

## SERMON XIX.

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.*

—VER. 17.

I COME now to the 17th verse, and that is the prayer itself which Paul here did put up for them, 'since he heard,' &c.

I will give you the division of the words, and some short analysis of them.

First, here is the person whom he prayeth to, that is, God; whom he doth set forth under the apprehension and notion, for the strengthening of his faith, for the obtaining of what he asks,—as we are always to do in prayer,—of 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of glory.'

Secondly, you have the things he prayeth for. Concerning which, in the general, all the things he prayeth for are *spiritual knowledge*, he mentioneth nothing else: 'That he would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him,' so saith the 17th verse; and that he would give you *enlightened eyes*, as I shall shew you the words may be read, and I think are rather to be read, 'that you may know what is the hope of his calling,' &c., so saith the 18th verse. In general you see it is for *knowledge*. More particularly, here are four things he doth especially pray for:—

1. For the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God*; which, as I shall open to you, I take it is in personal communion with God.

2. *That they might know what is the hope of his calling*; what grounds they had to hope for eternal life, that they might see more clearly into them every day than other.

3. That they might have great and enlarged apprehensions working in their hearts, and telling their spirits, of *the riches of glory which God had laid up for them*. 'That ye may know,' saith he, 'what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance,' &c.

4. That they might know *the power that was engaged*, and had begun to work in them, that would subdue all their lusts, that would never leave them till it had brought them to the same place where Christ was. Whereas they might look upon themselves as men, and sinful,—and how shall we come to this glory you speak of?—he prayeth that they might know the exceeding greatness of that power which works in those that believe, even the same that wrought in Christ in raising him from the dead. And, further to encourage them, he setteth forth Jesus Christ, not only in glory, raised up by the power of God, and that the same power is engaged to raise them up, but he setteth him forth as their Head, in whom therefore they have interest, who sat at the right hand of God in the heavenly places,—so saith the 20th verse,—and whose heart was engaged to them. For, saith he, ver. 23, you are the fulness of Christ, and Christ will not lose one of them. That they might know all these things, and live in the comfort of them; this is the sum and matter of the Apostle's prayer.—So much now for the short and brief analysis of the words to the end of the chapter.

But I come to the first thing which is in the 17th verse. He prayeth that they might have the 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.' The person he prayeth to I shall handle afterward, because the understanding of it hath influence into what followeth, as well as this first petition; why God is called the 'God of Christ,' why the 'Father of glory;' why Paul setteth him up under both these considerations to strengthen his faith, that these particulars shall be granted, I will shew this afterward; but I will now handle what is meant here by giving them the 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.' For the opening of this, and likewise of all the rest, I will give you these general premises:—

First, As I said, the thing he prayeth for is *knowledge*. He doth not mention grace and holiness, not in all this prayer; yet it is most strongly included in it, and it is the most necessary effect and concomitant of *that knowledge* he prayeth for here.

Secondly, That he doth not pray so much that they might increase more and more in the knowledge of their interest in God and in heaven, though some think that that is the meaning of the 'hope of their calling;' but the main thing he prayeth for is, that they might know the things themselves; that they might know God, that they might know what riches of glory is laid up for them in heaven, have enlarged apprehensions of the things themselves to be known, and so that they might know the 'power that works in them that believe,' &c.

Thirdly, That the things he prayeth for here were things that befitted the state of grown Christians. He doth not pray for them as for men to be converted. No; for it is a prayer he framed for them 'since he heard of their faith and love,' of whom he had said, they were 'sealed' too 'with the Spirit of promise;' as in the former verses. Now, my brethren, this the Apostle doth; he considereth with himself to what pitch Christians that are to grow in grace should be brought, and what is the greatest means to cause them to grow in grace; and for the working and effectual knowledge of these things he prayeth here. He doth not pray that they might know sin, as in the first conversion, that they might repent and believe, &c. But he prayeth that they might increase in the 'knowledge of him,' in an experimental communion with God and acknowledgment of him; for so, as I take it, it is to be meant, as I shall shew you afterwards. He takes the utmost things that his own light reacheth to, and he putteth them into his prayer for these Ephesians. And read all the prayers that he makes for others in several epistles, as Col. i. 10, Phil. i. 9, and they all fall short of the prayer here. The Apostle's mind is more filled with a higher and a further light; he expresseth more glorious things; his eye was upon the utmost pitch of Christianity which he would have these Ephesians aim at, and which he desired God to bestow upon them.

And yet, in the last place, let me tell you, that here is nothing that he doth pray for, but that common Christians, *vulgus Christianorum*, the Ephesian women and men, all the saints there, were capable of. This I put in, because of the word *revelation*, which might seem to carry things to somewhat extraordinary, proper unto apostles. What is the meaning of it I shall shew afterward.

Now, my brethren, take an observation or two before I come to the particulars.

*Obs. 1.*—The first is this, *That spiritual knowledge is the great, the main thing in the working of grace, or in the increasing of grace.* He mentioneth not a word of holiness, but you see all he prayeth for is knowledge; but it is

such a knowledge as no carnal heart in the world hath. He certainly prays for the highest thing, and the best thing he could pray for, that his light suggested to him. He prayed for holiness elsewhere with knowledge; but here you see for knowledge alone, because knowledge in the Scripture sense includeth the affections, includeth the whole heart to be carried after it—true knowledge doth; to know things as a man ought to know them, as the Apostle distinguisheth it in 1 Cor. viii. 2, to know the truth as ‘the truth in Jesus,’ as the truth is in the things themselves. The more knowledge and light a man hath in his understanding, the more his whole life is carried after such a knowledge. He need pray for nothing else if he have such a knowledge, for all else will fall in with it.

Look in all the prayers he makes for the churches: for the Philippians, chap. i. 9, 10, he prayeth that their ‘love may abound,’ but how? In all knowledge and sense, an experimental knowledge, that sees and tastes the things that a man knows,—‘that you may approve the things that are excellent,’ so saith ver. 10. So for the Colossians, chap. i., he prayeth, that they might ‘walk worthy to all well-pleasing,’ so at the 10th verse; but at the 9th verse first he prayeth they may be ‘filled with all spiritual wisdom and understanding.’ So that still, I say, observe, that all his prayers in these epistles, it is for knowledge in the first place, that is the main spring of all the rest.

My brethren, there is indeed a notional knowledge, or, as I may call it, a phantasmatical knowledge of spiritual things—that is, whereby a man knows them; but it is by such a kind of light as is in any knowledge and science whatsoever, whereby he knoweth the rationality of things, but by images as the fancy delivereth up to the understanding to work upon, by hearsay. But then there is a real knowledge that bringeth down the things into a man’s heart. Saith Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 18, ‘With open face we behold the glory of the Lord as in a glass, and are changed into the same image.’ Put but the difference in the similitude that the Apostle expresseth it, and you shall see how all knowledge falleth short of spiritual knowledge, which changeth the heart. Take a man now that is a rational divine, and no more; he knoweth the truth of the Scripture, and the reason and the harmony that is between one principle and another, as a man doth of things by hearsay, and the understanding works upon the reason that is in them, and the concordance and harmony that is in them. Take a temporary believer, and his knowledge hath more life in it; it is as the knowledge that one hath of a man in a dream; he hath heard much of a man, and he dreams of him, and fancieth him to be such a man, and thinks he sees him lively and really, and is affected by being in his presence. But spiritual knowledge the Apostle expresseth to ‘beholding as in a glass.’ Now mark, if you were looking in a glass, and a man you never saw before stood behind you, and you see his face, here now is such a real sight as putteth down all hearsays, all pictures, all dreams of a man; yet you do not see this man face to face. Now vision in heaven is seeing God face to face; but, saith he, in the meantime we behold him as in a glass. We have a real knowledge of him through the artifice of the Holy Ghost, and this knowledge now changeth the heart into the same image; therefore no wonder if the Apostle here prayeth for spiritual knowledge, and for that only, for these Ephesians.

There is a knowledge, my brethren, by way of gifts, that is in Christians, that is not this spiritual knowledge. Men may have large gifts, and yet be babes in respect of this knowledge, and they themselves be saints. That instance of the Corinthians is full to this purpose. The Apostle telleth

them, 1 Cor. i. 5-7, that in every thing they were enriched 'in all utterance and in all knowledge.' Mark it, it was such a knowledge which they had as served for utterance; they could express their minds fully and punctually, stamp their minds upon another man about spiritual things, which was from a distinct knowledge of the things. 'And,' saith he, 'you come behind-hand in no gift.' Well, but these knowing men, how doth the Apostle talk to them afterward? He tells them first, that there is another manner of knowledge than this, which is a spiritual knowledge; which, saith he, chap. ii., the spirit of the world doth not teach us, but the Spirit of Christ in a more eminent manner, and that to a man as a spiritual man. This you have in the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th verses of that second chapter. We have not, saith he, 'received the spirit of the world;' we do not know spiritual things by that understanding only, in a notional way that a man understandeth worldly things; but, saith he, there is a peculiar revealing of them by the Holy Ghost to a man's heart made spiritual, suited to the things. Now, when he had told them there was a spiritual knowledge, what saith he to them? Why, saith he, chap. iii., you that have all this knowledge, yet 'I cannot speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal.' For all they were enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge, and came behind in no gift; yet, saith he, ver. 3, 'you are yet carnal;' they were but as babes in Christ, so ver. 1. They were not spiritual, they wanted this spiritual knowledge in a great measure. Now, take a good heart that hath many notions in his head. Oh, thinks he, had I but a drop of that elixir that would turn all these notions into pure gold, into spiritual knowledge! That were excellent. Unbelief, my brethren, makes the knowledge of spiritual things to be but as dreams, though a man have much; whereas faith turns them all into realities, and works upon the heart accordingly. The Apostle telleth the Corinthians in that second chapter, ver. 9, that the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor ever entered it into the heart of a natural man; men may have much knowledge by the eye and by the ear, which entereth into their fancies, and so is delivered up to their understandings about spiritual things; but this is a knowledge that never entered into the heart of a carnal man. And this is the knowledge the Apostle here prayeth for.

*Obs. 2.*—The second thing I would have you observe is this: That that knowledge which makes a man holy is especially of spiritual things themselves. Though the knowledge of a man's interest that they are his, carrieth abundance of holiness with it, yet it is the revelation of the things in a spiritual way that doth it in a more eminent manner. Paul, you see here, doth not so much pray that they might know heaven was theirs,—he took that for granted,—but that they might know it, have glorious apprehensions let into their souls of what heaven was, and that they might increase in the knowledge of it, that they might know what God was more in his glory, as the God of Christ and the Father of glory. It is, I say, the knowledge of the things themselves that doth it. You think now that the want in knowledge is the want of application, that you know not till you have made them your own by application, and that therein lieth the great defect of faith. I acknowledge it is a defect of faith; but, my brethren, the main thing in faith is to see spiritual things really, to behold the glory of the Lord. Saith the Apostle, Heb. x. 39,—it is a place I have often upon occasion quoted to this very purpose,—'We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul.' Now what is this faith that is to the saving of a man's soul? Read the whole 11th

chapter to the Hebrews ; it is seeing the things, the evidence of the things themselves : it is—you will wonder at it—to believe that God is ; so he telleth us at the 6th verse. ‘He that cometh to God,’ saith he, ‘must believe that God is.’ It is to believe that the world was made. It is to believe all spiritual things by a divine light, by a spiritual light. Now, my brethren, when once things are thus strongly and really represented to a man’s mind, it will carry them all to the heart. The Apostle, in 1 John v. 5, saith, that by faith we overcome the world ; what is the faith that overcometh the world ? It is not so much believing Christ is yours, as it is believing that he is ; for who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ?

You will say unto me, that this is to preach only for general faith.

No, my brethren, if you will come now to the faith that justifieth you, it must be with the whole heart ; and although all that is required to justification in the understanding be to believe the thing really and spiritually, yet the will must concur ; and how must that concur ? It must cast itself upon God for it, for justification ; there, indeed, cometh in application. Nay, let me tell you further, that it is the strength of seeing the things themselves that draweth in the heart to give itself up to Christ. As now, take a poor soul that hath little evidence that Christ is his ; it may be he is altogether out of hope of it ; yet he hath a light that representeth such excellencies to be in Christ as he can never leave him ; this is it that makes him give up his soul to him. Take a man that hath assurance,—I will exemplify it there too,—he believeth that heaven is his, Christ is his. Well, this assurance oftentimes lieth by him dead. Why ? Because he wanteth a spiritual knowledge of the things. Let God come in now with a light, and reveal what himself is, and what heaven is to him, then assurance works in him. So that it is the knowledge of the things themselves is the main thing in Christianity, and the main thing in faith.—And so much in general for the observations which I do premise.

I come now to the particular opening of the things he prayed for. *He prayeth for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.* This is the first thing.

I must explain three things here :—

1. What is meant by *the knowledge of him.*
2. The ways by which he prayeth that they may know ; by *wisdom* and by *revelation.*
3. The *Author of this knowledge,* and wisdom, and revelation, and all ; the Spirit of Christ, whom he prayeth might be given to them as such. ‘That he may give you,’ saith he, ‘the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.’

The first thing you see he prayeth for, as the conclusion of all, is *the knowledge of him.* Whether you take it of God or of Christ, it is first of him ; which implieth that all human knowledge of human things, if you know all the secrets in nature, is nothing to this. Paul, you know, desired to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. This is the eminent knowledge, the knowledge of him, that the Apostle here prayeth for. He prayeth not, you see, that they might have the knowledge of their own graces so much, nor the knowledge of their own corruptions so much,—though all these will follow upon the knowledge of him,—but the thing he pitcheth upon for grown Christians to grow up in, is the knowledge of him. The eminent thing in a Christian is to desire more knowledge of God and of Christ especially. If they know their own corruptions, what use do they

make of it? To drive them to Christ, to make them know him more: 'I thank God through Jesus Christ,' saith Paul, when he saw himself a miserable man. If they know their own graces, it is that by those beams they might look upon that sun. If they know the law, it is to direct them to Christ.

The end, my brethren, of all duties,—mark what I say,—the end of grace itself, is the knowledge of God and communion with him; therefore you hear, and therefore you pray. If you rest in the duties, without communion with God and the knowledge of him, your soul will be found empty, and will sit down in sorrow at the last. In Col. i. 9, you shall see what the Apostle saith there, where he makes the very same prayer parallel to what is here. He prayeth 'that they may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,' (this is grace now,) that they may know their duties more, 'for this is the will of God, even your sanctification;' that husbands may know their duties, what is the will of God to them, and wives theirs, what is the will of God concerning them; take the whole will of God in the whole compass of it, he prayeth for that. To what end? 'That you might walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing,' so it is, ver. 10, 'being fruitful in every good work.' But, mark it, what is the end of all this knowledge and of all this walking? 'Increasing,' saith he, 'in the knowledge of God.' That cometh in last, as being the perfection, the reward of all obedience, to know God more. A Christian, a holy heart, improveth the knowledge of all truth to know God more perfectly, and to have more communion with him by it. Wicked men oftentimes see the great wisdom that is in the knowledge of God; they see the harmony and the agreement of one truth in divinity with another, how one kisseth another, and they are mightily taken with it,—as nothing will take a man's understanding so much as matters of divinity,—and the rationality of it. But still they pick not God out of all this; they do not know him spiritually and personally. Or, take a man that is an atheist,—as the one studieth the Scripture, the other studieth the works of God,—let a man be an arrant atheist, he will see a mighty wisdom that nature hath in all the works of nature; in all the causes and effects of things, and how in weight and measure they are all made, and one thing is subordinate to another; but still he picks not God out of all this, but so a Christian doth. So that it is the knowledge of *him*, you see, in distinction and opposition to all things else, which the Apostle here prayeth for these Ephesians.

But now 'of him.' *Of whom?* Is it God the Father, or Christ? for *αὐτοῦ* will bear either of them.

My brethren, he speaks of God the Father just before, 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that he may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.' He spake both of God and he spake of Christ. Who is the *him* here then? I take it especially God the Father; for in the 19th verse he speaks of Christ, while he is praying this prayer, as of a distinct person. 'That you may know,' saith he, 'the power that he wrought in Christ.' That same *he* there, is the *him* here; yet so as because it may refer to either, take both. It is the knowledge of God and Christ, or rather of *God in Christ*; to know God as he is the God of Christ, and as he is the Father of glory, and so to have the heart taken with him, to have the heart drawn into communion with him. This is the knowledge the Apostle here meaneth; you have them both put together, 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' How came you to know him here but in and

through Christ? So that it is the knowledge of both, but especially of the Father. And so in Col. i. 10, where the same words are used, it is called *ἐπιγνώσις*, as here; 'increasing,' saith he, 'in the knowledge of God.' You have them both mentioned, 2 Pet. i. 2, 'Grace and peace be multiplied through the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Therefore, I say, take both in. So much now for this *of him*, of God in Christ, of 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' as the Apostle expresseth himself in that 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Now let us consider *what is meant by the knowledge here he speaks of*. It is certainly meant an excellency of knowledge, as *γνώσις* is often taken, not merely for a knowledge, but for an *excellency of knowledge*, as Grotius well observeth. Rom. iii. 20, 'By the law is the knowledge of sin.' The word there is the same that is used here, *ἐπιγνώσις*. That is, though a man know what is sin by the light of nature, yet he cometh to an exact, to a perfect knowledge by the law. 'I had not known sin,' saith the Apostle, Rom. vii. 7, 'but by the law.' Well, then, the thing the Apostle prayeth for here is, an exacter knowledge, a more perfect knowledge of God.

Yea, but *what manner of knowledge?*

My brethren, if you will have me plainly speak what I think the Apostle chiefly aimeth at, it is this. It is not only a more enlarged knowledge about the things of God, as it is said of Christ, Luke xxiv. 27, that he expounded the Scriptures concerning himself; so it is not to know more things concerning God, to have their knowledge enlarged for the matter of it; but the thing he aimeth at here, being the perfection of knowledge, and the end and issue of all knowledge to grown Christians, to sealed Christians, it is communion with God, is such a knowledge as the Apostle here meaneth. Not such a knowledge as shall enable you to express God to others, but such a knowledge as makes you personally holy, and hath personal communion with God joined with it.

The reason why I interpret it so, is not only because the word will bear it, for *γνώσις* is indeed an acknowledgment or owning. One knoweth a stranger, but he doth *agnoscere*, he doth acknowledge, as some interpreters well distinguish, one he knew before, his friend. So that the intimate knowledge of God as of a friend;—as he said of Moses, 'I know thee by name,' and Moses knew God again; as the phrase is, John x. 14, 'I know my sheep, and am known of mine;'—to have this mutual knowledge, God knowing me, and I knowing God, and so to converse with God, and to have communion with him as with a friend; this intimate knowledge, I say, is the thing the Apostle meaneth. And my reason, besides what the word will bear, is this, because in Col. i. 9, 10, where he prayeth for the same thing, he makes it the consequent of holy walking; he prayeth before that they might walk worthy of the Lord to all well-pleasing, and then followeth, 'increasing in the knowledge of God;' the word is the same, *ἐπιγνώσις*, there and here; that is, increasing, as the reward of holy walking and being filled with the knowledge of his will, in communion with him, or in growing up to know him as your God, and his glory and excellency, and converse familiarly with him as with your friend. They were sealed Christians he wrote this to, for whom he prayeth, that knew God to be their God. Now, take a man that hath assurance, what is the next thing he desireth? To have much communion with God, to have much intimate converse with him; to see that God of whom he is assured, by a spiritual light revealed to his soul, to see him, and to see the excellency and the glory of him; as Moses, you know, it was his great desire. 'Shew me thy glory,' saith he, when God had used

him once familiarly as a friend. Now, because this is the next great thing that sealed Christians, as these Ephesians were, do desire, therefore the Apostle prayeth for this knowledge.

There is a parallel place to this likewise. 2 Pet. i. 2, 'Grace and peace,' saith he, 'be multiplied' (the word is, be fulfilled) 'through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord.' The word *knowledge* there is the same word that is used here. Now, my brethren, what is the meaning of it? 'Grace and peace be fulfilled,' for so the word signifieth, *πληθύνθειν*. How are they fulfilled, perfected? The meaning of it is this: God doth fulfil the utmost intent of his grace and favour to a man, by causing him to know him, and to have intimate communion with him. God doth fill a man's soul with perfect peace and joy in believing, through an intimate knowledge of God and of Christ. You see there the knowledge of God and of Christ is put for the utmost perfection, for the utmost issue both of God's grace, and of peace of conscience, and of joy in the Holy Ghost; they are fulfilled, saith he, through the knowledge of God and of Christ.

So that, my brethren, in one word, that is meant by the knowledge of God here which he prayed for for these Ephesians that were already sealed; which the apostle John meant, 1 John i. 3, where he saith, 'Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' That is, that you may have communion with God, know him as a friend, converse daily with him, have an intimacy of knowledge, that he owns you, and you own him, he knows you, and you know him; and upon this knowledge of him, that you do *agnoscere*, that you acknowledge him, cleave to him, give up yourselves to him, and delight to converse with him. This is the knowledge of God here meant.—And so much for what is meant by the *knowledge of him*.

The next thing is, *What is meant by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation?*

By 'Spirit,' I take, is meant the Holy Ghost. Why? Because he is called a Spirit of *revelation*. Indeed, if it were only a Spirit of *wisdom*, it might have been taken for a gift of the Holy Ghost, for a principle of faith infused into us, inherent in us; but that he is called the Spirit of revelation, that is not a gift inherent; for revealing is an act of one without us, of a person distinct from us; therefore, 1 Cor. ii. 12, 'He hath given us,' saith he, 'his Spirit to reveal the things that are given unto us of God.' So that by Spirit of revelation must necessarily be meant the Holy Ghost, who is the author of such revelation, and of such wisdom in a man's heart as causeth him to have intimate communion with God. This is the meaning.

Now you will say, *What is meant by wisdom?* And what is meant by *revelation?* And why is revelation added to wisdom? By wisdom, as I shewed in the 8th verse, is meant a principle of faith; and so some take it here. To open this of revelation—

It is not *extraordinary revelation* that he meaneth here, such as Paul had, Gal. i. 12, where it is said that he knew the gospel by revelation, he never heard any man preach it. 'I neither received it of man,' saith he, 'neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.' It is not such a revelation he meaneth, though indeed this revelation beareth some analogy with it; for 'they shall be all taught of God;' yet so as it is by the word, and it is revelation which the light of the world leadeth him to. And the reason why it is taken here for ordinary revelation is clear; because it is that which he would have all the Ephesians whom he wrote to, to grow in, and to have bestowed upon them, as ordinary Christians; therefore he doth not mean the extraordinary revelations of those times.



Now then, *What is meant by wisdom and by revelation?*

There are several interpretations of it, which will hold forth to us the Apostle's meaning.

First, You must know that all spiritual true knowledge is called revelation, and therefore many interpreters think that wisdom and revelation is all one; only he calleth it revelation, to shew that it is such a knowledge as is peculiar to Christians, and such a knowledge as is by a special revelation of the Holy Ghost proper unto them. Matt. xi. 25, 'I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent of the world, and hast revealed them to babes.' All spiritual knowledge, even of the meanest Christians, is called revelation.

Now it is called *revelation* in three respects.

First, For the peculiarity of it; for that you know is properly said to be by revelation which is hid to another, but is made known to me, and which I could else no way have come to know if it had not been revealed to me. This is plainly the meaning of revelation. Matt. xi. 25, 'Thou hast hid these things from the wise, and hast revealed them unto babes;' and ver. 27, 'None knoweth the Father but he to whom the Son revealeth him.' So that it importeth a peculiarness of knowledge proper unto saints, which the Holy Ghost giveth, and which the Apostle prayeth they might grow up in.

Secondly, It doth import still a further newness of knowledge; for if I know a thing but as I did afore, it is not revealed to me, it is not a knowledge by revelation; for revelation I say implieth still some further new thing. Now read Rom. i. 17. He telleth us there that in the gospel the righteousness of Christ is revealed from faith to faith. What is the meaning of that? Why, it is revealed from one degree of faith to another. Why is every new degree of faith called a revelation? Why? Because a further degree of faith makes the thing new. That is the property of spiritual knowledge; when a man increaseth in it, he sees something new in it; when that which is more perfect cometh, saith the Apostle, that which is imperfect is done away. My brethren, in notional knowledge, when a man doth know a thing, he cannot be said to know it again, for he knoweth it already, because the mind of man is all for news. Well, but in spiritual knowledge, if thou knowest God spiritually, though thou knowest no more of him materially, yet thou hast a new light come in, and God becometh again a new thing unto thee, as if thou hadst not known him before. Therefore it is called revelation, this knowledge that is joined with wisdom whereby we know God. As when a man seeth a beauty, though he sees all parts and all proportions, yet if he be in the dark, let light come in, he sees a further excellency; it is, as it were, a new face to him to what it was when he had but a glimmering light. So though you see no more of God, no more of his attributes, yet if you rise to have a new light from the Holy Ghost, all that knowledge will become new, you will see a further excellency in God, and have your hearts anew drawn to him, as if they never had been drawn yet; you will say, when a new light cometh in, you see that in sin which you never saw before. A man will say, I saw not this before, though he did. Every new degree of light addeth a further degree of knowledge. Therefore it is said to be by revelation. He would have them to have new sights of God, which might lead them into communion with God.

Thirdly, But there is one meaning which I shall give you, which I think the Apostle in a special manner aimeth at. For the Apostle here seems not to make wisdom and revelation one and the same thing, as this interpretation doth, but to make them different. Therefore the meaning that I do

think may more especially be aimed at, I shall open to you as briefly and clearly as I can.

The knowledge of God here, as I said at first, is *communion with God*, intimate knowledge of him, which he would have the Ephesians grow up in. Now, there are two ways of a Christian's having communion with God, which the Scripture holdeth forth, and which the saints have experience of. The one is *a way of wisdom*, and the other is *a way of revelation*. I shall open these to you as plainly as I can, and then prove it.

*The way of wisdom* is this; for he takes wisdom in a distinction from revelation. It is a knowing God by faith, making use of sanctified reason, taking in several truths of God, laying them all together, working them upon a man's heart by meditation, arguing God's excellency out of this and out of that, and so raising up a man's soul to admiring of him and delighting in him; by a way of discourse, by a way of wisdom; taking wisdom as opposed to and distinct from revelation, for so I now do. A man's understanding that is filled with many notions of God, a holy heart takes them and putteth them all together, and he boileth them together, and the concoction, the result of all is, that the soul is raised up to a communion with God and delighting in him whom he admireth. This is the ordinary way of communion with God; for wisdom, you know, is a rational laying of things together, to see the harmony of all those truths one with another; out of all which I gather how great and glorious a God he is, and so my heart is affected with him. When a man knoweth God out of a distinct consideration of several attributes, meditating of several passages, of redemption, &c., this is a way of wisdom, my brethren. And the Scripture is written so as it doth deal with a man *humano more*; a sanctified reason and meditation which the light of faith accompanieth, and by them converseth with God, resolveth all a man knoweth into God, by piecemeal, taking first this thought and then that.—This is knowing God in a way of wisdom, as I may so express it.

Then there is *a way of revelation*, which the Scripture and experience holdeth forth more or less, and it is a shorter cut. The Holy Ghost cometh down into a man's heart sometimes in prayer with a beam from heaven; he sees more at once of God, of the glory of God, astounding thoughts of God, enlarged apprehensions of God, many beams meeting in one and falling into the centre of his heart. They use to call these of old, comings down of God, whereby he slideth into a man's spirit by beams of himself; a man doth not come to have communion with God by way of many broken thoughts put together, but there is a contraction of many beams from heaven which is shed into a man's soul, so that he knoweth more of God in one quarter of an hour than he knoweth the other way in a year, and hath more communion and converse with God.—This, I take it, is the way of revelation, as it is distinguished from wisdom.

The Apostle, because he would have them perfect Christians, prayeth for both; that they may grow up both in a way of wisdom, so to have communion with God, and in a way of revelation likewise, that God might often come and visit their spirits in a more immediate manner, and shew himself to them. The one, my brethren, the way of wisdom, is *more humano*, accommodated and suited unto the reason of man, knowing God by way of discoursing; yet reason sanctified, for that it doth still. The other is *more angelico*, as some of the schools, distinguishing of these two knowledges, use to speak. The one is discursive, the mind runneth to and fro, compareth one thing with another; but the other is more intuitive, hath a prospect of

God at once. The one is acquiſite, wherein God uſeth a man's induſtry, by many conſiderations working upon a man's heart, which the Holy Ghoſt accompanieth, leadeth a man's heart into communion with God; but the other is infuſed, more immediate. In the one, the Spirit works in us, by applying himſelf to our own thoughts, goeth our own pace. But in the other, a man is in the Spirit; as the phraſe is of Paul, he went 'bound in the Spirit,' and as it is ſaid of John, he was 'in the Spirit;' and being ſo, his heart having this communion with God, then his revelation was made to him. The one is your commons, as I may ſay; the other is your exceedings. The one is the common ſtanding light of faith that goeth to ſermons with you, that goeth with you to all your prayers, more or leſs, and cauſeth your heart to cleave to God. But the other is comparatively an extraordinary light. 'We walk by faith,' ſaith he, 'and not by ſight;' yet Chriſtians now and then get a ſight; a ſight comparatively; it is a revelation comparatively to that of wiſdom, though it be not that ſight that we have of God in heaven.

I ſhall expreſs it to you by this ſimilitude. The ordinary conſtant courſe of a Chriſtian, that is, a holy believer; he walketh in light, as we walk in light in the day. Whether the day be dark and cloudy or not, we have light enough to do our work, to go about our buſineſs; though we do not ſee the ſun, yet we know the ſun ſhineth. So there is an ordinary ſtanding light of faith, that cauſeth you to cleave to God and obey him, and it is enough for you to help you to do your work. But ſuppoſe now upon a ſudden, in a cloudy day, a cloud ſhould break, and a beam be let in that you ſee the ſun; ſuch kind of irradiations hath the Spirit of God into the hearts of his people ſometimes. Sometimes you pray to God, my brethren, and there is, as it were, a curtain between God and you; you know he is behind the curtain, you know you pray to him, and you have ſo much knowledge and faith in him, that you believe he heareth your prayers, and accepts of you. But another time you go to prayer, and all the windows are ſet open, all the curtains are drawn, as I may ſo expreſs it. Now this is a way of *revelation*, more than by a way of *wiſdom*.

This Chriſtians have experience of; and this the Scripture holdeth forth.

First, *Chriſtians have experience of it*. My brethren, take a Chriſtian of a weak underſtanding, but exceeding holy; he hath little knowledge of God by way of wiſdom, by a way of diſcourſe, and by a way of laying this thing to that thing, and ſo knowing God. He is hardly able oftentimes to ſpeak wiſely and rationally of things; yet notwithstanding, this poor ſoul, you ſhall have God breaking in upon his ſpirit ſometimes, and he will know more of God in one prayer than a great ſcholar, though very holy, hath known of him all his life. And the truth is, that oftentimes God doth deal with weak underſtandings, that are very holy, in this way. For if they were ſhut up unto knowing God by a way of ſanctified reaſon, thoſe that have large underſtandings would have infinite advantage of them, and they would grow little in grace and little in holineſs; therefore now God makes a ſupply by breaking in upon their ſpirits by ſuch irradiations as theſe are.

You ſhall ſee it in temptations. A poor ſoul is tempted that there is no God, he doubteth whether there be a God. You may come, and bring forth arguments by way of wiſdom, and ſometimes they will convince him, he will get a little light from them; but ſometimes God will come into his ſoul with an immediate beam and ſcatter all his doubts, more than a thouſand arguments can do. The way of wiſdom thus of knowing there is a God, that

untie the knot, but the other cutteth it in pieces, doth it presently. So it is in all temptations; as, whether a man be a Christian or no? A man goeth the way of wisdom, of sanctified reason, and he looks into his own heart and there sees the work of grace, argues from all God's dealings with him, and all these satisfy not a man. Well, God cometh with a light into his spirit, and all his bolts and shackles are knocked off in an instant. Here now you see is a way of wisdom, and here is a way of revelation.

Take those Christians that have great parts and understanding, and have grown up to much communion with God in a rational way, by way of meditation and sanctified digestion of their knowledge; yet do but ask them, if at some times they have not had such mighty impressions of God upon their hearts, have been lifted up to the mount, so that they have seen that in God which hath left that impression upon them, that all their lifetime they had not before. Now, even in them here is a way of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God.

*Now to prove it to you by Scripture.* I will give you one out of the Old Testament, and another out of the New; and then I will give a caution or two, not to be misunderstood, and so I will end.

First, out of the Old Testament. Job xlii. 5. I quoted it by way of illustration, indeed, in the point of sealing; but it properly belongeth to this head I am now on. There you shall find, that Job, who was a holy man, and lived holily all his days; when God had spoken to him out of the cloud, preached a sermon to him; what was the issue of it? 'I have heard of thee,' saith he, 'by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes see thee. He doth not mean that he had any outward vision of God; that is plain, for you read of no such thing made to Job in the whole book; and if there had, that vision had not been comparable to the knowledge of faith. He speaks therefore of an inward light, that now upon this sermon fell upon his spirit. That, saith he, all the knowledge I have had of God in comparison of this, is but hearsay; not but that it was real, but so he compareth it: 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes have seen thee.'

The other place that I shall mention to you is that in John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.' My brethren, here is a promise made not only to apostles, but to believers; for it is to them that keep the commandments, and have out of much love obeyed God's law. He that hath my commandments, saith he, and keepeth them, he loveth me: him do I love, and him will my Father love; that is, we will take him into a more special nearness, to express more love to him; and how will he express more love to him? 'I will manifest myself unto him.' Here is now some further manifestation than what they had before; yet they had faith before, that is plain, for they loved God. The promise is to him that hath the commandments and keepeth them, and it is to one that loveth God, and that God loveth before; yet there will be some further expression of love, and that by some special manifestation of God himself and of Christ to a man's soul; which is the reward of having the commandments written in his heart, and kept in his life. 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them: I will love him, and manifest myself unto him.' The word *μνησίσω*, as Beza readeth it, I will set myself *in medio lucis*, in open light to him; and it is used of those apparitions, Matt. xxvii. 53, that were after

Christ's resurrection; not that there are such apparitions of God or of Christ, but because they hold a kind of similitude with this, for it is wholly by the Spirit. 'And,' saith he, ver. 23, 'we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' Mark, *We will come*, as if he had never come before, so the expression implieth and carrieth it. As you know a martyr said, 'He is come, he is come!' He cometh in such a manner, with such a manifestation of himself unto a man as he never saw him before. So you have it likewise Rev. iii. 20, 'I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.' *I will come*; it is a manifestation of the presence of God rather in a notional way. And it is a supping with him; he cometh, and cometh suddenly, as when a great person sendeth his meat and will sup with a man, and converse familiarly with him, and letteth him taste of his cheer.

I will give you but a limitation or two to what I have delivered. For this I have delivered, all divines, Popish and Protestant, acknowledge, and the experience of Christians doth confirm it, and the Scripture itself holds it forth. Only, let me say this to you:—

By revelation you must not understand as if there were *visions* made. No, brethren; 'Henceforth, though we have known Christ after the flesh, we know him no more.' How had Paul known Christ after the flesh? He had seen him in heaven. But mark it, that knowledge which he had by faith he valued more than that sight he had of him when he was converted. All the wicked men in the world shall see Christ one day, but that will not save them; but to know him by faith is more. And there is no such revelation now.

And then, if you mark it, he doth not pray that they may have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge of truths*, to open Scripture, to have an immediate light thus from heaven; to be able to say, This I know by divine revelation to be the meaning of such a place: or in matters of controversy to be able to say, This I know by divine revelation immediately that this is the truth. No, there is no such revelation now. It is the *knowledge of him*, it is only this in a way of personal communion between God and a man's soul. And for God to make such revelations as these to a man's spirit, to take him up to a nearness with himself; to come and sup with him, and manifest himself to him beyond the ordinary light of faith, going about by a long rational way of discourse and meditation; there is no harm in this, no absurdity in it. All truths that you know, you know them by a way of wisdom, and by such a way indeed a man's heart is settled in them; but when you come to converse with God, oftentimes God will in a more especial and immediate manner reveal himself to you.

It is not a revelation to draw men from the Word. No, but usually God cometh down upon the wings of some promise, or some word of his; and in that promise, putting an immediate beam of light from heaven into it, revealeth himself to a man's soul, that a man knoweth more of God in half an hour than he hath done in all his life.

And because the Apostle would have the Ephesians grow up in both, aim at both, he prays for both. He prays that they might know God both in a way of wisdom and revelation, and both joined together make perfect Christians indeed. Weak understandings oftentimes know God much in such a way of revelation, when they cannot in a way of wisdom; but to know him in a way of wisdom, and to have personal communion with him in that way of revelation, as I have opened it, it makes a strong Christian, fit for the profit of others. For this other knowledge, a man saith, Indeed I have

seen God and his goodness, and I have tasted of it ; but I can scarce give an account of him in a rational way, as a man may do by the knowledge he hath of God in a way of wisdom. Both together therefore make perfect Christians.

And so much for the opening of this, which I have been the longer about because I desired to finish this 17th verse ; and it was necessary also to insist so long, for the explaining these things.