

SPIRITUAL EYE-SALVE;

OR,

THE BENEFIT OF ILLUMINATION.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.—EPH. I. 18.

THE special grace that here Paul prays for his Ephesians is illumination. Wherein is described to us—I. An eye; II. An object. The eye is spiritual, the object celestial; the instrument is gracious, the spectacle glorious. 'The eye enlightened,' there is the organ; 'the hope of God's calling, and the rich inheritance of the glorified saints,' there is the object.

The eye is described by its situation and its qualification. The site is 'the understanding;' the qualification is 'enlightened.'

I. The eye is the most excellent organ of sense. St Augustine applies seeing to all the senses: hear and see, touch and see; and the Psalmist hath, 'Taste and see how gracious the Lord is.' Other senses discern only things near them; this, remote and distant objects. Some say the roundness of the eye resembles the unity of the Deity, which is one and perfect; and the triangular sight, the trinity of persons. This is too curious. Happy is that intellectual eye, whose object is the blessed Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; whose delight is good, yea, God!

In a clear eye, the looker sees his own image; so God, in a sanctified understanding, sees a limited resemblance of his infinite self. And as some physicians say, that if looking in a sick man's eyes they see their image, there is hope of life; but the want of this resultance is held an argument of instant death: whereby they give themselves a prognostic sign whether the patient will die of that sickness or recover it, by the reflection of his eyes. But it is certain, if God's image be not in the understanding, *instat mors animæ*, the soul is in danger; if it shine there, there is comfort of life, yea, life of comfort. Hence it is that the 'god of this world' doth so strive to 'blind the minds of them that believe not,' *ne imago Dei, &c.*, 'that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine into them,' 2 Cor. iv. 4.

God hath set two lids to defend the corporal eye from annoyances. So he hath given the understanding *duas palpebras*, faith and hope, to shelter it. For the eye is not more tender to the body than the understanding is to the soul. And therefore Satan seeks by all means to hurt it, either by offering it violent blows, which the 'shield of faith' bears off, or by throwing dust into it,—'gifts blind the eyes,'—which the other lid of hope for better riches keeps out.

1. The situation of this spiritual eye is in the soul. God, framing man's soul, planted in it two faculties: the superior, that is the understanding, which perceiveth and judgeth; the inferior, that is the will, which being informed of the other, accordingly follows or flies, chooseth or refuseth. The Scripture, favouring the simplest capacity, compares these two powers of the soul to two known parts of the body: the understanding to the eye, the affections to the foot—the eye directing, the foot walking. Every man is naturally born blind and lame: as Zedekiah, captivated to the king of Babylon; first they 'put out his eyes,' 2 Kings xxv. 7, and then they lamed his feet with fetters of brass. So is every man by nature, and therefore easily made a slave to the king of infernal Babylon, if the mercy of Christ should not redeem him. This consideration reacheth forth to us two uses; the one of instruction, the other of reprehension:—

Use 1.—This teacheth us to desire in the first place the enlightening of our eyes; and then after, the strengthening of our feet. So that sweet prophet ordereth his prayers, Ps. xxv. 4, 5: first, 'Shew me thy ways, O Lord: teach me thy paths;' then, 'Lead me in thy truth.' First clear my eyes, then enable my feet. Ps. cxix. 27, 32, 'Make me to understand the way of thy precepts,' and then 'I will run the way of thy commandments.' He that would sail safely must get a good pilot, before good rowers. Swift horses, without a skilful waggoner, endangers more. He that labours for feet before he hath eyes, takes a preposterous course; for, of the two, the lame is more likely to come to his journey's end than the blind. Could he run as swift as Hazael,* and overstrip the young hart on the mountains; yet being blind, he would hardly hit the way to heaven. There is but one way thither, bypaths innumerable; it is a thousand to one against him that he misseth the right. If he be set into it, yet there are so many blocks, rubs, obstacles put before him by the devil and the world, that he can no more go in the true way than he could discern it from the false. But if a man hath eyes, there is hope he will creep to heaven, though on lame feet. He sees where Jerusalem stands, and hath direction for the way; (as travellers in scrolls: from such a village to such a city, &c.); so the word of God prescribes his journey: from 'faith to virtue, from virtue to knowledge, from knowledge to temperance, from temperance to patience,' &c., 2 Pet. i. 5, till he comes to 'enter into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ,' ver. 11. Hence we see there is somewhat more hope of a vicious person that hath a good understanding, than of an utterly dark and blind soul, though he walks upon zealous feet. Let them know that they will come to heaven without eyes, when the wicked come out of hell without feet.

Which lets us see the kind love of the Popish clergy to their people, and how unfeignedly they desire their going to heaven, when they pluck out their eyes, and send them thither. So they may grope for it, as the Sodomites did for the door of Lot's house. That which they call the 'mother of devotion,' ignorance, Augustine calls *peccatam matrem*, the worst mother: *Peccatam matris ignorantie, peccatam videm duce filice sunt: scilicet falsitas*,

* Qu. Asahel?—Ed.

et dubietas ; illa miserior, ista miserabilior ; illa perniciosior, ista molestior,—There are two evil daughters of the most evil mother ignorance : falsehood and doubting ; the former is more miserable, the latter more pitiable ; that more pernicious, this more troublesome. Let them that plead so impetuously their religion authentical from the fathers, (*nos cum patribus rejicimur*;) read the opinion of a great father concerning a main point of their doctrine—ignorance. Chrysostom says, *Præcedit scientia virtutis cultum*,—Knowledge of virtue must ever go before devotion : for no man can earnestly affect the good he knows not ; and the evil whereof he is ignorant, he fears not.* So that true love to good, and hatred to evil, cannot occur to a heart nescient of them both. For *scientia conscientiam dirigit, conscientia scientiam perficit*,—knowledge rectifies conscience, so well as conscience perfects knowledge. *Con* must ever be in composition ; and so kindly uniting knowledge to devotion, there ariseth *conscience*.

If they allow not then their people eyes, they may as well lame their feet, and so send them like the Syrian band, instead of Dothan to Samaria. They say, 'This is not the way' to heaven, 'nor is this the city' of life : 'follow me, and I will bring you to the man,' Jesus Christ, 'whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria,' 2 Kings vi. 19.

Use 2.—This reprehends a common fashion of many auditors. When the preacher begins to analyse his text, and to open the points of doctrine, to inform the understanding, they lend him very cold attention. That part of the sermon is spent in slumber, as if it concerned us not. But when he comes to apply his conclusions, and to drive home the use of his inferences by application, then they begin to rouse up themselves, and lend an ear of diligence : as if they had only need to have their hearts warmed, and not to have their minds warned and enlightened with knowledge. But, alas ! no eyes, no salvation. Your affections are stirred in vain without a precedent illumination of your souls. You must know to do before you can do what you know. And indeed he that attends only to exhortation, and not to instruction, seems to build more upon man's zeal than God's word. Both do well together : attend to the 'doctrine,' and suffer also 'the word of exhortation,' that you may have both clear eyes and sound feet ; those which God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

2. I come from the situation to the qualification of this spiritual eye : 'enlightened.' For this blessing the Apostle prays to the 'Father of lights, from whom comes every good and perfect gift,' James i. 17 : from him, and from him only, comes this grace of illumination. Man's mind is not only dark, but darkness, Eph. v. 8, till the Spirit of knowledge light on him, and lighten him. Though Zedekiah was in Nebuchadnezzar's court, that great monarch, newly delivered of his monstrous ambition, to whom all the glories and pleasures of the world came a-gossiping, yet he saw none of this pomp and magnificence ; his eyes were wanting, 2 Kings xxv. So blind Samson among the merry Philistines, Judges xvi., saw none of their rich apparel, costly cheer, and glorious triumphs. When the natural man comes into the temple, among the congregation of God's saints, his soul is not delighted with their prayers, praises, psalms, and service ; he sees no comfort, no pleasure, no content in their actions. True, he doth not, he cannot ; for his understanding is not enlightened to see 'the hope of their calling, and the glorious riches' which the Spirit of grace and consolation sheds into them. He sees no whit into the awful majesty of God, filling all with his glorious

* Chrys. in Polit., lib. iii. :—'Nemo potest fideliter appetere quod ignorat ; et malum nisi cognitum sit, non timetur.'

presence, and ruling all events with his providence; even disposing evil to his glory. Nothing of the beauty, mercy, pity of his Saviour, sitting at the right hand of his Father; not his highness being in heaven, nor yet his highness to his brethren on earth. Nothing of 'Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the celestial Jerusalem; nor of the company of innumerable angels; nor of the general assembly and company of the first-born, which are written in heaven; not of God the Judge of all; nor of the spirits of just men made perfect; nor of Jesus the Mediator of the new testament; nor the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel,' Heb. xii. 22.

What more than a world of happiness doth this man's eye not see! Hereupon we call a mere fool a natural. The worldlings have esteemed and misnamed Christians God's fools; but we know *them* the fools of the world. The greatest philosopher is but a sot to the weakest Christian; therefore philosophy, unbaptized with grace, is said to be monocular, to have but one eye, and that is of natural reason; a left eye of the soul. But the Christian hath two eyes: the left eye of reason, whereby he may see into the secrets of nature as far as the philosopher; and the right eye of faith, which the other wanting, cannot conceive the 'mystery of godliness,' 1 Tim. iii. 16. This mystery to him is but like a high candle to a blind man. God only then must give Solomon wisdom; and to his father, a knowledge above his teachers. 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,' James i. 5. The first character our forefathers taught us was Christ's cross; our first spelling lesson, 'In the name of the Father,' &c.; to teach us that even all human knowledge, much more divine, is derived from God's fountain. There are two reasons why we must all beg of God for ourselves, as Paul did for his Ephesians, this grace of illumination:—

Reason 1.—Our spiritual blindness came upon us by God's just curse for our sins. As the Philistines put out Samson's eyes for his many mischiefs done them; so God on far greater cause blinded Adam, and his perpetual issue. He had pure and good knowledge; but because his ambition was *appetere prohibitum*, to desire that was forbidden, his punishment was *perdere concessum*, to lose that he had. Now, the same hand that laid on this penalty must take it off. The blind men in the gospel recovered not their sight till Christ came. They were as types to us, to teach us that only the Spirit of Christ can restore our spiritual eyes. Therefore of this Spirit are we counselled to 'buy eye-salve, to anoint our eyes, that we may see,' Rev. iii. 18.

Reason 2.—This original defect is increased by actual transgressions. We were born ignorant, we have made ourselves blind, putting out even that remaining spark of nature. We 'mind earthly things,' Phil. iii. 19; setting not only our 'affections,' Col. iii. 2, but even fixing our whole knowledge on this world. And it is impossible that a man's eye should look on earth and heaven also at one instant. It is a rule in philosophy: Nothing receives anything but that is empty of all other things of a contrary nature. The ear must be empty of all sounds, the taste of all savours, the eye of all colours, before there can be entertainment given to a new object. The smell possessed with rue cannot scent the rose; the taste infected with gall imagines all morsels bitter; and a green glass held before the eyes presents all things looked on green. So if the soul's eye be taken up with the gaudy vanities of this pied world, it cannot discern the things that concern everlasting peace. The understanding then must be withdrawn from earth that it may contemplate heaven. This confutes their practices that have vowed a monkish life, addicted to speculation and eying of heaven, yet are perpetu-

ally raking in the mud of the earth to get money, with an impossibility of reconciling these two opposite objects to their eyes at once. In vain they lift up ceremonial eyes of a forced devotion, for the eye of their heart is fixed downwards; unless they have squint-eyed souls, that can look two ways at once. But I rather think that, like watermen, they look one way and row another; for he must needs be strangely squint-eyed that can at the same instant fasten one of his lights on the light of glory, and the other on the darkness of iniquity. The riches above and below are remote things; *quorum dum aliud contemplatim aspiciamus, aliud contemptim despiciamus*,—whereof whiles we admire the one, we vilipend the other. This blindness then being both hereditary to our natures, (and hereditary diseases are not easily cured,) and augmented by our wilful disorders, can be taken away by no hand but God's. 'Since the world began was it never heard that any man—not man, but God—'opened the eyes of one that was born blind,' (John ix. 32,) and had increased this cæcity by his own accessive and excessive wickedness.

He that would desire inspection into others' blindness, had need of clear eyes himself. 'Cast out the beam in thine own eye, that thou mayest pull out the mote in thy brother's,' saith our Saviour. Let us take with us, then, the eyes of grace that we have, that we may the better look into that blindness of nature we had. There is in this blind eye diseases and defects. The diseases are double; so are the defects.

First, The diseases:—

First, The cataract, which is a thickness drawn over the eye, and bred of many causes: this especially, either from the rheum of vain-glory, or the inflammation of malice. From this eye there is no reflection, or returning its own beams, whereby a man may contemplate himself. But even the optic nerves and the visory spirits are corrupted: the memory cannot revolve, nor the mind present itself, what it is; *nec in se descendere tentat*. This dark mind is the vault where Satan keeps his seminary, and sits hatching a black brood of lusts.

The means to expel this disease is to take God's law into thy hand and heart, and through that glass to look into thyself. 'Consider your own ways in your hearts,' saith the prophet Haggai, chap. i.

'Teipsum.

Concute: tecum habita: te consule, dic tibi quis sis.'

Plumb deep into thy own breast: *Animi tui abyssum intra*.* A man offends less by searching sin with too deep than with too short an instrument. Though this be, saith Anselm,† *gravis angustia*, a hard exigent. *Si me inspicio, meipsum non tolero; si non inspicio, nescio. Si video, horror; si non videro, mors est*.—If I look into myself, I cannot endure myself; if I look not, I cannot know myself. If I see myself, there is horror; if I see not, there is death. This inspection is difficult. *Difficile est se nosse, sed beatum*.—It is a hard, but a happy thing, to know one's self. Private sins are not easily spied out. *Difficilius est invenire, quam interficere*, as Cæsar said of the Scythians,—It is harder to find them out than to root them out. Innumerable sins are in a man; if not in actual and ripe practice, yet in growing seeds. *Qui indulget uni vitio, amicus est omnibus*.—He that is partially indulgent to one sin is a friend to all. It is a pains well taken to study thyself. How sweet a rest doth that night bring whose sleep is prevented with a recognition of ourselves!

* Isid. de Sum. Bon., lib. i.

† In Meditat.

Bernard teacheth man a threefold consideration of himself: *Quid, quis, qualis sit*,*—What by nature, who in person, what kind of man in conversation. Which particulars, when he casteth up, he shall find in sum, himself a miserable sinner. *Si cupis bonus fieri, primum crede quod malus sis*,—If thou wouldest be good, first know that thou art evil. Chrysostom amplifies this self-knowledge by teaching a man to consider what he is in himself, dust and ashes; what is within him, much wickedness; what above him, an offended justice; what below him, a burning lake; what against him, Satan and sin; what before him, vain pleasure; what behind him, infallible death.†

But, alas! what is all this that hath been said of the eye, if God enlighten not that mental eye to see it? He must open our eyes to behold the 'wonderful things of his law.' Otherwise man's sight to these objects is but as *oculus noctuæ ad lumen solis*. Spiritual joys he cannot perceive; and what he conceives of death and hell, he thinks of them senselessly like a beast, or desperately like a devil. If his conscience begins to wake, he sings her asleep again. And as in some, the fuliginous vapours arising from the lower parts of the body blind the eyes; so in him the fumous evaporations of the flesh's lusts have caused absolute blindness. The Spirit of God, with the saving instrument of grace, can only take away this cataract.

Secondly, There is another disease called the pearl in the eye: a dangerous disease, and hereof are all worldlings sick; for earthly riches is such a pearl in the eye, that they cannot see the pearl of the gospel, which the wise merchant sold all he had to purchase. By the distrusting and distracting cares of the world, this intellectual eye is not only depraved, but deprived of light. *Affectio mundi, infectio animi*,—Our souls are affected, infected with this contagion. We are easily inclined and declined from our supernal bliss, by the doting love of these transient delights. And *ubi amor, ibi oculus*,—the eye follows the heart with more diligence than a servant his master. Now, it is no wonder if that eye be blind which the devil hath daubed up with the dirt of this world! Covetousness is an engrosser, where-soever it dwells; and as it would engross the whole universe to its unsatiate self, so it takes up the whole soul with all the affections and desires of it. It gives every member and faculty press-money, and binds all their contention to get riches. It leaves not so much as an eye for ourselves, not a thought for God. *Quicquid de se intrinsecus agatur, oblitus est animus, dum extrinsecus occupatur*,‡—Whiles the mind is externally busied, it forgets what is done in itself, what shall become of itself. This pearl then must be cut out of the worldling's eye with the sharp knife of repentance, otherwise he is likely never to see heaven. For it may be well said to them, as the philosopher answered to some that asked him curious questions of the world, —whether it had a soul, whether it were round, &c.,—*Vos de mundo solliciti estis, et vestram immunditiam non curatis*: You are busy examiners concerning the world, but idle neglecters of your unclean selves.

Secondly, These are the diseases; there is also a double defect in this natural eye:—

First, It perceives only natural and external things, *quæ ante pedes sunt*, —which lie at their feet; for 'it cannot see afar off,' 2 Pet. i. 9. It beholds only the bark or rind, but not the inward virtue. It can perceive what thy riches are, thy house adorned, thy lands tilled, thy grounds stocked; but

* De Consid.

† Chrys. in Tract. de Symb., lib. xiii. —'Quid intra, infra, supra, contra, ante, post, se.'

‡ Greg. in Mor.

not those spiritual blessings and celestial privileges that belong to thee as thou art a Christian. It judgeth the cabinet by the leather and cover, not by the costly jewels in it. It may see Job's outward affliction, not his inward consolation. If God swells their garner with plenteous fruits, and fills their bones with marrow, this they see; but the 'hope of God's calling,' the comforts of the gospel, the saving health of Jesus Christ, and the promises of eternal life, they not see. The world is their circumference; other things *nec capiunt, nec cupiunt; neque tenent manibus, nec cernunt oculis*,—they neither comprehend nor covet, neither hold nor behold them.

A beast hath one kind of eye, a natural man two, a Christian three. The beast hath an eye of sense; the natural man, of sense and reason; the Christian, of sense, of reason, and of faith. Each of these hath its several objects, several intentions. The eye of sense regards only sensual things; the eye of reason, only sensible and natural things; the eye of faith, spiritual, supernal, and supernatural things.

The eye of sense doth not extend to intelligible things and matters of discourse. Tell a brute beast of philosophy and the conclusions of nature, he understands you not. The belly of sense hath no ears for such instructions. Let it be fed, nourished, have the appetite delighted; of further felicity it hath neither notion nor motion. *Nec noscit, nec poscit*.

The eye of reason sees further than that of sense; and hath, more than common sense, a rational and discursive apprehension of intelligible objects. For the bodies of creatures, the brutes see them as well as man, and perhaps some better; but in these bodies he perceives hidden virtues, objectual to the scope of understanding, which the beast cannot see. I confess that many a man is defective in the gradual ascents of reason. Tell a rustic or mechanic that the sun is greater than the whole earth, or that a little star is larger than his cart-wheel, and he derides thy boldness, and thinks thou wouldst be admired for telling a lie; though this by the eye of mature reason is discerned perfect truth.

The eye of faith sees further than both the former; for it looks into the 'hope of our calling, and the glorious inheritance of the saints.' The Christian hath not only an eye of sense common with beasts, nor an eye of reason common with men, but also an eye of faith proper to his profession; wherein he goes beyond the natural man, further than the natural man goes beyond the beast. The unregenerate lives all his days in a mist: he cannot look up to heaven, in comparison whereof that world he sees is but a base molehill, and himself is like a blind mole digging in it. Yea, in this very world, his own proper element, how little doth he truly perceive! There is no herb or flower he treads on that he truly knows. Yea, he is a stranger at home, and is ignorant of what is in his own bosom. But for things that concern a better world he hath no insight. 'The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,' 1 Cor. ii. 14. Those things are incredible, impossible to him, which we build our faiths on. Happy then are their 'eyes that see these things!' In matters of the world our simplicity moves pity or makes sport; let it content us, that these losses are required by our spiritual knowledge, seeing further into better matters. That wherein we are ignorant, is transient and contemptible; that which we know, is glorious and eternal. The ignorance of the former shall not hinder our blessedness; the knowledge of the other shall accomplish it.

Secondly, The second defect in the eye is an insolid levity: it is roving,

like Dinah's, and ravished abroad; but wants self-inspection. Two things exceedingly move men—similitude and example.* When men judge others very evil, they begin to think themselves good. Nothing doth sooner blind us than comparisons. He that would mount to a high opinion of his own worth, by comparing it to the base wickedness of another, *perinde est, ac si quis ad claudos respiciens, suam miretur velocitatem*,†—is like one that observing a cripple's lameness, wonders at himself that he is so swift. The curious man goes abroad, *et exterius omnia considerat; qui sic interna despicit*,‡—and is so intentive upon foreign business that he forgets his own. They are common questions, *Quid ille fecit*,—What hath he done? and, *Quid ille faciet*,—'What shall he do?' John xxi. 21. But not, 'What have I done?' 'What shall I do that I might be saved?' Acts xvi. 30. They are like tailors, that have taken measure of many men, never of themselves. Such a man doth not smite his own bosom with the publican, but breaks his neighbour's head with the Pharisee. It is good for a man to keep his eyes at home, and set them about the domestic business of his own heart; lest at last *omnibus notus, ignotus moritur sibi*,—he that lived known to all, dies in ignorance of himself.

I cannot leave this excellent organ, the eye, till I have shewed you two things:—First, The danger of spiritual blindness; Secondly, The means to cure it.

Spiritual blindness shall appear the more perilous, if we compare it with natural. The body's eye may be better spared than the soul's; as to want the eyes of angels is far worse than to want the eyes of beasts. The want of corporal sight is often good, not evil: evil in the sense, and good in the consequence. He may the better intend heavenly things, that sees no earthly to draw him away. Many a man's eye hath done him hurt. 'The sons of God saw the daughters of men,' Gen. vi. 4. David, from the roof of his palace, saw Bathsheba. *Per oculorum beneficium, intrat cordis veneficium*,—The lightning of lust hath scorched the heart through those windows. *Malus oculus, malus animus*,—An evil eye makes an evil mind. The Apostle speaks of 'eyes full of adultery:' it is a fearful thing to have an eye great with whoredom. And there be eyes full of covetousness, lusting after the grounds and goods of other men: as Ahab's eye was full of Naboth's vineyard. But *non tutum est conspicerere, quod non licitum est concupiscere*,—let not thine eye be enamoured of that which thy heart must not covet. You see, therefore, that sometimes the loss of corporal sight doth the soul good; and the eye of faith sees the better because the eye of flesh sees not at all.

Besides, the bodily blind feels and acknowledgeth his want of sight; but the spiritually blind thinks that none have clearer eyes than himself. He that wants corporal eyes blesseth them that see; this man derides and despiseth them. Their blindness is therefore more dangerous, *qui suam ignorant ignorantiam*, that 'know not they are blind,' as Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17. This conviction Christ gave to the Jews: 'If ye were blind, ye should not have sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth,' John ix. 41. The blind in body is commonly led either by his servant, or his wife, or his dog: there may be yet some respect in these guides. But the blind in soul is led by the world, which should be his servant, is his traitor; or by the flesh, which should be as a wife, is his harlot; or by the devil, which is a dog indeed, a crafty cur, not leading, but misleading him. He that is blind himself, and led by such blind, or rather blinding guides, how should he escape the rubs of transgression or the pit of destruction!

* Cicero de Orat., lib. iii.

† Sen.

‡ Bern.

Now the means to clear this eye is to get it a knowledge of God, of ourselves. That the eye may be cured, this knowledge must be procured.

Now God must be known by his works, his word, and his Spirit.

1. By his works. The book of nature teacheth the most unlearned that there is a Deity. This may be called natural theology. For 'his invisible things may be understood by his visible works,' Rom. i. 20. *Præsentemque refert quælibet herba Deum*,—Not a pile of grass we tread on but tells us there is a God. 'Ask the beasts, and they will tell thee; the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, the earth will declare unto thee, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this,' Job xii. 7, &c. When a hermit was found fault with that he wanted books, he answered, that there could be no want of books, when heaven and earth stood before his eyes. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech; and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard,' Ps. xix. 1-3. All these creatures speak God; in whom is the act of all powers, and from whom the power of all acts. Whether thou have a carnal affection, filled with vanity; or a curious head, filled with variety; or a Christian heart, filled with verity; despise not the pædagoꝑy and manuduction of the world, leading thee to know God.

2. But this book reads only to us (that ask, *An sit Deus est*, that there is a God. If we ask further, *Quis sit*, Who this God is, or how to be worshipped, it cannot expound it. It brings us only, like that Athenian altar, Acts xvii. 23, *ad ignotum Deum*,—to the unknown God. We must turn over a new leaf, search another book, to take out this lesson. 'Search the Scriptures,' for they give this testimony. So Zechariah, 'Ten men out of all languages of the nations shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you,' chap. viii. 23. In the former, the book is the world, the school nature's light, the scholar man, *quatenus homo*, as he is man. But here the book is the Scripture, the school the light of grace, and the scholar Christian man, as he is a Christian. There was the eye of reason exercised; here of faith. There was taught God in his creatures; here God in his Christ.

3. But this scriptural knowledge (common to the wicked) is not sufficient; there must be a spiritual knowledge: whereby, though he sees not more than is in the word, yet he sees more than they that see only the letter of the word. 'The anointing which you have received teacheth you all things,' 1 John ii. 27. Call we then earnestly upon the Spirit of illumination for this knowledge. For it is not obtained *per rationem, sed per orationem*,—not by reason, but by prayers. 'For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c., 'that you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,' Eph. iii. 18.

Now we must learn to see ourselves; and this self-contemplation must be made—1. By a natural; 2. By a moral; and, 3. By a spiritual glass.

1. Naturally: by looking into the constitution and composition of our own persons; as Paul distinguisheth us into 'body, soul, spirit,' 1 Thess. v. 23. For thy body; it was not only 'fashioned beneath on the earth,' Ps. cxxxix. 15, but of the earth. Our first parents were made of the earth: of the earth was their meat; of their meat their blood; of their blood their seed; of their seed our bodies. *Corrupta et corruptentia corpora*,—bodies corrupt of themselves, and corrupting the souls. For thy soul; it is a real, spiritual, invisible and indivisible substance, diffused by God into thy body; who by placing this

soul in thy flesh, hath set thee in the midway, betwixt the bodiless spirits above and the mindless bodies below. This soul is preserved by neither element nor aliment, but by him only that made her, and to whom she resteth not till she returns. For thy spirit; it is called *vinculum* and *vehiculum*,—a bond and a chariot. It is a bond to unite a divine and heavenly soul to an earthly elementary body; both these extremes meet friendly by this *tertium*, a firmamental spirit. It is called a chariot, because it carrieth the soul's faculties to all organs and parts of the body, and that with wonderful speed.

2. Morally: by considering how frequently we have transgressed those virtues to which the very heathen gave a strict obedience. Where is our justice, temperance, patience? We have idle designs, and idler desires; and give way to all evil that may be either thought or wrought; and what we dare not act, we dare like. We loathe (like fond sheep) the good pastures of fit benefits, and bleat after the browse of vanities. Like erring planets, we keep not the ecliptic line of virtuous mediocrity. As God hath all good in himself, all evil only in knowledge; so we on the contrary, have much good in knowledge, all evil in ourselves.

3. Spiritual knowledge goes yet further; even *in medullas, et penetralia cordis*,—it searcheth the heart; and if in that most inward chamber, or in any cabinet thereof, it can find an idol, it brings it forth. It sees when the torrent of time beats thee down the stream of custom; what faintness is in thy faith, what coldness in thy zeal, when the awe of man gives the fear of God a checkmate. It sounds the lowest depth of the conscience, and spieth blemishes in the face of whitest innocence. So it brings the best soul down on her knees, teacheth her the necessity of humbleness, and puts this prayer in her mouth, 'Lord be merciful to me a sinner!'

II. We have now done with the organ of seeing, the understanding, or soul's eye: let us come to the object to be seen, 'the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints.'

The object is clear and transparent to a sanctified eye. The philosophers propound six necessary occurrences to our perfect seeing; and you shall see them all here met:—

1. Firmness or good disposition of the organ that seeth. A rolling eye beholds nothing perfectly. A Dinah's eye is the prologue to a ravished soul. This must be a composed eye, steadfastly settled on the divine object; saying with David, 'My heart is fixed, O Lord, my heart is fixed.' The proposed glory is so infinite, that it may well take up the whole eye, for it shall one day take up the whole man. 'Enter thou, good servant, into thy Master's joy: it is too great to enter into thee. This object is so immense, that we cannot well look besides it.

2. The spectacle must be objected to the sight: the eye cannot pierce into *penetralia terræ*, or *sublimia cœli*; nor can the understanding see into these supernatural joys, unless the Lord object them to it. Hence it is that many neglectfully pass by (*sine lumine lumen*) the light, for want of eyes to regard it. But God here produceth the wardrobe of his glory to the sanctified eyes; as if he said, *Venite et videte*, Ps. xlvi. 8, 'Come, and see.' So Moses: 'Stand still, and see the salvation of God,' Exod. xiv. 13. So Christ to his apostles: 'It is given to your eyes to see these things; to others but by parables.'

3. That there be a proportional distance betwixt the organ and the object: neither too near, nor too far off. A bright thing held too near the sight confounds it: be it never so bright, if too far off, it cannot discern it. God hath sweetly ordered and compounded this difference. Those everlasting

joys are not close by our eyes, lest the glory should swallow us up; for mortal eyes cannot behold immortal things, nor our corruptible sight see steadfastly that eternal splendour. 'Who can see God, and live?' And though you say it is the soul that sees, yet even this soul, while it is prisoned in this muddy vale, or rather jail, the flesh, hath by reason of the other's impotency and passibleness, a thick cloud between itself and glory. 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; then shall I know even as also I am known,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The best eye upon earth looks but through a glass, a lattice, an obscuring impediment. Now on the other side, lest this object should be too far off, that the intellectual eye could not reach it, behold, God hath given it the first-fruits: 'Righteousness, peace of conscience, and joy of the Holy Ghost,' Rom. xiv. 17; a prelibation of glory. It sees the earnest of the Spirit, 'sealing us up to the day of redemption;' a pledge of those joys which otherwise no eye hath seen, no ear heard, nor heart on earth conceived.

4. It is required that the objected matter be substantial; not altogether diaphanous and transparent, but massy, and of a solid being. Otherwise the sight cannot perceive, nor the mind well conceive, the nature which is so subtle and sublimed; but intends itself still further, till it can *acquiescere in materiam visibilem*,—rest itself on some visible object. But this object here proposed is no empty *chimera*, or imaginary, translucent, airy shadow, but substantial: 'the hope of God's calling, and a glorious inheritance;' which though nature's dull eye cannot reach, faith's eye sees perfectly. For *hæc est fides, credere quod non vides*.

And the subject of this spectacle is by demonstration proved solid and substantial; because nothing but that can give this intellectual eye firm content and complacency. How go the affections of man in a rolling and ranging pace from one creature to another! Now thy heart is set upon wealth; thou wilt have it, though thou dig for it *in visceribus* both *matris et filiorum*,—in the bowels of the earth, and of the sons of the earth. Say wealth is come, thou art then for honour; thy riches are a ladder, whereby thou wouldest climb to dignity. *Dedecet divitem esse ignobilem*. Nobility gotten hath not settled thee; thou art traversing new desires. Thy lust presents thee a beauteous paramour; unclean desires now fill up thy scene; and thou playest, like that German, many parts thyself—a golden ass, a proud lion, a luxurious goat. Wealth and greatness command thy pleasure; thy lust is answered. Then thou art for music, and so actest a fourth part; thou art thine own fiddler. Now thy blood is to be heated with delicates; thou must be indulgent to thy throat with lust-provoking meats: and so playest yet another part, a caterer to uncleanness. When all is done—

'Non contenta quies; non est sedata libido.'

When thou hast thus wandered, and begged of every poor creature a scrap of comfort, yet thou art but clawed and cloyed with variety, with vanity; not contented. It is all but one little crumb to one half-dead of hunger. Couldst thou pass over the vast universe, from the convex superficies of heaven to the centre of hell, yet the immense capacity, rapacity of thy desires will not be satisfied.

Well, then, did Augustine confess: *Fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*,—O Lord, thou didst make us for thee, and our heart cannot be quiet till it rest in thee. Nothing but the Trinity of persons in that one Deity can fill the triangular concave of man's own heart. The fire flieth to his own sphere, the stone falleth to his centre, the rivers

run to the sea, as to their end and rest, and are but violently detained in any other place. The needle, touched with the loadstone, stands ever trembling and quivering, till it enjoy the full aspect of the northern pole. Thus the Lord is only our centre, the very life of satisfaction, full of perfect and infallible comfort; and he alone can content the boundless apprehension of this intellectual eye. All other are but shadows and vanities; but this matter objected in my text satisfies. The world cannot, but this can: 'the hope of God's calling, and his glorious inheritance,' &c.

5. Clearness of space betwixt the organ and the object; for the interposition of some thick and gross body prevents the faculty of the eye. The quickest eye cannot see through hills; and a crass cloud is able to hide the sun from us at noonday. On necessity, that we may behold with our understanding's eyes this celestial object, 'the hope of our calling,' there must be a removing of all thick and impenetrable obstacles:—

(1.) Some have whole mountains betwixt their eyes and heaven; the mountains of vain-glory hinder their sight. They are ravished with the bravery of earth; they think there is no heaven but at court, no further scope of ambition than to be great in this world. If you tell them of the glory of God's inheritance given to his saints, alas! they believe not your prattle; they cannot see it. They cannot indeed; for who can see through mountains?

(2.) Others, to make surer prevention against their sight of heaven, have rolled the whole earth betwixt that and their eyes. These are the covetous, who are rooting down to the centre. If you tell them of this 'hope,' &c., they answer, *Non videmus nisi terram*,—We see nothing but earth. Well may they say so; for what eyes can see through the vast and condensed body of the earth?

(3.) Others yet have interjected such obscure and pitchy clouds between their sight and this sun of glory, that they cannot see. Whether of errors, that darken the light of truth; or of affected ignorance, that blinds their own eyes; or of blasphemous atheism; they will see nothing but what they do see. 'Where is the promise of his coming? Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,' 2 Pet. iii. 4. *Nil novi video*,—I see no new thing: it was so, and it is so. *Non aliud videre patres, aliudve nepotes aspicient*. Or of rude and crude impieties, which both blear their own eyes, and shadow heaven's graces from them. Thus the devil deals with them, as the Pharisees' servants dealt with Christ: first they blind him, and then buffet him, and bid him prophesy 'who smote him,' Mark xiv. 65. First he puts out their eyes with their own iniquities, and then leads them about to make himself sport. They cannot see the way to bliss, they have blinded themselves; interposed such clouds betwixt them and heaven, that this 'glorious light' cannot shine unto them. There must be then a clear space; and this God grants to faith: 'Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God,' &c. 'Behold, I see the heavens open, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God,' Acts vii. 55, 56. Though this be taken for more than a spiritual sight, yet hence we have this comfort, that our eyes of faith shall see God now in grace, and our eyes of flesh hereafter in glory.

6. Lastly, The object must be stable and firm, for if it move too swiftly, it dazzleth the eye, and cannot be truly (according to the perfect form of it) beholden. An oar in the river often seems to the passengers as if it were broken, by reason of the swift and violent motion of the water. An arrow cuts the air with such quickness that we can scarce discern it, which lying

at the mark is easily seen. God hath therefore answered our desires, and fitted our understanding with a stable object ; which Paul calls 'an exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'A weight ;' substantial and permanent : not a light transient matter, nor a swift voluble nature ; but weighty. Therefore let us 'not look on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal,' ver. 18. It is here called an inheritance, which none can take from us ; that subtle lawyer, Satan, shall never be able to pick cavils against it.

You must not expect that I should enter into a particular resolution of our objected comforts ; I must reserve that to a more liberal time. Only now let us set them in our meditation, and settle ourselves to attain them. Contemn we, condemn we the foolish choice of worldlings, in regard of our portion and 'better part, never to be taken from us.' Why should I dislike my gold, because he prefers his copper ? The least dram of these joys shall outweigh all the pleasures of earth. And as one torment in hell shall make the reprobate forget all earthly vanities ; so the least drop of this pleasure shall take from us the remembrance of our former miseries. We shall not think on our poverty in this world, when we possess those riches ; but forget our contemptible baseness, when God shall give us that 'glory of saints.' 'He shall not much remember the days of his life, because God answereth him in the joy of his heart,' Eccles. v. 20. God give us to see these things now in grace, that we hereafter may see them in glory ! Amen.