

## SERMON XXVI.

*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, &c.—VER. 19, 20.*

CONCERNING the working of his power to us that believe, here mentioned, I have shewn already that, first, it is not to be restrained only to the raising up of believers at the latter day. Nor, secondly, only to the power of the Spirit of God keeping us unto that day, as it is in Peter; 'kept by the power of God to salvation.' But that, thirdly, and more eminently, the power he prayeth here they might know was that power which wrought in them when first they were turned and converted unto God; for so he explaineth himself in the 2d chapter, from the 1st verse to the 11th. Here he speaks of the power that raised up Jesus Christ from death to glory, from the 20th verse of this chapter to the end; he saith, the same power that wrought in Christ in raising him up, works in us. And then, in the 2d chapter, he makes up the comparison; 'And ye,' saith he, 'who were dead in sins and trespasses;' there he describeth their death, and, when he hath done, speaks of their quickening and being raised up together with Christ. And indeed, as in the 2d chapter, from the 1st verse to the 11th, he sheweth the greatness of the work of grace and describeth it; so here he sheweth the greatness of the power that goes to work it, which that they may be thankful for, as he provoked them thereunto by his own example, 'I cease not to give thanks for you,' saith he, ver. 16; so he prayeth that they may know it.

In opening of this I have already done two things. I have first shewn that this is the intention of the Apostle in this place,—that I did at large,—namely, to speak of the power of God in quickening and converting men.

In the second place, I came to shew you what work it is that doth draw forth so great a power as here is spoken.

I shewed this two ways:—

First, *by subduing the old frame of heart*, which is enmity to God. In the *understanding*, casting down strongholds, as in 2 Cor. x. 4. In the *will*, deposing of self-love from that predominancy and regency, killing the great king, indeed the great devil, that is in all men's hearts. Not to root it out, but to depose it from being the predominant principle; which, when God cometh to do, all in a man is up in arms against him.

Secondly, *by mortifying all lusts*, giving them a death's wound, by destroying in part the body of sin, the love of pleasures, or whatsoever else is nearest or dearest to a man, as something or other is. That there is an almighty power in all this I have shewn at large.

I shewed, in the second place, besides the negative works which God destroyeth, what it is he putteth into the heart instead of this—new principles and habitual dispositions, which must be at least created. Not only old things pass away, but all things become new, as the Apostle saith.

Concerning this, I shewed in the last discourse that in the understanding there must be a new spiritual disposition, to make that capable of spiritual

things in their spiritual nature; else a man cannot know them spiritually, as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. And this will require no less than a creation, for which I quoted 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.

Secondly, in the will; to put in a new and great principle, to put a new spring into the watch, that shall turn all the wheels another way naturally; to put in love to God. And, my brethren, God will be loved more than yourselves, or he will not be loved at all. To touch the heart with this is more than to create heaven and earth. This I shewed, and gave you proof for it.

So, now, you see what it is in the work of conversion that doth draw out this exceeding greatness of his power. Two things, then, are despatched. First, to clear it, that it is the meaning of the place. And then, secondly, what it is that draweth forth the almighty power.

There is a *third* thing, and that is this, *What it is that occasioned this great controversy and mistake, that there is not so great a power as this spoken of that goes to the converting of men.* That is the third thing, I say, which yet remaineth to be spoken to, which some have denied—that there is so great a power as this needful to conversion. I do not say what occasioneth the mistake of their interpretation of this place, that is not my meaning; but of the thing that doth misguide men in interpreting this place. There would never have been so great a stir concerning the manner of conversion, and the work of it, and about the power of God put forth in it, had not there been such workings upon the hearts of men as have less power than this here spoken of.

I have, ever since I discerned into matters of this nature, judged the occasion of the mistake in this controversy, as likewise in that other of falling away from grace, that the ground of the mistake in both hath been this, to speak plainly, that there are *certain inferior and lower sorts of works of the Holy Ghost upon men's hearts*, movings of the Spirit of God upon men's hearts, which do not hold proportion with this exceeding greatness of power here spoken of, which yet are works above nature, are works of power indeed; but they do not come up to this exceeding greatness of power here spoken of. There are workings of the Spirit of God upon men that hold proportion with the doctrines of those men that hold there is not such a power put forth.

In handling of this point, which will conduce much to the clearing of all, my scope is not to shew you exact differences between these inferior and lower workings of the Spirit of God, which men take for grace, and true grace itself; but my main scope is to shew that there is a different proportion of power requisite to the producing of inferior works of the Spirit of God upon men's hearts, and that effectual saving work which puts men into the state of grace. To those embryos that never have a reasonable soul in them, as we express it, there is less power goes to those false births that do miscarry than to a perfect conception, which putteth a man into the rank of mankind. There goeth this exceeding greatness of power, here spoken of, to the one, but to the other a lesser power serveth.

You may remember I observed out of the words, 'according to the working of his mighty power,' that God had several proportions of working; he putteth forth more power in some works than in others. Why doth he say else, this work holdeth proportion with the exceeding greatness of power which he shewed when he raised Christ from the dead? In some actions God putteth forth more power, and in some less. There is less power needed to the producing of some things than of others. Now, that this exceeding

greatness of power is not needful in working in these lower ways, inferior works of the Spirit, is the main thing I am now to handle.

That I may proceed the more clearly in it, you must know this, that there are workings of the Spirit of God, by the word, upon men's hearts under the gospel, which are above nature, which are works of a great power, make a great deal of bustle in the hearts of men, and cause men to make a great noise in their professions in the world, and yet there is not an 'exceeding greatness of power' put forth in working such works.

I shall need to instance but in that place, Heb. vi. 4-6, for that is the highest instance; which I shall open by and by. You may read here of men enlightened, that are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they should fall away it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Here is you see a work of the Spirit; for they are partakers of the Holy Ghost, and how else do these men, when they fall away, sin against the Holy Ghost? It is a work above nature, for it is a tasting of the heavenly gift. It is a work of power, for they taste of the powers of the world to come, and the things of another world which they are enlightened to apprehend have a powerful impression upon their hearts.

But though they be works of the Holy Ghost, yet you must know that the Holy Ghost hath works of several sizes, as all artists have; they have slighter works, and they have more exact and curious works. The Holy Ghost is not as a natural agent that works *ad ultimum virium*, to the uttermost he can work, in all the works he putteth forth in a man's heart, or as fire that burneth as much as it can burn. But he is *agens liber*, he worketh freely, so saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 11. There are diversities of operations, and 'all these,' saith he, 'worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.' He worketh according as he will, and hence therefore he putteth forth more power or less power as himself pleaseth.

Now then, *the different proportion of power that the Holy Ghost putteth forth in these slighter works*,—as I shall prove that in the Hebrews to be, but a slighter work in comparison of true grace,—and that not so great a proportion of power is requisite to work them as is to work true grace, converting, saving grace; that is the thing which now I am to handle. And perhaps that may be one reason why it is called the 'power of godliness,' 2 Tim. iii. 5. He doth difference it from a form. Why? Because there is a greater power from God that goeth efficiently to work it. So that as the Apostle saith of ministers, 1 Cor. iv. 19, that seemed to be something, but were flat, and yet took upon themselves to be apostles; 'I will come,' saith he, 'and know, not the speech of them that are puffed up only, but the power.' So now let us consider the power that goeth to the working upon the hearts of these men, and you shall find that it doth not hold a proportion with that exceeding greatness of power here spoken of.

To explain this unto you yet a little more, that I may be understood before I come to the point. You must know this, that man's nature being now corrupted and fallen into sin and misery, the Holy Ghost makes a trial of all sorts of conclusions upon corrupt nature, besides that of conversion. God propoundeth this to himself; saith he, I will make trial how far corrupt nature, remaining such, unchanged, without a principle of the love of God put into it, how far it will go, how far it may be elevated and raised and yet not converted, how much supernatural good and working toward salvation it is capable of, without making it a new creature.

I will quote but a place for this ; it is Gen. vi. 3, 'And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh ; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.'

To open these words unto you—

He speaks these words not of all mankind in the generality. Mark but the words before ; he saith that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all that they chose ; snatched them away by force and violence ; mingled themselves in unlawful marriages. Who were they he speaks of ? Those that were the sons of God. Whom meaneth he by those ? Not they that were his own children by regeneration, for the text expressly saith in Peter, speaking of those that were drowned in the flood, that he swept away the 'world of the ungodly.' But you must know this, that there were Cain's seed and Seth's seed. There were Cain's seed ; speaking of that generation, he calleth the daughters of them the daughters of men. Cain was banished from the ordinances, Gen. iv. 14, cast out from the presence of the Lord ; and so was his posterity, and therefore they are called men ; that is, men left wholly to the swing of their natural corruption, without ordinances, without the enjoyment thereof, to work upon them or restrain them, and to convey the Spirit to that end. Then there were the sons of Seth ; those that lived in the church, enjoyed the means of grace, the preachings of Noah and other of the patriarchs ; and those were the sons of God ; for so, you know, they that do so are called the sons of God, 'I have brought up sons, and they have rebelled against me ;' and 'ye are the children of the Lord your God,' Isa. i. 2, Deut. xiv. 1 ; for God had taken them into the bosom of the visible church. Now then, those sons of God, living under outward means and in a sort the gospel,—I may call it so, for they lived under the preaching of Noah, a preacher of sure righteousness, Christ namely, and under the preaching of other patriarchs,—it is said the Spirit of God did strive with them, the Spirit of God going home to their hearts with the word.

Compare therefore with this 1 Peter iii. 18. It is a difficult place, and it is opened by this. Speaking of Christ there, saith he, 'He was put to death in the flesh, and quickened by the Spirit ;' that is, quickened by the Holy Ghost and by the Godhead ; 'by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.' I say these words in Genesis open those in Peter. Our Saviour Christ after his death was raised by the Spirit, by the Holy Ghost ; for that Spirit that raiseth up our bodies dwelt in him and raised up his, as it is Rom. viii. This Spirit of his, saith he, went with the ministry of Noah, who preached the same gospel we do, and preached in the days of the old world. Moses saith here, that his Spirit contended or strove with them ; and Peter alludeth to it that this Spirit by which Christ was raised had formerly preached to these men, who were now but spirits ; for that was their estate, they were now dead, they were in hell ; 'the spirits that now are in prison,' that is his meaning. And as Moses here saith, that God gave them a hundred and twenty years' warning to repent, 'The days of man,' saith he, 'shall yet be a hundred and twenty years ;' so Peter saith, he was long-suffering, and that he waited ; 'when once the long-suffering of God,' saith he, 'waited in the days of Noah,' waited a hundred and twenty years, 'while the ark was a preparing.'

Now then, that which I quote this place for is this, to come to it : that this Spirit of God contended or strove with these sons of God that lived in

the church. It did strive, that is all his phrase; he put forth so much strength as to try whether he should overcome corrupt nature, or corrupt nature overcome him; he put forth only a striving strength; as in wrestling, you know, if a man only strive, he doth, as it were, feel the strength of another. There is a striving strength that the Holy Ghost putteth forth upon the hearts of men, and there is an overcoming strength. There is a striving strength, as here; there is an overcoming strength, as in 1 John iv. 4, 'He that believeth overcometh the world; for greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.' But here he putteth forth so much power as shall be a striving, and yet they remain flesh still, (mark that;) that is, he doth not put forth so much strength or power as doth alter corrupt nature, they shall remain flesh still; for so you know it followeth, 'he also is flesh;' and so the Septuagint puts an emphasis upon it, 'he also is but flesh.' These sons of God that had all this means, saith he, I have tried how far it will go, and I see they are but flesh still, they are corrupt still; and while I deal with them thus in a lower way, it will not overcome their corrupt nature, they remain flesh for all that; therefore Peter saith, they were disobedient, and are now in hell. And upon this, what conclusion doth God make? I have tried, saith he, all conclusions with corrupt nature, all but one, fully to overcome it; I have given it all helps, I have striven, I have contended, I have wrought thus far, I have given them a hundred and twenty years yet longer, and the conclusion of all is in the 5th verse: 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;' and that corrupt nature would be corrupt nature still, would be flesh still, unless he put forth an almighty power, beyond striving, to change it.

To clear this yet a little more unto you, because it is the foundation of what I shall afterwards proceed in: you may observe that God hath tried all sorts of conclusions with the hearts of men, according to several sizes. He afforded corrupt nature a little light of truth, which the Apostle speaks of, Rom. i.; a light that shined in a dark place, whereby they knew many things of the law, as that there was a God, and that that God must be worshipped; this the heathens and all men more or less have in their hearts. He tried what corrupt nature would do with this, and he finds that generally they did imprison it in unrighteousness, they put this prophet of God into prison; that is, they went against their knowledge, they slighted it. The light of conscience, then, will not do it. Yea, he went so far with one man, he gave instance of one man in the world that went so far as to die for this, that there was but one God, and yet knew nothing of the Scripture. So Socrates was the highest instance how far the light of nature would go. God tried this conclusion first with the heathens.

I will give you a scripture for that. It is 1 Cor. i. 21, 'After that in the wisdom of God, the world'—that is the world of the Gentiles, for he speaks of them there—'by wisdom knew not God;' then when he had tried this conclusion, that all the light of nature, which he calleth the 'wisdom of God,' yet because of that corrupt carnal wisdom in men's hearts, would not turn them; then he sendeth preaching to convert them. After this, saith he, 'it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' This was trying a conclusion, you see; for after that he saw that this light of nature would do no good, then he sendeth Christ into the world, and by the preaching of the gospel to convert them.

Well, having tried the light of nature, and seen that will do no good, he cometh to the light of the law, and tries that with the Jews. He gave the

law to them ; ' he dealt not so with any nation, neither have the heathen the knowledge of his law.' This was but trying a conclusion too, as the other was. He would see how far the light of nature, improved by the light of the law added to it, would go. Now what saith the Apostle in Rom. viii. 3 ? ' What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.' He would try what the law would do ; he gave them a perfect rule, they had the same help for the external means that Adam himself had, (mark it,) for they had the same law. How cometh it to pass that the law could do no good, could not work upon men's hearts, though a Spirit went with it ? For so the law had, Neh. ix. 20. Saith he, it was weakened through the flesh ; corrupt nature weakened all the power of it, it was too hard for that light of the law. He tried that conclusion too ; and for that, as he gave Socrates the highest instance under the light of nature, so he gave Paul the highest instance under the law ; a man that never sinned against his conscience in his life, but was concerning the law blameless till his conversion. ' I have kept a good conscience,' saith he, ' to this day ;' he speaks it to the Pharisees that knew him before.

Well, he hath given us the gospel ; he will try how far corrupt nature will go there too, will be wrought upon by the gospel, which hath a power of the Spirit accompanying it, as all these had ; for certainly they were all supernatural, that must be acknowledged ; it was more than corrupt nature of itself would have done. He makes a trial, I say, with the gospel too ; for that you have that eminent instance in the 6th of the Hebrews, of men that are ' enlightened, and partake of the heavenly gift,' &c., and yet the Apostle tells us plainly, at the 9th verse, that there are better things than these which God works in men's hearts when he saveth them. ' We are persuaded,' saith he, ' better things of you, and such as accompany salvation.' The Holy Ghost elevateth and raiseth and works upon corrupt nature, to see how far it will go under the gospel.

And here he hath several sizes of working too. That parable in Luke viii. and Matt. xiii. sheweth it. The stony ground receiveth the word with joy, but falleth off in persecution. The thorny ground holdeth out in persecution, but cares, and riches, and pleasures grew up with it and choked the word. God hath several works upon nature, and trieth these conclusions with it.

And what is the reason he doth it ?

In one word the reason is this : because he would shew, by a comparison of the work of grace with other lower workings of his upon men's hearts, what an excellent thing grace is ; that it is ' precious faith ' indeed, which is the faith of God's elect, as the apostle Peter calleth it, 2 Peter i. 1. There is nothing in nature but hath a counterfeit. Go up to the heavens, there you see the beams of the sun, and you have streams in the air ; you have stars, you shall have falling stars and comets. Go down to the earth, you have precious stones, and you have the counterfeit of them, Bristol stones like to diamonds ; and the excellency of the one is set off by the other. And God deareth his children so much the more to him by this. Saith he, I have wrought so far upon another man's heart, but it was not grace ; I might have done so with you, but I overcame you, I stretched forth the exceeding greatness of my power to you.

And he doth do it too for this end, that all may see their own weakness, that as the Apostle saith the law was ' weak through the flesh,' so the gospel shall be weak through the flesh, and all sorts of assistances, but what doth the deed, shall all be weak through the flesh too. God may strive with

men, but if he doth not put forth a power to overcome them, they will overcome him. He doth it, I say, to shew the corruption of man's nature, and to shew the weakness of it, the utmost pravity of it, how it weakeneth all means of grace. Therefore he complaineth, 'What could have been done more in my vineyard, that I have not done in it?' that is, by way of means.

And, which most of all I would have you observe for the understanding of this, whereas you will say, If God give not sufficient grace to convert, why doth he try these conclusions?—

I answer you thus: though it is not sufficient grace to convert a man in the state of corruption, yet take a man as he was in Adam, and God considereth every man as he was in him, the same helps he affordeth now to corrupt nature would be sufficient to have kept Adam, and God is not bound to do any more. It is sufficient, I say, not in regard of the state of corruption to convert; but in this sense it is sufficient, that the same abilities and assistance given to Adam in innocency—and it is the fault of all mankind, their sin, that they are fallen from it—would have enabled him to have stood; and God, as I said, is not bound to any more.

And to clear God in this too, let me add this: that all these workings upon men's hearts, as they are trials of corrupt nature, so they mightily tend to lessen men's punishments, for they keep them from many sins. Yea, that which is wrought in the heart is in some way acceptable to God; this is more, God accepteth of it, though not for grace itself, yet he likes it well that corrupt nature will be wrought upon so far, though it be not turned to him effectually. You know he loved the young man that said he had 'kept all those things from his youth;' and so to see a man affected at a sermon, God is pleased with it, he accepts it according to its kind. As bring me a brass shilling, I say it is not a shilling, it will not pass for coin; but if you ask me whether it be worth anything, I say it is worth something in its kind, it is worth something as brass, though it is not worth something as a shilling: so these workings are acceptable unto God in their kind, though he takes them not for grace, they are not current money.

Having thus explained to you and laid this foundation, that the Holy Ghost hath lower kinds of workings upon the hearts of men, which yet notwithstanding do not arise to true grace, I will come now to shew you, *That God doth not put forth the same power in these as he doth put forth in a saving work.* That is the point which I am next to handle.

To demonstrate this unto you. The explication of it I refer to two heads:—

First, *That all lower workings of the Holy Ghost upon the hearts of men are but a restraint of corruption in them, and an elevation of corrupt nature.* A restraint and an elevation—that is, it is not a destroying corruption, but a restraining corruption. Nature remaineth corrupt still as it was. And it is not a changing of corrupt nature into its contrary, into grace, but it is an assisting of it, an elevating of it, a strengthening of it to go so far as he is pleased to carry it, remaining corrupt, and the same it was before.

And then the second thing that will demonstrate that not the same power is needful, is this, *That there is not a putting in of new principles of grace into the heart,* such as love to God, that was not there before; a new spiritual disposition in the understanding to take in spiritual things, as I shewed in the last discourse; but it is only working upon the old principles, improving them. And to both these, there is not so great power required as is there mentioned to conversion.

For the *first head*, you see it consisteth of *two parts*. There is, first,

but a *restraining of corruption, not a killing of it*. You know, when I shewed you what power lay in working of grace, I told you it was a putting off the old man, it was a passing away of all things that were old, it was a circumcision made without hands, it was a destroying of the body of sin, a deposing of that corrupt principle of self-love; and let me tell you this, till that be deposed, a man is an unregenerate man. Now you shall see, that in all these inferior workings of the Spirit, these strivings of the Spirit, there is not a taking away of corruption; there is but a restraining of it, the heart remaineth the same that it was.

To make this plain unto you, I will but give you one scripture which speaks of these kinds of workings. It is 2 Pet. ii. 20. He speaks of men that have been enlightened and wrought upon by the knowledge of Christ. Saith he, 'If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.' This is a place that is mightily alleged for falling away from grace; whereas, say we, the work here mentioned, namely, the escaping of the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ, did not rise up to true grace.

You will say to me, How do you prove out of this place that here is only a restraining of corruption, or a driving of it in? As I remember he said of Abimelech, Gen. xx. 6, 'I kept thee in, and suffered thee not to touch her,' speaking of Sarah, Abraham's wife; he restrained his lust.

I prove it thus: by the similitude that the Apostle useth in the following words, 'It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' Here is escaping of the pollutions of the world, here is a washing of the sow, a washing off her dirt; here is a keeping of her from going into the mire again for a while after she is washed; but here is not a changing of the swine's nature, here is a swinish disposition still; for, saith he, the swine is returned again to wallow in the mire.

To confirm it yet more unto you, you shall find in 2 Pet. i. 3, that I may speak pertinently to the point in hand, and compare that place with this in the second chapter, ver. 20, and so to the end; he speaks there of the work of grace indeed, and what saith he of it? 'According,' saith he, 'as his divine power hath given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' I confess I was much puzzled at this a long while,—for he useth in appearance the same phrase here that he doth in 2 Pet. ii. 20, 'If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ, they return again,' here is one work; 'having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,' here is another,—till this reconciled it; and I pray consider it. Here is a work upon men's hearts which makes them escape. But what? The pollutions of the world; the word in the Greek is *μιάσματα*, signifying the gross defilements, the outward defilements that in men's lives they run into; 'through the knowledge of Christ,' without changing of their nature; for you see they are swine still, though they do not wallow in the mire. But compare this other power, which giveth us all things pertaining to life and godliness; he telleth us, we are also made 'partakers of the divine nature.' And he doth not say only, they escape the *gross defilements* of the world, as I said the word there signifieth, but *ἀποφυγόντες τῆς ἐν κόσμῳ ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ φθορᾶς*,



they have escaped *the corruption that is in the world through lust*. Therefore there is a change not only in respect of outward defilements, but a change in respect of inward dispositions; the corruptions that are in the world through lust; these, a man having a new nature put into him that lusteth contrary, is free from the bondage of in some measure. Here is now a world of difference between washing of a swine from the outward defilement of the mire she hath wallowed in, and altering her swinish nature; there is no such work of power comparable in the one that is in the other. To wash off the pollutions, the gross defilements of the world that men lived in formerly, though it be through the knowledge of Christ, is nothing to the stamping of a new nature upon them, to the making them partakers of the divine nature, that they shall escape the corruption that is in the world through lust; that is, to kill the inward dispositions of sin, to destroy them, to alter the root and frame of the heart; this, saith he, is a divine power.

In a word, the one is but like laying Samson asleep, and then bind him, all his strength remaining, and when he awakes he breaks asunder all his bonds. But if you come to the work of the Holy Ghost, which is effectual upon corrupt nature, it is killing of Samson, it is giving him a deadly blow, which all in corrupt nature doth oppose; it doth not oppose the other so much, therefore it is not a work of so great a power.

So much for that first particular. It is but a restraint of corrupt nature, whereas the other is a passing away of old things, a destroying in part of the body of sin. Now to destroy, and subdue, and bring to nothing, therein lies the exceeding greatness of power; not in restraining, though it be a work of the gospel 'through the knowledge of Christ.'

In the second place, *There is an elevation, or an assisting of the Spirit of God*, whereby the Holy Ghost doth join with a man's spirit, and enableth him to perform actions above nature, which of himself he would not do. And, my brethren, there are those in the world that say that grace is nothing else but an assisting, an acting of the powers of a man. They acknowledge an inward calling as well as an outward; but the inward calling is nothing else but an elevation; the Holy Ghost elevateth a man's spirit, and joineth with it, and strengtheneth it with a supernatural strength put into it, and so by his assistance and joining with it, it is enabled to do that which of itself it would not do.

To express the difference concerning this, because much dependeth upon it. You know, in the Old Testament, that angels did appear in the likeness of men, and perhaps had the bodies of men for that time created for them by God, as some divines think. Make that supposition. They did all things as a man, the angels acted that body, used the tongue to speak with, and the feet to move, and the hands to do this and that, to pull in Lot, as you know they did, when they struck the others with blindness. They were created angels that did it, that the text is clear in. Now there is a great deal of difference between their assisting and joining with these bodies, and that work of God when he did create a soul, and breathed it into man's body at first: there is an infinite difference between them in the power put forth, for an angel can do the one; but to breathe the breath of life, the soul, into a body thus formed and fashioned, God only could do it. The one is a work of exceeding greatness of power; but merely to assist *tanquam forma*, and not *informans*, as the philosopher speaks,—an *assisting form*, and not an *informing form*, as the soul is to the body,—this is not a work of such great power, for you see an angel can do it.

I shall not need to stand explaining of it largely. You shall find, Eph.

iii. 16, that there is not only a strength put to the inner man, but there is an inner man too which God createth in a man, and then to strengthen it indeed is something. But simply to join, and strike in, and mingle itself with corrupt nature, as fire doth with water, according to the opinion of some, when it makes it hot,—though water be cold in itself, yet fire can and doth mingle itself into the pores of the water and heat it; for there are pores in the water, as philosophers do acknowledge; yet the principle of heat is in the fire, not in the water, which of its own nature is still as cold as it was, for it returns to its coldness again. So here, for the Holy Ghost to insinuate himself into the spirits of men, and act them, and raise them up to do things above nature, but yet put not into them a formal principle of life; thus, I say, to join with men's spirits, is no such great work of power, in comparison of that which I have described formerly unto you—viz., to put in a new light, the light of life; to give you all things belonging to life and godliness, to put in that great principle of the love of God into the heart, which is more than all the creatures themselves without it. This is a new life, a new principle, my brethren.

Those, who as you think in their opinions do deprave the grace of God, and you speak of them as such, the Arminians; they do not hold that a man can do anything of himself; they acknowledge that which Christ saith, 'Without me you can do nothing.' But, say they, it is but an assisting, it is but the joining with men a supernatural strength; it is not putting in of a new principle, say they. Why, say I, this is not such a work of such mighty power. Why? Take cordials, they will join with a man's spirit, to strengthen you. Take an angel, he will join with a man's spirit, and strengthen you; as we see in wicked men, the devil joineth with their corruption; a man shall have his affections blown up with Satan, like the waves of the sea by the wind, stronger than by nature they would be. You shall read of an angel, Dan. xi. 1, a good angel it was, and whether it was Christ or a created angel I need not dispute; certainly a created angel can do as much; he strengthened or confirmed the spirit of the king of the Medes; it was in a good business for the Church, and he joined with the spirit of the king in it. And, Luke viii., you shall find a man so strengthened by Satan, that no man could hold him, no, though he were bound with chains. And as one said of him that killed Henry the Fourth of France, that he had the strength of ten men in him; 'Satan filled his heart,' as the expression is, Acts v. So, on the other side, for the Holy Ghost to strengthen a man's spirit by an external assistance, enabling him to do these and these actions, by mingling himself with a man's spirit; this is not so great a power, for an angel can do it. But to make a 'workmanship created unto good works;' to put a new soul into a man, as the Scripture compareth it, and therefore I may so express it,—that is, to put a new principle of life and grace into a man, and then to enable him to act that grace,—here lieth that work that beareth proportion with the exceeding greatness of his power; that other doth not.

Now, my brethren, I will instance in particulars. I will shew you a work upon the *understanding* of a man, that a man shall be enlightened (as it is Heb. vi.) with a new light about spiritual things, and yet not have a work of grace that answereth to the exceeding greatness of God's power to work it.

To make this plain unto you. You may read in Num. xxiv. 2, that the Holy Ghost is said to fall upon Balaam. 'Balaam,' saith he, 'the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said,'—the Hebrew is, as it is in your margins, 'the man who had his eyes shut, but now are

opened,'—'he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.' And the thing he saw was the happy condition of the people of God, as you may read afterward. Here was a man that had his eyes opened by a new light, a new work of the Spirit upon him, yet remained flesh for all this; there was no new creature wrought upon him at all, for you know he is brought in as an instance of one that went after the ways of unrighteousness; yet you see what glorious things he saith of himself.

My brethren, mark it, here is new light indeed cometh in, and the mind is raised up to new objects it never knew before; but here is no new eye made, no understanding given, as the Apostle expresseth it; here is not a being *born again* to see the kingdom of God, here is not the image of God created, here is not that new creature, as I described it in the last discourse; a new spiritual understanding, and disposition in the mind to receive spiritual things as they are in themselves. And, my brethren, thus merely to put a new light in the mind, to suggest things that never were before; this is not a thing that requires an almighty power. Whereas he knew worldly things before, now to propound spiritual things to him, and to open his eyes to see them; the old eye is capable of this, for you see Balaam's was.

I said before, an angel can do as much. An angel can fall upon the understanding, irradiate an object and present it to the mind. There were no fantastics, enthusiasts, if the devil could not do this; he turneth himself into an angel of light, and he can do it. I will give you Scripture for it: 1 Sam. xviii. 10, it is said, 'an evil spirit came upon Saul, and he prophesied.' Here was Saul's eye opened, as Balaam's was; here was prophesying, as he did. Herein lieth not then the greatness of God's power to enlighten them, and to reveal to them the things of the world to come; though they knew nothing before but of the things of the present world. Here is a new light brought in, like the bringing of a candle into a room; but here is not a new eye, as there is in a godly man, and such a representation made as answereth to the creation.

My brethren, to work faith in men to believe the things of the world; to work a faith that a man shall be fully convinced and believe this is the word of God; simply to do this, is not a work of an almighty power. Why? Because the devil can make a man believe a lie; he can work upon the understanding so, who hath not an almighty power in working. Look in 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, where, speaking of Antichrist, 'whose coming,' saith he, 'is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they may be saved; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they shall believe a lie.' He speaks indeed of the Papists, the learned sort of them, who are knowing men. But here you see Satan cometh with 'deceivableness of unrighteousness,' and maketh them 'believe a lie,' through God's permission. 'Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and he said, I will go forth, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. Go,' saith God, 'and do so, and thou shalt prevail.' He went, and did so work upon the understandings of the false prophets as he made them believe it; he imitated God so. So, on the other side, for God to come and fall upon a man's spirit, and enlighten it so as he shall be fully convinced of the truth, that he is persuaded that these things that are delivered in the word are true, which he did not before; this is no more a work of an almighty power than that

other by Satan is ; he can do as much in another way, as the Holy Ghost in this way. So that to work upon the understanding is not a work of an almighty power.

My brethren, let me tell you this, if a man have never so much knowledge wrought in him by the Holy Ghost in a way of enlightening, when he cometh to turn to God, he findeth all that knowledge new, and it differeth as much from the other as the reason of a man from the fancy of an ape ; let me so express it, there is a reality in the proportion that this expression holds forth. It is called the light of life. Take but the poorest soul that hath but the understanding of Jesus Christ given unto him by the Spirit of God, he hath that knowledge which all the learned men in the world have not. The one is a work of an almighty power by creation, the other is but an enlightening. So then, God may work upon the understanding, and not by an almighty power.

Come to *the will and affections*. In a man, you know, there is love, there is joy, there is fear, there is desire. The Holy Ghost by way of an assistance may stir all these affections in a man, and yet not in a way of an almighty power. You shall find in 1 Sam. xi. 6, it is said there, that 'the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul, and he was exceeding angry.' It was upon a just occasion, upon an indignity offered his people by Nahash the Ammonite ; he would make a covenant with the people, but the terms were that he might thrust out all their right eyes. Hereupon now the Spirit of the Lord fell upon Saul, and raised up his anger. The Holy Ghost sometimes raiseth the affections of wicked men,—Saul was so,—without creating anything, but merely insinuating himself and joining of himself with their spirits ; as the wind joining with the waves of the sea, you see it makes them rise : so doth the Holy Ghost blow upon men's affections sometimes at a sermon, upon their fear, he terrifieth them, upon their love, upon their desires, as he did upon Balaam's : 'Oh that I might die the death of the righteous!' This is not a work of an almighty power. Why? Still, because an angel can do as much to the spirit of a man, an angel can stir a man's affections. There are many instances in histories how the devil hath raised men's affections to love women, and women's to love men, so long as the enchantment hath lasted. 'Who hath bewitched you?' It was a bewitching, that of the Galatians, chap. iii. 1. In 1 Sam. xvi. 15, you shall read there that an evil spirit from God troubled Saul ; it did terrify his spirit.

By this you see, my brethren, that the Holy Ghost can, and doth work upon the affections of men ; yet all this while there is not an almighty power put forth. Here is an elevation of a man's spirits, a stirring of his affections ; but yet all this is without an almighty power. Why? Because there is no change wrought in him, there is nothing of a new creation to make him suitable to spiritual things as spiritual wrought in him.

And that is the first head. He works either by way of restraint or outward assistance. Assistance I may call it, but I call it outward assistance, because it is not a vital disposition put into the soul, but only a bringing in of a new light, and a stirring up of the affections. That is the first way whereby I demonstrate that these inferior works of the Holy Ghost have not an almighty power accompanying them.

The *second head* I propounded is this, and I would have you mark it most of all, if I shall be able to explain myself in it: *The Holy Ghost, when he works these inferior works, these strivings with the spirits of men, doth not put in new principles, only works upon the old, and improves them in a supernatural way.* It is an *eduction*, as I may call it, it is not a *creation*.

I will give you an instance to express it. The sun works upon the principles that are in the mud by its heat, and there are living things begotten in it. The sun, as some think, doth not create a new life. The truth is, a sensitive life is but the spirits of the element, which the sun concocts and boileth up to such a height. But when God made creatures, then indeed there was creation. The sun doth but merely work upon the principles in nature, and boileth them up and concocts them, and there is a creature produced that hath some life. But when God created at first, he made living creatures immediately. This is the difference between eduction, as philosophers call it, out of principles in nature, and putting in of new principles. The work of grace is a work of *creation*; and why a creation? Because it is *ex nihilo*. It doth not depend upon any pre-existent matter, but it is a putting in of all new. When Adam's body was made, God did not draw the soul out of the body, as the sun doth these creatures out of the mud, *ex putridâ materiâ*, there being some seeds of them in it before. But it is creation, and so the schools say; it is a thing that doth not depend upon matter; God putteth it in of nothing.

This helpeth to express clearly and fully the difference between the work of the Holy Ghost upon corrupt nature in a lower way, and in this higher way; and it differenceth the power, that there goeth not so much power only to work upon the old principles, as doth to put in new. There is almighty power goeth to the one; there doth not go an almighty power to the other.

In James i. 17, he saith, that 'every good and perfect gift cometh from above.' He speaks of the work of grace, of regeneration; that is plain, for it followeth, 'of his own will begat he us.' I quoted this place in the last discourse, and it is now full for my purpose. I told you then, that the phrase 'from above' is applied to none but Christ, whose birth was altogether heavenly, and unto grace, in the whole Scripture. It is applied to Christ, John iii. 31, 'He that cometh from above is above all.' And here he saith, every perfect gift, speaking of grace, is from above. 'Every perfect gift;' why doth he put in the word perfect? My brethren, you must know there are gifts that do come partly from above that are not perfect. Look into Heb. vi. 4. He speaks of men that are enlightened, that have 'tasted of the heavenly gift.' Here is a gift you see from heaven, and yet he plainly saith, that a little love of God is worth all these things he speaks of; for so he saith, ver. 9, 'We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.' Better than what? Better than all these enlightenings; that is his meaning plainly. There are graces, saith he, that the Holy Ghost works, that have salvation in them, so the word signifieth. And what are they? Read ver. 10, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you have shewed toward his name.' Men despise signs altogether; you see the Holy Ghost mentioneth love to God, and obedience springing from that love, to be better than all those enlightenings and tastings of the powers of the world to come, which corrupt nature is capable of.

Now then, the one is a heavenly gift as well as the other. Why? Because that corrupt nature could not have any such thing in it, if the Holy Ghost from heaven did not work it; but yet it is not wholly from above, it is partly from heaven and partly from earth. I may say of it, as John saith of himself, comparatively to Christ, John iii. 31, 'He that cometh from above,' saith he, speaking of Christ, 'is above all.' His coming is wholly from above; he is the Lord from heaven, he came not from the earth, as other men; the Spirit of God made his body in the womb of the virgin, and put in his soul; but 'he that is of the earth is earthy, and speaks of the earth.'

All other men, and he includeth himself too, are partly from heaven ; their souls are from thence, but their bodies are made after the ordinary sort of men's bodies. These inferior gifts are partly from above and partly from below ; that is, they partly arise from the principles of corrupt nature, improved by the Holy Ghost ; hence now they are not perfect, but every perfect gift cometh from above, wholly from above.

But compare with this Luke viii., where he speaks of these inferior workings in the parable of the sower ; and he saith of the stony ground, that they did not ' bring forth fruit to perfection.' These are perfect gifts, and wholly from above ; those other works are imperfect, because not wholly from above ; only the Holy Ghost takes the same old corrupt heart, and works upon principles already in it.

I could give you many similitudes, which I omit, as that of the chemist. The chemist will fetch salt out of any body, out of a man's arm ; give him but leave to use his art, to put fire to it, he will extract and draw spirits out of it. You would think here were a mighty alteration. Here is no great alteration, no alteration like the creation. Why? Because he works but upon what is in it already, only he draws it out.

So it is here. The Holy Ghost falleth upon a carnal heart ; he would extract joy in the word, make an affection taste of the powers of the world to come ; it is but an elevating, it is but a raising and boiling up principles that are there already.

Now to make this plain unto you. I shall do it by these three things. The work of grace, as I told you, is wholly new, all becometh new ; it is not a working upon the old. Indeed, there is the old nature, I mean there is the same substance of nature, the understanding, and will, and affections, that were before. A man could not love God if they were not in him ; but, I say, here is but a working upon the principles that were in nature, without putting in new.

To make this plain, I will shew you—

*First*, What principles are in corrupt nature capable to be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost.

*Secondly*, I will shew you that there are things in the word suitable to work upon these principles of nature, if the Holy Ghost setteth them home.

*Thirdly*, That the Holy Ghost doth but improve these principles, by setting home those things in the word suitable to them.

You will say, What are those principles in a man's nature that are capable thus to be wrought upon and improved by the Holy Ghost, without putting in of new, that a man shall seem to have abundance of religion, and be exceedingly affected with spiritual things ?

I will go over some. Take a man's *understanding* ; there is a light of conscience in it, whereby a man knoweth there is a God ; as you may read, Rom. i. There is the letter of ' the law written in their hearts,' Rom. ii. 15. Now the Holy Ghost, without putting in of a new eye, can reveal more and further things of the law to their conscience, than nature of itself ever knew, and yet is capable to take in. Here is now but a work upon the old principle, a raising of it up higher, a revealing new objects to it.

There is naturally in a man's heart *the knowledge that there is a God*. There is naturally in all men's hearts devotion to a deity. The Holy Ghost cometh and works upon this principle, and convinceth a man's heart that the God that made heaven and earth is the true God, and that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. Now, take a man that is brought up in Turkey ; the same principle of natural devotion to a deity carrieth him to worship

Mahomet, that carries another that is brought up in the Church to worship Christ. The principle is one and the same, only here is the difference—the one hath the happiness to live in the Church, and to have the knowledge of the true Messiah. But, I say, the principle is the same in him that is in the heart of a Mahometan. Then the Holy Ghost cometh and works further upon this principle, and convinceth it with more supernatural knowledge concerning this Christ, that through it he escapes the pollutions of the world. This is for knowledge.

There is likewise in a man *a natural desire of happiness*. All men have a desire of the chiefest good. What is the reason else you go and heap up so many things together, riches and honours, &c. Now, the Holy Ghost cometh and works upon this principle in nature, and convinceth a man that heaven, and to be with God, is the only happiness. And a man out of love to himself listeth after this happiness; and, ‘Oh that I might die the death of the righteous!’ as Balaam said.

So likewise for the matter of believing that a man is the child of God; there is such a self-flattery in the heart of a man, that if he hear any good news out of the word that men shall be saved, I am the man, thinks he, that God will honour, as Haman thought himself the only man whom the king would honour; and so every man thinketh; this self-flattery makes out the conclusion presently. The Holy Ghost comes and terrifieth a man’s conscience, letteth it see sin as it is; for conscience is to be subject to God, for it is his vicegerent. When the conscience is terrified, he heareth of the gospel and of pardon of sin, the Holy Ghost makes him believe it, and thereupon he is filled with joy. And that very natural principle, which in a man condemned to die, if he hear of a general pardon, makes him believe himself to be in the number of those that shall be pardoned, and so is joyful in believing it; the same will make a man joyful at the hearing of the gospel, as you have it in Matt. i. 31.

And, besides, a man’s spirit is capable of a joy by the presence of the Holy Ghost; they are said to ‘taste of the powers of the world to come.’ You know naturally a man’s conscience, if he do well, hath peace in it; so in the law. So in the work of the gospel too, if a man hears of a pardon, and doth any way reform through the knowledge of Christ, to encourage him he hath a joy in his spirit, which the Holy Ghost works, and yet still the principle is the same, for God doth it to encourage men; men shall not go a step toward him, but he will come a step toward them.

I should shew you, that all this is far from the exceeding greatness of power that goeth to the putting of new principles in the heart, to give a new understanding to see spiritual things as spiritual, to put in that great principle of the love of God; not only stir up old self-love.

Believe it, my brethren, that the same affection that makes men to love worldly things, when conscience is convinced, diverteth a man to spiritual things, though not as spiritual. As for instance, Felix trembled when Paul preached to him of judgment to come; the same affection that made him tremble when Paul arrested his conscience, would have made him tremble if Paul had arrested him with sentence of death from Cæsar. It is but the same affection diverted to a new object.