

SERMON XX.

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

THIS is part of one of Paul's prayers; for the words just before are, 'Making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c.

In the prayer that he makes, which reacheth to the end of this chapter, there is first the *person* he prayeth to, it is God the Father, under two considerations, as he is the 'God of our Lord Jesus Christ,' and as he is the 'Father of glory.' And, secondly, here are the *things that he prayeth for* unto this God; he prayeth for spiritual knowledge, that is the general; and that in these four particulars:—

1. In the *knowledge of himself*, in communion with God; and that by two ways, a way of wisdom, and a way of revelation; as I have already shewn in the 17th verse.

2. *That they may know what is the 'hope of his calling.'*

3. *What are the 'riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'*

4. *What is the 'exceeding greatness of his power,' that works in the saints, and that will bring them to this glory.* The Apostle enlargeth his heart, according to the utmost experience himself had, what was requisite and necessary for sealed and grown Christians, and accordingly frameth his prayer for these Ephesians.

I have opened to you the meaning of the first petition, 'That he would give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.' By knowledge of him, I shewed, was meant an excellency of knowledge, as the Apostle calleth it, Phil. iii. 8, which consisteth in communion and fellowship with God. The way of which knowledge is, either in a way of wisdom, or in a way of revelation. I despatched this in the last discourse.

Now I come to the 18th verse, where there is a new petition. Our translators read it, 'The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling,' &c. But I read it otherwise, and I shall give you an account of it afterward. I read it thus, 'And that he would give you eyes of your understandings enlightened, for you to know what is the hope of his calling,' &c.

To open these words, 'To give you eyes of your understandings enlightened,' I shall but mention to you how others would interpret the coherence of these words with the former.

They would make this and the former to be but one entire petition; and so indeed our translators carry it: 'That he would give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understandings being enlightened, that you may know,' &c. They would make it, I say, but one entire petition or sentence, both this in the 18th verse and that in the 17th. And their meaning is this, 'That in the knowledge of God and Christ, their eyes being enlightened by a Spirit of wisdom and

revelation,'—all these being means by which we come to knowledge,—'they might know what is the hope of his calling.' To such a purpose or sense as this do many interpreters usually read it.

But I rather cut it off from the former, and make it a new and distinct petition. He had finished one petition, when he prayed that God would give them a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, or communion with him. And now he prayeth for knowledge of the hope of his calling; for a taste and prelibation, or foreknowledge, of the greatness of that glory they were ordained unto. And as he prayed they should have a Spirit of wisdom and of revelation given them to know God, so now he prayeth God to give them eyes of their minds enlightened, to know the hope of his calling, and the riches of his inheritance.

Only I yield thus much to the other interpretation, which I desire you to observe: that of the two, the Apostle putting knowledge of God, and communion with God, the 'knowledge of him,' as the text hath it, before the knowledge of what is the riches of his inheritance,—I say, I yield thus much to it, that communion with God, and knowledge of God, is the highest way to come to know what heaven is, and what the riches of his inheritance are; and therefore it is a meaning agreeable to the analogy of faith to read it thus, That in the knowledge of him their eyes might be enlightened to know what heaven is. It is, I say, a meaning agreeable to the analogy of faith: the knowledge of God, and communion with God, is the high way to know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of his inheritance are.

But yet, my brethren, that interpretation of theirs is certainly to me not the meaning; and my reason is this, because they would make the knowledge of God but as a way and means only subordinate to the knowledge of what heaven's glory is: 'In the knowledge of him, the eyes of their understandings being enlightened,' say they, 'that they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what are the riches,' &c. But though it is true that by the knowledge of God, and communion with him, we come to know what heaven is; yet of the two, communion with God is the greater. I shall explain myself to you thus:—

There are two things to be considered in heaven. There is either the happiness that the saints themselves shall enjoy, which is 'in the saints,' saith the text, their happiness and their blessedness. And there is, secondly, communion with God, which is the cause of this happiness. Now of the two, communion with God is the greater. There is *beatitudo objectiva*, the thing possessed, which is God himself; and there is *beatitudo formalis*, which is the fruition of him; the happiness by enjoying God, and by knowing God. Now of the two, the knowing of God, communion with God, is more than our happiness; and therefore, if you mark it, the Apostle putteth that first, 'That you may have a Spirit of wisdom,' saith he, 'and of revelation in the communion and knowledge of him;' and then cometh, 'That you may know what happiness you shall have, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in you,' in the saints: there is *beatitudo formalis*, your fruition of it. Of the two, my brethren, it is the greater, therefore it is put first here, and therefore is not meant as a means only of knowing the other, but as a distinct thing from the other.

You shall find as much to this purpose in Rom. v., comparing the 2d and the 3d verses with the 11th. The Apostle speaks there of faith. By faith, saith he, 'we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God,'—that is, of that glory we shall have from God,—and not only so, but we glory in tribula-

tion also.' Though for the present we are miserable, yet through faith we see so much glory to come that the soul shall have, as it upholdeth us, we rejoice in the hope of glory, notwithstanding tribulation. Now mark the 11th verse, 'And not only so, but we also joy in God.' He riseth higher; to rejoice in hope of glory is a great matter; and not only so, but to do it in affliction too, that is more. But will you have the highest? saith he. 'Not only so, but we joy in God too.'

These words, 'Not only so, but we joy in God,' have an aspect, have a look to what is said in the 3d verse, where he bringeth in the same phrase, 'Not only so, but we rejoice in afflictions.' Not only so, saith he, but we rejoice in God. We do not only rejoice in our afflictions, in the hope of glory, but we rejoice in God too. Not only in the hope of our happiness, the inheritance in the saints, as the text saith, but in the knowledge of him. So that, 'in the knowledge of him,' is not the means only or simply whereby we come to know what heaven is, but it is a greater matter, for the top of heaven lieth in communion with God, and not only in your being made happy.

And so you see now why it is preferred here. So that here beginneth—this is all I have contended for—a new petition in these words, and I read them thus, and he that consulteth the original will find it will bear it: 'That he would give you eyes of your mind enlightened, to know what is the hope of his calling,' &c.

The words in the original are, *πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς διανοίας*, 'eyes of your understanding enlightened,' in the accusative case, to give you the grammatical coherence of the words; it is not in the dative case, 'the eyes of your understanding being enlightened.' But take the words simply, and they lie thus, 'that God would give you eyes of your understanding enlightened.'

There are some that would make the words before, 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation,' to intimate and import the causes of spiritual knowledge; and these words, 'the eyes of your understanding being enlightened,' the act of spiritual knowledge, which is the effect of those causes; and they would make that to be the coherence of these words with the other; and they open it handsomely thus. Say they, unto spiritual knowledge by way of causation, there are two things required. There is, first, a Spirit of wisdom, which is a Spirit of faith; and, secondly, of revelation, which is bringing light to that faith. They express it well by this similitude, which I shall afterward make use of. To bodily sight, say they, there are two things required. There is first an eye to see with, a faculty of seeing, that is meant by the 'Spirit of wisdom;' the Holy Ghost giving a power, an inherent principle, a habit, a disposition of spiritual wisdom. For you know he is a wise man, not that hath wise thoughts sometimes, but that hath wisdom habitually in him; as we use to say, he that is wise of himself, that hath a principle of wisdom in him, is properly wise. So now by a Spirit of wisdom, they mean that inherent principle of faith which makes a man wise, that infused habit which the Spirit works, that is as the new eye in the soul. And then, by the Spirit of revelation is meant, the light that the Holy Ghost acts this principle of faith by; and as the effect of both these, he mentioneth the 'eyes of their mind being enlightened to know him.' The one noteth out the causes, the other noteth out the effects.

But, my brethren, I will give you a reason or two against this interpretation, and so I will go on; for the coherence of these words is the greatest difficulty in this text; the rest will go on more easily.

If his meaning were to pray only for the principle of spiritual knowledge in the former words, and the act of knowledge in these latter words, 'the eyes of your mind being enlightened, to know,' &c., first, he would not have terminated the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in an act, in the 17th verse, as he doth; 'in the knowledge of him,' saith he. Then he cometh with a new business, 'the eyes of your mind being enlightened to know.' Here is a new cause of a second act; therefore certainly we must part them. Here is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation produceth one act, 'the knowledge of him.' Here are eyes enlightened, which produce a second act, 'that you may know,' saith he, &c. Certainly, therefore, the one doth not note out the causes and the other the acts; but here is an act answering the cause of knowledge in the one, and an act of knowledge, answering the cause of knowledge in the other.

So now, having shewed the coherence of the words, I come to the parts of the text.

The parts of this 18th verse are two.

I. Here is, first, *a new expression of spiritual knowledge*; 'that they might have enlightened eyes to know.'

II. Here is, secondly, *new objects to be known*, the knowledge of which would make them complete Christians. Which objects are three:—

1. *What is the hope of their calling.*

2. *What is the glory of their inheritance.*

3. *What the power is that is engaged to bring them to this inheritance.*

I. To begin with the first, *what is meant by spiritual knowledge*, as it is set forth to us here by giving them eyes of their mind enlightened, enlightened to know. As I take it, here are *four* things held forth to us:—

1. Here is the subject of spiritual knowledge, the mind, the understanding; 'the eyes of your understanding.'

2. Here is a double gift:—1. Of eyes unto the understanding. 2. Of light unto these eyes; for so I read the words, 'that he would give you the eyes of your understanding enlightened.'

3. Here is the act; to know.

4. Here are the persons; ye, saith he, *εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι ὑμᾶς*, 'that ye may know.'

I will open all these in order.

1. Here is, first, *the subject of spiritual knowledge*; it is the understanding, 'the eyes of your understanding.' Some copies read it *τῆς καρδίας*, 'the eyes of your heart.' There are *variae lectiones* of the New Testament, as well as of the Old; that is, various readings. The king of Spain's Bible readeth it, 'the eyes of your heart.' Ordinarily we read it, 'the eyes of your understanding.' The truth is, the Hebrew word **לֵב**, which signifieth *heart*, the Septuagint usually translated it *διανοία*, *understanding*; as Gen. xxiv. 45. We use to call wise men *cordati*; and fools in the Latin are called men without a heart, that is, without understanding; and it is called applying a man's heart to wisdom. Understanding, and a man's heart, in the Scripture phrase, are put both for one; they are both joined, *διανοία καρδίας αὐτῶν*, Luke i. 51, 'the understanding of the heart.' So indeed the words may be read there, which are translated 'the imaginations of the heart.'

Now, then, from hence the observation is but only this, That the heart followeth the understanding. They are put one for another, whether in a man's corrupt estate; when they err in their understandings, they are said to err in their hearts; for if their understandings err, their hearts will certainly do so. Saith our Saviour Christ, Matt. vi. 21, 'Where the treasure

is, there will the heart be also.' Mark the reason, 'The light of the body is the eye.' How are these joined together? Plainly thus: look what the eye of the understanding of a man setteth up to be a man's good, his treasure, that the heart, the affections will follow. As we judge of things, so we are affected, and so the whole body, that is, the will and affections,—for he compareth the understanding to the eye, and he compareth the will and affections to the body, which is as the heart, and affections as the members,—look which way the eye goeth, saith he, the body will go as that directs. Look what the understanding pitcheth upon to be a man's treasure, there the heart will be. Therefore, now, it is all one to say, 'the eyes of your understanding,' as one copy readeth it; or, 'the eyes of your heart,' as another readeth it. If the understanding be once enlightened, the heart is enlightened, and so the whole soul is drawn; if that knoweth the excellency of heaven, where that treasure is, the heart will be also. I speak this to reconcile those diverse readings which the copies have.

And so much for the subject, the mind, or the heart, when that is once enlightened.

2. *Here is a double gift.* Here is an eye given, and here is an enlightened eye, light given to that eye too. There are some interpreters that do refer the words to the word 'give,' in the former verse, and do put some words in, and read it thus: 'That God would give the eyes of your mind, *δῶν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς φωτισμένους*, to be enlightened.' Others, as Ambrose, read it, 'To have eyes of your mind lightened.' But I take the words nakedly and barely as they are in the Greek, and I read it thus, 'That he would give you eyes of your mind enlightened.' The gift, I say, consisteth of two things: first, of an eye of the mind; secondly, of light to that eye; and both these are requisite for us to know any spiritual thing, saith he, *εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι*, 'that you may know.' That a man may know heaven or any spiritual thing, he must have a new eye in his mind, and he must have a new light put to that eye; 'that he would give you eyes of your mind enlightened.' So that now cometh fitly in the interpretation that others would give it of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; the one noteth out the principle, the other the light that the Holy Ghost bringeth in. To clear this to you—

In the first place, before a man can spiritually apprehend spiritual things, yea, or if he would grow in the apprehension of them, he must still have more of a new eye put into his mind. Read Deut. xxix. 4, 'God hath not given thee,' saith he, 'eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor a heart to perceive to this very day.' If a man will understand spiritual things, he must have a new eye and a new heart. God must give him an eye of his mind, and to his mind; put into his understanding a new understanding.

In 1 John v. 20,—it is another place I bring for it,—saith the Holy Ghost there, 'He hath given us an understanding to know him that is true;' a peculiar understanding, not creating a new faculty. No, but enduing that faculty with a new disposition, with a quickness; for it is called by the prophet Isaiah, 'the understanding of the mind.' You shall find, therefore, in Scripture, that wicked men are said to be blind, they want an eye; and, so far as we are unregenerate, we want eyes as well as light to see heaven or any spiritual thing with. Saith he, John iii. 3, 'Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;' for to see the kingdom of God a man must have a new light begotten in him, a man must have, as it were, a new understanding; and therefore you read, 1 Cor. ii. 14, that a carnal man 'cannot receive the things of God,' that is the phrase there; he cannot receive, he wants an eye, as a blind man he cannot receive in colours.

Well, that is the first gift, therefore, to have an eye, which in Ps. cxix. 18 is called opening the eye,—‘Open mine eyes,’ saith he, so we translate it; read the margin, it is ‘reveal mine eyes:’ Lord, take off the veil, and then I shall see the wonderful things of thy law; which answereth with what is in 2 Cor. iii. 16, the veil lies over all men’s hearts; that, as there is film over all men’s eyes that are blind that they cannot see, so there is over every man’s heart by nature. Here, then, is the first thing to be done, to clear the eye, to give a new eye, to take the veil off.

But if a man have never so good an eye, if he be in the dark, he can see nothing; therefore the second thing that concurrereth to spiritual knowledge here is, ‘to give you eyes enlightened;’ as to give you a new eye, so to give you a new light. For, Eph. v. 13, it is light that makes all things manifest. It is a philosophical speech the Apostle there useth, it agreeth with what Aristotle saith, *lumen* is *actus perspicui*, it is that which putteth life into colours and acts them. Let ever so good an eye be in the dark, it seeth not; therefore, now, here is a second work of the Holy Ghost, to enlighten this eye if ever a man cometh to see anything in a spiritual way; and as there cometh more light in, so a man seeth more or he seeth less. And therefore you shall find, in Acts xxvi. 18, the conversion of a sinner hath two expressions: the first is ‘to open his eyes,’ to take away the veil; and then ‘to turn him from darkness to light.’ You shall find the like in 2 Cor. iv. 6. God, saith he, that created light out of darkness, giveth ‘the light of knowledge’ (mark that phrase) ‘of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’ Will you have knowledge? There must be a light to accompany it. All men’s experience that have grace agreeth with this. What is the reason that you shall see some things in a chapter at one time and not at another; some grace in your hearts at one time, not at another; have a sight of spiritual things at one time, not at another? The eye is the same, but it is the Holy Ghost that openeth and shutteth this dark-lantern, as I may so call it; as he openeth it wider, or contracts it or shutteth it narrower, and sometimes he shutteth it wholly, and then the soul is in darkness, though the soul have never so good an eye. Therefore, as the Apostle prayeth for an eye, so he prayeth for light; ‘that he would give them eyes of their mind enlightened.’ And so much for the gift: here is the subject of it, the mind or the heart, that was the first; secondly, here is the gift, to give them an eye, to give them light, eyes enlightened.

3. *Here is the act, both of this eye and of this light*—that is, ‘to know,’ εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι; to know, saith he. To every act of spiritual knowledge that you have in anything, my brethren, there is a giving you an eye to see it, and there is giving you a new light to see it with. It is a gift of the Holy Ghost, not only to give you a light and to give you an eye, but it is a gift for him to draw forth the act of knowledge, to give you for you to know, so the word is in the original, εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι. It referreth to ‘give,’ with the 17th verse, even this as well as the other.

Our dependence upon the Holy Ghost, consider what it is, in all spiritual things. It is, first, to have a new eye; it is, in the second place, to have a new light from the Holy Ghost to actuate, to inform that eye, to shine upon it, to irradiate it; and, thirdly, to draw forth the act of knowledge. In Phil. ii. 13, It is God, saith he, that giveth the will; that giveth τὸ θέλειν; the very act of the will is from him; and here τὸ εἰδέναι, an act of knowledge, is his too, it is a gift too. Saith our Saviour Christ, ‘To you it is given to know,’ δέδοται γινῶναι, it is given to know; the very act of knowledge is a gift. We see, I say, my brethren, the great dependence we have upon the

Holy Ghost ; not only must he give us an eye and give us light, but he must give us to know too. It is a mighty expression that in 2 Cor. iii. 5 : saith he, 'We are not able of ourselves to think a good thought ;' he doth not say we are not able to *do*,—as Christ said before him, 'Without me ye can do nothing,'—but he saith, ye cannot *think*, if you come to spiritual things. No, *you cannot think*; of all things else it is easiest to think, yet this must be given too. Prov. xx. 12, 'The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made both of them.' Is it true in naturals that not only the eye is made but the seeing too? It is certainly much more true in spirituals. The scope of Solomon there is to let us see, as Cartwright well observeth, that in the smallest thing, in the very applying of sight to an act of seeing, 'the hearing ear and the seeing eye are of the Lord;' so it is much more in spirituals ; he must give you an eye and he must give you a light, and he must draw forth that gift too, else we have no sufficiency to do it. 'We are not able to think a good thought, but all our sufficiency is of God;' and there cannot a greater instance be given that 'all our sufficiency is of God,' when we cannot so much as 'think one good thought' else.—So much now for the giving them both an eye and light and the act of knowledge.

4. Here is a fourth thing, and that is *the persons*, 'for you to know,' for so indeed it is in the original. He mentioneth *you* no less than three times: that he might give to *you*, ver. 17, the eyes of *your* mind; that *you* may know, ver. 18. All that I observe out of it is this, which some against the Papist have done out of the same text, against implicit faith. What do the Papists say? They would have you see with other men's eyes; they would have you believe the greatest thing in the world, and believe it because the Pope saith it. No, saith the Apostle, I would have you see with your own eyes, I would have him give you 'the eyes of your mind enlightened, that you may know.' There all these three *yous* in it. The just shall live by his faith, and nobody's faith else.—And so much for that.

II. I divided the words into these two parts: first, into spiritual knowledge, that he prayeth for; that you see I have despatched. The next, which is that I now come to, is *the objects he prayed they might know*, which I told you were three, and in this verse we have two of them laid down. The first is, *what is the hope of their calling*; the second is, *what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints*. There is nothing difficult in these words but only this, 'what is the hope of their calling.' I shall present the difficulty to you, and I will tell you what my apprehension and judgment of it is.

Hope is taken, say interpreters, for two things; either for the thing hoped for, as Col. i. 5, 'For the hope,' saith he, 'which is laid up in heaven;' that is, heaven itself, the thing hoped for: so Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope;' that is, the thing hoped for. Or else, in the second place, it is taken for the grace of hope; not for the object, but for the grace of hope, by which we do hope. And it is sometimes put for assurance of our interest in the thing hoped for; as 1 John iii. 2, 3, 'Now we are the sons of God,' saith he; 'and he that hath this hope in him,' that is, hath an assurance of this, is confident of this, 'he purifieth himself as God is pure.' And so likewise Rom. v. 4, 5, 'Experience worketh hope, and hope maketh not ashamed,' that is, it worketh an assurance that leaveth not the soul in confusion; 'because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,' so it followeth. So that by hope there, he meaneth assurance of salvation; as likewise Rom. xv. 13, 'That you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.'

Now, my brethren, interpreters do generally carry it by hope to be meant

here the thing hoped for. I find almost all interpreters go that way, restraining it to the thing hoped for; and, say they, the Apostle, what he calleth hope in these words, he more plainly explaineth in the next words, that he meaneth by hope the thing hoped for. He telleth you in the next words what it is, what is 'the riches of the glory of his inheritance,' saith he. So that what he meaneth by hope in the one, he plainly expresseth in the other. Only he calleth it hope here in the first sentence, to shew that it is but in hope, but it is to come in the world to come; and to shew that the highest joy that we have here is but in hope to what is to come. For as it is, Rom. viii. 24, 'What a man seeth, that he doth not hope for.' By hope there, he meaneth the object of hope.

And it is called the 'hope of your calling;' or, say they, the 'hope of his calling.' Why? Because it is that unto which we were called. Read 1 Thess. ii. 12, 'Who hath called you,' saith he, 'to his kingdom and glory.' So then the meaning of the Apostle, say they, is this: he prayeth that they may know what great things are laid up in heaven for them, which God calleth them to hope for, which are annexed to their calling.

I find Zanchy thinks the grace of hope should be here meant, not so much the thing hoped for, as the grace by which we hope for this thing hoped for. And so they interpret it thus, 'the hope of his calling;' that is, say they, the hope which God calleth us to have of that glory that is to come, which God commandeth us to have, and calleth us to. Therefore, say they, it is called the hope of his calling. And his meaning is this, he prayeth that they may know what great hopes and assurance God would have us Christians to have of the life to come.

Now to this interpretation of theirs, I add but this: that by hope is here meant the ground of hope; it is not merely the grace of hope by which we do hope, but the ground which God doth give us to hope upon; the grounds and the evidences that we have for eternal life, that that should be the Apostle's meaning. And I find that Zanchy falleth into this, and so hinted me indeed to it; for he explaineth it thus, 'That they might know their hope is founded upon the most infallible and certain grounds that can be.'

I must give you Scripture for this, to shew where hope is put for the ground of hope. I will give you but one, Rom. iv. 18; there it is said, that Abraham 'against hope, believed in hope.' What is the meaning of that? He did against all grounds of hope believe. He mentioneth the grounds that might discourage him in the next verse; saith he, his body was dead, being an hundred years old, and Sarah's womb was dead; yet against all hope, that is, against all grounds of hope, he believed in hope.

So then the interpretation I pitch upon is plainly this. The Apostle prayeth here, that they may know what great, what infallible, what multitudes of grounds of hope God had called them to; what grounds of assurance and evidence their souls might have that heaven is theirs. So that now, in this first part, he prayeth that they may have much assurance of their own interest in heaven, and see good grounds for it. And, in the second part, he prayeth that they may see the glory of his inheritance.

I will give you my reason why I interpret it thus, rather than for the thing hoped for; that this expression should mean one and the same thing, heaven in both. My reason is this: the Apostle seemeth to pray for three things distinctly, and he putteth a conjunctive, *καί*, between them all. First, he prayeth that they may see what is the 'hope of their calling,' and see what is the 'glory of his inheritance,' and see what is the 'exceeding greatness of his power.' Now, if 'exceeding greatness of his power' be a distinct

thing from 'what is the glory of his inheritance,' then 'what is the glory of his inheritance' is a distinct thing from 'what is the hope of his calling;' therefore, the thing hoped for is not meant, but he intendeth three several sorts of things that he prayeth for. And he addeth *τίς*, and *τί τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μίσηδος*, *what*, and *how great*, to all three, to shew that they are distinct; what great grounds you have of your interest, and that you may see what a great and glorious inheritance it is that you have interest in, and that you may see thereby how great the exceeding greatness of his power is that he works in them that believe, and keepeth you for that glory.

Having thus opened to you what is meant by the hope of his calling, what grounds of hope you have, I will but shew you how it agreeth fully with the scope and with the phrase the Apostle here useth, that I may back this interpretation.

It agreeth fully with his scope; for, first, he prayed in the former verse for communion with God. Now, what is the next thing a good soul would desire, next to communion with God. To have the grounds of his assurance kept continually fresh in his heart, that he may 'know the hope of his calling;' that is the next thing any good soul would pitch upon, to keep himself in perfect peace and comfort; and then to know the greatness of that glory that he had an interest in. Link these three things together, this makes a complete Christian, full of comfort, full of joy and peace in believing.

It agreeth also with the phrase that followeth, 'the hope of his calling;' interpreting it for grounds of hope or grounds of assurance, what grounds of assurance you have.

By 'his calling' here is either meant that calling which God commandeth you to have; such grounds of hope as God calleth you, being Christians, to have, commandeth you to have; that is one meaning of the phrase. So the word 'calling' is used, 1 Thess. iv. 7; saith he, 'God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness;' that is, he hath commanded us to be holy, for so you may interpret it by the third verse, 'This is the will of God, your holiness.' God's calling and his will is all one. If you did but know, saith the Apostle, the grounds that God calleth you to have the hope you have, the assurance God calleth you to have, and hath given you grounds to have; that is the meaning of his prayer.

Or, secondly, the hope of his calling may refer to the work of grace, which is called calling and conversion; and so the meaning is proper and very good, and it is thus: that you, being called by God, have all the grounds to have assurance that may be; and I pray, saith he, 'that you may know what is the hope of your calling.' A man effectually called hath multitude of grounds to be assured, if he be not negligent in it. So that that which I pray for, saith he, is that you may know the very calling itself, the very work itself; God's calling you affordeth you grounds enough of hope. I pray that you may know the grounds of your hope, keep that fresh in your eye, and so you will be comforted.

I come now to some observations out of this interpretation.

Obs. 1.—The first observation is this: *That every man in the state of grace is called to have assurance*, and there are grounds enough for it. Oh, saith the Apostle, would you did know what is the hope of his calling, what grounds you have of hope from that calling of God that hath put you into the state of grace! The state itself affordeth it, and the word of God upon you affordeth it, only you want eyes to see it; therefore I pray that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened to know it, daily enlightened to see those grounds.

My brethren, every believer hath grounds enough of assurance if their eyes were but enlightened. There is a whole epistle written on purpose; God wrote one book to shew the vanity of the creature; he hath written another book on purpose to assure us and every believer of salvation. The first Epistle of John is written on purpose for that end; you shall see it is his scope both by the first chapter, ver. 4,—so he beginneth, ‘These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full,’—and by chap. v. 13, ‘These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.’ And, saith he, I write to all sorts of Christians that are called; so he saith, chap. ii. 12, 13, ‘I write to you, children,’—those that are babes are capable of assurance, to know the hope of their calling, if God enlighten them,—‘because your sins are forgiven for his name’s sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men,’ &c. All sorts of Christians are capable of assurance if God enlighten their eyes, and if they be once called there is abundance of grounds to give them assurance, to give them hope of salvation. He telleth us in the 10th verse of the 5th chapter, ‘He that believeth hath the witness in himself,’ that is, he hath the matter of it. Yea, there is no act of faith but putteth forth a witness;—as when we come to a hollow place there is no voice but turneth back an echo, only if you speak low the echo answereth you low, but if you speak loud the echo is loud too; so if a man’s faith speaks strongly, it will echo forth back again a strong witness;—there is the witness of blood and the witness of faith. ‘He that believeth hath the witness in himself.’ There is no grace a man hath but is a ground of assurance. There is no exercise of grace but is a ground of assurance. In your very not sinning you may fetch assurance from it; so John telleth us, 1 Epistle iii. 9, ‘He cannot sin, he hath the seed of God in him;’ you shall find that in your hearts that you cannot sin; there is an evidence of grace when you are tempted to sin. The grounds that every believer hath for assurance of salvation, if he did but know them, they are infinite ones and infallible.—So much for the first observation.

Obs. 2.—To give you a second observation. Though a man have never so much ground of hope from God’s calling him, yet, notwithstanding, he must have the eyes of his mind enlightened to know what is his hope, what are the grounds of evidence and assurance of salvation; and further than he hath an eye and an act of knowledge drawn forth, he cannot see it; therefore the Apostle prayeth that ‘the eyes of their minds may be enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of his calling.’

To make this plain to you. All graces, as they work with a borrowed strength,—not with a strength of their own, but with the strength of the Holy Ghost,—so they shine to comfort you with a borrowed light, as the stars do with the light of the sun. A man hath a natural power to know what is within him, so saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 11. Let any man ask me what I think, I can tell him, and so can you; it is from the natural spirit that is in every one. ‘What man,’ saith he, ‘knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him?’ The spirit of a man that is in him doth know it, it can tell you a man’s thoughts and affections; but if you would come to know whether faith be in you or not, or whether true love to Christ be in you or no, or zeal for his glory, now you must have the Spirit to enlighten your eyes; though it be in you, the mere spirit of a man will not do it; so it followeth, ‘We have received the Spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God.’ If you will

come to know whether you have grace or no, which God hath bestowed upon you, here you must have the eyes of your mind enlightened, 'that you may know,' saith the Apostle, or else you will not see it. Your graces shine with a borrowed light. You can tell, 'I think such thoughts as believers think;' but to tell that this is true faith and differeth from that of hypocrites, this you cannot tell without the Holy Ghost enlighten you. Therefore he prayeth 'that the eyes of their minds may be enlightened, that they may know.'

I will give you a scripture more for this, Rom. viii. 16,—mark that place,—It is the Spirit, saith he, that 'beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.' He doth not only say he beareth witness *to* our spirits, but he beareth witness *with* our spirits. Our spirits, our graces, (that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,) never witness unless the Holy Ghost witness with them; if he do not give in his testimony with them, your graces will give no witness at all; if he do not enlighten the eyes of your mind to know, you will not know the hope of your calling, you will have no assurance.

Likewise that other place, Rom. xv. 13; the Apostle prayeth there, that they may 'abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' Doth a man abound in hope? Hath he any comfort? any assurance?—for I take 'hope' there for assurance, as I do here,—any confident persuasion? It is, saith he, through the power of the Holy Ghost.—So much for the second point.

I might interpret it thus. 'The scripture is not of private interpretation;' so saith the Apostle, 2 Pet. i. 20. Read another book, your natural understanding will help you to understand it; but, saith he, the scripture is not of private interpretation; that is, no man's private understanding will help to understand it, but that Spirit that writ it. Look into your own hearts, there is a word written in the heart, as here the word is written in our books; that word written in the heart, the law written there, is not of private interpretation; all the human wit that any man hath who hath grace, cannot help him to do it, to know the meaning of it, but that Spirit that wrote it there; for so you know we are called 'the epistle of Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God,' 2 Cor. iii. 3. He only is able to read it; unless he enlighten your eyes, give you an eye, and give you light, and draw forth an act of knowledge, you will not know what is the hope of his calling, you will not know what ground you have for assurance of salvation.

Obs. 3.—To come to a third observation, and it is a good one. You know I interpreted the hope of his calling partly in this sense, to be that which God calleth you to have. Art thou a believer? He calleth thee to hope; as he calleth you to holiness, so he calleth you to assurance, to hope. What is the reason then that poor souls want comfort? It is God's mind you should have it, there is enough in the word to comfort you; there is enough in your own hearts to comfort you, there is a Holy Ghost that dwelleth within you. God, I say, calleth you to hope. Satan, my brethren, and Antichrist call you to doubt; so the Papists do; but God calleth you to hope, calleth you to assurance. The Papists exact of every man as necessary to salvation, to believe a harder point than the assurance of their own salvation; for they exact of them to believe that the Church of Rome is the only Church of Christ, to believe the mother, but they would have men to doubt of their Father; they would have men to be bastards, that is the truth of it. But, saith he, 'that you may know what is the hope of your calling;' he would have them know it. The Apostle writing to men that had assurance,

to old men, saith he, you have known the Father from the beginning, not only the mother, but the Father. It is a harder point to believe that the Church of Rome is the only true Church of Christ, than to believe that thou art in Christ, and there is more evidence in thy own heart, if the Holy Ghost irradiate thy mind, than there is of the other, for that is an extrinsical thing, and yet they are strict in that point; upon pain of damnation a man must believe that that is the true Church: yet they would not have a man believe he is a true member of the Church, nor of Jesus Christ. No, it is 'what is the hope of his calling;' he calleth you to hope, that is his commandment.

Rom. xv. 13, 'The God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing.' God is a God of hope, and he would fill your hearts with peace and joy through believing. He is not only called the God of hope because he is the object of hope, but because he is the author of it; and all the Scripture is written to work hope in us, so saith ver. 4 of the same chapter. God's mind is, that the saints should have nothing else, 'that you may know what is the hope of his calling;' only your eyes are dark indeed, there lieth the defect, naturally you are dark and can know none of these grounds, therefore the Apostle prayeth that the eyes of their mind may be enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of his calling.

Obs. 4.—In the fourth place, if you observe it, it is what is the hope of *his* calling, it is not what is the hope of *your* calling, or what is the hope of your grace; he giveth it not that title. Take calling in that sense for God's work of conversion upon a man's soul, I do observe but this out of it, and it is to you a note of much consequence: If you come to have good assurance that the Holy Ghost giveth, he will draw your eye unto his work, rather than unto the work that is wrought in yourselves.

I will explain myself to you as well as I can. It is the property of the Holy Ghost when he doth give any man assurance and hope, and enlighteneth his eyes to see what the hope of God's calling is, not to make the heart pore upon the work in himself: but to draw his heart up to God as the worker of it, and to have a hint from thence to stand admiring of him that thus called him, and by his mighty power wrought these things in him through his free grace. When men look upon grace wrought in themselves, self-love rejoiceth in it, and they boast as if they had not received it. No, saith the Apostle, look not upon the hope of *your*, but upon the hope of *his* calling; as having received it from him, let it lead you to the fountain of his free grace. I do observe it there in 1 Cor. ii. 12, (I quoted the place before,) 'We have received,' saith he, 'the Spirit of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God.' Mark that expression; not only know the thing, that this grace is wrought, but with this addition, it is the free work of God's grace. This is the end always of the Holy Ghost when he giveth assurance, that is his manner, as he discovereth his graces to you, these things are in you, so that these things are freely given you of God, he leadeth you to the fountain of his grace, that you may admire it and fall down before it; that you may know, saith he, praying for assurance, what is the hope of his calling; he fixeth their eyes there.

Next to communion with God and knowledge of him, he prayeth they may know their own interest.

The next thing that is to be handled is this—and what is *the riches of that glory*, which is the glory which they had assurance of. Put but these three things together, my brethren, and do but think with yourselves, what mighty effects it would work, what comfortable Christians it would make you, if

your hearts came up to what Paul prayeth for here : that you lived in the knowledge and communion with God day by day, to converse with him as he is the God of Christ and the Father of glory, as he calleth him in the next verse ; and next to that add, the grounds and evidences of our assurance, and eyes enlightened to see them, admiring the love of God in you and toward you ; and, thirdly, add the eyes of your understanding further enlightened, with mighty vast apprehensions of that heaven you have interest in, of the riches of the glory of his inheritance. If a man's soul would live but in these thoughts, what a mighty powerful Christian would that man be ! Paul had all these things in his heart, and when he cometh to pray for men he prayeth after this rate, and this is the meaning of his prayer.