

SERMON XXVIII.

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

I SHALL repeat nothing unto you of what I delivered in the last discourse. I will only give you the general heads.

These words, 'And what is the exceeding greatness of his power,' &c., refer, as you have formerly heard, to the words in the 18th verse, where Paul prayeth, 'that the eyes of their understandings might be enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward,' &c. So that, indeed, these words are the last part of Paul's prayer, which consisteth of three things which he prayeth for.

1. That they may know what was the hope of their calling, the ground of their hope.

2. What were the riches of that inheritance they were called unto, and had ground to hope for; 'what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

3. What power it was had both begun to work in them and was engaged to bring them to this inheritance; and that in the words I have read.

There are five general heads—I propounded but four at first—unto which I reduce all the opening of these words; whereof I have despatched three already.

The *first* general head is the reference of these words, their various aspect; they look several ways, both to what is before and what is after. That I have handled formerly.

Secondly, There are the parts of the words.

First, Here is a more general description or amplification of the power of God manifested to believers, and that in two things.

1. There is the exceeding greatness of it; 'the exceeding greatness of his power.' That I have handled.

2. There is the efficacy of it, in those words, 'according to the effectual working of the might of his power.'

So much in general, concerning the power of God here set forth.

Secondly, Here are the persons to whom it is drawn forth; 'to us-ward,' believers. I have opened that likewise, and given those observations that arise from thence.

Here is, *thirdly*, The work wherein this great power is manifested in believers. It is not to be restrained only to the resurrection at the last day, but enlarged also to their conversion, and all God's gracious dealings with them from first to last. And because there was a controversy upon that,

whether conversion should be taken in, yea or no, I have therefore done three things to clear that.

The first was to prove that conversion is meant and intended here by the Apostle, as that wherein God sheweth forth the exceeding greatness of his power.

Secondly, for the opening of this, I shewed you wherein the exceeding greatness of power is drawn forth; or what it is in conversion draweth forth so exceeding a great power.

Thirdly, which was the thing I handled in the last discourse, I shewed how that by way of difference there are inferior works of the Holy Ghost upon men's hearts, which have not in proportion (compare the works) so exceeding greatness of power manifested in them. I shewed this to clear the text, for he saith it is 'the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward;' to none else, in all works that are wrought upon them, let them go never so far. And likewise I did it to shew the occasion of that controversy. And all these things I have despatched.

There are yet these things remaining to be handled:—

I. The *first* is, I must speak something concerning *their knowledge of this power*; for if you mark it, he prayeth in the 18th verse that God would give them enlightened eyes, to know what is the exceeding greatness of his power in them that believe. I spake something concerning the knowledge of every particular else he prayeth for, and therefore I must do something about the knowledge of the power of God in them.

II. The *second* thing which remaineth is this: *The parallel or the pattern* that the Apostle prayeth they might have in their eye, when they consider how great a power works in them; even the same power, saith he, that wrought in Christ, in raising him from death to glory.

III. Then the *third* thing to be handled, which belongeth to the 20th verse, is this: *The resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ from death to glory*; which he continueth to the end of the chapter.

I. I must begin then with that, which is *the knowledge that believers have*, or which he prayeth they should have, *of the power of God working in them*. And concerning that I shall give you, for the explication of it, these three particulars; whereof some will be considerations about it, some will be observations.

I will give you, *first*, this distinction, that you may understand it the better, because the Apostle's scope here in his prayer is, that they may know the power that works in them that believe. You shall find in Phil. iii. 10, that the Apostle himself expresseth his own desires; 'that I may know,' saith he, 'the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead.' The Apostle here prayeth, 'they might know the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward that believe, the same that wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.' You would think now, that the knowledge the Apostle speaks there and speaks here are all one, but they are not. Therefore, in the first place, I will give you a distinction of the knowledge, both from what is there meant and what is here meant.

There is a twofold knowledge of the power of Christ's resurrection. The one is a *knowledge of faith*, the other is a *knowledge of experience*.

In that place, Phil. iii. 10; the knowledge he prays for there is a *knowledge of experience*; that he might know the power and virtue of Christ's resurrection in the effects of it; that he might find those effects upon his heart which Christ's resurrection is ordained to work in him; and therefore,

saith he, ver. 11, 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead;' that is, to be as perfectly holy as those that are risen from the dead. I would find, saith he, this effect of the resurrection of Christ. That is meant by the power of his resurrection there.

There is likewise a knowledge of *faith*; and that is this, for a man by faith to take in and understand that he may glorify God, and believe what a great power it was that raised up Christ from death to life, and that no less power works in believers when it works faith; and that is the knowledge the Apostle meaneth here. His meaning is not, that you may know more and more—if you will, you may take it in, it is not the chief scope—the effects of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; but from the effects that were in their hearts by faith, they might see the power that wrought it. This is the Apostle's scope here. As there is a double knowledge of a physician, who hath already oftentimes cured you of a disease. You know what skill is in him, that you may thank him; but then you send for him anew, and you desire to know the power of his medicines, and to know his skill rather by giving you new physic, and restoring you to health anew. That is the knowledge the Apostle meaneth in the Philippians; the other is the knowledge he meaneth here. And therefore, if you observe it, the words, 'what is the exceeding greatness of his power,' are referred to what went before, 'that you may have your eyes enlightened to see,' or to know, 'what is the power,' &c. Not only to have hearty experience of the effects of that power in them, but eyes to know the power that hath wrought in you already the faith you have, and will further work in you. It is a knowledge of faith, to believe it is so great a power, the same that wrought in Christ that works in you.

And so much now for that first particular, which is the first thing to clear this concerning the *knowledge of the power that works in us*.

The *second* thing I propound to clear is this: *How useful this knowledge is to Christians*, to know the power that works in them to be the same that wrought in Jesus Christ, when he was raised from the dead.

For that I must refer you to what I delivered concerning the Apostle's scope and reference of these words, as it here cometh in. I shall repeat it to you with enlargement.

It is useful, first, to the end you may be *thankful*. So at the 15th verse, Paul giveth thanks because God had converted them, that they might give thanks too, and see the more cause to do it; he prayeth here, they may know the power that wrought in them, the same power that wrought in Christ. You use to value a kindness by the love that is shewn in it; and you are to value a work of God upon you by the power that is put forth in it, and accordingly to be thankful. And, therefore, you shall find that the Scripture doth speak of the power of God in converting a man at first. The Apostle here in this second chapter, when he applieth all this to the Ephesians, goeth over the greatness of the work, that they might see the power. You were dead in sins and trespasses, and you hath he quickened; and faith is the gift of God, it is not in yourselves; you are his workmanship, created to good works. It is all to this end, that they might see the greatness of this power. And therefore, 1 Cor. i., from the 18th to the 26th verse, the Apostle saith, that God hath chosen out the most foolish means in the world, and the weakest means; to what end? To shew his wisdom and power in saving men. The preaching of Christ, saith he, is of all means the most foolish, for it preacheth and teacheth you to believe in a crucified God; it is so for the matter of it, most foolish. And of all means else it is the

most weak, for it is saving men by the breath of a weak man. And why hath God chosen out these two? To shew, saith he, that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.' It was to magnify his power so much the more in the work of conversion. 'The Jews,' saith he, 'require a sign,' that is his expression there, ver. 22. A sign, what is that? It is some extraordinary miracle to make them believe. What doth he oppose to a sign? 'It hath pleased God,' saith he, 'through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.'

Now then, his meaning in a word is this: let there be never so many signs and miracles wrought before you, they will never work faith; they may work an historical faith indeed. Look how far education prepareth you to believe, that you are brought up in the knowledge of the true God and the true Christ by education; so far miracles did bring the heathens and the Jews. They did serve instead of education to work in men an historical faith; but yet, saith he, when it cometh to the point, it is not a sign that will do it, but it must be the power of God to work faith.

Then again, another end which this knowledge of God serveth for, as to magnify the power of God, so it serveth to *strengthen your faith for the future*; that from the experience of that power you have found already in your hearts, you might gather and collect what a mighty power was engaged, and would continue still to work in you. And therefore, you shall find in Scripture, that the Apostle doth often come in with this; 'To him that is able to keep you,' so you have it in Jude 24. My brethren, you are not to look what your own weaknesses are, but what the power of God is in bringing you to salvation. As in the point of mercy you are not to look what your sins are, but what the grace of God in Christ is, you are to eye that; so now the Apostle, when he would draw up these believers' hearts, and wind them up to the height, consider, saith he, as Abraham did, not his own weakness of body, but the power of God. So do you, saith he, consider not your own sins, not your own distresses; these will all argue to you that you will fall short at last; but consider the power that works in you, to strengthen your hearts for the future.

I mentioned other things in the coherence, all which come under this head, how useful this knowledge is to a believer. I will only add one thing more, and that is this: you should to that end endeavour and pray to know what is the power that works in you, *that you might have dependence continually on that power*. That is the scope of the Apostle, why he would have them know it; it is useful to this end, that they might see what continual dependence they had upon the power of God, not only to see that without him you could do nothing, but that it is he that works all you do. Your will beareth not one part, and his power another, but it is he that works in you both the will and the deed, as it is Phil. ii. 13. God doth not only work *with* the will, but he works rather *by* the will. And therefore, you should labour to know the power that works in you to this end, that you might see your dependence upon God for every good thing he works in you.

There is a notable place to this purpose, which I confess I should have more enlarged upon. Here you see the same power works that wrought in Christ when he was raised from the dead. Now, you shall find in Heb. xiii. 21, that it is the same power goeth to work every good thing in you; not only the principle of grace, but every act of grace. Therefore the Apostle prayeth they might know the power that wrought in them, to this end that they might have a dependence upon that power for the working of

all good in them, not only at the first, but to the end of their days. Read the words there in the Hebrews, 'The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep.' Why is this preface used of Christ's resurrection? Mark what followeth, 'make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.' Why doth he mention the title of Christ's resurrection, when he speaks of working in them, not only grace at first, but every good thing that is pleasing in his sight? Because the same power that goeth to convert your souls at first, goeth to increase every degree of grace in you, and to work every good work. As suppose I am to pray, I am to have that power put forth in my soul—if I make a prayer pleasing in his sight—that was put forth in raising Christ from death to life. Therefore, saith the Apostle, 'the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, make you perfect in every good work.' So now, to the end you might see your dependence upon God for everything you do,—not only for the beginning of your faith, to praise him, but for the finishing of your faith, to depend upon him,—he prayeth that they might see and know what this power was.

In 2 Thess. i. 11, the Apostle prayeth that God would 'fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.' So that the fulfilling of the work of faith is with power, as well as the beginning of it. They had found the power of God in working faith in them at first; read 1 Thess. i. 5, 'Our gospel came unto you not in word only, but also in power.' Here he speaks of their first conversion. Now, in 2 Thess. i. 11, he prayeth that God would perfect this faith with the same power he had begun it. Therefore he prayeth here that they might know what this power is that wrought grace at first, to the end they might depend upon the same power to perfect it, for no less would do it.

I might be large upon this point, for indeed I had intended to be so. I could shew you that every act of grace must have an almighty power go with it to draw it forth. I will only give you in another scripture, that as here you see the work of faith is with power, so you shall see the work of patience and long-suffering, to bear afflictions, to do it so as to please God, is a work of an almighty power too. The place is Col. i. 11. It is one of Paul's prayers too. He prayeth that they may be 'strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.' To make a man patient and long-suffering, patient under afflictions, long-suffering to bear with the faults of others, and to expect the promise, though much time be spent before we obtain it, he saith it is a work of power, and a work of glorious power, wherein God sheweth the glory of his power, the exceeding greatness of his power, for then it cometh to glory when an exceeding greatness of power is manifested, an overcoming power; for that is properly glory when victory attendeth power, when power overcometh. 'I am able to do all things,' saith Paul; it is a proud word, a very proud word, but what followeth? 'Through Christ that strengtheneth me.' So in 2 Tim. ii. 1, 'Be strong,'—he speaks to Timothy, and he speaks to him as if he spake to a giant that had all strength in himself; be strong, be valiant; but what followeth?—'Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.'

Now then, that you might know your dependence you have upon the Lord Jesus Christ, he prayeth that ye may know the power that wrought in Christ in raising him from the dead works in you.

My brethren, you must know this, that you are not only dead in sins and

trespasses in respect of justification, but you are so in respect of sanctification also. If a man have never so much grace and holiness, he is to look upon himself as ungodly in respect of being justified; so saith the Apostle, Rom. iv. 5, 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly.' He speaks of Abraham's faith. Abraham looked upon himself as ungodly when he went out of himself to be justified; and this after he had grace, for in himself he was so. You are to do the like in respect of your dependence upon God for sanctification; you are to look upon yourselves as dead creatures, dead in sins and trespasses you were once, and of yourselves you are so still; and all grace that is wrought in you, though it be a principle of life, is dead when it cometh to work, if the almighty power of God assist it not.

Not but that a regenerate man hath a capacity in him which a wicked man hath not; for he is a charcoal that hath been in the fire already, therefore he is capable to take fire sooner,—he hath habitual grace more fitted to be stirred up, but yet the coal is a dead coal of itself; so that a new life to every action must be put into you, if you have any life and stirring in you.—And so much now concerning the second head, the use that this knowledge is unto men, to know the power that works in them.

Thirdly, I shall give you two observations about that knowledge which will further clear it.

Obs. 1.—The first observation is this, That believers that have true grace wrought in them, may yet be much ignorant of the power that works it. You see the Apostle here prayeth for them that were believers already, that they might have enlightened eyes to know what was 'the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.' What Job saith of the works of nature, chap. xxvi. 14, is much more true of the work of grace. He speaks in the former part of the chapter of the works of nature, and how doth he conclude it? 'Lo, these,' saith he, 'are parts of his ways: but how little a portion' (or how little a drop, as some read it) 'is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?' In working all these works of nature, saith he, God makes as still a noise as when a drop falleth which we can scarce hear; but the thunder of his power, that is, the force of his power,—it is not the noise of his power; thunder is put for force, so it is in that book of Job often, as chap. xxxix. 19, and elsewhere,—who can understand? So I may say to you, when you hear great things spoken of conversion, yet how little a drop of his power is that; how little a noise doth it make in men's spirits! There is a thunder of power goes to work it, a mighty force goeth to work it, but yet it makes but the noise of a drop, it is but a little drop which we hear; there is a still voice in which God is, and in which his mighty power is, and he passeth by, and we know it not.

My brethren, when we tell you there is such a mighty power in conversion, your thoughts run to nothing but thundering works; you think presently this power must lie in thundering men down to hell with terrors. No, it lies in changing men's hearts by an omnipotent power, but that power is but a still work, it is but a drop, and it falleth as a drop; for so conversion is compared. 'My doctrine shall distil as the dew;' it soaks into men's hearts, and there is a thunder of power goeth with it, though it is not heard.

The conversion of a sinner, the power of it, and his not feeling it, I may compare to that change which shall be at the latter day. 'We shall not all die,' saith he, 'but we shall all be changed.' Suppose you lived at the latter day, and were saints and believers when Christ came to judgment, you should see some men's bodies raised out of the grave, but your own bodies and spirits

will be changed, changed in an instant; you will not find a mighty power upon you sensibly, but you will find a mighty work whereby you shall find yourselves not to be the men you were; your bodies will shine as the sun in an instant. So is it here, my brethren; there is a change wrought in a man's heart in a still way; this is a mighty thing. If a man will judge it by what he feeleth, if he will judge it by any violent power put forth in it, there is exceeding little, a man feeleth nothing. He feeleth stirrings and workings in his spirit indeed, as there will be when a man is thus changed; there will be an elevation of the spirit and of the body at the latter day; but for any violent work there will be none. So oftentimes is it here; yet it is the same power that changeth men that doth raise them out of the grave, from the dust, and as much is the one as the other.

And as I may very well compare it thus: men that have dispositions never so near grace, yet, as I said before, and I will give you this comparison now, to put grace into their hearts and to change them truly is like the change that will be wrought at the latter day in men's bodies and minds that are believers. They have life already, but to change them there must go an almighty power, and the same power that goes to raise others out of their graves.

Now, my brethren, what is the scope of all this? It is not only to comfort poor believers, though they have not found a work of so much noise in their hearts, of so much violence and disturbance; that is not it, wherein God cometh forth in the exceeding greatness of his power; he came in the still small voice when he was not in the earthquake and in the rending of the rocks. Thou mayest have a mighty work upon thee, and yet not know the exceeding greatness of power that goes to work it. This, I say, is not the scope so much; but it is that you should not censure such whose judgments are that there is not so great a power put forth in conversion; they may have grace for all that: for the Apostle prayeth here that they may know, they that had grace, that they may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward that believe. You are not to censure them therefore, not simply for that. That is the first observation that belongeth to the third head.

Obs. 2.—The second is this, That in the matter of salvation men do as much stick in an ignorance and unbelief of the power of God towards them, as his will and mercy. Here you see the Apostle prayeth as heartily they might know the power that works in them, both that they may be thankful, and likewise that they may depend upon it for the future, as you would do to know the riches of the mercy that is in God, and his good-will towards you.

There are two things mainly which are the object of men's faith; both put together draw men in to believe. The one is to believe that the *power* of God is able to do it; and the other to believe his *good-will*. Now, men do stick as much at the belief of the power of God in working, that he is able to work, as at his good-will, that he will work. Therefore the Apostle prayeth here, you see, that they may have eyes enlightened to know the exceeding greatness of his power. Abraham's faith is described to us, Rom. iv. 21, by his trusting in the power of God. 'He was strong in faith,' saith he, 'being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.' This was the great faith of our father Abraham; it was placed upon the power of God, as well as upon his good-will. Now, take a poor sinner that hath lived long in doubt whether God would own him or no; he sticks only at this, I know God is able to save me, saith ~~he~~. but I do not

know whether he will or no. But I tell you, my brethren, you stick as much at the power of God to save you, as you do at the mercy of God, and it is an equal difficulty to believe the one as the other; and therefore, when such a soul findeth himself pardoned, what doth he use to say? Is it possible that such a one as I should have mercy? 'Let the power of my Lord be great,' saith Moses, Num. xiv. 17, 'to forgive the iniquity and transgression of this people.'

I might illustrate this point unto you, but I shall be prevented in what followeth. Only this, therefore you have it in Scripture so often, the Apostle mentioning it; as 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.' His faith, you see, is founded upon the power of God. 'To him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,' Eph. iii. 20. 'To him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory,' Jude 24. And, speaking of the conversion of the Jews, Rom. xi. 23, 'God is able,' saith he, 'to graff them in again;' he doth not only say God is willing to do it, but he is able; that is his expression there. This alludeth to what was said to Ezekiel, when the dry bones were presented to him, Ezek. xxxvii. 3, those dry bones are the Jews; 'Son of man, can these bones live?' Yet, saith Paul, he is able to engraft them, able to raise them.

I speak this to this purpose, to shew that the Scripture holdeth forth as much the power of God for the object of our faith as the mercy and goodwill of God. Dost thou believe that I am able to help thee? It was the question that Christ asked the poor man that brought his possessed child to be cured, Mark ix. 23. And the thing he propounded to Christ was his ability to help him, his power. 'If thou canst do anything,' saith he, 'have compassion on us.' Therefore the Apostle prayeth here that they may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward that believe. So much now concerning that fourth general head, which is the knowledge of this power which the Apostle here prayeth for.

II. I come now in the next place to *the parallel between these two*. He compareth, you see here, the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his exaltation to glory, the power of it, to that that works conversion in us, and all other good works.

The parallel, then, between what power wrought in Christ and works in us,—or rather, that Christ is the pattern of; what God wrought in him he will work in us; which he would have Christians have in their eye,—that is the next thing to be spoken to: 'that you may know,' saith he, 'what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe according to the working of the might of his power that he wrought in Christ.' That Jesus Christ is the pattern, the common instance or evidence, that look what he had wrought in him, the same power should work in us, that is the Apostle's meaning. Now, this parallel is but hinted to us only in a touch here in the 19th verse; 'according,' saith he, 'to the working,' &c.

For the opening of this I shall give you likewise these few considerations, whereof the first shall be more general, and yet raised out of the text.

The general consideration is this, which hath two things in it: That Christ is set forth to us as a pattern, as a standard set up by God, both of what he will be to us, and what he will work in us. I say, he set up Jesus Christ as a common standard, a common pattern to himself, that look what he putteth forth toward Christ out of himself, the same he will put forth to us; look what works he wrought in Jesus Christ, the same he will work in

us. He is a pattern both of the affections of God,—the same affections, the same disposition he beareth to Christ he beareth to us,—and likewise the same works he wrought upon Christ he will work upon us.

This is an infinite comfort to believers, that God hath not only set up Jesus Christ as a pattern that we should love him as Christ hath loved us, that we should follow Christ's example and imitate him in all things, our works should be like Christ's: I say, this is not all, but for our comfort—the other is for matter of duty—but for our comfort, God hath set up Jesus Christ as a pattern to himself, that look what he hath been to Christ, that he will be to us; look what he wrought in Christ, he will work in us.

He is a pattern, first, *of the attributes that God manifested in Christ*; the same shall be manifested in us; that the text is clear for. Hath he shewn exceeding greatness of power in Christ? 'I pray that you may know,' saith he, 'what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward;' the same he wrought in Christ. Here is the same attribute put forth, the same power that wrought in Christ works in us.

Then, secondly, he is set up by God as a pattern *of the same works*; that is implied in these words, 'which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.'

First of all, *Jesus Christ is the pattern set up by God to himself, that of the same attributes he sheweth forth and manifesteth in Christ, the same he will shew forth in us.* Here is an instance of power; I will give you but one instance more of love, and so I will pass from that. Here he saith the exceeding greatness of that power which wrought in Christ works in us. Look John xvii. 23, and there you shall find the same love wherewith he loveth Christ he loveth us. 'I in them,' saith he, 'and thou in me, that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.' So that Christ is set up by God as a pattern to himself, to shew forth the same attributes in us that he did in him; here is, you see, the same power put forth to Christ and to us in the words of the text; here is the same love put forth towards us as was towards him; 'that thou hast loved them,' saith he, 'as thou hast loved me.' He sheweth how they are one; as he is one with the Father, they are one with him in their proportion; now always love followeth union, and therefore accordingly as he hath loved him he loveth them. We use to love the members and the head with the same love, because we love the members in relation to the head. A father-in-law loveth the husband and the wife, the daughter-in-law, with the same love, because he loveth her in relation to his son, her husband. So doth God love his children, members of Christ, with the same love he loveth Christ the Head; and he loveth the Church, the spouse of Christ, his daughter as he calleth her, Ps. xlv., with the same love as he loveth Christ her husband, that is, his Son. As in Eph. v. 25, &c., speaking of the peculiar love men should have to their wives, 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife loveth himself.' So doth God love us, as he loveth Christ; 'that thou hast loved them as thou lovedst me.'

So that, my brethren, you see in general, that God hath set up our Lord Jesus Christ as a pattern of himself of the same affections and attributes as he manifested in him, to manifest in us.

He is a pattern likewise of the same works; the same power that wrought

in Christ works also in us. Here you see he raised up Christ from death to life, he set him at his own right hand in heavenly places. Read chap. ii. 5; saith he, 'You, that were dead in sins and trespasses, hath he quickened together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' The same power that wrought in Christ, the very same work he wrought in Christ, he works in us also. This is the Apostle's scope.

But now here lies the great thing, more particularly: it is not so much to compare the work wrought in Christ and in us together, to shew that God works the same works in us which he wrought in Christ; but that which the text holdeth forth is, that the same proportion of power that was put forth in raising up Christ from death to life, is put forth in converting us and bringing us to heaven. Therein lieth the parallel especially. So that now this is the thing I am to speak to: it is not to shew the likeness of Christ's resurrection and exaltation to the work of conversion; that is not the scope in hand; but to shew that the *same power* that God putteth forth in the one, he putteth forth in the other. That is it which makes the parallel, as it is intended here.

To shew you this I must do two things.

First, I must shew you *the greatness of power that was required to raise up Jesus Christ from death to glory.*

Secondly, That there is *a like proportion of power put forth in working upon our hearts* to the power that was put forth in Christ's resurrection. I have spoken much of the power of God in conversion, in general; 'the exceeding greatness of his power.' That which now remaineth is to shew, that it holdeth proportion with that power which raised up Christ from death to glory. 'According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ,' saith he.

For the first of these two, That there was an exceeding greatness of power put forth by God in raising up Christ from death to glory; there is a great difficulty in opening this point unto you clearly, to shew you wherein this power lay. I will give you a parallel place of Scripture, wherein you shall see that of all works that God did do for Christ, the raising of him up from death to glory was a work of the most power,—set aside that of the incarnation,—did manifest and declare the greatest power of all other. The scripture is Rom. i. 3, 4, 'Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' I quote this place for this, as you shall see in the opening of it, that of all works else, Jesus Christ was declared with the greatest power, to be the Son of God, by the resurrection from the dead.

I will open these words unto you a little, for the scope of the place here is the same with what is in my text.

He speaks of two natures that are in Christ, his human nature and his divine nature; that is the first thing tendeth to open these words. His human nature is expressed in these words, 'he was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;' that is, take him according to his human nature, he was the son of David: and, saith he, declared to be the Son of God by the Spirit of holiness; by Spirit of holiness he meaneth his divine nature; that is, as concerning his divine nature he was declared to be the Son of God. Every parcel, if I may so speak, in the Trinity is called *Spirit*; you see his divine nature is called here the Spirit of holiness, for God is a Spirit; and so is the second Person as well as the third, he is a Spirit too;

he is God, and therefore called the Spirit of holiness. 'God is a Spirit,' saith he, John iv. 24.

Now observe the difference, 'He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.' Take his human nature, *he was made*; but take his divine nature, the Spirit of holiness in him, he was only 'declared to be the Son of God;' he was not made the Son of God, he was begotten, not made. Now he was declared with power to be so.

I will not stand to open those words, 'declared,' &c., and the various acceptance of them. Only observe, that he was declared with power to be the Son of God, with an omnipotent power; as, in Luke iv. 36, it is said, 'with power he commanded the unclean spirits, and they came out;' such a power as is only proper to God. But the main thing I quote the place for is this, what it was that declared Christ with so much power to be the Son of God? It followeth, 'by the resurrection from the dead,' saith he. Why doth he instance in this? He had wrought miracles, you know; he had raised Lazarus, and he had raised another from the dead; doth not that argue him to be the Son of God with as much power as his own resurrection? No; if you will have, saith he, an instance of an almighty power, and that he was the Son of God, take his resurrection from the dead; he was declared mightily to be the Son of God by his resurrection. Therefore the apostles, if you observe it, when they would prove him to be the Son of God, the Messiah, still you shall find they open his resurrection. Look Acts ii., from the 22d verse, and so on; when they would convince the Jews that he was the Messiah, they do it by his resurrection. And look Acts iv. 2, you have the like, where it is said, 'They taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.' You shall find the like Acts xiii. 33, where Paul proveth him to be the Messiah by the resurrection from the dead. And therefore, in 1 Tim. iii. 16, Christ is said to be 'justified in the Spirit;' that is, having been put to death in the flesh, and quickened by the Spirit, his Godhead, he was justified, he was declared that righteous one that had died for sin, and to be the Son of God, to all the world.

Now then, how doth the resurrection of Christ argue him to be the Son of God with power, that the exceeding greatness of his power should be put forth in his being raised from the dead? That is the thing I must speak to.

Interpreters upon that place, Rom. i. 4, put it upon this: say they, he raised up himself by his own power; that is the gloss they put upon it; therefore he was declared to be the Son of God, because he raised up himself. And indeed it is a strong argument, that he was the Son of God with power, if he raised up himself.

But you will say, How doth that prove it?

It proveth it thus: suppose there had been no more in his own resurrection than in any man's else, yet because he raised up himself, it was declared with power that he was the Son of God.

But how might that appear to the Jews that he was the Son of God? Why might not the Jews think that Christ had been raised up by the power of God, as Lazarus had been raised up, or those in the Old Testament had been raised up? How doth it prove that he is the Son of God in his resurrection, more than in anything else? And how doth it appear that he raised up himself as the Son of God?

I will shew you how it appeareth. He had said before, he had given it out, it was that he died for, he had told them that he was the Son of God; and the witnesses brought in this witness, that they heard him say, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again.' Now if he had lied, if

he had not been the Son of God, God would never have raised him up; therefore it was a manifest argument that he was the Son of God, by his being raised up again; and being the Son of God, raised up himself by that power that is in God himself. Therefore, in John ii. 19, saith he, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;' and John x. 18, 'I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again.' Had he lied, had he not been the Son of God, certainly God would never have raised him up; therefore seeing he was raised up by God, certainly he was the Son of God.

But yet still the objection remaineth; for you will say, though he was declared to be the Son of God by being raised up again, he having given it out, which is all that interpreters put upon that place; but yet what special power was there put forth in his resurrection, more than in any man's else, that he should be said to be declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection, and that God should shew forth the exceeding greatness of his power in raising of him up? That is the thing I am to speak to.

To that I will but suggest two things unto you, wherein the power lay of raising up Christ from death unto life; and a special power, more than in raising up all men else besides, that were before him, or shall come after him.

My brethren, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ undertook never to rise or enter into his glory till such time as he had satisfied for the sins of all his elect; they lay all upon him; therefore to raise him up from death to glory must needs be a work of a greater power than ever yet was to raise up any man, whatsoever he were; for he had all the sins of all the elect, that he was to satisfy for, meeting in him.

My brethren, let me speak unto you. We are dead in sins and trespasses; but let me tell you this, he was to die for sins and trespasses, that is the phrase the Apostle useth, Rom. vi. 10. We read it, 'He died unto sin,' or, 'He died for sin,' the word will bear it. He was by his death to satisfy for sin, or he must never rise again.

Now then, take Jesus Christ not only as an ordinary man, but take him as he is made sin, as he is made a curse, there must a mighty power go to bring him to glory; for he must suffer for that first, he must have a power to endure that first before he be capable of being raised up again; which all angels and men could never have borne; therefore there is so great a power declared in his rising again.

In Rom. iv. 24, 25, 'We believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.' Mark that; the resurrection of Christ was not an ordinary resurrection, for it was not an ordinary death: for, saith he, when he died he was delivered for our offences, and he must satisfy for them by his death; and when he was raised again, he was not raised as a particular person, it is not like the raising up of an ordinary man; but, saith he, he was raised for our justification, for the justification of all that he died for, and therefore he must satisfy for sin, and pay the uttermost farthing before he rise again. Hence now cometh there to be so great a difficulty in raising up our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to that glory he was raised up unto.

I will omit some confirmations of this truth, and give you but one scripture, which will present it unto you. It is Acts ii. 24, 'Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible he should be holden of it.' It is Peter's speech concerning Christ and his resurrection. And, ver. 27, 'Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.'

To open these words, and to prove the thing out of them which I intend

—viz., That in raising up Jesus Christ from the dead there was an infinite power put forth, more than in raising up any one that ever yet was raised up. The Apostle's scope here is to prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he proveth it by his resurrection, and by the difficulty that was in it, which is implied in these words, 'Because it was not possible he should be holden of death,' or of 'the sorrows of death.' If it had been possible, they would have held him, but it was not possible; there was so mighty a power came to have his *mittimus*, that though they put forth all the power they could, yet it was not possible they should hold him.

Now, to open the words a little unto you, I will give you what I think to be the sense of the place. The difficulty of raising up of Christ lieth in these words, that first the pains of death were to be loosed. They are *ōdivai*, as Beza and others, and I find that Zanchy ran the same way. The meaning of them is this: God raised him up, say they, being loosed; it is not the pains of death being loosed, but *him* being loosed; *solutus doloribus mortis*, for *solutis doloribus mortis*. He ascribeth that to the pains of death which properly belongeth to Christ; he was freed from the pains of death, and then God raised him up. As in the gospel it is said, 'his leprosy was cleansed;' that is not a proper speech, but 'he was cleansed of his leprosy:' so here, having 'loosed the pains of death'—that is, he was loosed from the pains of death, he had scattered, he had dissipated all the pains of death, and then he was loosed, and he was raised.

Now, what is meant by the *pains of death* here? Let us examine that a little, for, if you mark it, the difficulty of his resurrection lies in the pains of death. After Christ was in the grave,—consider what I say,—there were no pains of death that held him, he had no pains in the grave after he was dead. What pains are they, then, that are here called the pains of death, which he was freed from, and then God raised him up, upon which he putteth the difficulty of his resurrection?

The word in the Greek, *ōdivai*, is the birth-throes of death. Isa. liii. 11 interpreteth it well; 'He shall see,' saith he, 'of the travail of his soul.' They were the birth-throes which his soul had, which he must be loosed from and overcome, before he is capable to be raised up by God. It is not an ordinary death he is to undergo, or ordinary sorrows of death that hinder his resurrection, but there are the birth-throes of death to be overcome. What are those birth-throes of death? The travail of his soul. All our sins met in him, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, as you have it in the 5th and 6th verses of the same Isa. liii. All those pangs that were in his soul—they tended to death, they would have carried his soul to hell, kept him from ever rising again, he had never come to glory; therefore they are called the pains of death—held him: yea, they would have held his soul had he not been God; had not God upheld him, they would have carried his soul instantly away, and held him from ever being capable of rising up again. Therefore, before he be capable of being raised, he must be freed from these pains of death; therein lieth the difficulty of his resurrection.

They are called the 'sorrows of death' too; not only of the first death, but of the second. I do not say he died the second death, the Scripture doth not say so. But that the sorrows of the second death took hold upon him, and upon his soul, to me is a certain truth. 'My soul,' saith he, he points to what was it, 'is heavy unto death;' he doth not say, My soul dieth, but it is heavy unto the death; it was at the point of death, when our sins and the wrath of God came in upon him.

In Isa. liii. you have his *deaths* mentioned,—look into your margins,—not death only, but deaths; and in Heb. ii. 4, it is said, ‘he tasted of death.’ What death? It appeareth by the following verses, *that death* which the devil hath power of; he tasted of it, but he was not overcome by it, that is the second death. It is that death which men are afraid of all their life long, which the Jews were afraid of: read the 9th, 14th, and 15th verses of that second to the Hebrews; and that was the second death.

Now, my brethren, in this death, and the pains of it, lieth the danger that Christ should never be raised up again, should never come to heaven; for those pains of death would have fetched his soul away, and made all angels and men to have died the second death, never to have been raised, never to satisfy the wrath of God. They were sorrows of death; deadly sorrows, as some interpret it, as he himself is called a man of sorrows, which is attributed to none but to him, because none endured the sorrows he did, deadly sorrows: as it is called the ‘abomination of desolation,’ that is, abominable desolation; so the sorrows of death, that is, deadly sorrows, hellish sorrows, infernal sorrows, if you will so express it; for there was the cause of it, the wrath of God; there was the substance of it.

Now, in a word, to gather up this. Saith he, God hath raised him up, he being free, or having freed himself by the power of the Godhead from these pains of death, which, if it had been possible, he should have been held by them, but hold him they could not; therefore the words in the 27th verse interpret it without all straining. There is a great deal of do what should be meant by ‘leaving his soul in hell,’ and his ‘Holy One not to see corruption,’ that is, his body. Say I, the 24th verse interpreteth it, ‘him hath God raised up,’ being freed from the sorrows of death, of the second death, the birth-throes of it; God delivered his soul of it, left not his soul in hell; then he raised up his body that it should not see corruption. Herein now lieth the difficulty of raising up our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, more than all the men in the world; for if all the angels in heaven, and all the men in the world, had encountered with those sorrows of death he encountered with, they had never been raised up, for they could never have overcome them. Therefore saith the text here, the ‘exceeding greatness of his power’ was shewn in raising up Christ from death to glory.

And this is one sense in respect of which there is an exceeding greatness of power attributed to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But, secondly, if you will know wherein the exceeding greatness of power lieth,—if you observe the coherence,—it is not only in raising him up simply from death, there is but a little said of that here, but it is attributed to *the glory he was raised up to*. Therein lay the power; it lies not simply in the *terminus à quo*, the term, the state from which he was raised; but if you take in withal this, that God hath ‘set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities and powers;’ take but the compass of the distance between the state he was raised from, and the state he is raised unto, and then you will all acknowledge what the text saith here, there is an exceeding greatness of power indeed.

So that if you ask me now, What this power was that was shewn upon Christ?

I answer, first, merely in his raising him up; for he was to overcome that which no creature could overcome, before he was capable of being raised; he was to pay the last farthing, whereof the sorrows of death were part, and the greatest sum.

And then, secondly, if to raise him up merely had been no more than to

raise another man, yet to raise him up to glory, there lieth the exceeding greatness of his power. Take the *terminus ad quem*, the state wherein he is now. Eph. iv. 9, 'He that ascended, he descended first into the lower parts of the earth.'

Now then, go and make a pair of compasses, make a proportion between these two; put one foot of the compass in heaven, whither he is ascended, far above all principalities and powers, and put the other foot of the compass in the lower parts of the earth, in the grave in which he lay; and to raise him up from the one to the other is the exceeding greatness of power the Apostle here speaks of. Measure from the lowest part of the earth, to far above all principalities and powers, and therein lieth the power put forth in raising Christ here spoken of.

Now I have shewn you wherein the power of raising up Christ lieth; that is the first thing. The second thing I should shew you is this: That to bring a sinner from the death of sin to live again,—Christ lay under the guilt of sin imputed to him, we lie under the *power* and *guilt* too,—to raise up a sinner from this, 'we who were dead in sins and trespasses,' and place us in heaven with Christ, holdeth a proportion with the resurrection, and with the power put forth in raising up Christ from death to glory.

This is the second thing I should shew to make up the parallel.