

SERMON XXII.

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of the might of his power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.—VER. 19, 20.

THIS is one of Paul's prayers, and, as I take it, at this 20th verse doth this prayer of his end; for the rest is but a doctrinal enlargement of what he said last concerning Christ's exaltation.

I have divided this prayer into two parts:—

First, *The Person that he prayeth to*: 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.' When he would pray for all these glorious things, he thus styleth God, representeth God under these considerations to his faith, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.

Secondly, Here are *the things he prayeth for*. He prayeth first, that in a way of intimate knowledge and communion with God, they might have the Spirit both of wisdom and revelation whereby to obtain it, to obtain intimate knowledge and communion with God: 'That he may give to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.' I have opened this at large.

In the second place he prayeth, that he would give them eyes of their understanding enlightened, for so I read the words, to know three things.

The first is, 'to know what is the hope of his calling,' (so at ver. 18;) that is, what grounds from the calling of God they had to hope for eternal life, and to see their interest by them. That this was the meaning of it, I have likewise handled, and shewed at large.

The second thing he prays for is, after he had prayed that they might know their interest, and the grounds of it, that they might know the glory, and the greatness of that glory which they had interest in; and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance are in the saints.

And then, thirdly, that they might know that almighty power, which both had begun the work in them, and would go on to bring them unto all this glory: 'And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of the might of his power,'—instancing in the power that raised up Christ from death to life,—'which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.'

The last thing I did was to open these words, 'what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,' which the Apostle prayeth they might know. In the handling of these words I propounded two things.

The FIRST is, How great and glorious the happiness of the saints in heaven is, so far as the Apostle here representeth it, while he calleth it 'the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' It is an inheritance, a rich inheritance, a glorious inheritance, and the riches of it consist in glory; and it is an inheritance of God's bestowing, and the inheritance of himself indeed,

for so the words will bear ; and, last of all, in the saints. How the glory of heaven is set forth to us by all these things I shewed the last time.

The SECOND is, That the knowledge of this is useful to believers, to have enlarged thoughts of the glory of heaven, experimental working thoughts in their minds about it. Therefore you see, as he setteth forth heaven to them, it is in a way of prayer, 'that they may know it ;' and to help them to know it, he describeth it thus largely, and under so many words. So that now the second thing that I am to handle and speak to is this, *The knowledge of the riches of the glory of this inheritance, what this is to the saints ;* for as he setteth out the thing itself, so he prayeth for their knowledge of it.

Concerning the knowledge of it, which here he prayeth for, I shall but speak these few things :—

The first is this, that it is proper to the saints to have genuine and true thoughts of what the glory of heaven is. There is a peculiar knowledge that the saints have of heaven's glory, which wicked men have not. The Apostle, you see here, prayeth for these converted Ephesians, that they may know what are the exceeding riches of his glory, &c.

I shall name but one scripture ; it is Heb. x. 34, 'You took,' saith he, 'joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' Other men may know it by way of notion, but the saints know it in themselves : they have a prelibation by faith of heaven's glory. When their goods were taken away, God sealeth them bills of exchange in their own hearts to receive a better substance in heaven. They know it in themselves, so as no carnal heart in the world doth. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man,' saith the Apostle—that is, of a natural man, for so he expoundeth himself in the following verses—'to know the things which God hath prepared for them that love him ; but,' saith he, 'God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit,' 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

Therefore, brethren, it is a great mistake for men to say now, I seek God for heaven's sake, and therefore I am a hypocrite. No ; if thou knowest what heaven is ; if thou hast such a knowledge of it as Paul here prayeth for, that lieth in communion with God, and in fellowship with him ; and that he is the happiness, and that thou findest a spirit suited to find happiness in him alone ; the more thou desirest heaven, the more holy thy heart is. It is so far from being a sign that thou art a hypocrite, that there is no greater sign that thy heart is holy. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee ?' saith David, 'and whom in earth in comparison of thee ?'

You will only make this objection : Do the saints know what heaven is ? Why, heaven, it passeth knowledge !

I answer. Herein lieth their uttermost knowledge of it, by that little they feel and believe, for they see it passeth their knowledge, and that is it which takes their heart so much. The very objection doth prompt matter to my answer. I answer that objection with that which the Apostle saith, Eph. iii. 18, 19. He prayeth that they may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, the length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ ; but he addeth, 'which passeth knowledge.' So that now, to say that heaven passeth knowledge, that it is the hidden manna, the manna in the pot,—for that is meant by the hidden manna, the manna that was hid in the ark, which no man ever saw after it was put there,—to say that it is within the vail, unto which no man entered, as the Apostle's allusion is in the Hebrews ; their knowledge lieth in this, that it passeth knowledge, and yet they are said to know it ; 'we know in part,' saith he, but

they know so much of it that it swalloweth up all their thoughts in the taste and apprehension they have about it.—And so much for the first observation concerning this knowledge, ‘what are the riches of his inheritance,’ the Apostle prayeth for.

The second observation I make about it is this : That to have a tasting knowledge what heaven is, is one of those things that have the greatest efficacy to carry on the heart to holiness. Why doth the Apostle mention that when he would set himself to pray? His aim is to pray them holy, and to fit them for heaven; you see he inserteth this, he prayeth that they may know what the glory of heaven is, and have working thoughts filling their hearts continually about it.

I will only give you one, and that the highest instance for this. It is the instance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. What was it that had a mighty power upon his heart to bear out all his sufferings, to be obedient to the death, to the death of the cross? The Apostle telleth us in Heb. xii. 2, ‘Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.’ I know that the words may be read as well, that instead of the joy which he might have had, he did endure the cross; but this interpretation suiteth most with the coherence, with what went before, that *for* the joy,—apprehending what joy that was that was set before him,—he endured the cross, and despised the shame; it was that which bore him up. That this is the scope of the Apostle appeareth by the connexion of this chapter with the former. In the former chapter he had shewed how by faith all the saints had lived; he instanceth how they sought a country, professed themselves strangers, their eyes were upon heaven still: he instanceth in all the patriarchs; in Moses, who did choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect to the recompense of reward. Now, in the conclusion of all, when he had brought in all his cloud of witnesses that lived thus by faith and eyed the recompense of reward, he bringeth in, last of all, Christ himself; who likewise, saith he, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, &c.

My brethren, when our Saviour Christ came to die, when he stood before the high priest to answer for his life, the high priest asked him whether he were the Son of God or no? He knew the words would condemn him, yet he would speak them: ‘Nevertheless,’ saith he, ‘you shall see the Son of man come in his glory.’ It upheld him in his suffering; he speaks it as to dash them, so to comfort himself. For that joy which he had then in his eye, he endured the cross and he despised the shame. Our Saviour Christ had a representation made him of all the glory of the world, so as never yet man had of it, either before him or since. Satan, that is the god of the world, took him up into a high mountain, on purpose to make landscapes in the air of the glory of the world, and caused it all to pass before him; it moved him not this. But God setteth the glory of heaven before him, and this moveth him; and for that glory, and for that joy he endured the cross, he despised the shame, so great an encouragement is it. Nay, I will go further with you, brethren; under enduring the cross is not meant only bodily death, but it is enduring the wrath of his Father; he was content to endure hell itself, so far forth as the Son of God was capable to bear the wrath of his Father without desperation, and all such circumstances cut off; he endured all this, for hell is loss of the joy of heaven. And what joy was it that he endured all this for? He might have been glorious in heaven, as

he was the Son of God, without it; for it was his right the first moment that he was made flesh—a right that could not be taken from him. It was but the glory of the mediatorship that made him endure all this; it was but an additional glory, yet so great it was as it upheld his soul to endure the cross and to despise the shame, and to bear with all the contradictions of sinners, and to be obedient all his life.

I will not stand urging other places upon you. Therefore we faint not, saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 18, because we look upon things that are eternal, and not upon things that are temporal. Therefore we are always confident, saith he in the 5th chapter following, because we have an house with God not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. In 1 Cor. xv. 58, when he had spoken of the glory of the saints after the resurrection, he exhorteth them there to all holiness, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye always steadfast, abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' If this be the reward of it, saith he, it will not be in vain; you have good wages, and he that giveth good wages will look to have his work done well; it is an inference that he makes from the glory he will bestow upon the saints after the resurrection; read the whole chapter.

There are but two men we read of, beside our Lord and Saviour Christ, that had any more eminent knowledge of heaven than other men. The one was Paul, the other was Moses. Paul knew what were the riches of that glory, for he was rapt up to the third heavens; you read of it 2 Cor. xii.; and God vouchsafed Moses that privilege, to see his glory; therefore their grace wrought more than any man's we ever read of. It so much quickened the heart of Paul, saith he, I that have been in heaven, I could be contented to be accursed from Christ for the glory of God, and for the conversion of my brethren. And Moses, who had seen his glory,—which one would have thought would have made him so much the more to desire it,—'Blot me out of the book of life,' saith he. It enlarged his heart so much the more to the glory of God. I can ascribe these large dispositions of spirit to nothing else, but that God took the one up to the mount, and shewed him his glory, and took the other up to the third heavens. So that there is no consideration almost that will have more working and powerful effects upon the souls of men, to make them holy, than the knowledge of heaven hath. As likewise, Phil. iii. 18, 'Many walk,' saith he, as those that are 'enemies to the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things;' but, on the contrary, saith he, 'our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body.' That will make a man heavenly-minded, if he look for the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the glory that is to come. Therefore doth the Apostle pray here that they may know what are the riches of that glory of his inheritance.—And so much now for the use that the knowledge of heaven is unto believers, and so I have done with the second particular the Apostle prayeth for.

I am behind-hand in one debt to you. I slipped over that first part of Paul's prayer, the titles he giveth God in the beginning of his prayer. I must pay this debt. I will therefore do it briefly. I therefore choose to bring it in here, after that I had spoken of heaven and the glory thereof, because those titles do agree with the particular matter of his prayer more especially.

The titles he giveth to God when he prays to him for these Ephesians, for these great things, are, as he is the *Father of glory* and the *God of Christ*.

'Making mention of you in my prayers,' saith he, 'that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of glory' would do so and so for you. The manner of the apostles is this in all their prayers, to give such styles and titles to God as was suitable to the matter that they prayed for. Paul here prayeth for knowledge, spiritual knowledge of glorious things; he prayeth that they may know what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance, and all this to be bestowed upon them in and through Christ; therefore in the beginning of his prayer he calleth him the God of Christ and the Father of glory.

And, first, why he calleth him the God of Christ? It is spoken in relation to his human nature; for take Jesus Christ as he is the second Person and God, it is an improper speech to say he is the God of him as he is God; but as he is a man, so he is the God of Christ. I opened this when I handled the third verse, therefore I will not insist upon it now; 'blessed be the God,' saith he there, 'and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. I will pass over that now; only in a word, he is called the God of Christ in distinction from the style in the Old Testament. How did the old covenant run? I will be the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of their seed. How doth the New Testament run? I will be the God of Christ, and of his seed. Abraham was therein a type of Christ; and the covenant was made with him. Now, because he is the God of Christ as of a public person that hath seed, all the faithful, just as he was the God of Abraham that was to have seed; hence, therefore, when he prayeth to God for any mercy or blessing which is to be conveyed to them in and through Christ, he presenteth God to himself and to his faith as the God of Christ, to shew the foundation of obtaining all blessings.

What is the observation from this, in a word? This: join the third verse and the sixteenth verse together. In the third verse, when he would bless God, under what notion doth he do it? 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things.' Here, in the 16th verse, when he would pray to God, he useth the same style, that 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ' may give unto you so and so. The observation, then, is plainly this: That all mercies from God do descend down to us in and through Christ, and all prayers and blessings we put up to him should be all as to the God, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore saith he in his blessing, 'Blessed be the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,' who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ; therefore saith he in his prayer, that 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give unto you' thus and thus.

But, secondly, 'Father of glory,' that is the second title which here he giveth God. We find in other scriptures that he is called the God of glory, Acts vii. 2; that Christ is called the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. ii. 8. There are many other scriptures where he is called King of glory, Lord of glory, God of glory; but there is not one other where he is called Father of glory but only here.

There are some would read the words thus—they would make a parenthesis in these words, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of glory; that is, 'The God (of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father) of glory,' and so they make the sense thus: 'The God of glory, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' joining *God* and *glory* together, because it is an uncouth phrase, the like is not in all the Scripture again. But, my brethren, we may well adventure upon the phrase as it is; and, indeed, it lieth more fair in the original, and that is thus, that God is the Father of glory.

He is called, first, the Father of glory by way of eminency of fatherhood ; there is no such father as he, he is a glorious Father ; and so by way of Hebraism, he is a Father of glory ; that is, a glorious Father, such as no father else is. He is called the King of glory ; there are other kings, but he only is the glorious King. There are other fathers, he only is the Father of glory ; he is therefore called the heavenly Father. It is an expression the Scripture in the New Testament often useth, and in the Lord's Prayer it is. It is such a kind of expression as you use to children ; when you would commend the excellency of a thing to them you use to call it golden : you shall have a golden ball, or a golden girdle, or a golden coat, because that is a notion under which they apprehend the excellency of a thing. Heaven and glory are the highest things we are comprehensive of ; when he would set out how great a God, how glorious a Father he is, he calleth him heavenly Father, a Father of glory in distinction to all fatherhoods.

My brethren, the use or observation, call it which you will, shall be in a word this : Never be ashamed of your Father, you that are the sons of God, you are the highest born in the world ; no nobility riseth to glory ; your Father is the Father of glory ; and therefore walk worthy of him, and let your good works so shine before men that you may glorify your Father, the Father of glory, which is in heaven. That is the first.

He is, secondly, called the Father of glory, that is, the Father of the Deity, taking Father for the spring, the fountain ; the head, as it is often taken in the Scripture. He is not the Father of the Godhead of Christ, as if he did beget the Godhead of Christ. No ; the object of his fatherhood in that sense is only the person of Christ. But we may say he is *Fons Deitatis*, he is the fountain of the Deity ; and so divines express it, and the word Father will import it. We find that glory in Scripture is put for the Deity, for the divine nature. Exod. xxxiii. 20, 'No man can see my glory,' that is, my Deity, 'and live.'

Now, my brethren, to consider that God is the Father of the Deity, that he is *Fons Deitatis*, when we come to pray to the Father,—and therefore, indeed, all prayers are put up to him in a more special manner,—it is a mighty strengthening of a man's faith. Why ? He that is the fountain of glory, of the Deity itself, communicated that Deity to the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, that is to strengthen a man's faith that he will communicate grace and glory to a poor creature ; therefore, he prayeth here for grace and glory, glorious grace ; he prayeth to him as the Father of glory, in that sense as I take it now. My brethren, it is a great strengthening to our faith, that those things which are only in God himself, between himself and himself, yet may be props to our faith, that he will be our God, and do that for us in our measure that he hath done to the Persons and to himself. For example : one of the greatest and strongest arguments we have to support our faith is, that God is the Father of Christ. But how is he the Father of Christ ? By eternal generation ; yet this is put in as an argument to strengthen faith, that he will be the Father of all those that are Christ's. When you come likewise to pray for grace at his hands, consider it ; he is able to give me, a poor creature, grace, for he was the fountain of the Deity itself ; he was the Father of glory, taking in that sense. He that is able to communicate the Godhead to the Son and Holy Ghost, he is able to communicate grace and glory to me. You know that God is just, it is an attribute in him ; we may plead this attribute as it is in himself, he having declared himself to be our God ; if he be just, he must forgive sins now ; if he be God, he must forgive sins. So that all those intrinsical things in God himself, all his attributes,

those ways which indeed were natural between him and his Son, to be the Father of glory, they are all made engagements, we being in Christ, and strengtheners to our faith to obtain and seek things at his hand.

A third reason why he calleth him Father of glory is, he had spoken here, you see, of riches of glory, and riches of glory as his inheritance; so he calleth it. Now, what so proper, if he speaks of a rich glorious inheritance, which is God's inheritance given by him, as to call him, when he putteth this into his prayer, the Father of glory? That is, the author of all that glory, the contriver of all that glory which the saints have in heaven. Likewise in his discourse following, he mentioneth all the glory that Jesus Christ hath; he saith he had raised him from the dead, he hath set him at his right hand, far above all principalities and powers, given him a name above every name, given him to be the head over all things to the Church. He was the Father of the glory of Christ. Because he was to speak of our glory, and of the glory of Christ, and was to insist upon it in the following words, therefore he premiseth and calleth God the Father of glory.

My brethren, this is the honour that God the Father hath, that, take Christ as he is man and mediator, all the glory he hath the Father has given him by an act of his will; and so, in that sense, he is more peculiarly the Father of glory; he is the Father of all the glory Christ hath, of all the glory the saints have. And because the Apostle speaks of both these, therefore he mentioneth this in his title, 'Father of glory.' Look in Matt. xvi. 27, he saith that the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; though Christ calleth the angels his, as being their Lord; yet the glory himself shall have, he calleth his Father's.—And so much now for the opening of the phrase, why it is put into this prayer, 'Father of glory.'

I now proceed unto the 19th verse: *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of the might of his power, (so it is in your margins,) which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, &c.*

Here is a third thing that the Apostle prayeth for, 'That they might have enlightened eyes, to know the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,' &c. I must first give you the coherence of the words, why this cometh in here; and next it shooteth through the whole chapter, it shooteth up small roots, it hath coherence higher than the words just before.

The reference of these words is manifold. He had spoken much of God's good-will to his children in the former verses. Read all his discourses from the 3d verse to the 15th: he telleth them there how God had chosen them before the world was, had redeemed them by the riches of his grace; he had forgiven their sins, had accepted them in his beloved; he had predestinated them to a glorious inheritance. Here is enough spoken of his good-will. Now, to strengthen their hearts and their faith so much the more, he addeth, *the greatness of his power*, which his will putteth forth in their salvation. As he had doctrinally taught them and instructed them in the good-will of God from everlasting, so now he likewise prayeth that they may know the power of God, 'the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.'

My brethren, do but join *power* and *will* together, and it breedeth strong consolation. 'If God be for us,' saith he, having spoken of his predestinating us from everlasting, 'who shall be against us?' They are the two ingredients in those strong cordials, Rom. viii. Now he strengtheneth their faith in this power of God, to be as much engaged for their good as his will. He strengtheneth their faith in it by two things.

First, by what already he had wrought. He had wrought faith in them; 'to us-ward who believe.'

In the second place, he strengtheneth their faith by what he had wrought in Christ, and in Christ as a Common Person and head representing us. He raised up Christ your head, gave him to be to you as a public person in heaven. He that raised up Christ personally, will raise up Christ mystically; and the same power that wrought in one, shall work in the other. Here is *power* and *good-will* joined, you see. Here is one scope, why he mentioneth his power, and bringeth it in to this prayer so solemnly.

A second scope the Apostle had was to *provoke them to thankfulness*. You may be sure that that was one of his great scopes, for he telleth them that he gave thanks for them; 'I also,' saith he, 'give thanks for you,' and cease not to do it, for the great things God hath done for you; so he telleth them, ver. 15. Now, that they might know how much they were beholden to God, as he had laid open to them the love of God, the riches of his grace, in the former verses; so now he layeth open to them the greatness of his power which he had, and would put forth in their salvation. He had told them before, they had obtained an inheritance by faith. But, saith he, you little think how much power this faith cost the working; it cost the 'exceeding greatness of his power.' He mentioneth that to make them thankful for the work of faith; that when they shall consider the guilt of sin that once they lay in, they might know it is of the riches of his grace that they had forgiveness; so when they look but upon the power of God that wrought faith in them, whereby they obtained that forgiveness, and which was engaged to bring them to salvation, they might magnify the exceeding greatness of his power. Put but both these together, and how thankful will it make a man to God! How will it provoke a man to glorify God for the power he putteth forth in working faith, and in bringing a man to salvation!

I will give you a scripture that falleth in with this coherence. It is Col. i. 12, 13; he there giveth thanks to God, as here likewise; 'Giving thanks,' saith he, 'unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' How made us meet? 'He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' He magnifieth God here, as in ordaining them to an inheritance, so in translating them, and rescuing them, as it were by force and violence, from the power of sin and Satan they once lay under. And that is the second scope why he mentioneth the exceeding greatness of his power here.

In the third place, the last thing he had mentioned was, 'the riches of the glory of his inheritance;' and he had set out the riches of the glory of it by many arguments, as I shewed in the last discourse: here he mentioneth the 'exceeding greatness of his power' engaged to glorify them, even the same that he put forth in Christ, when he raised him up to life and glory, as one of the highest arguments to let them see what heaven was, and the glory of it. Why? For that must needs be an infinite mass of glory which hath the exceeding greatness of God's power engaged to work it, the same power which raised up Christ from death to glory; for the effect must be answerable to the cause. Now, saith he, if you did but consider what an exceeding greatness of power there is engaged to glorify you, you will fall down before the apprehension of what glory this power must work in you. The work must be answerable to the cause; if there be an exceeding greatness of power goes to glorify saints, then the glory must bear some proportion with it. That is a third coherence.

In the fourth place, a fourth scope, coherence, or reference, is this. When he had prayed that they might know what interest they had to heaven, what the hope of their calling was, and that they might know how great the glory was; might some soul begin to think, Alas! we are poor creatures; looking upon their vile bodies, Shall these vile bodies of ours ever come to be filled with so much glory? How is it possible? Carnal reason will be considering, as Abraham's carnal reason would have him consider the deadness of his own body, and the deadness of Sarah's womb: so carnal reason will consider the vileness of a man's body and of his soul, and the lowness and meanness of it, and argue, as Mary did, when she was told she should be the mother of the Messiah, Luke i. 34, 'How can this be?' Saith he, ver. 31, 'The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee;' and 'with God,' saith he, 'nothing is impossible.' He mindeth her of the power of God. So here, when he had laid open the glory of that inheritance, to take away all doubting that they might be raised up to it, he prayeth that they might know what the exceeding greatness of his power is that will work this.

I will give you a scripture answerable to this coherence too. It is Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body.' How? 'According to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.' He doth suggest to their doubting faith the exceeding riches and greatness of his power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself, as that which was able, if to do all things, then this; and also certainly would change their vile bodies, and raise them up to this glory.

There were worsed doubts than this that might rise in their hearts; for they might not only consider the vileness of their own bodies, but the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that is the worsed doubt of the two. They might not only say, How shall such vile creatures as we ever come to be made glorious? but, We are sinful creatures, and though we see for the present the hope of our calling, and that we have interest in heaven, and though we see what a glorious estate it is, yet we may miscarry before we come thither, and 'we shall one day perish by the hand of Saul,' as David said: some sin or other may undo us, and make us fall from God. Therefore, to take this doubt away, what doth he do? He prayeth next, that they might 'know what is the exceeding greatness of his power in them that believe,' to bring them unto his glory; a power, which as it had been put forth infallibly in raising up Jesus Christ from death to life, and bringing him to glory, should as infallibly be put forth in bringing them to glory also. And so now, this added to the former, it makes a man have strong consolation.

Do but see all these three things put together, and what strong confidence must it needs work in a Christian's heart! If he seeth the hope of his calling, what grounds he hath that he is one to whom this inheritance belongeth. If he seeth, secondly, what the glory of this inheritance is, and hath mighty, vast, and stunning thoughts of it working in his heart. And, thirdly, if he seeth the exceeding greatness of that power that is engaged to keep the soul, that for the present hath this interest to eternal life. Put all these together, what could be more prayed for? Therefore the Apostle bringeth in that next, 'that you may know the exceeding greatness of his power,' &c.

I will give you a scripture that agreeth with all these scopes too, and mentioneth the very same things in the same order, 1 Peter i. 3; only there he mentioneth it by way of blessing God, whereas he mentioneth it here

by way of prayer to God ; but he bringeth in all three things there in a way of blessing, that he doth here in a way of prayer, and in the same order. 1. 'Blessed be God,' saith he, 'who hath begotten us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to a lively hope ;' that is, to have an assurance and hope of salvation that putteth life into a man's soul. Here is the 'hope of their calling.' 2. 'To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.' Here are the 'riches of the glory of his inheritance,' described ; that is the second thing, you know, in the text. 3. 'Who are kept,' saith he, 'by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' Here is the third, that ye may know, saith he here, what is the hope of your calling ; that you may know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints ; and that you may know the exceeding greatness of that power that keepeth you thus to salvation. So now you have the full scope and coherence of these words in the general.

The parts of these words in the 19th verse are these four :—

I. Here is, first, a more general amplification or *description of the power of God* as here it is set forth.

II. Here is, in the second place, *the persons whom this power is engaged to*, to work their salvation and their good ; it is to us that believe.

III. Here is, thirdly, *the things wherein this power is seen*, both in Christ's resurrection and in working faith ; it is in them that believe, and in raising them up at last to that glory that Christ in heaven hath.

IV. Fourthly, here is *the use that the knowledge of this will be of to a Christian* ; wherefore the Apostle prayeth they may know it.

I. To begin with the first, he prayeth they may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward. He describeth the power while he prayeth they may know it. Even just as before while he prayed that they might know what heaven's glory is, he giveth the strongest description of it that could be, 'that ye may know what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' So here, when he would have them know what the power of God is that is put forth to believers, he setteth it forth in words, he wrappeth in such a description of it in his prayer, that might open their eyes to see what it was ; 'what is the exceeding greatness of his power.'

First, the description of the power of God here set forth hath two parts in it. I reduce it to two heads.

1. *The excellency and sublime greatness of the power of God engaged to believers.* He calleth it not only great power, but 'greatness of power,' and not content with that, it is *τι τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος*, the exceeding, superexcellent, sublime, overcoming, triumphing greatness of his power.

2. He describeth it by *the infallible efficacy of this power*, that it will certainly bring to pass the thing which you believe and hope for, and which God hath intended to you. 'According,' saith he, 'to the effectual power,' for so the word signifieth, *κατὰ τὴν ἐνεργίαν*, the effectual working of the might of his strength ; so you may interpret it, and the original bears it ; 'according to the effectual working of the might of his strength, of the force of his strength.' He setteth forth, I say, this power, first, by the *excellency* and *sublime greatness* of it ; and, secondly, by the *efficacy* of it, it is efficacious, it bringeth things to pass.

1. Now to open these a little unto you, and to begin first with the description of *the excellency of this power.* I shall open the phrases to you, for that will make way for the rest.

He calleth it first the 'greatness of his power.' When he speaks of the power of creating, he never giveth such a phrase to it ; he sheweth forth his

power there indeed ; he saith, 'his power and Godhead,' Rom. i. 20. When he speaks of the work of grace and salvation, then he calleth it the 'greatness of his power.' You shall find that usually, *ὁ πλοῦτος*, as we call it, that is *number*, is attributed to the *mercy* and to the *wisdom* of God ; but *μέγεθος*, namely *greatness*, is attributed to the *power* of God. You nowhere read the riches of his power, you nowhere read of his powers ; but you read of his mercies, and riches of mercy ; but his power consisteth of greatness. Ps. cxlvii. 5, 'Great is our Lord, and of great power ;' look how great God is in himself, so great is his power, if you would know the greatness of his power. But when he speaks of his understanding in the next words, 'his understanding,' saith he, 'is infinite.' Look in your margins, in the Hebrew it is, 'Of his understanding there is no number ;' he attributeth an infinity of number to understanding, and so to his mercy ; but when he cometh to speak of his power, it is a bulk, 'great is the Lord, and great is his power.' School-men have laboured to give reasons why God is omnipotent ; but, as divines well observe, all their reasons fall short to prove it, and there is no reason to prove it but this which the psalmist giveth, 'The Lord is great,' and therefore, 'great is his power.'

If you will know therefore how great his power is, consider how great a God he is, and all the power that is in this God is engaged to save a poor believer. All being hath some power that doth accompany it to do something ; there is no creature that hath a being but hath a power to do something ; only, because the creatures have limited beings, one creature hath power to do one thing and another creature hath power to do another thing. Now give me one of an infinite being, and he must have an infinite power ; as he is in being so must he be in working. The Lord is great, and great is his power ; his power is as great as himself.—So much now for the first thing, the greatness of his power.

He doth not only say the greatness of his power, but he addeth, *ὑπερβάλλον*. That word hath these three forces in it :—

In the first place, it signifieth an excelling power that putteth all power else down. 2 Cor. iii. 10, the same word is used where he speaks of the glory of the gospel. The glory, saith he, that the law hath is no glory, in comparison of that which excelleth ; it is the same word which is translated here 'exceeding.' Take all created powers, my brethren, and they are nothing to God.

I will give you a scripture for it ; it is in 1 Cor. i. 25. 'The weakness of God,' saith he, 'is stronger than man's strength.' He hath a power that excelleth, that exceedeth, that all the power of the creature is no power to it. That is the first thing.

In the second place, the word *τοῦ κρατοῦς* doth signify sometime *overcoming*, *prevailing*. He hath an exceeding greatness of power in him, engaged to believers, which is a prevailing power, nothing can resist it. Saith he, Phil. iii. 21, where he speaks of the power that shall glorify believers, 'According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself ;' he is able to subdue them, to conquer them. It is *κράτος* ; it is a conquering, prevailing greatness of his power that is able to subdue all things. It makes nothing rise to something ; it makes all things arrive to whatsoever he will have them come to ; they have all an obedient faculty in them to obey him ; he is able to subdue all things to himself, and by that power he will glorify believers.

Again, in the third place, it is called *ὑπερβάλλον*, a supereminent, surpassing greatness of power, because it passeth our knowledge. In Eph.

iii. 19, he useth the same word, τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην; you translate it, 'the love of God that passeth knowledge.' It is the same word that is used here. It is a power that exceedeth all our thoughts, as it is Eph. iii. 20, 'To him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think;' it is so exceeding, what he will do for believers, that they are not able so much as to think. 'As far as the heavens are above the earth, so are his thoughts' (and so his power) 'above ours.' It doth not only exceed the power of the creature, and excel it,—all that which is in the creature is as nothing to it,—but it excelleth all their thoughts. I have quoted scriptures that imply all these significations of the words.—And so much for the first part, that description of the exceeding greatness of his power, the excellency of it.

2. In the second place, he setteth forth this power by *the efficacy of it* in the next words; 'According,' saith he, 'to the efficacious working of the might of his strength.' As I take it, the scope of these words is to shew that it is such a power that works in believers as will always do the things that God intendeth to do with it, as hath an efficacy, a thorough working in it; every word is emphatical to imply so much.

First, the word that is translated working, ἐνεργεῖαν, implieth an efficacy of working, such as bringeth the thing to pass. To give one instance, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 'God shall send upon them ἐνεργεῖαν πλάνης, efficaciousness of error, an efficacy of error; they shall be given up to delusions efficaciously and strongly, so as their understandings shall not resist them. More plainly, Phil. iii. 21, 'According,' saith he, 'to the efficacy, the energy whereby he is able to subdue all things.' So that now that is the first thing, it doth note out an efficacy which is implied in the first word which we translate working, it is *energia*.

The words that follow do as plainly and manifestly express an efficacy and an ability to do what he will for believers; he calleth it an efficacy of the force of his strength, or of the might of his strength. Look in your margins, and you will find it so translated out of the Greek. Τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ. It is 'the energy of the might of his strength.' One word was not enough to express the power that works thus strongly; he therefore doubleth it, as the manner of the Hebrews is. He doth not say, 'according to the working of his power;' or 'according to the working of his might;' but he putteth two words together, 'of the might of his strength;' that is, as the doubling in the Hebrew phrase implieth, the uttermost of a thing; as thus, 'the Holy of Holiest,' that is, of the Most Holy, so the 'might of his strength,' that is, his uttermost strength.

You shall find it is doubled of God to shew the greatness of his strength when he works a thing infallibly and bringeth it to pass. Isa. xl. 26, 'Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things,' (the heavens he meaneth,) 'that bringeth out their host by number, and calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.' When he doubleth the attribute, makes him strong in power, as here he doth, then always followeth an efficacy, a thorough working the thing. 'Not one faileth,' he never faileth when he putteth forth the might of his strength, as the word here is. And you shall find the Septuagint use the very same words that are used here in their translation of those words. As likewise in Job xii. 16, 'With him is strength and power,' the Septuagint read it, κράτος καὶ ἰσχύς, the same words that are used here. It is doubled to shew the mighty effectualness of his power; when God will do a thing so as to put forth the might of his strength, he will cer-

tainly bring the thing to pass. Now, saith he, the might of his strength works efficaciously in all them that believe; 'the exceeding greatness of his power, according to the working of the might of his strength.'

Now, that his scope is to shew the efficaciousness, the irresistibleness of his power in working what he meaneth to work in believers, it appeareth by what followeth. For what doth he instance in? He putteth forth, saith he, the same power toward you believers that he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead to glory. Now, I appeal to all your thoughts what power it was that was put forth when God raised Christ from the dead; a power that could not be resisted; a power that should as certainly raise him up as God is God, and it was impossible it should be otherwise. I will give you Scripture for it and reason.

The scripture is, Acts ii. 24, 'Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible he should be holden by it.' Now, the power that works in a believer is such a power as works according to the efficacy of the might and strength that wrought in Christ in raising him from death to life.

Now, to gather up this. The Apostle here would have them apprehend two things concerning the power of God that is engaged to them. He would have them first to apprehend the excellency of it, that they might admire it as it is in God. That is the scope of the first word, 'to know the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe;' that, as it is Eph. iii. 20, 'To him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, unto him be glory in the churches for ever.' He layeth open the greatness of his power as it is in itself in the first words, that they might admire it in God, and thank him for it. But, secondly, he addeth the efficacy that this power will have in them to bring them to salvation in the next words, 'according to the working of the might of his power,' to the end to comfort them. He addeth the one that they might admire the power in God; he addeth the other to comfort them, when they shall see such a power works as shall efficaciously bring a thing to pass, and as effectually and irresistibly as it wrought in raising up Christ from the dead. That as it was impossible that God should lose his Son, and his eldest Son, as he had lost him when he was not raised up again; therefore when he raised him up, he saith, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;' he was lost before. This power, saith he, shall work in you, and bring you to salvation; that power that wrought in Christ when he raised him from death to glory.

II. I will but add one thing more, with which I will end; and that is, *the persons* whom this great power of God, this exceeding greatness of his power, a power as great as God himself, a power as efficacious as what wrought in Christ when he was raised from the dead; to whom is all this power engaged? It is engaged *to us-ward*: that is the second thing. I will but speak a word or two to it, and so conclude.

Obs. 1.—The first observation is this: That the simple consideration of what power is in God, of mercy or any other attribute, will never comfort a man's heart, *unless that he have a knowledge that it is to us-ward*, and for our good. The Apostle doth not, you see, pray simply that they may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power in itself; that would have done them no good; but he prayeth that they may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power *to us-ward*. The devils know what mercy is in God; yea, but, say they, it is not to us-ward; therefore all their knowledge of it doth them no good. So likewise you may read, 2 Peter iii. 9, speaking of

the mercy of God to men, and, as is thought, peculiarly to the Jews to whom he there writeth, saith he, it is his 'long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' Here lieth that which works the comfort in a man's heart; that it is the power of God to us-ward. 'To us a child is born, to us a Son is given;' and 'peace on earth,' not in hell; because there is peace on earth to us-ward; this is it that draweth a man's heart; this is it which giveth the comfort.—That is the first observation.

Obs. 2.—But the second is the main observation, and it is this: *That toward the saints, and for their good and their salvation, God doth engage the uttermost of all his attributes;* engageth the uttermost of power, the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward. It is not so in any work else, saith he, or toward any creature else; but it is to us-ward. He doth engage the greatest of his mercies, the uttermost of them, to us-ward. I shall give you Scripture for both by and by. He had mentioned in ver. 11 the power of God that works all things. He worketh all things by the counsel of his will, saith he. But there is a peculiarness of power, the power that works in us that believe; it is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward. The mercies of God are mercies to us-ward, such as to none else; they are called therefore by way of distinction 'the sure mercies of David;' that is, of David and his seed, the faithful; such mercies as to no creature else, singular mercies, special mercies: others are common mercies, as divines use to call them, but these are mercies to us-ward, sure mercies of David. So now, when he speaks of power in other scriptures, he putteth a singularity of power that works in believers, a power equal to that which works in all things else. Look Phil. iii. 21 and Eph. iii. 20, 'According to the power that works in us,' so it is in the Ephesians: 'According to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself,' so it is in the Philippians. Take all the power whereby he is able to do all things else, and it is but equal to that which he works in the saints.

My brethren, the grace of God in Christ, and the salvation of mankind by Christ, was a new stage God set up to bring all his attributes upon, to act their parts to the uttermost. He had shewed them all before, he had shewed power in creating the world, and a great power; but when he cometh to make the new creation, then cometh in the exceeding greatness of his power; he speaks superlatively of it. He sheweth mercy, nay, he sheweth riches of mercy to wicked men; it is called 'the riches of his goodness and long-suffering,' Rom. ii. 4. But when he cometh to speak of mercy to the saints, what doth he do? Read Eph. ii. 7. He doth not only call it riches of mercy, but he calleth it by the same word that is used here, *τὴν ὑπερβάλλοντα πλοῦτον*, the exceeding great riches; what is said of power here, the same is said of mercy there when he speaks of mercy to believers: the 'exceeding riches of his grace to us-ward,' there; the 'exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward,' here. All the attributes of God that he bringeth upon the stage, he acts them to the uttermost now in and through Christ.

My brethren, the works of the new creation put down the old. 'I create,' saith he, 'a new heaven and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered;' he will put forth such power in them. Nay, let me yet go further; go to hell, you shall read indeed that he sheweth his power there; so it is, Rom. ix. 22, 'What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and make his power known;' and believe it, a blow struck in wrath hath a great deal of power in it; for anger stirreth up power, draweth forth the mighty power of God. But what followeth comparatively to hell in his working

toward the saints? It followeth, ver. 10, 'and the riches of his glory upon the vessels of mercy.' Though he sheweth a glorious power in his wrath in condemning men, yet he sheweth a greater riches of glory, of mercy and of all attributes else, in saving men and bringing men to heaven. The power that God will shew in glorifying his saints will infinitely exceed the power he sheweth in condemning wicked men. The power that love stirreth up is a greater power than what wrath stirreth up in God.

I will give you the reason of it: nothing commandeth power and strength more than love; it commandeth it more than wrath, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength,' Mark xii. 30. Doth God love thee? He loves thee with all his strength, as thou lovest him, and art to love him. Jer. xxxii. 41, 'I will rejoice over them to do them good, with my whole heart and with my whole soul;' his love makes him to love them with all his strength, with all his heart. Now, when he sheweth forth the power of his wrath when he cometh to condemn men, yet let me tell you this, it is not with all his heart, there is something that regrets within him; for he considereth that they are his creatures, and he doth not will the death of a sinner simply for itself, for there is something in him that makes a reluctancy; there is not his whole power in this, though it be the power of his wrath. But when he cometh to shew forth his power out of love, that draws his whole heart; therefore you shall find in Scripture that mercy is called God's strength, because when he will have mercy, all the strength and power of God accompanieth it. Num. xiv. 17, 'Let the power of my Lord be great.' What to do? To destroy them? To do some great work for them? No, but 'according as thou hast spoken,' saith he, 'saying, The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy; pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy.' His mercy is there called his strength, because that love doth draw forth all the strength of God.

Now, my brethren, to gather up to an end and to a conclusion: you therefore that believe, comfort yourselves with the exceeding greatness of this power that is engaged to you; know the exceeding greatness of his power to you-ward. It is a power will do for you above all your thoughts; it exceedeth that way, it is *ὑπερβαλλόν* in that sense. It is a power that will do beyond all resistance. 'If God be for us, who shall be against us?' saith the Apostle. 'The Father,' saith Christ, 'is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand,' John x. 29. It is a reigning, a domineering power, a power that carries all before it. The word *τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος* may signify the sovereignty, the dominion, the absoluteness of his power, such as a monarch hath. Suppose a monarch had strength to do all by himself, and had authority joined with that strength, it were a power that would carry all before it, and command all. Such a power it is that God putteth forth to believers. It is a conquering power: 'He will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and who hath resisted his will?' When you come to beg pardon for your sins, what say you? 'Lord, forgive us our trespasses.' What arguments do you use? 'For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.' Sovereignty and dominion and strength are both his, and out of both these he will pardon your sins and save you; and if all that power of God will bring you to salvation, and keep you to salvation, you shall be surely kept.

And, my brethren, let me raise up your thoughts to consider with yourselves, if the exceeding greatness of his power be engaged in you and to you to do for you, what then is the thing that is answerable to this power? If that power that wrought in Christ, to raise him from death to glory, shall

work in us, Lord, whither will it bring us? What, will God bring you to salvation? It must, then, be a thing answerable to the power. What glory, therefore, must it be which God will shew forth in the saints at the latter day! The heavens declare the power and glory of God; yea, but the estate of the saints in heaven declares the exceeding greatness of his power; and what a glory, then, must that needs be!—And so much now for the second thing, *the persons*; ‘the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward.’

There are these two things yet behind—

First, to shew wherein, in what it is, that this power is put forth: it is put forth both in working faith and in keeping them to salvation, glorifying them at last. All that work and power that God putteth forth toward a believer, first and last, from his conversion to his salvation, is that which the Apostle here intendeth. This I shall shew the next day.

The second thing that remaineth is this: that it is a power that answereth to the power of raising Christ from death to life, and from death to glory. And therein I must shew these two things—

1. That the greatest work that ever God did, and the greatest power that ever was shewed, was in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and raising him up to glory.

2. That the working in the hearts of believers grace and faith, and keeping them to salvation, and glorifying them at last, will hold a proportion with that great power that was shewed in Christ's resurrection. And when I have handled these, I shall have done with the 18th, 19th. and 20th verses.