifieth it; so all meet together in Christ, He is the abridgment of all the elect in one, so that all the three persons, as they appeared at his baptism, met together in him. Let us mainly labour to get into Christ, and then grow up in Christ, in the knowledge of God the Father, and love of the Father, to grow more and more acquainted with the secret will of the Father to our salvation; and therefore esteem much of all the blessed means sanctified to strengthen our faith in the word and sacraments. In the sacrament see the Father. When the minister giveth the bread and wine, think that God the Father giveth his Son to every one of us in particular, and all to strengthen our faith; see God the Father together with God the Son. The Father was the person first offended, and therefore God the Father is reconciled by Christ. And it is more comfort that God the Father, the person offended, hath the chief hand in the plot of salvation; 'He gave Christ's body to be broken, and his blood to be shed for our sins,' Rom. 3:25.

I beseech you therefore to labour to be acquainted every day more and more with these mysteries, and do not take these as any encouragement to a sinful course, because the glory of mercy shineth in Jesus Christ, and therefore turn grace into wantonness. Mark this one thing. Amongst other attributes that shine in God, there is specially his holiness and displeasure against sin, for God shewed his displeasure against sin in turning his angels out of heaven. Heaven itself could not brook\* sin. It turned Adam out of paradise, and is the chiefest procurer of God's wrath; but all these are nothing to that

hatred of sin that appeared in Christ. The purity of God appeared in him above all things in the world, and it will at the day of judgment appear more in sending the greatest part of the world to eternal destruction and torment. But it is not so much as in making his Son a curse. Therein we see the holiness of God, that rather than man's sins should not be satisfied for, he would set apart his own Son to satisfy it. How much then is the holiness of Christ, that offered himself for it? how much is the holiness of God, that gave his Son to take it away? Can any man now believe in God as his Father first, and in Christ as his Saviour, and live in sin?

We must look on sin as the Father when he gave the Son, and on sin as the Son did when he gave himself. Therefore if we do not look on sin as most opposite to holiness, and have not an antipathy rooted in our hearts, how can we bear God's image and the image of Christ resembling him in all things? How can we think ourselves his members when we want his Spirit? How can we say we be his, when he walks in light and we in darkness?

If that holiness be not rooted to look on sin, in some measure, as God the Father and Son [do], we can as yet have no comfort, and therefore there is no reason to 'turn the grace of God into wantonness,' Jude 4.

And then remember this one caveat more. Whatsoever I spoke of the love of God the Father, and Christ the Son, is nothing unto us, unless every [one] of us labour in particular to have the Spirit of the Father and the Son discovering to us in particular this, that the Father is our Father, and the Son our Saviour, for that is the issue of our ministry. We must not rest in the ministerial discovery of things, but if we belong to God there is a work of the Spirit, and the chief work of it is to particularise and to bring truths home to every man's soul; and

therefore Christ is nothing to us, unless the mind of God to us in particular be discovered. The Spirit knoweth the 'secrets of God,' and revealeth to every particular man their particular interest in God the Father and God the Son, and this should be our desire and prayer every day, together with all knowledge, that God would give his Spirit to discover to us his peculiar love in Jesus Christ, and that Christ would by his Spirit discover our interest in him. Ministerial light will not serve for comfort unless our spirits be sealed to be the sons of God. Therefore are the sacraments to seal in particular an interest in Jesus Christ. Therefore we should set our faith on work. God in particular died for me, as if for none but me, and God the Father giveth me comfort in Christ. As I taste the outward element with outward sense, so with my inward taste of faith I taste of Christ. These be the things will stand in stead against temptation. He is the Saviour of the elect; but what though? The Spirit of the Father and the Son must discover the love of the Father to us in his Son.

These words contain the chief cause of all spiritual light, which is God, who by the same power by which he 'commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts,' or rather by a greater, because here is more opposition, and no help at all from nature to spiritual things, not so much as a seed of it.

'Hath shined into our hearts.' The end of spiritual knowledge in the ministry, is especially 'to give the glory of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

I propound these things.

First, That God is glorious in his mercy, wisdom, and other attributes, his reconciling justice and mercy together. Secondly, That this glory of mercy is in Christ, and satisfaction of his justice by him. Thirdly, That the glory of God, and all his sweet attributes in the face

of Christ, must be made known to others; and that this knowledge may be, there must be a calling. So God hath shined into our hearts to give the light. The ministry is to give the light of the knowledge of God; knowledge leadeth us to Christ; Christ to God, in whom our faith is terminated, as in its last object.

Divers of these things we have unfolded,

As the first, that God's mercy is a glorious mercy: therefore called the 'glory of God in the face of Christ.' That his mercy, specially in Christ, is his triumphing attribute. The power of God shineth in creation, the justice of God in damnation; but mercy triumphs in salvation by Christ. And it is not every mercy, but glorious mercy. Mercy sets all others on work, and therefore I mean that excellent mercy that stirred up wisdom to devise a way how justice might be satisfied, and so reconciled, that a way may be made for mercy. So that there is a wonderful mystery in these things, which the very angels desire to behold. This glory 'shineth in the face of Jesus Christ.'

'None knoweth the Father but the Son, none the Son but the Father, and they to whom the Father and the Son will reveal themselves by the Spirit,' Mat. 11:27. If the Father revealeth his Son by his Spirit, the Son revealeth the Father by the Spirit. Then they are known, but [not] else.

'The glory of God shineth in the face of Jesus Christ,' being incarnate, made God-man. I will proceed to bring this truth home, to make it more clear and comfortable.

You see then the glory of God shine in Christ, and then it shines to us. So that Christ is between God and us; the face of Christ between God and our face.

What is the reason of this order? Because God and we be in such opposition, that Christ must be between. God cannot love our nature, but as it is pure, and clean, and undefiled; and it is only so in Christ. And therefore he loveth our nature only in Christ, as being knit to Christ, and so purged by the Spirit of Christ. For there cannot be more opposite terms than between God, 'who is a consuming fire,' Heb. 12:29, and sinners; therefore Christ cometh between. That is, the middle person of the Trinity must be the middle person for reconciliation. He that is the Son is fit to make us sons. He that is the image of God, is fit to restore us to God's image. He that is beloved, is fit to bring us in love with the Father, to give entrance and access to him. And therefore God shineth first 'on the face of Christ' before it come to us. It cometh to us at the second hand by reflection.

Then Christ is *primum amabile*, the first subject and seat of divine love, for he is the first begotten; and whatsoever God loveth he loveth in relation to his Son. If he loveth us it is in relation to him. If he loveth any before they be in Christ, it is to give them to Christ. So that all the love of God must be seated in the first subject and receptacle of his love, which is Christ. First God shines on Christ, and then on all them that be one with Christ. Therefore Christ is called *ὁ ἀγαπητός*, 'The beloved,' and the Son of God's love, 'in whom are all the treasures of wisdom,' Col. 2:3; and therefore is truly lovely.

Whatsoever good we have, it is in Christ. For the first degree of salvation, the first link of the chain, from election to glorification, all is in Christ, seated in free grace, of which Christ is the first-fruit. For so 'God loved the world, that he gave his Son,' John, 3:16. Christ himself, and all the benefits by him, are first-fruits of the free grace of God, which was *amor benevolentiae*, a love of good will; but then there was *amor amicitiae*, a love of amity, which is only in Christ; and the execution of all favours is in Christ. He calleth, justifieth,

sanctifieth, and glorifieth in Christ, because by our consistence\* in Christ we have all benefits, even from election to glorification. The apostle runneth in this stream: Eph. 1:3, 'Blessed be God, who hath blessed you with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.' We are beloved in him, as the first love. So that in all things Christ is the first. He was the first Son of God, we sons in him. What he is by nature, we are by grace and adoption. He is first beloved, we beloved for him, as having communion and fellowship with him. He hath justified us from our sins, and therefore we are justified in him. He is our surety. If he be not acquitted, we shall never be acquitted. He is risen, therefore we rise. He is the 'first-fruits of those that sleep,' 1 Cor. 15:20. He is the 'first-born of many brethren,' Rom. 8:29; the 'first begotten from the dead,' Col. 1:18. He ascended, therefore we ascend. He sits in heavenly places, therefore we sit in heavenly places; for God hath elected us to be conformed to him. He is the first-fruits of God's predestination, as Austin observeth (h). God first made choice of him as the head of all, and of us in him. We are elected to be conformed to him in grace and comfort, in the love of God here, and in glory and perfect happiness hereafter. He is our eldest brother. Now it is fit therefore that he should have pre-eminence in all things. Christ in all things hath pre-eminency, in love and grace, in every passage of glory, resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of God; and in all things hath pre-eminency.

This is a very comfortable and useful point in the great mystery of Christ and glorification, to know the foundation of God's love to us. It is seated on Christ first, and then it cometh to us; nay, and through Christ, in Christ, as an head, through Christ as mediator.

Use 1. Therefore let us make this use of it. Never think of God without Christ. And again, never think of any spiritual favour, but think of it in Christ first. If we think of any promise, think of it as

given to Christ first. For all promises are made over to him, and he maketh them over to us. 'All promises are in him yea and amen,' 2 Cor. 1:20. Promises come from love. Love is first in him, and therefore must come first from him; and therefore desire God to make them good for his sake. If we think of the love of God, think of it in our flesh, in Christ first, as our head. If we think of freedom from sin, think of Christ our surety, who is first freed from it. If we think of resurrection and ascension, think of it in Christ our head. If we think of glory, think of it in Christ; we are glorious in our head. And have it as a fruit of his prayer, that 'we should be where he is,' John 17:24. Whensoever we think of anything that is good, think of it first in Christ, that God may have his scope and end, which is, that Christ the second person, that took our nature on him, may have his pre-eminency.

Use 2. And this should make us in our devotions to bless God for being the Father of Jesus Christ, when we bless him for being our Father. O blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for if he had not been his Father, he had never been our Father: John 20:17, 'I go to my God and your God, my Father and your Father.' If he had not been his God and his Father, he had never been our God and our Father. Therefore bless God for his love to Christ, and Christ for his love to us; for they both join in our salvation. As Rom. 8:39, 'Nothing can separate from the love of God,' nor from the love of Christ. They be both together in the verse, because they be all one in Christ. See the love of the Father in Christ. See his own love in himself, together with his Father's. Therefore consider the sweet agreement of the Trinity towards the salvation of mankind; and that we come not to heaven, are elect, and saved only by the counsel of the Father, or only by the love of the Son, or only by the operation of the Holy Ghost, but all three joining together in our salvation. God looks on us 'in the face of Jesus Christ.' God loveth us, the Son loveth



us, the Holy Spirit sealeth the love of both to us. So then conclude that our salvation is strongly built. It is built on the love of the Father in Christ, and on the love of Christ, together with the Father, and on the assurance of the Holy Ghost, testifying both these to our souls. God for ever loveth his Son, and God for ever must love us, for he shineth on us 'in the face of his Son.' Now what is the love of God to his Son? Pure love, tender love, bowels of love, an everlasting love, and a rich love. And is not his love to us the same? If he loveth Christ, he loveth whole Christ; not only Christ personal, but mystical Christ, and all his members. He loveth the whole body of Christ with a pure, tender, perfect, and everlasting love. And therefore as God's love can never be removed from his own Son that lieth on his bosom, so God's true love shall never be removed from any true Christian that liveth in his Son.

It is a comfortless, fond conceit to imagine any separation in that kind, because his love is founded not upon love to their persons, but on his Son. Now having an everlasting foundation, it must be an everlasting love; and this may comfort us in all conditions.

Use 3. To make another use to direct our devotions aright, we must not go to an absolute God, for he is 'a consuming fire,' Heb. 12:29, but must take Christ's name along. We must take Christ along in all our prayers. It is an unworthy conceit to think God will be pleased otherwise than in his Son. It is God must satisfy God, and not we, that be stubble to go to the fire. It is presumption, and the end of it will be confusion. Therefore go to God in the sweet name of his Son Jesus Christ. Only so. We do not conceive worthily enough of God if we think he can have any communion with us, if his love be not conceived in the person of Christ. Therefore if we will have worthy conceits of him, go to him, that is, God made flesh in our nature, a Saviour of his own appointment, a mediator of his own sending, and

sealed. And God will not refuse him, if you bring his Son before him. Therefore let it be our rule to put up our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our head.

Now our natures are in Christ lovely to God, because our flesh is in him pure, sanctified, and separate from all sin; so that he loveth our natures. And the nature of God, before opposite, is now lovely to us, because God dwells in our nature, as the apostle saith, bodily, that is, fully, Col. 2:9. Now God in our nature is lovely. God out of our nature is not, because he is purity and holiness itself; but in our nature he is all love and mercy, for his justice is fully satisfied. God by his Spirit will never leave any particular Christian till he makes their nature in them like his own nature, that is divorced and separate wholly from sin, that it may be a pure glorious nature, fit for so glorious a head. Therefore go boldly to the throne of grace. There be good terms between God and us through Christ.

'We shall die, because we have seen God,' saith Manoah, Judges 13:22. Now we shall live because we have seen God in Christ. Out of Christ we cannot see an angel, and live; but seeing God in the face of Christ, a mediator not of our appointing, this is a sweet and comfortable sight.

I beseech you, let us make a comfortable use of these things. God thinks of us in Christ. It was a good prayer of a holy martyr, 'that God would shine on him in the face of Jesus Christ.' He was so guilty of his own sins and corruptions that he durst not look upon God, but desires God to look on his Son first, and then on him, in his Son. In Christ God can see us perfect, for Christ's righteousness is our righteousness, and we have the same spirit with Christ. For note that by the way.

As Christ, by taking our nature on him, testified by the Spirit he was the Son of God in our nature, so the same Spirit of Christ having knit us to Christ, and sanctifying our nature, we become the sons of God and Christ too. The same Spirit that sanctified the nature of Christ in the womb, will sanctify every Christian. And as the grace of union was the cause of Christ's unction, so the grace of union with Christ is the ground of all communion with Christ. And therefore labour in the first place to be one with Christ by faith, the foundation of all the comfort that I have unfolded.

To us-ward is the union with Christ by faith, that Christ and we are one; for if God look on us in the face of his Son, then we must be one with his Son: bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, by his Spirit, as he is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, by our nature. He took our human nature that we might partake of his divine nature; and therefore labour for union, that we may have gracious communion with him. If we be one with Christ we are his friends, and he will be with us. 'I and the Father will sup with him, Rev. 3:20. Rest specially in that. It was the effect of Christ's prayer, 'that we may be all one: I in them, and thou in me, and that thou mayest love them with the love thou lovest me,' John 17:22, 23. So intimate was Christ's love that he desires the same love to us, and in us, one with another. This is a blessed union of the Trinity in one, and of Christ with the Father, and of every Christian with Christ and the Father, one with another. This is the fruit of Christ's offering himself a sacrifice to God; 'that we may be one, as they are one: I in them, and thou in me.'

The reason of Christ's prayer for that union is, that all good is conveyed from the Father to us, 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' as we have our consistence and being in Christ, and are one with Christ; and that makes the sacraments and all holy ordinances to be means to bring us into communion with Christ, and to seal it to us, and

thereby our communion with the Father and the Holy Ghost. If the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be ours, what can we want? 'Shew us the Father and it will suffice,' saith Philip, John 14:8. If we have God for our Father, we need no more. Therefore make much of the means whereby our union and communion and fellowship with God in Christ is stayed, and confirmed to us. To go on.

It is said here, there must be a 'knowledge of this glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' And the ministry is the cause of that knowledge, for God hath shined in our hearts to give the light, &c.

Doct. So that we must know the face of God in Jesus Christ. Knowledge is the first thing in this new creation, as light was the first in the old creation. God by his word made light, and God by his word puts the Spirit of light in our hearts. All grace is conveyed by knowledge, grace being nothing but knowledge digested. And therefore, Col. 3:10, the apostle maketh it the 'image of God,' which in the Eph., 4:24 he calls 'holiness and righteousness.' But there he bringeth all under that one head, because all grace cometh by knowledge, and all comfort is conveyed by knowledge. For even as together with light from heaven comes influence and heat, so together with the divine light comes the divine influence and heat of the soul. Therefore the apostle joineth together grace and knowledge: 2 Pet. 3:18, 'Grow in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' So you see the reason why the glory of God in Christ must be known. For it is an axiom in divinity, no spiritual blessing doth a man good but by way of knowledge, and therefore out of the church there is no salvation, because the church being like Goshen, there is no light of knowledge out of the church. Therefore it is a gross and fundamental error of them that will have men saved in any religion, for all salvation cometh by knowledge, and that is only in the church.

Use 1. I beseech you, therefore, labour for knowledge of God 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' and to grow in it every day more and more. 'Without knowledge the soul is not good,' Prov. 19:2. The soul is dark, and therefore those that be enemies of knowledge, are enemies to the salvation of God's people. They are enemies of God's glory, because God's glory shineth in the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But this is a clear truth.

Use 2. To make it more useful; every man thinks he knoweth Christ. But knowledge of God's glory in Christ is another matter.

(1.) It is a purifying knowledge, and it is a sanctifying knowledge.

(2.) It is a knowledge that is both full and experimental. It is a knowledge with a taste. It is a knowledge that brings a man to salvation. He relisheth divine truths. Every divine truth hath a sweetness and a savour in it, and our souls are to relish it. If there be not relish in the palate, the relish in meat is to no purpose. And therefore God giveth knowledge per modum gustus. When things are to us as in themselves, then things have a sweet relish. God's favour and sonship, and grace and peace, they have sweet relish in themselves.

And as they are in themselves, so they are to every Christian. There is a harmony or suitableness in every Christian to divine truths wrought in him. If we have not a relish of divine truths, undoubtedly we know them not as we should.

Use 3. And it is a knowledge with application of interest in the things, when we know God to be our God, and Christ to be our Christ, heaven to be ours, and all the promises to be ours, for that is the nature of faith to make its own, whatsoever it layeth hold on. What good doth Christ, and the glory of God in Christ, if we know

not Christ, and God in Christ, and make applications that God and Christ may be ours? Therefore the sacraments are ordained for the particular attaining to the knowledge of Christ, that as we are really interested in what we receive, and turn it into ourselves, so by faith we have interest in Christ, and he is one with us, and we with him.

Use 4. And then this knowledge is a transforming knowledge, suitable to the object. In nature, objects have an influence into the things that apprehend them. If a man look on a lovely object, it stirs up affection of love; if on hateful objects, it stirs up affection of hatred. But much more in divine things, for they have not only influences into the spirit, but a Spirit accompanying the influence to transform the soul. So that by reason of the object and the Spirit, all divine truths have a transforming force.

Therefore, he that knoweth God to be his God, transforms himself to be his Son. He that knoweth Christ as he should, transformeth himself to be like Christ, to labour for the gracious bountifulness, free obedience, and disposition of Christ. We cannot know Christ as we should, by a spiritual knowledge, without it transform us to the likeness of the thing we know. The knowledge of the glory of God in Christ, will make us glorious Christians. Apprehending glory we shall be glorious, as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. 3:18: 'Beholding the face of God in Christ, μεταμορφούμεθα, we are changed from glory to glory,' that is, from one degree of grace to another.

Wherein is our happiness? For what is the happiness of a Christian, but to be like Christ, and in Christ like God? The very heathen could say, likeness to God, and communion with God, is the foundation of all happiness. Therefore, this transforming happiness, by which we look to be saved, which makes us more like Christ, that we must labour after, this may be sufficient to stir up our affections, to labour

to know God in Christ, being that which is most excellent knowledge. The right knowledge of God in Christ is that that the very angels have a desire to look unto, 1 Pet. 1:12. It is a knowledge we should more desire than angels; for if we know God in Christ as we should do, we are above angels. Did God take the nature of angels? Are they the mystical body of Christ? No. They are the acquaintance of Christ's, but not the spouse of Christ. In both these respects we are above angels. And shall not we study that more than angels, that have more interest therein than angels? Is not the knowledge of this glorious? and shall not we study to know that, that raiseth our natures above the angels themselves? So we should do. And so we will do, if we have the Spirit of God, as Paul, Phil. 3:7, 8: 'I count all dung and dross,' not in comparison of Christ, but διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου μου, in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. The right knowledge of God shining in the face of Christ, with an interesting\* knowledge of Christ to be my Saviour, God my Father, myself to be a temple of the Holy Ghost, a member of Christ, heir of heaven, to know I am by grace what Christ is by nature: what is all the world to this, if we had hearts to consider of it? And therefore labour to prize and value this knowledge every day more and more, to beg the Spirit of revelation, that God would reveal himself to us in Christ more and more: pray for the Spirit that knoweth the secrets of God and Christ, that we may know God to be our God, and Christ to be our Saviour. And let it be the desires of our hearts, that God would give us deep knowledge of him, in particular: not only in general, but that he would reveal his fatherly love in Christ, and Christ's sweet love to us.

Quest. But how shall we come to this knowledge?

Sol. God shines not into the brain, but into the very heart of his ministers, that they may give the knowledge of God in the face of

Jesus Christ.

Doct. So that the end of God's shining on his ministry is, that they may shine on others.

So then, if you ask what is the sanctified means of God to come to so excellent a knowledge of the face of God in Christ, it is specially to the ministry. So God shines in them, that they may give the light of the knowledge they have to others.

And here I will unfold to you their excellency, and authority ministerial, and the necessity of the calling, they being the light of the world, the sun of the world; of whom it is said, 'As the Father sendeth me, so I send you,' John 20:21. But these things concern our calling more.

Only it concerns all to know this, that God hath not set up an ordinance in his church in vain. As it is glorious to know 'the glory of God in the face of Christ,' so if ever we will know it, we must come to the ministry, that God hath set up as lights in his church; for they be appointed to give thee 'the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.' So that the ordinance of God is joined with access to the ministers of God. If you regard God and Christ, regard the ministry, for the grace of God, and faith, and knowledge, and the ministry of faith, are all linked together, and he that despiseth the ministers, despiseth God, and grace, and heaven and all. And therefore the word, as opened in the ministry, is called τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς, 'the word of reconciliation,' 2 Cor. 5:18. No reconciliation without it; τὸν λόγον τῆς ζωῆς, 'the word of life,' Philip. 2:16; τὸ ἐνδοξον εὐαγγέλιον, 'the glorious gospel,' 1 Tim. 1:11; τὸν ἀνδρείον βραχίονα τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς τῆν σωτηρίαν, 'strong arm of God to salvation;' τῆν δυνάμιν τοῦ Θεοῦ, 'the power of God,' 2 Cor. 6:7; because God conveyed all these things by it. And they that despise it, despise



glorification, reconciliation, glory, and life, and all. It is ὁ λόγος τῆς βασιλείας, the 'word of the kingdom,' Mat. 13:19; because we enter into the kingdom of grace here, by his ordinance, and then into the kingdom of God. Therefore to despise God's ordinance is to despise God; and Acts 13:46, the apostle saith, 'Seeing you account yourselves unworthy of the kingdom of heaven.' If they will not hear the gospel, it is as if they despised the kingdom of heaven.

Use. That I advise is, that every one labour for a right apprehension of the ordinances of God. 'Let a man esteem of us as the ministers of Christ,' 1 Cor. 4:1, neither more nor less, but just so; that is, not lords over our faith, but ministers that dispense the mystery of Christ.

I need not speak much of this, because God never wrought good in any but they would have a due and right conceit of the ministers and ordinances of God. And they that have base conceits of it, it is a sign God never wrought any good in them. And therefore I speak to them that have respect to the ordinances of God, and that they [may] have more respect to it. Mark what the apostle saith, 'God shines on the heart of the apostles to give light,' &c.

Obj. But it may be objected, God shines in the hearts of his ministers that they may shine on others. Can only good men convert?

Ans. I answer first, that they have a great advantage above all others, because they have those affections and those desires to stir them up to pray to God heartily for their people. And then they have love to the people. It is love that begets grace, and so they having sanctified hearts, that way they do more good than others. But the effect of God's ordinance is not tied to the dignity of any man's person. Judas was a preacher, as bad as he was. Those that convert many shall 'shine in heaven,' if they be good, Dan. 12:4; if they be bad they may convert others and never come thither themselves; therefore respect

the ordinance of God for itself. But because a good expression of the integrity and constant sufficiency in the teacher is a good help to attention and respect, therefore we ought to be careful in the choice of these. For though God's ordinances depend not on the worthiness of the minister, yet there is much help this way.

Obj. But you will say, Can the ministry cause the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ? They be but men, and God shineth in us that we may give knowledge of God.

Ans. I answer, man doth it whether they be good or otherwise, ministerially. God honours them so far as to give them his own title: Acts.16:14, Paul preached, God opens Lydia's heart. There must be a concurring of God with the ministry: 1 Cor. 3:6, 'Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase.' But if Paul plant and God giveth not increase, all is to no purpose. 'Be faithful in thy calling,' saith Paul to Timothy, and so thou shalt both save thyself and thy hearers, 1 Tim. 4:16. So that God appoints calling, and giveth gifts and callings for the good of his church. The sun shineth on the moon and stars, to enlighten the world; and the light that ministers have is to shine upon others. God teacheth men by men, and it is most suitable and proportionable to our weakness. As it is a trial of our obedience to respect the word, as it comes from one subject to the same infirmity with ourselves, so it is suitable to our weakness. We could not hear God, nor an angel, therefore God giveth gifts to men for men. Beloved, it is a marvellous fruit of God's love, that he will establish such a calling, the end of which is to bring men to heaven. I They be 'sent of God,' Acts 13:26; they be the 'salt of the earth,' Mat. 5:13, the world would be putrified without it; they be 'the light,' Philip. 2:15, the world would be dark without it. If it were not for the gospel, what is England, that is now so glorious above other countries that sit in darkness? And therefore seeing God conveyeth

all good to us this way, let it be our prayer to God 'to send labourers into his vineyard,' to set up light in dark places, and to teach his ministers, that they may teach us.

It is strange that Paul, so holy a man as he was, should desire the Romans, chap. 15:30, 'to pray and strive with God in prayer for him.' 'I beseech you,' I conjure you, 'by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Spirit, that you strive to God for me.'

Note. The devil sets against this ordinance of God especially, for it battereth his kingdom, and is a means to draw men out of his darkness, 'into the glorious light of the sons of God,' Rom. 8:21; as in the Acts 26:18, the Lord 'sent him to bring them from darkness to light.' Therefore the devil stirs up 'unreasonable men,' malicious men, that have hurtful and evil principles, to do hurt to them that seek their good, to requite good with ill; and therefore the apostle prayeth, 'Lord let me be delivered from unreasonable men,' ἀπὸ τῶν ἀτόπων, absurd men, greedy, that are so far from faith that they have not common reason, 2 Thes. 3:2. Now considering God conveyeth all good, specially saving knowledge this way, desire God to preserve the ministers from unreasonable men; that God would let the gospel 'run and be glorified,' 2 Thes. 3:1; and that the ministry may be glorious, that is, that the Spirit may accompany it to get a great deal of love and strength to bear afflictions. Where the ministry is rightly received it is a glorious thing. And therefore the apostle prays that the gospel may have a free passage, and be glorified by the Spirit accompanying it, in the hearts of the people; and they that will profit most by it, must be so far from undermining it, that they must desire God to assist the teacher, that he being taught may teach others. Thus far it concerneth us all.

And this not only teacheth the ministers to shine to others, but every Christian is a prophet.\* And they that have the light of God shining on them are to give the light to others. We are all anointed of God, and like good Christians we have all received the anointing of the Spirit, and in our sphere we ought to do all the good we can to every one in his place. 'You have all knowledge,' saith the apostle, 'that you may exhort and edify one another,' 1 Thes. 5:11. This must be done by the public ordinance, and by every particular Christian. And therefore every Christian may shine to others, and open to others the mystery of salvation, according to their Calling, specially in their families. Our Saviour saith, 'Admonish thy brother, and thou shalt save thy brother,' Mat. 18:15. God maketh common Christians saviours of others. And therefore as we believe communion of saints in the creed, so we ought to labour for the grace of communion of saints, that is, for ability and love, that we may be able to do good one to another. And no man is a Christian for himself alone. Every man hath grace for the good of the body. There is no idle member of the church's body. As soon as any one is a Christian, he is a profitable member. Onesimus, as soon as he is converted, 'he is profitable,' Philem. 11. By prayer, by advice, by comforting, and counsel, he hath ability to do something to the body of Christ. As he hath good by the graces of the body, so by God's grace he is able to do some good in the body: he is no dead member, but hath some grace of communion.

And it is no vain glory, if it be not done for ostentation; if for Christ, not for his own advantage or ostentation. Breasts may be opened to give milk, which otherwise would be shut; gifts may be opened to do good. If they know anything that is good they ought to infuse it to them, whom God hath made near and dear to them, for grace is communicable.

The sun shineth on the greater part of the world at once. The more communicable the better: the more near God and Christ.

And then we may think that we have all things, the benefit and comfort of any true gift, when we have spirits of love to communicate it to others. These be therefore two main graces of communion, humility, and love. And when we can sweetly, humbly, and by the spirit of love communicate it to others, then we be masters of what we have, else it is not given for our good. God will blast it if we do not communicate it. God will take away that he hath from the idle servant, that will not employ his talent. I would to God more conscience were made of this, that not only ministers, but every one, would be first the cistern, and then the conduit, first get something in, and then put it out, when it is seasonable, and when we have a calling to do it.

How hath a Christian a calling to comfort others, to give seasonable reproofs, to give admonitions, to strengthen others, when no minister is by? He that is not able to do it in some measure, can he believe communion of saints? Therefore labour for some spiritual ability, that ye may not be dead and idle members of the body, but shine to others in giving example to others in the way to heaven, that others may have cause to bless God. O blessed be God that ever I was acquainted with such a one. As David said of Abigail, 1 Sam. 25:39, so such a one gave me counsel, and it came from love, from a sweet spirit, and I shall have cause to remember it while I live.

Consider it is our calling. We are all prophets, all anointed. A Christian hath an high calling; but specially consider what we do believe by the 'communion of saints;' and what we pray for, when we say, 'thy kingdom come,' that is, that faith may reign in our hearts and minds. Shall we say, let thy kingdom come, when we are enemies

of the ministry, and good communion? If we use this prayer thus, we mock God. I desire God to make these things effectual.

The apostle in the former chapter, as we have heard, raiseth up the soul to the chief cause of all heavenly light in the soul, which is God, by his almighty power shining in our hearts, as he caused the light to shine at the first. By how much that light is more excellent than that light of nature, by so much the greater power is put forth for the working of it, being so opposite thereunto.

The end of this shining in the hearts of the ministers especially, is to 'give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' God shineth on ministers that they may reflect that light upon others. As John Baptist saith, 'they be friends of the bride, that learn of the bridegroom,' Christ, what to do to help his spouse, John 3:29. They labour to know the meaning of Christ, what his good will is to them that be his. They be friends on both sides, on Christ's, and the spouse's. They come between both, for the furthering of the blessed marriage between Christ and the soul.

I have spoken of the glory of God, which specially shines in his mercy and goodness. There is a greater lustre of God's attributes in the gospel than in the law.

Quest. It may be asked, Are not we for to preach the law as well as the glory of God in the face of Christ discovered in the gospel?

Ans. I yield there must be special care of that, even now in the days of the gospel; for you know there be three degrees, the state of nature, the state under the law, and the state under grace. Before we can come from nature to grace, we must come under the law; we must know ourselves thoroughly, and be humbled to purpose. Many live under the gospel, that were never yet under the law, that think

themselves under Christ, and under grace, and yet were never humbled. Therefore in love to the souls of men, let the law be discovered; as God gave the law, not to damn men but in love to men, that thereby they might see the impurity of their natures, and lives, and the curse due to it, and so follow him forthwith to Christ, from Sinai to Sion, appealing from the throne of justice to the throne of grace and mercy, the Lord Christ. The Lord gave not the law purposely to damn men, but to drive them to an holy despair in themselves. They that despair in themselves, they come to see their whole hope of comfort to be in the face of God in Christ.

Therefore respectively to grace, we ought to force the law in these dull and drowsy times. For they that stick in the state of nature, as profane godless persons, swearers, loose persons, were never yet under the law. And what have they to do with Christ, that were never humbled? If their eyes were open to see what they are by nature, and what they would be if God should cut the thread of their lives, they would look about them then. The kingdom of heaven would suffer violence, if men understood their states throughly, that there is but a step between them and hell, nothing but a life full of uncertainties, without serious repentance.

Moses brought none into Canaan. That was Joshua's part. When Moses had brought them near, then he giveth up his office to Joshua. The law must give up its office to Christ. When men are cast down with apprehensions of sin, they must run into the bosom of the gospel, and shelter themselves under the wings of Jesus Christ. Though such persons may in the error of their conscience think themselves farthest off grace, yet they be nearest. For 'blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. 5:3. 'And come to me, all ye that be heavy laden, I will ease you,' Mat. 11:28.

Quest. Again, some will object, we must teach moral duties, teach men not to be sottish and drunken and filthy in their lives.

Ans. It is very good. I would these abominations were reformed, but if there be not a better foundation laid for the knowledge of God in the face of Christ, by the discovery of the hidden face of nature, we should make them but hypocrites, and only civilise them. Therefore the right way to make them leave these abominations is, first, to get knowledge of themselves by nature, and of their original corruptions; and then, to lead them to the knowledge of God 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' that seeing love, love may kindle love, and alter their course, and make them study to please God. If duties spring not from love, they be dead duties, and but carcasses of duties. But love constraineth us to perform services by the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ.

Therefore if we will make men leave sin on good grounds, teach the gospel; else we shall bring them into a civil\* compass which is good, and I would there were more of it; but we should not rest there. Holy duties, and abstaining from gross sins, is a great deal more groundedly enforced from the gospel than the law. For the reasons from thence are very demonstrative, as Paul, Titus 2:12, 'The grace of God hath appeared, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and to live soberly to ourselves, righteous to others, holily to God.'

And therefore the apostle's method is first to lay the ground and foundation of Christian doctrine, and then to build upon it Christian duties in all his epistles; as in the Romans, after he had shewed free justification, by the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and then sanctification of our nature, then he comes to the comforts of a Christian life in predestination, and God's free everlasting love. 'Then I beseech you, by the mercies of God in Christ, give up your bodies as



reasonable sacrifices to God,' Rom. 12:1. The ground of his exhortation is to devote and consecrate ourselves to God, and it is from the mercies of God. And so in all the rest of his epistles, he layeth foundation of a Christian life upon Christian doctrine, as Lactantius saith well, 'All morality without piety is a goodly statue without an head (i). [It is] the head that giveth life and influence into all duties of a Christian and the knowledge of Christ.\* In a word, whatsoever we preach is either to drive to Christ, or is Christ himself, by his benefits unfolded, or an holy life, with this respect, that we may live answerable, and worthy of Christ; so that whatsoever we preach, it hath respect to Christ.

And therefore the apostle speaking of the main duty saith, 'God hath shined in our hearts, to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Certainly all will follow where this is, 'She loved much, because much was forgiven,' Luke 7:47. She had relished the sweet love of God in pardoning her, and therefore loved much. For what is love but all duty in the root? It is one in the root, and all in the branches. All sin is one in original corruption, the root which brancheth itself many ways into particulars. So love being one in the root, when the heart is filled with that, you shall not need to dictate to it, to do this or that. Love is an affection full of invention, to please, delight, and gratify the person loved, and sets the soul on fire to all duties whatsoever.

1. Again, the knowledge of God differenceth God's people from atheists, that know no God at all. So to know God in Christ, that differenceth them from those without the church, that know God, but not 'in the face of Christ.' To know God in the face of Christ as he should be known, differs true Christians from popish and rotten professors, and from an hypocrite within the church. The papists know God not in the face of Jesus Christ; only they go to him by

other mediators, and they will have crucifixes, and many gods, never desiring to discover the face of Christ.

But the best discovery of God is to see him 'in the face of Christ.' The best sight of Christ is, not in a crucifix or the work of an idle painter, but to see him in the word and sacrament. You have seen Christ 'crucified before your eyes,' saith Paul to the Galatians, Gal. 3:1. God worketh grace by his own means, and not by the bastardly means of man's invention. The knowledge of God is conveyed by Christ, and no other mediator. That knowledge which comes nearest the knowledge of God in Christ is not only disciplinary, but a sound saving knowledge, that sees things in their formal, proper, spiritual light, and not only in their shell.

2. This distinguisheth likewise them under the law. And they see the face of God under the law, poor distressed sinners. Ay, but they see an angry face there. But if they will see God as they should do, and as true Christians, they see not his angry countenance in Moses under the law, threatening men with hell and damnation; but they see him 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' reconciling the world to himself.

In the next verse, ver. 7, the apostle preventeth an objection, as he is very curious in prevention; for he was full of love, and desired to make way for himself in the hearts of them whom he taught. When he saw anything between him and their hearts, he labours to remove it, by all the wit and policy that he could; and therefore he now preventeth an objection from the meanness of his person and condition. You speak much of preaching the gospel, what doth the world esteem of you? you be a poor despised man. It is true, but I carry the excellent treasures of the love of God in Christ; nay, we carry it in earthen vessels; but it is a treasure, though in earthen vessels, though conveyed by despised persons. And God hath a wise

end in it. I look to God's end; which is, that in the meanness of my condition the power and excellency of what I teach may come from him, and not from me; therefore he useth mean instruments in his great work. So that the words have a prevention of an objection.

And there is a double answer to the objection.

1. We are 'earthen vessels,' but we carry a 'treasure' in them.

2. Again, God doth it 'that the excellency of the power' of my preaching 'may be of God, and not of us.' To come to the particulars.

1. That the gospel, and the knowledge of God in the face of Christ, it is a treasure.

2. And the way to come to it is by the ministry. Our ministerial dispensation of it is the way to convey it to others.

3. That ministers, as well as others, are but frail, empty vessels. Indeed, they have a treasure conveyed by the dispensation that God hath set upon his church, but it is all but by earthen vessels. These be the three things.

Then the next part is, 'that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' So that there is a power, and an excellent power, shewed in the ministry to all them that shall be saved.

There is a power in them that be reprobate wretches, and they feel it at length, to harden them more and more, to make them more bitter and worse; but in them that be saved there is a power, and excellency of power, in the ordinances of God.

This power is of God, and not of men. It is conveyed by man, but the power originally, *tanquam à fonte*, cometh from God. These be the

parts.

1. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,' the gospel, the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, it is a treasure.

What is a treasure? We all know. Experience sheweth that it implieth plenty, and variety of things of price, and rare things, not common, and them of excellent and special use for the time present and to come, for ornament, or for security, or defence, or for discharge of debt and trouble, or for help and comfort. When any want lieth upon a man, he hath recourse to his treasure.

The gospel is a treasure in these and all other respects that may be comfortable.

For here is plenty, variety, rarity, price, usefulness in the highest degree; for in Christ, who is the chief thing in the gospel, we have all.

(1.) There is plenty in Christ, treasures of wisdom and of all good hidden in him for our good. The apostle saith, 'In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' Col. 2:3; and he is all in all, he is our riches. The particulars I have unfolded out of a portion of Scripture heretofore.\* He is 'wisdom,' he is 'righteousness,' and 'sanctification,' and 'redemption,' 1 Cor. 1:30: wisdom to supply our ignorance, righteousness to supply the guilt which we stand charged before God with; and so he is righteousness to our consciences. He is sanctification to the defilement of our natures, our conditions and persons being miserable. He is redemption to us, partly of our souls in this life, and of soul and body in the life to come. He hath all by grace of union; for our natures being so near as to be hypostatically united, and taken into one person with God....\*

As there be three ways of conveying excellency—union, revelation, and vision—so Christ hath it by union, we by revelation in this world, by vision in the world to come.

Now Christ hath a fulness in him, partly by virtue of this union, and partly *ratione officii*, as he is the head of the church; for where should we be but in the head? The head is wisdom for the body. All the senses are in the head. It sees, it hears, it understandeth for the body, it doth all for the body; so that the riches of a Christian is hid in Christ, but for the good of the body. Whatsoever we stand in need of, God is all-sufficient, and Christ is God-man, and we are knit to Christ by faith, so that Christ and we are all one, and therefore a Christian hath a rich treasure in Christ.

(2.) And then he hath price and excellency in the things we have in him. If any things be excellent, these things are. They raise our condition above the common condition of the world; nay, above angels in some sort, making us heirs and fellow-heirs with Christ. It makes us the sons of God, sets us at liberty from our cursed condition, and not only at liberty, but in a state of advancement as high as our natures can reach unto. *Liberatio à summo malo, summi boni habet rationem*, freedom from the greatest evil, which is damnation and destruction. It hath respect to the greatest good; but then, together with freedom from the greatest evil, we have advancement to the greatest good. Indeed, we can hardly conceive of the excellency of the things we have in Christ. Every grace is precious.

[1.] How precious is faith, that layeth hold of all the graces in Christ, and makes them our own!

[2.] What precious grace is love, that makes us to deny ourselves and communicate ourselves to the good of others! A world of good a

loving soul can do.

[3.] And so the hope of life, what an anchor it is to stay the soul in all conditions patiently and contentedly!

And every grace is precious, and needs must every grace be precious, considering the price they cost. Things dearly bought are precious, and every grace of the Spirit, and the Spirit itself, is purchased by the blood of Christ. For the Spirit hath no communion with us till peace be made between God and us by Christ; but when God the Father is reconciled by Christ, then the Spirit, a friend of both, cometh from both, and assureth us of the love of both, discovering the secret love of God in Christ, and bestoweth all grace, to furnish and fit us for heaven. So that the graces of the Spirit are precious, and to be accounted precious, because they cost so dear as the blood of Christ.

(3.) And then for usefulness, what use have we of every grace? What were our lives without grace? What serve treasures for but to pay our debts? Christ paid all your debts to God the Father, to God's justice. We are all discharged. One red line of his blood drawn over the debt-book crosseth all the debt. Satan hath nothing to do with us. In him we have remission of sins, and he is now in heaven to make intercession for us, and plead our cause as our friend. At God's right hand we have a friend and brother in our nature, that maintaineth the love of God constantly to us as his members and as his spouse.

Besides, we have comfort in all distresses; and we have strength in all our weaknesses; light and direction in all our perplexities, by the Spirit, and grace of the Spirit. So that in every respect Christ and the graces of the Spirit are satisfying treasures.

(4.) The gospel which revealeth this is a treasure specially for the time to come, for then is a treasure specially useful. Christ is a rich

storehouse, and in him we have all. For the time to come we have more in Christ than here. When Christ shall be revealed, and we shall be revealed, then our treasure will appear. And before that, at the hour of death, when all comforts shall be taken from us, then comes in the treasure of a Christian, then he hath use of Christ, of the Spirit of Christ, to support him; and the spirit of faith and hope, to strengthen him with patience and willingness to go to Christ: then come in all the riches that he hath laid up, all the spiritual graces, for to help him at that hour. So that specially then in time of need comes in these treasures, Christ with his grace and Spirit. The best use of religion is in time to come. Now, we can make a shift with riches, and friends, and strength; but when all is done, we must have a better treasure, that is, Christ and the graces of Christ.

We may refer all to these two heads, Christ partly imparted and partly imputed. That that is imputed is his righteousness, by which we have freedom from hell, advancement to heaven; and the imparted and bestowed favours are the graces of his Spirit for all times and services. We have remedies for all maladies. And they are of a higher nature than all other treasures whatsoever.

Therefore, to shew the difference between this and other treasures, to raise up the estimation of Christ, and the good things in him, these treasures we have in Christ imputed and imparted.

1. They are independent. The comfort of them doth not depend on any inferior comfort, or things in this world, but when all comforts are taken away, then they are of special use.

2. And as they be independent, so they be universal. Christ and the good things in him are universally good for all turns. There is no other treasure but is for particular ends, and cannot do all things. Riches can make a man as happy as riches can do; and dainties make

a man as lively as such things can do; and friends can do what friends can do; but all is limited: they cannot do more than in the sphere of their activity. But what is said of money, that it is good for all things, I am sure it is true of the grace of God in Christ. It is good for all things and all conditions: it is a universal good.

3. Then it is a treasure that is proportionable to the dignity of a man. It is proportionable to the soul, to satisfy the desires thereof. A man's desire is larger than any pleasure in the world. A man can spend all his contentment in an earthly thing. In his thoughts and affections he runneth through the contentment of all earthly things presently. If a man had all earthly contentments, the soul would pass through them all and see beyond them; and when he hath done, he looks on them as soiled commodities and cast things; but the treasures of the gospel in Christ are proportionable to the soul. They be spiritual, as the soul is spiritual; nay, likewise they be larger than the soul, the treasure is larger than the treasury. But of other things, the treasure is but little, the treasury large; but here the treasure is larger than the treasury, for our soul is not capable of the fulness of Christ. There is more in Christ, and more in our state of happiness than the soul can contain. The soul can never spend nor run through all the good we have, for there is still more and more. Therefore the apostle calls it, Eph. 3:8, 'the unsearchable riches of grace.' Search more and more, and still they be unsearchable. 'Neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of the excellent things in Christ,' 1 Cor. 2:9. They transcend the capacity of the soul, which no other treasure can do.

4. And then they have another excellency. They make the soul and the whole person a treasure; as God saith, Mal. 3:17, 'I will make up my jewels.' The grace of God makes us gracious, turneth us into jewels. No other treasure can change the cask wherein it is; but these



blessed things of God and of Christ, wheresoever he dwelleth, he makes the soul like himself, stamping his own image and likeness upon it. For such is the change of nature into grace that it makes us treasures.

Other treasures perhaps make us worse, as indeed they do, by reason of the proneness of our dispositions to earthly things, they soil and stain our natures. But these treasures of excellent things purify our natures, make us better, and change us into the nature of themselves; nay more, grace changeth the worst things to be good to us: that is the excellency of its virtue. They talk of the philosopher's stone, and strange things, but I am sure the grace of God is so excellent a treasure that it extracts good out of every evil, and as grace, turneth all to good, and so the sanctifying Spirit concurring with it, draweth the greatest comforts out of the greatest crosses. And is not that a rich treasure, that turneth the worst things to good? It will make every thing to guide us to the main.

5. That our affections may be raised higher. All other treasures whatsoever they be, here we find them, and here we must leave them, whether we will or no, or they will leave us. As the wise man saith of riches, 'they have eagles' wings,' Prov. 23:5. Peritura perituris, we must leave perishing earthly things to perishing men. But is this treasure of that nature or no? For it makes the soul eternal, it doth raise the soul to be spiritual, the soul carrieth them to heaven with it. The earthen vessel indeed is cracked to pieces, but the treasure remaineth. The soul goeth out of this earthen vessel to heaven, and thither carrieth all the love it had, and all the graces, and the image of Christ it had. All is there perfectly, nothing is taken away. As we say of an earnest, it is part of the bargain, and not taken away again. Luke 10:42, it was said of Mary's part, that 'her part shall never be taken from her.' All other things will be taken from us. We

shall be stripped of all, and turned naked into our graves, we know not how soon. As we came naked, so must we be turned naked; but Mary's part, the interest in the treasure of the gospel and the good things of Christ, shall never be taken from us, but shall be perfected in heaven. When friends are taken away, and life taken away, and all comforts taken away, yet Mary's part endures for ever. When nothing will comfort, all our treasures fail, as at the hour of death, then comes in this treasure and comforts most. So that herein it differs from all treasures: it is never taken from us, and stands us in greatest use and stead in our greatest necessity.

6. And which is of special use, other treasures we cannot carry about us whithersoever we go. But this is like [a] pearl rather than treasure. A Christian carrieth this treasure wheresoever he goeth; nay, he carrieth it in his heart, it is hid there, and who can take it out thence? Can the devil? No. It is hid in his affections. His love, and choice, and judgment hath gotten it and mastered it. This I have, and this I must stick to in life and death; for having got it in his heart, judgment, and affection, he carrieth it wheresoever he goeth, maketh use of it wheresoever, in prison, at liberty, abroad or at home. Let all the devils in hell conspire, they may take away his life, but not his treasure, they must leave him the gospel. Perhaps they may take it out of the book, but can they get it out of the soul? Indeed, unless divine truths be gotten into the heart, the devil will come between us and our souls and rob us of them; but if it be in the judgment and heart, we carry it with us, and that continually and in all places, else it could not serve for all turns. You see then in what respect this treasure is so excellent.

First, that we may believe these things we must believe God, and believe his saints, and believe Christ.

(1.) God by his Spirit saith it is so, Prov. 3:14, 15. The knowledge of Christ and the good things by him, nothing is to be compared to them, Mat. 6:29. God's judgment is the rule of the goodness of things. If he saith it is so, it is so. Christ calleth it a treasure, that a wise man that hath God's Spirit in him will sell all for to obtain it. 'Lay up treasure in heaven,' Luke 12:21. Labour to be rich in God, for that is 'true riches,' Luke 16:11.

(2.) And for the servants of God, take Moses and St Paul. What was the judgment of Moses? In comparison, the worst things that can be in Christ and religion are better than the best things that can be in the world. What are the worst things? Shame and reproach, together with poverty, and the like; but the 'reproach of Christ,' which is most insufferable to the disposition of one that is a man; but the rebukes of Christ are greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Nay, Moses balanceth them; he layeth the reproach of Christ in one scale, and the treasures of Egypt in the other, and the reproaches of Christ is the heavier scale, Heb. 12:26. Take St Paul, Phil. 3:7, 8. He puts into one scale all his excellencies whatsoever he had. He was a Jew 'of the tribe of Benjamin,' 'without reproof,' 'as to the law blameless;' after he was a Christian, he had excellent graces, abundance of the Spirit of God. No man, next to Christ, discovered a greater portion of the Spirit of Christ; and yet, not only 'I did' before my being in Christ, account of my Pharisaism, and righteousness of the law and civil life, but note, 'I do,' when I am well advised what I say, I do 'doubtless esteem all dung in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and to be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ.' Διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου μου. That is the jewel of jewels; the treasure of treasures; for thereby we come to have infused righteousness. Imputed is the most useful, and therefore the apostle so esteems that, that in regard of it he esteemed the other nothing,

and thinks he hath not done enough till he hath set disgraceful terms upon it, calling it dung, offal, that which is cast to dogs.\* He will suffer the loss of all righteousness, reputation, and all, that he may gain Christ. Thus, if we believe the judgment of God, and of men led by the Spirit, and of Christ, we must needs judge this an excellent treasure.

Use. Therefore let us labour to have our parts and shares in this excellent treasure of Christ, and the good things of Christ; to give no rest to our souls till we have union and communion with him, in whom 'all treasures are hid,' Col. 2:3. Get the Spirit of Christ, whence all graces and comforts be derived; what will all other treasure do good, when we stand most in need? When we lie gasping for comfort, as we must ere long, what will friends and possessions do good? what will these farther you, when you go swelling and puffing against God's ministers, and truth, and them that be better than yourselves—What will they do you good that thus leave you? Alas! nothing at all. It will only fill your souls with despair and horror. The knowledge of God in Christ, and the Spirit of God to seal it, and to sanctify hard hearts, is the only thing that will comfort us. It will not comfort a man on his deathbed, that he hath worn gay apparel, or been acquainted with great persons, or borne so high a place, or tasted of so many dainties. Alas! when he reflecteth on these things, what good will they do? This will do him good; I remember such promises, such comforts, such precious mercies, that have been unfolded to me; the work of God's Spirit in me hath led me to such and such holy actions, as the fruits of his Spirit. I remember Christ hath been unfolded to me, that I might cast myself on his mercy. These things may comfort, but other things may be objects of discomfort, but comfort they can yield none. I beseech you, let us consider wherefore we came into the world, and wherefore God hath given men great parts. We are sent as factors\* into the world to trade, being all

merchants. And what do we trade for? For this commodity that we should carry to heaven with us, that we may go stored to heaven with them. If a merchant send a factor into a foreign country, and he bring nothing but baubles and trifles, can he give a good account to him that sent him? Doth God send us into the world to get a great deal of 'hard clay,' Hab. 2:6, and of ill-gotten goods for pleasures, and to deify ourselves and others, to make ourselves much more the children of the devil than we are by nature? No. We are factors for great matters, to get the knowledge of God in Christ, to get near acquaintance with God, to get out of the state of nature, to get near to heaven; these be the ends wherefore we live in the world. This earth and this church of God is a fit place, a seminary, a nursery, wherein we grow, and are fitted to be transplanted to the heavenly paradise. Wherefore do we live, and wherefore doth God give these excellent parts by nature? Is our understanding to exercise itself in the dirt of the world? Is this heart, these wills, and affections given to cleave to baser things than ourselves? Hath he given love, so sweet, so large an affection, to cleave to things below?—which is capable of Christ, of heaven, of happiness. These excellent capacious souls of ours, which the world cannot contain, are they for anything that is meaner than ourselves? Oh no. They serve for Christ, and for these excellent treasures. Oh that we should forget the end of our creation, redemption, live here, and labour not for the things which we live in the world only to attain to but let the devil abuse us! As they catch whales, with casting empty barrels about them to play withal, so while we be playing about this and that vanity, we are made a prey to Satan. How few live to that purpose for which they are! Few fit themselves for their eternal condition, by heaping up comforts from these things, which may be true comforts. Lay these things to heart, that we may be wise to purpose, wise to salvation. This is our wisdom and our understanding.

Use 2. Quest. But how shall we know whether we have interest and portion in these excellent treasures, ay or no?

Ans. [1.] We may see our interest in them, especially by our esteem of them. If they be presented to our souls indeed as God doth, and as Christ and the word of Christ presents them, then it is an argument, that there is a tincture in our spirits whereby they are made suitable to the Spirit of Christ. If they be presented [as] excellent things—and beyond all comparison, all the things thou canst think of are not to be compared with them—do we so present them to ourselves, that we esteem of them as Moses, and Paul, and God's children do? Do we so esteem of grace, that if we were left to our wish, whether we will have anything in the world, or a greater measure of grace, of the love of God, of union with God, what choice would we make? Our estimation and choice will discover the frame of our hearts. As we esteem, so we be. If it were left to our own opinion, and wish, and desire, would we make David's choice, Ps. 4:6, 'When many said, Who will shew us any good?' A right temper of a worldling, 'Who? it is no matter who,' let any 'shew me any good,' do but shew it, I have ways enough to get it. But saith David, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.' Life is in the favour of God; nay, the favour of God is better than life itself. I had rather part with my life than the favour of God; saith Paul, 'My life is not dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy,' Acts 20:24. Now do you esteem communion with God and peace of conscience higher than life? It is a good sign of interest in Christ when you have this estimation and choice on him.

Ans. [2.] Again, a sign of interest in this treasure is, when we have grace to make use of it on all occasions; for together with graces the Lord gives his Spirit to make use of them, in our afflictions, in our troubles. And therefore they that make not use of the Scriptures, and promises of good things they have in Christ, have no part in this

treasure. What is the use of a treasure if it be not applied to our occasions; if we run to earthly contentments, and never make use of our best grounds of comfort? Christ giveth an excellent note of discerning: 'Where the treasure is, there the heart will be,' Mat. 6:21. Wouldst thou know whether thy treasure be in earth or heaven? Where is the heart? that is, where is thy love, thy joy, delight? Ask thy soul what thou lovest most? what thou most cleavest in affection to? what thou delightest most in? There is thy heart. And therefore they that have few thoughts, and very shallow and weak thoughts of the better state to come, and of the state that they have here in Christ, and the excellencies in Christ above the world, that do not think of these things with joy and love of God, their heart is not there; therefore their treasure is not there. They have hearts eaten out with the world, if they were anatomised, you should find nothing but projects for the world. Anatomise their affections, there is nothing but the love of the world, and vanity, and emptiness, and which is worse than emptiness, much sin and evil that Satan hath brought into the world. And if nothing be found in the soul but worldly vanities and profits, alas! where is our treasure? Our treasure certainly is here, and not in heaven; for 'where the heart is, there is our treasure.'

They that have treasures, Oh they mind them. Therefore we shall see worldly men, they have nothing in them. You shall not have a savoury word of goodness. Their minds are like mines of gold and silver. They say of them, that where they are the ground is always barren, because the metal sucketh out the juice that should cherish it. And so it is with all the minds of earthly men. Enter into an heavenly discourse, it is not for them. They have not a word with them, they have no savour, no relish of it, they shew a distaste; yet if it be brought in by occasion of mortality, a short thing will serve. But they will quickly be in the old tract of the world. They be so unwilling

to dwell in the meditation of these things, that they be mere strangers to them.

Ans. [3.] A man will think of his treasure and look on it, as a covetous man, that though he use not his gold, yet will open his chest to look on it; excellent is the colour of it.

Note. Shall a worldling joy in refined earth, and shall not a Christian delight to reflect on Christianity and his comforts in Christ, and his future estate, and what blessed conditions abide in him, and being for ever with the Lord, and having such rivers of pleasure? The oldest man, the dullest wit, will never forget where he layeth his treasure, and when we cannot call to mind this comfort, and that comfort, and things useful for us, it is a sign they be not treasures to us, for if they were we would make more of them.

I beseech you, therefore, labour more and more, that as things are in themselves, and as God who is the rule of all truth doth judge of things, so let us judge of things, let them be to us as they are to him, and as they are in themselves. If they be treasures, the blessings and comforts of God's Spirit and the good things of Christ, let them be so to us; never leave begging of God that we may have a sanctified judgment, to have the same mind of them that he hath; and to this end balance them often with other things. As Moses did, and as Paul did, lay them in the scale, and consider the emptiness and vanity of all things besides\* grace and the Spirit, and the good things of Christ, and what other comforts they will afford. God hath given wit and discourse, how shall we use them better than by comparing different things, and answerable to our comparing to make choice? We should shew ourselves wise men in our wise choice, and good men in our good choice. How else should we shew ourselves to be what we would be thought to be?



There be treasures in these poor vessels of bread and wine. Now what treasures are conveyed by them, if we look on themselves? Bread is an ordinary thing, but the good conveyed to us by God is conveyed by these common easy things. Thus God delights to shew himself in common ordinary ways to us. Therefore raise up your thoughts from the commonness of the things to the excellency of the things conveyed. What is conveyed by bread? The body of Christ crucified. And what is conveyed by that? God reconciled in Jesus Christ, by the sufferings of Christ, the love of God, and mercies of God, and pardon of sins. Great good is conveyed by the bread broken, for Christ is conveyed with satisfaction to divine justice, and thence favour and reconcilment with him. And so when his comforts are represented by refreshing of our bodies, Christ's body 'is meat indeed,' Christ's blood 'is drink indeed,' John 6:55. The benefit of Christ's blood and satisfaction are great things that are conveyed by a reverent receiving of the sacrament. If we come preparedly we have communion with Christ, in whom are 'hid all treasures,' Col. 2:3.

## VERSE 7

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We entered upon this verse the last day. 'But we have this treasure in earthen vessels;' where he answereth an objection, for the heart of man is full of objections against Scripture truths. God in manner of his dispensation pleaseth not the natural heart of man, especially when it thinks itself most wise, but pleaseth itself in cavilling and expostulating against the word, or the dispensation of it; and therefore the apostle being desirous that these blessed things may come to the hearts of the people he hath dealt withal, takes away all objections that may stand between them and the truth.

The chief objection is the baseness of Paul's condition. He was scorned and persecuted in the world.

It is true we are 'earthen vessels,' but we have a 'treasure' in these vessels. And God is wise, and his end is good, 'that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.'

And then the treasurer, and the under-treasurer; Christ is the chief; we are the under-treasurers. And then the vessels which this treasure is contained in. 'Earthen vessels' are baser than the treasure itself; and then the reason of this seeming disproportion, that so excellent a treasure is in earthen vessels. These be the particulars that deserve to be unfolded. Some of them have been unfolded in part already.

I shewed that the gospel was a treasure. Soul-saving truth is a treasure. It was compared to light, the most divine quality of all,

fittest to set out divine truths, which hath influence conveyed from heaven with it; and which discovers itself and all excellencies in the world besides. And now it is set out by another borrowed speech, which we highly esteem in the world, that is, a treasure. Nothing more prized than light and treasure. God speaketh in our own language to us; not that heavenly things are not better than any earthly things, but we cannot understand God if he speaks in any other language. And therefore he conveyeth the excellency of spiritual things under that which we most prize in the world, under light, and under treasure.

I came then to make a use of trial, whether we have this treasure or no.

Use 3. For further use, if so be Christ, and the good things by him discovered, are such a treasure, then we ought to be content with him, though God cut us short in regard of outward things; for we have a treasure, and this is one benefit we have by it. If we have Christ, we shall have all other things, as much as God shall see needful. They shall be cast into the bargain, and that is one comfort.

The little we have we shall have with a blessing. And then though we be never so poor in the world, we are rich in promises. Rich faith we have to make use of these rich promises. Precious faith, and precious promises We have bills, and God is a good paymaster, and is content to be sued on his own bond. We cannot have a better debtor than God himself. Now, having the Spirit of God, to give us precious faith, to lay hold on the rich and precious promises we have in Jesus Christ, therefore we should not be much discontented with whatsoever befalls us in this world, for we have a rich portion.

Let us labour to understand this, and consider not only that we are rich in bills and promises, but in reversion. The best riches are laid

up in heaven for us. We have some earnest and other tastes of them here, some grapes of Canaan,\* but the best is to come, the true treasures are laid up in heaven. What we have here, alas! is nothing to that we shall have hereafter. Therefore having a rich God, and a rich Saviour, God-man; God having enriched our natures, and willing to enrich our persons, so far as shall concern heaven; having rich faith, and rich promises, and rich reversionaries; for matters of this world let God deal as he pleaseth. God, that gave so rich a treasure as his own Son, cannot deny anything else, as the apostle reasoneth strongly: 'If he hath not spared his own Son, but given him to death for us all, how shall not he with him give us all things?' Rom. 8:32. He wonders that any man should call it to question, 'How can it be?'

He stands not on petty commodities, which we stand in need of, that giveth treasures. It is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom: *Dabit regnum, et non dabit viaticum?* He will give you a kingdom, and will not he give you safe conduct and provision to bring you to heaven?

Consider this, and often examine your faith, whether ye believe these things or no. If you believe them, why are you discontented with every petty loss and cross in the world, as if there were no better things to depend upon?

(1.) Oh labour to bring [y]our hearts to a holy contentment, and for a Spirit of wisdom to improve this treasure. What use is there of a treasure, if we do not employ it for a supply of our wants? And therefore make use of the riches we have in Jesus Christ. Are we sinful? He is gracious. Have we much guilt [that] lieth on our consciences? Christ hath a great deal of favour: he is 'the beloved Son of God,' Mat. 3:17. Set that against conscience. Have we many enemies in the world? We have an intercessor in heaven. 'Doth sin

abound? Grace aboundeth much more,' Rom. 5:20. Is there any want either in grace or in comfort in the things of this world? See a full and rich supply in Jesus Christ.

(2.) And then get wisdom to make use of it. There is a special art to make use of the good things we have in Christ every day. For a man to famish at a feast, to starve and perish with thirst at the fountain's head, it is ignorance and want of wisdom. If we be in Christ, if we have a well-head, whence we may fetch whatsoever we stand in need of, if we have faith, then\* to this end beg of God a spirit of wisdom and revelation to know the excellent things we have in Christ.

(3.) And likewise labour for a vessel of faith for to contain this treasure, and get enlargement of faith. The larger faith we bring, the larger measure we carry from Christ. As the poor woman, that had vessels of oil, had she had more vessels, she had more oil, 2 Kings 4:6; for the oil increased as her vessels served. If we had more faith, we might have larger oil of grace, and larger oil of comfort from God's word in Christ, and God's riches in Christ. And therefore beg with the holy apostles, 'Lord, increase our faith,' Luke 17:5, that as we have rich promises, and a rich Christ, and rich comforts, so we [may] have rich faith.

(4.) And because Christ is rich, not to them that are without him, but within him, as they have union with Christ, labour therefore to strengthen this union with Christ, that we may be nearer and nearer the fountain, nearer and nearer the well-head, nearer and nearer the treasure of all. And therefore labour in use of the word and sacraments to increase union, and so to increase communion with Jesus Christ.

(5.) And for this purpose increase the sense of emptiness in ourselves, for as we grow empty in our conceits, so are we fitted to be

full with God's goodness. 'He sends the rich empty away,' Luke 1:53, that be rich with the windy conceit of their own worthiness. Let us search deeply into our own hearts what we want, what sin lieth on us, that we may be pardoned. What is wanting we should know, that it might be supplied.

It should be our daily task to empty ourselves, by our daily consideration of our own wants and sinfulness, and then to fetch a fresh supply from the throne of grace.

It is with a Christian's heart, as a vessel that is full of something it should not be. So when men's hearts are full of windiness and what they should not have, the more we labour to set\* ourselves, the more God infuseth supernatural grace and knowledge into us. And therefore let these two go together. Know our riches in Christ, and know ourselves; know God in Christ, and Christ, and then our own baseness, and that is the way to make use of the treasure we have.

(6.) And likewise meditate and recollect our thoughts daily of the vanity of all things here, that our hearts run after so much. Alas, what is here we should stand so much upon as to neglect our treasure! what is here will induce the scanning of a wise man! what is worthy our spirits, our souls, our labours!

Let us wisely consider, and see through these things, and see beyond all things here, see them, and then see as much as we can into these treasures, which we can never see through, for they be larger than the soul. All other treasures are contained in a place, and the place larger than the treasure, but these riches be larger than the treasury. But see as far as we can into the dimension, and height, and depth, and breadth of these things, and seeing the vanity of all things below, the excellency of these things, using our wits this way, it will teach us how to improve this treasure.

I know these things be uncouth and strange to a carnal proud man, to advance things so much that they see not, to set such a price on things they understand not. But God is wiser than we, and if we take his word for truth, we must judge good, and conceive more than I relate to you. We must go to a skilful lapidary if we will know the price of a stone; and if we will know the price of a treasure, go to him that is able to judge. Consider not what vain foolish men think of God's ways, but ask God and Christ. Foolish creatures prize a bastardly coral more than a precious stone. So much of that doctrine.

To proceed to the next point. We are the treasurers. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,' we apostles and ministers. So that the riches of the gospel, they are conveyed under dispensations ministerial. And then the conditions of these, namely, 'they be earthen vessels.' God is so good that he not only conveyeth treasure to us, and giveth us rich promises, but he giveth us those that shall help us to come to the possession of, and interest in them. All the riches that we can desire are in Christ and from Christ, but then Christ must be acknowledged, and these treasures must be conveyed, and brought in; and therefore God hath ordained an ordinance to us by way of entreaty, by way of persuasion, and by all the ways the Spirit of God in Scripture useth. And hereupon the ministry of the word, from the excellent use of it, is set out many ways.

(1.) As it is with the lifting up of the brazen serpent, Num. 21:9, if it had not been lift up, they could not have seen it to have healed them. The ministry of the word sets up Christ that all may behold for the healing of all their spiritual diseases.

(2.) It is the lifting up of a banner, that all may come under it. The gospel is this banner, as in Cant. 2:4.

(3.) If treasures be never so rich and lie hid in the earth, there is no use of them. Now therefore is a calling appointed to dig out treasures, to spread them before God's people, to lay before them 'the unsearchable riches of the gospel,' Eph. 3:8. The use of the ministry is to lay them open to the view of God's people.

(4.) Christ hath a great love to his people, but we must have somebody to woo for him. The ministry is a wooing for Christ. It discovers the excellency of Christ, and our want, and need to be enriched by Christ. Therefore they be called *παρανυμφιοι*, 'friends of the bride,' to shew the riches of Christ, and the church's beggary, and so to procure the happy marriage between Christ and the church, John 3:29, *ὁ δὲ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου*. That is the use of the ministry, to handfast Christ and the church together, to make up the marriage, that so 'the church may be presented a chaste virgin to Christ, so glorious a husband,' 2 Cor. 11:2. By them God sends his jewels and treasures to the church in this time of contract, as this world is but a time of contract between Christ and his church. As Abraham sent his servant to procure a marriage between Isaac and Rebekah, Gen. 24:1, seq., the faithful servant carrieth jewels to enrich her, and make her more lovely in Isaac's sight, when she was brought to him; so ministers carry those treasures, open these jewels to overcome the church, that seeing the riches in Christ, she may be more in love with Christ, so rich a husband.

(5.) The ministry is 'the salt of the world,' Mat. 5:13. Without salt, things putrify. So salt preserveth them, and eats out the corruption. It hath a cleansing, purifying power. What were the souls of God's people without it? Rotten and stinking in God's nostrils, with pride and self-conceitedness.



(6.) So we are called 'the light of the world,' Mat. 5:14. We are in darkness, and were not God's light held out, what were the world but an Egypt?\* Nothing but palpable darkness. As in times of popery, when there was no ministry, but instead of it mass, and other empty things.

(7.) And therefore in the Revelations and other places they are compared to 'stars.' The church is as a firmament, and heaven. And antichrist, in opposition, is compared 'to earth.' And the 'stars in heaven' be those that be set to shine in the darkness of the night of the world, to give aim to others which way to walk.

But I might be large in this. I only speak of it for a general use to us all, that we may better conceive of God's love, not only to give to his church rich treasures, but likewise a calling whereby these things may be unfolded to us, that our love and affection may be stirred up to them. And therefore, Eph. 4:8, when Christ ascended to heaven in triumph, intending to leave the richest things in the world (as emperors and kings in triumph scatter gold and silver), 'he gave gifts to men.' What were these gifts? petty mean things? No. But 'some evangelists, some prophets, pastors and teachers,' Eph. 4:11. And how long? 'To the end of the world,' ver. 13. Not only for the laying of the foundation of religion (as some will have the word only used to lay the foundation, and then to leave them to I know not what), but to edify and build them up more and more.

Therefore the greatest gift Christ in triumph will scatter to his church, is gifts, and men furnished with gifts for the service of the church, Jer. 3 ver. 15. When God promiseth to bless his people, he saith, 'I will give you pastors according to mine own heart,' as if that were a blessing of blessings. And therefore, they that live under the ministry of the gospel, let them know the good things of the gospel

are not only treasures, but the ordinances of God, wherein that treasure is conveyed, it is a treasure. We ministers carry this treasure in earthen vessels.

The church where means are, is as it were Goshen, a place of light, and all other places are places of darkness, Exod. 10:22, 23. How pitiful is it to live in places where means of salvation are not, that have no light shining in their hearts at all? I would enforce this point if I were to speak in another place, and to another auditory; but I cannot unfold my text without opening it in some degrees, and therefore we will hasten.

'We have these treasures in earthen vessels.'

The condition of all ministers, they be men, and carry these treasures in earthen vessels. In earthen vessels, in what sense?

First, It is true fundamentally. And for the matter whereof ministers and all other men consist, it is but earth.

Secondly, It is true of their condition. Earth is the basest of all elements, and they are counted of carnal foolish men, the basest callings of all. They be poor and despised, and thereupon 'earthen vessels' in the regard of the esteem of the world, and usage in the world. Earth in matter, earth in condition, earth in esteem, earth in usage suitable to their esteem, earthen vessels every way.

[1.] For the matter whereof we consist, the foundation of all the rest. It is the common condition of all. The rest are more peculiar to the ministers. We are all but 'earthen vessels.' You know the story of our creation, Gen. 2:7. God made us of the earth; but if we had not sinned, though we had been made of the earth, we should never have

been turned to the earth again, but our states should have been changed.

God's gracious power would have suspended that mortality which our nature of itself was subject to; for man being made of earth, was subject to have turned to earth again, though he had not sinned. But by the door and gate of sin, death entered into the world.

The angels were subject to fall as well as the devils, for every created thing is changeable, and so the angels, only God suspendeth that possibility of sin, and establisheth them in grace, but he withdrew his support from the devils and suffered them to fall. So man, if he had not sinned, God would have continued him in grace, that though mortal by nature, yet his mortality should have been so suspended, that the subjection to mortality should never have come to act. But since sin, the curse is on us, 'Of earth thou art, and to earth thou shalt return; dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return,' Gen. 3:19. We be all 'earthen vessels' in our original, and in our end, 'earth to earth, dust to dust;' as we say of ice, 'water thou art, and to water thou shalt return,' because it riseth of water, and is dissolved into water again. So a man that consisteth of earth, 'dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.' Thou shalt be resolved into thy first principle whereof thou wast made; so that we are but 'earthen vessels,' by reason of the curse inflicted on us since the fall.

[2.] An earthen vessel is but a weak frame; a little dirt concocted with the fire. And we are a more exquisite frame, knit together by a more singular art, of God, being made in a wonderful manner; and yet God compares his frame\* of us to our frame\* of earthen vessels, since the fall, Jer. 18:4.

Beloved, it is matter of experience which needeth no proof. I would we could make good use of it, rather than stand to prove it. Nothing

is more apparent than the frailty of man, and yet nothing less made use of. 'The Lord remembers we are but dust,' Ps. 103:14, but we forget it. If we could remember we were dust, it were well, to make us less proud, and less presumptuous. The Lord knows we are but dust, to pity us, but we remember not that we are dust, to humble us. And therefore as God knows we are dust and earthen vessels, we should often think of it too, to make us humble and sober, and to take off our high thoughts from any excellency here.

And take heed lest by intemperance we break ourselves sooner than we should do. Many break themselves by intemperate courses, as candles that have thieves in them (j), as we say, that consume them before their ordinary time. So many by intemperate lusts and courses, they break the thread of their lives.

Indeed, let an earthen vessel be preserved never so, it will moulder to pieces, though it may be kept an hundred years, if preserved from knocks; so man will moulder of himself to an end; all the art and skill in the world cannot prevent it.

Yet notwithstanding there may be, and ought to be, care that we shorten not our own days, as many intemperate persons do, and that in sinful courses, which is more to be lamented.

Therefore let us often think of our condition, Jer. 18:2, 3, 4. God bids the prophet go to the potter's house and see his making of pots, and there he sees how he makes one to one use and another to another; and so we are but vessels of earth for several uses; and let us learn the use the prophet there was taught, to resign ourselves to God's dispensation. If he will make us longer or shorter, of this use or that use, let God have his will, and not quarrel with God; as the vessels never quarrel with the potter, who makes what vessels he pleaseth,

and for what end he pleaseth, as the apostle makes use of it in the great point of predestination, Rom. 9:23.

Use 1. And since the best ministers, magistrates, and all are but earthen vessels, make what use we can of them while we have them. Let us not rely on them. They be but 'earthen vessels;' but though we must not depend on them for our comfort, yet make use of them while we have them, for they may be knocked in pieces, we know not how soon, and then all the use we might have had is gone.

Use. 2. And to rise to a higher use, which concerneth us all, since ministers, kings, subjects, and all are but 'earthen vessels' in regard of the manner,\* and seeing they may be golden vessels in regard of grace and glory, as the apostle saith, 'in a great house are vessels of gold and silver,' 2 Tim. 2:20, let us labour to have another manner of being than this, labour to be born again of 'the immortal seed of the word,' 1 Peter 1:23, and then in death we shall live, then these 'earthen vessels' shall be made golden vessels for ever; for God's second work is a great deal better than his first. Now we be in the first creation 'earthen vessels,' but when God reneweth us out of dust again, if we get into Christ we shall be golden vessels in heaven for ever, born and begotten of the seed of the word; as the apostle Peter saith, 'All flesh is grass,' he compares us not only to earthen vessels, but to grass, of less substance than earthen vessels, 'but the word of the Lord endureth for ever,' 1 Peter 1:25.

Labour that we may be golden vessels under a golden head. If we be Christians we have a golden head, though earthen vessels; and having a golden head, he will make all conformable to him ere long. We shall have bodies conformable to him, as Phil. 3:21. He will make our earthen bodies, vile bodies, base bodies, like his glorious body, by the power whereby he is able to subject all things to himself.

And this comes by hearing the word of the Lord. That word is the seed of the new birth. 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord,' Jer. 22:29, and consider we be earth, earth, nothing but earth; for he repeats it thrice together, 'Hear the word of the Lord,' that we of earthen vessels may be made vessels of everlasting continuance.

Use 3. And then it is no prejudice to us that we be earthen vessels, but rather a comfort; for death, whereby we shall be knocked in pieces, will be only a consummation of our grief and trouble here, and a beginning of the happiness in another world. In the grave dust lieth a while, but we shall be made of another fashion, and receive another kind of stamp in the world to come.

Use 4. And, I beseech you, forget not that which is the proper use of it for humility. You may differ in outward relations, but you be all of one stuff. You be all earth; *judices terræ terram judicant*, the judges of the earth judge the earth. They judge other men that are earth, and they be earth themselves, and *fili terræ*, that is, base men. The sons of the earth, and men of the earth, that is, great men, that account all as grasshoppers in regard of themselves; though they be men and giants, yet they be but earth. We should all therefore labour to have low conceits of this life, and of all comforts of it, as Austin saith well, *Respice terram*, look to the dust; go to the grave and say, Here is the dust of the emperor, here is a rich man, here is a poor man; see if you can find them differ. Alas, no difference at all. Therefore make use of sobriety in regard of the use of things of this life, for we be all earthen vessels. And so much shall serve for this point.

But the apostle intendeth more than so, for he speaketh of their esteem; earthen vessels are not only broken, but contemptible. Look into the element, and you shall see every element and creature as the more light, it is more excellent, and as more earthly, it is more base,

as the apostle before saith. We see now the water more lightsome than the earth, the air than the water, the fire more lightsome than it, and the element more pure than it, till we come to God himself, who is pure light. So everything as more light, is more excellent. What is the excellency of pearl? They have a sparkling light in them; but everything as it groweth near the earth is more base, for earth is the dregs of the world. Now ministers are more so than others, both in esteem and in usage, which followeth esteem. And what is the reason of it? Surely,

Reason 1. Because that the world is foolish and childish, and liveth by sense and fancy; and the matters of the gospel and divine truths we speak of are spiritual things, matters of faith, far remote from sense and fancy, by which the world liveth.

When we preach spiritual things, what are these to honours, and to riches, and to dependence, and to the goodly things of this world? Thus the fools of the world undervalue the things of God, especially when they be in their gawdes.\* See a foolish man when he hath his riches, and clothes, and friends about him, his fancy is full of these things; tell him of spiritual things, what a loathing there is in the heart of a man! This is the proud carnal heart of a man, which the more carnal, the more it loatheth things of a higher nature, being besotted and drunken with worldly excellencies, as men's natures are.

Reason 2. Again, divine truth is a solid thing. Men naturally are given to superstitious conceits in religion. They will have one, but it shall be with this conceit or that conceit; as the apes, so they hug the brats of their own brains; they will have devices of their own. Religion is solid, and tells them this is God's way, and God's course; but the foolish heart of man will not yield to it. And that is the reason they

cry down the solid things of God's word which have realities in them, and things to purpose. And then the world loveth their own courses, and are in love with their own way. Sin is a sweet morsel to them. Herodias is sweet to Herod. John Baptist was a good man till then, but when he meddled with that sweet morsel, then his head must off, Mat. 14:2, seq., Mark 6:28. And so when Christ opposed the worldly courses of the Scribes and Pharisees, he was counted a demoniac, a wine-bibber, and an enemy to Cæsar, and what not, when he took on him the office ministerial.\* When Paul calleth himself an 'earthen vessel,' how did they use Paul? Tertullus, a prating orator, counteth him a pestilent fellow, Acts 24:5. And his usage was base. They whipped him, put him into the dungeon. The Corinthians, that were begotten by him, because he had not eloquence and gifts of ostentation, and fitting the stage, as their flaunting teachers had, they count him a mean person. The proud teachers brought him out of conceit with the Corinthians, and therefore he is fain to make apology for himself. 'He writes great letters indeed, but his presence is mean and base,' as in the 10th chapter of this Epistle, ver. 10.

There may be many reasons given why this calling is subject to base usage in the world, and esteem from the dispositions of men contrary to it, but indeed not much to follow the point. It is not so much at all times, nor in all places. God doth at some time give more liberty, and raise up a more excellent esteem of them than at other times; but ordinarily it is thus, the more faithful, the more despised of carnal people.

If you ask a reason what raised popery to be so gaudy as it is, they saw the people of the world fools, and knew that children must have baubles, and fools trifles, and empty men must have empty things; they saw what pleased them, and the cunning clergy thought, we will have religion fit for you. And because they would be somebody in the



world, they devise a religion that is only outward, and such an one as dishonours God, by thinking him like to themselves, to delight in incense, and ornaments, and pictures, and the like; and hereupon came all the outside of popery, whereby they labour to ingratiate themselves to the world. They fool the world with all toys to please themselves, and they had suitable clergies: like lips, like lettuce; they had a religion suitable to their life. And hence came all that trash in popery to please the foolish heart of man. And because they will not be basely esteemed of, they get into the consciences of people by raising authority by false means and false conceits, that man can make his Maker, and turn bread into Christ's body by five words; and the pope cannot err, and whatsoever comes from him thou must obey, though with denied obedience to thy lawful prince; for they had seated themselves in the consciences of the people, and raised themselves by false means to avoid that which they saw would follow, the gospel. They knew the cross would follow the doctrine of the cross, the preaching of Christ crucified, and mortification and self-denial. And therefore they thought to take another way, and hence is all that forced respect they have in popery.

But it is clean contrary, where any that are won by God to the means, they have high esteems of it presently. As the jailor that had whipped and abused the apostles, Acts 16:33, used them very respectfully,\* and made them a feast. And so first [epistle of the] Cor. chap. 14:24, 25, When the simple man heareth the word open his sinful estate, he presently falls down at the apostles' feet, and saith, Certainly God is in you. No man is won by the blessed truth of God, but hath high conceits of the pure ordinances of God; and the more pure and close and home it is, the more he esteemeth of it. And therefore we may take an estimate of ourselves by our esteem of it.

A sanctified ear sheweth a sanctified heart, and a sanctified esteem of God's ordinance, as God's ordinance. From the power and virtue we find in it, working upon our souls, it is an argument we be wrought upon by the ministry; for though we be counted 'earthen vessels,' by base earthly-minded men, yet they that be wrought upon have other estimations of us.

Their calling is to bring men's souls to heaven, to be saviours of the people, to be God's own name, to be fathers. It is a calling that the angels may stoop under it. 'Who is sufficient for these things?' 2 Cor. 2:16, and yet the base slight it; but I say, respect must not be won by forced means, as in popery, but by opening the mysteries of God, and the Spirit accompanying the outward ministry. This will work so effectually in the heart, as will raise the heart to a high esteem of these things, from the blessed experience they find of the Spirit of God working in them. But that will appear more in the next, where he saith, God's end of conveying heavenly things by earthen vessels is, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man.

The first part of the verse we have unfolded, and have shewed,

1. That the gospel is 'a treasure.'
2. The 'treasurers,' they be the 'apostles and ministers.'

And then, 3. The 'vessels.' We carry it in 'earthen vessels,' earthly vessels for the matter and for their esteem.

Of this I will only say, that which concerneth every man.

1. It is not a severed condition, it is the condition of all. To be earth of itself is no such base condition. That it is a word of disgrace and frailty, it is from sin. For howsoever we be earthy, and of nothing,

and so might fall to nothing, yet God would have suspended the inclination of the creature, which is prone to turn to its original, which is nothing, if Adam had not sinned. The heavens are made of nothing, and yet still continue their condition, because God preserveth them. And the angels made of nothing, and are subject to fall to nothing, as the angels that fell, they might have fallen. And they stand not by any strength of their own, but God's grace suspendeth that possibility of falling to nothing, and confirmeth them in that blessed condition. And so the baseness of the earthen vessels is from sin.

2. And add this by the way, see the marvellous power of God. At first, all things were nothing at all, then they were a chaos, a confused mass; out of a confused mass comes a heaven and earth, and all the creatures. Man himself falleth, and becomes worse than nothing, having sinned; and to be delivered out of that miserable condition he must be a new creature. Of an earthen vessel he makes him a vessel of glory, and never leaveth him till he be settled in a blessed everlasting condition. So that God brings man from nothing, and worse than nothing, to a blessed and glorious condition.

Let us often think of it, that we be earthen vessels. It is a strange thing that God hath joined body and soul together, which are so wonderfully different, the soul being spiritual, the body earthly. But that he hath joined this spirit with a sinful polluted soul, that is more wonderful. But to join the Godhead with earth, that the Virgin Mary being an 'earthen vessel,' should have Christ made of her substance, that he should set his own stamp and image in a piece of earth, and take a piece of earth into union of his person, that earth should be joined with God, here is a wonder of wonders.

3. Therefore let it tend to our humiliation, that we be but earthen vessels: and keep us in terms of subjection, that we dash not against God, being but earthen vessels; for he hath iron sceptres for proud earth, to dash them all to pieces, Ps. 2:9.

4. Let us be thankful for our protection and preservation, being earthly vessels. In the last visitation, how many of these earthen vessels were dashed to pieces in one day?\* Beyond the seas, in the wars, how many dashed together in a moment? We be so frail, that if the like judgment fall on us, we turn to nothing. We are proud, womanish, and lewd, and have high thoughts, as if not 'earthen vessels;' and therefore it is a great mercy that we have been thus long preserved.

As ministers are earthen vessels, so magistrates and great men. Their souls be knit to their bodies by no sounder bonds than the meanest man's. There is as little combination, and as weak, between the strongest and greatest men in the world, as between the poorest.

5. But as it concerneth ministers especially, let me make one use further to the people that are in any relation to the ministry or magistracy, that we do not refuse the treasure for the weakness or infirmity of the vessel. Elias had meat brought to him by a raven; did he refuse it because so poor a creature brought him his meat? 1 Kings 17:6. No. But took it as a special blessing of God that he had meat at all, sent from God, to refresh him in his weariness, and therefore stands not upon the vessel, but marks the treasure whence that came. Who would refuse a pardon, because he that bringeth it may be meaner than himself? Look to the prince's hand and seal. Is it a sealed truth? Doth conscience bear witness to it, being God's privy seal? It is no matter who bringeth it. Magnify God's ordinances, that not only giveth pardon, but giveth likewise a messenger to bring it.

Therefore bless God rather for his ordinances, than stumble at the weakness of his ministers.

It is no matter what the hand is, if it give a treasure. We be wise in the things of this life, and so should we be in heavenly things, considering God doth this in a wise and gracious dispensation, condescending to our weakness. We bear no proportion to messengers of an higher nature. If we cannot endure the sight of an angel, we cannot endure God himself. You know the history of Moses. And therefore seeing God hath thus stooped to us, yield thankfully to this weak dispensation, that God conveyeth spiritual things to man by man.

Now what is the end of all this? 'that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' Wherein are these things observable.

First, That there is a power in the ministry and dispensation of the gospel, and an excellent power. The apostle cannot enlarge himself enough here, when he enters upon the argument of commending the gospel.

Secondly, This power, and excellency of power, it is of God, and not of man.

Thirdly, And that this may appear to be so, he useth the ministry of weak men, and earthen vessels, that by the disproportion between the excellency of the things and earthen vessels, they may know if any good be done, it comes from him who is the highest cause of all conversion of the soul. To bring the soul out of Satan's kingdom to the liberty of God's children, to be heirs of heaven, is so far above 'earthen vessels,' that it must needs appear to be God's work.

Doct. For the former, we shall put them both together, that there is an excellent power in the ordinances of God, as it is dispensed under the gospel. The Word itself, what power hath it? Are not all things by the Word in creation? Nay, is not the vigour and strength that every creature hath from the same Word? Is not the being and efficacy of all things, and the continuance of things, from the Word? As Heb. 1:3, φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, He upholds all things by his mighty power and word. Whence comes the support and continuance of the vigour of every creature, but from God? Who doth cause the sun to shine, and to give light to inferior things, that they may bring forth fruit, for the use of every creature?

And why is the sea, that vast and unruly creature, kept within its bounds that it cannot go an inch farther; is it not God's commanding words? At first God created it, and God made bounds that it cannot go beyond its due compass. Is not an eternal law set upon every creature by the word? This you are, this is your virtue, this is the extent of it, thus far you shall go, and no farther. 'God sent forth his word,' saith the psalmist, 'and they were created,' Ps. 148:8. I speak it but by way of illustration of the point in hand. And so the excellency of the power in the great work of redemption and salvation of man is from the word, as it will appear in particulars.

(1.) What a large power is put forth in the conversion of a man. For is it not the bringing a man out of Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of Christ? Col. 1:13. And will Satan let a man go willingly? Is not conversion a world of miracles? How many miracles hath that one work of conversion? It was a miracle when the blind man saw, and the deaf man had his hearing restored, when the dumb man began to speak, he that had his feet together so that he could not enlarge himself, to be able to run. But to give life to a dead man is a miracle indeed.

Now in the conversion of a sinner by the ordinance of God and the Spirit accompanying it, all these are in one; for what is conversion but the opening of the sight of the soul to see its misery by nature, and a better condition in Christ than ever; and the opening of the ear to hear and to taste heavenly discourse in another manner than before? What is it but restoring feet to run [in] God's commandments, to delight in the ways that were tedious before, and that the mouth that was used to swear and to curse, in the language of hell before, now do set forth the praises of God. Is there not a world of wonders in one work? Therefore there is a power, and an excellent power, put forth in conversion. Whatsoever Christ did in the gospel to the body, that he doth to the soul in conversion, and there is greater power put forth in the one than in the other.

To enter into the heart of man, that fenceth itself against all goodness, 'to pull down strongholds, high imaginations,' 2 Cor. 10:4, rebellious oppositions against God and goodness—do not you see daily such spirits under the gospel? Do but guess therefore what is in the whole mankind. What was it when Christ sent his apostles into the world? He sent his word accompanied with his Spirit, and that word should enter into the hearts of men, and cast all the proud, high, lofty imaginations, and lay all flat before Christ. 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Acts 2:37. We have been vile wretches, and now we are convinced of it. Is not the word powerful to turn a man out of himself, clean to dash him to pieces, and then to make him up new again better than ever he was? This is power indeed.

There is an excellent power in the word. First, in the ministers themselves; and secondly, by them to the people.

[1.] There is an excellency of power to make them fit for the work, and then to go along with them in the working others' conversion. A

great power wrought on Paul, and Peter, and the rest, and a great power wrought by them on all the rest. But because I speak not to ministers, but as it concerneth all, we will speak of the power in general.

[2.] I might be very large in shewing the power of the ministry from the success of it. Look into the history of the church, mark Christ's time, the apostles' time, that strange fishermen, and men of low conditions, being furnished with commissions from heaven, and carried these treasures in earthen vessels; see what wonders they wrought in the world by spreading the sweet savour of the gospel. The fishermen cast their great nets into the great world, as Austin saith, and got in whole nations (k). And therefore Saint Paul magnificently speaks for himself and the rest of the apostles. 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation,' Rom. 1:16. As Isa. 53:1, 'To whom is the Lord revealed and made bare?' as the word signifieth. That is, to whom is the power of the word in the ministry made bare? The ministry is the arm of God, whereby he pulleth man out of Satan's kingdom. Now God the Father draweth them to Christ in spite of corruption, in spite of sin and Satan, into his own kingdom. The cross was then set above princes' crowns, the greatest emperors that were, submitted themselves to the sceptre of Jesus Christ, and laid down their crowns at his feet. In the ten persecutions,\* was there not mighty power of the gospel, that when it had caught the hearts of women, young men, old men, or children, all conditions, all the fire, all the torments that tyrants could devise, could not get Christ out of their hearts, but they were willing to sacrifice their lives, and found more comfort in the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ, that all the discouragements in the world could not make them forsake him. Such a fire was rooted in their hearts by the fire of God's word, that made them not care for all other fires whatsoever. Where this



excellency of the power of the word appears in any, it armeth them against all oppositions whatsoever.

3. We will shew the powerful work of the word in some branches of it.

(1.) That there is an excellency of power that enables a man against his own corruptions, against temptations from Satan, from the world, sometimes from God himself in a way of trial. But this ordinance having God's Spirit accompanying it, enables a man against corruption, the most bosom corruptions, against all temptations whatsoever. It makes a man do that which is clean contrary to his nature. It will turn Jordan back, to make of Mary, a light woman, a blessed woman; to make of Paul a persecutor, Paul a preacher, to be able to subdue corruptions when they rise, that great persons lie under, to subdue their carnal wills. We see great persons are led by their wills, and countenanced by him that rules their wills, the evil spirit, and so they run rushing on, the devil joining with them, to destruction. The Christian having the power of the word and Spirit crossing his will, he is able to deny himself; and what an excellent power is that! Is it not an excellent power? Now the word giveth us strength and comfort against temptations to sin and for sin; and whether they come from Satan or from God, shewing himself an enemy. The word teacheth how to oppose God himself, when he personates an enemy, as sometimes he doth. A poor Christian then can say, Lord, remember thy promise. Thou seemest to be mine enemy, and 'writest bitter things against me;' but I believe not thou art an enemy, thou hast made rich promises, and remember them, Lord, wherein thou hast caused me to trust, Ps. 119:49. God is content to be bound by his word; and is not that powerful that can bind God himself, when we can sue him by his bond? Thou seemest

to be mine enemy, but I will not away, I will lie at thy feet till I hear comfortable news from heaven.

For temptations on the right hand, allurements and promises, and on the left, as threats and afflictions and the like, the word sets other matters before us than these; and the word enables us to all kind of duty. A man that is tongue-tied, it enables him to call on God; and a man that hath naturally nothing to speak that is good, it enables him to speak a word of comfort to others; it enableth him to every duty that God calls him to, to trust him, and to love him above all; it enables him to live well and to die well, to perform all duties God requires. The word with the Spirit enables us to manage all in a spiritual manner.

(2.) And so for bearing afflictions, how doth the psalmist speak in the Old Test[ament]? The word will direct and comfort for the carrying on of our souls in troubles of all sorts; as David, 'I had perished in mine affliction, if it had not been for thy word,' Ps. 119:92. No affliction can befall us but we have grand comforts to support us in it, when God hath promised his gracious assistance, that he will not fail us nor forsake us, when the sting is taken out by him that hath sanctified all afflictions in his own person, that as our crosses increase, so our comforts and consolation shall increase. And the afflictions of this world are not worthy the excellency that shall be revealed.

Then no wonder there is that strength in the word that it enables us to duties of our calling, public and private; it enables us to bear afflictions. And therefore the apostle may well say, 'That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.'

(3.) And so to enjoy all things that God giveth in a right manner. The word with the Spirit teacheth how to use the world as if not, to enjoy

it as helps in our pilgrimage and way to heaven, that they be not snares to us, as they be to carnal men, who perish in these things, as wasps on gally-pots.

They are drowned in riches, and drowned in pleasures, but the word and the Spirit directs the children of God to use these things in an holy and sanctified manner, and to taste them as they ought, which no man can do but they that have the word engrafted by the Spirit in their hearts.

And there is a great reason; for what doth this word oppose? Doth it not oppose greater things than the world hath? What is all preferment here to heaven? And what is all discouragement of tyrants to hell? If any one saw the joys of heaven, would not he forsake ten thousand worlds rather than lose it? If a man saw with his eyes hell opened to swallow him up if he did not alter his courses, would not he leave his courses? Now, the Lord saith, it is true that these things shall be. Let a power go with the word, and is it a wonder that he will leave his sinful courses rather than have a curse? It is no wonder that Moses should leave 'the pleasures of a court, that saw him that was invisible,' Heb. 11:26; and that Paul, that was lift up to the 'third heaven,' and saw things that could not be uttered, 2 Cor. 12:4, regarded not the threats of all tyrants, for he saw the right difference of things, he saw things in their right colours. So if the Lord lets us see spiritual things and earthly things in their colours, one will appear to be realities indeed, and other to be nothing but vanity. It is for want of faith and power accompanying the ordinance of God, to persuade ourselves that these things be as they are, and as we shall undoubtedly find them another day. And therefore it is no wonder the gospel findeth such power, where it is received and obeyed, because of the vast difference of conditions.

I beseech you, let us consider these things, and not be led away with a spirit of vanity and folly and error. So that there is a power, and an excellency of power, in the ministry; and you that have open understandings in the history of the church, know how it hath powerfully wrought in all times.

Quest. How do you know the word to be the word?

Ans. It carrieth proof and evidence in itself. It is an evidence that the fire is hot to him that feeleth it, and that the sun shineth to him that looks on it; how much more doth the word, that carrieth its own character and stamp with it, to them that be God's people; for it not only giveth light, but giveth that which is more than the sun can do. And that giveth light, but no eyes. The word giveth understanding to the simple, opens their eyes, Ps. 119:130; and a Christian can say, God hath not only shined upon me by the word, but hath wrought in my heart by it; so that in it I will live, and in it I will die. So that they need not seek arguments, for the word itself is stronger than all framed arguments. It hath a character of divine truth stamped upon it, in the heart of every believer, that minglith it with faith that it is the word, though all the world preach the contrary, and the ministers that teach it apostatize from it. I am sure I felt it, it warmed my heart, and converted me. And that is the best trial of the word to be the word, because of the efficacy felt in the heart.

That Spirit that makes the word effectual, doth by that efficacy convince the soul that the word is the word. For the soul reasons thus: I have found this word casting me down, I have found this word lifting me up; I have found this word warming my heart when it was cold and dead. I found it enlarging my heart in loving God and praising God. I have found the Spirit of God in the word casting down strongholds, and Satan out of me, and setting up his kingdom

in me, and ruling me by his Spirit, that I cannot but do what was irksome to me before, and can abstain from that which was sweet to me before; and all because I am convinced of another course than before. The soul that can say thus, if objections come, he defieth the motion. My soul hath felt the strength of the word taking root downwards, bringing forth fruit upwards, 2 Kings 19:30, and shall I doubt it to be the word? But to leave this.

Application. I beseech you, if there be such efficacy in the word, make a use of instruction of it, that we regard it more than we have done.

Use 1. And first of all, that we may make way for instruction, do but examine ourselves whether it be as a word of power to us, or any that have lived so long under the gospel? The trial is very easy.

[1.] If it be a word of power to us, certainly it will enable us to defend it, and maintain it in the worst times. St Paul saith, 1 Thes. 1:5, 'You received the word in much affliction.' If we should live in places where holy things are disclaimed and abandoned with Ishmael's persecutions, that is, the persecutions of these times, scoffings and scornings, yet hearing divine things unfolded, we receive them, and entertain them, and that with joy and comfort, with an opposition to the poison of the times, it is a good sign that the power of the word hath caught every one of our hearts. But if every taunt of Ishmael and poisonous spirits be regarded, when in times of poverty a little thing will discourage us and make us flinch, where is the power? Alas! whatsoever profession we make, we deny the power of it; for if it did work upon us, we should receive it, in the midst of opposition, with joy and comfort.

(2.) The apostle saith in another place, 'Receive the word, as the word of God,' 1 Thes. 2:13. Now if a man receive divine truths, he will

acknowledge that it is a word of power, and excellent power. What is it then to receive the word as the word? To receive divine truths with a great deal of reverence, as blessed truths, that come from the bosom of God, and likewise with a great deal of subjection, submitting the soul to them. It is God's truth delivered by Jesus Christ in the ministers, and therefore I do receive it as God's truth, and submit my conscience to it. Though there be discovery of some rebellion, yet if I allow of no risings against the power of the word, it is a sign we have felt the power of the word, when we regard it as the word.

You see then some particular evidence how we may know if the word hath wrought upon us.

Add the particulars named before, by way of trial.

(3.) What power have you to help you against temptations? What power have you against temptations from the word and divine truth? What power have you to bear crosses, and afflictions, to comfort you in sickness, losses, and crosses in the world? Can you fetch comfort from truths heard and read out of this book of God's word? It is a sign then that the Spirit of God, with the word, hath wrought a blessed change in your hearts. Can you use the world moderately? Can you perform duties in a spiritual manner? Undoubtedly, you may comfort yourselves, though with much conflicts and oppositions, both without and within.

If on trial we find these things not so, I beseech you own\* not yourselves one minute of an hour, for that minute may be the minute of our destruction, and may cut off the thread of our lives. Rest not one minute, for howsoever we may bless ourselves, as all proud hearts do against God, and the ordinances of God, and godly ways, in a scorn, as if they had a heart distinct from God and the word, and

needed not to be beholding to God for direction. They can go home, and there they have means and friends, and they can do well enough. God sets himself to laugh at the destruction of such; and that word that they cast behind them, and would have nothing to do withal, now that will stick by them to the hour of death, and they shall carry it with them in their own consciences to hell, and their consciences shall say, God told these truths to thee, and I told them to thee; I heard this from God's word, and thou regardedst me not. And therefore when your consciences be awakened with divine truths, know, that conscience shall be one day revived, and you shall hear it. What you now slight, you shall regard. You regard now no command, no duty, but you shall think of them when it is too late. Therefore seeing this is the time, labour to find the power of God in the heart, rest not.

But how shall we carry ourselves, so that the word may be effectual to us?

[1.] Labour to have humble, teachable souls, attending on God's divine I dispensation in his ordinances meekly. You know what David saith, Ps. 25:9, 'The humble he will teach.' Come with teachable hearts, and God will reveal mysteries to us. He will teach secrets, so that we shall say, I never thought there had been such light, such sweetness in the word. Come with humble souls, and you shall find him opening the secrets of heaven, especially if you desire the Lord to give the Spirit of revelation, and to take off this veil of darkness and corruption, that he would back his Spirit with his own ordinance,\* and make it effectual, that as things are in themselves holy, and heavenly, and excellent, and as they are to God's children, so they may be to us. God's word is a word of power to all elect children. Oh that I might find it a word of power to me! that I might get myself to be God's elected child.

[2.] Join with the means a spirit of prayer, as God shall enable you, and 'to him that hath shall be given,' Mat. 13:12. Labour to wait for this. If God speak not at first, the good hour is not yet come; wait till the waters be stirred, as it was in the pool of Bethesda, John 5:3. Wait till he give the Spirit of revelation, and at length we shall find such a change as Isaiah speaks of, 'The lion and the lamb shall dwell together, and the leopard and the kid, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,' 11:6. The knowledge of the Lord maketh lions lambs, and leopards kids, makes them fit to live together, though their dispositions be never so cross. If we have grace to wait God's leisure, we shall find a transforming, changing power in the word to alter us perfectly, and to mould us to a holy frame of spirit.

The apostle, as we heard heretofore, laboureth in the former chapter, as likewise in this, to set out the dignity of the ministry of the gospel above the ministry of the law, and answereth, as we have heard, all objections; and lest he should seem to savour of too high a spirit, as Saint Paul to attribute so much to his ministry, in the sixth verse, he giveth all to God; 'God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts.' So that whatsoever light is conveyed by the ministry, is conveyed by God, and by an almighty power in God, even by the same that was used in the creation, and in some sort above it. Now the end of the knowledge kindled in the heart especially of the ministers is, 'that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God may be seen in the face of Jesus Christ.' God shineth on the ministers, not only upon their understandings, but upon their hearts; and to what end? Not to shine in ourselves only, but to reflect the light, whereby God shineth upon us, to others. Then he shews the end of the ministry is especially to set out God in Christ, and the glorious mercy and goodness and bounty of God in Christ Jesus.



And what is the end of this? That God will have such an excellent treasure, as is in the dispensing of the mysteries of Christ, out of earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

Wherein is considerable, first of all, that there is a power, and an excellency of the power, in the sweet truths of God, discovered in the gospel, especially in the dispensation of it by weak vessels; so powerful, so excellently powerful it is, that it may be known that it is of God. It is of God, but that it may 'appear to be of God;' for things are said to be when they appear in regard of men. Now that it may appear to all, that the power and efficacy of the ministry of the gospel is of God, and not of man, God would have such a disproportion between the vessels and the treasure. The treasure shall be rich and heavenly, the vessels shall be earthly, that whatsoever is good, it may appear it cometh not from the vessels, but from the treasure itself.

That there is a power, and excellent power, in the truths of God, especially dispensed by the ministry, we have in part shewed heretofore, but we will follow the point. God hath furnished everything in the world with power. Every creature hath power, together with being. The heavens have a power of influence; the dull earth hath a power to put forth what it receiveth from the influence of heaven, into this and that creature, being the common mother of many excellent things, but all the power is from God. God hath put a power into the creatures, which we call an eternal law. Besides the law made to man, there is a statute given to the creature. Heaven shall move, and by moving limit time, and heaven shall bestow influence upon inferior bodies. There is a law for the sea that it shall ebb and flow, and not pass the bounds God hath set it; and by the law of God there is a centre immoveable on which the earth shall stand. These keep the statutes and the laws that God hath given them

eternally. God to shew a miracle can make the sun stand still, or the earth move, or the sea to overflow. But the power we are to speak of is another manner of power, a spiritual power, and excellency of power.

There is a power, then, in the ordinance of God, and a spiritual power. There is in every ordinance of God something that hath an heavenly relish. There is in the word, in the sacraments, that that maketh a heavenly relish. And God, by the word and the ministry, doth create spiritual sense suitable to the relish that is in spiritual things. Had we not by the word created in us spiritual sense to relish those heavenly things in the ordinances, they were to no purpose; God should lose his glory, and man should lose his benefit thereof. God createth spiritual eyes to see, and spiritual taste connatural and homogeneal to spiritual things. As there is a sweet taste in the word, so God altereth the taste of the soul, that the word should be found better than the appointed food, sweeter than the honey-comb. Nothing so sweet as divine promises to a sanctified soul; because God, that hath put a sweet taste into the ordinances, altereth the relish of the soul, the taste, and sight, and spiritual feeling of all divine truths. The spiritual heart feeleth the comforts of the sacrament in strengthening faith, and tasteth the goodness of God in Christ in giving his body and shedding his blood, so that there is a relish and virtue in the things themselves, and by them the soul is fitted to take the benefit that is hidden in the things.

There is in divine ordinances not only a light to convince, but likewise a power, together with the light, to open the eyes. There is light and power to open the eyes of the soul together. What if all were light? If there were not the eye to see, the light would be of no use at all. There is power in the ordinances not only to offer light, but it hath a spirit accompanying it to open the eyes of the soul to see that

light, so that there is extraordinary power in God's ordinances. What light can give sight, and what meat can give relish to him that wanteth it? There is therefore an excellent power in the ordinances.

Now, there is a power φυσει et φήσει, there is a power of a thing in nature, and there is a power by institution. Now the power of the ordinances and the ministry is drawn from God's institution, who hath appointed it and sanctified it to have such power, where he will accompany them with his Holy Spirit.

Now this power that is in the ordinances of God, it is set out and illustrated by many speeches and comparisons that are very clear and excellent for that purpose.

(1.) As the word and ministry is called 'the salt,' Luke 14:34. Now the power of salt is to season, to make sweet, to relish, to consume the superfluous humours, to preserve, and keep long. So the word hath the power of salt to eat out the corruptions, and to preserve the soul to make it relish God. The souls of men, without divine truths accompanying them, they are, to speak with reverence, but carrion souls and dead souls, ever stinking in the nostrils of God; howsoever they bear it out in the world to be godly persons, yet if they have not souls sanctified by divine truths, they have but rotten hearts, and are good for nothing.

(2.) The dispensing of it is compared to 'the arm of God.' Isa. 53:1, 'To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' Now a man's power is in his arm. The ordinance is not only 'the finger of God,' but 'the arm of God' to pull men out of Satan's kingdom and their wicked courses, by shewing them the vengeance of God, and better things than the world can, or Satan can. The word, the power of the Spirit accompanying it, is the arm of God 'made bare,' as the word signifieth in the original.\* God revealeth and maketh bare his arm in

the ministry when he pulleth men out of Satan's kingdom and their wicked courses.

(3.) And so likewise the truth of God in the dispensation of it is the 'sword of the Spirit,' Eph. 6:7, and cuts on both sides. It is no leaden dagger, as the papists blasphemously term it (l). It hath a force in it to cut as it goeth, and they shall feel it one day that will not feel it now; and therefore it is compared, together with the Spirit, 'to wind,' which hath a mighty power to carry and transport things, John 3:8.

(4.) And the ministers of God's holy truths, in regard of the efficacy of the ministry, have excellent terms. They are,

[1.] 'Stars,' because they give light, Rev. 1:16.

[2.] They are 'ambassadors,' as they have commission from God, Luke 9:2.

[3.] They are, in regard of the excellency of the truth, 'angels,' Rev. 2:1.

[4.] They are, in respect of the necessity of God's people, 'saviours.' So were Moses and Joshua.

God saveth by the ministry ordinarily those whom he doth save; so that there is a power and efficacy of power in the ministry, as appears by the terms by which it is set out.

(5.) Again, God is able to give efficacy to whatsoever he will. As he giveth power to every creature according to its own natural working, so he giveth power to those things that have institution from him. He is able to do it, to make them effectual for the end for which he hath appointed them, for he is the supreme power himself. All power is

resident in him as the head; and therefore he furnisheth and clotheth this ordinance of his with a power.

(6.) The word is compared to 'seed,' Mat. 13:3, seq. Now, in seed there is a power to put forth itself, to grow and breed seed like itself, and it will break through clods till it comes to its ripeness and maturity. So there is a power in the word. When it is so in the believer's heart, it will bring forth a disposition like itself, as seed doth. As it is a holy word and a pure word, it will make the heart that receiveth it suitable. Therefore James\* calleth it the 'engrafted word,' James 1:4, comparing divine truths to a syance engrafted into a plant, that turns the juice of the plant into its own nature. So when the word is engrafted, it altereth the heart, that the inward man doth relish of divine things, thinketh in power of what he heareth, and speaks in power of what he heareth, and understandeth, and worketh, and doth in power of what he knoweth; so that divine truth is like a syance engrafted into the heart. Therefore there is a power, and an excellency of power in it, not only in truth itself, but in the dispensation of it. God setteth not up an ordinance but he giveth a blessing upon it. There is an excellency of power as a power. Is there not a power and excellency of power to level mountains and to fill up valleys? It filleth the valleys. Poor dejected souls are filled with comfort. Is there not power and excellency of power to make a camel to go through a needle's eye? That is, to strip a man of self-conceitedness of his own worth, so far that being a camel, a swelling person before, he shall now be humble and low in his own sight. It is difficult as for a camel, so for a cable too (m). There needeth much extenuation to make a cable to go through a needle's eye, and much to humble a Christian; and is not this an excellent power? Sure it is. Therefore there is a power, and an excellency of power.

I will shew you this in particular.

1. The power of the ordinance of God is first seen in that it discovers to men their natural conditions, sheweth what they are by nature; for which end it useth the law, to shew that we be dead men, carnal men, under a fearful bondage, and the Spirit going along with it, convinceth the soul that we are dead, and thereupon the soul is amazed and cast down with fear and terror.

2. And then the word hath a power likewise to shew and discover the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, to pull us out of Satan's kingdom, to drive the strong man out of our hearts by higher reasons, by higher comforts, Mat. 12:29.

3. And then the word, together with the ministry of the Spirit, hath a converting power, a changing power, to alter the very frame of the soul. All the words in the world, all philosophy, all education, all the best helps that can be given, cannot stamp the image of God upon the soul, or frame holiness in the soul, but only the blessed truth of God, especially in the dispensation of it. So that the image of Christ in the 'second Adam' is stamped upon the soul, by the Spirit accompanying the ordinance.

And when the Spirit of God in the ordinance hath set a stamp of holiness in the soul, and made it like to Christ, it worketh in the soul, and by the soul. When the soul is altered and changed, it is a fit instrument of the Spirit, together with the ordinance, to pray, to do any service, to trust in God, to love God.

4. And to shew more particularly wherein the power of God's word is seen after conversion, I will shew it in four or five particulars.

(1.) First of all, when it hath altered and changed men's frame, and pulled them out of Satan's kingdom, it is seen in enabling them to perform duty in a right manner, which a natural man cannot reach

unto; as the soul altered by the power of the word and Spirit, can love God, can deny itself, can hate that it formerly loved, can pray—which no carnal man can do—can have communion with God, can perform spiritual duties and actions above the rank of nature. This the Spirit of God, together with the ordinance, raiseth the soul to do. A man may do many things that a Christian man doth, a common Christian may do many things that a sincere Christian doth, but self-respect\* enters into all he doth. He doth it either of slavish fear and terror, or to be thought well of, or to redeem some inward quiet to his tormented conscience; but he hath not the Spirit of God altering the relish of his soul, to love divine truths, and out of love and obedience to do what he doth. An holy man, if there were no enforcement out of God's word, he loveth the truth because it is truth, and hath a suitableness to his sense. If there were no hell, no torment at all, yet there is that excellency in divine truths, his soul being altered and changed suitable to divine truths, that he obeyeth heavenly truths out of love to heavenly truths, and obeyeth God out of love to God, because it is best in his judgment to do so, and not only out of fear, though that is a useful way too.

(2.) Again, as there is a power enabling a man to do, so there is a power in the word enabling a man to resist temptation; for the word breedeth faith, and faith knitteth the soul to Christ, and draweth virtue from him to resist Satan. By faith we overcome the world, temptations of honours, pleasures, temptations from within and from without. The Spirit of God working faith to lay hold on better things, enableth us to resist all temptations on the right and on the left hand. 'This is your victory, even your faith,' 1 John 5:4. 'Faith cometh by hearing,' Rom. 10:11. Faith presenteth to the soul such excellent good things, such terrible evil things, that it overpowereth the soul to embrace better good, and to avoid greater evil, notwithstanding all temptations from the world. The good the world

affordeth is nothing so good, and for the evil there is nothing so evil. Now faith apprehending this by divine light, it overcometh the world.

(3.) And as the power is seen in enabling to do duties above another man, and enabling to resist temptations, so likewise it is seen in shewing our corruptions that we be naturally prone to. A man by the power of grace is so altered that he falleth out with his most beloved sins, and laboureth to get strength against that above all other sins. The word maketh division between his Spirit and sin. Jordan is driven back with him. That stream of nature that was carried amain one way, now is carried another way. Though he hath corruptions which sometimes foil him, yet faith getteth spiritual strength, whereby he at last not only subdueth them, but at last expelleth them; and therefore the Scripture calls it self-denial. He hath a self that denieth itself, he hath a self wrought by the Spirit and word, by which he denieth himself, that is, his carnal self, Titus 2:12. When his corruptions would have such a thing, his other self saith no, it shall not be; when it stirreth him up to revenge, no, it shall not be. I owe no service to my flesh. And he hath a principle in him, whereby he subdueth what before was wonderfully powerful in him, which setteth him above himself.

(4.) There is a power, and excellency of power, in the word, to comfort us, to raise the soul in all dejections, in all discomforts. Therefore it is called 'the word of faith,' 1 Tim. 4:6, an instrument to beget faith in the promises. Faith relieth upon better things, and sets the soul above all inferior things. And so for comfort, it setteth the soul upon a rock, higher than all trouble; it setteth the soul upon God's infinite goodness and power and truth, and promises; it setteth the soul upon the things promised, heaven and happiness to come. What are these things to the glory to come? So faith carrieth the soul to heaven, to God, to Christ, to the promises; it pitcheth the soul



upon such a foundation, as no discomforts here below can shake the soul; it is above the reach of any trouble. A soul that pitcheth itself on the word and Spirit of God, and so upon God himself (for God and his word are one), it is above the reach of all discomforts whatsoever, so far as it believeth; and therefore it comforteth a man. The comforts of God's word, having the Spirit of God with them, are called 'the consolations of the Almighty.' 'Despisest thou the consolations of the Almighty?' Job 15:11. We will instance a little in a few promises. Let the soul be in want, it pitcheth itself on the promises in the word. God hath promised 'he will not leave thee nor forsake thee,' Heb. 13:5. Let a man be in some weakness and disability, he cannot perform his duty. God hath promised his 'Holy Spirit to them that beg it,' Luke 11:13. We are in many miseries and crosses, 'all things shall work together for the best to them that love God,' Rom. 8:28. God is working my good by this cross, and shall I be angry with God for working my good? No. Let me by faith see the issue of things in this promise. God will turn all to the best, and how will this stay the soul! God sheweth himself as a Father, and it is for my good, and I shall receive 'the quiet fruit of righteousness,' Heb. 12:11. And so you may see how the soul is stayed in all afflictions whatsoever. 'I had perished,' saith the psalmist, 'in mine afflictions, but that thy statutes were my comforts,' Ps. 119:92. They were my supports. Thus you see in some particular things how there is a power in the word, and an excellent power many ways, enabling us to duty, sustaining us in all crosses whatsoever.

(5.) Again, there is a power, an excellency of power, in the ordinances, whereby we are above all good things that the world affords to us. By the word, we know we have lawful use of the blessings, prosperity, peace, and plenty, God giveth us. We may use them as God's creatures, being in covenant with God. And by the word we come to manage them, and not to be slaves to them, as to

make them our masters that are our servants. By the word, and by the Spirit accompanying of it, we have a sanctified use of all. All conditions are sanctified to us, and we sanctified to all conditions; not only to afflictions, but to prosperity and everything. By the Spirit of God we are raised above prosperity, which subdueth more than adversity doth. There is an excellent place, Phil. 4:12, 13: saith St Paul, 'I have learned'—in Christ's school, not at the feet of Gamaliel —'to want, and to abound; I can do all things in Christ that strengthens me.' But a carnal man, that hath not let the word into his heart by the Spirit of God, he can neither want without murmuring, nor abound without pride and licentiousness. Every thing turneth to his bane, because he giveth not way to the Spirit. But where the Spirit getteth place in the heart, it advanceth the heart above all conditions. Thus you see, in particular, wherein the excellency of the power in the ordinance of God appeareth.

Now all this is from God, not from us; and therefore saith the apostle excellently, 2 Cor. 10:4, 'The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to beat down strongholds' of corruptions, and to beat back temptations. So the weapons of the ministry of the word, they are 'mighty,' but 'through God;' being 'strong in the Lord, and by the power of his might.' I have learned, saith Paul, 'to want and to abound,' but it is through Christ. The gospel is a dead letter, the word is dead letters without the Spirit, which is the infusion. Take water without infusion, it is dead; but a drop of aqua vitæ, which hath such spirits, is more than a pint without spirits: that is flat and dead. So take the Spirit from God's ordinances, they are the massy substance, but they want infusion. There is the bread, but the staff of bread is gone; the staff of all the infusion, is from God, and not from us. You may see this in the Acts, chaps. 1:2. When the Spirit of God did fall down upon the apostles, what extraordinary men were they! It carried them through all oppositions, through all abasements, whips,

scourges, imprisonments. It wrought mightily, nay, by help of the Spirit it did greater things than Christ. We may speak it with reverence, for Christ saith, 'You shall do greater things than these,' John 14:12, speaking of the mighty power of the Spirit, that should fall on them after his ascension. He never converted so many at once as Peter, who converted three thousand, and yet might have preached three thousand sermons and not have converted one man, if it had not the Spirit to accompany it. He cast the net, and caught three thousand souls, and all because the Spirit was mighty in the ordinance, Acts 2:42. What maketh the age of the church bad or good, but because there is more and less of the Spirit? Why were the eight hundred, nine hundred, and thousand years so dead? Because Christ was not known as he should be; or so the Spirit was not given in that measure, and therefore they were dead and dull times. So that it is the Spirit of Christ accompanying the ordinance, that maketh it effectual. 'I, even I, am thy comforter,' saith the prophet, Isa. 57:15. Men must speak comfort, but God must comfort the heart. 'I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace,' ver. 19. The fruit of the lips it cometh by the ordinance, but I will create it, and make it to be so. What is the fruit of the lips, if God create it not? 'Paul may plant, and Apollos may water,' and if men had the tongue of men and angel, if the Spirit did not accompany them, all were nothing. 1 Cor. 3:6. Nay, miracles are nothing without Christ. Israel saw the wonders of God in Egypt, yet because God gave them not an heart, they were not effectual. Nay, the miracles of Christ did no good. Nay, the doctrines of Christ did no good, without the Spirit. The Jews were not converted, because the Holy Ghost was not so abundantly given, as afterwards. Afflictions and crosses will not work without the Spirit. As it is said of Ahaz, 'This is Ahaz,' 2 Chron. 28:22. The more God humbled him, the worse he was; and Pharaoh, after ten plagues, was ten times worse than before. Nothing will humble, neither word nor work, but by the power of the Spirit. Therefore as there is power and

excellency of God in God's ordinance, so it is all from God, for all operation is from the Holy Ghost. God the Father and the Son work by the Spirit. Power is originally in the Father, and it is conveyed to Christ God-man, mediator, for to be the treasure and fountain of all power, and riches, and goodness. But the Holy Spirit doth take it from the Father and the Son, as the third person being near to us, and working in us. And so by the Spirit is meant the Holy Ghost, which cometh from the Father and the Son.

Use 1. Is there such a power, and excellent power, in the ordinance of God, when the Spirit of God accompanieth it? Then make this use of it, for to depend on the ordinance of God with meekness and humility: and take heed of Naaman's pride. Naaman was self-conceited. He being put in mind of washing himself in Jordan, what saith he? What reason is there in this? Is there not as good rivers in our country as the river Jordan? 2 Kings 5:1, seq. But if Naaman had not hearkened to his servant's counsel, he had gone home as leprous as he came. Saith he, the prophet, he biddeth thee do thus, and therefore do it, or else return a leper as thou camest; and then he hearkened to him. So many [are] of Naaman's conceitedness. Cannot I read a good book in my chamber? Cannot I have good lessons out of philosophy and morality? It is true; this is Naaman's mind; are not other rivers as good as Jordan? But God hath sanctified his word, and the dispensation of his word too. His word is holy, and the ordinance is holy, which holiness is in consideration distinct from the word. The very unfolding of the word hath a Spirit with it. God will not set up an ordinance in his church to no end. Therefore, if we will not stoop to it, as we be lepers by nature, So we may die as we are born, for anything I know. Therefore humbly depend on God's ordinances, and be thankful that God vouchsafeth to teach men by men. It is the most suitable teaching. We cannot endure the presence of an angel, nor an angel the presence of God. Therefore this is

proportionable teaching, when God will teach man by man. If an angel were to administer it, the word would not be entertained for its own sake, but for the messenger's sake: but now God would have it regarded not for the vessel's sake, but for the treasure's sake. Whatsoever the vessel be, therefore, God will teach man by man. Therefore depend upon it. But if God hath not wrought this power and efficacy in our hearts, yet wait at the posts of wisdom, wait at the pool of Bethesda till the good hour come. Perhaps the good hour is not yet come, for the ordinance is the grand conduit that conveyeth all Spirit, and all grace, and all comfort in life [and] in death. And therefore, unless we will quarrel with our own comforts and salvation, and the kingdom of heaven, and life, do not despise 'the word of life,' 'the word of the kingdom,' 'the word of salvation,' 'the word of faith,' 'the word of reconciliation.' Despise that, and despise all these, because God is pleased to convey these things no otherwise ordinarily, where he hath established a church; ordinarily I say, extraordinary things we leave. And therefore God styleth his word with these titles, 'the gospel of reconciliation and peace' and the 'word of the kingdom,' to shew there is no way to come to grace, peace, and life, but by the word of grace, the word of peace, the word of reconciliation; and therefore be stirred up to attend upon it, to make the best use of it, even as we desire the good that is conveyed by it.

Use 2. Again, if the ordinance of God, in unfolding the truths of God, hath such a savour, and power, and relish in it, then examine ourselves whether we have found such power and efficacy or no. If not, then search what is the cause, what standeth between our souls and divine truth. And finding out the cause, be not more in love with our corruptions than with our souls. This word is able to save our souls, and therefore let us see whether there be stubbornness in our wills resisting the truth of God, withstanding it, rebelling against it.

As the chiefest hindrance of divine truths is not so much the veil of ignorance in the glorious times of the gospel, as a kind of wilful stubbornness and pride, men will not stoop to God's ordinances, and when truths be revealed, men shake them off, as Stephen telleth them, 'You resisted the Holy Ghost,' Acts 7:51; and as Christ telleth them, 'You would not come to me that you might have life,' John 5:40; and as he saith, 'I would have gathered you, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not,' Mat. 23:37. We are in love with our corruptions more than with our souls; and therefore the word hath not that power, that efficacy, that excellency of power, that otherwise we should have experience of. And it is a pitiful thing indeed it hath not. We may justly take up lamentations over the times. What power hath the word, when it hath not power to make men leave fruitless sins? What fruit is in swearing? Declaring only frothy hearts and rebellious dispositions, that we get nothing, no other good by it, but only, publishing our shame? God saith, 'the plague shall not depart from the house of swearers, and for oaths the land mourneth,' Zech. 5:3, 4; Jer. 23:10. There is no good in the world by it. Every sin hath its auctoramentum,\* but this hath no end at all in it. The word hath not power to make men leave superfluity, to leave an ugly fashion, that becometh them not, but disgraceth them, serving only to discover that they desire to fashion themselves to the worst deboist persons.

Use 3. If this power hath not virtue one way, it will have virtue another; if it draws not and quickens, it will have virtue to confound. The threatenings of God against sins, that they are willing to live in, was made good, as Zechariah, 1:6 saith, 'Where be your fathers and the prophets?' They are dead and gone, 'but their words catch hold' of your fathers. They be gone; they threatened for these and these sins, and their threats remain. Moses is dead, but the threats extend to the people of the Jews, and stick upon them. The prophets and

apostles are dead, but the threatenings of the sins of the times light upon the people, and they feel them now in hell; as Rev. 6:2, it is said 'that Christ, who rideth on the white horse of the gospel,' and goeth to conquer and to conquering, he 'goeth with his bow, and woundeth as he goes,' either to conversion, to alter their wicked course of life, or to confusion. There is an arrow shot in every man that heareth, and that either maketh him better or worse.

Obj. But you will say, What efficacy is there in the word, when men leave not off their swearing and deoboist courses of life?

Ans. I answer, There is an efficacy on these very persons even before they come to hell, which doth as it were gape for them, unless they alter their ways. There is an efficacy in hardening their hearts for the present, for every sermon maketh them worse and worse; and is it not a terrible judgment to be hard-hearted? Son of man, 'harden this man's heart,' Isa. 6:10. What! with preaching? That is the way to soften them; but if they stoop not to it, it shall harden them. Every sermon they hear striketh them more and more with hardness, till they have filled up the measure of their sins, and then God payeth them home with confusion in hell for ever. Is it not a judgment of God to sink deeper and deeper in sin? If you ask who is the most wretched man of all that liveth in the church? Surely those that will hear many things, and yet will go against them; that will set their wills against God's will, and set their authority against God's authority; that will live as they list, and live as they please; for every sin they commit is a step deeper to hell, and the more they have their wills, the more they shall be tormented against their wills. No man so deeply tormented as they that will have their lusts most freely, for God will have his will first or last. And the deeper they fall into sin here, the deeper they shall be in hell hereafter. What is the punishment in hell? To suffer what they would not. Now, your wilful

persons, of what rank soever, that despise the law of God and reason, though never so free and never so great, a wilful person is in the most dangerous condition; because he sinketh deeper and deeper in rebellious courses, and therefore his account will be heavier; and when conscience is awakened, it will charge sin on them with more terror than on other men. Because he would have his will, God will pay him home with suffering that that shall be clean contrary to his will. And therefore learn to stoop to God, submit to the ordinances of God; and labour that it may be effectual, and that we may find it effectual, since all is of God.

Use 4. The power, and the efficacy, and the excellency of it; I join prayer together with the ordinance. Lift up the heart to God, that God would accompany what we hear with his own Spirit, and accompany the receiving of the sacrament and every ordinance with his own Spirit, to make it effectual, for they be dead ordinances without it. As food to a dead man, or cordials poured into a dead man's mouth, they have no efficacy; and therefore desire God to afford his Spirit, to quicken us by the ordinance. And if we have spiritual life, that he would more and more increase it by his ordinance, and make our studies oratoria, places of prayer, as well as studies; because the virtue of all is of God. And think not to break through things with your own wit,\* which is it that hath made all the heretics in the world. They will break through things with their own wit, and not submit to God's truth; and this makes profane men. They will not submit their profane wills to God's rule. Therefore know that thou canst not do it without the Spirit of God, joining prayer with the ordinance, for the Spirit.

I beseech you, take these things to heart. I cannot enlarge them. That that hath been spoken may be sufficient to stir us up to a care of the ordinances. Let me say this and no more at this time: It will bring an



ill report upon all God's ordinances, if we are not careful to get good by them. We bring reproach upon them. How? God saith his word is mighty to salvation, and it is his strong word to salvation, and his arm, but we by hearing and growing no better, shew there is no such thing. Our lives deny it, and therefore the word will conclude it. Look upon many a Christian, he heareth the word, and converseth about it, but what power hath it in him? Surely, if there were any such power, it would appear in them that attend upon it. If there be such power in the ministry, why is their lives no better? And so the word is reproached to be a dead word, and the sacrament a dead ordinance. And therefore in honour of God, and the blessed things of God, I beseech you, labour to go to God by prayer, and attend on the means, and to find more virtue and power, and never give over till we find something in ourselves above the nature and course of other men. And then we shall honour the ordinances of God, and shall witness that they be powerful, that we have felt their power casting us down in ourselves and lifting us up in God, resisting of temptations, subduing our corruptions, enabling us to go through adversity and all conditions. And then we credit and adorn our profession, and grace religion, when we find the Spirit of God making these things effectual to us, otherwise we bring reproach upon them, and bring discredit to them in the hearts of carnal men.

The holy apostle, as we have heard, after he had out of the fulness of his apprehension of the divine mysteries of the gospel set it out gloriously, cometh to avoid imputation of arrogancy, lest he should seem to advance his calling too far. The gospel is indeed a treasure, and the preaching of it is a treasure; the dispensation of it, being God's ordinance, is a treasure, because it hath a special virtue distinct. But we are but 'earthen vessels' though. The end why God would convey such excellent things as are in the gospel by such poor

means, is, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We have spoken at large of the first part of the verse, wherein we shewed, first of all, that the gospel is a treasure in the dispensation of it, so largely, that I will not now stand to repeat anything then delivered. The ministers are 'vessels,' and 'earthen vessels.'

Now the end is, 'that the excellency of power may be of God, and not of us,' wherein we propounded to speak of these particulars.

1. That there is a power, and an excellency of power, in the gospel, and in the dispensation of it. In divine truths dispensed, there is a power, and excellency of power. This power takes place even of God. It is not of the instrument that conveyeth truths to us, exclusively set down, and not of us. He strikes off us, because proud men will be ready to touch upon God's prerogative, if he had not an exclusive with it. And therefore he saith, 'it is of God, and not of us.' Now, the end of all is, that it may appear to be of God, and not of us. It is so; but it appears not to be so, unless there were such a disproportion between the vessels and the treasure. And therefore God would have the vessels that carry it to be earthly, the treasure to be excellent, that as there is a great difference in the reality of the things themselves, so it may appear to be so in regard of man. Non esse, et non apparere; it is all one; for if it appear not to be so, man will not believe it is so. And yet because God will have it appear to be so, therefore is that disproportion between the vessel and the treasure.

Because the point is not perfected, we must add a little.

Now, the power is wrought by degrees; as in the 14th chapter of Revelation, ver. 2, where St John 'heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters,' where heaven is taken for the church, because

the church is from heaven, and begotten to heaven. Now, he heard a voice from heaven, 'as the voice of many waters, as the voice of great thunder; and I heard a voice of harpers, harping with their harps.'

1. The word in the dispensation of it is like 'the voice of many waters;' that is, it is confused, and raiseth a kind of wonder and astonishment, but the people know not why. Take an ignorant man that cometh to hear, and read the word and divine things, he is astonished at it, and filled with a kind of wonderment. So that it is as the noise of many waters to him, Mat. 22:22. You have the description of such persons, 'when they heard these words they marvelled, and left him, and went their ways.' Some will hear the word, and if there be any extraordinary parts, or extraordinary actions of a preacher, perhaps they will come and hear, and marvel, and leave him, and go their way. Many come to sermons, and hear, and marvel, and so away.

But the second effect that the word hath, 'it is as the voice of great thunder;' that is, where the word prevaieth a little more, it is as the voice of thunder. Now thunder astonisheth, and breedeth fear and terror. So they that wonder confusedly at first hearing, a while they hear as they heard it thunder; and therefore the thunder is called 'the Lord's voice,' Job 37:4, 5, because it breedeth fear and terror. So before the great work of conversion, the word, as thunder, terrifieth, and affrighteth, and casteth down.

But the word leaveth not the soul there. Therefore, saith he, 'I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps;' that is, the sweet tune of the gospel. As the sound of the harp is delightful to the ear, so the sweet tune of the gospel breedeth joy and peace to the soul. After thunder cometh the voice of harpers harping with their harps. So the power of divine truths is first a kind of marvel, confused

wonderment, but then it hath the power of thunder and astonishment, then it endeth in the sweet voice of harping, in peace, and joy, and comfort. The Epistle to the Hebrews, 4th chapter, maketh an excellent description of the power of the word in the 12th verse, 'The word is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing and dividing asunder the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow, a discerner of the thoughts of the heart.' When the word is let into the soul, it is a discerner. It hath power to discern what is flesh in the word, and what is spirit. And likewise of all actions that proceed from contrary principles, it hath power to tell when we do well, when ill; what will hold water, what not; what we may stand to, what not. And not only in actions, but in afflictions also; and therefore is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,' Heb. 4:12; and thereupon rippeth up and anatomiseth the whole inward man when the Spirit of God accompanieth it.

Obj. Now, we will answer some cases and objections that may be made, and so proceed. Why is it not so powerful in some, say many, as in others? The apostle Paul telleth them, Heb. 4:2.

Ans. 1. They do not 'mingle the word with faith.' You know physic must have nature to work with it. Physic will do no good to a dead man. No. They do not 'mingle the word with faith,' and therefore they feel not the virtue of it. They lift up their own conceits against the word, and hear it, and know it, but yield not their hearts to believe and assent certainly to it, and therefore it worketh not. And,

Ans. 2. Then they let it not into the heart and affections. They give it room in the mouth to talk of it, but the word is never powerful till it hath its own seat and throne, till it getteth into the heart and affections, and alters the frame of the inward man. When it is not engrafted into the heart, it yieldeth not forth its virtue and power.

Ans. 3. Again, there is a great deal of opposition. What is the hindrance of the power of the word? A foolish conceitedness and presumption. Men think they have enough already, and think they have a divinity point when they can talk of it. But, beloved, we know no more of religion than we love, and we love no more than we do. He that doth not, knoweth nothing as he ought to know. He may prate and talk for ostentation sake, and to satisfy conscience. But this conceit, that people have divinity when they can talk of it, it is a very destructive conceit that hindereth all the working of the word. Religion standeth not upon words, but it is a matter of power. Religion is not matter of fancy and imagination, faith is another thing.

You have many, especially great scholars, they think they have all they know, but they have nothing but what they love, and obey, and subject their hearts to. What they have more, it tendeth to damnation. 'Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou faithless servant,' Luke 19:22; thou knowest this, and thy courses are contrary. Therefore, take heed of this conceitedness, I beseech you, for it overthroweth all.

But I would not have such absent from the word; for the word is able to remove all the obstacles and hindrances between the heart and it. Physic will not do a dead man good, but this physic will give life to dead men; for the power of the word is such, that it hath a quickening power, and a raising power, and a directing power; and therefore, though there be never such mountains of oppositions between the heart and divine truths, as indeed they that be given to a profane course of life, there is much opposition between their hearts and divine truths.\* ... They that be practisers of any profession called to great employments, they should be so far from absenting themselves from the means of salvation, that they should offer

themselves the more carefully and diligently, that whatsoever is between their hearts and divine truths may do them good. When all other things will fail, this may be removed; and therefore the main thing hindering from doing them good. The word is able to make way for itself, by removing the hindrances upon the word by a careful and continual attendance upon it. There is an excellent place in this Epistle, chap. 10 ver. 4, 'The weapons of our warfare are not weak, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds, and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' It is an excellent portion of Scripture. There be three things in a man which much hinder and indispose a man from taking good.

(1) There be λογισμοὺς, 'reasonings of flesh,' as, Is not reading as good as preaching? which men that have much wisdom in them think. Then,

(2.) There be ὑψώματα; that is, 'exaltations of the heart.' What! shall I stoop? Shall I be so base-minded as to regard what common persons do? I ever judged it more for my credit and reputation not to stoop than to yield up myself to be obedient to what they say. And when divine truths are propounded, seeming to be contrary to reason, though no truth be contrary to reason, but above it, as the great matters of predestination, and election, and free will, the pride of man's heart seeing no great reason for this, being above reason, it riseth, and will not yield, but the divine truths beat down these, ὑψώματα, λογισμοὺς. There is,

(3.) A word, that is, νοήματα, 'actions of the flesh against divine truths.' As when a man is exhorted to be liberal, it suggesteth, I shall want myself, and it is good to look to a man's self; and for suffering, it is good to sleep in a whole skin. Whatsoever the disputes or

reasonings of flesh and blood there be, let a man attend upon the word, it will subject and subdue all in time, if a man belong to God; therefore it is powerfully said to make way for itself. For God will let himself and his Spirit into the heart in spite of corruption, and in spite of Satan. Never despair of a man that hath care of God's ordinances.

Obj. 2. But you will say, How or by what means doth God make this word effectual?

Ans. I answer, this excellency of power in the word and his truth worketh in the heart by the Spirit.

(1.) By way of revelation. It revealeth to us excellent things above nature, and better things than corrupt nature can apprehend in the world—Christ, and all the good we have by him; and that is the first thing—a revelation of divine truths.

(2.) Then again, by the Spirit, as all this is offered to a soul that will receive it. There is not only a discovery, but an offer.

(3.) There is not only these discoveries and offers, but divine truth is the instrument that worketh faith to apprehend and lay hold upon this. And therefore it is called the 'word of faith.' And when faith is wrought by the Spirit, after revelation, and after offer of divine truths, then that faith draweth out of Christ. Faith hath a drawing and sucking power out of the word, and Christ revealed in the word, of whatsoever is necessary for grace and comfort, that may be needful to bring to heaven; for the Spirit of God worketh faith, and by faith bringeth all other graces in, and maketh them effectual in the soul. Faith is the grace of union, that knitteth us to the principle of life, Christ.

And therefore God, upon revelation and offer of divine truths, first worketh faith, and by faith knitteth us to the fountain of life, Christ; and it is a wise grace, teaching the soul to fetch sovereign advantages from Christ, as in nature there is an instinct in every creature to fetch nourishment from the dam. So when God hath wrought faith in the soul, God putteth this supernatural divine instinct into the soul, to fetch whatsoever is needful, all comfortable graces out of Christ. And thus it becomes an effectual word, an excellency in a believing soul. 'It is the power of God to salvation to all them that believe,' Rom. 1:16. When we believe, God sheweth his power in the soul. God, by his almighty power, first worketh faith, and then faith layeth hold on that mighty power again. When God hath by the word wrought faith, we do apprehend the almighty power of God in Christ, and to make use of it on all occasions. And therefore it is called, Col. 2:12, 'The faith of the operation of God.'

Obj. 3. And by resolving of this question we may answer another.

Quest. That is, what degree of power is here meant, when he saith the excellent power that is of God? Whether it is only a revealing of divine truths, or likewise in working upon the soul effectually? For you know that distinctly there is a moral kind of working which is by persuasion, and entreaty, and efficacious working, which is more than entreaty, which worketh as the sun worketh upon inferior things, which is called a virtual\* working, and maketh an impression therein. Now whether doth the word by the Spirit only reveal, and offer divine truths, or have a work sometimes in the soul?

It is no nice question, as it is made. And I will give you the truth of it.

Ans. The excellency of the power is not only in revealing, but in working. The word and the Spirit not only reveal, but work something in the soul, and in every part of the soul.



(1.) In the understanding there is not only a revealing of truth, but a light. In the understanding he giveth not only life but sense.

(2.) So the will not only apprehendeth what is good, and excellently good, but God's power goeth, together with the revealing of things, to the will, and putteth a relish into the will to relish that good, else natural corruption will will above what is good, without power wrought in the will to clear itself, and bend itself, and weigh itself towards the best things.

(3.) And so for the affections; good things are not only revealed to love and joy, but the affections themselves are altered and changed. The corrupt natural affections have no proportion to supernatural objects, without an inward work, wrought in the heart, in the will and affections. So the power and efficacy of the word and Spirit is not only in presentation and offer, but in powerful working upon the soul, because there is no connaturalness, no proportion between a soul unturned, unchanged, and objects of a higher nature. Can an eye see things invisible? Can a natural soul apprehend and love things supernatural, above nature, before it be altered? It cannot. There is a vicious humour overspreadeth the soul, and therefore alters the taste of it, that we cannot naturally like nor approve the best things. And therefore the taste must first be altered. Take a sick man, if he have never so much skill, the palate is vitiated, and he cannot relish the wholesomest thing in the world, but answerable to the corruption of his palate. So let a man have never so much knowledge, if the power of the soul be not altered, he relisheth divine truths only according to his corrupt fancy. And therefore there must be wise and powerful workings upon the soul, that as divine truths are savoury in themselves, so they may be savoury to us. Therefore they speak very shallowly of the work of grace, that take it only to be matter of entreaty, and leave the soul to its own liberty. *Nolo hanc gratiam.* I

will not this grace (saith one of the ancients), that leaveth the will to be flexible, and at liberty (n). It is a dangerous thing when a man hath no more grace but what is left to himself. One mischief will necessarily follow, that God hath not so much power as the devil hath. If he propounds any motion, we have a corrupt heart that yieldeth to the temptation, and betrayeth the heart, but if God's persuasions be only moral, and alter not the frame of the heart, he findeth nothing of his own goodness in us, only he findeth in us what is contrary to God's Spirit. And therefore the devil hath the advantage of God, if God should not work in us powerfully. For supernatural things have no friends at all in us, but opposition and enmity. Propound the sweet truths of the gospel to a proud natural man, he hath no more relish in them than in the white of an egg, Job 6:6, till his heart be humbled and subdued, for we have no friends within us to hold correspondency with such truths. But let the devil offer a temptation to any natural man, he is iron to God, and wax to the devil. And therefore of necessity there must be more than a moral work, by effectual persuasion. I speak it to advance the power of the word, that we may know what degree of grace to beg. What is suitable to the apprehension of these things prayer will be for. If we conceive grace to be only a motion and persuasion, and no powerful work upon the heart, we will beg no more. No man was ever brought to heaven with such a grace, but it is an altering, changing, converting grace that bringeth us to heaven.

I will name one reason out of the text. It is more than revealing, offering, and persuading by reason, because that is not the excellent manner of work. God in the gospel works in the most excellent manner, but working by persuasion is not the most excellent manner of working; but working powerfully and really and effectually. Now the excellentest manner of working belongeth to the most excellent

worker, who worketh powerfully in the heart, which is the most excellent manner of working.

Now, how prove you that?

Ans. Is not he that is able to do stronger than he that persuadeth to do?

Therefore the most excellent manner of work is to work inwardly and effectually, not only by entreaty and persuasion, which is a weak and shallow kind of work, in regard of an efficacious work in the soul. Now God, the most excellent worker, worketh in the most excellent manner, and therefore works not only by persuasion, but worketh powerfully in the inward man. God made the soul, and framed the soul, and knoweth how to work upon the soul, and how to work upon it with preserving the liberty and power of it untouched. And therefore as they say very well, he worketh suaviter and fortiter: suaviter, by entreaty, agreeable to the nature of man; and fortiter, powerfully (o).

There are two things that are the principles of action in men working by reason, working by strength. When there is power to do a thing, and reason why to do it, they work like men. If a man had never so much reason, and not strength, he worketh not. If he hath strength and not reason and grace to guide the action, the action is common, and there is no religion. But when a man worketh by power from reason it is like a man. So there be excellent and strong reasons in the word to dissuade from sin, make us in love with heaven and happiness, if we were believers; and without a power accompanieth the reason secretly and sweetly, and altereth the soul powerfully, all will do the soul no good; and therefore together with reason goeth a divine power to the soul. So God at one time worketh powerfully and

sweetly by entreaty. He works suitably to the nature of man, and powerfully to overcome that nature.

Obj. 4. I come now to answer this—How shall we know whether this virtue, and excellency of virtue, hath wrought on the soul by God and the Spirit of faith?

To give you some evidences; and first, you may know easily that it hath wrought, but we cannot tell the manner in working, because we will answer a secret objection.

Quest. I feel not how God works upon my spirit by his Spirit.

Ans. It is true, for the present you do not. For instance, grace is wrought in the heart, as the sun works on inferior bodies. Influence cometh from heaven to it, but who can tell you how influence entered into his body? Who can in spring-time see the manner how he is cheered? He seeth he is cheered, but to say exactly the time and measure, that is unknown. It is a sweet and strong influence. We see there is a sweet influence in the working of things, but the very working is unperceivable; so the power of God's ordinances in the working is concealed, but presently after there is an alteration, as we know the spring is come when we see nature altered, and things flourishing and green, and a new face of things over there was in winter. So we know the Sun of righteousness hath shined on our souls in the ordinances and means of salvation, when there is a flourishingness and fruitfulness in our conversations. When our speeches and actions savour of the word and Spirit, we may know that the Sun of righteousness hath shined upon our souls, Ps. 110:3. The church is compared to dew that falleth in the morning. 'The birth of thy womb is as the dew of the morning.' So the best translators have it (p). 'In the day of thy power;' that is, in the powerful work of thy ordinances, the word and sacraments. The birth of Christ, which

is\* the church begotten by the Spirit, is [as] the womb of the morning; that is, the dew of the morning which falleth from heaven, but insensibly and unperceivably. It hath an high cause to draw it up, and let it fall, and to put virtue into it, to make things fruitful, but none perceiveth the falling of it. So grace is wrought in the heart, as dew falls from heaven; that is, we feel the power and virtue of it, but the manner how grace is wrought, and the church is begotten of God and Christ, is unperceivable. And therefore go to the fruits, where there is a power and excellency of power wrought, and a change is seen in life and conversation; for being a lion before, thou art a lamb, there is a triumphing and prevailing power over corruptions that they were enthralled to before, themselves are not themselves, and therefore judge by obedience.

Then there is a power and excellency of power in the soul, when we have turned by a natural power the nourishment into our constitutions; then we be strong, as Elias, that by strength of the nourishment sent from heaven walked forty days, 1 Kings 19:8. So when we have received the sacraments, and heard as we should, we shall find more ability for duty, for fitness to die, more intercourse with God, more strength of faith against all temptations; and therefore if thou wouldst know what power and excellency of power is wrought in thy soul, examine it by thy strength derived thereby. If you find not strength to overcome temptations and resist corruptions, then you have not yet been good hearers, nor good readers, nor good receivers of the sacraments, as you should be. We know sheep and such creatures are judged of not by that they chew, but by their flesh and fleece, and so should a Christian by his life, his strength, what he is able to do.

And here we may take up just complaint, that many that have great knowledge of the gospel, and have been long professors of the truth,

yet they fall before their spiritual enemies; as when Israel, falling before their enemies, complained, 'Lord what is it?' Josh. 7:8. What is the reason that we fall before the enemy? So a man may complain, what is the reason a Christian should fall before his spiritual enemies? That every temptation should overturn him, every corruption and passion enslave him, why is he, so enthralled to temptation? Certainly there hath not been that power and excellency of power in the soul that should be.

By these and the like circumstances, we may know whether we have felt this power and excellency of power or no.

There is, as we said before, a power in religion, if it be mingled with a believing heart; and till we find that power all will do us no good. Profession of religion and knowledge will be in the brain, therefore labour not to know but to feel divine truths. And when be they felt? When the virtue is felt. It is not enough scire sed sentire. It is not enough to know, but to feel. And when do we feel? When we find the virtue of the word in comforting, in raising and directing, in changing, in transforming.

We think we believe all things necessary, when we can say them and speak of them, but there is never an article of our creed, but being apprehended by faith, worketh mightily upon the soul in an excellent manner. As for example, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty,'\* how shall I know I believe? If the Spirit of God witness to my spirit that God is my Father, and teacheth me to go to him as a Father in all my necessities, I know he is Almighty. When I am under strength of temptation and oppositions whatsoever, he is able to raise my soul, and after death to give it a better being than in this world; and I believe in him as the Father Almighty, when I will not distrust him. He is my Father, and will do me good. He is Almighty, and can do all

for my good. So 'I believe in Christ, born of the Virgin Mary.' This a man believeth not till Christ be born in the heart and the image be stamped upon his soul, and a disposition suitable to Christ; and so 'for the death of Christ.' The cross of Christ, it is a crucifying knowledge. I know Christ died for my sins. The faith of this crucifieth this corruption for which Christ was crucified, when I look upon my corrupt nature, with that odium and detestation that Christ had when he suffered for them. So that I feel not things with power and efficacy, till something be wrought by them. So I believe not Christ 'is risen again,' unless I find that power that raised him quicken my heart and raise me to heavenly-mindedness, to ascend with Christ, and sit in heaven with Christ. A man believeth not that Christ is in heaven unless he hath glorious thoughts. He doth but talk of them. He that believeth Christ his head is in heaven, Christ and he being all one, can he be much cast down with any trouble here, or be abased here when he believeth this? No. And therefore saith the apostle, 'If you be risen with Christ,' as you be, if you belong to Christ, and have the same Spirit that raised his body raising you, then 'seek the things above, and not the things beneath,' Col. 3:1, and savour the things that be spiritual, and suitable to your condition. So a man cannot believe his 'sins be forgiven,' but he must love, he must have joy and peace: 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,' Rom. 5:1. He that findeth not peace in his conscience, how knoweth he that his sins are forgiven? 'Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven,' Mat. 9:2. A man that knows his sins are forgiven, he is comforted, for his debt is paid, and all discharged. And so 'the resurrection of the body and life everlasting,' what is the power of it? It maketh him as willing to die as when he goeth to sleep, for when he goeth to bed he knoweth he shall rise again, and rise better and more refreshed. So a man that is to die he resolveth, I lay down my body, and shall rise again, as sure as I shall rise out of my bed, and more sure, for many die in their sleep. So if we believe 'the coming of Christ to judgment,'

the virtue of it will shew itself in walking fruitfully and carefully. Christ must come again, and I must make account of all. And so 'life everlasting.' If a man believeth that, what courage will it infuse! There is never an article but if it be believed hath a spiritual infusion in it. Let a man believe life everlasting, he will not care to venture his life for religion and his country. What will he care to adventure a life [which] is nothing but vanity?

I do but touch these things, to shew that out of the grounds of religion there is a power in them, if they be apprehended and believed; and if they have not this power, we believe them not. We talk of them, but are not moulded to them; as the apostle's phrase is, 'We are not fashioned to them,' 2 Cor. 3:18. So that we may try whether the word hath wrought mightily on us, by the power we find in us altering our natures.

Quest. 5. Well, what course shall we take, that we may find this power of the ordinances and word, and an excellent power?

Ans. (1.) Remember all is of God, from God's Spirit. The third person in the Trinity is next to us, and next in working. God the Father and Son work by the Spirit. For as it is in the body, there be the veins and arteries put together, the veins carry the blood, the arteries carry the spirits, the blood in the veins nourish the spirits in the arteries, the spirits in the arteries quicken and enliven the blood; [so] the word is as blood in the veins. For as blood spreads itself over all the body by the veins, and feedeth the several parts, so the word spreadeth itself over the whole man, over all the powers of man, over his understanding, will, and affection. It spreadeth itself over all the actions of man, for all must be done in virtue of some word. It spreadeth itself as blood spreadeth over the body, but together with the blood there must be spirits to quicken the blood; so there must



be the Spirit with the word. The word is vehiculum Spiritus, the chariot which carrieth the Spirit. And therefore consider the concurrence of these two when ye come to God. They be coupled together as the veins and arteries; and when we have to do with divine truths, remember to beg for the Spirit, and therefore, Ps. 119:18, 'Open mine eyes, Lord, open mine eyes.' His eyes were opened, and yet 'Lord, reveal the wonders of thy law more.' So we must pray for a fresh, new revelation of truths to us. And are we quicker and better-sighted than he or Paul, that prayed so often for the Spirit of revelation, and that God would take off the veil of ignorance and unbelief from the heart? There is a natural veil upon divine things, that we cannot see them in their truths and excellency. Therefore pray to God by the Spirit to take away this veil.

Ans. (2.) And if we would feel the power, and the excellency of the power, of the word, enter into our own hearts, and see our own necessity every day, and see our own wants of God, who doth shew his power in weakness, labour to see a necessity of divine power and divine truths, a necessity to do anything well, and that our callings are not sanctified unless we sanctify them in a morning by prayer, and direct them to ends above nature and above the world, and make them serviceable for the soul. See a necessity of grace and of the efficacy and power of the word, and necessity will enforce us out of ourselves to him, in whom is the fountain of all strength, that we may be 'strong in the power of his might,' Eph. 6:10, 2 Tim. 2:1. Beloved, times are coming to every one of us that will enforce us to seek for strength and for power. Can we undergo afflictions when they come without spiritual strength? We may carry them as civil men, but great crosses may come above all morality and civility. Ahithophel had brains enough, but having no grace he sunk. Judas had much knowledge, but sunk under it. So though we have strong brains and great parts, we shall sink under them if we have not grace. A

Christian must be more than a man, as grace raiseth a man above a man, makes him spiritual. By virtue of this power we must be more than men, else we shall meet with things which are above a man, fiery temptations and Satan's darts, and if we are not more than a man, woe be to us. Therefore labour to feel and see our own wants; present and propound beforehand all possibilities. What if our lives should be questioned? Sickness will come, death will come. What strength have I? What faith have I? What have I lived upon before, and what do I know? Do I believe all I know? As Joseph provided against hard times, Gen. 41:48, times of spending will come, therefore lay up knowledge, and often examine if things be to us as to themselves. Divine truth is holy, full of majesty and power in itself. What is that to me if it be not so to me? It will do me no good, but help to damn me. Do I find that power and efficacy that is said to be in them? If not, never give over waiting on the means that God hath appointed for that purpose.

Beloved, it concerneth us nearly and very much, for if we do find the power of divine truths in our hearts, Oh happy men! If we find it hath wrought a change and alteration, it will make the weakest Christian stronger than all the gates of hell. Take a weak Christian that hath digested the word and mingled it with faith, a few divine truths digested and mingled with faith will stand out against the devil and all temptations, even at the hour of death, because they be divine truths, and God goeth with them; the truths being divine of themselves, and likewise divine power going with them, having the strength of God for every word. As a man is, the word of a man is. It is as powerful as himself, and the word of a noble man, the word of an honest man, is as the man is. Now consider what word it is, and what power is annexed to it. Labour to feel the power of these divine truths, and all hell let loose cannot overcome the weakest Christian, not a fool, not a novice, not a child in religion, much less a strong

Christian. But the tongue of men and angels, if men will be drowsy, and lazy, and dead, will not make them affected with these things, but those that belong to God understand what these things mean.

We are speaking of the end of this dispensation of God, that he would have this blessed treasure of divine truths carried in 'earthen vessels,' that 'the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.' Now in the end three things are considerable.

1. First, That there is a 'power' in the ordinances of God, and an 'excellency of power.'

2. That this excellent power of the ordinances of God 'is of God.' It is not of the 'earthen vessel.' No. It is not in the treasure itself. It is not in the gospel, distinct and abstracted from divine power accompanying it, but it is of God, exclusively set down, and not of us.

3. The intention why God would have this power, and excellent power, to be in earthen vessels and not of us. See how he demonstrateth it, that it may appear that the power is of God and not of us. There is excellent power, and it is of God. How doth it appear? Compare the meanness of the vessel with the excellency of the treasure, and it shall appear that all the good done by the ordinance is not by the vessel, but from the treasure, or rather from God himself, whose treasure it is.

That there is a power, and an excellent power, of God's ordinance, we have shewed at large.

We have shewed wherein this power consisteth, and how it is of God. All the power is of God, else the ordinance is dead; and indeed unless God's virtue go along with it, what can do the soul good? Afflictions make men worse. The law hath only a power to harden us. The law

by the power of God killeth, but it quickeneth not. Let not the power of God go with the ministry of Christ, it doth no good.

How many sermons did Christ preach which did no good? 'He piped and they would not dance. They would not 'mourn' when he preached matter of humiliation, when he preached matter of comfort 'they would not dance,' Mat. 11:17, but, like froward children, they were untractable, and nothing would work upon them; and therefore without God and the work of the Spirit, not man, not an angel, not Christ himself, can work upon an obstinate stubborn soul.

I shewed that the excellency of this power must be of God and not of us. I propounded divers cases and questions, and answered some. I will briefly answer some now, as,

Quest. First, Not to speak of what I then delivered, if there be no power in the ordinances, why do we exhort people and stir them up to believe and to repent, if all power be conveyed from God, as we proved the last day at large, and that they have no power at all in themselves?

Ans. I answer, God's word in the ordinance is an operating word, a working word, as in the creation, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' Gen. 1:3. So in miracles, 'Lazarus, come forth,' John 11:43. There went an almighty power with the word of Christ, and Lazarus comes out. 'Believe and repent.' There goeth out an almighty power with the ministerial word, and giveth power to believers. Dum jubet juvat, where God commandeth he helpeth. His word is clothed with an almighty power. And therefore though we exhort men to do so and so, we say not, they can do it themselves, but together with the speech there goeth a commanding power. The Spirit of God clotheth the word. Loquitur Deus ad modum nostrum, agit ad modum suum, God speaketh according to our measure, worketh according to his

own. We are men, and are to do things by reason and understanding. God speaks to us by way of open reason, and shewing grounds of reason, because loquitur ad modum nostrum. But when he comes to give strength and power to reason, all moral power or reason will do no good without inward strength, and therefore agit ad modum suum, mightily, powerfully, and by way of persuasion and reason, and all to condescend to our manner, yet still all the while as a God.

And therefore it is a childish thing for them to infer that there is power in man, because God persuadeth and exhorts. God with these infuseth his power, he conveyeth power into the will and affection this way. Then he works powerfully when he seemeth to condescend thus far, and this exhortation is but to drive us out of ourselves to the rock of our strength, and to the spring of all comfort. It is but to drive us to Christ, and therefore wheresoever you have a commandment in one place, ye have a promise in another. If you are commanded to turn to God, to mortify lusts, we have a promise of assistance that we shall do these things. The commandments may make us go out of ourselves with humility, the promise makes us go to God with confidence in him. And therefore it is ignorance of God's divine dispensations to enforce any power and strength in us from those sweet exhortations that are commended to us in Scripture.

Quest. 2. Secondly, If there be such power and efficacy in God's ordinances accompanied with the Spirit, as indeed there is, whence then cometh the resisting in men? It sheweth there is more in man's malice than in; God's ordinance. I answer thus,

Ans. That God intendeth to convert and put forth his strength that way. For those whom God intendeth to put forth his strength for, it tendeth to conversion. He joineth such a strength with the ordinances, as overcometh all rebellion and resistance in them that

he doth convert, as Augustine saith well, *volentem hominem salvum facere*, when God will save a man, no stubbornness of his will shall withstand (q), else the will of man were stronger than God's. And it is a high point of comfort that the goodness of God is above the malice of man, that there is a greater power in the ordinances and efficacy, than there can be indisposition in man, whatsoever it is in the party.\* For all things in the world, in the soul of man, which is the most rebellious, refractory, and stubborn thing, all things in the world are in obedience to the first worker. There is an aptness which is of purpose for this matter which we speak of. There is an active power in the creature, whereby it is ready to work, and this active power to do good we have none at all. There is a passive power, as in wax to receive impression. This we have not. We cannot so much as receive goodness. The reason is, because good things, so long as we be corrupted, be presented to us as folly. A wise man will never take that he apprehendeth [to be] folly. To a carnal wise man, the most excellent things in the world are presented as folly, and he will not subject to the impression of divine truths when they be presented. And therefore there is neither active nor mere passive power. But there is *potentia obediencialis*, a power obediencial. That is, in plain terms, there is such a subjection of the soul of man to God the first cause, that it yields to him when he worketh. He knoweth all the windings and turnings of it. He can deal as he pleaseth, preserving the liberty of it without prejudice of its liberty. For both things, and the manner of working things, are of God, and preserved by God. God he carrieth things so, as he preserveth *modum agendi*, the manner of working peculiar to things; so that all things are obedient to God's manner of working. For they cannot resist him: there is no question of that.

Obj. But we say, that as the Scripture speaks, there is resistance in things. Resistance is in them that belong not to God, or in them that

belong to God, till he putteth forth an invisible strength to convert them. But if they resist, they may resist the work of God's Spirit. Then there is some excuse for them.

Ans. I answer, No. They may pretend the word is not powerful enough the ordinance is not able enough; but let them leave secret things to God. There is no man converted, but his heart will tell him that God was before-hand with him. God enforceth goodness on men; they willingly resist it. God is then before-hand with them, and there is no man that withstandeth God's workings, but his heart will tell him that the fault is altogether in himself; for God is willing to yield more power to him than he is willing to receive, and that maketh him afraid of the means of salvation. If I go to such, and converse with such, they will advise me to alter my course. They will put conceits in me, disquiet my mind, vex me and torment me. I shall hear what crosseth my old ways, and I am resolved still to walk in my old courses, and so their hearts tell them they willingly betray their own souls. So that they cannot pretend the weakness of the understanding, but strength of corruption, which declineth the ordinance.

The two witnesses, Rev. 11:10, 'tormented the world;' and so the ordinances, the truths of God, torment some kind of men. But to let such go, I speak to them that belong to God. Here is our comfort, that the ordinances of God are powerful, 'and mighty, but through God, to beat down all strongholds,' 2 Cor. 10:4, and therefore come and attend upon the means of salvation. Come; though you be lions, you may go out lambs! Come; though you be wolves, you may go out sheep! For the knowledge of God, accompanied with the Spirit of God, as Isa. 11:6, may alter and change your natures, transforming you to be like to Christ, whose word it is. It is a transforming, converting word.

Where it doth not convert the heart and conscience of men, or tell them that God was willinger to convert them than they were willing to be converted, the fault is in themselves; but I will always hope well of them that carefully and diligently come within God's reach. The ministry of the gospel is said to be the power of God; and Isa. 53:1, 'the arm of God.' 'To whom is the arm of God revealed?' that is, the power of God in the ordinance. Those that will come within the power and reach of God, never despair of them. They that will meekly subject\* to God's dispensation, and not proudly despise the powerful working of God, that attend 'at the posts of wisdom,' Prov. 8:34, if not at one time, yet at another, there is a blessed hour to come for the angel to stir their waters; for the Holy Ghost to stir the waters to heal their souls. Therefore I speak to all them that love their own souls, never to weary of God's ordinances. Though the means be weak, yet the glory of God, and power of his Spirit, will be more eminently apparent in the weakness of the means, as the apostle saith here, 'The excellency of the power is of God, and not of man.'

Now, to make some further use of this: Is all the power of God?

1. Therefore observe another thing, we must not depend on the power of the ministry, and the excellency of the minister his parts and gifts. Why? The power and excellency is of God. And we may say by experience, that men that think themselves converted by some excellent parts of a rare man, it is usually but a shallow repentance. And they that be hanged by the ears upon men of good parts, they seldom hold out. But where the soul is wrought upon by grounds from the word, and evidence from the Spirit in the teacher....\* But conversion wrought only by admiration of the parts of the teacher, it is with them as with them in the gospel: 'They marvelled at him, and stood astonished, but they left him, and went their ways,' Mat. 13:54.



And therefore take heed of depending on men for the efficacy of the sacraments. Some are to blame that way. Unless they have such a preacher they will not receive it, as if the doing and efficacy of the sacrament depended on that, if they be placed in the office of the ministry and have a calling. Now look 'to the power of God, and the excellency of that power,' in his own ordinance by whomsoever. We will receive gold out of any hand, we will receive a pearl from a mean person. Do we regard the pardon itself, or the person that bringeth the pardon? No, we look to the pardon. If that be right, it is no matter who bringeth the pardon, who offers this treasure of life. Look to the excellency of the things themselves, and God, though in the course of means—we must add that,—God doth ordinarily convert by the best men, that can speak from the heart to the heart. He can kindle others best that is kindled in his own heart, begetting, being from a love in the teacher. They that are truly, sanctifiedly affected, they can beget others sooner than others. And therefore in the course and ways of means, God for the most part useth blessed and holy means for working of the great work of conversion for the most part.

Yet God tieth not himself to the excellency of means. Oftentimes the greatest men of all, God humbleth them, to do others good. As we see Isaiah, that great kingly prophet, saith he, 'We have laboured in vain,' Isa. 49:4, seq. I have laboured to subdue the people to God, but to no purpose. 'Son of man, go, harden the people's hearts.' So excellent a power, instead of converting, maketh them worse, and so it is, that the most excellent preacher, both for parts and likewise for graces, oftentimes doth harden and make them worse. God will have it so; it shall be the savour of death to some presumptuous proud persons, and not a savour of life, 2 Cor. 2:16. And therefore we must not look altogether on the excellency of the persons that preach, nor to their meanness, but to the ordinance of God.

2. Give me leave farther to add this thing: God sheweth his power, and his excellent power, by his own ordinance; and therefore other courses are not sanctified for conversion, nor for spiritual good to the soul. This observe. There is a conceited superstitious generation of men, ill-bred for the most part, not for want of parts, but for superstitious breeding. They have great admiration of a bastardly means of good, what do I call them? Means they set up themselves, which God never sanctified. Oh, they will have crucifixes, and such and such helps. Who ever sanctified this? Every workman will work with his own tools and instruments. Did God ever sanctify crucifixes and the like to stir up devotion? What kind of devotion is like to come to that, that God never blessed to that end? A bastardly devotion from a bastardly means. And usually people give to those kind of things higher measure of admiration than to good and sanctified means.

I never knew, nor ever shall know, a superstitious person to like of things sanctified of God, but in that proportion he grew bitter against that which is indeed sound. See what religion popery is, their study being to weaken that powerful instrument that God hath sanctified to convey all saving power by. How do they weaken it? By all the means they can. They labour to take away the strength of it. They lock it up in an unknown tongue, in Latin; and not only so, but in a corrupt, vicious translation, and lest it should do much good, they add Apocryphal writings with it—many of which indeed are holy books, but yet they equal their authority with the Scriptures. Nay, that they may weaken the strength and efficacy of the blessed word by which is wrought whatsoever is savingly good, they make traditions of equal authority with the word. They make the present determination of the present pope of equal power with the word, nay, above it; for the life and soul of words is the sense and meaning of them. The meaning is the form, and being, and life of speech; the words are but husks. The

kernel and life of words, is the meaning of them. Now they take upon them to give the sense and meaning of the Scriptures. But they go about to judge that, which will one day judge them; to keep under the word, that will keep them under, and blast them, and consume them, as 2 Thes. 2:8, 'Antichrist must be consumed with the breath of his mouth,' that is, with the ordinance of God. It is such a wind as he cannot endure; it will consume him. There is no means sanctified of God to consume antichrist, but the ordinance. There be other civil and apparent ways to weaken him, but that that shall 'consume' him indeed, as he 'is antichrist,' is the powerful ordinance of God. And therefore blame them not for being such enemies to that which is such an enemy to them, that is, the powerful preaching of the word. But we must not dwell upon these things, only I thought it necessary to put you in mind of it, that our hearts may be brought to think highly of that which God so esteemeth, even as we love our own souls.

Other truths may civilise, and other helps may be profitable; other books besides God's book may do us a great deal of good, and many holy treatises there are, in which the word is unfolded, and made familiar to us. The water in the spring, and water brought in a pipe, is the same water. So that the word in Scripture, and the word brought in preaching and holy treatises, is the same. But I speak of other truths we read of in human writers. God giveth a power to every truth, and there be inferior works of the Spirit. But this work of conversion, of setting the image of God upon us, is reserved especially for the ordinances of God. All the learning in the world will not set the image of God upon the soul, will not bring the soul out of darkness into the kingdom of Christ, but the powerful ordinance of God, and the powerful work of the Spirit accompanying it. It is not every work of the Spirit, but an almighty work. By embalming, a dead body may be preserved from putrefaction and annoyance a long

time, but all the spices and embalmments in the world will not put life into a dead body. So the inferior works of the Spirit, by inferior means, may embalm the soul, that is, may make it civil, and it is very good conversing with civil men. You shall have them fair-conditioned men, and excellent things will break from them, but this is but embalming; the quickening of a dead soul, the putting of life into that, is reserved for the ordinance of God, and the power of the Spirit accompanying it. This is that the apostle speaks of, 'the excellency of the power of God.'

3. One thing give me leave to add more, That as God doth powerfully work by his ordinance in us, and in the church, so he doth powerfully work by his ordinance on others, by the church on others. To make it plain thus: There is an excellency of power in the word, in faith, in prayer, in fasting, in the sentence of the church; there is an excellent power in all these, not only on the soul, upon whom they work, but likewise on others. There is a power in the church and in the minister for to threaten; and God, to make good those threats to others, worketh on others. And there is a power in prayer, not only of grace to make us fit to pray, but a power by prayer, for God thereby to confound the enemies of the church. Therefore the phrase in the psalms, is, 'God send thee help out of Sion,' Ps. 20:2, that is, out of the church, by church means; and 'God is terrible in his holy place,'\* Ps. 68:35. What is the meaning of that? The meaning is: in the church, where God is truly worshipped, where the ordinances are in purity and power, there God is terrible out of his holy place. If there come forth prayers against the enemies of the church, God saith Amen to them. Woe be to the enemies of the church, when the church falleth a-praying and fasting. Woe be to Haman, when Esther, Mordecai, and the rest fall to this duty. And woe to popery! If all Christians would join in prayer and fasting, antichrist had been brought upon his knees, and to nothing ere this time. There is a

power in God's ordinances, let them be used as they should be, with faith and persuasion, that God will say Amen to them all, they will work. What! Let a man pray with confidence, that God will bless it, though not in the particular that he desireth, yet you shall see what wonders God will work by it.

No question, but the humiliation of God's people brought antichrist so much upon his knees, as he hath in Germany. God's people humbled themselves, and believed the threatenings against antichrist, and believed the promises of the church, and laboured to have faith suitable to God's promises, suitable to God's threatenings; and in that faith, as an exercise of it, pray to God, we shall see God make good all his ordinances. 'God will be terrible out of his holy place, and he will send help out of Sion.' Pray therefore for the church and against the enemies, and we shall quickly see an end of them. And therefore you have 2 Cor. 10:6, that speaking of the power of the ordinances of God, he saith in the 6th verse, 'God is in readiness to revenge all disobedience.' There is a power in the ordinances of God to kill men, to send men to hell. You think the words of the ordinances are wind, but they are not; for as it is in Zech. 1:5, 6, 'the prophets be gone, and are dead, but their words are made good.' Whom we bind, God bindeth from heaven; whom we loose, God looseth from heaven. If we threaten the judgments of God, and punishment upon swearers, or profane persons, or despisers of the ordinances, do you think it doth, them no harm? Beloved, they are struck, they be men under the sentence of damnation. They are not yet in hell, but the word hath damned them, the ordinance hath damned them, they be struck men. There is a power in God's ordinances to be revenged on the disobedience of men, when men will live in sins, threatened and condemned by the ministers. They go up and down like glorious men, but they be condemned and under sentence. There is but a step between them

and hell. And they shall know one day God will make good every one of his threats in his ministry against their profane courses, though they make slight of it. No! it shall not be made light off, when God cometh to execute it; when God shall come immediately from heaven, to execute the word he hath spoken mediately by the minister, as one day he will. What we speak mediately, he will immediately from heaven come to execute it. How will they shake off that, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire'? Mat. 25:41. You that have lived in sins against conscience, can you shake off that? God is now patient to them, if his patience can win them, but can they shake off God's immediate peremptory sentence from heaven? Oh no! And therefore I beseech you, labour to bring your souls to obedience of the ordinances of God, for it is mighty to take vengeance of all obstinate sinners. Therefore take heed of living in sin, condemned by the ordinance; for God will make good every word that he hath spoken.

The last thing I propounded in the words to shew us is, that God doth shew his power, and excellent power, by weak means, that it may appear by the disproportion that it is of God.

Doct. The point from hence is this, that God is wonderful curious,\* as we may with reverence speak; he is wonderful exact in this, that his glory may be advanced in all. And therefore he would have this carriage of things, that heavenly treasures should be carried in earthen vessels; not gold, not silver, but earth, that the good done may not be attributed to the vessels, being so base, but to him. God's aims and our aims must concur. God aimeth at his own glory, and it is no pride in him, because there is none above him, whose glory he should seek. And therefore it is natural for God to do all for his own glory, as it is natural for him to be holy, because he is the first cause, and the last end, of all things. It is fit the first cause and last end of

all things should have all the glory: 'Of him, and through him, are all things: therefore to him be all the glory,' Rom. 11:36. It is God's prerogative. The grace is ours. He giveth grace to us, but the glory is his own, and his glory he will not part withal.

To make this clear. God takes all the course he doth in the government of the world, in the ministry and church, that it may appear that the glory is his in all things. Look to his providence in governing the world. Doth not he do great things sometimes without means, and sometimes with poor weak means? What be the blowing of rams' horns to the fall of 'the walls of Jericho'? Josh. 6:20. Was it not that it might appear that the falling of the walls was from God? What was Gideon's 'pitchers with lamps' for the confounding of the Midianites? Judges 7:19. What was a victory to an earthen pitcher? So what is the light of the gospel to an 'earthen vessel'? Doth the virtue come from these? No. God appointeth to us these means, that the glory and excellency of power may appear to be of him. The ministers are but Gideon's pitchers, with the light of the gospel in them. What was Shamgar's 'ox-goad' to the slaying of so many? Judges 3:31; Samson's 'jaw-bone of an ass' to the slaying of so many Philistines? Judges 15:15. It was to shew that the glory was God's. What is the converting of so many souls by so mean fishermen, when ignorance overcame knowledge, folly overcame wisdom, weakness overcame strength? Fishermen and their consorts made the crown of the Roman empire stoop to them. The poor preachers of the gospel brought it to pass at length, that the great empire of Rome should subject\* to the gospel; and why is all this but that the power may appear to be of God?

I might with this truth go through all ages, from the beginning of the world to the end, and shew how God hath done great things, sometimes by no means, sometimes by weak means, sometimes

when means have been armed against him, in opposition of means. When others are opposite, then hath he got greatest glory. But it is so plain a truth, that I will not spend time to no purpose to declare the point; and therefore I will come more close, and bring the truth home to ourselves.

Now, because we are naturally forgetful of this, and so rob God of his glory, I will shew you divers courses that God taketh with his children to train them up to learn this hard lesson, to give all the glory to God, which naturally they love to finger themselves. For man is naturally a proud creature, and would have all things to himself. Therefore observe in five or six particulars what course God taketh to teach men this lesson, 'that the excellency of power may be of God, and not of us.'

Reason 1. First of all, what is the reason why God deserts men, his dearest children, oftentimes, leaveth them to terrible plunges, maketh them apprehend he is their enemy, and that they be none of God's, leaving them in a state of darkness, that they see no light? This is the state of God's dear children. The end of this is, that they may know they must needs go out of themselves if they will have any comfort: 'They are in darkness, and have no light; therefore let them trust in the name of God,' Isa. 50:10. If it were not for these desertions, to see nothing but darkness in themselves, they would not fly to the rock of strength, they would not retire to their rock of defence, they would not trust God. Why do men suffer the sentence of death, and are brought to death's door? No help, no physic will do them good. St Paul giveth the reason, that they may learn 'to trust in the living God,' 2 Cor. 1:9. What! Paul to learn this lesson? Yea, Paul had need to learn this lesson, to go out of himself, and give all the glory of all things to God. And therefore St Paul received 'sentence of



death, that he might trust in the living God,' and perfectly go out of himself.

Reason 2. Again, what is the reason that sometimes the child of God is foiled very foul in little temptations, and standeth in great ones? Because indeed in these temptations he goeth on in his own strength, and in greater temptations he goeth out of himself and flieth to God. And therefore a good Christian sometimes is basely foiled in a little temptation, and standeth out like a man in a great one, because in the one he is confident of his own strength, in the other he is enforced to repair to God for assistance. That is the reason of it, to learn this doctrine, to give God the glory in all things.

Reason 3. Again, what is the reason that men are better after a foil, after some base fall, than ever they were before—as oftentimes God suffers them to fall into foul faults—what is the reason of this strange dispensation of God? To shew that they stood too much on their own bottoms. And why are they better after them? Because, seeing their own weakness and wilfulness, they are driven out of themselves. The sink of corruption was opened to them. They saw they had rebellious hearts. There was depth of corruption which they discerned not before; and now after a fall, that they see the depth of corruption more than before, they grow more humble, more wary in time to come, having more experience of God's infinite mercy in pardoning, of his infinite power in raising; and so in some measure they learn that lesson, to give all the glory to God. God sometimes sanctifieth a gross fall to make them strong. Peter learned to stand by his fall; and Christians once falling by presuming too much upon their own strength, are made to stand stronger for time to come.

Reason 4. Again, what is the reason that sometimes the church is foiled by weak enemies; and sometimes, when the church is very

weak itself, it overcometh strong enemies, as you have instances of both? It is that men may learn to know that God must be sought to in all things. When there be strong means, they place too much confidence in that strength; and when they offend God, though the means be never so strong, God curseth and blasteth all helps, as the prophet tells them: 'You shall fight against the Chaldeans, but God will curse you,' Jer. 37:9.\* You that think you be strong men, you shall fight against them, but they shall prevail. You have not made your peace with God; and if so, let all the best means be gathered together, God will blast them all. To teach us that whatsoever means we have, we must seek to God. There is an excellent place for this, Jer. 37:9, seq. The Jews thought they were stout men, but they had offended God. Therefore in the ninth hour saith God to them, 'Thus saith the Lord, Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall depart from us, we shall do well enough.' Saith he, 'Though you had smitten the whole number of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remain but wounded men amongst them, yet should they rob every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.' Though you had smitten them so, yet God is your enemy. It is no matter what weak men they are, what strong means you have. You have broken peace with God. God hath decreed and determined your ruin, and therefore your city must be burned with fire. Never therefore trust to any means if you have offended God, for God can do great things with small means if we please him. Gideon's three hundred can overcome the Midianites, though they cover the earth as grasshoppers, Judg. 7:6. And if God be offended, [though] the enemies be all wounded men, yet they shall rise and burn the city. And therefore if God be our enemy, trust not to our walls, nor to the sea, nor to our strength and courage of men. All is nothing if we have not God our friend. And therefore it is true that is usually spoken, that where God will defend a city and country, a cobweb may be the walls thereof; but where God will not defend a city or country, a wall

is but a cobweb (r). Why is all this but that all power may be known to be of God—that we may resign ourselves to him, make our peace with him? If he be our friend, it matters not who is our enemy; if he be our enemy, it matters not who is our friend. 'If God be for us, who is against us?' Rom. 8:31. It is sin within the city, and sin within the land, doth more hurt than all enemies without it; because it estrangeth and animates God against the place and country.

Reason 5. And what is the reason likewise—to add one more instance—that he helpeth most in extremity, that he deferreth help till that time, that in the mount he is seen, and not till he be in the mount, as the proverb is? Gen. 22:14. The reason is, that by this means he may mortify and subdue all confidence in the means, that there may be no spiritual adultery with the means. Then faith is stirred up, then prayer is set upon, then is more communion with God, the fountain of strength; and the more communion with God, the fountain of strength, the more strength; and the more communion with God, the fountain of power, the more power. In extremity we have more communion with God's strength and power. Therefore God withdraweth help oftentimes, to wean us from the creature, and to train us up to trust in him.

Use 1. Now to make use of what I have spoken. Doth God take this course, to do great matters by weak means, that we should acknowledge the virtue of all to be from him? I beseech you, then, to learn this lesson. Mark the Scriptures, how curiously careful holy men have been not to finger anything of God's. They feared sacrilege, spiritual theft, and lies; that is, to attribute that to them which belongeth not to them. And therefore Saint Paul, 1 Cor. 15:10, 'I have laboured more than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God within me.' Not the grace of God and I together, as two horses draw a coach, but grace with me did all. I was subordinate, not co-ordinate, with

grace, but I under grace. We do but act as we are acted, move as we are moved, and therefore you see how careful he is, and you see the phrases of Scripture, of holy men. 'I am not worthy to loose his shoe latchet,' saith John the Baptist, John 1:27. 'I am not worthy to be called an apostle,' saith Saint Paul, 1 Cor. 15:9. 'I am not worthy thou shouldst enter into my house,' Mat. 8:8. Papists stand upon merit of congruity, but the phrase of Scripture saith, 'I am unworthy;' 'Not unto us, not unto us be the praise, but unto thy name.' And therefore give God all the glory of anything that is done. If any good thing be wrought, if any good news be heard from beyond the seas, be sure to advance the instrument so that we rob not God of his glory.\* And when God worketh in us anything that is gracious and beneficial, let God have all the glory. All cometh from him, therefore let all go to him again. You see in the Lord's prayer the connection of these two together; 'Thine is the power,' therefore 'thine is the glory,' Mat. 6:13. The excellency of power is of God, both in governing the world and in governing the church, in subduing corruptions. If power be his, then let glory be his too, let them not be severed.

Use 2. Again, let this teach us to resign up ourselves to God in the use of all good means, give ourselves to him, for he doth all. Trust not in the means, rest not in confidence of wit and parts, but depend upon him. It is a lesson easily understood, but not so easily practised. Therefore look to God. All things belong to God. Art thou of God? Ministerial teaching is not enough. There be two teachers concur to save souls: ministers and God. There are two to be preached to, the outward man and the inward. We speak to the outward man, God to the inward. Paul speaketh to Lydia's ear, but God openeth the heart, Acts 16:14. And we baptize with water, but Christ baptizeth 'with the Holy Ghost,' Luke 3:16. And therefore in all the ordinances of God, see them administered by the outward man, but there is virtue from Christ and from God. He must baptize with the Holy Ghost and with

fire. He must open the heart, unlock that, and teach that. If this were experimentally known and practised, we should have greater exercise of grace than there is in people's hearts, but it is known as a notion, but not for matter of obedience and practice. The last thing we will speak of from the words is,

Use 3. That seeing all power and excellency is from God, then take heed we keep God our friend. Take heed we offend not this God, in whom is all power, our life, our strength. 'In him we live, move, and have our being,' Acts 17:28. Take heed we do not offend him. You know what the apostle saith, Phil. 2:12, 'Make an end of your salvation in fear and trembling.' Why? 'It is God that giveth the will and the deed, and according to his good pleasure.' That is, God worketh all in matters of salvation. He giveth not power, if you will; but he giveth the will, he saveth us and converteth us, and maketh our will answerable to his will. He giveth the virtue τὸ ζῆλειν, and according to his good pleasure. As long as we submit to him he will work powerfully in us, and therefore 'make an end of your salvation with fear and trembling.' If we leave his Spirit, we be as air without light, presently dark, and as the earth without the sun. All things will decay and become dead, if the light and influence of heaven be withdrawn. Let God subtract the influence of grace, and we shall grow barren, and dead, and cold; and therefore fear him. No man is wise more than God maketh him wise upon every occasion, nor no man is stronger than on every occasion God strengthens him.

And, therefore, if at any time you have a distrusting heart to look to the creature, he withdraweth his strength, and then we are at a loss, and fall, and die; because we work not our own salvation. We are given to self-sufficiency and self-dependency, and therefore God oftentimes blasts our endeavours. 'Blessed is the man that feareth always,' Prov. 28:14, not with a fear of distrust, but a fear of jealousy.

Oh this fear of jealousy! We have false hearts, ready to trust in the creature, in wits, in friends. But all that be God's children must have this fear of jealousy, to make an end of salvation with fear and trembling, for God worketh both the will and the deed. He giveth a power according to his good pleasure, and can suspend it when he list.\* So much shall serve for the unfolding of this verse, which I did specially intend; the other verses are but an application of this, 'We are troubled on every side, but not distressed,' &c.

## VERSES 7–9

That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, yet not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.

I have spoken largely of the verse before, wherein you may remember that the apostle might take away all suspicion of arrogancy in taking too much upon himself, he saith, 'We carry treasures but in earthen vessels.' The end of which dispensation of God is, 'that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of man.' There we shewed there is a 'power,' and an 'excellent power' in the ordinance of God. And that this is of God, and exclusively, not of us. All which we have propounded at large.

We shewed, there is a blessed presence of God and of his power, and sweetness, and goodness, in all his ordinances. He distilleth and conveyeth whatsoever is in his Father's breast to us by his ordinance.

He doth good to us by men like ourselves. As the devil conveyeth all his mischief by men unto men, so God conveyeth all his good by men to men. But they are but the conduits, for the virtue and excellency of the power is of God.

Things otherwise seeming alike differ in regard of virtue, as cold water differs from hot water. They differ not in colour but in virtue. It is the Spirit of God that accompanieth his ordinance, that giveth power, and virtue, and efficacy to it. For the ministers of the gospel are ministers, and no more nor no less, to be regarded as ministers and no farther. To regard them more is to make idols of them; to deny\* them less is to deny them due right. This should stir up a wonderful care of diligence in all the ways and courses that God hath sanctified to convey grace by. They that be God's children love God's presence wheresoever they find it; and because God vouchsafeth his presence in his ordinance, therefore they regard it, and remember always to give the glory of all to God. For the power and excellency is of God, and not of us. 'Why gaze ye on us, as if we by our own power had cured the man?' Acts 3:12. It is not from man, but from God.

Now to come to the 8th verse, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed,' &c.

The apostle's words have an elegant antithesis of things seeming contrary. 'We are perplexed, not in despair; persecuted, not forsaken; cast off, but not destroyed.' There is a kind of elegancy in the dispensation of God. And this serveth to the former argument to shew that we carry these treasures in 'earthen vessels.' That we should not despise the earthen vessels because they be weak, he sets down what befalls them in the world, and how God supports and giveth supply of comforts suitable to the distress. He grants 'we be troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in

despair.' Those that are to deal with enemies, and are to prevent objections, they must grant the worst that may be granted, that so they may make their apology better. Saint Paul freely granteth all that can be objected by any that look on the outside of the professors and ministers of the gospel. I grant these fall out, and yet it must be granted God hath a special care likewise, as you shall see in the unfolding of the words, which we will particularly go over, and then jointly raise out of them some observations.

'We are troubled on every side,' The word signifieth pressed, *ζιβόμενοι*, but yet not oppressed. God suffers his children to be pressed. Afflictions, they are the wine-press of God, to press out of them all that is good, to the view and taste of others. They have liquor in them, but it is not tasted of, but by pressure. For the most part spices relish not, savour not, unless they be beaten. So it is with grapes unless they be pressed. The works the enemies of the church do to the children of God, is to press the ill that is in them, and to press out the ill that is in themselves. For at the same time they press out by trouble, and disgraceful usage, better men than themselves, at the same time they press out and make apparent their own malice and poison. So that afflictions are discoveries of their evil, and of good men's good. And it is helpful for the church, that there be both, that all men may be known, and the thoughts of men discovered; and that the graces of the good may be also manifested. And therefore he saith, 'We be troubled or pressed on every side.'

Indeed, *ἐν παντί* in the original signifieth 'in every place,' in every time, as here 'on every side,' for the children of God are on every side pressed. Sometimes from above, God seemeth to be their enemy; and sometimes from within, by the terror of conscience; and sometimes on the right hand vexed with their friends, and sometimes on the left hand vexed with their enemies; and sometimes round about them



with the states and conditions of the times; sometimes from beneath, with Satan's molestations and vexations; something before them, fear of hell, damnation, and trouble to come; and something behind them, remembrance of former sins. So that they be pressed on every side, 'yet not distressed,' στενοχωρούμενοι, or oppressed, or altogether distressed, as the word signifieth, not altogether in desperate straits; when the body is in straits and pinched, that it cannot tell what way to turn, and the mind in strait doth not know whither to retire. But God's children are not in such straits. For though they be 'troubled on every side,' yet they are not straitened in spirit, they have large hearts; as David saith, Ps. 118:5, and 18:19, 'Thou hast set my feet at large;' and Ps. 119 and ver. 92, he declares how God had enlarged his heart. And so God enlargeth the paths of his children. Though they be afflicted, yet they be not so straitened but they find inward enlargements; enlargedness of prayer to God. They can vent their desires to God largely; before men they are bold to maintain God's cause. They find a large heart in regard of inward peace and comfort; and indeed there is never a child of God but he hath incomparably a larger heart than wicked men. All wicked men are all vainly-hearted, base-spirited persons, but the child of God hath a large heart; for the grace of God and sense of heavenly comforts enlarge the heart, and so he hath a more heroical spirit than any worldling hath. So that though they be in pressure, yet they be not overpressed. Wicked men have a prison in their own breasts. Take a wicked man that is not besotted: when he understandeth himself, though he be never so free, though above all men, though a commander of the world, yet he is imprisoned and straitened in his own heart; his conscience upbraids him with his sins, commands him to come before the tribunal-seat of God. In greatest liberty he is oftentimes in straits for abusing that liberty. But a child of God can in all afflictions lay open his soul before God. So much for that particular.

'Perplexed, yet not in despair.' The word is elegant in the original: ἀπορούμενοι, we are perplexed, but not in extremity. The word in the original signifieth want of counsel, what course to take, when a man is in such difficulty for want.\* Want of things necessary, and then want of counsel to get them supplied, breedeth perplexity. Now, saith Paul, we want many things. And therefore among other troubles the apostle reckons hunger, thirst, fasting, 2 Cor. 11:27. God's children are oftentimes in want, not only of outward things, but seemingly in want of counsel what course to take for a time. In regard of danger, what a difficulty was Abraham in when he was to offer his son Isaac, his eldest son, his only son, the son of the promise! Gen. 22:1–3; and Jacob when he parted with Benjamin, and thought he had lost Joseph, Gen. 43:13, 14. Exod. 14:10–12, seq., Moses at the Red Sea; present to yourselves what straits he was in. The mountains were on either side, the Red Sea before them, the Egyptians behind them. In what strait was David when they were ready to stone him? 1 Sam. 30:6. Certainly exceedingly great. In what strait was Jonah in the belly of hell, the whale in the depth of the sea? Jonah 1:17. And so God's children are oftentimes not only in want of help, but in want of counsel. So they be almost at their wits' ends, not knowing what course to take.

'Yet we are not in despair,' ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔξαπορούμενοι. For God at the pinch of time cometh, and as it was in Abraham's case, in the mount, appeared. When the knife was ready to cut the throat of Isaac, then God sheweth himself. So Moses at the Red Sea, he was in wonderful straits perplexed. And he crieth to God. Why dost thou cry to me? saith God, though he said nothing, Exod. 14:15. God made way for him through the Red Sea. God makes his way where he findeth none. He can divide the Red Sea, and cause Jordan to fly back. When the ways be desperate, and the plunges extreme, then God makes way for his children. God is wonderful near to them in their extremities. He

was nearer to Daniel than the teeth of the lion, Dan. 6:16, seq., and nearer Moses than the water was, when he was swimming in his basket, Exod. 2:3. God is nearest in danger when it is nearest of all. When Jonah was in the whale's belly, he was in wonderful perplexity, Jonah 2:1. It could not be otherwise; and yet at the same time God enlarged his heart that he did not despair. So that you see the words are true. Though God's children are perplexed, yet they be not in 'despair.' They have a God to go to at all times. At the worst they can send forth their sighs and groans, though they cannot speak; and those sighs and groans are great cries in God's ear. God knoweth the desires of their souls; God hath an ear in their very hearts, and knoweth the meaning of his own Spirit joining with their spirits. No man is in desperate condition that can pray, and though he cannot pray in words, yet prayer being matter of affection and desires to God, and any man being in such extremity may do that. There is no prayer but it fetcheth help from heaven. There is not a groan lost that is sent to heaven, and therefore 'though they be perplexed, yet not in despair.'

The church seemed to be in a perishing condition, and David saith, 'I am cast out of thy sight, yet thou heardest the voice of my prayer,' Ps. 31:22; yea, a prayer joined with such expressions that I said, 'God hath forsaken me.' The spirit sighs and groans, and God regardeth such a prayer. And so, that howsoever in regard of the flesh we be in desperate conditions, yet the Spirit hath an eye to God, and moveth a sigh and tear to him, and at the same time fetcheth help from heaven. You see then the point is clear.

Verse 9. 'We are persecuted, but not forsaken.' διωκόμενοι. The Greek word signifieth to pursue. God sometimes personates an enemy, and seemeth to be against us, and that is a heavy case. It was Job's case: 'Thou writest bitter things against me,' Job 13:26. In

divine temptations God seemeth to be our enemy. We are persecuted and pursued; sometimes by the arm of the Almighty, sometimes again by Satan, and by his instruments. When we have made by conversion to God escape from the world, the world sendeth hue and cry out after the saints, pursuing and labouring to bring them to their old conditions and labours, to trip them in their ways. The children of God have been from the beginning of the world so pursued, that they never leave pursuing them, till they have driven them to death, and even to hell itself. And this is the state of all God's children if once any will be righteous. 'Whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.' He may be civil,\* and no man will say black is his eye; but if he have power of religion, and labour to express it in his conversation, he shall have persecution of the tongue or of the hand. Saint Austin saith well, Though we live well in times of peace, yet, audi, audi mi frater, begin to live as a Christian should live, and see if you be pursued; you shall find a Babylon in Jerusalem (s). And truly in times of peace a man will find enemies enough at home. For it is almost equally difficult to be truly righteous at all times. In the primitive church the doctrine of religion was opposed in applying the truth of doctrine. Now the power of practisers. At all times religion hath been so much persecuted, as may stand with salvation. The devil is content with profession. The thing may stand with lust and sin, but so much as is necessary to bring to heaven that hath been always under persecution in one kind or other. 'Though persecuted, yet not forsaken,' viz., of God. No. So far from being forsaken of God, that God is never nearer them than when trouble is nearest of all. 'Be not far off,' saith the psalmist, 'for trouble is nigh,' Ps. 22:11. Then there is most use of God's presence and comfort. In persecution usually the souls of God's people fly under the shadow of his wings, and being driven to him they find more support and succour than at other times. It was a good speech of the Landgrave of Hesse, Philip the First, that was of fame and note, to Charles the Fifth, when not

only the Duke of Saxony, but he, was taken prisoners, and a great while continued so. How did you all the time demean yourselves? Said he, 'I found those divine comforts that I never felt before.\* So that there is certain evidence of God's presence in persecution and standing out in a good cause, which God's children never felt before, as after. There is a hidden manna conveyed to them, which is appropriated to those times. So saith he, 'We be persecuted, but not forsaken;' nay, God is never nearer than at that time.

When there is a new moon, the space between the old and the new is interlunium (t), that it is as good as lost now, yet hath more light in itself than ever it had, for it is nearer the sun than ever, though it appears not to the world. And though the comforts of the soul appear not in afflictions, yet then God shineth more upon them than at any other time.

'Cast down, but not destroyed.' Cast down, by persecution prevailing. Persecution prevailing doth cast men down, and give them the worst in the eye of the world, but yet we are not destroyed. The children of God go masked, many thousands of them, to the sight of flesh and blood, and in appearance of flesh destroyed. But they be nothing less than destroyed. For to take it at the worst, though their meat is taken from them, yet they are not distressed.

(1.) For what is the worst the world can do? They take away their lives which they must leave ere long, and thereby they are made partakers of their wish, which every child of God hath, 'to depart and to be with Christ,' Phil. 1:23. Now when they drive them out of the world, they make them partakers of what they most desire, for they have more communion with God in heaven than ever they had before; they are in their seats and proper place.

(2.) Again, though in regard of some particulars the church may seem to be destroyed, some boughs are cut, yet the body remains, so in regard of the whole body they are not destroyed.

(3.) In regard of the 'inward man,' they are not destroyed. They take courage still, and comfort still, while they are in the world. When they go out of the world they have accomplishment of all desires. Put case God deliver them not, but give them up to death: he delivereth them in not delivering them. For what is death but delivering them from all trouble? When he delivereth not in particular danger, he giveth them a general deliverance by death from all trouble whatsoever.

(4.) Again, there is a double deliverance. There is an inward secret deliverance, and an apparent open deliverance. Put case they be cast down, and not openly delivered, yet secretly they are delivered, that is, from fear and despair. The soul is set at liberty within. So that though they be cast down, yet not destroyed.

(5.) If they be destroyed to the appearance of the world, it is but seed sown. Saints are the seeds out of which grow many other. The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.\* As often as we are mowed and cast down, saith Tertullian, by your cruelty, it is but an allurements to our profession. So when they seem to be destroyed, they be but seed sown, and out of their ashes many rise out of them. How much are we beholding to the bloody times in this kingdom, for this after-glorious church!

(6.) 'Not destroyed' in this world, while they have any work to do. You may imprison them, fetter them, but God will work a miracle rather than his children shall be taken out of the world before they have done their work. The three young men in the furnace, the fire shall cease to burn rather than they shall before their hour cometh,

Dan. 3:27. In the gospel Christ was not hurt by them, for his hour is not yet come; they cannot hurt one hair of the head. 'They are afflicted, but not oppressed; they are persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.'

From all which we may raise some general truths, and make use of all that hath been spoken.

Doct. First of all we may from hence observe, that troubles and afflictions of God's people in this world they are many, and they are great and growing. They wax greater and greater till God's time be appointed. Here is distress, persecution, perplexity, casting down, they be many and manifoldly different in their kind. And then they be great, for here he reckons the greatest troubles than can befall, except death itself, which is usually included. And then there be degrees of them; to be afflicted is less than to be perplexed, and persecution added to perplexity. Then to persecution without is added the trouble following. And not only afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, but cast down.

That is no matter, mille mali species, mille salutis erunt, if a thousand ways of trouble, there will be a thousand ways of deliverance. God is never at a loss to help his children. Therefore God grant we are so. So, but we are not in distress, we despair not, we are not forsaken, we are not destroyed.

'We,' that is, Paul, and not only we as men, and we as Christians, but we as eminent men. For the troubles of God's children happen to them as men. Sometimes sickness, death, losses, crosses. Sometimes as Christians, as they be maligned and opposed by the wicked world. Sometimes in an eminent calling, as Pharaoh, that desired to slay the male children especially, that were strong and able to do service; they were objects of malice, Exod. 1:16. Now we are thus used not only as

men and Christians, but as eminent men. So that it is the condition of the most eminent of all to be thus used. It pleaseth God to let his children endure many and manifold and great troubles. Now what is the reason of this? I might be large, but I will give a few.

Reason 1. Of necessity there must be a conformity between the members and the head. It behoved Christ to suffer, that he might enter into glory. And all we in our time must suffer, and so enter into glory. 'We are predestinate to conformity to our head,' Rom. 8:29. We are not only predestinate to salvation, but to all between us and salvation. We are ordained to pass through such and such good actions, such and such turnings. There is no man but hath so many actions to perform, so many sufferings to endure, to which they be by God ordained.

Reason 2. And again, the best of God's children have something to be wrought out of them by a spirit of burning and affliction; the best need refining.

Reason 3. And again, grace needeth trials and exercise and increase. Now God sanctifieth all these, passing from 'vessel to vessel,' Jer. 48:11. These transfusions [are] to work out what is evil, to try, exercise, and increase what is good.

Reason 4. And if there were no more but the malice of Satan and his cursed seed, the seed of the serpent, it is not possible to avoid the cross. And God, that his children may not love the world, hath made the world hate them. And it is safe for God's people to have the hatred of the worst people. Their hatred will do them more good than their love. Their hatred breeds a separation, and commands a separation in conclusion. For what shall we do with familiarity and acquaintance with them whose company we cannot enjoy in heaven? And therefore God will have his children exercised with the worst



men; and then he desires to take them out of the world, and to set God up in his due place. God is God, and the Creator, when we be stript of all worldly comforts. Then vanity is vanity. God will not have us idolize anything below, and therefore suffers us to fall into extreme wants and dangers. Many other reasons there be, which I do give you but a taste of.

You see then the state of God's children in regard of the world. But what is it in regard of him? They be not forsaken, they be not utterly cast off. So they are patient in both; patient in regard of the trouble they meet with in the world, patient in regard of God's dealing with them. God forsakes them not so as to destroy them. He leaveth them not in a desperate condition, as he doth the wicked.

Doct. 2. Again, observe this, that the life of God's children in this world is a mixed life, woven of afflictions and of comforts, intermixed of both. It tastes of both the malice of the world and the goodness of God.

They oftentimes enjoy sickness. They be sometimes in dumps and sadness. Their life is woven of comfort and discomfort, and it is good for them in this world to be so, till they be in their proper place in heaven. And this is our comfort always, though troubles be many, and manifold, and great, and growing, and the last day worst, yet as the waters of afflictions grow, so do their comforts and the graces of the Spirit grow like waters of the sanctuary;\* as troubles increase, so the waters of consolation increase. And it is better to be in trouble than to be kept from the trouble without the comfort. There is more sweetness in affliction than in freedom from it without the sweetness. If we look to the world, you see what we may look for. If we look to heaven, you may see what to expect thence.

Use. If this be so, that their condition is thus mixed, it is good in our prayers to allege to God our ill condition, to argue extremity. 'Help, Lord: for vain is the help of man,' Ps. 60:11. 'Save, Lord: the water is entered into my soul,' Ps. 69:1. Help, Lord: if thou wilt not, none will; if thou canst not, none can. God will be bound with these arguments. It was the speech of Philo, 'A man's help faileth, where God's begins' (u).

And it [is] a good argument to allege to God in matters of sin, 'Lord, pardon, Lord, forgive, for my sins are many and great,' Ps. 25:11. This is a good argument with God, for he is infinite in mercy; therefore allege it as a binding argument.

But if God himself seem to be our enemy, What course shall we take then? Sometimes God acts a part that is not his own, that he may shew afterward a greater mercy. In such times we must get the eye of faith, and break through the clouds between the soul and God's face, and see his fatherly countenance in Jesus Christ. Faith hath piercing eyes, and breaks through the clouds between God and us, and bindeth him with his own nature and promise, whatsoever part he acts. 'Lord, howsoever thou dealest, thy nature in Christ is gracious, merciful.' 'Thou hast made rich promises that thou wilt not fall from.' 'Forsake me not.' Bind him with his word, with his nature; he cannot deny his word, his nature, himself; allege them to him in Christ, and allege his own promise, and they will be effectual.

Use. Again, we see here that it is a good art, and needful in times of trouble, to look to the good, as well as to the ill. The apostle doth not only confess ingenuously all the ill that the enemies might object to weaken the reputation of the gospel, they are people cast down and despised. All this is true, but we are not forsaken, we are not in despair, not destroyed. This is a good art in every affliction. It is

better to have our eyes on the good, than to have our eyes altogether upon the ill. God hath taken away one child, he might have taken many. God hath afflicted with sickness, but he might have taken away our wits. Therefore have not both eyes fixed upon the grief, for that is Satan's policy, to rob God of his glory, and our souls of comfort.

Use. Therefore learn a blessed skill from hence. When there is objected anything by Satan to disgrace the gospel or discourage it, reject\* the objections of Satan with better. It is so, I confess; but [while] God seemeth to be displeased, and I am afflicted, God is yet a gracious God, hath left many comforts, his word, and promises, and therein I will trust: he hath given me his Spirit to support me. Thus return all the temptations of Satan, learn to be as witty and ingenious to argue that, for the strengthening of our faith, which may drive us to the acknowledgment of God's goodness and mercy, as Satan is to do the contrary: Judges 6:13, 'God be with thee, thou valiant man;' but if God be with us, 'why is it thus with us?' And so God's people look all to the grievance; why are we persecuted, and in distress, and want, and at our wits' end? Now, but consider the comfort as well as the discomfort; learn that heavenly wisdom from St Paul.

Let no man be discouraged, if he findeth himself sensible of the grief he lieth under. We be flesh, not spirit. God knoweth whereof we are made; and therefore he layeth not whole loads upon us, but in anger he remembers mercy. You see how he deals with the apostle Paul, and others in his case. Therefore, if we be sensible of trouble, God can help. No man more sensible of grief than Christ, Christi dolor, dolor maximus. For he had perfect wisdom to apprehend, and a sound body (v). St Paul speaks of these things as wonderfully sensible, but here is true patience, when we be sensible to the uttermost of the grievance, and yet withal are but sensible of the

grievance. 'Why should I smite them any more?' Isa. 1:5, saith God to the prophet. It is not only sin, but judgment, to be given up to hard hearts, not to feel the condition. Well, St Paul was sensible of his condition.

Obj. Thou wilt object, What is this to us? We live in calm times, and enjoy health and prosperity, and know not what these things mean that Paul speaks of.

Ans. Beloved, the more we be beholding to God. But do we know to what times the Lord may call the best of us all? Therefore we must be prepared before hand. Comforts are not found in adversity that were not sought for in prosperity, as Austin saith (w). In times of peace, people should provide for war and defence; and so in times of peace let us think of these things. Our conditions may alter. Howsoever the state may continue, yet we that live under our vines and fig-trees, do we know how the Lord may exercise us? May not he exercise us with afflictions of mind and persecutions of body? May not he exercise us with trouble of conscience, and bring us into straits, which is a spiritual martyrdom too? In times of prosperity, God's children know better what to do and whom to depend on, because then he keeps them off from inward troubles. And therefore, seeing we know not how long in our personal condition we may be as we are, it is not amiss to think on these things.

And to direct us a little what to do now in times of peace and quietness.

(1.) Labour to preserve our peace with God by all means, that when changes come, as changes may come, and will come one way or other, we may say with the apostle, 'I am afflicted, but not forsaken.' If we make not God now our friend; if we shall now multiply sin and guilt, and run into God's books more and more, it will be a hell when

trouble, and sickness, and persecution come. And therefore as we will have God our friend when we stand most in need of him, so let us labour to keep God our friend now at this time. The desperate course that many loose persons take: they run into an old course, they let the reins loose to licentiousness, let their tongue lie and swear, and deny nothing that they affect. 'Is there not times and months for these wild asses to be taken in? In their months you may take them.' There be months of trouble and months of sickness; and when their former courses have been nothing but a perpetual provoking of God, what comfort can these persons have? And therefore, as we desire to have God stand by us and help at every pinch, labour for peace with him now in time of prosperity.

(2.) Let us be constant in his cause, in his religion, that is so constant to us. And this constancy of the Spirit and the best things will be an evidence to us that we have found him constant in his love to us.

(3.) And that we may quiet ourselves the better, if such times come, be careful, and treasure up promises for the time to come, that we may allege them to God. Get good liquor into our hearts, that when times of pressing come, there may be good wine. If good knowledge be not gotten beforehand, what will afflictions press out but murmurings and despair, and something that was there before. Therefore treasure up now all we can; there is a spending time will come. Joseph's hard years may overtake us; we know not into what distress we may be brought. And because God is the best friend in extremity, be sure we offend not him for any creature, because let the creature do his worst, yet God will always be sure to be our friend. And if God be our friend, it matters not who is our enemy. I cannot press all that may be pressed out of this point.

(4.) Labour at all times to maintain a good conceit of God and his goodness. If Satan suggest he will cast us off, and that there is no hopes for us in our God, answer again, It is not so. Labour to have a spirit of faith to beat back all such temptations. You shall see strange temptations, and yet excellently answered. 'Yet God is good to Israel,' Ps. 73:1. When the child of God is low, yet he keeps good conceits of God, though things go strangely. I know not what to make of my condition and of the churches,\* 'yet God is good.'

The reason is, when we be at worst, God can help us. And therefore come those comfortable exceptions in the Psalms. 'Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all,' Ps. 34:19. 'They were afflicted sore, but not delivered to death,' Ps. 118:18. So here mark the exceptions: we be in straits, persecuted and cast down, but yet delivered.

Thus labour for a good conceit of God. The like things you may observe out of these words of the apostle; and I beseech you, let us make use of them for the right knowledge of these things. Hence it is said, Rom. 8:37, 'That in all these we are more than conquerors;' a strange speech, in affliction, pressures, casting down, 'we are more than conquerors.' And how cometh this? 'We are more than conquerors in him that loved us, in Jesus Christ;' more than conquerors, because we are overcome when we seem to be overcome; because religion hath grown even by blood and suffering. St Austin saith, by straits and afflictions the church hath been delivered and spread abroad to the uttermost parts of the world (x).

'We are more than conquerors' in all these in a treble regard.

[1.] Specially in regard of ourselves; for the devil aimeth at separation between God and us. 'Now, what shall separate us?' saith the apostle, Rom. 8:35.

The devil intends a divorcement; but when by a spirit of faith we draw near to God, and cleave fast to God, then the devil's policy is overthrown. The more the world driveth us from God, the faster we cleave to God; and then we be more than conquerors.

[2.] In regard of spiritual courage. The more God's Spirit is depressed, the higher it riseth. The enemy labours to quail the spirits of them that be good, but they cannot do it, for the Spirit of God is invincible. And the spirit of a Christian being supported by an higher Spirit than their own, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me,' Philip. 4:13. Therefore they are more than conquerors by the invincible Spirit of Christ.

[3.] And then they be more than conquerors in regard of the cause. The devil labours to drive men to the dislike of the cause and religion by suffering disgrace, but he cannot.

Use. Firstly. And therefore, I beseech you, let me conclude with a point of encouragement, considering it is spoken with a great deal of courage. 'We are afflicted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;' let it encourage us to take the cause of God in hand, and go through with it in spite of Satan and his instruments, and fear nothing that shall befall us. Why should we fear the devil? Let no man think what the devil threatens, but what God promises. Therefore fear nothing, for God will make it good; he will be never nearer than when we stand most in need of help. And therefore set upon God's cause with courage; and not only on the cause of religion, but cause of honesty and justice. The truth of God in any kind is dearer than our lives. The worst that can befall us is to be persecuted and distressed. You shall have more comfort from heaven than discomfort from the world; and what do you lose then?

Therefore let us all support ourselves with this. There is more force in God's help from heaven to secure and support by an inward invincible strength, than there is in the world, or Satan the prince of the world, to cast us down; we have more for us than against us. When we be stripped of all, yet know, that God is the God of all; when he hath taken all, yet he leaveth himself. We have all at the fountain, all at the spring. Therefore let that be ground of resolution; 'If I perish, I perish,' saith the good woman, Esther 4:16. But never depart from God, from religion, from justice, from the cause of the church; because I know God will be like himself; he cannot deny himself, but constantly deals with his church and children, as in former times. It cannot be otherwise with me, than Paul the great apostle of the church. If that befalls me that did befall Paul, as I am in Paul's distress, so I may look for Paul's support and comfort.

The apostle, to avoid the objection of the scandal of the cross, by which they were the less accepted in the hearts of many, sets down the state of the people of God in this world, take them at the worst. He speaks here of himself not only as a man (since the fall of our weak nature is subject to many calamities), but he speaks of himself as a Christian, opposing the sins of the world. And he grants what they may object. 'We are troubled on every side, but not in distress.' The apostles take advantage from the troubles they were in, to advance the love and mercy of God in those troubles. We lose nothing by them, for that which is gained in any trouble, is better than that that can be lost. 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed,' so as we know not what to do, when we are in such straits. Take a Christian at the worst, yet he hath freedom to the throne of grace by the spirit of prayer; and God looks upon him in the worst condition. The more strait his condition is, the more large his [supply of the] Spirit is; therefore though troubles increase, yet his comforts increase.



Secondly, 'We are persecuted with wants, and by reason of wants we know not what course to take,' so that we are oftentimes 'perplexed, but yet not in despair,' for God supplieth. This I unfolded before.

A Christian man hath some bottom, in his worst condition, to uphold him, but take a man out of the state of grace, and he hath no bottom to stand upon, but he sinks presently in any trouble of mind or conscience to hell, though never so strong in wit and parts. He cannot encounter with a divine temptation, he hath no power with him above himself. We see Ahithophel, that wise politician. He was a bad man; and what became of him? He hanged himself.\* So Cain, Judas, and Saul. What saith Saul in his perplexity? 'The Philistines are upon me, trouble is upon me, and God hath forsaken me,' 1 Sam. 28:15, a pitiful complaint; and this may be the complaint of all carnal men, 'The Philistines are upon me, trouble is upon me, and God hath forsaken me.' But the children of God, when they are perplexed, they do not despair. It is a pitiful case with those that shall desire the mountains to cover them, Rev. 6:15. Your wicked persons that now outlook anybody, that despise every one but themselves, the time shall come when they shall desire the mountains to cover them, a pitiful strait that they cannot tell where to betake themselves, as Christ saith, Mat. 24 [throughout]. Oh, but the child of God in his worst he hath something to stay himself upon. Though he be in deep troubles, there is a help above him, a power of God to support him on the left hand and on the right. If there be a height and depth of troubles, there is a height and depth of mercy to support them.

Thirdly, 'Persecuted, but not forsaken.' Grant what is to be granted. 'We are persecuted.' How far? They will never leave us till they have taken us out of the world; and what hurt do they then? Drive us nearer to God. God owneth his children most when the world owneth them least, and there is a blessing pronounced upon all those that

suffer for good causes. 'Blessed are you when men persecute you, for great is your reward in heaven,' Mat. 5:10. As he said, It is a kingly thing to suffer evil, &c. (y). I am sure it is a Christian's condition to do good and suffer evil.

In sufferings let us look to three things.

(1.) First, To the cause, considering that it be free from sin.

(2.) To look to our carriage in the cause, that we carry not ourselves tempestuously.

(3.) Look to those that persecute. Let them persecute; and though they do, you shall not be forsaken. Though a man may desert him that stands for him and his cause, yet when the children of God shall stand for God, he will not desert them in his cause; 'though persecuted, yet not forsaken.'

Fourthly, The fourth is, 'cast down, but not destroyed.' Persecution prevails sometimes to casting down, but 'yet we are not destroyed.' We are cast down, trodden down, insulted over, but not 'destroyed.' Beloved, you see the great persecution of the church. What a pitiful condition the church hath been brought unto within these late years: trodden down, 'yet not destroyed.' For they are partakers with Christ that is now in heaven, and they are assured of a blessed resurrection; and therefore not destroyed, when they seem to be destroyed in the eyes of the world. As he said before, they 'are earthen vessels.' So every man is but an 'earthen vessel,' but it is much that an earthen vessel should be cast down and yet not broken; they may be cast down, but not destroyed. For when the enemies have done the worst they can to destroy them, that destruction is no destruction, but salvation.

Again, 'We are cast down, but not destroyed.' We see here is a kind of eloquence of things as well as words. Here is a sweet harmony of things: 'they are afflicted, but not in despair; perplexed, but not distressed; persecuted, but not forsaken.' Every one of these are greater than the former. I shewed you God's children are troubled in this world, and their troubles grow more and more till they are scarce able to bear them, and then God giveth a gracious promise, 'that he will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength,' 1 Cor. 10:13. For God limits the time and the measure of all troubles in this world. He stands by and turneth the glass,\* and limits the measure. 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,' Job 38:11, as we may see in Job's case; and his promise is, 'that the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the back of the righteous,' Ps. 125:3. This is one comfort, that a Christian's times are not in the enemies' hands, but 'our times,' as David saith, 'are in thy hands,' Ps. 31:15. Our times of coming into trouble, and our times of going out of trouble, are in the hands of God. As he made all things, in the first creation, in number, weight, and measure, so he rules and governeth all things in number, weight, and measure, especially his church. He will not put in a dram too much; he weigheth their strength, and weigheth their crosses, and exactly observeth what their strength is able to bear. For he is a most wise father; and that is our comfort, whatsoever falls upon us. If troubles grow upon us, comforts shall grow; if they grow great in number and measure, comforts shall grow great in number and measure too; for he is a God of comfort. He comforts in every trouble, as we see here, 'perplexed, cast down, persecuted,' yet God hath comfort for every one of these.

Last Obs. Again, here see the comfortable condition of God's children in this world. All their happiness is not reserved for heaven, but they are happy in affliction itself. In them there is comfort. There is support not only in heaven, but in the very time of affliction, as we

may see it in Ps. 94:19: 'According to the multitude of my thoughts, thy comforts delighted my soul.' According to my distracted thoughts, thy comforts have refreshed my soul. There be present comforts in troubles that keep God's children from despair. St Paul nameth the lowest comforts that God's children have here. Though they are 'persecuted, yet they are not forsaken;' though they are 'cast down, yet they perish not.' He sheweth here, that if we regard not the great matters that we shall have in heaven, yet God dispenseth his comforts here now in the time of troubles. Here is matter of comfort, and not of despair. Miserable heathens, that had not the knowledge of God in Christ, what condition were they in? As one saith, 'I would pray, but my prayers are in vain' (z). They were in great misery. Wanting the knowledge of God in Christ, they fell into despair. So in the church: those that are not acquainted with God, in great troubles fall to despair; but you see the comfortable condition of a Christian, take him at the worst.

Ver. 10. It followeth, 'Always bearing in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.' Here he addeth a comfort to those that suffered before, shewing the end of all that God intends. 'We bear in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus.' He calls all troubles by the name of dying. This is the first.

All the troubles God's children are exercised with here, are named with the name of dying.

(1.) Because troubles are little deaths. Death is not the last parting of soul and body, but every separation from comfort is a kind of death. Therefore he calls afflictions dyings, because they make way for greater deaths. He calls afflictions dyings, from the intent and

purpose of the persecutors, for their intent is, if it were in their power, to kill.

(2.) Likewise it is called a dying, because this is in the preparation of spirit that they are ready to die; for no man is a true Christian but he labours to deny father and mother, and all comforts, and resigns himself to Christ. If I can serve him with mine honour, yea, with my life, he shall have it, so that I am ready to die upon all occasions, as you may see in the next verse. 'We are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake,' that is, the enemies expose us to death, and if it were in their power they would kill us.

Quest. But why doth he call his troubles a dying 'of the Lord Jesus?'

Ans. [1.] There be some troubles that Christ suffered, which we cannot; as the curse of the law, and the wrath of God due to our sins. These Christ suffered alone. 'He trod the wine-press of God's wrath alone,' Isa. 63:3. In these there is no partaking.

Ans. [2.] There is another dying, a dying in his mystical body, his church. He suffers affliction in every Christian. He was stoned when Stephen was stoned, Acts 7:59. Christ was beheaded when John Baptist was beheaded, and in prison when Paul was in prison. Christ suffered in all the martyrs, by reason of that union between him and his church. So that besides that, he suffers in every Christian, this is called 'the dying of the Lord Jesus.'

Ans. [3.] Because he measures out to every one their cup. Afflictions are called a cup, and therefore they are his, because they are measured out by him.

Ans. [4.] And then they are his dyings, because by them they are made like unto him. He suffered first; and then every Christian must

express that suffering. As he suffered and entered into glory, so 'we must suffer with him, if we mean to reign with him,' 2 Tim. 2:12.

Ans. [5.] And then again, they are called the dying of the Lord Jesus, because Christ hath a fellowship and communion with them in all their dyings. As a Christian hath communion with Christ when he dieth, we are 'crucified with him;' so Christ suffers with us. He is afflicted with us, reproached with us, as Moses, Heb. 11:26, counted 'the rebukes of Christ' greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Christ enters into prison with us, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Acts 9:4. Christ takes upon him all the wrongs done to his children as done to himself. As it argueth madness in those that persecute, so a sweet comfort to them that do suffer, that they have Christ to suffer with them. The presence of Christ so sweetens everything, as he said, 'The presence of Christ made the gridiron sweet unto Lawrence' (aa). A beam of Christ's presence that is now in heaven scatters all troubles. The presence of Christ made Paul sing in prison, Acts 16:25. The presence of Christ sweetens all conditions and all places whatsoever, because our dyings are the dyings of Christ; Christ hath fellowship and communion with us in them.

Ans. [6.] Then again, they are the dyings of Christ, because they divorce and wean us from the world. Now we being separated from worldly comforts, are fitter for farther fellowship and communion with Christ, as you shall see afterward.

Thus we see some reasons why all the miseries of a Christian are called 'the dyings of our Lord Jesus.'

We see then there must be a dying of the outward man; first there must be little dyings, and then a consummation of all. And why? Because sin is so invested and so sunk into our natures, that without death it cannot be divorced. Afflictions are to make a divorce

between sin and our nature, for 'no unclean thing can enter into heaven,' Rev. 21:27. As the Spirit did separate sin in the nature of Christ, so doth the Spirit of God purify the nature of every man by afflictions. Because grace needs help, therefore afflictions join as fire with grace, to make a more perfect separation between the soul and sin. Together with the sanctified spirit there is a spirit of burning. When the canker hath seized deeply on metals, it must pass through the fire before it can be purged; so the nature of corruption hath so eaten into our natures, that we need fire to purge it out.

'Flesh and blood,' saith the apostle, 'shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,' 1 Cor. 15:50. What is the meaning of that? That is, there be some remainders of corruption in it. Until this body be returned to dust, till the Lord make this body of ours new again, which is now so stained with sin, it shall never enter into heaven. Our blessed Saviour's body the third day, before he saw corruption, did rise again, because there was no sin in him, and therefore it was not necessary he should see corruption.

Now divers reasons there were why he should not see corruption. But all our bodies must be turned to dust, or changed, which shall have the force of a death, as 1 Cor. 15:52: 'And therefore we bear in our bodies the dyings of the Lord Jesus.'

Use. This should sweeten all our afflictions, that we are dying with Christ, whereby Christ hath communion with us, and whereby we are fitted for communion with Christ; as put case we have sickness or trouble, &c. Christ took upon him flesh, but what? As it was in Adam unpassible?\* Christ took upon him our passible nature, as subject to suffer cold, and hunger, and pain, of weariness, and it is fit our bodies should be conformable to the body of Christ, 'for we are predestinate to be conformed to Christ,' Rom. 8:29, and therefore

when we are put to pain in our callings, or troubled for good consciences, and thereby wear out our bodies, it is but as Christ's body was used. He took a body that he might suffer, and going about doing good, and be put to hardship. Therefore, if we be put to hardship, it is no more than our Lord Jesus Christ did. And therefore those that be so delicate that will take no pains, endure no sickness, the wind must not blow upon them, the sun must not shine upon them, they love no saving goodness, nothing of the Spirit of Christ, who out of love took our nature upon him, obnoxious to all pain and labour; though not infirmities of our particular persons, yet of our nature. He took upon him our miserable nature, our passible nature, and then he hath our nature in heaven. If ever we will be glorified with him in heaven, we must be content to take upon us his miserable nature here, that our flesh may be used as his was, even to death if there were occasion. If we be humbled to death, happy is that mortification that brings us to conform with Christ, whatsoever it is. And therefore be not discouraged; let what will come, come on this body of ours.

Now if you ask me, who are the happy men in the world? Truly those that are most active in good, and suffer most for good, for they are the flesh of Christ. What did the flesh and nature of Christ? He did all the good he could, and suffered all the evil that the pride and malice of man's nature could possibly lay upon him. He therefore that doth most good, and suffers most ill, he cometh nearest to Christ, and carrieth about with him the 'marks of the Lord Jesus.'

To pass on in the words.

To what end is all this? 'That the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies.' What is the life of Jesus? You all know what life is. I will speak of it as a Divine especially.



(1.) You know that the life of Jesus is either the life secret in himself; and therefore he is called 'our life.' 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' John 14:6, when 'Christ our life shall appear,' Col. 3:4. Christ is life, as having life in himself as God. Or,

(2.) Else the life of Jesus as mediator, and as God and man; and so it is here meant. Life is first founded in the Godhead. He is the living God, and therefore wise and powerful, and all because he is living. But life as it is in God doth not comfort us a whit, but rather is a matter of terror, because we have no communion with God, considered absolutely, without a mediator. And therefore we must consider of life as derived to a middle person, a mediator, God-man. So that life is derived to us by Christ our brother, who hath taken our nature. Our Christ is derived to us in our nature. God alone doth not comfort us; mere man alone doth no good, John 6:32, seq. The argument is profoundly followed by our Saviour. The flesh profiteth nothing. The human nature without the divine profiteth nothing. It is the Spirit that quickens. Look to the death of Christ. Consider Christ dying as man, he doth us no good at all if he had not been God. As God he could not have died, but the person of God dying in our nature makes his flesh bread indeed, and his blood drink indeed; that is, the soul may feed upon the satisfaction, the sacrifice of God-man, as full satisfaction to God's divine justice. So that the Spirit and the flesh, the divine and human nature, is the ground of all life.

[1.] First, of the life of sentence, whereby we are freely acquitted from sin; for there is life of sentence when a malefactor waiteth for death, and hath a life of sentence given him. So Christ is the fountain and author of this life of sentence, for that God in our nature died to satisfy God, and therefore we be acquitted. The guilt of our soul is taken away, and a life of sentence is conveyed to us.

[2.] The life of Jesus is as the life of an head. We have not only life through Christ, but life in Christ; and not only life through Christ as mediator, but life in Christ as an head, conveying the same Spirit that is in himself to every member. So that if you will have the fountain of life, here it is. God is the first living, he is life itself. God conveyeth life to the mediator, God-man. He restores life to us, the life of sentence, and hath likewise conveyed the life of sanctification to us. Sometimes ye read both of God and Christ mediator. 'The Father liveth, and I live; and because I live, you shall live also,' John 14:19. But to come nearer to ourselves.

(3.) The life that cometh from Jesus, cometh first upon his own person, then by the second on us. Christ exercised this life first upon himself in raising himself from the grave. Christ as God raised himself as man from the grave, and so he is called the Lord of life; he hath the key of hell and of the grave; Lord of life, Lord of death, because being dead he as Lord of life raised himself again.

Now after he had exercised this power in giving his body life again, so by the same power by which he raised his own dead body, by the same he raiseth every Christian's. So that every Christian is raised and quickened by the life of Jesus; that is, by the power by which Jesus quickened himself being dead in the grave; and that is St Paul's meaning, Phil. 3:10, 'That we might find the power of his death, and the virtue of his resurrection.' There is virtue in Christ's resurrection. What is that? It is nothing but the quickening power whereby the body of Christ was raised out of the grave; and Paul desires to feel the power and virtue of that resurrection from the life of Jesus.

And therefore in particular, what is the virtue of Christ's resurrection, whereby Christ doth raise himself?

The virtue of it in us is, first of all, the same Spirit that raised his body out of the grave doth raise us out of any affliction, or quickens and strengthens us in it.

The argument is from the greater to the lesser. If Christ hath such an almighty power to quicken his own body when it is dead, hath not he power to quicken and strengthen a man in any poor and miserable condition in this world? Doubtless he hath; and therefore Paul desires the virtue of this in all his troubles and dying. And so the life of Jesus is manifested to a man in trouble, when he findeth divine power supporting him above nature in any trouble, or else bringing him out of that condition to a glorious one. Take a man in any uncomfortable condition of soul, perplexed, deserted, cast down by sense of sin: he may be raised to the divine power of Christ to comfort, and to stand stronger by his falls, grow better by his sins.

And because death is the consummation of all trouble, the life of Jesus is manifested there, when our bodies are in the grave, as Rom. 8:11, 'If the Spirit, that raised Jesus from the grave, be in us,' the same shall raise up our bodies when they be turned to dust and rottenness.

So then, in a word, the life of Jesus is made manifest in us, when we find this life powerful in the midst of all our worst conditions, supporting us in our falls, and making us better and more comfortable afterward; and at length the spiritual life that raised him from the grave, shall raise up our bodies to be conformable to his glorious body now in heaven. St Paul was content to suffer the dyings of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in him; that is, the power of Jesus. To add another thing.

(4.) It is not only a manifestation of the divine power in our falls and raising us from the grave by the life of Jesus, but withal he infuseth a

life to every one; he sanctifieth the soul and body, and worketh the same impression in others that is in him; that is, his life. When he is meek, we are framed to be meek; he obedient, we are framed to be obedient; he humbled, we are framed to be humbled; he is good and holy, we are framed to be answerable. This is the life of Jesus. And the more we bear in our bodies the life of the Lord Jesus, the more we are like to Jesus, and fashioned to him.

Therefore it may be well called his 'power,' and his 'inward grace;' because it cometh from him, and it makes us like to him altogether, and it tendeth to Jesus. It is from Christ, and maintained by Christ, and it carrieth the soul to Christ, makes us like to Christ; therefore it is called the life of Jesus.

We all know life is a sweet thing. We desire it above all, and fear the contrary, death, above all. Now blessed is that mortification, that dying, that makes us partakers of the life of Jesus. If life is sweet, what is this life of Jesus? Alas! what is a life to the life of Jesus; that is, to the divine power shewed in us, which was shewed in him.

Use. You see then that dying to Jesus Christ makes way for the life of Christ. If we will live with Christ, then we must die first. You know all life springs from death, so the life of Christ springeth from death; his own life that he liveth, any spiritual life, it was after his death. And so spiritual life in us cometh after dying. The papists will have a life of their own; others will have power in corrupt nature; but there is no resurrection without death before; there must be dying before there is a living.

If we will feel the life of Christ, we must be content to carry bodies dying to Christ. If we will have strength and power and joy, and the presence of Christ, then endure the dying of the Lord Jesus. Endure

whatsoever he will please to exercise us withal. And if we carry his dyings, we shall be sure to be partakers of his life.

Use 2. I beseech you, consider whether we be partakers of this life, strength, and power, and grace, and comfort. And let us be content then with any condition in the world wherein we may have communion with Christ by anything, that we may be subject to Christ; to be poor that we may be rich with Christ; to die to all, that so we may live to Christ; to be nothing to all others, that so we may be all in all to Christ. By dying to Christ we lose perhaps health, but we gain it in strength; we may lose countenance and friend, we gain it in spiritual things. God takes nothing from his children, but he giveth better in a better kind. And happy is that parting that is recompensed in an higher kind; happy is that death that is made good by a better life; happy that self-denial that is made up in Christ; happy that discomfort that is made up with comfort in Christ; and therefore let us not be against any suffering, fear nothing that God may call us to in this world; no, although death itself. Life with Christ is better incomparably than anything we lose. Our life is but a dying life, take it at the best; die we must. Now if we die suffering afflictions, which are the passage to life, why then there is a benefit made of necessity. We owe to God a death by nature, and now we get an advantage by anything we suffer for Christ's sake. For we have a hundred fold for anything we suffer in this world. It is hard to persuade this reason to flesh and blood, but they that find experience in it once, as Christians do in sufferings, they find peace and comfort from the presence of Christ's Spirit in their souls; they know what a benefit it is to suffer for Christ's sake, though with loss of anything in this world. Would Saint Paul have wanted those whippings and imprisonments, or wanted his comforts of Christ's presence? Would the martyrs have wanted that sweet comfort they had for present life? Surely they had it offered, they might have entertained it if they

would, but they would not. And if glimpses of glory, the little life derived to us now, supporteth under the troubles of the world, what is the 'exceeding weight of glory' reserved for us in another world? We can soon fathom and compass the things we suffer. We know what contempt meaneth, and poverty meaneth, but the life in this world passeth understanding. 'The peace of God passeth understanding,' Philip. 4:7, and 'is joy unspeakable and glorious,' 1 Peter 1:8. Therefore if there be a measure and narrow measure of trouble in this world, and that there be inward peace and glory immeasurable, then we be gainers here, setting aside consideration of heaven.

Therefore, I beseech you, let us be willing to undergo anything God shall call us to; for,

(1.) We shall find a divine energy of God's Spirit, which we never perhaps had before, nor ever shall have hereafter. Therefore fear nothing God shall call us to. The comforts of God's Spirit, from the life of Christ manifested in the hearts of his children, are above the course of nature, for it is an high life. The life of Christ is above the life of reason or sense. Therefore suppose troubles lie in sense, the large peace and enlargement of spirit is above them all.

Now as the life of reason is above the life of sense, so the life of grace is above all conditions whatsoever. No inferior subordinate condition can prejudice the life of grace and comfort. Therefore if all tyrants in the world conspire to make a man miserable, they vex his outward life, but there is a life of Jesus, and they cannot hinder the influence of grace and comfort to the soul. They cannot hinder the inward peace of inward joy, they be comforts of an higher rank. And therefore if ever God calleth us to stand in a good cause, for justice, for religion, never go off: we shall have comforts of an higher rank.

(2.) Consider, the worst they can do is, to take this life of ours, which we cannot keep long. These things be easy to be known, for matter of understanding, but hard to practise upon occasion; therefore we ought to think of them beforehand, and to labour more and more, persuaded of the love of God in Christ. And to see the life of Christ quickening them to all holy actions and duty, this is a spiritual life. As Christ, when he rose, never dieth more, so he that hath this spiritual life hath an eternal life, he never dieth more. When Christ begins to quicken our souls by joining our spirits with his Spirit, that conjunction is everlasting. And it is nearer after death than before; when death separates the soul from the body, then cometh the conjunction of the soul to Christ. Therefore labour after the spiritual life that makes us happier and happier still. The longer we live the nearer we are to Christ, and when we die nearest of all. Labour to feel the power of Christ's Spirit quickening our spirit, putting life into them, vigour into them, beauty on them, strength into them by his Holy Spirit.

(3.) Again, when the body is severed from the life of the soul, we see how deformed it is, how stiff and inactive it is; we cannot endure the sight of our dearest friend if life be gone. If the life of Christ be severed from our souls, what carrion souls have we to God. There is no beauty on the soul, no strength to duty. But now if we enter upon the first degree of life here, and find the beginning of it in altering and changing our natures, we are sure to leave\* farther degrees of it in our death, and the consummation of it at our resurrection; then body and soul shall enjoy the same life that Jesus doth now. But the scope of the apostle, which I desire you mainly to remember, is this, that you should fear nothing; nothing can befall us, though never so grievous to the outward man.

(4.) I add, because we shall experimentally feel the life of Christ manifested to us. It is that that makes a Christian. Experience is the life [of] a Christian. What is all knowledge of Christ without experience, but a bare knowledge, if the power that raised Christ's body raise not our souls? This is to know Christ to purpose, to know the virtue of Christ. We hear that Christ is powerful to quicken his own body. You hear that Christ is gracious, and good, and full of comfort; but what is this unless we feel it in ourselves? It is the experimental knowledge of Christ, and of the life of Christ, that doth us good, and makes us abound in all things. I suffer bonds, saith the apostle, for the gospel, but I am not ashamed, Rom. 1:16. Why? 'I know whom I have believed.' He felt the power of Christ in all his tribulations and afflictions. When we find by experience Christ is a quickening Spirit, hath quickened our souls to grace, comforts, peace, joy in our worst condition, then we know Christ to purpose, and then are fit to be carried through all afflictions of the world, and beyond all, and above all, to bear us through all things we meet with in the world between us and heaven. The life of Christ being a divine life, without a little experience of it, all is to no purpose. And a little of this beareth down all that stands between us and glory.

## **VERSE 10**

Always bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus,  
that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our bodies

The apostle, as before we have heard, labours to vindicate the credit of the gospel, and the ministry of it, preventing all objections that carnal men might make from the trouble that usually accompanieth both the preaching and profession of the blessed truths of God. And



he setteth it down by way of opposition and contrariety. He grants all that the adversary can say, and then sheweth on the contrary how God is present graciously in the midst of the troubles of his children. And this in five particulars.

1. 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed.'

2. 'Perplexed, yet not in despair.'

3. 'Persecuted, yet not forsaken.'

4. 'We are cast down, yet not destroyed altogether.' Every [one] of these is worse than [the] other. The waters of trouble do arise, but as the waters of trouble do arise, so comforts arise in every one, especially in the fifth, which is the worst of all.

5. 'Always bearing about in our bodies the dying of our Lord Jesus.' It is true, yet for all that 'the life of Jesus is made manifest in our bodies,' beside these unspeakable comforts that are preserved for religion in the world to come, God doth not desert his children nor his cause even in this. It is a happy condition when they be at the worst; so that the blessed apostle, though he had something in the flesh to discourage him that he had no better in him than nature, yet notwithstanding, he had something whereby he was encouraged, whereby he should be able to retort all upon any that should object anything in religion to his discouragement; a blessed art and skill which we should all learn, not to look altogether upon the grievances, but consider likewise what is in our condition wherein we may be comforted; nay, more comfort if we have spiritual eyes than grounds of discouragement. God is gracious; he never taketh anything from his children but he makes it up in a better kind.

We came the last day to the beginning of the 10th verse. 'We bear about in our bodies the dyings of the Lord Jesus'; the end of it is, 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.'

God afflicts not any one of his children but he makes it up by a gracious and blessed recompence; and what he takes away he maketh up; and in what measure the outward man decayeth by mortification, in that measure, in a more excellent kind, he makes it up in the life of Jesus; and what is the decay of the life of nature, or the life of condition, that stands in riches, and pleasures, and honours, suitable to the growth in a life of a higher kind, the life of Jesus?

'We always bear in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus.'

The words are a yielding to that objection that might be made concerning the affliction of the outward man. It is true, 'we bear in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus.' We spake of that first part the last day.

That is, such afflictions whereby we are conformed to Christ, not only which Christ permits and suffers, and which are like to the dyings of Christ, and conformable to him, which is called the mortification of Christ and the dying of the Lord Jesus, but also such a dying wherein we have the Lord Jesus to be partners with us, and which is for his sake, and whereby we are framed to be like to him, and conformed to his image.

Obs. Whatsoever we suffer for Christ's sake, we have Christ a partner with us in it. Even as by virtue of communion with him we die with him and rise with him, so by virtue of communion with us he suffers with us and dieth with us. He was stoned in Stephen, he was beheaded in Paul, he was reproached in Moses. Christ suffers in all

those that suffer for him. There is that near communion between Christ and his church. And therefore it is the mortification\* of Christ, because he bears part with his children in it, and likewise because we are framed thereby to be like unto him. For, beloved, not to say any more in this argument, there must be a great deal of alteration in the outward man before it will be like Christ. Our flesh and outward man is so tainted with original corruption, that there must be a great deal of change to fashion it to be like to the pure nature of Christ. Ye know the nature that Christ took upon him. It was an afflicted nature, but a human nature, before it was a glorious nature in heaven. And so likewise this nature of ours, this outward man, before it can be a glorious nature, must be a human nature, it must be an afflicted nature. For sin hath eaten so deeply into our natures, that there needs, as it were, a spirit of burning to consume and waste the corruption that is in us; and therefore it is called the mortification\* of Jesus, because by it we are conformable to Jesus in our natures and dispositions, by little and little, till at length our bodies and souls be for ever conformable to him in the heavens, death being the accomplishing of mortification.

And then again, the mortification of Jesus is such a mortification whereby we are content our bodies should be like the body of Christ on earth, which is in all hardship, labour, affliction, weariness; and all God's people have such a spirit, all that come to heaven have such a spirit. They are not so dainty that their bodies should be better used than the body of Christ. Christ took upon him our flesh and our miserable condition, he took a nature subject to pain and labour. He took not our nature as in Adam, impassible, that could not suffer, but he took the weakness of our nature, and in our nature went about doing good, hungry, and thirsty and weary, and taking a great deal of pains; and shall any man that is a member of Christ be so dainty and delicate as not to be content to have his body like as Christ's body

was? And therefore, the more that any man by Christ's Spirit is content, his body should take pains in any calling to do good, and the more he is content to suffer ill in doing good, the more he carrieth the mortification and dying of the Lord Jesus in him. And, beloved, so soon as ever a man is become a Christian, his life is no more his own; his health, his liberty is Christ's, not his own. Self-denial is the first lesson. There is a hatred, a not loving of anything in comparison of Christ, even of life itself, and whatsoever stands in the way; and therefore we must be content to be partakers of Christ's sufferings, that our bodies should be so used as Christ was; we must give up life and liberty and all to Christ; and that is 'the dying of the Lord Jesus.' This we shewed more largely upon the last day; but I will now specially insist on the end and use of all this, 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.'

You see there is nothing lost by the dying of the Lord Jesus. It is made up in a better kind, being for this end, 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.' This is God's end, and this is Christ's end, and this is Paul's end. It is both the effect and issue that cometh of the dying of our bodies, and it is the end intended by Christ, who will use our bodies in his service, so that his life may be made manifest in us. St Paul's end is suitable to Christ's in bearing the afflictions of the outward man, that the life of Christ may be made manifest in him; for being once in Christ, Christ's aims and ends are our aims and ends; and therefore saith Paul, we are content to 'bear in our bodies the dyings of the Lord Jesus,' so this be the issue of it, 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest.' Christ will have this end, and it is his end. He taketh away nothing but he makes it up in a better kind to the better man. It shall be supplied by a life of the Spirit, which shall be perfected in a life of glory in heaven.

Now what is this life of Jesus?

There is a life of Jesus whereby he liveth himself, as God, and as mediator, God-man. There is a life of Jesus whereby Christ was upheld while he lived upon the earth; for that Spirit that quickened the dead body of Jesus in the grave, that Spirit carried Christ along in all his lifetime, freed him from all dangers till he had done his work. There was a Spirit of life in Jesus that upheld him, and strengthened him to do the great work he took in hand, till at length he did a greater work than all before, that is, raised up his dead body. So that beside the life of Jesus enjoyed in heaven, a glorious life, there was a life that Jesus led on earth, which was carried by the Spirit, and acted by the Spirit of God in all things he did as mediator, God-man. And there is a life that he hath now in heaven, which is either the life that he enjoyeth himself and as our head, which we shall be conformed to when we die; for we shall enjoy the same life in our proportion and measure that he doth in heaven, the glorious life which is the life of Christ our head; that is, that life of Christ which is now hid, as the apostle saith, 'our life is hid with Christ in God,' Col. 3:3; or else the life of Jesus is that quickening power which comes from Christ unto us.

Not to speak of higher matters, how God is life, which be speculations, not to the present purpose, the life of Jesus here, it is not the life of Jesus as it is and was in himself, but the life of Jesus as it is conveyed to us. The life of Jesus is derived to every Christian.

Not to speak of the life of justification, which is a life of sentence, and not here principally intended, though it be the spring of all the rest, for we are dead in law, and we must be quickened by sentence. We are dead in our sins. Guilt is upon us, and the guilt must be removed in justification. We must live in law, and in sentence, and in absolution. God must forgive our sins for Christ's sake, and remove the guilt of all death, before we can have inward grace, which is the

life of sanctification. Though it be not here meant, it is supposed, as that which leadeth to all the rest. But here is meant the life of grace in us which is from the work and function of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit of every Christian. As there is one soul in the head and all the members, so there is one Spirit in Christ and all the members, and one spiritual life in Christ and all the members. Now this Spirit of Christ conveyeth to us the Spirit of life, and Christ is the life of our life, the soul of our soul, the union with our spirits. For even as the body liveth by fellowship and communion with the soul—for what is life but the vigour of the soul in the body by reason of union?—so doth our souls and bodies live a spiritual life by union and fellowship with Christ, [which] is the vigour of the Spirit in our souls by virtue of Christ. And therefore that spiritual life by which we live here is the life of Christ, not only exemplary, because it is like Christ's life, but by way of efficiency. Christ is the head of it, and conveyeth it to us. There is no better comparison than to express it by the life of the body which hath communion from the soul. The soul hath a distinct life of its own. It hath a life when it is out of the body. It hath reason, it hath discourse, it wills, it understandeth, it joyeth, it delighteth, yet notwithstanding, distinct from the body. That is not a life that it liveth in the body that is severed.\* The body's life is that that is communicated by conjunction and communion. So the life of Jesus [is] not the life that he liveth in himself, but in this place specially, the life that we have by communion and friendship with him.

And this life that we have, the life of Jesus, it admitteth of a double consideration.

First of all, it is that habitual life as we may call it, that inward frame of divine nature which is in us Christians, which raiseth us above other men, as other men by a rational life are raised above other

creatures; that temper and composure of soul whereby they mind heavenly things, and have a supernatural end and aim in all things, have enlargements of understanding, enlargements of will and affections, larger souls than others. Narrowspirited men they are that are carried only to the things of this life; and this is a constant life, by reason of the constant dwelling of the Spirit in us, as there is constant life in the body by the constant dwelling of the soul in it. And it is besides that, a perpetual influence of life from Christ, especially in dangerous and difficult times, as Saint Paul speaks of here. It is a power above nature conveyed to uphold and carry us along through all dangers till we come to heaven; so that it is a life first in us, and then the life of Christ drawing out the life in us to all kind of grace, and addeth a divine strength.

For, beloved, it is not that life that is in us doth all the great matters, but it is the life of Christ as it joineth with the life of grace, supporteth it, strengthens it, draweth it forth, increaseth it. For the life that is in us it is a created thing, it is a new creature, but a creature; but the life that maintaineth a Christian, that upholds him specially in the dangerous matter, ay, in the 'dyings of the Lord Jesus,' in great difficulty, that is not a thing created in us, but the life of Jesus as it hath influence from him, and is conveyed from him by a perpetual kind of derivation. For if troubles grow, then the quickening power must increase with them, and habitual grace in us must be raised, and strengthened, and quickened; and besides the graces formerly in us, there must be an addition of strength from the spring, still more and more. In natural life we do not only live in God, but move in God: 'In him we live, and move, and have our being,' Acts 17:28. So in regard of spiritual life, we not only live by Christ, but our motion and the prompting of our power being sanctified to any particular action, it is from the quickening power of Christ, which is a quickening Spirit quickening us. Sometimes this

quickenings power must be shewed in way of strength, when the trouble is great that the strength may be suitable; sometimes by way of comfort, when the discouragement is great; sometimes by way of joy and peace, when the discouragement is to assault us with the contrary. So that perpetually there must be quickening power in our lives from Christ our quickening head, besides the habitual, constant grace we carry about with us always. We know, in the body, if there be obstructions that hinder the spirits from the brain, whence motions come, there is an apoplexy or lethargy, causing a cessation of motion. So if there be ceasing of the quickening powers continually derived from Christ our head, there would be an apoplexy or lethargy in our spiritual life, and a kind of death. Therefore when we speak of the life of Christ, we must not understand the life that he lived; 'because I live, therefore you shall live also;' but to think of the habitual grace wrought in ourselves, whereby we are conformed to Christ, and to think of a quickening power that Christ sheweth continually, he being the Sun of this world. Though the things of this world, as plants and the like [grow], yet let the sun withdraw his vigour and efficacy, and they seem to die presently. The light of the air ceaseth when the sun ceaseth to shine. So besides that, in us habitually and continually, there must be influence of Christ into us answerable to the exigencies and occasions a Christian hath, either of peace, or joy, or comfort of some portion of spiritual life or other. Now this is called the life of Jesus, because it is radicated in him originally, as the 'second Adam.' We all derive it from him. The grace and quickening power we have continually, it is from him, the glory we look for is from him. He is the 'first-born' to whom we are predestinate to be conformed every way, in grace here, and glory hereafter; and therefore it is called the life of Jesus. That is specially herein meant. Both these lives, the inward frame of spiritual life and grace in us, and likewise a perpetual influence specially discovered and manifested then, when



there is most need of it, in times of trouble, with the accomplishment of it in heaven. The life of Christ is manifested in his children here when they stand in most need of grace and comfort, and it is manifested continually to the day of judgment, when the life of Jesus shall indeed be manifested to the full, as it is manifested in him in heaven; for as Christ is glorious himself in heaven, so his mystical body shall be like himself too.

I need speak no more for the unfolding of the meaning of the words. The points considerable are these,

Obs. 1. That Christ is the foundation of all spiritual life that is in us. He is the 'second Adam' that conveyeth all that is spiritually good. As the first Adam conveyeth all that is spiritually ill, it was his office so to do, to convey life. 'Because I live, you shall live also,' John 14:19; and he saith, John 10:10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have life abundant.' Christ came that we might have life, and that we might have abundance of life at the length. We have it by degrees here, but there is abundance of life preserved for us, such abundance as he enjoyeth himself in the heavens. So that Christ as the 'second Adam' conveyeth spiritual life to us, as the common root of all believers, as the 'first Adam' was the common root of all mankind, but more peculiarly by virtue of office as an head. As the head conveyeth spirit and life to all parts of the body, so doth Christ convey spiritual life to all his.

It is the end of his coming and incarnation, to procure life of sentence and reconciliation, which is the life of justification and freedom from condemnation, and the life of acceptation to life everlasting. He died that he might expiate\* God, and get the lives of men by getting them to be acquitted from sin, and entitled to heaven; and thereupon he came to convey (as head unto all his members) life

like his own, that the Spirit that is in him may quicken all his members. Therefore he hath taken upon him the sweet relation of an head, of a root, the Sun of righteousness, to shew that he is a powerful head, a powerful root, a powerful husband that can alter and change by virtue of the Spirit of God, that he hath in abundance, all that belong to him, and be knit to him; and therefore our spiritual life is in Christ.

He first exercised this life on his own body by quickening that. As he was mightily declared to be the Son of God, by raising his own body, Eph. 1:19, 20, so he will be mightily declared to be the head of all his, by raising the bodies of his children out of the grave, and by raising them out of troubles, which are partial deaths, little deaths. So that all spiritual life comes from Christ, from union and communion with Christ.

Use. Therefore we must labour to have union and communion with Christ strengthened by all means; by hearing, and by the sacraments, and by all means. For all our life is derived and fetched from Christ, as a 'second Adam,' who by virtue of his office deriveth life to all that be his. The more we know of Christ, the more experimentally we feel the power of Christ, the more we live.

Obs. 2. For the second point: As all life is from Christ, so (which is the main point of the text) this life is most discovered in afflictions and evil times, in the dying of the outward man.

Beloved, both the spiritual lives I speak of, both the inward frame of grace is made more manifest, and likewise the power of Christ in upholding a weak creature in such a condition; for all grace shineth most, and appears most in trouble; as obedience, courage, faith, love to God, love to others, love of the truth. I need not stand to particularise. And therefore the life of Christ is manifested in the

decays of the outward man, whether by outward persecutions, or by sicknesses, and the like, that is the time of the discovery of grace; and likewise it is the time of the discovery of the power that Christ exercised and shewed, the divine power that God declared in raising his body, that is, the time wherein he sheweth that power in all his.

Reason 1. The reason is, things are best known by opposition. The decay of the outward man is a foil as it were to grace, to make it appear more clear and glorious, and the weakness of the outward man is a means to discover more the power of God's Spirit, and the power of the life of Christ in such a weak body; for a weak man, or a weak woman, or a weak child, to be able to stand up for the truth, here is divine power shewed, as the martyrs did not only\* shew, but declare it gloriously. And for a sick body to believe, makes the soul glorious and comfortable. Here is divine power shewed more gloriously by reason of the opposition of the outward man.

Reason 2. And then again, in this time the soul itself uniteth itself more unto God, and to divine things; and therefore the life of Christ is more manifested, because there is a near union between Christ and the soul. For the soul gathers itself from the sphere, down to worldly things, as in times of prosperity, ease, and plenty, when the soul scatters and looseth itself in the creature. Now there is a sweetening power in that which is inflictive, to make the soul gather itself to God, to the fountain of life; and so it is a means sanctified by the Spirit of God to procure union with the Spirit of Christ; and therefore the life of Christ is then more manifested in the flesh.

Reason 3. And then these things that befall the outward man, they are as it were *removentia prohibentia*, they remove the hindrances of the life of Christians; for what hinders the life of Christ from appearing in us, but that our affections are eaten up with the world

and vanity, one way or other? For naturally we are not so vigorous in spirit when we have vigour in the outward man; and that which farther the life, and strength, and comfort of the outward man, will diminish the strength of the inward. It should not be so. It should be that the more vigorous in the outward man, the more vigorous we should be in the inward; but it is not so. Now suffering takes away that, when these be embittered by the cross, by some suffering that is against the feeling and sense of the outward man. Hereupon cometh a better relish of divine things, other things being embittered to the soul; and hereupon the soul, in times of any great pressure, doth hear with other ears, and doth see with other eyes heavenly things, and doth feel and judge after another manner than it did before. Take a man when he is under any thing that afflicts the outward man, for his body or condition, which are both called life, the life of body, and the life of condition, we shall fasten a few good things sooner on him than at another time. Speak ten times as much at another time, it shall have no passage, no entrance, but the state of all things without being made less delightful, his soul recovereth a spiritual taste, and relisheth heavenly company, and heavenly truths, as they be suggested by others or us. Experience sheweth this in David and other saints, and in every Christian; and therefore the blessed life of Christ, such a spiritual life as is in Christ, it is his most of all glorious and conspicuous, specially in times of afflictions and crosses.

Reason 4. And then another reason may be, that the point may be clear. God doth delight, and Christ delighteth to shew himself most glorious at such times, not only because his virtue and strength and power is most manifest then, but likewise out of tenderness to the condition of his children; for he sees they more need his presence, and they more need his immediate comforts. Then immediate comforts are specially desired of the soul. When outward comforts

are taken away, there is a sweeter communion with Christ in any trouble than at other times. No communion in prosperity for the most part that is so sweet to a Christian as at that time, for the soul knoweth then it is most acceptable to the soul. The soul stands in need of it. Therefore comforts are immediate to the soul at this time, and immediate comforts that come from the fountain are pure. When the comforts derived from friends and outward helps be all taken away, there must be immediate comforts, or else the soul will sink. And now Christ, out of love to his children, comes forth to them and joineth with their spirits more than at other times; so that the sweetest communion any man hath with Christ is at the worst times. The martyrs verified it abundantly, for they never had the comforts before that then they had; for Christ came into the dungeon and supported them with strength above nature; and all this is from the sweet love and mercy of Christ, that applied himself to the necessity of his children. These and the like reasons that the life of grace, the life of comfort, and the life derived immediately from Christ, is the most apparent in afflictions.

I will not press the point any further.

Use of trial. To make use of what is spoken. If it is true that there is a spiritual life, another life, and this is most manifested in affliction; how then shall we know whether we have this life of Christ or no? for Christ conveyeth a spiritual life to all his.

We will speak of the evidence of them both, whether is there a gracious frame of life in us from Christ or no.

If the life of Christ be not in us, beloved, we are stark dead in regard of a better life; and it is woeful to be in a dead condition. And therefore it behoveth us a little to take heed that we have the life of Christ, and if we have it, we may know it familiarly. I do but name

the heads. Because it is a word borrowed from the life of nature, you may know it from proportion to the life of nature. Where spiritual life is, there it is. As in the outward life you know there is sense and motion, appetite, and such like; so where the life of Jesus is, there be spiritual senses, eyes that see spiritual things, a taste that relishes spiritual things, a taste that can relish them above all other things, that can set the highest price upon the best things, that judgeth of things as they be. There is a spiritual taste and judgment suitable to the judgment of Christ. And so I might run through all the senses, if I would affect correspondency in this kind.\*

And as there is spiritual sense, so there is sensibleness. A natural life makes us sensible of any injury, of any comfort. So where there is the life of Jesus, it makes us sensible of anything that is suitable to nature, or contrary to it. Where there is life there is sympathy and antipathy; sympathy, agreement with what is suitable to nature, and antipathy to what is contrary. So where there is the life of Jesus, there is a sympathy with all things that are Jesus his stamp upon them, to spiritual things and spiritual persons, and an antipathy to the contrary.

And here is the ground why a godly man may be known by his hatred of sin, because it sheweth an antipathy; and antipathy sheweth the kinds of life. Sin is contrary to union and communion with Christ, for it is a dissolving and divorcing nature.

Now the soul that liveth by Christ, and knoweth sin to be of a divorcing and separating nature, to sever his soul from his head and life, and so to cause apoplexies and death itself, if it be not looked to in time, hereupon comes the soul to hate sin to the death, and to seek the death of sin by all means, because sin seeketh the death of the soul; for what is sin but a separation of the soul from Christ, and a

joining to the creature? Therefore wheresoever there is grace, there is antipathy to sin, not only as bringing damnation with it, but as contrary to the life of Christ; as every creature hath an antipathy to its enemy, as we see in doves and eagles; the dove is the prey. The tamer and wild creatures have an antipathy in them by nature. So the soul that hath the life of Christ hath an antipathy to sin. So far as the life of Christ prevaieth in him it must be so, for every life labours to preserve its being. We are bid to be wise as serpents, that wind and turn themselves about, that cover their heads and will suffer all manglings so the head be safe, because the life is in the head; so the Christian that hath the life of grace will endure anything, so the life of grace be not hurt. There be sympathies and antipathies, an inward joining to that that preserveth, and an inward hatred to that that is destructive; and therefore they that live in sin against conscience, that divideth between God and them, I cannot see how they can think of spiritual life; for the soul liveth, and is swallowed up in base pleasures and in the creature. Now if they had spiritual life, it would preserve itself from breaches and all dangers.

Let us not deceive ourselves. Christ came not to free us from damnation only, but as an head, to infuse spiritual life into us, and to live in us by his Spirit. He came not only to purchase a life of glory for us, but likewise to live in us by his Spirit; and if he overcome for us, he will overcome in us; if he hath a life for us, he will have a life in us. The life of Jesus must be manifested in us. And therefore take heed of joining in affliction, to any sin; for it doth divorce the soul from God, and joins it to the creature. And so the soul becomes fading like the creature, and cometh to nothing; and indeed it is worse than nothing, to be for ever in hell. It comes to that degree in misery that it would otherwise have had in happiness.

Creatures have their instincts. There is a natural instinct in every creature to run to that that feeds it, as lambs and other creatures as soon as ever they are born run; they know whither to go to suck, because that is ordained by nature for its preservation. So there is an instinct in the soul to carry it to that that feedeth and maintains it. Bees go naturally to the flowers by an instinct; so the spiritual soul that hath the life of Christ runs to whatsoever may feed and maintain that life.

I beseech you, therefore, not to speak of the outward actions that are objected to hypocrites. Look therefore to the sympathy and antipathy of your souls and your instincts. Whither doth the bent of the soul lead you? Wherewith do you preserve the inward man? How is the soul taken up? And this will discover the frame of the soul more than anything else. Every creature that hath life, hath an element wherein it is preserved above another place, as the fish in the sea, the birds in the air. So the element of a Christian is holy, he is piscis in aqva,\* when he is in other courses and company. He walketh by the Spirit, He liveth by the Spirit, and he walks in the Spirit. He liveth in the Spirit as in his element. So that spiritual things and good company is his element. Till in heaven, indeed, he is never in his centre, in his proper place till he is in heaven. But in the mean time his element here is in heaven on earth; that is, spiritual actions wherein he walks and solaceth himself, as fish in the sea, wherein he draweth in the breath that is suitable to his disposition. Ill company or evil hearts will not suit with that spiritual life; and by these ordinary resemblances we may judge a little of the frame of our spirits, whether they be living souls or no.

But to go a little higher.



The life of Jesus, as it riseth from Jesus, from as high as heaven, so it leadeth to Jesus. It makes the soul to look to Jesus, to look to Christ. It subordinateth all things unto Christ. It takes all things in the way as furtherances for Christ, and considers of his hindrances as they hinder the main, and of furtherances as they further the main. It looks on all things below, as they further and do hinder the main. It is a life bred from heaven, and aims at heaven, and cares for no more of these things than can stand with a spiritual and eternal state. It considers of things, and reasoneth of things, how doth this help or hinder the main? And when it doth anything it fetcheth reasons for it from Christ, and from heaven, and from the main end. As a man that hath life of reason, that is adorned with policy and wisdom, it considers of things as they help his state; or if he be a man of narrow apprehension, as the sot with his particular good, and goeth no higher. So a man that hath the life of Christ, hath a larger soul than any of these, for he hath a larger end, and an higher end, because he hath a higher light to discover that end. Light is the first thing in life, and that discovers greater things than any other man can apprehend. His spirit is too narrow for them. And when by a supernatural light he apprehends a glorious condition in heaven, he makes that his aim. And as he hath large aims, so he hath large affections, and nothing below can satisfy him, because his soul is enlarged by the life of grace, and by the life of the Spirit to see better into things, and to have better aims. Therefore let every man look what his ordinary aims are, whether he rest in any thing below, whether he maketh things below serviceable to greater things. If he delight in inferior things, he hath but a common life. Many think their conditions good, because they attend religion, but there is falsehood in that; for a man that hath not the life of grace, that makes the practice of religion serviceable to his base ends, he makes heavenly things serviceable to his ends; that is, out of self-love, because he would not be damned, or he would be so reputed, but he hath not the aim of spiritual actions:

he doth not spiritual things from a spiritual life, but from self-love, from a false principle within. Now where the life of Jesus is, it resteth not in anything but in Jesus, and makes all things serviceable to that. The skill of referring things to the main end is one main property of spiritual life.

Firstly, For a man may do the same thing, and yet from divers principles; one from flesh and blood, and vain-glory, and base ends, and the other from higher considerations, as men and beasts. A man hath a higher life than the other creature hath. Both may refresh themselves, but a man doth it as a man, and directs that strength of his to human actions. If he be a Christian, he directs not only human actions, but refers human actions and all to serve God in his place. So that he works like a man, though for the actions they be the same. So the shallow creatures that be determined to one, and have not latitude of reason to look to many things. Thus you see there is great difference between men and men.

Secondly, Men may do the same things, come to church, receive the sacrament. The one may have base, low ends, the other higher ends; nay, higher ends in civil actions than another in spiritual actions. For he doth holy actions with a carnal end; and the other having spiritual life, by virtue of that life carrieth his calling in the duties of it in a spiritual manner. I beseech you, therefore, let us examine our life of Jesus by the carriage of our souls towards Jesus; he never suffers us to rest in subordinate things. I might be very large on this point, but I will name no more.

Consider what setteth you on work in all things you do. There be things we call ἀυτόματα, 'things that be moved by art.' One would think they moved themselves; but they be moved by a weight, that is not seen presently, as in clocks and such like. In all frames of art that

move, one would think it is from themselves, but there is no principle of life in them; an external thing, a weight without, sets all the wheels a going. But in living creatures that have principles of life within them, something within them guideth their life and sets them a-going. So a Christian and another man, he that hath the life of Christ, from the life within him, he is set on work with his actions. The other man moveth to the same thing, but he moveth from an extrane[ous] principle. There is something or other that swayeth his course and biasseth his actions, which is outward and not spiritual: either freedom from outward troubles, or to hold correspondency with others. I beseech you, look to our motives and to our aims in all our actions, for these will best distinguish.

But that is not the life mainly intended by the apostle, but the life that is with\* him, flowing and having influence from Jesus, specially in hard conditions. 'The life of Jesus is manifested then.' That is, both the inward frame it sheweth itself then, and likewise the power that comes from Christ.

Now, how doth it appear that a man is upheld in every condition by a divine virtue, besides his inward frame of soul?

Beloved, when the state of spirit he is in is contrary to the outward condition and above it. When if a man looks to ordinary courses such a man should sink; and when he doth not, and that from supernatural principles and strength, that argueth there is a power in him above nature and above his own. As for a man in restraint, to have his soul at liberty; for a man disgraced in the world, to have a bold spirit to God-ward; for a man weak in outward shew, to have strong courage, forcible courage, that all the enemies of truth cannot daunt; when a man is pining away, and is nothing but skin and bones, yet to have a heavenly soul that is in heaven before its time,

and altogether in heavenly conversation; when the outward man is in great pain, and all confidence is to be cast away in regard of outward hopes, yet he is strong, and assures himself of a better condition afterward, and the very faith and hope, casting anchor in heaven, though they be not seen or felt, yet there is that power in spiritual things, laid hold on by faith, waited on by hope, that it supports a soul in such a condition; so that if it were not for these heavenly supports, by the Spirit of God, it would sink. If thou wouldst have the life of Jesus manifested, compare thy condition and thy strength. When a man can master all conditions, when a man can master imprisonment, disgrace, restraint, weakness, anything, from considerations above nature, and strength together with consideration; for the Spirit worketh not only by reason, but by an inward strength, it sheweth there is something in a man above nature, that there is in him a life of Jesus. When nothing shall stand between a man and heaven, neither fears of great ones, nor frowns, nor hopes of preferment; when nothing below can stand in a man's way to heaven, but he will break through all by an invincible courage, it argueth he hath a frame of spirit above his own. There is not only a frame of grace, but a spirit of strength, to carry him through all conditions whatsoever. As St Paul, 'I am able to do all things through Christ that strengthens me,' Philip. 4:13. 'I have learned to want and to abound,' to do all things through Christ that strengthens me, that supplieth me with perpetual strength from above.

Beloved, in a Christian, especially in evil times, there is more than a man, there is more than a holy man, there is something that floweth from this head, Christ, that doth administer supplies of comfort, and of peace, and of joy, and of friends, whereby he is carried through all. By these and such like particularities, we may discern whether there be the life of Jesus manifested in us or no.

Use 2. Of exhortation. Beloved, let us labour by all means therefore to have this spiritual life; to have a frame, to have the divine nature stamped upon our nature, the frame of grace; and let us not rest on that, but labour for a perpetual and continual stream of life from Christ, the fountain and the spring.

I speak of this the rather, because there is a main defect in this, and the cause of many foils.\* But our hearts be good, and we trust to the frame of life and grace that is in us, without looking to the supernatural spring and fountain of all grace out of ourselves; and we think to-morrow shall be as to-day, and by the same strength we do to-day, we shall stand against temptations to-morrow. Beloved, it will not be. There must be supplies not only of new strength, but also of greater strength, to new conflicts, to new oppositions, and new temptations. For as that strength will not carry a great burden that carrieth a little, they that carry burdens put forth greater strength to carry more than others. So in Christianity, when we meet with a strong temptation, we must not think to overcome it without setting upon it with spiritual strength. Lord, I need divine strength, else I shall sink under this temptation; this cross is too heavy for me, and so not going about to oppose any extraordinary thing with strength of nature, for nature will do nothing in great matters. It will make us do things comely to the outward eye. Nor common grace will not make us able to set upon great matters, but we must have a supply from grace, from heaven. And therefore a Christian is a depending creature. None is so dependent or independent. Certainly none so independent on the creature as a Christian, especially when he carrieth Christ in his heart by faith; but then he is continually depending upon Christ the head, who is the treasure and spring of all spiritual life, to convey to us on all occasions. 'Without me you can do nothing,' John 15:5, much less suffer without me. And therefore, I beseech you, let it be a rule for us in our ordinary course, when we

set upon any duty, withstand any temptation, conflict with any corruption, when we are to enjoy any prosperity above the common model of grace, to enjoy it without surfeiting of pride, security, or the sins that accompany prosperity. Consider with ourselves, Have I a frame of grace enough to set upon this? No, I have not. Surely that must be, there must be a power from Christ, a perpetual drawing of strength from Christ to master this, to meet with this, to bring it under. As a Christian is lord of all conditions, of prosperity and adversity, but not by an ordinary frame of grace, but that together with a divine strength and power, which is here called the life of Jesus, specially manifested by dependency. So let the life of a Christian be continually dependent. Peter by his ordinary graces could say, 'Though all forsake thee, yet will not I,' Mark 14:31. But that he may see he stands by his own strength, he falls foully. And why do so many fall foully, but because they undertake things with their own strength, with former strength, and not with dependency, or a supply suitable to present necessity, and thereby they learn to stand by falling? God sanctifieth their slips and falls, to teach them better dependency for time to come.

I beseech you, therefore, let this be a direction how to guide our lives; and that we may depend on Christ for strength in all courses, take heed of offending him, and grieving his Spirit, [take heed] that he suspendeth not his divine power. That strength obstructs this life, to call it home to himself, and then to leave us to our own principles, and then we fall presently. The life of a Christian is perpetually watchful, 'to work out faith with fear and trembling,' Philip. 2:12. How? Not doubting of your salvation, but fear for offending Christ, 'for he giveth the will and the deed;' he giveth will to supply, and the deed to perform. And it is 'according to his good pleasure,' Philip. 2:13. You stand upon your good behaviour. If you work not your salvation with a holy jealousy over your corruptions, and with a holy

trembling, he may suffer you to fall. Therefore consider our dependency is not in ourselves. Now, since the fall, God will not trust us with our own strength, but will lay up all in Christ. Therefore take occasion to go to Christ, and that he may be our friend, and have his Spirit, as he doth all by his Spirit as the sun doth all by his beams; take heed of grieving the Spirit, and giving it occasion to suspend its influency of grace and influence of comfort. For it is another thing than it is taken, to be lively Christians. We should not only labour to have lives, but to be lively, to have the life of Christ manifested in us, and not only for crosses; in that time God preserveth great comforts; but labour in time of prosperity for the life of Jesus. There is little life of Jesus in times of peace. Security deadeth the life of Jesus. Sins of plenty, and sins of long peace, stick upon us, that there is not that vigour, that liveliness of Jesus in us that ought to be.

Now our endeavour should be to labour after an increase of this inward frame, and together with increase of grace in us, increase of continual dependency by faith, which fetcheth all from Christ. And why should we labour for it? For the credit of Christian profession. What a glory is it to have a company of lively professors, in whom the life of Jesus is manifested, that are above all conditions, that are thralled with no condition, that can bring under all things, master their desires! 'The spiritual man judgeth all things,' 1 Cor. 2:15, subdueth all things. He orders them so that he maketh them serviceable to his own ends. And what a glorious thing is it to be like a lion, bold in all conditions, to be afraid of nothing but of offending God! And then fear and tremble because God may suspend his Spirit. A wicked man may fear everything, but he feareth not God, which is to be feared above all. But a true Christian is a lord, a master above all other things, only he feareth to offend God, whereby this spiritual life may be obstructed. Now in regard it is such an excellent thing to be not only a living Christian but a lively Christian, and that it is for

the honour of religion to be so, let us labour more and more for it, specially considering we know not with what dangers we may encounter, with what temptations and corruptions. Having now the life of Jesus, it will be manifested more and more till it end in glory. Is it not an excellent thing to have that in us, to have such a conquering principle in us, to have the Spirit of Christ in us, not only a frame of grace, but a Spirit enabling us, and acting us, and carrying us through all conditions?

Then this life of Jesus is a life that sets us in an order above all other lives. There is a great latitude of life from that plant, the powerful life\* to God, which is life itself. What a gradation is there of life! There is life of sense, and life of reason, and the spirit. Now a Christian that hath the life of Jesus, which is a spiritual life here, and will end in a glorious life in heaven, sets him in a glorious rank above all lives under him; for it makes him one with Jesus. The Spirit of Christ acteth in him, loveth in him, joys in him, delights in him, carrieth him through actions, bears him through crosses. Even as the soul acts his body, so the life of Jesus acts him, and sets him in a higher rank. Indeed, a spiritual man is as much above another man, as another man above another creature.

What excellency is there, you will say, of a man that hath the life of Jesus in him? What excellency! Beloved, this life makes him eternal. All other excellencies are but 'grass, and the flower of grass,' as the apostle speaks, 'but the word of life, begotten by the word, endures for ever,' 1 Pet. 1:25. Spiritual life endures for ever. He that believeth in Christ endures for ever; for it is an everlasting life. All other things perish and fall. Put case they be the flower of grass. The flower perisheth before the grass. They be of shorter continuance. Wit, and greatness, and honour, and the like, they are of shorter continuance than life. Life is but grass, and all the ornaments of life are but



flowers of the grass. These be fading things, and they must all end in death. All honours are determined in death. All excellencies lie in the dust. And we must rise up equally, all kings and subjects, great and small. But this life is a life that endures for ever, and therefore called an everlasting life. Then we live to purpose, and never till then, when we live the life of Jesus, when that is manifested in our souls, that is, *vita vitalis*; the other is, βίος ἄβιος, a life not worthy the name of life. The conditions of life, riches and nobility, which is a condition of life, all have their end; but this life of Jesus is begun in Christ, and ends in glory. And therefore it is worth labour to grow in it more and more, to have it more and more manifested in us above all conditions and life whatsoever.

I beseech you, let us not pass the time as careless, but labour to have something in us above nature, to have the life of Jesus to quicken our rational life, to sanctify all. The life of Jesus hinders us not of anything, but ennobles all other excellencies. A man that hath the life of Jesus may be as wise as he will, as learned as he will, he may be noble, this doth make him more noble, it doth dignify all. It is a diamond set in gold; it addeth excellency to all other excellencies. A Christian is truly noble. A man that hath the life of Jesus is truly rich, truly great, truly beautiful; he hath the image of Christ stamped upon the soul, and hath excellencies added to all other excellencies.

It is an unworthy thing that we should pass over this life, which is altogether to get into Christ, and to die before we begin to live. How many live a natural rational life, and live in an outward condition perhaps great in the world, and then all endeth in death; and they be out of the world before they come in. Here they come, here they live, and hence they go, and never do the work for which they came; which is, to get out of nature and to grow in grace; to get into the spirit of the life of Christ, who is the life of a Christian, the sun that

quicken all. Instead of this, they go on from day to day, from year to year, and so die before they begin to live. And thousands do this in the bosom of the church.

This is a fearful condition. Therefore let this be the conclusion of this point.

Never rest till we find ourselves in a condition above nature, till we find ourselves in such a state that none can come to but a child of God. Let us enter into eternal life while we live. For none shall be transported into heaven that is not engrafted into Christ here. This is the entrance of heaven. Therefore begin the life here, get into the church here, else it shall never be obtained hereafter. Labour for more and more experiment,\* that Christ is in us, that at the day of judgment Christ may know us, by his own stamp, and by his own life, that the life that raised him up out of the grave, may raise our bodies out of the dust. For this is our comfort we may have from the life of Jesus, efficacy to quicken us to duty. We shall find the life of Jesus to quicken us from troubles, and at the consummation of all, we shall find the Spirit that cometh from him powerfully able to raise our dead bodies. If the Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead be in us, it will raise up our bodies likewise. Indeed, I should never satisfy myself almost in this subject, but that the time is past, and you may in your own meditations work better upon that I have said, than I can by any strength of mine press at this present.

## VERSE 11

For we which live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

The holy apostle, by a more than ordinary wisdom, by a spirit enlightened from heaven, doth not only take benefit from the weak estate he was in with his fellows, but makes use likewise of such objections as were made against the profession of religion by such as looked on the outside. He grants to all that might be objected tending to the outward disparagement of religion, but then he retorteth all upon them, and makes a gracious and comfortable use of it. As you may see in these two verses: 'We bear in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, but the life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal bodies.' Of the tenth verse, we spake something largely the last day: 'Always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus, that,' &c.

We will now proceed to the next verse, which is but an illustration and exposition of the former. For what he said before, 'we bear in our bodies the dying of Christ,' here he saith, 'we are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake.' And where he saith there 'that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our bodies,' here by way of exposition and illustration, 'that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal life.' So that it is but an illustration and exposition of the former verse.

'For we which live,' saith he; we apostles and ministers, and it is true of all Christians, we which live, while we live, are in some sense always delivered from\* death for Jesus' sake.

Here is the circumstance of time, added to the condition they were in, and the aggravation of what they were delivered to. 'We are always delivered to death,' 'we are delivered to death, and always,' and 'for Jesus' sake.' These three things are a little considerable before we go further.

The condition is 'deliverance to death,' the circumstance 'always,' and 'for Jesus' sake.'

Obj. How could they die, being alive?

Ans. I answer, we are delivered to death, because God, by his permission, gave them over to Satan ruling in the children of obedience, to molest, and threaten, and deliver them, to death, in regard of the designing of cruel men of them to death, on all advantages they could take against them. And likewise delivered to death in their preparation for death continually, for they could make no other account every day they rose but that they might die before they slept again. And in this respect, they and every Christian ought to be a dying man to be delivered to death.

God is ready to permit them to die when they may honour him. God is not prodigal of our lives. When our lives may save his truth, he will permit our lives into the mercy of merciless men, and they have bloody minds. Their malice is more than their power; their cruelty is more than their ability oftentimes, but their hearts are altogether bloody. And so a Christian is always prepared for the worst, as the apostle saith. For, beloved, as soon as ever a Christian becomes a Christian, the first lesson in religion is self-denial. And in what respect must he deny himself? In regard of goods or honour? Not only so, but in the grand matter of life itself. He must hate, that is, not love, father, mother, not life itself, if the question be for God's glory and the good of the church; if they come in competition with

divine truths of the gospel. We must give up our lives for Christ and his church; we must have resigned minds. This we must do in preparation of spirit. God indeed calleth not always for it. There be more difficult times sometimes than other, and the times of the gospel be sweet times of rest; for in the Acts it is said the churches had rest, 9:31; but we must be prepared for it. St Paul saith to the Corinthians, that when they 'gave themselves to Christ,' they gave their goods to Christ, 2 Cor. 8:5. And when a Christian giveth himself to Christ, he giveth his goods and himself to Christ. It is no hard matter, when a man hath given himself to Christ, to part with any things else that serve only for necessary comforts and provision, and then he takes all back again when he hath his life. Lord, it is thy life; thou hast bought me and my life, I am thine; thou hast paid a dear price for me, and thine it shall be when thou callest for it. If thou wilt have my credit, my state, my liberty, thou shalt have it; if my life itself, thou shalt have it; of thee I have it, to thee I return it again, if it may be for thy glory and thy church's good. And this should be the disposition of every Christian, to count nothing his own so much as not to be ready to part with it when Christ calleth for it. Beloved, a Christian is a sacrifice, and the end of all the favours of Christ is, that from a free willing spirit 'he should offer himself a free willing sacrifice to God,' as the apostle speaks excellently, Rom. 12:1. When he had spoken of all the favours of God in Christ, election, justification, sanctification, the comforts of his children in trouble, the end of all is, 'that we should offer ourselves as a willing, reasonable sacrifice to God' as the end of all. And therefore reservation in our spirits of anything that we will have limitations in: we profess religion, but with reservation of liberty, and not offend so and so, and not endanger their skin in hazard, or reputation, and life; it cannot stand with the truth of Christianity. No man is a true Christian that hath such reservation. He never knew what faith and implantation into Christ meant; he hath not entered into the first

form of religion; he hath not learned to deny himself. 'Whoever will be a disciple of me, let him take up his cross,' Mat. 16:24. There be two hindrances of religion, one within, another without; within us ourselves, that we must deny; without us is the cross, and that we must take up; and he that doth both these, is fit to follow Christ. And none but those.

And therefore thou must be content, as the apostle saith, to be 'always delivered to death for Jesus' sake.' So is Christ himself our head. He was delivered to death, as I named before. God permitted them by little deaths to afflict him, and misuse him; at length God gave him up to death itself. They thought to have swallowed him up continually, and to have made an end of him; at length God gave him indeed. And he was himself a willing sacrifice, ready to die. So we must be as Christ was, ready to part with this life, as Christ did part with all for us; else we are not suitable members of so glorious and gracious a head. He gave himself for us, and shall not we give ourselves back again to him, specially when it is the only way to save ourselves? 'He that loseth life, shall get his life; and he that will spare his life, shall lose his life,' Mat. 10:39. It will prove so in the end. You will say these be good things, and true matters, but they be not for us in these times. The more we are to bless God, beloved. And yet we are delivered to death if we regard that sympathy that should be between us, and the mystical body of Christ. In France now and in Spain, and in many places of Germany, and Italy, Christ hath a church. And are not the poor souls there continually, as it were, delivered to death? Are they not always between the block and the hatchet, either killed or ready for death, continually as sheep to the slaughter? The persecutor makes no more bones of killing them, than a butcher makes conscience of killing a sheep, or a man to eat bread when he is hungry.

'They eat up my people, as they eat bread,' Ps. 14:4, and 'they think they do God good service,' John 16:2. This is the state of all countries beyond the seas, except ours; and shall not we have actions of sympathy? That member that sympathiseth not with the body is a dead member. And therefore we cannot make it good to ourselves, that we are living members of a living and glorious head, except we sympathise with them. So that in regard of the body of Christ now in Europe, under the cross a long time, and under tyranny of crosses, we may say we are delivered to death continually. And it may be our portion and lot, before we go out of the world, for anything we know, and for anything we discern. That is the truth of it.

But what speak I of delivering to death, when some nice\* Christians will not endure a scorn, a frown, a reproach for Christ? They will not part with anything for Christ; how then will they part with their blood? Are those likely men to be 'delivered to death for Christ's sake,' if times should be, that will not yield up anything they have?

Now that we be enabled to do it, I will not trouble you with many directions. I will give but one. When a Christian cometh to be a Christian, let him think he is not a man for this life, farther than God will suffer him to live for the good of others, and to get assurance of interest in another world. He is estated in heaven, therefore let him be at a point for this present life. And now he hath given himself to Christ, his life is Christ's, and let him think his life is not his own. 'If I live, I live to Christ; if I die, I die to Christ,' Rom. 14:8, and be content that Christ should have what he hath bought so dearly, whensoever he will call for it. Be content with partial little deaths under them, for many of us die in times of peace, such partial deaths, as sickness, and infirmities. This life goes out many ways, sometimes by infirmities of body, sometimes by violence, at length by age. All partial deaths, we must learn to make use of them every day as we

should, and in every of them some little part and glimpse of the light of Christ is manifested. And therefore labour every day to bear every day's cross comely, and as Christians should do; and the bearing of partial crosses will enable us to bear the grand crosses. The undergoing of little deaths will make us able to undergo the grand death, when the time cometh.

To go on: 'For we which live are always delivered to death for Christ's sake.' 'Always,' for anything we know. 'We die daily,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor 15:31; in our expectation, and in our resignation of spirit; we die daily in the designs of malicious spirits. God and Christ may challenge our right in our life, when he will, in regard of that disposition of soul answerable to Christ's dispensation, which we are ignorant of, and answerable to the malice of wicked men, which we know not. When our humanity will vent itself, we are always 'delivered to death for Christ's sake.' It is not the life we are to make account of, not to reckon of. 'We are dead men,' as the apostle saith, Rom. 8:10, 11. We are dead in sin, not only dead to sin, but in regard of the sentence of mortality pronounced on us, which I shall have occasion to touch when I come to 'mortal bodies.'

'Delivered to death for Jesus' sake.' Jesus' sake! What, will the enemies say so? No! it is for your heresy, schism, faction, unquiet spirit; it is that you be troublers of state, but by no means for Jesus' sake. But the course of the enemy is first of all to be liars, and then to be slanderers, to take away the good name of God's people, and then to take away their lives. They be serpents and dragons for cunning, and then to be lions to devour. That is their method, and the devil's method, when they cannot with colour execute their cruelty, but under lies and slanders. Therefore the course of [the] wicked is to devour them in their names, civilly\* to devour them first; and then they have afterwards better colour to shew all the malice they can.



And all that be led with cursed spirits at all times, their fashion is to disgrace them, that by it they may blemish them all they can, and then they shall be counted excellent men, for pursuing such men for such sins; they blast them, but in their reputation specially. Such as will take any leisure to examine things, may plainly see their malice against the life of Christ. And then they have glorious pretences to carry their malice, and cruelty which they list. But doth God interpret it so? No! He interprets it for Christ's sake; Christ interprets it for his own sake. They do for such and such ends, but Christ takes it as done for himself; his religion, his profession, for the cause of religion, and a good conscience. Whoever therefore do suffer for the discovery of a good conscience, if but in a civil matter, as John Baptist (it was not for a matter of religion), it is for God's sake, the truth of God, and justice of God; and we may suffer in way of justice, and rather than not stand out in a civil matter for Christ's sake. Therefore we count John among the martyrs. For religion, in the profession of it in word, or the profession of it in life, or in discharge of a good conscience, any way, that is for Christ's sake. Christ will take it so, and that is our comfort; and if he take it so, surely he will be partner with us, he will suffer with us; and if he suffers with us, surely we shall be well borne out, and he will glorify us hereafter. 'Blessed are ye when men persecute and revile you for my name's sake,' Mat. 5:11; so did their fathers the prophets before you. Whatsoever the world makes pretence to, their wisdom, folly, thinking to daub things as they may well enough with the world, yet God will take it out otherwise. It is for his sake. He will revenge it, as done against his children, and afterward crown them.

They that be enemies to God's people for religion, either in the profession or practice of it, as upbraiding them with their loose practice, and their false opinion, they are not so much enemies of men as of Christ. And if Christ were on the earth, they that persecute

anything for Christ's sake will persecute him more. If Christ were on the earth he should find like entertainment, as amongst the Jews; for the wicked would devise this and that pretence to put him to death.

This is a terrible consideration to wicked men; he that hateth good in any degree, because it is good, hateth the best good most of all. And he that hateth good men as good men, will hate him that is the head of all good men, Christ himself. And they that be malicious against good men, and carry matters cunningly, they would do the same to Christ, and much more. He that hateth any thing as it is such a thing, he hates it most of all; and he that hateth goodness as goodness, hateth it most of all where it is to be had in the fountain.

What can such people therefore look for, that be enemies to God's people, and cause, and religion, as far as they dare, when they would use him as ill, if he were upon the face of the earth? For if they malign and hate them for Christ's sake, surely they would more malign and hate Christ if he were here. But I have not much occasion to press this point. I only open it, hoping there will not be much need of pressing it in this place; but you may use it to help your judgments, how malice is dangerous, and how it is interpreted by Christ himself, what colour soever the world sets upon it.

Now what is the event of this delivery to death? What is the issue and fruit of it in God's intendment? What is the event? Now God's intendment is, 'that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.'

The life of Jesus I spake of in the former verse, and some things lately. I will add some things, and so go on.

'The life of Jesus is manifested to our mortal flesh.' The life of Jesus is not only his glorious life, that he liveth in heaven himself, and that

he liveth here on earth with a gracious person; but the life of Jesus is that quickening power that cometh from Christ our head, whereby he doth enliven and quicken all his members, and that with a double life.

First, A habitual and constant life, by reason of the constant dwelling of the Spirit in us.

And besides this, there is a quickening power, continually to act and draw forth this life of grace upon all occasions. But of this I have spoken largely heretofore.

I am willing to add something for the further clearing of this point, that you may better understand what the life of Jesus is.

Now, beloved, if we would know whether the life of Jesus be in us or no, I give you some evidences. And that I desire you specially at this time to take notice of is this: Observe the beating of the pulse; that is, holy desires to heavenly things. Where this life is, that is the lowest thing in this life of Jesus, that there be holy desires, which are the pulse. As, beating of the pulse is the liveliest life; where they beat there is hope of life; and then there is breath to take in fresh air, and to send out that that is taken in. So where there is grace there is breathing, receiving of new air, new strength from Christ, and sending out by contempt all that is naught. There is some little suitableness between the life of nature and the life of Jesus. And then there is spiritual sense, whereby we are able to feel, and taste, and see, and discern spiritual things in another manner than before; and answerable to spiritual sense there is spiritual motions to the things we are sensible of, and motion is always where senses are. For we have sense but to discover what is good or evil, and upon discovery of good or evil, power to move from what is evil to good; else senses were rather fit to torment us than anything. Therefore there is

likewise a power to move in natural life. So in spiritual life, whereby we are enabled to taste and relish heavenly things, there is a power to move them, and carry the soul to them, and to remove from what is spiritually evil. And therefore together with the pulse, and breathing, and sense, and motion, usually there be sympathies and antipathies to what is suitable or contrary to their being. As spiritual life hath antipathy to sin, as the bane and the poison of it; and works it out by little and little, being like the poison of nature, that when poison enters it works against the poison as much as it can to cast it up; so where there is spiritual life, it works against the sinfulness of corrupt nature, and whatsoever is opposite to it, and works it out by little and little, as a counter-poison to it. For this spiritual life is opposite, and contrarious every way to sin. And therefore they that cherish corruption by occasion, company, and objects, which they should mortify, alas! where is the life of grace in them?

But to leave these things, though they help our understanding in the mystery I speak of: the thing I would have you specially to discern in the spiritual life of Jesus is, that it leadeth a man higher than all other lives. It sets a man in a higher rank of creatures. It makes a man a spiritual man, and it guideth his life by reason above nature, by reason above common course; for it is called 'the life of Jesus,' because it comes from Jesus, and as it comes from Jesus it leadeth to Jesus.

Now, therefore, a man may know he liveth the life of Jesus, that cometh from Christ, if he hath such a spirit as leads him to Christ, that leads him to honour Christ. Though not immediately in his person, yet Christ hath in the world his religion, his children, his ordinances, and by these he is carried to Christ, and findeth Christ. So he that hath the life of Christ in him, he will relish Christ in all these, and in all these will be carried to Christ, and will honour Christ

in all these, and will be a friend of the church, a friend of religion, a friend of all God's ordinances, not only as finding a relish in them, but he hath a life from Christ, that teaches us to refer all to him. And he will venture his natural life to save his spiritual life, because it is his best life. There is no man that is a sound Christian, and in a right frame as a Christian, but will adventure anything of his inferior life to maintain his head. (As it is one point of the wisdom of the serpent to maintain his head) he will maintain his union and communion with Christ, religion, and the ordinances, whereby he preserveth his life, though with some prejudice of the outward life.

Life is taken oftentimes not only for the life that cometh from the union with soul and body, but from the condition together with that, as to be rich, and poor, and in credit. So many, not only to maintain their natural life, but their life of condition; that is, to maintain an honourable condition in the world, to be of high esteem; they make the life of Jesus only to serve their turns. If they can keep their natures continually, and grow in favour with men, they think the life of Jesus is a hidden and secret thing, as indeed it is, and they will not trouble themselves much about it. Oh, this is far from the disposition of a lively Christian that hath the life of Jesus, for he is ready to suffer in his natural life, in his condition of life whatsoever it be, rather than prejudice his best life, and he will consider and esteem of things, not so much as they further his natural condition in the world, or natural life, but how it stands with his spiritual life. Nothing against religion, nothing against grace, nothing against the Spirit. This is such a thing for his head, his religion; then he will consider things as they tend to that, though it be to the discredit of his person, though with loss of liberty, with peril of the decays of natural life, though with prejudice in worldly things whatsoever they be, rather than he will endanger his best life, the life of Jesus; and he will esteem of things suitable to that, that shall be his glory, the life of

Jesus. But whatsoever is between him and Jesus shall be lightly esteemed. Those that be in a true Christian frame of soul are thus disposed to God; and there is good reason for it, for it is the best life of all, and it is that for which we have natural lives. Beloved, if we have not the life of Jesus, we had better have no life at all. As it was said of Judas, 'better we had never been born,' Mat. 26:24; if we have not a new life besides what we have by nature we had better not be born at all. Therefore, let us not deceive ourselves, but labour to have something above nature.

I will not trouble you with farther evidence in the point, because I desire that what I have spoken may sink into your souls.

And to stir you up after this life of Jesus, this frame of grace, this quickening from our head Christ, it is that for which we live, it is that which our life is decreed unto. You know there be three degrees of life: a life in the womb, a life in this world, and a life in heaven; the first for the second, the second for the third. The life in the womb is for civil life among men. The child hath not eyes and ears for that place where it is, for in that strait place it hath no use of eyes, or ears, or tongue, or anything. All the sense it hath there, is not for that life, but for a civil life amongst men, where there is use of eyes, and sense, and tongue, and all the members it hath. So high are a man's designs and large, vast things, that nothing will satisfy. When a man understandeth, he desires more; his affection is large, nothing will satisfy desire. There is large expectation and love, that nothing here will satisfy, but fresh, fresh, still for desire. Hath God given them vast understanding, and this vast will, and vast affections for that which will not remain with them? They are for another life. The very frame of our soul sheweth it. As the frame of the infant in the womb sheweth that that frame is for the life in the world, so the life we live,

in regard of the large capacity of our souls, is for another life in heaven.

Therefore, if we labour not for the life of Jesus to be begun here, which is called the life of grace, the beginning and infant of glory, we miss of our end. This life is for that life; we are not for this life. God ordained us not for this life. Therefore he will take this life away to advance it to a spiritual life. He takes liberty to take away our health and natural life, that he may advance our spiritual life, for he knoweth what is in this life is well lost, if it be gained in a better life, and it is for a better life. I beseech you, let us think seriously of these things.

What should I speak on the life of condition, that you may be moved to the excellent life of Jesus? There is a better condition together with it than any condition. For a natural life\* takes a condition with a king. A Christian is a king, and a king over that that is terrible, a king over death, and hell, and the world, and above all. Take our natural life with the condition of a rich man; there is better riches in the life of Jesus. The riches of heaven are his. Take the natural life with any outward condition, and there is better in grace, better in religion. The life of Jesus hath better endowments accompanying it. Is it not better to have the image of God stamped upon the soul? What better honour? Name you what you will, is there not a better condition in the life of Jesus? So as the life itself being a spiritual and divine thing, for the divine nature is most excellent; so the endowments and appurtenances that accompany the life of grace, are incomparably above all the endowments and appurtenances that is of natural life. Take it in the life of kings, emperors, or what you will, they are nothing to the life of Jesus.

Now this life of Jesus is manifested most when we are delivered to death. Both the frame of grace, and the quickening power of grace, they are both more manifest when we are delivered to death; that is, in trouble, sickness, or any cross whatsoever, there is more discovery of the life of Jesus than at other times. I have touched some reasons of it heretofore: I shall give some now, because the apostle repeateth the thing, and we will not pass it over, because the apostle doubles a little upon it.

Reason 1. Beloved, if we speak of the inward frame of grace, is not that most manifested when our outward man decayeth, and is afflicted? It is. For everything is increased by the exercise of it. 'When we are delivered to death,' that is, prepared for sufferings, or do suffer, there is opportunity of exercising all the branches of spiritual life. We put forth the exercise of spiritual life. Then we pray more than at ordinary times. Then we exercise our faith and dependency upon God. Then we exercise our hope of life everlasting. Then we exercise our love to God, his church and people. Then we are advanced for exercising of all functions of spiritual life. Therefore the life of Jesus is most manifested in the dyings of Jesus.

Reason 2. Beloved, it is a clear point, if we take it for the quickening power of Christ, together with the inward frame that is most in the dyings of Jesus. When we suffer any thing for God, it is his honour to be most present with us, and graciously present with us, when we stand most in need of his presence. But we stand most in need of his gracious presence at these times; therefore he, out of the bowels of pity and compassion, is nearest to us. 'I will be with thee in fire and water,' Isa. 43:2. The Spirit of God enters into all conditions, into prisons, into dungeons, into every condition whatsoever. The quickening power of Christ is as much manifested in the outward condition as in any kind of way. As now for Christ to make a weak



man, a weak woman, or a weak child, an old man, one being weak, another by sex, a third by age, when these three shall be able to stand out for God, for Christ in times of persecution: when these shall in times of peace and prosperity hold out the profession of religion, there must needs be a manifestation of a power above nature. By nature children are tender, by nature women are fearful, by nature old men are timorous, and fearful too. I say, the disproportion of the condition to the grace and power that is shewed, discovers the manifestation, that there is a quickening power more than ordinary. For the martyrs, when they were to seal the truth with their blood, to have a fire of love kindled in them, above the flames of fire, and the spiritual comforts kindled in them, here was manifestation of the life of Jesus, when they were delivered to death. Nay, a sick worn body; take it in times of peace, a good Christian that hath given himself to the study of mortification, and hath supplied the wants of affliction by mortification....\*

As that it is a gracious use of afflictions to supply the want of them by mortification, you shall see the life of Jesus in afflictions. A great deal of patience in a body tormented with sickness, a great deal of heavenly mindedness, when he is ready to go out of the world; a great deal of comfort in the midst of disgrace in a stout Christian; when the condition is one, and the strength another above it to master it, here is manifestation of power. Are the conditions so, that the manifestation of the life and quickening power of Jesus is most of all in such times when we stand most in need of it, times of suffering, times of sickness, hour of death?

Reason 3. Thirdly, Another main reason that the life of Jesus is more manifested then is, because Christ reserveth his comforts for the fittest times. Then is the fittest time for Christ to close with the soul, for then the soul stands most in need of grace. He is an head, and

therefore wise, because an head. As all wisdom resteth in the head to guide the body, so all wisdom in Christ to guide his church. And he knoweth the fittest opportunity for the measure of grace and comfort. There is no comfort comparable to the comfort God's children find in the greatest abasement; for then they empty themselves, and therefore are most fit to be filled with the Spirit. Then God delighteth to have communion with them at all times. God draws them into the wilderness, and then speaks to their hearts, as the prophet saith, Hosea 2:14: 'God will let the world know that he hath hidden manna for his children, which they know not, nor feel not.' And so God hath his hid manna, which he suffers them to taste more especially when they be distressed in the outward man, and then is the life of Jesus most manifested to them.

Use. And therefore, beloved, I beseech you, fear not any thing in the world that may befall us; fear nothing that may befall us in our own quarrel. Shall we fear our advancement in a better kind? What we lose in nature, we gain in grace; what we lose in outward comforts, we gain in spiritual. It is made up in a better kind, and shall we be discouraged for any thing that befalls us in this world? Shall not we give Christ liberty to take what he will, so he make it up in a better kind? Shall not we suffer him to take our credit, our liberty, our life, so he make it up in the life of Jesus? What damage is it if we be delivered to little deaths, to partial deaths, that is, to vexation, to restraint of liberty, to fall into disgrace with the world, if we gain as much in spiritual life? That is well parted withal, and lost in this world, that is made up in spiritual things; for the spiritual things are eternal. They make us good, they commend us to God, they be proportionable to us, they add a worth and value in themselves to us: whatsoever, therefore, we part with for God's cause, if we find access and increase of inward grace, and peace, and comfort, are we losers by it? Doth not God make sweet recompence to his children,

according to that general rule, 'All things work together for the best to them that love God'? Rom. 8:29. Let us remember this, and lay it up against times of trial. And when we are sick, shall we fear sickness? Oh, if we had the Spirit of faith then, Lord, now I am delivering up to death, and cease to live; Oh, as the life of nature decays, let me find the life of Jesus; let me find some drop of that life which Jesus lived. For the life of Jesus makes us like Christ in some measure; that is, full of grace, full of peace; full of glory; the life of Jesus in heaven is glorious, a gracious life. Now when drops of it are dropped into a man in times of sickness or persecution, it will make a man forget all troubles whatsoever; as it is a saying in the Canticles, 'Thy love,' saith the spouse, 'is better than wine,' Cant. 1:2. Now what is wine? It will make a man forget his trouble. And so the love of Jesus, which is a principle of the life of Jesus, a distillation of the love of Jesus, is better than wine. It will make a man forget his disgrace, forget his afflictions, forget all, because it is a beam of such a sun, a drop of such an ocean. It is a supernatural, a commanding life, a life of a higher nature, above all things below, an independent life, which will be sufficient in heaven when we have neither meat, nor drink, nor conversation, nor converse with men; and if we have a little of this derived\* to us in any troubles, it will carry us through all. Therefore labour to think of these things. You see what need we have to be one with Jesus, who is the spring and Lord of life, that hath received life, to convey it to us, as the 'second Adam.' Therefore we had need of sacraments, to confirm and strengthen our union with this head, from whom we have spiritual life. Therefore come with joy, and comfort, and courage to the sacrament; the end whereof is to increase union and communion with the fountain of life, Jesus; who gave his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed, that he might give life to us, that he might by satisfaction in his death give us life of sentence, that we might be acquitted at the bar of God's justice. 'He died, and is risen again; who shall lay any thing to the charge of

God's people?' Rom. 8:33. Therefore come to the sacrament, that we may grow in assurance of the life of sentence, in removing the guilt of sin, because Christ died for us. And we shall likewise have great increase of the inward frame of life and grace. For the more we are assured of forgiveness of sins, and acceptation to life everlasting, the more we live; as, where many things are forgiven, there is much love, Luke 7:47. And the more we love, the more willing and cheerful we shall be; for all obedience springs from love. When we love we are ready for all duties. And therefore come with encouragement to increase our union and communion with Jesus Christ, now at this time.

## **VERSES 12, 13**

So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, therefore have I spoken. We all believe, and therefore we speak.

In the former part of the chapter we have heard how the apostle doth grant freely what might be objected to the disparagement of the ministry of the gospel, in regard of many particulars, and then he retorts, and makes use of all; as you may see in the several particulars.

We spake the last time of the eleventh verse, which is but the same with the tenth, only a more full expression and exposition of it, by some addition.

I observed divers things from thence.

That God's children must make account of the worst in the world; 'that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.' Here is the event of the troubles God's children meet withal in this world, and the intendment on God's part.

'Made manifest in our mortal flesh.' I did not speak anything of that, therefore I will add something.

'The life of Jesus is made manifest in our flesh,' though mortal, and subject to death; and mortal, not only because subject to death, but also subject to miseries, which are little deaths. For, beloved, we do not only die when our lives are ended, when the last day of our life is cut off; but all that makes way to that is death. All the petty miseries, that by little and little unloose the affections from earthly things, that unloose the soul from the body, all those partial things, they are little degrees of that separation which is in death. So that in our mortal body, that is, our body that is subject to death, and to that that makes way for death.

'Our mortal flesh.' Flesh is a diminishing word in Scripture, implying mortal and frail nature. This is a matter of use, rather than to be unfolded; the best of us all carry but mortal flesh. We carry our deaths, and our hearse about us; our life is dying and mortal. It is a matter rather to be thought of to make us wise indeed; as Ps. 49:3, 'I will speak of wisdom.' What wisdom is it that he speaks of? He speaks of mortality and of death common to all, that is wisdom indeed. And therefore, Ps. 90:12, the holy man with order teacheth us 'to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.' There be no wiser thoughts in this world than to judge aright of the condition of earthly things, and of our estate hereafter; for wisdom is in the judgment of things. When do we rightly judge of ourselves? When we judge this life to be a dying kind of life, and our estate to be

a fading kind of condition. Mortal flesh it is; 'we are but earthen vessels.' 'Dust we are, and to dust we shall return again,' Gen. 3:19.

Beloved, think of this. It is but mortal flesh we carry; and therefore do not stand too much in adorning of it, in feeding of it, in providing for the lusts of it. How many betray their souls, their better part, by studying to give contentment to their mortal flesh! This is not the life for mortal flesh. The time for that is the life to come, at the resurrection. Then when we shall have other flesh, we shall be all spiritual, even our bodies spiritual, not maintained with meat and drink, as now they are. That is the life of the body, a glorious life. Now it is a mortal life, that must end in dust and rottenness.

It is the vanity, especially of the younger sort, as if all their commendation were in setting out their bodies in apparel, and such things. It is a poor thing for a man, that hath a reasonable soul, to fetch his commendations from his flesh, from that which is worms' meat. Hath he nothing else to fetch his commendations from but what covereth his body? What is the flesh but the garment of the soul, and a rotten one? And what are other garments but a covering of that? And for a man to seek commendations, which should arise from parts and worth within, to be studying to provide for this mortal flesh, is a course unworthy of them that prove themselves to be Christians.

And therefore we must labour not to value ourselves by the body, nor by any worth we have in the outward man neither. If we have diseased bodies, or weak bodies, more mortal than others, not to be cast down, even the best are but mortal flesh; let us value ourselves by that which is to eternity, by the life of Jesus. Learn humility hence, not to be proud of mortal flesh, and sobriety. Many wise observations are from hence, but they are so easy, that the meanest

of them, the Spirit accompanying them, may be sufficient to you that be of understanding. Therefore I will not speak of it now, being more largely spoken of in the latter part of the chapter. 'So death works in us, but life in you.' That is the conclusion of the former comparison of Paul's suffering with the presence of God supporting him in his sufferings; he concludeth them all with this, 'So then death works in us, but life in you.'

Some take this for an irony, or a sarcasm, as we call it, a bitter kind of speech.\* You be free from the cross, and from death. But I take not that to be the meaning of the place, but rather this: we die daily, we carry the death of Jesus about us, but life works in you. You have the good of all our deaths, not only we ourselves, that be apostles, but you have life by our death, glory by our shame, happiness by our misery; you are gainers by it. And indeed so it is. Those that be the grandees of the church, when they die, others live by them, as you shall see.

'So that death works in us.' How doth death work in us? Death works two ways at once.

It works in the outward man a decay. And then, by a command of a higher power, by God's Spirit, death works life, the contrary in us. Death works in us; that is, we are subject to death, and dying. It works in us a farther and farther disposition to death. And life is taken away continually by partial deaths, which fit us for the last death; death as a canker eateth out our life and natures. As he said before, death is not only the conclusion of our life, but it eateth into it continually. Every day taking away a piece of it, especially them that be under crosses, death by little and little worketh a separation of soul from the body. And then death works in us the life of Jesus, that is, not in itself—for it works nothing but dissolution, and turneth us

to our dust out of which we were taken—but death works in us by the command of God, who can raise light out of darkness, and life out of death, and happiness out of misery. God, who hath all things in obedience to him, can raise contrary out of contrary. And therefore death works in us the life before spoken of, not of itself, but by the command of God himself, who extracteth out of death, and mortality, and misery we suffer, a farther degree of spiritual life. Beloved, it is a strange thing that death should work; but consider all things under heaven, even they work not in themselves, but under command and at obedience of the Supreme Worker, who is so excellent and powerful a worker, that he can raise contraries out of contrary, that cannot only raise from death, and make happy after misery, but make happy in misery, in life, in death, he is so powerful a worker.

Use. And of this make this use of it. We are in covenant with a powerful God, that can make any condition work to our good. He hath command over life, death, imprisonment, abasement whatsoever. He can raise out of them whatsoever is contrary, that no state shall be over-troublesome to us, that we shall not distaste of any condition. Shall we distaste of any conditions, when God can make that condition serve for our best good? Oh no.

Use 2. Comfort. And let this comfort us in the greatest misery. God works life in death. He giveth spiritual life, and makes it appear we are upheld by a divine power, another power than our own; therefore be not discouraged, and never despair.

But what benefit have they by it? Life works in you by our death; life works in him too. And the life of Jesus is manifested not only in him but them too. God bringeth his own children into great troubles for the good of others. They be the standard-bearers of the church, but



he commands their lives to be manifested in their dyings, two or three ways.

(1.) The more he dies, the more death was wrought in him, the more the Spirit liveth in him, the more spiritual life was in him; that is, a divine power and strength of grace, to enable him in the inward man. And was not this for the church's good, being a public man, as he was? And therefore the church loseth nothing by the afflictions of their godly pastors. Oh your Christians, the more they be afflicted, the more free they be to comfort and instruct. Of all physicians the experienced physician is the best. And they be the best teachers, and do most good, that can speak from experience of the life of Christ manifested in them; in that regard life was theirs, by death working in him.

(2.) Then again, as death wrought in him, so life in them, that they might have good by his sufferings, and the presence of God's Spirit in his sufferings, to be less troubled with the cross. We see St Paul nevertheless hath his partial death, his abasement in the world, as an 'earthen vessel' despised of all; how straight he walks and comfortably he walks! how God is present with his Spirit! And surely if we suffer for a righteous cause, the same Spirit that was present with Paul shall be present with us. And thus by way of example life works in them, but death in him.

(3.) Life wrought in them, by death in him, that they might be in love more with religion, which is such as bringeth comfort and strength from heaven in the greatest sufferings for it. And that they might love the cause the better, God is present with the cause. If it were not God's cause, he would not accompany it with such increase of grace and comfort. Therefore, as death in Paul, so life in them; for they are more and more in love with religion. And so it was with the martyrs:

when they saw it was such a cause, then they went cheerfully to suffer. They knew God had neither persons nor cause, that he was so present with all; and therefore they were encouraged themselves, because they saw others victoriously and triumphingly to suffer. So we see that we ought not to take scandal at the sufferings of any for a good cause. Their death is our life. If we be of the same body, we may take good by it. We should be so far from taking scandal at them that suffer for justice or religion, that we should honour them the more. 'I Paul, a prisoner,' Eph. 3:1. Is that a weakening of himself? No. As a prevailing argument, [he] here mentioneth his bonds and sufferings. It is so far therefore from being a matter of offence as to make us not to be ready to taunt them, as proud flesh is ready to do; and therefore they have counted crosses and suffering, a contemptible thing, that we should honour it the more. And therefore take no offence at them that suffer in the cause of religion; their sufferings is for the good of others. For this we have a more clear place in the latter part of this chapter.

Obj. But have not all God's children their death, without dying to you? Are not all God's children partakers of the cross?

Ans. Beloved, sometimes it is thus with God's church and children, that God to favour them doth give them an exemption from any great cross till they be trained up, and get fortitude and strength; not that God loveth them more than he loveth others that he exerciseth; but it is clean contrary, for where he causeth to suffer for a good cause, it is a privilege. 'To you it is given, not only to believe, but also to suffer,' Philip. 1:29. He favours them more, and tenders them more. The rest have not that strength of grace, and therefore God cherisheth them; as when plants be young, we set them about with bushes against excursion of outward causes; but when they have taken root, those be taken away. So God besets his children with props and comforts till

they have gotten root; but afterwards exposeth them to storms and wind, that they may take root deeper. Therefore let none think they be better because they be free. God is preparing and fitting them for that which is prepared for them.

'We having the Spirit, as it is written, I believe, therefore have I spoken; we also believe, therefore we speak.'

The holy apostle doth here, as an entrance into this discourse, fully set forth his condition under the cross, and the sufferings as a believer; that is, he was bold and confident, notwithstanding all sufferings, in hope of the resurrection, and glory to come. And he sets out his faith by comparing his faith with them in former times. 'We having the same Spirit of faith' that they had before, as Abraham, and David, and others, we are not alone, neither in sufferings nor in our comforts. We have the same combats and the same comforts, the same Spirit of comfort and grace, according 'as it is written, I believe, therefore I have spoken; we also believe, therefore do we speak.' He made David's case, Ps. 116:10, parallel to his own. They were both in trouble and affliction, both confess to God in the midst of his congregation. Saint Paul had the same Spirit: 'we believe and speak,' as they believed and spake. I shall have the present life of Christ manifested in me. I know by experience that I shall be carried along by the life, and power, and Spirit of Christ, and afterward I look for a glorious resurrection, as is specified in the next verse.

'We having the same Spirit of faith,' not the same with you, and the rest of the members that now live. Now that I conceive is not so much his meaning,\* as we having the same Spirit of faith with David, and them before Christ died, with all the professors of religion from the beginning of the world to the end, the same Spirit with you. Now

the same spirit with the church in former times, one Spirit runs through the veins of the church in all ages; having the same spirit of faith, he hath the same commanding act of faith. For there be two acts of faith: one we call elicited, which is, the inward proper act of faith; and there is actus imperationis, whereby it commands the exercises of other graces. As I believe in the proper exercise of grace in itself, and I not only believe, but courageously confess; confession is not so much the proper act of faith, as it is commanded to be exercised by faith. Here is first the life of faith, and then the act and expression of faith with a parallel, David: as David believeth and speaks, so I believe and speak.

'We have the spirit of faith.' Faith is here the fundamental grace, the radical grace of all. We have faith, and a spirit of faith, and the same spirit of faith. So that faith is the radical grace, it being the grace that exercises all the rest. It is the grace of the new covenant, whereby we are knit to Christ: 'Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life,' John 3:15. It is the grace of union that knits us to the root, the foundation of lively Christianity. And therefore he mentions faith in the first place.

Think of faith as the first grace of the Spirit, that acteth and stirs up all other graces. It is the first, because it is the grace of union that knits us to Christ. It is the grace required in the covenant of grace. It is the grace that giveth God all the glory, therefore fit to be the grace of the covenant. And [it] takes all from man, emptieth a man of all, and giveth all the glory to God, and Christ, whose righteousness we lay hold upon by faith; being therefore the grace of the covenant, the grace of union, the grace of abasing man and glorifying God above all other graces, and the grace that acts and stirs up all other graces; and all other graces do increase, or decrease, as faith increaseth or

decreaseth. Therefore 'having received the spirit of faith, we also believe,' &c. Therefore above all other graces labour for faith.

But now we have not only faith, but 'the same Spirit of faith,' which sheweth the original whence faith cometh. The spirit of faith is an excellent attribute to faith, to shew that faith as all other graces comes from the Spirit; and if all other graces come from the Spirit, then the grace of graces, faith especially. The Spirit is either the Holy Ghost himself, called the Spirit, partly passively, because the Holy Ghost is breathed from the Father and Son, and partly actively, because the Spirit doth spirare, breathe into us. All the life and comforts we have is from the Spirit. The Holy Ghost comes a spirando, not a generando. He doth breathe all grace and comfort into God's children, and therefore [is] called the Spirit. Now as the Holy Ghost infuseth all grace and comfort, he works first a gracious disposition in God's children, which is called the Spirit. The Holy Ghost is called not only the Spirit, but a gracious disposition and temper of our soul, whereby our spirits are made suitable to the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost puts an impression upon every soul that comes to heaven, like itself, and sets a stamp of holiness upon it, and renews the image of Christ. Again, the Spirit is also called spirit, as to 'walk by the Spirit, and live by the Spirit;' that is, to live in an holy and gracious disposition wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. Now as in general a gracious frame of soul is called spirit, so every grace is called the grace of the Spirit; as the 'spirit of faith,' and the 'spirit of love,' and the 'spirit of a sound mind,' and the spirit of the 'fear of the Lord,' and the 'spirit of counsel,' because they issue immediately from the Spirit, and sanctification wrought in us by the Spirit of God. For the Spirit of God will infuse a divine nature into us, which we call the Spirit, being the seed of all grace. And then comes the spirit of all other graces. As in original sin there is the seed of all corruption, so

in the Spirit the seed of regeneration is the seed of all grace, hope, and faith, and love, and whatsoever.

Now, as we say, though there be one general ocean, yet it hath several names according to the several coasts it washeth, and therefore called the British seas, the Irish seas, the Mediterrane\* seas, the French seas. There is but one sea, yet [it] hath its terms according to the several coasts. So the Spirit is one Spirit, but as it begets several graces, so it hath several names. As it giveth faith, it is called the spirit of faith; as it enableth us to suffer, the spirit of assistance, or supportation. There be also animal spirits in the veins, and vital spirits in the liver and heart. So it is with the Spirit of God. It is the spirit of such a grace and such a grace as there is occasion to use it. So that the apostle terms the work of God's grace in the hearts of his children a spirit of faith; faith therefore is wrought by the Spirit of God, and that is the doctrine. The excellent grace of faith is from the Spirit. For it is called from the work of it, 'a spirit of faith.'

What need I prove it? For all things above faith are above nature. The objects of faith are above nature, which are merely mysteries. There is no seed of faith in us at all. It is harder to believe than to fulfil the law; for there are seed of all commandments of the moral law, some impressions of it are yet left in our natures to serve God in some measure, to do justice. So that the moral men and pagans have been excellent in that kind. But to believe requires the revelation of the objects, which are supernatural things, above nature, contrary to carnal reason. Faith hath no friend at all in us. There is a cursed enmity of nature against every article of faith to call the foundation itself into question; and we are prone to believe our own lying hearts and Satan in time of temptation, rather than divine truths. To believe the favour of God to a sinner, the heart will not conceive of it, unless the Spirit of God sets down to the soul that it is so. To believe life

everlasting and glory, they be things above nature. Unless they were revealed by the Spirit, who would have believed these things? And therefore it must be power divine that must raise the heart above itself. Nothing can work above its own sphere. Nature cannot rise higher than nature; a river cannot rise higher than the spring from whence it ariseth; nothing can do above its activity. Natural things cannot apprehend spiritual things. The acts of faith are above nature. For a soul, a guilty soul, a soul under the guilt of sin, to apprehend the favour and mercy of a just and holy God, unless there be a Spirit to raise the soul above all guilt, and to see more mercy in God than sin in itself, it must be a supernatural act to do this. To overcome the world, all temptations on the right hand of pleasure and profit, and on the left hand fear and danger, is above nature. But faith enableth a man to overcome the world. Therefore it must be the spirit of faith that enables him to overcome himself, the world, and the prince of the world and his temptations, where the object and the act is supernatural. Therefore surely we must have a spirit above our own. A man must be more than a man, he must be a spiritual man, that doth the things that faith enableth him to do. Therefore faith is wrought by the Spirit; for a man to be able to conquer God himself, by his word and promise, it must be by God. And this must be by a spirit of faith. As our Saviour Christ overcome by the woman of Canaan, 'O woman, great is thy faith,' Mat. 15:28. And then Satan especially joineth against this grace of faith, because it most opposeth him in all his temptations and methods. Moreover, we must have a Spirit of faith not only to work faith in us, but likewise in every act and exercise of faith; for though we have the grace of faith, we cannot act and raise ourselves upon occasion, as the object is present, and duties to be done by the Spirit. 'He giveth both the will and the deed,' Phil. 2:13. And for all these reasons there is a necessity of the Spirit to work faith.

Therefore faith is a gift of the Spirit. 'To you it is given to believe,' Mat. 13:11. 'Faith is not of ourselves, but the gift of God,' Eph. 2:8, and a rare, excellent, and peculiar gift it is. The point is plain, that this excellent grace of faith, whereby we go out of ourselves and fetch all without, it is from the Spirit of God, which indeed is first a Spirit of faith before it is a Spirit of love and patience. This is the first work of the Spirit; the first work of the Spirit is a spirit of faith, and then of love, and patience, and contentation with the condition, but first the spirit of faith.

Use 1. And if it be so that faith comes from the Spirit of God, and groweth not in ourselves, then we must learn whither to go for it; to pray, 'Lord, increase our faith,' Luke 17:5. If we want it, to expect it in the use of sanctified means, even to look for it from above. 'Every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father of lights,' James 1:17, and therefore this excellent gift of all gifts. And account it an excellent grace, and that will make us sue more for it. We must have a Spirit of faith, else all things are nothing, for that is a fundamental grace. 'Therefore look to the power of the Spirit of God for it, the Spirit being the agent of the Father and the Son here below. As it proceeds from the father and the Son, so it works from the Father and the Son; and by faith assures us of the love of the Father and the Son, for it knoweth what is in the breast of the Father and the Son.

Use 2. And then if God doth give this act of faith, this supernatural eye of faith, this supernatural hand of faith to lay hold, eyes to see, this supernatural hand of faith to lay hold, and stomach of faith to digest, then it is not every one that hath it; all have not faith. And therefore if we have faith, if we can go out of ourselves and rely on the promise, thank God for it; thank God for it more than for any grace or gift in the world. For, beloved, we are stubborn, alike dead, dark, rebellious alike by nature; and for us that be all of the same



condition by nature to be raised to a supernatural condition, to have an eye and hand to see and reach to things above nature, and to make them our own, this is a peculiar grace; and therefore not unto us, but unto the Spirit of God, be all the glory and praise.

Use 3. And then let us take heed that we do not rashly or hastily attempt any suffering or doing, without looking to the Spirit of God for a new exercise of faith, that now being to use faith, we may have the Spirit to raise up the habit, which otherwise will be a dormant and sleepy habit; that as occasion is offered, so we may have fresh strength suitable to the fresh occasions. The same faith we had before will not serve for the present time, especially if there be increase of trouble. And if the actions to be performed be more difficult, according to the increase of trouble and hardness of business we are about, we must beg a greater measure of faith. So that indeed the life of a Christian is nothing but a dependency since the fall, under the covenant of grace. We are under guidance of the Spirit, not only to prop and strengthen us with habits, as we call them, but likewise on every occasion to raise and stir up our graces, and to persuade the soul to receive them. It is faith that stirs up all grace, and directs all grace, and holds every grace to its work, and, so long as it continueth, keepeth all other graces in exercise.

But more particularly, by the spirit of faith he meaneth the receipt of a powerful faith, because a spirit of faith; and a constant faith, because it is a spirit of faith; for the spirit is put to things that be strong and constant. And the Spirit is a strong worker, and it is the spirit of faith; and a free worker, because it is a spirit of faith that works more or less according as it seeth need. It is an holy grace, because it comes from the Holy Spirit; and therefore it is a grace indeed that makes us holy.

First, It is a spirit of faith, that is, a powerful work of faith. Now a spirit of faith doth overcome our unbelieving natures, a spirit works strongly, takes away actual resistance. Faith comes not by persuasion, but by a powerful waking strength; for if it came by persuasion, the devil would persuade to unbelief sooner than the Spirit should persuade to faith. For he hath more help for unbelief than there is for faith. We have in us more arguments against truth and against goodness than for it. And therefore if it were but a mere persuasion, and the soul not overpowered by the Holy Ghost to believe, it would never believe. So that it is not left indifferent to us to believe or not believe when God's Spirit comes. But the Spirit, as wind, is a powerful work[er], and because it takes away all prevailing resistances from the soul, and makes way for itself, bringing an heavenly light into the understanding, and a spiritual kind of reasoning, and an heavenly obedience into the will, bowing it to obedience of divine truths to yield to them, because by little and little it consumes corruption, it takes away prevailing corruption, and makes the soul believe, though there be roots of infidelity remaining.

The Spirit takes down the rebellion of nature so far that it shall not prevail. They never have the spirit of faith that think they can resist. When the Spirit comes it subjects all to its work. But I will not make a counterpoint of it. But, indeed, the spirit of faith takes away all resistances, which is to be observed, not only against divers heresies in this time, or opinions at least that tend that way, for they end in a little better than heresy; but likewise to think what an excellent grace it is, how much we are beholding to God for it, how to importune God for it, considering it is such a supernatural, holy, and powerful grace of the Spirit. And then it is a constant work. God's children do not only believe now and then, but they have a spirit of faith. Now spirit implieth a constant inclination, in the Scripture phrase, as a spirit of lying, of falsity, of envy, is an inclination that way; and a

spirit of faith is a constant inclination wrought in the spirit to live by faith constantly, to depend upon God for all things, pardon of sins, life everlasting, provision and protection in this world.

Again, Because it is called the 'spirit of faith,' it sheweth that it is a free grace, and the grounds why some have more or less faith, it is free for measure and free for time. They that have faith have the spirit of faith. They have not faith at command. No. The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, more or less. If you ask why some have great, some less, faith? It is because God seeth it needful for them in afflictions to have a great measure of faith, them that are wretched in the world, that have pre-encountered great dangers and afflictions, it is necessary to have a great measure of faith, and God giveth it. For the Spirit is a wise Spirit, and giveth faith according to the exigencies of particular persons more or less, for it is a Spirit.

The things God works by his Spirit, in regard of the freeness of them, are called graces; they as they are wrought by the Spirit are called the graces of the Spirit. The graces of the Scriptures are not like the graces of the heathens in their ethics and morals, who call them habits,\* but they have their names from their efficiency, the spirit of love, as they be from God's freeness; they are called the spirit of faith, as referring all to the work of God's Spirit, because as we are saved by grace, so we must be ready to give all glory to the work of the Spirit.

And therefore we should not be much discontent if we have not so great a measure as others have, but thankful for the least properties of faith, for the measure of it comes from the Holy Ghost, who is a free worker. The Holy Ghost is not a natural worker, as fire burneth with extremity of its strength, because it is a natural agent, but the Holy Ghost being a wise and free agent, works according to his good will and pleasure. And therefore take heed how we grieve the Spirit

of God, which is a Spirit of faith; but as the apostle giveth wise counsel, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,' Philip. 2:12, because it is God that giveth the will and the deed of his good pleasure. If we esteem not the Spirit as we should, the Spirit may withdraw and suspend the sweet exercise of faith, though not wholly take it away, because it is a grace that proceeds from a free agent, the Holy Ghost.

And it is said likewise, we have the same spirit of faith, because the same Spirit of God works the same faith from Adam, the first believer, to the end of the world. Beloved, those before Christ, they were saved by Christ, as we read, Acts 15:8, 9, 'When our hearts are purified, we are saved by faith as they were.' There is one Spirit breathed into all the children of God to the end of the world, the same Spirit is in the hidden members. What shall I say? The same Spirit with them, the same Spirit with Christ their head; one self-same Spirit is in Christ our head, and in all the members of Christ from the beginning to the end of the world. And as there is one Spirit, so one spirit of faith in regard of the object, the same things believed. For though faith be diverse, according to the diversity of belief, yet in regard of the things believed, and the cause of faith, the Spirit, they are all one: 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' Heb. 13:8.

There is nothing we believe in the gospel, but they did believe believe Christ. Our faith is Abraham's faith and David's faith. I will give an instance before Christ. Abraham believed in Christ, 'and saw his day and rejoiced,' John 8:56. And the sacrament of circumcision was 'a seal of the righteousness of faith,' Rom. 4:11, as our sacraments are seals of our faith. And likewise they gave all to the Spirit of God. 'Breathe thy law into our hearts.' And Moses giveth the reason why they heard and saw in the wilderness, and profited not. God gave

them not an heart. All was given to the Spirit, as now, and life everlasting.

They believed as well as we do now. 'At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore,' Ps. 16:11. Christ was believed as well as now. He was Immanuel then, and with them as well as with us, though we have a farther measure of revelation. Christ is laid, Christ is a corner stone, 'and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed,' 1 Peter 2:6. There was the same covenant of grace. 'Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life,' as now, John 3:15. And therefore believers are called 'the children of Abraham,' Gal. 3:7, heaven, 'the bosom of Abraham,' Luke 16:23. Women-believers are called 'the daughters of Abraham,' Luke 13:16, because there is one spirit of faith in believers from the beginning of the world to the end of it. Now the particulars are revealed more clearly, the canon is enlarged, the gospel is added to the precepts of the law, but notwithstanding, for fundamental points, they are the same from the beginning to the end of the church. The difference between them and us was in outward garments, in outward affections. As a man differs from a child in garments and outward habit, and yet is the same man, so the church of the Jews and our church are all one church, only differing in ceremonies and outward concernments, and yet still the same church. The difference is the accidental and outward; the essential main points are always the same. And therefore the grand point of faith, we believe, is not yesterday's faith, as the papists would make it, like the Gibeonites, that when they came but from hard by, came with mouldy bread and shoes, counterfeiting that they came from a far country.\* So you shall have it in every papist's mouth, Ours is the ancient religion, the fathers' religion, when it was but of yesterday, and of all novelties; but we are true catholics, because we believe an universal truth, the same spirit of faith which they had in ages of the church before. We believe nothing but what

Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets believed. We are the catholics. We are not upstarts, and I prove it by this reason. There is nothing we believe but they believed; whatsoever we believe all the ancient fathers and patriarchs believed.

Now that faith is most catholic that all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles believed, and that they themselves believe. They only add patcheries of their own, and therefore they have a new faith, but we the same. They believe the two sacraments, but they add their own. They believe the Scriptures, but they add traditions. They believe salvation from Christ, but they add works; believe we must call upon God, but they add saints to Christ in invocation and mediation. They have destructive additions of their own, which spoileth all in the conclusion. What they have we have; but their patcheries neither they nor we have; and therefore is not our faith more catholic, that holds the same things with the patriarchs and prophets, more than they that have only mere additions of their own?

That wherein they differ from us is not catholic in their own confession, for they have it not out of Scripture, nor catholic with us in regard of the divided church that they had. It was neither the faith of the ancients, patriarchs, nor prophets before Christ, nor of the ancient fathers since Christ; and therefore they are fain to fly to traditions and their own devices, and to make articles of their own, as Pius IV. made not many years since as many articles of his own as there be articles in the creed. For they say the present church is led by the Spirit of God infallibly, and according to the present state of the church things must be expounded. Therefore they be true catholics that hold with the ancient church, and them too, in such things as be true. And therefore we deserve the name of catholics, and they of neutralists. For is not that more catholic which is the same with ancient patriarchs, with ancient fathers since Christ, and

the same with them, than that wherein they differ from us? Indeed, that wherein they differ from us is merely the act of a private spirit of the one, not as if they did only add and still retain truth, but they defile whatsoever passeth from them. For they do change some things, add some things, take away some things. They change the government of Christ into a tyranny, making the pope head, the sacrament of the Lord's supper into a sacrifice, and transgress every article of religion. They take away the cup in the sacrament, and then their additions are destructive additions. If they add, they overthrow all. As Paul saith to the Galatians, 'If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing,' Gal. 5:2; and if you look to be saved by the law, you shall miss of salvation; and 'whosoever teacheth another doctrine different, is anathema, is accursed,' 1 Cor. 16:22. Their additions are destructive additions. If they were perfective, it were another matter, but they add something to faith which overthroweth faith, and something to Christ which takes away Christ. They do not hold to the head, but have another head than Christ, other mediators, and other rules of faith. They do not agree in the principles of faith. They agree that the word is the word; but then to take away the edge of it, they add something to weaken it: their own expositions, traditions, and applications. So that they have what we have, yet they change all points of religion; and the additions are against the foundation, and destructive. Not that but divers of them go to heaven, but it is not by their tenets. But they hold contradictions; and in the hour of death they cleave to the one, and forsake the other. Howsoever, for cavil sake, they hold merits and righteousness with obedience of Christ, yet they that belong to God amongst them, at time of death renounce that religion, and cleave only to Christ and obedience of Christ by justification to faith. But my meaning is not to take up time in these things, but only to breed a love of the religion we have, that hath a justification in the main tenets we hold from the enemy, from the ancient church, from the

Christian church, having one spirit of faith. And to say truth, they have the old spirit, as in Revelations, the spirit of Egypt, for so is Rome called, and the spirit of Sodom, and, as it is for the most part called, the spirit of Babylon; for they have a cruel and bloody spirit; and the filthy spirit of the Sodomites, and the idolatrous spirit of Egypt, and the tyrannical city of Babylon: for they have the same spirit with them. But for ancient tenets of religion, we may safely say, that in the main points of religion we have the same spirit of faithful Abraham, the patriarchs, David, the prophets, apostles, and ancient fathers; therefore we may be bold.

There is one faith from the beginning of the world to the end of the world, the faith of the elect: 'faith once given,' as Jude calls it, ver. 3.

I cannot press this point, but make this use further of it. We have the Spirit of faith, and the same Spirit of faith with them that were before. Therefore let this comfort us, that if we truly believe, we are brought into communion and fellowship with the church that hath been and shall be to the end of the world, that is now in heaven; for we have all one Spirit. Though instead of faith they have vision, yet we have all one Spirit. Is it not a sweet thing to have communion with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets and apostles? And so we have, if we be true believers, by the same Spirit of faith. Perhaps we differ in the measure and degree, because the necessities of one are more than the necessities of another; as in organ pipes the same breath is in all the pipes, but some sound little and some have a greater sound, answerable to the making of them, yet one breath makes them all sound. So there is the same Spirit in all the church, but some have little, some great measure, according as their necessities and places in the church are; and therefore it is of great comfort, and it may teach us, as a comfort, that we have communion



of saints in this church, that the Spirit is in all, so to love communion of saints. We have 'one faith, one spirit, one baptism,' Eph. 4:5.

That wherein Christians agree is better advantageous to this purpose to enforce unity and peace than anything wherein they disagree, to make a rupture and fraction. Perhaps they may disagree in ceremonies, in opinion of this or that; but if there be one faith, one baptism, if there be unity in the main, shall other things of less concernment be of force to make a fraction in the church? Oh beloved, no! The church before Christ, and the church after Christ, for garments they did differ, for outward appurtenances. As a child and a man, it is the same person, yet he hath one apparel when young, another when a man; so the church when young had one kind of ceremony, when old another, yet at all times one Spirit. So one church may differ from another in this or that particular outward appendixes, but what is that to the spirit of faith? There is one Spirit of Christ in all; and is not that of greater force to knit together than other lesser matters to make a division? which should teach us more and more to study the unity of the Spirit. Were it not an excellent thing if all Christians in the world had the spirits to agree in the same things, and love the same things that shall be our life in heaven? And it were not heaven on earth if there were no agreement in the judgment and affections of Christians. Therefore study peace; and for other matters, they will follow. Let them not be of that concernment as to make any separation: Philip. 2:1, 'If any consolation, if any peace, if any love,' &c., 'be of like mind one toward another.' Why, what is the cause they press union so much? Because our happiness is in it, and Christ in his excellency, to pray that 'Christ and all may be one,' John 17:11; because the same Spirit that knitteth to Christ knitteth to one another by love, and all grace and comforts are derived to Christians as knit to Christ by faith, and to others by love. If we be not knit to Christ, there is no derivation of

grace from the head; where there is no derivation, there is decay of grace suitable. Therefore as we will grow in grace and comfort, there is more force in union than is thought of; and if it were serious[ly] thought of, in regard of our own benefit, we should labour to maintain it.

## **VERSE 13**

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.

You have heard before at large how the apostle answers all discouragements, from God's gracious dealing with them.

Now, St Paul goeth forward with the words read to the end of the chapter, in setting down divers encouragements to help him to go on in his Christian course. One is in the verse I have read to you; 'We have the same spirit of faith, as it is written,' &c.

We must go through many afflictions, inward and outward, before we come to heaven. And therefore the apostle multiplies grounds of comfort, whereby he may be carried through all to the end of his race.

The first ground of comfort in these words is from the words, 'We have the same spirit of faith' that David and others had before, 'and therefore we speak;' therefore we are bold in our profession.

In these words we have already considered divers things. Of faith we shall have occasion to speak afterward.

Now whereas he comforts himself from the example of David: 'David believed and spake, and therefore I believe and speak.' We have a sweet pattern how to make use of the Scriptures; in reading of them, read ourselves in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are not only written for us, and written for them that lived in those times; but God, in his infinite wisdom and foresight, knew that whosoever\* was in Scripture should be applicable to all times and states of the church: for though it was written at divers times, yet nothing shall fall out to the end of the world, but there is something in Scripture to rule it, else there would need multiplication of Scriptures to the end of the world. And therefore the Scriptures contain necessary truths, both for the times wherein they were written, and for all times to the end of the world. As the apostle argues, 'David believed, and spake,' therefore we may, because the case is alike. The church in regard of prerogatives of salvation, and in regard of many duties and promises, hath the like command and interest from the beginning of the world; as we say of corpus homogeneum, every part of an homogeneal body hath respect to the whole. Every drop of water is water; every spark of fire is fire; but every piece of an arm is not an arm, because it is heterogeneal. I speak of it, because in many prerogatives and promises there is the like reason of every member, and of one member and another; as David speaks and believes, and therefore we speak. 'Abraham believed, and it was imputed for righteousness,' Rom. 4:22; let us believe, and it shall be imputed for righteousness. I believed, and found mercy: if we believe, we shall have mercy. Peter, after he denied his Master, found mercy; if we do the same, we shall find the same, because there is the same reason for the whole church, and every particular member. And, therefore, when we read the Scripture, we should read to take something out for ourselves. When

we read any promise, this is mine; and any privileges, these belong to me; when we read a good example, this concerns me; as I said before, 'Whatsoever was before written was written for our learning, that through patience and learning of the Scripture we might have hope,' Rom. 15:4.

There is not anything that befalls a Christian in his life, but there is a rule or pattern for it in Scripture. If we were skilful to bring the places and rules together, we should see a ground in Scripture for everything, both for all duties and all things to be believed. And there be not only rules in Scripture, but also rules quickening by example; for divinity is of practical knowledge, and therefore it is enlivened and interlaced with examples, as here he makes use of the example of David. God doth not write us laws, and leave them barely in our possession as commands; but God quickens and enlivens all the rules and promises with the practice of some of the blessed saints. None can read David's psalms but he shall read himself in them. He cannot undergo a trouble, but he shall find David under the same trouble; he shall not need a comfort, but he shall see David comforted with the same comfort; so that he is a pattern for them. It is a comfortable thing to read the Scriptures, because there we shall find whatsoever is useful for us. They that go into a garden that is beset with flowers, they cannot but receive a sweet spirit and breath from the flowers in the very walks; and so there is such a spirit in Scripture, that we cannot read the Scriptures with reverence but there is a sweet savour that springeth from them, which both delights and strengthens at once. No walk is so comfortable as the walk of Scripture; therefore, take our solace there, and we shall see the promises, and those enlivened with examples and patterns, and the Spirit of God bringing the like sweetness and the like strength into ourselves. Oh that we would be more in love with reading of Scripture. We see the apostle Paul, as great a man as he was, encourageth himself and strengthens

himself with the pattern of holy David: 'David believes and speaks, and I believe and speak.' So that you see how you may make benefit of the Scripture.

From hence you have a rule of enlargement of the Scripture to you, and a rule likewise of application, that when we read the Scriptures we may enlarge them, and apply them to ourselves in particular. And so much for that point, we have faith, the spirit of faith. 'And the same spirit of faith, according as it is written.'

The next thing observable is this, that after the spirit of faith he names belief; and after belief, he names speaking; whence observe the connection and knitting together of these things by God, the coherence that God hath made betwixt. First, there is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Spirit is the agent that works all in the church, it being Christ's vicar on earth, and that Spirit works a spirit of grace in us, in particular a spirit of faith. When the Holy Ghost hath framed our hearts to believe, then we believe; and when we believe, then we speak. So that these go together, the Spirit of God, begetting in us a spirit of faith, and an act of believing answerable to the frame proceeding from a spirit of faith; and then, because faith is the spring and foundation of all other graces, 'we believe, therefore we speak.'

First of all, the Spirit of God works a blessed frame in our hearts, here called the 'Spirit of God.'\* The Holy Ghost doth not only work by a Christian as an instrument, but works in him as a subject. Our soul is altogether out of frame. The Holy Ghost, therefore, puts us in frame by a spirit of faith, infusing a spirit of knowledge into the understanding, a spirit of obedience into the will. He draweth the will and enlighteneth the understanding, and then we believe. All actions come from a fountain, and spring, and life, and frame within:

the Holy Ghost worketh a holy frame, and then we act. We must not think of believing without a spirit of faith first, for that is to conceive of a river without a spring head, or a beam without a sun, or a branch without a root. And therefore, as faith cannot be without the Holy Ghost, so belief cannot be without the spirit of faith, which is only for the clear conceiving of the point. We shall make use of it afterwards.

First, a spirit of faith, and then we believe. So that the grace of faith cometh from the Spirit, but the act is ours, and comes immediately from us, which serveth to answer an idle objection against those that be all for grace. If we do all by the help of the Spirit, and we have no liberty, then the Holy Ghost believeth, and the Holy Ghost speaketh, and the Holy Ghost loveth, and not we. The objection is [not] idle against those that be all for free grace.

It is true, the grace is from the Spirit, but when the grace is received, the act is from ourselves, not only from ourselves, but immediately from ourselves. We cannot but confess it so.

For instance, a windy instrument is fit to sound, but it actually soundeth not till it be blown. So other instruments of hand are fit for music, but it makes not music till it be stricken by the hand. So we do not actually believe, but by an act of the Spirit; but yet the act of believing is our own. The wind in one instrument, and the hand on the other instrument, must make the sounds, and yet the instruments sound. And so, though we have the grace of faith, and faith is ours in believing, yet the very act of believing cometh from the Holy Ghost, though not immediately. We speak, but the Spirit opens our mouth; and we believe, but the Holy Ghost inspires a spirit of faith; and we do, but as we are enabled to do; *acti agimus*, we move, but *moti movemus*. So that there is an action and passion in all the graces and exercises we do. We are first patients, and then

agents; first the Spirit of God works on us, and then we work; not the Spirit immediately, but we by the Spirit.

So we see how these two are reconciled. We believe, we speak, we do good, and yet the Holy Ghost doth all. How? Thus; the Holy Ghost sets us in a holy frame, and then being in that frame, the Holy Ghost fits us to speak, to do, to work, to suffer, to do all that is to be done. We are the agents, and yet we do no further than as acted by a superior agent. As with the orbs, the inferior orbs move but as they are moved by an higher, except the highest of all: so all the subordinate agents under God, they are moved by God. For if the will were moved, and were not moved by God, then so many wills, so many gods, for there is nothing independent but God.

But to speak of the positive truth: all the frame of grace comes from the Spirit. We work, but by the Holy Ghost, as Ps. 51:15, 'Open my lips, my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.' Now David saith here, 'We believe, therefore speak;' we speak, but it is God that opens our mouth.

But I rather intend points of practice. For besides that proper act of faith to believe, there is a commanding act of faith, which stirs up the soul to do, for faith stirs up all other graces. The proper act is to believe, but by believing it stirs up and quickens all other graces of the soul. Therefore, Heb. 11, you see that all other graces are attributed to faith. By faith Enoch did walk with God, and by faith Noah prepared an ark, and by faith Moses was courageous and bold; and so you see all their excellent graces, they have their spring and stirring up from faith. So that having the same Spirit we not only believe but speak.

The next point observable hence is, that a Christian knows he doth believe. 'I believe, therefore I speak.' And a Christian knoweth his

own faith, and by consequence he may know certainly his state in grace. It is not an idle, dormant, sleepy faith; but 'I believe, therefore I speak.' It makes them fix the eyes of their souls so much on their deserts and guilt, that they look all to that till they be surprised with horror, till God hath humbled them, though there be a striving of soul against despair, and striving for favour and mercy.

In these particular cases there may be faith without the knowledge of the act. But ordinarily the frame of a Christian is such, that he knoweth what he knows, and he doth know that he doth believe when he believeth; and thereupon he knoweth his state in grace. How else should he be thankful to God? how should he be pitiful? how should he be content and quiet in his condition? how should he be fruitful in his conversation? Beloved, the knowledge that we are in a good condition is a most fruitful knowledge. It is the best frame of the soul, when it hath grace, and knows it hath grace, and never hath a good frame till then. When we are in God's favour, and we know that we are in God's favour, it puts us in a holy disposition to God, to love him, to be thankful to him, and in a gracious disposition to him to be abundant in the work of the Lord. It works a sweet disposition in ourselves, begetting in us much patience, when we know we believe, and believing that we shall be saved, for salvation is the end of faith. Faith never endeth but in salvation.

And therefore it should be our main endeavour to believe, and then labour to know that we do believe, that Satan may not hide our evidences from us, and make us bear false witness against ourselves; and so when he cannot hinder our salvation, he hinders our comforts in the way to heaven, as it is his way, by casting a mist and cloud between our souls and God's favours. 'Therefore give all diligence to make our calling and election sure,' 2 Peter 1:10. The more we grow in assurance that we believe, and by believing our interest in Christ,



the more we grow in grace, and in all comforts whatsoever. They pretend it is a way to bring to security. Indeed, of heavenly security it is. But who fears to displease God most? and who takes most care to please him? Is it not them that have sweet contentment in his favours? that be loath to displease him? And is it not their whole care to please him, and continue sweet communion with God? They speak against the nature of the things, and against experience. But how shall a Christian know that he doth believe? Will he think he doth not believe, when he cannot peremptorily conclude, I do believe? Though he cannot reflect upon himself strongly, yet he may reflect upon himself, especially by conference with them that can discern that he hath desires. There is afterwards in a Christian, Christian mourning, sighing, and groaning, and he will not deny but he desires to have faith, he mourns that he hath it not. Let them reflect on that, and bring the Scripture to that case. The Scripture speaks comfortably of desires, of parts, of the gracious desires; he that desires faith hath a measure of faith, if he desire it truly.

And therefore you say you have no faith. Your desires shew you have. You can reflect, and know you desire, mourn, hunger, and thirst, and would have grace. Now are the promises made to this desire? 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the poor in spirit,' Mat. 5:6, seq.

Then again, there is a combat in them. They that have the main act of faith, they have strife between flesh and Spirit, between unbelief and faith. None will say but he striveth against unbelief, and endeavours against it. That very strife is an argument that there is a spirit of faith, an act of faith; and they may know that act of faith, if they will consider seriously. The very strife is a greater argument of comfort that they have faith, than the confidence of many carnal men that they have faith. For their confidence is a false argument; and then

the others doubting, and striving against doubts and remainders of infidelity, is an argument of their having faith.

Again, they that have the least degree of faith, they look up to God, they never forsake God, they will die at his feet, and they will cast themselves down before his footstool, before his mercy; let him deal with me as he will, they resolve of that. And where this is, it argueth a spiritual act of faith. So that in some cases a man may have an act of faith, and yet not know it. And in some cases there may be a confidence of the presence of faith, when yet they have it not.

How shall I know false confidence? It is a large point, and I will name but two or three things.

(1.) False confidence is groundless, voluntarily taken up of themselves without the Scriptures, because they wish well to themselves; and out of self-love they think they have anything they want. If they go to the grounds of Scripture, they would rather despair, because there be many blasphemous, loose lives secure of goodness. Faith affirms he is not worthy to live that believeth not. If they did believe, they would believe their own damnation. They should believe there is nothing between them and hell, but a little uncertain life: for they live in the curse of God, and live in sin, damned by Scripture. And therefore their faith is not only a barren faith, but a presumptuous faith, and groundless.

(2.) And again, you may know false confidence, because as it is groundless, so it is careless in the use of good means. A confident spirit, out of self-love, will persuade itself all is well, and yet be bold in the use of means. And so it is fearless till trouble comes; and when trouble comes, then they sink. He is confident, before trouble of conscience or outward troubles seize upon him; but when any trouble comes, then they see all was but a spirit of presumption and

carnal confidence; then they see there was never sound peace between God and them, never sound union between Christ and them. For it is the nature of false confidence to be confident before, and to sink into despair in times of trouble.

(3.) And again, false confidence, as it is groundless in the use of means, and spiritless in danger, so it is fruitless. It brings not forth fruit of faith, it is barren. And therefore let people that be careless of the exercise of love and other graces in their conversation boast of faith what they will, it is but a confidence; they think they believe when they do not believe.

(4.) In the next place, faith is an exercising grace wheresoever it is. 'I believe, therefore I speak.' It is a working grace wheresoever it is. He shews his faith by obedience and practice, so that the truth of faith is an active and working grace. And therein it differs from the confidence spoken of before. It works in heaven, it works with God, it layeth hold upon him, wrestles with him for a blessing, and overcometh him; it works on earth, and overcomes all on the right hand and left, all temptations of prosperity, presenting better things than the world can; it overcometh all temptations on the left hand, all fears and threatenings, and presents to the soul worse dangers than anything here. What can be threatened comparable to hell? and what can be promised comparable to a good conscience and heaven hereafter? It works stronger than hell and temptations. And it must needs be so, because it is a grace of union that knits us to Christ. It is the fountain of life. We cannot touch Christ without life, virtue comes from him upon every touch; his grace, his union, and being. So it draweth virtue from Christ. The spirit of faith is a spirit of power, a spirit of vigour. Faith infuseth vigour into the whole soul, silencing all objections that the heart can make; answers all temptations that the devil can make; triumphs over all that can be presented to it, and

draweth it from God. It is powerful with God himself. I will not enter into commonplaces of faith, but only as it comes in my way shew that where belief is it will work, and the particular work of it is to 'speak.'

(5.) As it is a working grace, so it is a bold grace. 'I believe, therefore I speak.' If there be faith in the heart, it will express itself in the tongue. If the heart be a good treasure, it will vent that treasure. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak,' Mat. 12:34. And therefore as there will be encouragement and strength and vigour, so there will be boldness in speaking to God. Faith is a grace that hath liberty with it. Where the Spirit is there is liberty, specially where the spirit of faith is; because faith sets the soul at liberty from fear of guilt and damnation, and persuades the soul of contentment with God in Jesus Christ.

(6.) Where the spirit of faith is, there is boldness to the throne of grace; and therefore because we believe we speak. We speak to God in prayer, because we believe we are reconciled to God in Jesus Christ. Wheresoever faith is there is prayer. Speaking to God in prayer is the prime expression of faith; as faith is the birth of a Christian, for it knits him to Christ the fountain of life. A child as soon as it is born crieth, and a new-born child as soon as it is born crieth to God. He hath a familiar kind of boldness to go with reverence to God, and say, 'Abba, Father.' As soon as ever Paul was converted, 'behold, he prayeth,' Acts 9:11. He might speak prayers before, but he never prayed till then. A man never prayeth till he believeth; and when he believeth, he prays presently with the spirit of faith. Therefore it is a spirit of supplication; they go always together.

And the reason is, because as soon as ever a Christian is new born, he is sensible of the root and spring whence he hath all his strength and all he hopes for. It is in Christ. And therefore as by faith he is knit to

Christ, so by faith he makes use of Christ. Faith is an emptying grace of itself, and emptying the soul, sendeth forth his ambassador, prayer, to fetch all help from heaven. Prayer is the messenger, the ambassador of faith, the flame of faith. Where faith is kindled within, it flames out in prayer. Prayer, you know, sheweth that there is nothing at home, for then we would not go abroad. Faith is a grace that goeth out of itself. It hath the greatest humility that can be, and is always seated in an humble soul, that despaireth of itself, and is emptied of itself; and therefore the first expression of faith out of itself must be to the fountain of help and fountain of strength and comfort together, and therefore sends forth prayer. Prayer and faith are all one, prayer being nothing but faith digested into words and conceptions. Faith prevails, so prayer prevails; and according to the measure of faith, so are the degrees of the spirit of prayer. And then again, our tongues being our 'glory,' Ps. 16:9, it hath a desire to glorify God, and that is in speaking, praising of God, and praying to God. And therefore those that do not pray, they have no faith. Little faith, little prayer; and great faith, great measure of prayer. And as faith groweth, so the spirit of prayer and supplication groweth. They increase and decrease in a proportion.

And therefore let us examine ourselves, if we believe, to pray; if we believe, to speak. A Christian is no still-born creature. He that is new-born, he is not still-born. He crieth to his Father for strength of grace. There is a spirit of boldness, together with the spirit of faith, whereby we can look God in the face reconciled in Jesus Christ. Now, looking upon God as a Father, we cannot but as to a Father repair to him in all our necessities. So you see the connection of these two, 'I believe, therefore I speak.'

And as it is true of prayer, so of praise, for that is also the language of the Spirit of God. God will have occasion, for our tongue is our glory;

we glorify him in our whole man. The heart giveth him the glory of all his attributes; the speech giveth the glory of it to him. And therefore, Ps. 63:5, 'When I am filled with marrow and fatness,' the inward comforts of grace, 'then shall I praise thee with joyful lips;' that is, then shall he sound forth the praises of God in his speech. He praiseth God not only for what is past, but he praises him for what is to come. 'I believe, therefore I speak.' For if a man by the spirit of faith apprehend the resurrection of the body and glory in the world to come, that Spirit, apprehending the excellency to come, will stir him up to praise God beforehand; as by a spirit of faith we take things in trust, as if present; we see heaven, and glory to come, as if present: 'For faith is the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. 11:1. So it stirs up affections as if present. In heaven we shall praise God for ever, and therefore faith makes heaven and happiness as if present to the soul. It enlargeth the soul with thanks beforehand. Therefore when the apostles speak of the glorious condition to come, presently they break out into praises. As they believe, so they speak, as Peter prayeth, 'By the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that hath begotten us again to an inheritance immortal, undefiled, reserved for us in the heavens,' 1 Pet. 1:3, 4. He believeth heaven is kept for him, and he for heaven, and therefore he praiseth God for it. If we believe the blessed state to come, we will speak the praises of God before hand; and therefore it is the state of God's children in time to come, revealed now, that God may have present praise. Faith sets the soul in heaven in some sort, and as it setteth us in heaven where Christ is our head, so it setteth us into the employment of heaven; and what is that? To have a heart enlarged to praise God.

Likewise if we believe we will speak to men, not only to God in prayer, but of God to men, 'in the great congregation,' as the prophet speaks, Ps. 22:25; we will not be ashamed of God, but speak to him by prayer in all things, and of his truth; and speak for him too when

religion is opposed, and his children disgraced. He that hath not a word to speak of God for the benefit of others by way of edification, that hath not the spirit of prudence to speak a word in season, nor a spirit of courage to speak for God, I will never believe he will speak to God as he should, I will never believe he doth believe. For he that believeth, he will speak to God in prayer, and praises, and of God, and for God. Beloved, in this world God puts his cause and his truth, and the state of God's people, into our hands, and counts himself beholding to us if we will stand for him, and trieth what we will do for him, whether help him in his church and people or no. He crieth, Who will be on his side, who? as Jehu said, 2 Kings 9:32. Specially in times of opposition and lukewarm times, when there is a clouding of religion, men will be of all sides, and no side to serve their turn. Therefore 'Curse ye Meroz, for he helped not the Lord,' Judges 5:23. God thinks himself helped by us when we speak for a good cause, for a good person, for justice, for truth; and if we will not own the cause of God in doubtfuls, God will never own us. Doth God honour us so far as to put his cause into our hands, making himself beholding to us for his word? And shall not we speak a word for his church, his children, but rather join with backbiters, and slanderers, and secret papists? All slander her religion, her faith. What saith our Saviour Christ? Is not that an idle thing?\* 'He that is ashamed of me before men, I will be ashamed of him before my Father which is in heaven,' Mat. 10:32, 33. They have the name of God in their foreheads. As the antichristian limbs carry his mark, so they that belong to Christ carry his mark; that is, they are bold for the Lord, known of their Master, to speak as to him, so for him, when occasion is offered. 'Wisdom will be justified of her children,' Mat. 11:19, and therefore they that believe will justify wisdom, will justify the cause of religion. And they that do it not do not believe, for he that believeth will speak. Christ is called λόγος, the speech, the word, because as a word expresseth the mind, so Christ expresseth what is in the bosom and heart of God

towards us. And as he hath truly expressed from God to us what is the Father's good pleasure to us, being the word, so every Christian must be the word to express what Christ hath done for him and for the church. And we must do this bodily, sincerely, freely, and roundly, without tergiversation, equivocation, or delusion; we must be bold for a better Master. It is true out of the nature of the thing we cannot but speak. A convinced understanding and sanctified heart cannot but speak when an opportunity is offered. I wonder any should ever think to look the blessed Saviour in the face with comfort, and yet notwithstanding betray his cause, betray religion here. And therefore, I beseech you, consider the connection of these two together, 'I believe, therefore I speak.'

By this therefore I have spoken, you may learn what to judge of your natures. Those that are partial of both sides, and of neither, that count it a policy to conceal themselves, they think whatsoever shall fall out they will be sure to displease no party beforehand, that so they may have friends; and so, to redeem a peace to themselves, they betray religion and the cause of Christ. You may say, "What wisdom is that? It is a wisdom of the flesh, and a plain discovery they have no faith at all, or at the least a very weak faith, no faith at all.

And therefore they are called Nicodemites; that is, such as keep religion to themselves; it is a false means.\* For Nicodemus at first indeed[so] came for Christ, but after he defended him against the Scribes and Pharisees. And at his death, when all forsook him, then Nicodemus and Joseph appeared. So it was a growing faith. And therefore let no man that conceals religion pretend Nicodemus. If they mean to be in that condition they are in, if they will sleep in whole skins, then it argueth they have no faith at all; but if they are ashamed of it, and grow, and by falls learn to stand strongly, and find their weakness sanctified to get more strength, it is a good sign. But



those that are neuters, and for all turns, you may say they have no faith. He is not worthy of a tongue that will not speak for Christ, that will not speak for the giver of speech. He is unworthy to speak that will not speak for him that hath enabled him to speak. You are more like the Samaritans, that would be of no certain religion. They would worship God, and they would worship the gods of their country likewise; they would be of the Jewish religion when the Jews flourished, and against the Jews when the Jews were down. So that they would be of all religions and of no religion. And so you have some that have their religion to choose for all turns; so far as stands with outward conveniences they will appear, and when it doth not, they will betray it; vespertiliones in fide, as he calls them, bats, that will neither be amongst the birds or other creatures, but doubtful creatures, you cannot tell what to make of them (bb). So there will be always some doubtful persons that you cannot tell what to conceive of them in religion; but this you may make out, they do not believe, for if they did believe, they would speak.

And therefore let us be stirred up to speak in the cause of Christ as occasion serveth. There must be a spirit of discretion and wisdom when and how to speak, of which I have spoken at large heretofore out of Rom. 10. Only, I beseech you, if occasion be, be entreated to be as bold for Christ as others against Christ, as bold for religion as others against religion. I am sure we serve a better Master. It is a shame to hear papists, and popish spirits, and half atheists speak dangerously to the destruction of youth, that they may be saved in any religion if we believe in God and keep his commandments; and so run to some few generals, whenas the will in the mean time falls a-swelling and breaks the commandments. They bring all to a few heads, and shuffle off all with a generality in any religion; if you live well you may be saved. Therefore let us be as bold and impudent\* for Christ as his enemies shall be against him. And because we see that

boldness in the cause of Christ comes from a spirit of faith, as all other graces come from faith, let us be stirred up to labour for faith above all other graces, that that may be planted in our hearts. And that it may be so, do but observe these directions.

First of all, consider who it is that giveth us comfort and giveth us promises; dwell much in the consideration of the loving faithful nature of God, and then consider former experiences, how God hath made good all things to us; consider what pure and glorious pledges and promises we have for time to come. Peace of conscience is pledge of the peace which is heaven; joy in the Holy Ghost, a pledge of the joy in heaven. And then consider the excellency of the things we are to believe. The objects of faith, the promises, are surpassing things, even surpassing admiration. Oh the excellent things laid up in another world! If we cannot express the first fruits, the earnest here, what shall we do with the fulness of happiness that we shall enjoy hereafter? A probability of excellent things will set men more to endeavour than a certainty of petty and base things.

Now that we have offered to us things above admiration, we may stand in wonderment at the love of God, that hath laid up things 'that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive,' 1 Cor. 2:9. And shall not these things stir up the spirit of faith and endeavours suitable, whenas a probability of excellent things, though earthly, will stir up endeavours? Therefore, where there is no endeavour against earthly things, we do not believe a whit. The evil things we be forced from are so terrible, and the good things present to faith so excellent, that if they were but probable conjectures, they would be better than they were. Therefore many are so far from faith, that they have not conjectures there be such things, for infidelity reigneth in their hearts. If faith set up a kingdom in their hearts never so little, it would stir up boldness; and therefore

consider of all the sweet natures of God reconciled, and approve but the excellency of the things, which if we have the apprehension of in weak measure, they will make us better than most of your common blasphemers, and swearers, and scornors of goodness. He inwardly laugheth and scorns at all parts of religion. Though for shame of men he comforteth himself something, yet notwithstanding, infidelity reigneth in his heart.

Second. Again, that faith may set up a regiment in the soul, consider now that this is the grace that infuseth vigour and strength into all our graces; all are nothing without faith. Faith must fetch from Christ strength for patience and contentation. There is no other grace but hath his vigour from faith, as faith from the Spirit of God. Therefore pour water upon the root, water the root of all other graces, cherish faith. Oh, this consideration that all springeth and have their life and vigour from faith, and that now the government of the church, by the Spirit of God under covenant of grace, is to fetch all out of ourselves! We must have a supernatural eye, and a supernatural hand to reach to heaven and fetch treasure out of Christ, and spiritual virtue to draw out of Christ and his promises, and have all. Every time, every thing, every word, every action whatsoever, is out of ourselves, and cometh from a principle that is in Christ. And therefore, considering the excellency and necessity of grace, labour for it, and let it be more and more planted in us, that according to our apprehension of the excellency and necessity of it, and misery without it, we may earnestly endeavour after it.

## **VERSE 14**

Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall be present\* with you.

The apostle, in the former words, as we, heard at large, sets down the afflicted and comfortable condition of God's people; and because our nature is very unfit as to do good, so to suffer evil, therefore he opens a further spring of comfort to the end of the chapter.

Among others, as you heard the last day, this in the 13th verse is one. 'We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore I have spoken.' Here is a double comfort in whatsoever we suffer. 'We have a spirit of faith,' which is a spirit of strength wrought by the power of God itself, and laying hold likewise upon divine power.

And another ground of comfort is, 'We have the same spirit of faith,' and faith stirs up not only to believe,—the proper act of it,—but it stirs up speaking both to God in prayer and of God in praises, and for God in times of opposition. These things were more enlarged. I pass on now, only I add this, that before we speak we must believe. Mark the method, 'I believe, therefore I speak.' A man cannot speak to God in prayer, in praises, or speak of God aright, but he must believe what he speaks. You know it is monstrous that there should be a birth without conception, that a man should speak of that he doth not know, or speak of that he doth not believe. And we must labour to know and believe things in their own light by the Spirit. We must have a spirit of faith before we speak of spiritual things. This is a careless neglect that sometimes people will speak of good things, but they will speak of them in an human spirit, others in a diabolical spirit, by way of scoffing or blaspheming, as some never speak of God but they blaspheme and swear, nor ever speak of religion but with scorn, as if not grave enough for them; or if they speak sadly, they

speak of holy things with human spirits, not truly believing, as their hearts tell them, what they speak. Now the tongue must be the true messenger of the heart. The heart must indite, and the tongue write. And therefore we must endeavour by all means to have a spirit of faith, and labour with these false hearts of ours to believe, and then to speak. Our hearts else will give the tongue the lie. Thou speakest these things, but thou dost not believe them. And indeed a man may see by the manner of men's speaking of holy things that they believe not what they speak. As he said, 'If thou didst believe these things, wouldst thou speak so of them?' (cc). So if a man did believe divine things, would he speak so irreverently, so slightly of them as they do? And therefore we must labour to believe what we speak. If we speak to God or others of the state of grace, or the like, we must first have the Spirit of God; we must know the meaning of God, to speak of holy things in God's meanings. Were it not a bold part for a man to speak of another man's meaning, and never know his meaning? God discovers his meaning in the Scripture, and if we do not know his meaning; if we speak of certainty of salvation and of such matters, and of great spiritual things, and of knowing them by the Spirit of God, by his own Spirit; we speak of the love of God, and care and providence of God, and know not by his Spirit that he is this to us. Indeed, it is presumption for us to speak anything of God, unless God discover it at first; to speak anything of our own condition in an intimate manner, as if we were so and so, when the Spirit of God doth not truly dictate so much to our souls. We see spiritual things with spiritual light, and we must speak of spiritual things with help of the Spirit, and must judge of spiritual things by the discovery of the Spirit, or else we had better say nothing all\* than speak presumptuously. 'We believe, and then we speak.'

Obj. But you will say, Many divines speak excellent well for points of religion, and hold them, and yet their lives discover they have no

faith. And therefore there may be a spirit without faith.

Ans. Beloved, mark what I said before. They may speak of religious things in a human manner, and see spiritual things with a common light, but they cannot see spiritual things in their proper light without the Spirit of God. And they cannot speak of spiritual things in a spiritual manner without the Spirit of God. We must first believe, and then speak. Therefore our labour should be in the ground-work, to get faith in the heart. And when faith is gotten into the heart, it will quickly overpower all fears and doubts and despairings, and all rebellion. It is a victorious and conquering grace. If we can get that, it will subdue the heart unto itself. And it will make us speak boldly, and speak of holy things, and to purpose; to speak to God and of God in divine things, and of God in oppositions. So we must speak likewise for the good of others, by way of edification. And we must speak to our own hearts in times of temptation, speak to Satan by his solicitations. When Satan and our hearts shall speak to us, and judge us to be thus and thus, Thou art thus, and thus God saith by his Spirit, for saith faith, thus he hath told me, 'I am thy salvation,' he saith in Scripture, Ps. 35:3. 'If I believe, I shall not perish, but have everlasting life,' John 3:15. And he saith in particular to me by his Spirit, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' Mat. 9:2. Therefore care not what our doubtful hearts, or Satan joined with them, saith. God saith thus, and the spirit of faith saith thus; 'and as I believe, so I speak.' So that if there be a spirit of faith, we shall speak to our own hearts, 'Why art thou so disquiet, O my soul; and why art thou troubled in me? trust in God,' Ps. 42:5. Faith will quail all the rising doubts of our own hearts and temptations of Satan. Satan saith thus and thus, but what saith God? what saith the spirit of faith in me? That saith thus. Alas! when our hearts shall rise against us, and Satan shall join with our accusing consciences and have not a spirit of faith to speak against our hearts, and against our

hearts accusing us, guilt is a clamorous thing. Oh, the conscience and Satan makes great ado. When he getteth guilt he is an excellent rhetorician and orator, to set colours on things. If we have not something to still our clamorous consciences, and to quiet the accusation of conscience, what will become of us? And therefore labour so to believe that we may speak, not only to God, but for God and profitably to us; but in defence of ourselves, against our own unbelieving hearts and Satan's temptations.

What is the reason that poor souls yield themselves to despair, and so to a desperate conclusion of themselves oftentimes? Oh they labour not for the Spirit of God to believe first in their own hearts, and to have a word to answer Satan's temptations. And therefore, of all things, labour for the spirit of faith, that we may believe, and believing, may be able to speak, to speak every way, to express ourselves for God, for ourselves, for the truth.

The next verse is, 'Knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up with Jesus, and present us with him.'

Here is farther grounds of comfort, that God will raise us up by Christ, and present us with him. Paul comforted himself with this, that God should raise him by Christ, and present him with the believing Corinthians. Now this hath a double meaning: first, that God should raise him out of troubles, which are a kind of deaths, as in the beginning of the chapter he calls the troubles he was in 'a great death;' and then, that God would raise him at length out of the grave, and present him and them at the day of judgment, as his crown before the Lord.

This was his comfort. Now, for aught I see, the apostle may mean both subordinately one to another; for God doth raise us out of trouble by Jesus, and present us one to another in this world for our

comfort, and at length raise us out of the dust, and present us altogether, to be for ever together with the Lord. His comfort then is, that God will raise us up, and then he will present us with you. This is set down by the effect. 'God will do it; God that raised up Jesus will do it.' And the cause why God will do it is, because he hath raised up Jesus. First, God that hath raised up Jesus will by Jesus raise up us, and present us with you. So that here is the comfort and the ground of it. The comfort is double. God will raise us up, and then God will present us with you. The ground of it is this, why he will do it, because he hath raised up Christ. God is the author of it, and he that hath raised up Christ will raise up you. There is such a connection and blessed union between Christ and us, that the same power that raised up Jesus out of the grave will raise us up likewise.

So that here is a comfort above comfort; but yet 'knowing' is prefixed. 'Knowing that God will raise us up, because he hath raised up Jesus.' So that I may observe in the passage of it, that all comfort cometh into the soul by knowledge. God not only raiseth us up, and presents us one with another, by the same power that he hath raised up Jesus by, but we must know that it must be so, if we will have comfort. Whatsoever cometh into the soul to strengthen it cometh through knowledge. As from the heavens come light, and through light all influences, and whatsoever is sweet from heaven, to make things flourish, comes with light, so all things that come to the soul to make it comfortable and cheerful, comes with the light of knowledge. Indeed, all graces are nothing but knowledge digested, knowledge turned into affection and practice. What is anything but knowledge? any grace, but the performance of such a thing from such and such grounds? As we see in fruit, all that is in the fruit cometh from the juice that is [in] the root. And so the vigour and strength of everything is knowledge; I mean knowledge and a spirit of faith to believe what we know, to assent to it, and acknowledge it.



Light, you know, is very comfortable. Darkness is a state of fear. So ignorance is a state of doubting and fear. There is no good where ignorance is; but light and knowledge is a state of boldness. We believe, and speak, and are bold. Why? 'We know.'

And therefore the people that be careless of growing in knowledge, they be enemies of comfort and of grace. 'Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 2 Pet. 3:18. The most knowing Christian is the most constant, courageous, comfortable, fruitful Christian, because together with divine light enlightening the soul, there goeth divine heat, enlarging the soul to every duty, and to all comforts whatsoever. So much for that.

We will speak a little of the comforts and places of the ground of the comfort. 'He will raise us up, and present us with you.' Troubles that be greater are called death, as in the first chapter of this epistle.\* The Lord that delivered me from so great a death, and why? Specially for this end; because, as they be partial deaths, so likewise they agree with death. In this we despair of life and recovery. So when a trouble is great, as when a man is dead, the trouble is desperate. It is a death, there is no hope of recovery again. Now, saith Paul, though my troubles be great, yet notwithstanding God will raise me up, even out of death, and present me with you.

Quest. How knew Paul that God would do this?

Ans. It is like he knew it by a spirit of revelation, having nearer communion with God, as a more public person, than we have. But what is that to us? Can we say God will raise us up, and present us one to another, as Paul did? No, beloved, we cannot say so; but this we can say, God will raise me up out of this trouble, or if I die in it, God will raise me out of the grave. This is the happy condition of a Christian. He is sure, if he be in trouble, either to be raised for the

good of the church, if he hath any service for him to do; else if I die, he will raise me up at the last day with all his people, to be for ever with him. If it be for the good of the church, and mine own good to live, I shall live still; if not, I shall be sure to be raised at the latter day; fall out what will fall out, all falleth out well for the children of God.

Now the holy apostle no question had reference to both. He had both in his view, raising out of trouble, and raising to eternal life; because he could never speak of any inferior deliverances but his mind would run on the future, and that did terminate all comforts. All comforts end in the resurrection. Usually when Paul maketh mention of an inferior thing, he mounteth higher, he mounts to the highest of all; he resteth not his thoughts till he hath thought of that, as in the end of this chapter he endeth in the resurrection, and endeth in comfort, speaking gloriously of it. So at this time no question but there was present all deliverances in this world, but especially eternal deliverance in the world to come. As 2 Tim. 4:17, 'The Lord delivered me out of the mouth of the lion, and can and will deliver for the time to come, and present me to his heavenly kingdom,' that I am sure of.

So that it were a very heavenly course for Christians, if they think of anything that cometh from the love of God to them, to take hints from that, to take notice of the issue of all. All deliverances are terminated in their last deliverance out of the grave, and all blessings are terminated in the last blessing, life everlasting. And take every thing as a pawn, a pledge, a beginning of that, for the same love that giveth eternal comforts, giveth comforts in this world; and the same God that delivers out of the grave, delivers us out of troubles; and the same God that will bring us all to heaven, will bring friends together in this world, if it be for their good. And therefore if we will comfort ourselves solidly in any condition, extend our thoughts to the time to

come. Was it David's comfort when he said, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord'? Ps. 27:4. Was it his meaning to confine his thoughts on that only desire, and to dwell in the church for ever? No; 'that I dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' here while I live, and in heaven for ever when I am gone, Ps. 23:6: 'Doubtless I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever;' here while I live, and for ever in heaven. Then they will be solid comforts. If the drops of comfort we have in holy things be carried on to the end of all, everlasting deliverance, by the resurrection, and eternal comforts in heaven, then they would be comforts indeed. It is a good disjunction when friends promise to meet again. Well, we shall meet either here or in heaven, and perhaps here and in heaven. The same God that will comfort us in heaven, if he seeth it good for us, he will comfort us here with the presence of one another.

'He will raise us up, and present us with you.' That is another of his comforts. But what comfort is that in this world, if he meaneth only the joy in the world to come? as I am persuaded it is that he mainly aims at, the other was but that that by meditation he raised his thoughts to. What comfort is it that friend shall be presented to friend, pastor to people, believers among friends!

There be divers kinds of communion, if absent, by letters, by real tokens, by message; but what are these to presence? Presence is the sweetest kind of communion that can be. Communion one with another in presence is in deed, in word, of communion in presence. And therefore God will deliver us from trouble, and present us with you; for in presence every thing speaks comfort. Without discourse the very presence of a friend comforts. There is a quick and living power in the very face of a friend. The eye comforts, the speech comforts, all comforts, and nothing but comforts if they be hearty friends in the Lord.

And therefore saith Paul, this shall be my comfort and your comfort, that I shall be delivered out of this death, and presented with you, for your good, for my own comfort. And no question this is a beginning of heaven in this world. If there be any heaven on earth, it is the communion of saints; it is when many join together in an holy affection, that have not only general likings of the same things, but have the same spirit acting and living in them all, one and the same Spirit of God stirring up approbation and dislike of the same thing, the same end for good causes. This is a special comfort, if there be any comfort in this world. And so Paul meaneth, when he saith, 'I shall be delivered, and presented to you.' And therefore we should take special care to improve communion by all means, considering it was so sweet a thing. O qui congressus, et gloria quanta fuerunt! when Paul was severed a great while. Paul came with abundance of blessings of God, and they came with abundance of desire to have heavenly discourse with St Paul.

Thus while we be in this world we must be exercised with these intermitting comforts. This is a life of separation; we shall enjoy a while, and then part, till we be in heaven, 'and then we shall be for ever with the Lord,' 1 Thess. 4:18. 'Therefore comfort one another with these words.' What is the comfort? 'We shall be for ever with the Lord.' If it be such a comfort to enjoy communion one with another, what is it to enjoy communion for ever with the Lord in heaven? That is the meeting time, when body and soul shall meet, when Christ and all his members shall meet, when all the members of the church from the first to the last shall all meet. These three blessed meetings shall be, Christ and we, and we one with another, and body and soul. Then is the meeting, then is the presenting. But all other meetings together are comfortable, as they be tastes of the last and everlasting meeting that shall be revealed. This may comfort us in the parting of friends, in the loss of friends by death. There will be a time of meeting again.

Our head will bring all the members together, as it is said of Christ, 'that he shall gather all to a head,' Eph. 4:15: that being Christ's office, to gather all the children of God together, from whom they were fallen; to gather them to the angels in\* whom they were in terms of difference; to gather them together, one to another in love, and gathering to themselves in peace. This is Christ's work. This gathering together to a head belongeth to Christ. And though we be not together now, yet in heaven we shall be.

Now the ground of this is, God that hath raised up Jesus, will by Jesus do this. He considers of God as serveth his purpose. It is an act of a Christian, of a discreet and wise soul, to single out of God those attributes and those actions that suit to his present distress or present condition; as if a man be in perplexity, think of him as a God strong and wise; if a man be in any trouble, think of him as a good and powerful God; if a man be wronged, think of him as a God of vengeance. Thou God of vengeance, shew thyself! And when we be in any trouble and cast down, and dead, as troubled by others' deaths, then can God raise Christ out of the grave, who is our head. And out of the love that he loveth both mystical Christ and natural Christ, the Lord is gracious to all for his sake. He that loveth Christ as his own natural son loveth Christ mystical, all that be Christ's, with the same love that he loved Christ. As Christ himself prayeth he will embrace all such with the same love he loved himself withal, John 17:24, so God is well pleased and rests in his love, not only in his natural Son, but all that be his; and therefore out of love to his own Son, as he hath raised up him and set him in heavenly places, he will raise up all them that be his, and are engrafted into him. He that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also. What is the consequence? Because he hath raised up Jesus, therefore by Jesus he will raise us out of trouble. The ground is, Christ is a public person, and so in heaven is a public person, a second Adam, and raised up as a second Adam;

and therefore be raised up as [a] public person, and as a second Adam, and a root of all believers. He hath taken heaven in our place as our husband, and we sit in heavenly places with him; and therefore God that raised up him will raise us up also. 'If Christ be risen, we shall rise.' There is no question of it, as he proveth at large, 'because I live ye shall live also,' John 14:19. I cannot follow the point, but it is a point you are acquainted with all, being an article of faith. Therefore see the ground of this comfort. God will raise up us and bring us together, because he hath raised Jesus. He is the first-fruits of them that slept. Now all the harvest is blessed in the first-fruits. Our first-fruits is Christ now. And therefore we shall be here raised out of little deaths, and at the resurrection out of the great death, and be for ever with the Lord, which may teach us this comfortable observation; to see all our comforts in Christ first; to see all we look for from God, first in Christ and then in ourselves. If we look for love from God, see his love on Christ first: 'He loveth us because he loveth him first,' and he loveth us in him. If we look to resurrection, ascension, or glory, see it in Christ first. If we look for the performance of any promise, see that promise in Christ first, for all are made for his sake, and made good in him, to Christ first and then to us. If we want any grace, see it in Christ first, for he hath fulness of the Spirit for our sakes: 'And of his fulness we have received, and grace for grace,' John 1:16. So that in both estates of humiliation and exaltation severally, see all first in Christ and then in ourselves. Look on Christ in state of humiliation, and see ourselves there. 'Christ was a curse for us,' died for us. All this is for us. And see all the evil that belongeth to us taken away by him in his state of humiliation. He humbled himself to death, and became a curse for us. And so in his state of exaltation in several degrees. See our resurrection in his resurrection, our ascension in his ascension, our sitting in heavenly places by his sitting in heavenly places. The ground is, the union I spake of before. And then God hath decreed

that we shall be made conformable to his Son. 'We must be conformable to Christ our elder brother.' We are chosen to be conformable to him. And therefore whatsoever was in him, there will be a conformableness in us thereunto. And we must be content to go to heaven as Christ went. 'He first suffered and then entered into glory,' 1 Peter 1:10, 11, he rose again, but he died first. We must be content to go to heaven by that way that our blessed head and Saviour hath gone before us. And if we do so, surely that God that raised him will raise us up too.

I beseech you, therefore, when we are to consider of any comfort, see it in Christ first, not only as a pattern to whom we must be conformed, but see it in Christ as a cause, because Christ will raise us up. We shall not only be raised because he is raised, and ascend because he is ascended, but God will raise us up with Jesus. Between God and us cometh Jesus, for all that comes from God comes from Jesus. So all that cometh from us to God must go through the mediation of Jesus. 'He that raised up Jesus will by Jesus raise us up.' Christ is not only a pattern of conformity, but likewise a cause. And it is an improvement of the favour, that God doth us favour through such a one that standeth between him and us; that there should be so excellent a person as Christ to do all, to be a pattern of all, and cause of all. For can there be a better than he to raise us out of trouble here, and to heaven hereafter? Then he that is our own head, will he suffer his members to perish? And he that is so favourable with God, and one with God, that as a man layeth hold on us, and as God layeth hold on God, as a friend to him, being between both as a friend of both. As God, so we must trust him with all, with our rising again, with our ascension, with our glory in heaven. He is the Joseph between God and us. As he conveyed all favour to the patriarchs, from Egypt through Pharaoh,\* so Christ is the high steward of all, that hath the dispensing of all his comforts by our

sweet head, that is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, to make us for ever one with him. So that there is comfort in the deriving of comfort by so sweet, so loving, so gracious a head as Jesus is.

But you will say, Will Christ raise us out of trouble likewise? Yes, by the same power and virtue. For the virtue of Christ's resurrection reacheth farther than to raise us from death, for it extendeth itself to all abasements in the world. God raiseth us out of all abasements by the power that he raised up Christ, and by the power that Christ raised up himself. And therefore we should comfort ourselves in the distress of the church and personal distresses. And first for the church. God raised up Christ the head of the church after three days, and when they had rolled a stone upon the grave, and set a watch too, and when Christ had been a surety to bear the sins of all the elect of the world from the beginning to the end; Christ having a stone upon his grave, so much mould, and such a stone, and his grave watched and sealed; and then having as a public person the sins of all the world, yet Christ rose up again for all this.

Beloved, Satan and his instruments labour to bury the church if they can, and to roll a stone on the church, that it should never rise up again. It was their plot of late,\* and it is their purpose now, but that their power is a little broken. They would bury Christ and his church altogether, roll a stone on him, watch him that he should never rise again. This they do; and now in the third day he shall rise again. There may be a limited time of Jacob's sorrow, but there will be a day of deliverance. He that raised up the head of the church, after the time he had appointed he should lie there under the bondage and captivity of death, he will raise up the body of Christ. Our times are not in our hands, nor in the devil's time, nor in man's time, but in God's time. Men may oppose his time, and be against his time. 'They shall cast you into prison for ten days.' It is certain and sure, which



may be a comfort to the church. The church beyond seas was lately under hatches, and the enemy had got her into the grave, and thought to have rolled the stone upon the church; but God, that raised up Jesus, hath raised up the church in some comfortable measure, which may put us in hope, that now there is time to set prayer on work. It puts encouragement into our hands. That that God hath done, encourageth us to pray to God for the finishing of his own good work. We have not only faith and promises, but performances to encourage us. We see the stone is rolled off as it were. This is our comfort, and this is the church's comfort to the end of the world. She may be for a while under the grave, but God will send his angels, his messengers, one or another, to take away the stone, and raise up the church, as in the parable of the dry bones, Ezek. 37:1, seq. The church was 'as dry bones,' but 'the Spirit entered into them, and made them live.' So at length a spirit shall enter into the church, and it shall live. Babylon must fall; the church must rise. Christ will enlarge his church to the end [of] the world. Heaven hath said it, and hell cannot disannul what God hath concluded. He that raised up Jesus will raise up the church out of all its troubles. And for ourselves, in all deaths and all our desperate troubles, sink not under them. Make use of the articles of faith. They are of wonderful enlarged sweetness. The sweet article of the resurrection and life everlasting have influence into all our lives. Make use of that; God, that doth the greater, will not he do the less, if for our good? Will God raise my body out of the grave, and not out of this sickness? God that can raise me out of dust, cannot he raise me out of this trouble, and present me to my friends again? If for my good, he can do it.

And rise from inferior things to strengthen our faith, and the greatest things we have in faith for the time to come. Will God give me life everlasting, and not daily bread? Will God give heaven, and not provision to bring me thither? Will God raise me out of the dust,

when it is scattered I know not where, and get all my dust together, and quicken that dust, and not quicken me out of this, if it be for my good and the good of others? If he have any service to do for me, he will do it. And therefore, I beseech you, beloved, let us labour to strengthen our faith in the way to heaven, by that which is to come. What made the apostles pass through thick and thin, break through all troubles between them and heaven, but [that] they thought God would deliver them? If he did not deliver them, he would deliver them to heaven, and present them to his heavenly kingdom. Having heaven in their eyes, time to come in heaven, resurrection in their eyes, and glorious times in their eyes, it will be of such force and influence into their hearts, that they shall go through all things between, and make this disjunction; either God will raise me out of this, or out of the grave, and present me to his heavenly kingdom. I beseech you, therefore, learn this, that in all our dejections we make use of that last and powerful work of God in raising from the dead. Raising comforteth for what is past. Our Saviour Christ, our best part, our head, is in heaven, and we shall all draw to him in time. Let us not lose the benefit of such a meditation, of such a ground as this. See all in Christ beforehand; all is done in Christ. Beloved, can we have a better pledge and pattern, than to see all we look for done in Christ beforehand? We look for the resurrection, Christ is raised; and ascension, Christ is ascended. We look for glory in heaven: Christ is glorified, Christ, and we in Christ; for when we think of Christ, we must think of ourselves in Christ. And therefore, when we hear the creed repeated, and the articles of religion, or anything of Christ, let us wrap up ourselves by the spirit of faith in Christ, see ourselves crucified in Christ, and dead in Christ, and raised in Christ, and set in heavenly places with Christ.

I but administer the heads to you, for your meditations to work upon. You see what excellent use the apostle maketh of his faith. It

made him believe, speak confidently for the present. And therefore, with cheerfulness attend upon the blessed means of the word and sacrament, that God hath appointed to strengthen our union and communion with Christ. Christ is our life, and the nearer communion with him, the more life we have. And the sacrament is appointed for to seal to us this communion, to strengthen this near union, and receive\* with the spring and fountain of life, Jesus Christ. And therefore, come with exceeding comfort; and the more our union with Christ, the more our comforts in life or death. All depends on that: as we see hope of resurrection, hope of deliverance, hope of glory, doth all depend upon that, union first in Christ, then in us, and in us because in Christ. Therefore, strengthen union with Christ, and strengthen all. For matter of the sacrament, you are acquainted with the doctrinal part of it, have this conceit of it. It is a high ordinance of God, which strengthens faith, which being strengthened, strengthens all the powers of soul.

## **VERSE 15**

For all things are for your sakes, that most plenteous grace, by the thanksgiving of many, may redound to the praise of God.

The holy apostle, as we heard, labours to arm himself and all others against all discouragements in religion, by comforts fetched from religion.

He bringeth in divers springs of comfort in this latter part of the chapter. 'I believe, and therefore I have spoken; as David believed,

and therefore he spake.' It is no otherwise with us than with David and other saints before us, as we shewed at large.

The last day this comfort was handled, that God would raise him out of his trouble, and present him together with the Corinthians in his life, and at the last in the world to come. And from this ground, 'Because God raised up Jesus.' 'Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up by Jesus, and shall present us with him.' Of this I have spoken at large already.

I beseech you, before I leave this point, learn this, that in all our dejections, we make use of that last and powerful work of God, in raising from the dead.

I now proceed to what followeth.

'For all things are for your sakes.' Here is a farther ground of comfort, both of present deliverance, as for their sakes.

The second ground is, 'All is for the glory of God.'

And the means of that glory, 'Because the grace aboundeth,' that these deliverances spring from, 'thanksgiving abound to the glory of God.' Why should we be discouraged in suffering, since God will be presented with us in sufferings, delivering us in time, considering it is for the church's good, and for the glory of God? And for the glory of God in this way, because it will minister matter of praise, not of one, but of many, out of which praise God will be glorified. This is the scope of the words.

The first ground of comfort is, 'All are for your sakes,' both our sufferings, and assistance, and presence of God in them, and deliverance out of them, all is for you, 2 Tim. 2:10: 'We suffer for the

elect's sake,' all is for your sake. Indeed, beloved, it is a large diffused consideration, for all is for the church's sake, the world itself. The standing of the world is for the church's sake. If God had gathered his elect, there would be an end of these sinful days. Another sinful generation, God would not suffer the world to stand for a company of wretches, that daily blaspheme his name, that pollute and defile their souls and bodies, that oppose his truth like rebels.

That the world continueth, it is for the elect's sake, that they may be gathered out [of] the world. The world is as it were reprieved, because many are to be born in the world; as lewd women are reprieved, being with child, for that's sake that is to be born. So the world continueth because there is a generation to come; the number of the elect is not yet accomplished.

Thus you see the very world, and the standing of the world, is for the 'church's sake. The world is elect; and so are things in the world, in heaven or earth, in some sort. They are for the church's sake. 'To us a child is born, to us a son is given,' Isa. 9:6; for the church he died, for the church he rose again, for the church 'he appears in heaven and makes intercession,' as Rom. 8:34. He sits at God's right hand making intercession for us. John 17:17, 19, 'I sanctify myself;' that is, I prepare myself as a sacrifice to suffer for them. 'I pray not for the world, but for them thou hast given me out of the world.' All that Christ did suffer, enjoy, and do in heaven, as our head, it is for the church's sake. That he giveth gifts to wicked men, that they continue, it is for the church's sake, that they may be instruments and servants of the church. In that sense they be redeemed by Christ as servants of the church. We see in nature that summer and winter serveth for vines, and fruitful trees, and plants, for the good corn. Cold weather and warm weather, they have the leaves to cover them. And every thing serveth to bring forth the fruit; all these circumstantial things.

So whatsoever is circumstantial in the world, as kingdoms, states, government, they think to tumble in the world for their own ends, and to toss the world as they list. It is for a number of men unregarded, unknown, that pass here as unknown men, hidden men for the most part, it is for the church's sake that they continue, that they have any favours. They are beholden to the church for their lives, to the church for their standing, and for the gifts they have, though they think not so. God, the great God of heaven and earth, and Christ the great king of the church, in reference to his church, giveth gifts to men, magistrates, ministers, people, yea, even to them that be not good men, and all for the good of his church. So that 'all is for you,' word, sacraments, every thing.

I might make a large dispute here, but that I unfolded it at large out of that place in Corinthians, 'All is yours,\* which is the general. The church is yours, 'whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or things present, or things to come, or life, or death, or the world, all is yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'

And from this general truth the apostle deducts this, 'it is for your sake.' All things that we suffer, all things that are done to us is for your sake. If so be all things are for the church's sake, beloved, we ought to join with God, as Paul doth here. Christ hath passed as it were a deed of gift of all things to the church, to serve her turn, to bring the church to heaven. Shall not God's intent, and Christ's intent, be ours? Saith he, all that I do and suffer is for your sake. It is a happy thing when God's intentions and ends, and our ends, shall meet in one, beloved, voluntarily. And God will bring all men's ends to serve his against their wills. Oh but happy are we if we can make our ends meet with God's ends willingly and cheerfully.

Quest. What is the ground of this, 'that all things are for the church's sake'?

Reason 1. The ground of it is, that covenant, wherein God passeth over himself as it were to the church, 'I will be your God.' And Christ he is as it were not his own; he is the church's. Christ is the church's. Therefore all are the church's. All the three persons of the Trinity have their title of excellency from relation to the church. God a Father in regard of the church; Christ a redeemer in regard of the church; the Holy Ghost a comforter in regard of the church. So God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they are in covenant with the church. And they are the church's, as it were making themselves the church's, out of that infinite bottomless love; being God, they have made themselves the church's.

Now if God himself be the church's, and in covenant with it, that the church may improve him, and whatsoever is in him, all his excellent attributes for their comfort and good, shall not all other things be the church's? If God himself be reconciled to the church, shall not all things else be reconciled? If God be in covenant, shall not every thing? 'The stones in the street be in covenant with him,' as Job saith, 5:23.

Reason 2. A second subordinate ground to this is, the union with Christ the king of the church. Now all things serve Christ, who is the king of heaven and earth; his kingdom reaches from heaven to the bottom of hell; he overruleth cursed devils and wicked spirits. Who is he whom the devils obey? saith God. Now if all things serve Christ, they serve his spouse, by reason of the union and spiritual commerce with Christ, to whom God hath dedicated and committed the rule and government of heaven and earth. All things are mine in heaven and earth, committed to me, saith Christ, when he ascended into

heaven; and therefore as Christ is the great Lord of the world, so the church is the great queen and empress of the world. All things serve Christ the husband, and all things must serve the church his spouse. It must be so. God is in covenant with the church, and Christ is hers by union with the church. 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm,' Ps. 105:15. Withhold the hand of violence from them, they are mine. So Christ is head, king, and husband of the church, and will not suffer her to be wronged in his sight, but all things shall serve for the church's good.

Reason 3. Again, to come nearer and lower to us. If you look to us, all is for the church's sake, the children of God too; because God hath put a Spirit into his church to extract good out of all. 'All is for your sakes.' The Spirit of God shall teach you to see God seeking your good in all things. God puts it into the spirit of his children to seek the good of his church in all things. Paul had the Spirit of God to direct his aims, as none but the child of God hath right aims to seek God in all things, and his glory.

The church hath the Spirit of God to see God seeking their good in all things. 'This shall turn to my good,' saith Paul, 'through the supplies of the Spirit and your prayers,' Philip. 1:19. The church prayeth that all things may serve for his good; that God would sanctify all his crosses and afflictions; that God would bless magistrates, ministers, and all ordinances for their good; that, with the Spirit of God, and this action's\* exercise of the Spirit of thanksgiving and prayer, all things are made for the church's good, because they have a spirit specially shewing itself in a spirit of prayer, to work good out of everything. Therefore the children of God pray that God would bless his sufferings and deliverances, and all things, not for his own good, but for the church's good. And the church itself and every good Christian labours to see God, seeking and deriving good to



themselves out of everything; for the covenant of God, being friends of God; and they are near to Christ, and near to God in Christ. And they labour to see the love of God and the love of Christ in all things, that so the sweetness and communion of the love may be increased. God acquaints them with his secrets in everything, so much as may be for their eternal good; and with the secrets of his election, how he directeth and ordereth all things to their good. He never corrects but he instructs with it; he never afflicteth but they know the ground of it; and so by the Spirit of God are enabled to draw good out of everything. In prosperity they see God seeking their encouragement; in crosses they see God seeking their humility and repentance. So that on these and other grounds which I might name, all things are for the church's sake. Why do the children of God look for the good of the church?

The reason why Saint Paul as a minister sought the good of the church, was the relation between a master and a people, between an apostle and people, called and gathered by him; and in relation as a Christian, because fellow-members with them.

If I were to speak to ministers, I would speak of the relation between pastors and people, how they should seek the good one of another; but as a Christian, all is for your sake. No Christian but as soon as [he is] a Christian hath a public mind inspired into him to seek the good of others; he concurs with God willingly. As soon as ever he is a Christian, he learneth self-denial; he knows he hath given up himself and all to God, to the church, and he is become a servant to others for Christ's sake. As soon as ever a man begins to be a Christian he hath a spirit of love, and seeketh not his own good. As soon as ever a man becomes a Christian, he hath a spirit enlarged, he hath higher and farther aims, and large affections towards God and the church; his soul is large. All other men are straitened in their affections, and

strengthened in their aims. They have poor aims and ends of their own. And in their affections they be straitened; they cannot love, nor long after good things, yea, they be straitened to their own in all things. He is within his own circumference, within his own term; his terminus reductivus is himself. He reduceth all to himself, and seeks himself in all things. He thinks not that he doth sin, but he doth, for it is impossible any but a Christian should seek the good of others as they should; but as soon as [he is] a Christian, the Spirit of God maketh the heart public to seek the good of others. And the more Spirit of Christ, the more they seek the good of others; and they that be greatest in heaven are the greatest servants. Christ is greatest in heaven, and who was more made a servant? He became a curse to make us blessed: poor to make us rich. As he was the greatest servant that died for others, so they that be the greatest next to him have learned self-denial.

Not they that heap up great states, and are put into great places, but they that have public minds and public spirits, that seek the good of others, and abase themselves for the good of others, such as Paul is here, 'All is for you, and for your sake.'

I beseech you, therefore, make this use of it; learn of so excellent an apostle as Saint Paul was, to have large affections and public aims and ends. Labour to discern of your conditions and states by this, that you have the Spirit of Christ in you; because to do good to others you can deny yourselves. 'All things are for your sake.'

This should teach us likewise to have honourable and high esteems of God's people. Are they such whom Christ gave himself for, and made himself of no reputation and power for? Are they such as heaven and earth serve, and shall we despise them? Are they God's darlings, as dear to him as the apple of his eye? Are they the jewels,

as the Scripture sets them out in such excellent terms? Are they his friends? are they his heirs and fellow-heirs with Christ? Are they such as the Holy Scriptures sets them down? Are 'all things for their sakes?' and shall not we have honourable esteems of them? Let this rectify our conceits of them, that they be not worthy to live in the world, when indeed the world is not worthy of them, 'All things are for your sake.' Suppose they have nothing in possession, yet in use and service all things serve them to bring them to heaven, and direct them for their good.

They are here as princes in a strange country, that must be honoured for their father's sake, and for their country's sake. They shall be great men when they come home; and therefore howsoever the world valueth and esteemeth them, when we see any price of grace and of the Spirit of God, think that these be yours, for the present all things be theirs. Oh but how great will they be? These shall be Christ's, not the world's; these shall sit and judge the world; they shall judge me, if I be not a Christian, ere long. Now, therefore, let me take heed how I despise one of Christ's little ones, how I debase such a one that is so great in God's esteem, for whose sake the world stands; and let this respect to them evidence to us that have another spirit than the world hath, that we know another Christ.

And again, let it comfort God's people, who have some testimony that they are his, in their losses, in their crosses, in their misuse in the world. Let them consider, are they so to God, are they so to Christ? Oh no! Let them labour therefore for a spirit of patience and courage to go through good reports, bad reports; good usage, bad usage; for the worst thing that befalls them hath a command to do them good. 'Do the young man no harm,' saith David of Absalom, 2 Sam. 18:5. And so all things have a command to do God's people no harm. Kings have a prohibition: 'Touch not mine anointed,' Ps. 105:15. There is a

prohibition given that no hurt shall be done. They may kill them, but not hurt them; imprison them, but not hurt them; they may wrong them, but not hurt them; that is, they cannot hinder their everlasting good, they cannot take away their Christ, their comfort, their peace, or touch them in their names; but oftentimes, against their wills, do them most good when they think to do them most harm. And therefore, I beseech you, labour for a spirit of comfort, considering all things are for our sakes, if we be Christ's.

I have been something long in the point, but it is comfortable and useful. I will now haste to that which followeth.

'All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace, through the thanksgiving of many, may redound to the glory of God.'

The second ground of comfort is from the main end of all, which is the glory of God. Here is a sweet combination of the grace of God and the glory of God, 'that abundant grace, through the thanksgiving of many, might redound to the glory of God.' The links of this chain are these:—God suffers his children in this world to be exercised; in the exercise he giveth evidence of his presence, by grace and by comfort; and after all delivers them, giving them cause and matter of praise; and that praise is the praise not only of themselves, but of many. The praise of themselves and many, returneth to the glory of God. Here is grace breedeth praise, praise breedeth glory.

We will handle the words as they lie: 'that the abundant grace, through the thanksgiving of many, may redound to the glory of God.'

'The abundant grace.' What doth he mean by abundant grace? We shall know it a little by distinguishing a little the word of grace in the Scripture.

Primitive\* grace is the free favour of God in forgiving of sins, and access to life everlasting.

Secondly, The next grace that springs from that is grace whereby we are sanctified, usually called habitual grace, whereby our natures have a stamp of Christ on them, and we are transformed into his image.

Thirdly, Grace is the stirring of us up, exciting grace stirring up that grace that is in us; and draws it forth to particular actions, of doing, and suffering, and resisting, and carrying ourselves as Christians should do. For besides the favour of God, and the fruit of that favour, which is of our nature, there must be spiritual stirring grace to act and stir up the grace which would otherwise lie sleeping in us; there must be new grace on all occasions. 'God must give the will and the deed,' Philip. 2:13. God must stir us up to every good action, as I have shewed at large heretofore. A man cannot do the good he is enabled to do by an habitual grace, unless he have grace to stir him up to do. As he hath all graces in general to enable him, so he must have new graces for every new act; he must have constancy of spirit. And if the troubles be great, there be enlargements of grace; as if a man carries a greater burden, he must have more strength. But,

Fourthly, Grace is any favour that cometh from the primitive grace and favour of God. As we say of a great man, when he giveth a petty thing to an inferior person, This is such [a] man's grace.

Or grace is such a thing that springeth from his love and favour to us. So not only the favour of God that accepts to life everlasting, and that inward grace of God's Spirit, and that actual grace that stirs to every good action, but everything that comes from God is grace.

When God once enters into covenant with us, to become our God, to love us in Christ, whatsoever befalls us comes to us as a fruit of that love; for he being Lord of heaven and earth, and having all things at command, will not suffer the wind to blow upon his church, will not suffer the waves to beat upon it, but out of love, and for the good of the church; for otherwise his government and wisdom would be impeached. And,

Fifthly and lastly, By abundant grace is meant the presence of God, the assistance of God unto Paul in suffering, and God's delivering him out of trouble. These two things he specially means. God's presence in troubles, and delivering him out of them.

It is a grace of God that we have faith. It is a grace of God that we have strength to suffer for that faith. To endure anything is a special grace. 'To you it is given to suffer,' Philip. 1:29. It is a more special grace when we have not only grace to believe, and grace to suffer, but strength of faith. And therefore 'it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer.' It is grace to have special peace, and joy, and comfort in the midst of all spiritual contrary conditions. And therefore God's presence and comfort in the midst of his disconsolate estate was a grace; and not only the doctrine of suffering for Christ [is] a grace, but whatsoever comes from the presence of God is a grace likewise. And likewise his deliverance out is a grace. For as gold comes purer out of the furnace, so Paul comes richer in experience out of trouble; rich in faith, rich in love, rich in mortification; more heavenly-minded in the experience of God and his ways, and every way; and therefore it is an exceeding grace. And then [it is] a grace that God will bound and limit the malice of the devil and his instruments, that thus long they shall trouble them, and then set them at liberty. So that hereby we may plainly see, that all is done in favour of the church.

So it is a grace, that God hath put bounds and limits to the boundless malice of Satan and his instruments, to deliver the church, or any poor member of the church, as Paul was, at any time; and therefore they were to reckon all graces that they were to praise God for, both for his trouble and for his deliverance out of trouble, they being both graces.

Quest. But why doth he call it 'abundant grace?'

Ans. This St Paul doth out of his abundant humility, and out of his abundant love to God; out of his abundant measure of knowledge of the love of God towards him; for Paul's seeing and knowing were his own; want of worth in himself and his own weakness in himself, at the best, are nothing in themselves.\* And St Paul, weighing and considering the mighty power and malice of the enemy, the devil and his instruments, that laboured to trouble him and oppose the gospel, —when Paul saw that opposition and his own weakness; when Paul saw likewise the evidence and demonstration of the excellency of God in being present with him in trouble, and delivering him out of trouble, saw the power, and goodness, and mercy of God, here was an abundant grace, here was a spring-tide of grace, as an overflowing, as he saith, 'My cup overfloweth,' Ps. 23:5. I have not only for necessity, but something for abundance: 'My cup overfloweth, and thou hast spread my table in the sight of mine enemies.' David considered the circumstances of God's bounty, for it was abundant. And Paul considering the great comforts that he had in the Lord, his great enemies and God's, and the malice of them against him and his God; here was an abundant grace.

Beloved, let us learn from hence, first of all, to see God in everything that befalls us: in sufferings, deliverance, the dealing of others towards us. See the grace of God in it. There is, you know, in things

in this world, the bulk and surplus, or body of things; and then there is the spirit, and quintessence, and vigour of things: an extract, the vigour and quintessence of things. What are they? They are next to nothing. Take out God's grace, God's mercy out of things, what are things? what is the world? Take away God's love, what is riches? what is honour and worth? Therefore, in every thing, see it as a grace, see it as derived from the primitive grace, from the favour and mercy of God in Jesus Christ. And then we cannot but be thankful, for we shall see the sweetness of grace. Every little gift, though by the hand of man, nay, every injury that is sanctified, he seeth it as a grace of God, looks to see God in it, his free love and grace among men. What is that that commends any thing to us that comes from another? Not the thing, but the mind of the person that sends it; not the bringer, but the sender. So when we have anything, look to God the sender. Look not to the thing, but to the love of God in the thing, which is the spirit, and quintessence, and vigour of the thing, the best thing. Nay, anything in the world is the love of God in it, derived to us through it. Let the grace of God be derived through losses, crosses, injuries; they be sweet. 'It is given to suffer,' Philip. 1:29. Every one is not partaker of such a favour. See the grace and favour of God in health, and wealth, and strength, and riches, the life and quintessence of all, which commends all to a Christian soul. God deriveth and conveyeth his grace and love to men through this. This is a little drop of that great love that he beareth to me in Jesus Christ. This cometh from that love by which he intends heaven to me. And when God intends heaven and happiness, and to be with him for ever, everything that befalls us by the way hath something of that love, as it were dipped in that love. Whatsoever befalls us between this and heaven, if we be God's children, it hath a tincture of that love, to make him keep heaven for us. And therefore labour to see the grace and love of God in everything, see the language of Canaan, the language of the Spirit of God. That that puts the style upon grace, a



free gift, an undeserved thing issuing from love, it implieth love and freeness and undeserving in the person that hath it. Therefore, conceive of every thing, we have it first from it; is undeserved on my part, comes from love. This will make us use things as we should, to the glory of the Giver, and it will make us comfortable in all conditions, as grace. And labour, as the apostle doth here, to see them abundant graces, to raise the favours of God to an high esteem, as Paul doth here: 'It is abundant grace.' And that we may think the grace of God is great, considering to whom he hath denied it. Hath not he denied it to thousands? Therefore we have abundant grace in us, with great opposition; therefore an abundant grace. Consider the designs of the devil and devilish-minded men, who would have the church trampled under foot. Is it not above our worth? Do we deserve so much? Oh no! Then it is 'abundant grace.' We that deserve nothing should be thankful for everything, as a beggar that deserveth nothing is thankful for every little gift. Labour thus to see a grace in everything, and labour to see an abundant grace.

The graces of God bestowed on St Paul raiseth up thankfulness of many, and that tendeth to the glory of God. Many had the prayers of St Paul,\* for he had commended himself to their prayers: Rom. 15:30, 'Strive with God for me by prayer;' and so the Philippians and others, 'I shall be delivered by your prayers,' Philem. ver. 22. It was usual with Paul to commend himself to the church and people of God; and having done so, he knew that of course they would praise God. As he desires them to pray for him, that God would be present with him in trouble, and deliver him out, so he knew they would praise God. And as many prayers for him, so many praises for him; and therefore, 'through the thanksgiving of many,' &c.

Beloved, here see that the blessing of God bestowed upon public persons, or upon the church, or public persons in the church, should

stir up thanks, and many thanks of many persons. Many thanks were given for the grace of God shewed to St Paul.

Reason 1. I said before, that a Christian, when he becometh a true Christian, hath the Spirit of Christ in him, and hath learned self-denial. He can love others, especially public persons that be eminent in their standing for the good of the church, upon whom the good and honour of the church dependeth in a great measure. And therefore you see the Corinth[ian]s praise God for St Paul.

We should therefore labour for to consider what favours God sheweth to his church, to any public person in the church, magistrates, ministers, or any notable Christian or friend; praise God for his benefits to others. Thus, in the prophet David's time, the good people made a circle as it were; 'The righteous shall come about me,' and were glad and joyful, and gave praise for his sake, and this made him, Ps. 66:16, say, 'Come hither, ye children, and I will teach you what the Lord hath done for my soul.' He inviteth them to come, and tells them what the Lord hath done for him, that they may praise God. 'The righteous shall hear it and be glad,' Ps. 64:10. And therefore, in the communion of saints, the sweetest communion is the rejoicing and giving of thanks for the good that God doth to others, especially those that be eminent in the church.

Reason 2. Another reason that concerns ourselves is this: Our good is laid up in the good and prosperity of others; our good is in the communionship of the church and commonwealth; our private welfare in the public. As it is in the state, so especially in that heavenly commonwealth of the church, the communion of saints, the good of one dependeth on the good of the other. Why? Because God deriveth and conveyeth all good to man by man. It is his ordinance, he will have it so. And therefore, considering he deriveth good to

men by men, therefore, when he sheweth any favour unto men, we ought to praise God for it, because God deriveth good by that man to us. A Christian is a public good, because he hath a public mind. When any favour he hath of God, he is sure the public shall be the better for it, he will be useful, he will be serviceable. As soon as ever a man is a Christian, he becomes as a tree of righteousness; and therefore, if you see favours bestowed upon any good man, thank God for it, especially if it be a Paul, a blessed instrument on whom the good of many dependeth.

Therefore, what shall we say of them that be led by the spirit of envy, that think they have the less the more others have, that have an ill eye? Oh, beloved, take away that cursed spirit of envy! That that I have is thine, and that that thou hast is mine; in religion, there is a kind of blessed community. The more thou hast the more I have. If thy envy hinder thee not, and if envy be taken away, the more thou hast the more I have. Oh take heed of this cursed spirit, that hinders us from praising God for the good of others; as Paul doth here, that saith, God shall have praise, and many praises for his goodness shewed to me.

Now, he saith many praises, because many had prayed. When they receive the harvest of prayers, they are thankful. You know prayer is a sowing in God's bosom. Prayer is a seed. So many prayers, so many seeds sown in heaven. When the harvest comes, when they see the fruit and issue of their prayers, then they praise God.

If we will therefore praise God, learn this one thing, for to observe what we pray for; not to pray at random and never to observe whether God answers or no, that we may be able to render his tribute due to him. How he answers our prayers for the church, for the special instruments of the church's good, king, and state; how he

answers our prayers for our particular friends; and then let him have the tribute that he requires of every one, which is only praise. There is a kind of friendship between God and us, by which we enter into covenant with him; and friendship is maintained by duty, by returning of whatsoever we receive. Now, when we pray to God, and have this blessing, and that blessing, and give nothing to God again, friendship will not be maintained without. When men are graves for benefits, to bury them, and return nothing again, this dissolveth the bonds of friendship among men, and it dissolveth also that bond with God, when they derive blessed benefits and return nothing back again. Thanks is nothing but a reflection to the favours wherein he hath shined on us first. It is his due, and an echo; therefore, give thanks for blessings to ourselves and others. And to that end, observe how he hears our prayers for ourselves and others.

But how doth the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God? Certainly it doth, 'that the thanksgiving of many may redound to the glory of God.' The more heart, the better music in God's ears, the better music and the louder music; the more the prayers are, the more are the praises, Prov. 14:28. The wise man saith, 'The glory of a king is in the multitude of his subjects,' and the glory of God is in the multitude of subjects, thankful subjects, that will return praise to him, give him the tribute he requires at our hands; the wages and service is to him the more the better. When a company can, as it were, levy an army, not only in prayers, to offer an holy violence to God, to get a blessing, but when it is gotten to join in company to praise God, Oh it is a blessed sound, a blessed noise in God's ears, when many do it.

Reason. The reason is this, because there is more abundance of incense. Prayers and praises be incense, and if the prayer of any one man be powerful with God, of one righteous man, what is the prayer

of many righteous men? If the praise of one man be incense, what are the praises of many? 'If where two or three be gathered together, Christ is in the midst of them,' Mat. 18:20, what will he do where two or three thousand be gathered? will not he be much more in the midst of them? O beloved, company is excellent here, and therefore as you have it recited well in the psalms, stir up one another to praise the Lord, 'Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise his holy name,' Ps. 103:1. But that is not enough, 'Praise the Lord all his angels, all the creatures.' The holy prophet, he puts a voice into hills, dragons, mountains, rivers, and every creature, that they may praise the Lord, Ps. 148:7.

But fearing he should not have heart and spirit enough to praise God enough, he stirs up 'sons of Levi, sons of Aaron, angels of heaven, to praise God.' So large was the heart of that blessed man, because he knew if the praises of one would be acceptable, what would the praises of many be? Why have we such narrow hearts? Indeed, God intends our good, God intendeth it, for to make us heavenly-minded, who would otherwise have been like moles in the earth, but in regard of God, that we may think of God, and praise God, and therefore, Ps. 92, there is a psalm of the Sabbath, wherein is a high exaltation of God's works. And we have the sacrament. Why is it called eucharist, the Greek word,\* but because it is a praising of God? We having the sacrament are to praise God for the good we have by his body broken, his blood shed; and therefore have cause of the greatest praise that ever was, for the greatest gift that ever was given, 'the Son of man.' It is God's end in Sabbaths, in sacraments, his end in all his favours and blessings both in this and a better life; and therefore let us stir up our hearts, and stir up others to praise God, that thanksgiving may abound by many. But I cannot finish this argument so necessary.

For some rules how to do it I will not go out of the text, because I have spoken of thanksgiving upon every occasion.

If we will praise God, see that everything be a grace, be a grace and abundant grace, answerable to the degrees of goodness. The abundant grace indeed is Jesus Christ, who is the gift of gifts, and cause of all gifts, and the good we have by him. The abundant mercy in God is, new birth in Christ. There is the abundant grace. But even in the things of this life, that we have sacraments, ministers, helps to heaven, is abundant grace. Beloved, whatsoever we have more than hell by nature, it is all grace; and when we be Christians, and delivered from fear of hell, whatsoever is overplus is a grace. If we were poor all our life, and miserable all our life, what were it? But when to our way to heaven God giveth double portions, mercy here, and abundant hereafter, here is 'abundant redundant grace.' Therefore if we will be thankful, see grace and abundant love in everything. And consider the circumstances that increase the favours of God in Christ towards us, when We were unworthy, when we deserved the contrary. It came in opposition of the enemy; it came when we had much comfort in it, being stripped of all other comforts. See it come from the spring of God's favour, and see all the sweet circumstances of it, and that will make us thankful.

And then consider it is all we can do or need to do. It is just we should do it. God needeth not our thanks or praises, but it is justice on our part. Is it not just that we should return praise, 'that rivers should run into the sea, from whence they came?' that beams should reflect to the sun, from whence they came? An unthankful person is an unjust person. Therefore stir up others, that the thanksgiving may be by many.

But now ye see what cause he gave the church to be thankful. Beloved, if we have the Spirit of God; and if we consider the churches abroad to whom is not only grace, but to us also, we being all the spouse of one husband, branches of one root, heirs of one inheritance, sheep of one flock and pasture, all as from one head; whatsoever God doth, and whatsoever favours he sheweth to our brethren beyond the seas, there is grace, and abundant grace shewed. And now there ought to be thanksgiving, and 'thanksgiving of many,' if there were many prayers, and for the church. Every one that hath the spirit of prayer, hath many prayers for the church of God. And so much humiliation for the misery of the church, that, as the psalmist saith, 'lay among the pots,' Ps. 68:13, as scullions do, all besmeared and all bedaubed with misery. But now God hath brought it from 'among the pots, and covered it with silver wings,' the wings of a dove, and begins to restore beauty and excellency to the church. As we were then ready to pour forth our prayers in the behalf of the church, now let us labour to have our hearts enlarged for his mercy to the church, that there may be thanksgiving, and thanksgiving of many. This is our duty, and all that have the Spirit of God will do it.

Thus the saints of God have done at all times. You see when the ark was brought into Jerusalem, how David forgot himself and kingly state, and danced before the ark, so far that Michal his wife scoffed at him, 2 Sam. 6:14, seq. And so we should rejoice so, as if we had forgot ourselves, especially them that it nearly concerneth; as it concerneth us all, indeed, as if we were in their case, we would desire others to rejoice in our behalves. Prayers went 'out of Zion.' God blessed the church out of our Church of England; our prayers did help them. An army of prayers is as good as an army of fighters. Now as an army of prayers went out of our Zion, so let an army of praises go out of our Zion: 'Praises wait for thee in Zion,' saith the psalmist, Ps. 65:1.

When there is matter of praise, make the best use of it. We have waited for matter of praise, we have waited for good news, and we have news. Now as God hath helped out of Zion, so let us help with our praises, for praises help as well as prayer. As in the story of Jehoshaphat, after they had praised God in solemn special manner, the victory came, 2 Chron. 20:21. Now praises prevail more than prayers, for there is more self-denial in praises than in prayer. God hath more honour, and all his attributes to him, whereas self-love may move a man to pray. Therefore, I beseech you, as we have helped them with our prayers, so help them with our praises to God, for that will help them still farther and farther. When God sees he gaineth a return by our praises, we shall have matter of praise more and more, and still cause to pray that we have an heart to praise; and praises shall be evermore a pleasing obligation to God. But a place of all places is, Rev. 19, where you see a voice in heaven crying to God to avenge the blood of his saints, on that man of sin, and that cursed seat there; how all creatures in heaven and earth, they have their alleluiahs against these things. 'I heard a great voice and much people in heaven,' that is, the church, say, 'Alleluiahs! Salvation, glory, and honour, and power, be given to the Lord our God,' much people. Here is many thanksgiving. When antichrist begins to fall, Babylon to fall, we that belong to the people of God, if we have part in heaven, or any portion in heaven, we will praise God, we will have our alleluiahs. And now because the work is beginning we should join with a choir of heaven, join with the people of God, join with angels, join with all God's people. 'Alleluia! Salvation, glory, honour, and power, be to the Lord our God.' Why, what is the reason? 'For true and righteous are his judgments; he hath judged the great whore, which corrupted the earth with her abominations.' And again 'they cried, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever;' and so 'the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped God. Alleluia. Praise God all ye servants, ye that fear him, both small and great,'



praise and glorify God, and let all, small and great, in heaven and earth, join in praises. If we had any wise consideration what God is working now in heaven, how he exalts himself, what excellent attributes he sheweth in delivering his church, of power, and justice, and mercy in destroying his enemies; if we have divine spirits, let us sing forth praises to God, expecting by God's blessing more matter to praise God, to sing alleluiahs as the church did there.

## **VERSES 16–18**

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

A little to touch the two former verses, for they are a part of that heavenly comfort whereby the holy apostle raiseth up his spirit in the midst of all discouragements, multiplying comfort upon comfort, as trouble upon trouble.

Verse 16, 'But we do not faint; though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.' 'We do not faint.' Indeed, if we look upon outward causes, there is great reason why we should faint. For if we look within, nature is weak, the suggestions of the flesh strong since the fall; and then we are usually beset with temptations of discouragements in our particular calling, thinking we could do anything better than that we are called unto. This is an

heavy temptation. And if it were to do such a thing, or such a thing, it might more easily be done. And then hard usage from the ungrateful world; when a man doth any good he receiveth ill for it.

These are great grounds of fainting, but the apostle saith he faints not for all this, 'though our outward man perish.' He grants that the outward man, body and condition, strength and health, may grow more and more downward; but the inward man, the soul, is under the guidance of the Spirit of God, that is, renewed day by day. The outward man consumes continually, death and life work together, we die as soon as we live. As he that hath a lease, every day it is shorter and shorter, and while we live we die, and the more we live the more we die. Death is at the last moment, the candle is going out continually till it be spent. Nay, more, let a man use his body never so holily, let him endure many crosses, the outward man will perish; it must be so.

But where is the comfort? 'The inward man is renewed day by day.' The inward man is the sanctified soul. All the graces of God are renewed, they are upheld' under a consuming condition of the outward man. This is the blessed condition of a true Christian, that when he groweth downward he groweth another way. He doth not wholly perish as a base wretch doth, but as he decayeth in one part he reneweth in another. God by his Spirit reneweth him. For as in the body the Spirit is that which giveth a life to what we do, so the Spirit of God giveth a vigour to the inward man day by day.

But when is this, that the inward man is renewed day by day? In the time of affliction, for then we grow most; for in time of prosperity, then we grow backward. Usually in time of prosperity, when all things are according to our will and desire, we go backwards; but when the outward man decayeth, the inward man is renewed day by

day. We decay in prosperity, but we grow in adversity; as a body shoots out more after sickness than before. Why should we then be afraid of sickness and weakness of body, considering it is a time of growth of the inward man? Mark the gracious goodness of God. When he takes away strength, because we are not for this life, he makes it up, working strength and vigour in the inward man. We owe God a death. Since we must die, is it not better the decay be made up in the inward man? If we gain that which is gain to the soul, though with weakness and sickness to the outward man, it is well gained, because that is for eternity.

But this is a constant course with God. He is so good, he never takes away anything from his children, but he giveth it another away. Shall we then be discouraged when God takes strength, and he makes it up in the inward man? If anything be a ground of patience, this is. Whatsoever God doth to his children, there is love hid in the doing of it. If he give comfort, it is to encourage. Doth he follow us with crosses? It is that we may grow in the inward man. If we had hearts to follow God in his dealing, we should lose nothing but that he takes away.

Verse 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works a far more exceeding weight of glory.' Here is a ground of comfort to those that are in any crosses and afflictions. Whatsoever they suffer, it works glory, it works happiness; it is set out by glory. Now the Spirit of God sets out this estate of a Christian to come by way of comparison to anything that we suffer. Here are afflictions, here is glory; momentary afflictions, eternal glory; light afflictions, a weight of glory; and not only a weight, but a superlative, an exceeding weight of glory. So the Spirit of God meets with all discouragements here, for we can suffer nothing here, but we shall have better for it after. Grace is glory, but mixed with imperfection. What are those

things we suffer here in this world, to glory, and eternal glory, and excessive glory? What cause have we to be discouraged for anything we suffer here?

But he saith afterwards, 'causeth unto us an eternal weight of glory.' That is more than to say glory follows afflictions; but there is a causal virtue in that we suffer, to work glory. We know the working by way of merit and desert, that is done by Christ; we have right to glory only by Christ. And it is sacrilege to attribute it to any creature, but when there is a working power fitting us. Now afflictions working by way of fitting us to that glory, whereto we have title by Christ, as soon as a man is a Christian, he hath title to heaven. But how doth God fit us for heaven? One way is by crosses and afflictions. He fits us for heaven, as the winter fitteth the ground for the spring, by killing the weeds, and mellowing the ground. So that whatsoever we suffer here, fits us for heaven, and that many ways.

(1.) By weaning our hearts from the love of these things, upon which we are desperately set. When we see what they are, we see they are vanity.

(2.) And then again, they exercise and try our graces, and they increase a desire of heaven; and we know the more hardly we are used here, the more we desire to be at home. And usually God reveals himself more sweetly and more comfortably in these hard times. We feel more of heaven in our worst times. Therefore they have fitting power.

Quest. How comes this to pass? Are crosses, losses, curses, and such things naturally?

Ans. God by his Spirit doth overpower and overrule these things, and there is a sanctified use of them, that helps them to work. 'All things

work together for the best to them that love God,' Rom. 8:28; that is, God's power so overruleth them, that it makes them advantageous to his children. And they by the grace of God's Spirit, draw a sanctified use out of everything. So that by the grace of God the worst things work an eternal weight of glory.

As God prepares heaven for us, so he prepares us for heaven: he prepares us by Christ, but by the cross and affliction. So you may see the truth of the point.

Use 1. But what shall I speak of popish merits? For in merits there must be a proportion to the things we suffer. We receive glory for ever, and suffer afflictions for a time; a weight of glory. This overthrows popish conceits.

Use 2. Beloved, are they not out of their wits, that add vexation to God's children? What is the worst they do? They work their good, they vex them; ay, but they work their happiness, as if a man would hurt a fish by casting him into the sea, or a bird into the air. And a Christian being vexed, it driveth him nearer to heaven. It is his best condition. Compare our secure estate with our afflicted condition, and see which is best. There is no man that is a Christian but will say, there is more in the cross than in prosperity; the one dulleth, but the other sharpeneth.

Use 3. Be not discouraged, whatsoever befalls us in this world. While Satan works our hurt, God is then working our good at the same time. When the outward man is wronged by the world, at the same time the inward man is set at liberty. So much for that.

But how cometh it to pass that these things we suffer, fit us for glory?

Verse 18. It is wrought by grace, enabling us to eye things that are not seen. And then we reason, 'because the things that are seen, are temporal, but the things that are not seen, are eternal,' 2 Cor. 4:18.

To omit divers things, I hasten to other things.

But you see the things we suffer do work unto us an eternal weight of glory, as physic doth upon the body. That that we suffer doth no good unless we use those parts and graces that God hath given us. And therefore he saith, whilst our minds are occupied, and 'looking on things that are not seen,' God having made man a reasonable creature. And so in way to salvation he sanctifieth those principles he hath given him to bring him to heaven, by way of discourse and reason. And as a Christian is saved, so is he saved by something in his understanding. As we see in this world, man worketh by principles in him, so in the way of Christianity. Some things are hindrances to heaven and happiness, as conceitedness and self-sufficiency. Therefore the apostle saith these things 'work an eternal weight of glory,' not whether we think of them or no; but these things do so because God giveth a sanctified understanding, to see the difference of heavenly things from earthly, when we do not look upon things that are seen.

So much shall serve to give you a reason how to see the inward man groweth more and more, and we faint not; because we look upon things that are not seen.

That which I will speak of at this time is this.

That the best things in this world are not seen; the meanest things are those that are seen. The best things are to come; the meanest things are present. The best things are such as are eternal; the meanest things are temporal. And when I have unfolded these, then I

will shew you a wise and gracious use the sanctified soul makes of looking upon things that are not seen, and how his sight worketh, what use we are to make of it.

Doct. The observation is, that a Christian is to look to the things not seen, for things seen are not the object of a Christian's eye. The best things are not seen; the meanest things are such as are seen. I will not stand to unfold the negative part much, because I have spoken of that before.

But to speak especially, What are the things that are not seen?

Beloved, if you labour to be good Christians, you shall better feel them than I can tell you what they are; you shall better know them by experience than by discourse here.

(1.) We cannot see God face to face. We have not immediate communion with God here. We have it in the word and sacraments; but in heaven we shall see all things that are good. Here we may see God in everything; there we shall see everything in God. There we shall see health, and strength, and comfort in God.

(2.) The things not seen here is Christ in our flesh. The heavens are between us and him now. The sight of him is the happiness of a Christian, for the head and members to be together, husband and wife together. Ay, but here we are severed. Here is a spiritual communion; but that is not that that the soul looks for.

(3.) Neither have we full communion of saints; for here is a mixture of good and bad, and here the best have their imperfections. If here an holy joining together of two or three wise Christians be so sweet, what shall it be when we all meet together in heaven? Now we see not God, and Christ, and the blessed souls in heaven.

(4.) Here we see not our perfect liberty.

(5.) Here we see not that eternal Sabbath we shall have there.

(6.) Here we see not that perfection of grace.

(7.) Here we see not that comfort we shall have there. Here we have a taste and the beginning, but what is this to that there? Therefore let us think of what is not seen.

Obj. But why do we not see them here?

Reason 1. You may as well ask me, Why is not heaven upon earth? God will have a difference between heaven and earth; he will have us to walk by faith and not by sight. Heaven is a place for sight: if we will have happiness in sight, it is in heaven. But here we have hope, and faith, and some feeling of comfort; and therefore, considering our condition is by faith, therefore God preserveth matter of sight for another world.

Reason 2. Again, the best things are not seen, because we have not proportionable parts. Our parts are not fitted for that glory. Peter, James, and John, they were as it were drunken with this sight, so that Peter speaks he knows not what, Mat. 9:33. And Moses, when he came from God, he was fain to cover his face, 2 Cor. 3:13. If these glimpses were such as people could not endure them, how could we endure a full manifestation of glory, when Christ saith, 'No man can see God and live'? Exod. 33:20. Therefore let us be content to die to have this sight. Our understandings here are too shallow, our hearts too narrow, our imperfections too many: darkness cannot conceive of light. So no soul can see what is in heaven.



And so here we cannot tell what happiness there is, till we be there. That is the reason why the best things are not seen. And these are the proper objects of a Christian. For things seen are exposed to the outward man; they are not fitting for the soul. The soul will soon spend all the good that are in things seen. Take all the beauty, and all the riches, and all the honour that can be, and the soul will be quickly weary of it. The soul will draw out all the good. We see those that are in great place, within a little while grow weary of them.

But there is an everlasting spring of comfort and contentment in things not seen. They are larger than the soul. The more we see of them, the more we may see; the communion with God, joys in heaven, and such things. Alas! the soul is a very capacious thing, yet the joys in heaven are larger than it; therefore things seen are not the object of the soul.

Quest. But doth the soul never look upon things that are seen?

Ans. Yes; but if the soul look upon them, it looks also beyond them.

If it look upon them, it looks upon them as in a glass, to see farther. It looketh not upon them as clouds to stay our sight from the sun, or as placing contentment in them. For the soul taketh no rest here. The things seen 'are vanity and vexation of spirit,' Eccles. 1:14; 'unrighteous mammon,' Luke 16:11. We may and ought to look upon them as helps and comforts in our pilgrimage. If there be such comforts here, what is in heaven? Doth God convey such sweetness in outward things, that castaways have with us? What are those then that he hath reserved for his friends? And so by way of a gracious use we ought to look upon things seen; but to pitch upon them, and make them our bottom to stand upon, they are no fit objects for the soul. But is there no way to see things that are not seen?

Quest. But have we nothing of them here?

Ans. Yes; there is nothing seen but we have some little taste of it here. For full peace to come, we have peace of conscience here. For full joy to come, we have joy in the Holy Ghost here. For full communion of saints to come, we have some communion of saints here. If there be any heaven upon earth, it is in the meeting of two or three judicious, wise, gracious persons; and our employment here in hearing, praying, and conference with God is but a taste beforehand of that in heaven. So that God doth not reserve all for the time to come. But in regard of the full accomplishment he doth. But those that have not the first-fruits here shall never have heaven in the harvest. Those that have not the earnest here shall never have the bargain hereafter. But that which is the full satisfaction of the soul is for hereafter. Therefore, whatsoever sweet employment is here, it is not like to that the soul shall have hereafter. Therefore rest not in them, but rather let them set an edge upon us, to desire it more and more, till we have it fully in heaven.

Reason 3. Why these objects are things not seen. Things that are not seen are eternal, things that are seen are temporal. No man that hath an eternal soul, and knoweth it, will make that his object that is temporal. Therefore the soul must look upon things that are of equal excellency with it, and that is, things not seen. For things that are seen are temporal: riches are fading, honours are but blazing comets, pleasures are but worm-eaten vanities. So for the ill we suffer, it is but temporal; all determined in death. The grave makes an end of all things that are seen. This should be a comfort to us when we are under any sickness. It is a seen thing. This sickness I feel, and this I taste, it is but for a time. The thing I look at is that which is not seen, and which lasteth to eternity. So the good not seen is eternal in the cause of it. It is in Christ, who is for ever in the heavens; and God is

for ever in the heavens: and Christ reconcileth the Father. And then the place is eternal. Heaven is eternal. Now the influence from which all good comes being eternal, the soul being itself a spiritual, eternal substance, the influence of grace and comfort being eternal from God, and Christ, who is an head for ever and a husband for ever; and heaven being an inheritance immortal, undefiled, continuing for ever; and the soul being an everlasting substance, the joy and comforts of it are eternal. Whom God loveth, he loveth for ever; whom he makes happy, he makes happy for ever. 'He is life everlasting.' It is a kingdom 'that cannot be shaken,' Heb. 12:27. 'It is an inheritance that fadeth not,' 1 Peter 1:4. It is not only everlasting, but everlastingly fresh. It is not only immortal, but it keeps its beauty still, eternal joy, eternal peace, eternal communion one with another in the heavens, everlasting Sabbath, everlasting triumph over all enemies. There is no end of this joy, no cessation of this comfort.

I come now to the wise improvement that the soul makes of beholding the things that are not seen, because they be eternal, and neglecteth the sight of things that be present and temporal. You see the wise use the blessed apostle maketh of it. For he bringeth it as a reason why he faints not, but is renewed day by day in the inward man. You wonder why I faint not, and why day by day I grow fresher and fresher, and still fitter and fitter for heaven; and that all things I endure here fit me for heaven. All is because I have an eye to things that are not seen, not regarding things that be present. So that if we will find a difference of the things, we may easily understand, some things be fading, and some things eternal. If we will get comfort in this, that our portion is not only in fading things, we must have grace to consider of it, and not to look on the other overmuch.

To give trial, whether we look at the things that be seen or no.

(1.) If we look to things not seen, because they be eternal, this is a sight that ravisheth the soul, that lifteth the soul above itself. Things above be so exceeding above things below, that it makes the soul almost forget itself; it worketh an high esteem of heaven, of heavenly things. For as it is said of knowledge, it hath no enemy but the ignorant, so there is no enemy of grace but they that feel it not from conscience.\* All that see it have a high admiration of it, which appeareth by the mean esteem of all things else. When the sun riseth, the stars hide themselves. And when these comforts rise in the soul, upon the apprehension of the glory in the glass of the word and promise, and a little feeling here, all earthly comforts are gone. When Moses saw God that was invisible, what cares he to look for Pharaoh? Heb. 11:27. And when Micaiah had seen God sitting on the throne, what cares he for Ahab? 1 Kings 22:14. We have seen the Lord, and what have we to do with base idols? Not anything in the world must be co-rival with God. What have I to do with pride, with riches, with honour? I have seen God, I have seen heaven. When the patriarchs had with the eye of faith seen the excellency of the world to come, what cared they for banishment or death? When Paul had seen Christ, all things else were 'dung and dross,' Philip. 3:8. Therefore your great admirers, that admire worldly things, it is a sign they never saw better. They that doat upon worldly things, it is an argument of spiritual folly.

(2.) Again, the consideration of things spiritual, it is a purifying sight, a purging sight, that makes the soul fit for the object. A man cannot with the eye of faith apprehend things to come, nor by hope wait for them, but that hope will be effectual to purify the soul. They that have any faith, any hope of good to come, they will prepare their souls suitable to that condition, 1 John 3:3. And therefore where the apprehension of these things hath not a purging power in some

degree, it is but a conceit. We do not so see them as that we be convinced that they are so excellent as they be.

(3.) Again, this is a sight that doth marvellously affect. Love comes of sight. Sight is the most affecting sense. That which moveth the affection most is sight. Feeling is but dull. And therefore if we have the eagle's eye, a sharp sighted faith, to see things which are not to be seen with the eye of reason and flesh, then certainly this sight will quicken and affect a man greatly; move to joy and move to delight, move to the love of God and heavenly things. A man cannot see any excellency but his heart embraceth it; as the patriarchs, Heb. 11:2, seq., saw the promises afar off, and their hearts did join with them; they did embrace them, grasping as it were the things they saw in the arms of their affections. In what measure that I apprehend and see things, in that measure the heart lets in the things to embrace them and close with them. Therefore where no love is there is no sight. And the reason why affections are so flat and dead is, because they do not exercise this sight of faith. Let us examine ourselves by these things, whether we have spiritual sight of the things we see. Do they affect us? Do they quicken us? And do they put into our hearts holiness? Do they raise our hearts to a holy admiration? If so, certainly we have seen them.

I will give you a familiar comparison. The nearer the object is to any man, the more glorious it seemeth; the farther off anything is, the less it seemeth. The stars are bigger than the world, and yet appear to us little.

Now, ask our souls how great things are in comparison of former times. Are heavenly things greater? And for earthly pomp and state, have they less esteemed them than in former times? It is a sign we are nearer heaven, and heaven nearer us. When we can look upon

earthly things in a distance, it is a sign we are removed from them, and drawn nearer to the best things. And then the best things seem to be great to us, when we conceive of them in their own magnitude.

Quest. But how shall we come to look on things not seen, and things eternal, according to their own worth?

Ans. (1.) First of all, labour every day more and more to be purged and purified, and then we shall have delight to look upon that which is proportionable. The holier a man is, the more delight he hath in holy and heavenly objects, and laboureth to grow in grace more and more. The more we see, the more gracious we are; the more gracious we are, the more desire we shall have to behold with the eye of faith these excellencies.

There is no apprehension without light. We cannot see light without light; we cannot see heavenly things without heavenly faculties. And therefore labour for something within gracious, which may have correspondency and harmony with what is in heaven, else contraries will not apprehend contraries. But heaven and a sanctified soul have some proportion and co-naturalness; and therefore never rest till we have something like that which is in heaven, though not in degree, yet in quality.

Ans. (2.) Again, labour to get the eye of the soul clear, that the dust of the world may not be in it. Satan's policy is to cast pleasure and profit into the eye of the soul; and then corruption raiseth a foggy mist in the soul, that we should have natural love to present things. And present things raise a cloud in the soul, and that cloud doth interpose itself between heaven and us. Labour therefore for mortification more and more.

That the eye may be clear, consider seriously they be temporal things; shorter than the soul, meaner than the soul, not fit for it. We shall outlive them all. And when base affections rise in the soul to cast a mist thereupon, consider what a foolish thing it is for us to doat upon things meaner than ourselves. Why should such affections intercept this heavenly sight from us?

The dignity of the soul is an excellent substance. The whole world is not worth a soul. The soul is between heaven and earth, and all earthly things are meaner than itself. Shall the soul marry itself and join itself with things baser than itself? Doth it not then debase itself? And therefore keep the eye of the soul clear from impediments within and without; labour to have true judgment of things in their own nature.

Ans. (3.) And then let us dwell often in the consideration of things to come; have serious considerations of it, and every day redeem some time to think we cannot live here for ever. We have an immortal soul, that must be immortal in misery or immortal in happiness. If we be not good, heaven will not take us, and nothing but hell will receive us. And these things may quicken us. I have an immortal soul, I must not stay long, I must give account; and how shall I appear?

Get these and the like considerations every day. We live as we see; and considering life is guided by inward notions and apprehensions of soul, labour to have apprehensions of soul, that may guide the life as it should be. Labour to see what is reserved in the heavens; consider how we be assured for it; what ground we have; what assurance we have if we should die presently, for we have not the certainty of a minute. These be wakening considerations. And these will be a means that we should look on things not seen. And when we do take liberty to think upon these things, dwell upon them till the

heart be warmed. The sun doth not heat without some staying. Those beams that are broken, they do not gather themselves to heat by reflection. So let the soul stay a while in consideration of these things. Our soul is unstable naturally; and therefore labour by grace to settle the soul till the affections be warm, till the resolutions be pitched; for then we shall see to purpose when we resolve to take this course, else we see not to purpose. And therefore because we know not in morning what will befall us before night, never rest till we be set in heaven by faith. And consider the condition there, so far forth as shall be effectual to guide our lives suitable to what we see. This were a wise course indeed, to guide our courses suitable to eternity, and to fetch reasons for a holy and good life from eternity, and not from pleasing this body and that body. I will do this, because I shall get riches, because I shall satisfy my flesh, and raise myself. Are these reasons for a Christian to work by? Let a Christian work like a Christian, having his reason raised by faith higher than himself, to consider of things as they are in themselves, and as they shall be hereafter. This is temporal, my soul is eternal; and I will fetch my reasons of my course from eternity. What if I should have all the world and die, what will the satisfying of the carnal desires of others do me good? And therefore I will sway my actions by rule that shall hold to eternity. Is not a man wise that doth thus? and is any man wise that doth not thus? He is wise that guideth his life to the last end, how he shall be happy hereafter, how he shall avoid torments for ever. He that is wise to get preferment, to undermine others, to flatter and insinuate, to give contentment against conscience to the carnal humours of others; is he a wise man that is penny wise and pound foolish? He is wise in a particular, he is wise in a little.

But what is this particular wisdom, when in the general scope of his life he is foolish, not considering what is good for him as a Christian? None is wise but a Christian. Every man else is a mad man, or a fool.



What are all other things but straw and baubles to eternity? Therefore regard the things that be beyond the soul, and more excellent than the soul.

I beseech you, take this course. It will make us wise and diligent in our place and calling; for we should eye what is to eternity, notwithstanding all discouragements. Many have fainted and given over, because they be unthankful persons, and they grow cold in doing good. What is the reason? They look not to eternity. It is good sometimes to meet with ill usage from unthankful persons, for God will make amends, though we deserve well of ungrateful persons. And sometimes again I will do them good, and let the glory alone to God. It is good to meet with ill usage in the world; for there is sufficient amends made in the world to come. Wilt thou have all thy wages here? And therefore do as St Paul did, get into heaven in our thoughts by faith, and meditation how it will be with us ere long; and that will set us in such a frame of conversation as shall fit us for Christ, and only that. It will keep us in a growing condition, in a fruitful condition, in a constant courageous condition.

And when we do not so we fall into discouragements. The cause of sin, is it not some present temporal thing we doat upon? So sin is nothing but placing that affection on that which is temporal, which should be on that which is eternal.

Now when doth a man sin, but when he lets go his object? As long as a man keeps his eye on heaven he is well enough; but when he looks to discouragements, to the arm of flesh, then he is discouraged. But when is he not discouraged? When he hath heaven in his eye, and God in his eye, and spiritual things in his eye. And now in this pitch he is neither sinful nor discouraged; and then he is as well as he can wish in this world. Therefore labour with Paul to have the eyes of

your souls exercised about these spiritual things. Look on things that be not seen, because they be eternal; and be not carried away with outward things, nor dazzled with them, because they be temporal.

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