

SERMON XV.

In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.—VER. 13, 14.

I HAVE proceeded unto these words in opening of this chapter. The coherence of these words with the former is both natural and elegant. He had spoken of an inheritance which they were predestinated unto, so ver. 11; which inheritance was purchased for them by Jesus Christ; so, ver. 14, it is called 'the purchased possession.' Being appointed them and purchased for them, he telleth them, in the 13th verse, that the gospel brought the first news of it to them: 'After you heard,' saith he, 'the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' Upon their hearing of it, their faith closed with it, and by believing they obtained that inheritance; so saith the 11th verse. Now, because that this inheritance, though the right unto it was obtained by believing on Jesus Christ, though it was appointed for them from everlasting,—they were 'predestinated according to his purpose,' so saith the 11th verse,—although purchased by Jesus Christ, yet they stood still out of the possession of it. In the meantime, therefore, 'till the redemption of this purchased possession,' till the time should come that they should enjoy it, he giveth them the Holy Spirit, who had both sealed them up to it, and had given them the earnest of it in their hearts. 'After you believed,' saith he, 'you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance.'

For the division of these words,—I mean the first part of them, viz., those in the 13th verse, 'In whom after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,'—they fall naturally into these parts:—

First, Here is A WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST DISTINCT FROM FAITH: 'After you believed, you were sealed.' There is a work of SEALING, to open which will be the greatest difficulty that I shall have to do with at this time.

Here is, *Secondly*, THE ORDER OF THAT WORK: it is 'after they had believed.'

Here is, *Thirdly*, THE VIRTUAL CAUSE, if I may so call it, in whom this sealing was wrought: it is *in Christ*, 'in whom after ye believed ye were sealed.' *In whom* referreth to sealing, as I shall shew you anon.

Fourthly, Here is THE PERSON THAT IS THE SEALER; it is the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the Trinity; and he is set forth unto us, as he is a sealer, two ways:—

First, He is the 'Spirit of promise.'

Secondly, He is a 'Holy Spirit.'

Then, *Fifthly*, here are THE PERSONS SEALED: 'After ye believed,' speaking to the Ephesians, 'ye were sealed,' &c.

I. To begin with the *first*. I shall profess merely to perform the part of an expositor, and but mention such observations concerning *sealing*, which

in itself will afford a large field of discourse otherwise, as the text affordeth. And first, concerning this sealing, let us inquire what that is.

I shall *first* shew you *what it is not*; which some interpreters have given to be the meaning of it too.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to shew you *what it is*.

First, What it is not. I will not trouble you with what Popish interpreters make this sealing to be, because they are enemies to assurance of salvation. But, first, Piscator and some others do take it for the work of faith itself; and so they express the meaning of it to be, that in believing, in the work of faith, the Holy Ghost did seal up the truth of the promise unto their hearts. The like saith Calvin upon this place; and they have these two reasons for it. Because he is called the *Spirit of promise*, say they; because he sealeth up the truth of the promises, when men believe. And whereas he had called the gospel the 'word of truth' in the words before, he speaks, say they, to these Ephesians, and telleth them, Ye know it by this to be the truth, for the Holy Ghost did seal it up to you, when you believed.

Their meaning, that I may explain it to you, as I understand it, is this: there is a *twofold assurance*.

There is, first, an assurance of the truth of the promises,—and that is their meaning,—whereby a man's understanding is spiritually convinced that the promises are true and from God. And, secondly, there is an assurance of a man's interest in those promises.

Now, when they say that the Holy Ghost, in believing, seals believers, their meaning is, that he sealeth up the truth of the promises to them. Now to confute this interpretation in a word or two. I do grant them *three things* concerning it.

The first is, that it is a truth that in all faith there is an assurance of the *truth* of the promises wrought. I do not say there is an assurance of a man's *interest* in the promises. No, but whoever believeth hath unbelief thus far subdued, that he fully believeth this promise is true, and giveth up his soul unto it. There is a prevailing assurance of the truth of the promise, above all doubting, in every believer. I do not say it excludeth doubting; neither do I say it is an assurance of a man's own personal interest in the promise. I could shew you this by Scripture, but I must not insist upon it.

In the second place, I grant that this is a work of the Holy Ghost. It is not all the light of reason that can convince a man spiritually of the truth of a promise, or draw his heart into rest upon it. Speaking of the conversion of the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. i. 5, and of the Apostle's entrance among them when they first were turned to God, he saith, that 'the gospel came not unto them in word only, but in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' The *Holy Ghost* and *assurance* are both there joined together.

Nay, in the third place, the Holy Ghost's convincing a man of the truth of any promise is called a sealing. I grant that likewise. Job, chap. xxxiii. 16, speaking of the manner of God's converting men in those times, which was done by visions and by dreams, 'then,' saith he, 'he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.'

But yet, though all this be granted, this is not the meaning of the place, to speak of the work of faith. For, first, if you mark it, it is not a sealing up of the promise, the truth of it, a sealing of *instruction*, that the Apostle here speaks of; but it is a sealing of their *persons*, and so their personal interest in the promise: 'by whom,' saith he, '*ye* were sealed;' he doth not

say the promise, or the truth of it, was sealed to them, but *their persons* were sealed.

Then, secondly, it cannot be meant of that sealing of instruction that is wrought in believing, for it cometh after believing; 'after ye believed,' saith he, 'ye were sealed with the Spirit of promise.' I know Piscator readeth the words otherwise, but I shall meet with his interpretation anon, (for the order of it,) when I speak to that point.

Again, it is evident he speaks of this sealing as a distinct thing from faith. For suppose this sealing were at the same time that men believe; suppose he had said, When you believe you were sealed; yet it is evident that it must needs be a distinct thing from faith. If a man saith that he did such a thing when such a thing was, it argueth he speaks of two things.

Lastly, if he had spoken of the sealing of the Spirit as the cause of faith, he would not have said, 'when you believed you were sealed with the Spirit,' but 'through sealing you did believe.' He would have spoken of faith as an act of theirs, and of sealing as an act of the Spirit, the cause of faith. And so much to confute that interpretation.

I find, again, in the other place, that Zanchy doth acknowledge—as a man must needs do—that sealing here is a distinct work from faith. But then he interpreteth it of the work of regeneration, and of sanctification, and renewing the image of God upon a man's heart; and his reason is this: for, saith he, a seal doth import the impression of an image; he giveth many reasons, but that is the main. Now, because that sanctification beareth the image of God, therefore, saith he, the sealing of the Spirit is the stamping of holiness and of all the frame of graces upon the heart; which, saith he, is upon believing, is wrought in a man by faith.

Now, my brethren, to confute this. I do grant that the seal here mentioned doth imply and import, in a secondary sense, the stamping of the image of God upon the heart, and therefore this attribute of *holy* is given to the Spirit as he is a sealer. But yet it is not the meaning of the Holy Ghost here, not the principal meaning of it, especially not the first work of sanctification; and the reasons are these:—

For, first, besides that many divines hold—and I think not without ground—that all the principles of sanctification are wrought in the heart before an act of faith, they are all wrought together; this is a truth, that the acts of sanctification depend upon the acts of faith foregoing them, (it will decide a controversy;) I say the acts of sanctification, our acting of love to God and obedience, do follow the acts of faith, laying hold upon Christ, and free grace; but yet the working of the image is presupposed before faith in order of nature. I might prove this unto you at large.

But, secondly, if the working of the image of God upon the heart were the thing here intended to be the seal, he would not say, 'after ye believed.' Why? Because that believing and faith is part of the image of God, part of the image of Christ, as well as any other holy disposition in us. It is said, we 'receive grace for grace' of Christ, John i. 16. That is, look what graces he had, we also have, and faith amongst the rest; and therefore, 1 John v. 1, he that believeth is said to be born of God.

And then there is this third reason for it also, why the first work of regeneration is not here intended in this metaphor; for the Apostle followeth an allusion of making sure an inheritance. Now, when the Scripture speaks of the work of sanctification and of regeneration, he nowhere calls it the seal of the Spirit, but he calleth it the writing of the law in the heart. For you know, when you will make a thing sure, you write the covenants, and when

you have done, you seal to it. Now sanctification is the writing in the heart, as the scripture is written in the book. So you have it, 2 Cor. iii. 3, 'Forasmuch,' saith he, 'as ye are declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.' Here is sanctification; now the Holy Ghost is as ink, and that is as writing; but here the Holy Ghost is as the seal, and the work here which the Holy Ghost works is as the thing sealed.

That which occasioneth this mistake is this: because every seal hath an image in it, it was therefore supposed that the main intent of sealing was this stamping of an image; but that is not the main intent of a seal. It is true every seal hath an image upon it which it leaveth upon the wax; but yet the main intent of a seal is to assure or ascertain, to certify and make known, and to convey and make sure a thing; that is the intent of a seal, that is the primary intent of it; only, *ex consequente*, by way of consequence, and because you may know this seal is true, you have an image annexed to it. So I have confuted those interpretations that put most fair. It was necessary for me to do it, for they that read comments will find that these are the great interpretations.

Secondly, Now then, in examining *what it is*, I shall do that first in general.

It is, first, a work of the Holy Ghost. That is certain, he may be called an *earnest*, the Holy Ghost's person may be so called; but he is not called a *seal*, but in relation to an act of sealing. It importeth a work of the Holy Ghost upon the heart. This giving of the person of the Holy Ghost to a man is the highest earnest of heaven, more than all your graces. But if you speak of the Holy Ghost as a seal, it importeth a thing sealed, an act of his, a work upon a man's spirit. That is the first.

Secondly, It is a metaphorical expression, or a similitude; and if you will open this similitude, you must have recourse to the use of seals, what use seals serve for.

Divines give many uses of a seal that they apply to this particular in the text. They say, God sealeth his children, because he owneth them to be his by way of appropriation, setteth them apart to be his, as you merchants seal your goods, and so distinguish them from other men's goods; as, Cant. iv. 12, the spouse is called a sealed fountain unto Christ. The meaning of which metaphor is this: the Jews, you know, whose drink was water, there were some fountains and springs more delicate than others. Those that were great men, such as Solomon, the kings and others, if they had a delicate spring of waters, they rolled a stone upon it, (so you read they did of their wells, Gen. xxix. 3,) and then when they had done they would seal that stone, that their servants or others, walking in their enclosed gardens, might not taste of that spring. They would reserve it for themselves. As in Matt. xxvii., 'they sealed up the stone that was rolled upon the sepulchre to make it sure;' so they used to do to their fountains—rolling a stone upon them, they sealed them up. It is an allusion to what one's wife or spouse should be to him. She should be as a sealed fountain, appropriated unto him alone; and so, saith Christ, is the Church to me. Prov. v. 15, 18, 'Drink waters out of thine own cistern;' 'Let thy fountain be blessed,' saith he, speaking of a man's wife; 'rejoice with the wife of thy youth.' And so now, to appropriate the soul to Christ, to make the soul that sealed fountain, this is one interpretation they give of it.

So likewise for *estimation*, and for *security*, and the like. They give many such. But, my brethren, I cut off all such interpretations in a word or two.

And the first is this: that you have all these upon believing, as well as after believing. You are distinguished from other men, you are sealed in that sense, you are appropriated to God when you are first converted; but this sealing is after believing: therefore still this hitteth it not.

Secondly, let there be never so many uses of a seal, that which is proper to the scope here is sealing of an inheritance. You see the Apostle speaks of an inheritance, whereof the Holy Ghost is a sealer. 'We have obtained,' saith he, 'an inheritance by faith,' and having believed, we are 'sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.'

So that now, if you would know the proper meaning of the word, you must have recourse to the use of a seal in sealing up of an inheritance.

What use is there of a seal in sealing up of inheritances?

There is a double use of it. There is, first, a making the inheritance sure to a man in itself; and there is, secondly, a making the man know that it is his, to confirm and settle his spirit that it is his. Now let us see which of these two is the seal here meant.

First, it is not the sealing of it to make a thing sure, to make salvation sure, that is not the scope principally here, *to make it sure in itself*; and the reason is this: for to make salvation sure there needeth no seal after believing. No, there was a seal set to make salvation sure long before his believing, therefore that is not the Apostle's scope here. Look into 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his.' He speaks of God's eternal election; there is the seal now by which salvation is made sure in itself; therefore now for the Holy Ghost to seal it up, to make it sure in itself afterward, it needed not; there needed not a second seal to that end. No, upon thy believing, and by being sanctified, and receiving the Spirit at first, thy salvation is made as sure as by all the works of the Holy Ghost for ever after.

Well then, secondly, there is nothing, therefore, that is left that should be the meaning and the principal scope of the Holy Ghost here, but this, that they are sealed by the Spirit *to make them sure*, to make their persons sure of their salvation, to persuade their hearts, to put them out of question that this inheritance was theirs, that they might be able to claim it. In Jer. xxxii. 10, when Jeremiah did buy land, you read there that he had both the evidences written, and he had witnesses to them, and he had them sealed too; and all this in public, before public notaries, before the magistrate. It is the manner amongst men still; and the Holy Ghost alludeth to what was done then; he doth, I say, mention his sealing there unto that end, that there might be a public and a general notice, that he himself might be able to claim that land for ever.

Now, my brethren, this is that that I pitch upon to be the meaning of the Holy Ghost here. You must know that in ancient times, as likewise now, as the Scripture recordeth, when there should be a public certificate made that all men should take knowledge that such an act is authentical, it was done by a seal and without hands sometimes. Look into Esther viii. 8, 9, when a decree was made by the Persian monarch, it is said it was written in the king's name,—there was not the king's hand to it,—and it was sealed with the king's ring. Read on in that chapter; he wrote (at the 10th verse) in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring. All acknowledged that to be the king's seal when they saw it. The end of the seal was to make a certificate, that it might be known by those whom it did concern. And therefore now, to this day, you see, where the king's broad seal is, the king's hand is not to it; but there is the seal set, and it is

enough to assure all that see it that it is the king's act. The end of a seal here, therefore, is to make known, to assure, to persuade, and to certify that such a thing is an act of God's.

And, my brethren, not to make salvation *sure in itself*, but to make *us sure of it*, is plainly the meaning of the Holy Ghost here ; for, first, you shall see that in other Scriptures sealing is so taken. Take but one or two places ; I will name one eminent one, 2 Cor. i. 21, 'Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God ; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' As Musculus well observeth upon the place : There are, saith he, three similitudes used to express what he had said plainly at first ; he had said, 'he that stablisheth us with you ;' this same establishing is expressed both by anointing (for the Holy Ghost is given to teach us all truths, 'the anointing teacheth us all things,') and by sealing, 'who hath also sealed us,' saith he ; he assur-eth us of our interest in them, and he hath given us an earnest of them in our hearts ; and thus, saith he, the Holy Ghost establisheth a man. It is not making salvation sure, but it is making the person sure ; it is therefore expressed by 'establishing us with you.' And the scope of the Holy Ghost in this place is evident to be so, for mark by what degrees he setteth forth the revelation of salvation to believers. He telleth them, first, that the gospel brought them the first news of it ; it was the happy news of 'your salvation,' as the 13th verse hath it, and so Beza expoundeth it ; and as usually the first news of a thing is but confused, so is the first news of the gospel ; it is but an indefinite hint ; there is salvation, this salvation is offered to you, it may be yours. Well then, secondly, cometh faith, and that closeth with this salvation. 'You believed,' saith he, you gave your souls up unto it to be saved by it ; then cometh the seal of the Spirit after believing, and confirmeth a man, setteth and establisheth the soul (as the Apostle's phrase is in that of the Corinthians) that this salvation is his.

And then again, in the second place, if you observe it, he doth not say that your *inheritance* is sealed, as if it were made sure in itself ; but he saith the *persons* are sealed ; 'he sealed *us*, he sealed *you* ;' those are the phrases both here and in that of the Corinthians ; therefore the end of this sealing is to seal up their peculiar interest.

And then, again, there is this third reason for it likewise, that it is not making salvation sure in itself, but to make us sure of it, because that the inward work here of sealing answereth to the outward work of baptism. It is Zanchy's observation, though he doth not apply it : I say, the Apostle, instead of saying you are baptized and so sealed, mentioneth the inward work of baptism rather. You are sealed, saith he, by the Spirit. Now the end of baptism is to be a seal ; that is the outward seal, for it succeedeth circumcision, as appeareth, Col. ii. 11, 12, compared. Now, circumcision is called the 'seal of the righteousness of faith,' Rom. iv. 11. Now every ordinance hath his proper work ; the proper work of baptism, the inward work that answereth to baptism, is the seal of the Spirit, for that is the seal of the righteousness of faith. Now baptism supposeth regeneration, supposeth salvation sure in itself first. Sacraments are never administered to begin or work grace ; you suppose children to believe before you baptize them. Read all the Acts ; still it is said, 'they believed and were baptized.' I could give you multitude of places for it. Now then salvation is made sure upon believing ; but you are baptized, that is the seal to confirm. Answerably, salvation is made sure upon believing ; but the seal of the Spirit cometh as the fruit of baptism, which is the proper work of it. The

inward seal answereth to the outward. You shall therefore find in the Acts, that upon baptizing of men that were at years, the Holy Ghost fell upon them ; as, when the eunuch was baptized, Acts viii. 38, 'he went away rejoicing,' so saith ver. 39. He had 'joy in the Holy Ghost.' You have the jailor baptized, Acts xvi. 33 ; you have him rejoicing, ver. 34. So that now the seal of the Spirit in those primitive times did accompany the outward seal of baptism ; and so, to this day, the proper fruit you are to expect of your having been baptized, is to be sealed with the Spirit of promise ; it is not to work regeneration, but supposeth it. So now you see that sealing is an assurance of salvation.

But now there is a twofold assurance of salvation, that we may yet go further in examining what is intended in it ; for I must sift things to find out what is the proper scope, what is the *elixir* of the Holy Ghost's intention. There is, first, an assurance by sense, by conditional promises, whereby a man, seeing the image of God upon his heart, to which promises are made, cometh comfortably to believe that he is in the estate of grace. That there is a use of sense all acknowledge. But then, secondly, there is an immediate assurance of the Holy Ghost, by a heavenly and divine light, of a divine authority, which the Holy Ghost sheddeth in a man's heart, (not having relation to grace wrought, or anything in a man's self,) whereby he sealeth him up to the day of redemption. And this is the great seal of all the rest. The one way is *discursive* ; a man gathereth that God loveth him from the effects, as we gather there is fire because there is smoke. But the other is *intuitive*, as the angels are said to know things ; it is such a knowledge as whereby we know the whole is greater than the part, we do not stand discoursing. There is light that cometh and overpowereth a man's soul, and assureth him that God is his, and he is God's, and that God loveth him from everlasting.

Now the question is, Which of these two is intended here ? I shall give you an answer to it by consulting that in 1 John v. 8. He saith, 'There are three that bear witness' to a man's conscience, to a man's spirit. There is the *Spirit*, saith he, that is the Holy Ghost ; and there is the *water* ; and there is the *blood*. By water he meaneth sanctification, as all agree ; and by blood he meaneth the blood of Jesus Christ, by faith laid hold upon, which hath a witness in it : 'He that believeth,' saith he, 'hath the witness in himself,' ver. 10. You shall find both these in Heb. x. 22 : 'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,'—there is blood, for, Heb. ix. 14, the blood of Christ is said to purge the conscience from dead works,—'and our bodies washed with pure water,' that is, our whole man sanctified, alluding to the types of the ceremonial law. But you see here, beside the testimony of blood, when a man cometh to believe, he layeth hold upon the blood of Christ ; when a man looks to Christ, though with a weak faith, Jesus Christ doth somewhat look upon him ; as when a man looks upon a picture, if he eye the picture, the picture seemeth to look upon him too ; this becometh some quiet to the soul. A man that is elected, and cometh to lay hold upon the blood of Christ, look as a man that is guilty of murder, when he cometh to the dead body the blood floweth : so when a man that is a believer looks upon Christ, there is a fresh flowing of the blood, and that strengtheneth faith ; no man looks upon Christ but cometh off more cheerly ; but this is a weak witness. Then cometh in water, that witnesseth too ; but yet, I say, if you mark it, here is the Spirit, that differeth from both these, therefore there is a further testimony than either from a man's sanctification or from mere faith. The

Holy Ghost witnesseth with both the other : for your sanctification cannot comfort you, if it were not for the Holy Ghost ; no, your faith could not comfort you, but that it is a work of the Holy Ghost. I will give you but one place for it, Rom. xv. 13. He prayeth that God would make them ‘abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.’ If thou hast any hope wrought in thee, either by looking to Christ’s blood, or by seeing grace in thy heart, it is by the power of the Holy Ghost. Well, why doth he say *Spirit*, differing from both *blood* and *water*? Because there is an immediate testimony beyond all these, which the Holy Ghost works in a man’s soul.

Now, my brethren, to answer you which is meant here by the sealing of the Spirit. I answer in two things.

First, I say, that in a large and in a general sense all assurance wrought, whether by *water* or by *blood*,—for there are no other ways,—any assurance, what way soever it be, is a seal of the Holy Ghost. I shall give you something to confirm it. If you will take sealing for a *giving in witness* in a large and common sense, so whatsoever giveth a testimony through the power of the Holy Ghost is an irradiating of a believer, and is the work of the Holy Ghost, that may be said to be a seal. In John iii. 33, you shall see the use of the phrase of sealing. It is used there for the giving of a testimony : ‘He that hath received his testimony,’ namely, by believing, ‘hath set to his seal that God is true.’ So that now, in a large and common sense, any witness that is given to confirm a truth is expressed in the Scripture by *setting a seal unto*. Therefore now, when the Holy Ghost doth give in a witness that you have grace *by blood*, laid hold on by faith, that you have grace *by water*; if it be a witness, it may be called a seal. I will not exclude these two other ways of assurance. Witnesses did use to set to their seals as witnesses, as well as the conveyer of an inheritance, in ancient times. Therefore divines make degrees of sealing. They say there is a sealing by blood, and there is a sealing by water, by sanctification, and there is a sealing by the Spirit. They make them several degrees; as in passing a thing at court, it passeth the king, and then it passeth the privy seal, and then it passeth the broad seal. These are but three several degrees of confirming the same thing; but the broad seal doth the business, whereby a man authentically claimeth it for ever. So that I say, in a large sense, I will not deny but that sealing here may be put for all kinds of assurance.

But yet let me say this, that that which is here more eminently meant is the immediate testimony of the Holy Ghost, the special thing that is here aimed at; and my reasons are these—

First, If you follow the metaphor close, every witness is not a seal in a strict sense; when there are witnesses and a sealer too, the witnesses come in to confirm the seal, or to confirm the writing. Every seal indeed is a witness, and it is the highest witness that is; and therefore, though the Spirit and his immediate testimony is called a witness, yet he is called a seal too; but yet, on the other side, every witness is not a seal, not in a strict sense. There are many things that are signs that are not seals, as you have it, Rom. iv. 11. There are many witnesses that are not sealers, especially in matters of inheritances, where there is a conveying over by the person that sealeth.

Then again a second reason is this: if you observe the phrase, it is said you are ‘sealed by the Spirit,’ he only is mentioned. Now, if you have recourse to that 1 John v. 8, water is said to be a witness, and blood a witness, and the Spirit a third witness; the witness of water and blood are swallowed

up as it were in the witness of the Spirit, in respect of the immediate testimony of the Holy Ghost. His testimony, though it is joined with theirs, yet it is hid under theirs; it is not said so much to be the testimony of the Spirit, is the testimony of water and blood: whereas here it is said to be the testimony of the Spirit; therefore that third is rather meant than the other.

And then again, in the third place, in sealing of an inheritance, the witnesses, you know, are *extranei*; they are persons which are not the conveyers of the inheritance; he that selleth or conveyeth the inheritance is said to seal properly, he whose the inheritance is. Therefore now, though your grace and faith may come in as witnesses, yet when he speaks of a seal, he must mean the seal of the conveyer; which is therefore the seal of the Holy Ghost himself, as distinguished from these two, as principally aimed at.

Great persons, who stand upon their authority, use to seal without witnesses. If you will speak of the seal of a king, as this is the seal of God: so, Esth. viii. 8, they did but write in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: there was the seal, there was no hand to it. To this day the king writeth *teste me ipso*, 'witness ourself,' when he putteth his seal to. In some colleges, when they put the college seal to a thing, they put no hands to, neither of the fellows, nor of the master, but only the seal of the college. Saith Christ, John v. 33, 34, 'I receive not testimony from man.' Though John, saith he, hath given me a witness, yet I receive no testimony from him, I am witness enough myself. When the Holy Ghost cometh to seal up salvation, he will have no witness but himself; they may come in as under-confirmer of it; but he doth it himself; 'witness ourself.' That is the seal of the Holy Ghost.

God hath made a promise, and he hath made an oath, to confirm our salvation; he hath made a promise, and he hath set to his seal, to confirm salvation; now do but parallel these two. When God sweareth, he sweareth by himself, he will not swear by anything else. Will the Holy Ghost seal? he sealeth by himself, he will take nothing else: so you have it, Heb. vi. 13, 'Because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself.' Will he seal? he will seal by himself. There may be other witnesses, but they are *extranei*; they have not to do with the bargain; but, saith he, it is my witness. I will seal by myself, I will receive testimony from none. He doth it himself.

So now, my brethren, I have opened this thing unto you, and all that I have said tendeth plainly and clearly but to open the words.

Now I shall come to some observations from what hath been said.

Obs. 1.—In the first place, you see that *the work of faith is a distinct thing, a different thing, from the work of assurance*; that is the least that can be gathered from it. He speaks of faith as one thing, of the sealing of the Spirit as another thing. Those that have held *that faith is assurance*, and others that have held the contrary; there is a double mistake in the point. I shall shew it in a word.

First, it must be granted, that in all faith there is an assurance; but of what? Of the truth of the promise. If a man doubt, if he 'waver,' as St James saith, in the truth of the promise, he will never act his faith. But the question here is about the assurance of a man's interest; that is not always in faith.

Again, all faith is an application of Christ. But how? It is not an application that Christ is mine, but it is a laying hold upon Christ to be mine. It is not a logical application in way of proposition that I may say

Christ is mine ; but it is a real one, I put him on, I take him to be mine ; and that is the better of the two. Faith, my brethren, is distinct from assurance.

Obs. 2.—In the second place, the sealing of the Spirit here intended, especially that immediate assurance which is mainly aimed at, is a *light beyond the light of ordinary faith*, that ordinary faith which a man liveth by. Why ? Because he makes it to be a further work than believing. ‘After ye believed,’ saith he, ‘ye were sealed ;’ he makes it a further thing, and because it is the next thing to heaven, you have no more, you can have no more till you come thither ; for you are sealed, and it is the ‘earnest of your inheritance.’ Faith indeed doth give the soul up to Christ, it dependeth upon him, quieteth itself in the blood of Christ. A man feeleth the load taken off his conscience while he believeth, and while he washeth himself in that blood, and eyeth that blood ; but this of the seal of the Spirit is more. At the 17th verse, (it may perhaps prove the meaning of it, I shall consider it when I come to it,) he is called the ‘Spirit of wisdom’—I told you by *wisdom* is meant *faith*, in the 8th verse—‘and revelation.’ I will give you Job for an instance ; Job had an ordinary light he lived by, and an extraordinary light that came into his soul. Look Job xlii. 5, ‘Mine ear,’ saith he, ‘hath heard of thee, but now mine eye hath seen thee.’ He calleth this *vision*, in comparison of what he had all his lifetime. I think Job speaks it in respect of a sight of God himself, but you may apply it to the sight of a man’s interest ; it is a sight by which a man seeth it, though he did but hear of it before. I have heard it whispered to me by the Holy Ghost,—for the Holy Ghost whispereth secretly by blood and by water,—that I am in the state of grace, but now I see it, saith he.

I yield, my brethren, that the sealing of the Spirit is but faith, if you compare it to heaven. It is not the vision of heaven, and therefore, 1 Pet. i. 8, it is said, ‘Believing, you rejoiced with joy unspeakable and glorious.’ It is but faith in comparison of heaven, it is believing when you are filled with joy ; so, Rom. xv. 13, he prayeth that they may be ‘filled with all joy through believing.’ But let me tell you that it is faith elevated and raised up above its ordinary rate ; as Stephen’s eye with which he saw Christ was his natural sight, but it was his natural sight elevated, raised up above the ordinary proportion of an eye ; so is this, a light beyond the ordinary light of faith. I will give you but one instance to difference it unto you, and it is a clear one. You read in 2 Sam. xii. 13, that Nathan came to David as a prophet, and when he spake as a prophet, David believed it, he had faith to entertain this word ; and he telleth David plainly, that his sins of adultery and murder were forgiven, and he said that God had told him that he should not die. Well, this being a word of God, David had an ordinary light of faith to apprehend it, to believe it, as we believe the Scripture when it is read. Suppose thy name were written in the Book of God ; that thou foundest it in the gospel, as Cyrus’s name was in the prophets, that thou shouldst be saved ; thou wouldst believe it with such a faith as thou believest there is a God out of the Scripture, and a Christ out of the Scripture. Well, but David for all this was not satisfied ; he had a faith to believe that his sins should be forgiven, and that faith was an assurance that they should be pardoned ; but it was not a seal of the Spirit. Therefore, Ps. li. 12, after Nathan came unto him, he prayeth, ‘Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and establish me with thy free Spirit.’ He knew it before by an ordinary light, but the thing he seeks for here is the witness of the Holy Ghost.

Now, when we say that it is a Spirit of *revelation*, we do not mean as the

Papists do ; they say, a man cannot be assured of his salvation but by vision, and by an angel appearing to him, and by immediate messages from heaven. Neither do I mean such revelation as Paul had, when he was carried up to the third heaven. No ; but it is such a light to know a man's own interest in salvation by, as wherewith the apostles wrote Scripture ; not that he that hath it can write Scripture. It is not a revelation of new truths, but to apply those truths to a man's own heart. In 2 Cor. i. 21, 22 ; in the verses before, the Apostle speaks of the truth of his doctrine ; as he was an apostle, he pawneth his apostleship upon it ; I am confident in it, saith he, the gospel I preached is not 'yea and nay.' I am an apostle, and I delivered it unto you as an apostle ; but now coming to those ordinary believers of the Corinthians, saith he, 'He that stablisheth us in Christ with you is God, who hath also sealed us,' &c. He hath given you that light to see your interest in those promises, the same light wherewith we see the truth of the promises, and have preached them unto you.

And so now you have the second observation from hence. The first was, that it is a distinct thing from faith ; the second is, that it is a higher light than the ordinary light of faith.

Obs. 3.—The third is this, for I shall keep to the text. It is called a seal ; now in reason every seal hath an impress upon it. *What is the impress of the immediate seal of the Spirit that it stampeth upon a man's heart ?*

To help you to understand this, I must have recourse to that 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his ;' that is, God knoweth whom he hath loved from everlasting. Here is God's seal. Well, what is the seal of the Spirit ? It is the impress of this seal from everlasting ; he cometh and stampeth upon a man's heart, The Lord knoweth thee to be his. It beareth the image of God's everlasting love, (it is news with a witness,) of God's everlasting love to a man, to him in particular ; that is the motto, the impress about this seal. It hath holiness with it too, as I shall shew, but I say the impress, the motto is this, God knoweth thee to be his. For this seal of the Spirit answereth to the other seal, it is the copy of it, it is engraven from it. God's seal is, The Lord knoweth who are his (that is in general spoken of election ;) the particular seal of the Spirit is, God knoweth thee to be his. As we choose God because he chose us, we answer his election in love, we love God because he loved us first ; so this seal of the Spirit, Know thou that thou art God's, answereth that, God knoweth thee to be his, which was God's seal from everlasting. It is the electing love of God brought home to the soul ; therefore, as election looks not to works nor graces, when God chose you to be his : so when he sealeth you up, the impress of that love of his is without the consideration of works ; a man doth not know that he is God's by marks and signs, but by an immediate impress and light of the Holy Ghost's. —And so now I have fully, as I could, explained to you what this seal of the Spirit is.

II. Let me now in a word but observe *the order*. You see here it is *after believing* ; 'after ye believed you were sealed,' saith he. I will not here enter upon that controversy,—because the text giveth not occasion for it,—whether assurance by signs be first, or assurance by the Spirit immediately be first ? for I must still keep to what the text saith. Only this I raise out of it, and observe further to open the text, that the Spirit is *after believing*.

Piscator readeth the words, *Per quod etiam quum credidistis*,—When ye believed, at the same time that ye believed. But, my brethren, it is not

πιστεύοντες, *believing*, as you have it, 1 Pet. i. 8, 'Believing, you were filled with joy in the Holy Ghost;' but it is πιστεύσαντες, it is of the time past, when ye *had believed*; having believed ye were sealed. 'After ye believed,' saith our translation rightly.

Take the greatest instance in the world for it, the apostles themselves; they were believers, and they trusted God by faith, before they were assured and had the seal of the Spirit. You know, ver. 12, Paul, speaking of the apostles, saith, 'who first trusted in Christ,' and the word is 'hoped in Christ.' Now do but look into the 14th of John, read but that chapter, and you shall find that the apostles had faith and the Holy Ghost long before they had assurance and the seal of the Spirit. Saith Christ there, 'Ye believe in God;' here they had faith, but it was a very poor faith, for, ver. 5, they said they did not know the way to heaven, so far were they off from this assurance here mentioned. Christ telleth them there also, that they had the Spirit, ver. 17, 'He dwelleth with you,' saith he, he is in your hearts. Well, but see what he saith in the 20th verse. At that day, namely, when I am ascended, ye shall know (I will give you the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, so he calleth him, he dwelleth with you now;) but 'at that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.' Then they should have a full manifestation of their union with Christ, and their union with the Father, and of the union of Christ with the Father. 'Then you shall know,' saith he, 'at that day;' this was after their believing.

I will give you but one scripture more (it openeth that place to me clearly) in the same chapter. Christ promised them that do believe the Comforter. 'I will pray the Father,' saith he, ver. 16, 'and he shall give you the Comforter; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' I take the meaning of the words thus: I promise you the Holy Ghost as a Comforter, you have him already as a sanctifier; he dwelleth with you, you have him already as one that hath wrought faith in you; but as a Comforter the world cannot receive him as you shall. Why? Because the world hath not known him *as a sanctifier*, but so you have known him already; for till such time as the Holy Ghost hath wrought faith, and put a man into the state of grace, he cannot assure him, he cannot comfort him. For, my brethren, consider well the reason he giveth why the world cannot receive the Spirit is, because they do not know him. I ask this, When thou wert converted, wert not thou one of the world? Thou didst not know the Spirit. If this were the reason why men did not receive the Holy Ghost, no man in the world should receive him; therefore the meaning must needs be this, till men have some experience of the work of the Spirit upon their hearts; till he hath been a sanctifier in them, and caused them to believe, they cannot receive him as Comforter. Why? Because there is not matter wherewithal to comfort them; they must first be in the state of grace before they can be comforted by being in the state of grace. They must therefore receive him as a sanctifier before they can receive him as a Comforter.

I shall name one scripture more, it is Acts xv. 8, 9. You shall see there that the Holy Ghost was poured out in the primitive times after believing. At the 7th verse he speaks of the Gentiles, that they 'heard the word of the gospel, and believed;' and saith he, ver. 8, 'God, which knoweth the hearts,'—knowing they believed,—'bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us.' So that now the giving of the Holy Ghost, as he did to the apostles, as a Comforter, as a sealer to them of salvation, is

when they have believed, when God, who knoweth their hearts, knoweth them to be holy.

And, my brethren, the reason is clear and evident ; for Jesus Christ must first be mine, before I can say he is mine, the thing must be first ; now he is made mine by faith, I then receive him to be mine. They were without Christ in the world, he saith of these Ephesians, till they believed ; when they believed, then Christ is theirs, therefore necessarily an act of faith must go before an act of assurance ; for assurance doth tell you that Christ is yours, and that according to the rule of the Word. Now, according to the rule of the Word, though he may be yours in God's secret purpose, yet you are without Christ before you believe. Things must be, before I believe them to be.

Then it is equal that God should be honoured first by mere trusting, by mere *believing*, before he honoureth your faith with setting to his seal. John iii. 33, he that believeth 'hath set to his seal that God is true.' Well, when a man hath done that, now, saith God, I will set to my seal that he believeth, and that he is my child. But God will have you trust him first with a mere act of trust, as the woman did that trusted the prophet : she had no more meal nor no more oil than would save their lives, one meal more. Well, saith he, I will be trusted ; 'Make me thereof a cake first, and bring it to me that I may eat of it, and after make for thee and for thy son.' God will be trusted first ; and when you have set to your seal that God is true in his Word, God will set to his seal after your believing.

SERMON XVI.

In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, &c.—VER. 13, 14.

THE coherence of these words with the former, as I have shewed you, is easy and natural. He had spoken of an inheritance; he had spoken of it in the 11th verse, and he speaks of it likewise in the 14th verse; an inheritance unto which they were predestinated by God's eternal purpose, so ver. 11; in which inheritance they had, by faith and by believing, as I shewed, obtained an interest: 'we obtained an inheritance who first trusted in Christ,' ver. 11, 12. Now then, having been thus appointed to it, having obtained an interest in it, and the thing itself being made thus sure, and this by faith; now, saith he, 'After ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.' This inheritance, as it was made sure in itself, so you had the inheritance made good to you by a work of sealing: ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

I shewed the last time, in opening of the work of sealing, first what it was not, which some interpreters would have to be meant in this place.

It is not, first, the gift of the Spirit only, abstractedly considered, for it importeth a work of the Spirit upon the heart, which sealing always must needs do, and impression likewise. Indeed, the gift of the Spirit may be the earnest of the inheritance, merely and alone considered, as I shall shew you anon; but the sealing of the Spirit importeth an impression, a work upon the heart.

It is not, secondly, a work of faith, as some would have it; for besides that he doth not say, 'Believing ye were sealed,' (as elsewhere he speaks; so the apostle Peter speaks, 1 Pet. i. 8, πιστεύοντες, 'Believing, ye rejoice,' in the present tense;) but it is πιστεύσαντες, having believed, or, as our translation well rendereth it, 'after ye believed;' which at least implieth it is a distinct thing from faith.

Then, thirdly, I shewed it was not sanctification or regeneration; which though it be an image, yet the use of the metaphor of sealing, though it implieth an image, is taken principally from the use of a seal, which primarily is not so much to stamp an image, though it doth that, as it is to assure.

I shewed by this what it was not. I shewed, secondly, what I conceived it to be.

You must fetch the notion of it from the use of a seal amongst men, and you must confine it likewise to the use of a seal in matters of inheritance, for that is properly the Apostle's scope, he followeth that metaphor; therefore, though there be many uses of a seal,—for service, and propriety, and the like,—yet, I take it, they are not the proper scope here.

The use of a seal in point of inheritance is, first, to make the thing sure, to convey an inheritance, that the inheritance should be thereby conveyed, and made sure in itself. Now, though that is not excluded,—for every work of

the Spirit doth make the thing over and over sure, still engageth God more and more,—yet that is not the proper and primary scope of sealing here. Why? Because there is an ancients seal than that, the original seal of all, whereby salvation is made sure in itself, even God's eternal purpose. And this sealing is a distinct thing from that 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of the Lord remaineth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his,' speaking of eternal election; that is, rather a setting of us upon God's heart as a seal, (as the expression is, Cant. viii. 6, 'Set me as a seal upon thine heart,') than God's sealing our hearts by his Spirit. This is not the meaning here, for he had spoken of that before; he had spoken how by predestination they were appointed to it, ver. 11, and how by faith they had obtained it, and the thing was conveyed; they had 'obtained an inheritance,' ver. 11.

There is therefore another use of a seal. It is to ascertain the parties, or others, to whom the thing is made over unto, that they might have that to shew for it for ever. So, indeed, sealing is taken in the Scripture, not only so much for making salvation sure in itself, as to assure our hearts, as the phrase is that the Apostle useth in his epistles. It is parallel to what is in 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. 'He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us.' *Sealing* and *anointing* is there put for *stablishing* us, making us sure of it, not making the thing sure.

Now, because there are two ways of making us sure of salvation; the one mediate, by the witness of our graces and the witness of the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the conscience, and laid hold upon by faith; and the other immediate, which is an immediate testimony of the Holy Ghost, as I shewed out of 1 John v. 8, where there are said to be three that bear witness that we have eternal life, as it followeth afterward, ver. 11; there is the water, blood, and Spirit. Now by Spirit there is meant the Holy Ghost, by water is meant our graces and sanctification, and by blood is meant the blood of Jesus Christ, looked upon by faith; when faith hath a recourse unto it, it leaveth a witness behind itself. A man never cometh to Christ but he goeth away somewhat quieted, somewhat comforted; he never layeth hold upon that blood but it easeth or pacifieth the conscience more or less. Now when *Spirit* is made a distinct thing from the other two, it must needs be an immediate witness of the Spirit distinct from the other two. Why? Because the Holy Ghost witnesseth with the blood and water; therefore when he saith *Spirit* as a third witness, it is differing from both these; it must be the Holy Ghost witnessing without these.

The question is then, Which of these are meant here, when he saith, 'Ye are sealed with the Spirit of promise?'

I answer, If you take it in a large sense, every witness, and all assurance of salvation by any of those witnesses, may be called a sealing of the Spirit; if you take sealing in a large sense, for testifying or witnessing a thing that is true, as John iii. 33, where the word is used, he that believeth, saith he, 'hath set to his seal that God is true.' If you will take it for witnessing anything, every one of these witnesses, in such a metaphorical sense, may be called a seal. Yet I take it, that which is principally aimed at here is an immediate testimony of the Holy Ghost. The metaphor of sealing an inheritance implieth as much; for you know, in conveying inheritances, as I shewed out of Jeremiah, there are witnesses that are as standers-by; but the act of sealing is the immediate act of the party that conveyeth it. And the seal of great persons is set to without witnesses; the seal of the king is without hand, as the broad seal amongst us, you know, is. And so, Esth. viii. 8, the seal of the king Ahasuerus was without a hand; there was no other witness

but the king's seal to it. So now, when the great God of heaven and earth, when his Spirit will witness over and above water and blood, he will do it himself. My brethren, every seal is a witness, but every witness is not a seal, in a strict sense.

Now then, concerning this seal of the Spirit, we having found what is principally meant; for all this is but to find out the meaning of it; I gave you these three things:—

The first was, that it was a distinct light from the ordinary light of faith, a light beyond that light. It is indeed faith elevated, though not to vision, where faith shall cease, as it is in heaven; yet as Stephen's bodily eye was raised to see Christ beyond what the power of the ordinary sight could have done, so here is a light beyond what the ordinary light can reach unto.

In the second place, this immediate seal must have an impress that it stampeth upon the heart. Now I told you, that the motto, or the impression that this beareth,—to follow still the metaphor of a seal,—is the impress, it is the copy of that great seal in heaven, which God did set to our salvation before all worlds. Now what was that great seal, that original seal of all God's heart? Saith the Apostle, 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his;' that is, he chooseth them out of love. Now then this immediate seal of the Holy Ghost beareth the impress of this original seal, stampeth this upon the heart,—The Lord knoweth thee to be his, and he hath known thee so from everlasting. And as God chooseth us, not looking to works or anything in us, so this light cometh in without reference to graces, or anything else.

Then, in the third place, as in a seal, the wax, you know, is passive unto the stamp of the seal, so is the heart, the understanding, and the will and affections to this work of sealing. That is a third thing I add now, still keeping to the metaphor of sealing, as being proper to the text. It is a light that doth not leave you to think, 'This may be my own thoughts,' but an overpowering light; for when the Holy Ghost will speak as a sealer, he will do his office, and therefore a man's own spirit is not active in it. He is active in it in the effect indeed, but in the light itself, and in the receiving of it, he is passive, as at the first conversion.

Having opened what the work is, I shewed in the second place the order of it; it is after believing. I gave you that one instance in the apostles themselves, which I shall repeat, because I should have use of it afterward. You may read, John xiv. 1–4, that they believed in Christ; yea, at the 17th verse, they had the Holy Ghost in them: yet at the 16th verse, he promiseth them, when he was ascended he would give them the Comforter; and, ver. 20, 'At that day,' saith he, 'ye shall know that I am in you, and you in me.' The apostles had not this seal of the Spirit till Christ ascended; they had the Holy Ghost before, they had some assurance before; for you know Peter appealeth to Christ, 'Lord,' saith he, 'thou knowest that I love thee,' and Christ telleth Peter, that he did believe so as 'flesh and blood had not revealed to him,' Matt. xvi. 17. He had the witness both of blood and water, yet the Holy Ghost was to come down as a Comforter. And in that day, saith he, ye shall know your immediate union with me, 'that I am in you, and you in me.'

III. The third thing concerning this sealing in the text is, *the PERSON in whom we are sealed*. There is, first, the *work of sealing*, that hath been opened. Secondly, there is the *order of it*, it is after believing. Then, thirdly, the *person in whom*, or the *virtual cause* in whom we are sealed. It is in Christ: 'In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed.'

The words translated here, 'in whom,' ἐν ᾧ, are exceeding ambiguous in their reference, as in the Greek they are. They may refer unto the gospel, spoken of just before, and so Piscator would have it; that is, *by which gospel* ye believed; that ἐν ᾧ is put for δι' οὗ. Or, secondly, they may refer to Christ, 'in whom,' as our translation readeth it; and so they have a double reference: either that the meaning is, 'in whom, after ye believed,' and so it referreth to faith, to believing in Christ; or, secondly, they may refer to sealing, 'in whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed,' sealed in him after believing.

My brethren, there is not a verse but there are such ambiguities as these are; so comprehensive and vast a writer in his scope and aim is the Holy Ghost, yet still aiming at something peculiar. There is no book written so ambiguously, in that comprehensive way, as the Scripture.

If you ask now, to which I refer 'in whom?' Plainly, I say, unto sealing; and my reason is this, for he mentioneth sealing here as a new benefit distinct from faith. And as he had said of all other benefits, that they were in Christ; we are elected in Christ, adopted through him, redeemed through him, in whom God abounded in grace to us; still mark it, to every benefit, 'in Christ,' is added. Now speaking of a new benefit of sealing, this phrase, 'in whom,' referreth to sealing; so that this is the meaning of it, that the *work of sealing* is performed *in Christ*.

Now, my brethren, 'in whom' will still have a double reference, and a double meaning, if we refer it to Christ and to sealing in him, and both in the meaning and scope of the place.

First, 'Εν is all one with εἰς. In Christ you were sealed, that is, you were sealed *into Christ*, into him: so it importeth that the matter made known in the work of sealing, is a man's union with Christ. When the Holy Ghost sealeth a man up, the thing he makes known, the thing he sealeth to him is this, that he is in Christ, that he hath been elected in Christ by God the Father from everlasting, that he is one in Christ; he was one with him from everlasting, he was one with him when he hung upon the cross, he is one with him now in heaven. 'Into whom,' so the words will bear, as well εἰς as ἐν, you may read either, one as well as another; I speak for the scope and meaning of it.

I will give you a scripture for this interpretation: 2 Cor. i. 21, where he speaks of establishing and sealing our hearts, he putteth in this phrase, saith he, 'He who stablisheth us with you εἰς Χριστόν, in Christ, is God.' He hath stablished us in Christ, or sealed us in Christ, (for that followeth, ver. 22, ὁ δὲ σφραγισάμενος,) into Christ. And, John xiv. 20, 'At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.' So that a man's union with Christ, his being in Christ, is the matter sealed up to him; 'in whom ye are sealed.' My brethren, in the work of sealing there is the love of all the Persons manifested; God the Father's love, and Christ's love, and our union with him, he leaveth not him out. Therefore you shall find, 1 John v. 8, there are three witnesses in heaven that witness love to us, as well as three on earth. I remember that I shewed that the work of baptism is the outward seal, to which this inward seal most principally referreth; for baptism is not to work regeneration, that is a mistake, as circumcision was not. Rom. iv 11, he calleth circumcision 'the seal of the righteousness of faith, which Abraham had, being uncircumcised;' so that it is not to work, but to seal regeneration and salvation unto us. Now, as we are said to be 'baptized into Christ,' Rom. vi. 3, that is the outward seal: so this is the inward work, whereby the Holy Ghost sealeth a man into Christ. 'In

whom we are sealed ;' it may be as well *ei* as *iv*, as it is in that place of the Corinthians which interpreteth it.

Or, in the second place, this phrase, 'in whom ye are sealed,' importeth, and the intent of it is to shew, by virtue of whom this benefit is bestowed, that it is bestowed by virtue of Christ. The work of sealing is wrought in us by virtue of Christ ; it is in him virtually, though by the Holy Ghost efficiently. The Holy Ghost is the author of it, but Jesus Christ is the virtual cause. In that 2 Cor. i. 20, the place I quoted even now for sealing and stablishing us, you shall find there, that 'all the promises are yea and Amen in him.' Now as all the promises are *yea* and *Amen* virtually in Christ, they had been worth nothing else, if he had not died to make them good, so the sealing of all the promises unto the heart of a believer is in him too. So the words that follow, 'He that stablisheth us, and sealeth us in Christ,' will bear both senses, as well as here it doth.

Now, my brethren, to open this a little, for it is a point of useful consideration. The work of sealing of the Holy Ghost is done by virtue of Jesus Christ. He, and his virtue, is left out in no work that is done for us. I remember that I gave you this rule in handling of the 10th verse, and it is a thing I have largely elsewhere handled, that whatsoever work God doth upon us, he doth unto Christ first. Now then, are we sealed virtually in Christ ? Why then, we must find the same work upon Christ himself first. We died to sin, because he died ; we rose from sin, because he rose ; we are sealed, because he once was sealed, and by virtue of that we come to be sealed. This is necessary to be opened, if you will understand the full scope of this, 'in whom ye are sealed.' Now we read that Jesus Christ was sealed, John vi. 27, 'For him hath God the Father sealed.' Mark it, *him* hath he sealed. Now do but look into your margin, and see to what the translators have referred this sealing of Christ ; to Matt. iii. 17. Do but read there, and you shall find that Jesus Christ, when he was baptized, which, as I told you, is the outward seal, heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

My brethren, as Christ did partake of the same ordinances we do, so there was some effect that these ordinances had upon him, which he was capable of, answerable and suitable to what they have upon us. Therefore, as baptism is the outward seal, to seal up adoption to a believer, and the witness of the Spirit is the inward work, the fruit of baptism, to be waited for, (yet a man hath it not by virtue of his baptism :) so when Christ was baptized, what was the fruit of it ? What was the inward work answerable to the outward upon him ? This, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom,' &c. And as the inward seal of the Spirit to us is an immediate witness, so was this from heaven to Christ. Not that ours is an immediate voice from heaven, but a light of the Holy Ghost's superadded to the light of faith ; other revelations cease, and they are the revelations that the Papists speak of.

That you may see your ground for this, look 1 John v. 9, compared with the verses going before. He saith there are three witnesses in earth, and three in heaven, that bear witness to two things (read the place, you will find it the scope.) First, that we have eternal life in Christ ; and, secondly, as appeareth by the 9th verse, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ; 'This is the witness of God,' saith he, 'which he hath testified of his Son.' There are three in heaven that bore witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God when he was baptized ; there was God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, all these three did bear this witness. There was God

the Father; he speaks, the voice that came from heaven was his voice properly, for he called him his Son, 'This is my beloved Son;' there was God the Father's testimony. And, John i. 32, 'the Holy Ghost descended down upon him like a dove;' there is the Spirit's witness, and all at his baptism. And then, as 'he that believeth hath the witness in himself,' so Christ had the witness of his being Son of God from the second Person also; he had it in himself. All these three witnesses concurred then at his baptizing; and thus was Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour then sealed. Will you have me speak plainly? Though he had the assurance of faith that he was the Son of God, he knew it out of the Scriptures by reading all the prophets; yea, and as Adam had it written in his heart that he was the son of God, so Christ had the like instinct and law in his spirit that he was the Son of God; yet to have it sealed to him with joy unspeakable and glorious, by the witness of all the three Persons, this was deferred to the time of his baptism. He was then 'anointed with the Holy Ghost,' as I remember the expression is, Acts x. 38; 'anointed with the oil of gladness'—that was the first beginning of it—'above all his fellows,' in a more peculiar and transcendent manner. Now mark it, answerably (compare 2 Cor. i. 22) he hath sealed and anointed us, just as he sealed and anointed Christ in his baptism. We are conformed unto Christ; look what was wrought upon him, is wrought upon believers. He did believe in God, and himself to be the Son of God by faith from his mother's womb, so he telleth us, Ps. xxii. 9. But this eminent, transcendent, heavenly witness of it from all three Persons, was deferred till now. So now we see we are sealed in him, by virtue of him, and by his being sealed.

IV. The fourth thing in the text is this, *The efficient cause by whom we are sealed.* By the Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity, who is described to us by two things. 1. That he is the *Spirit of promise.* 2. A *holy Spirit*, and this as a sealer, for so you must understand it. All these must be spoken to; for there is a mystery lieth in all these. First, here is the Spirit by whom we are sealed, there is the person. Secondly, here is his description as he is a sealer: 1. he is the Spirit of promise; 2. he is a holy Spirit. You shall find every one of these have their weight in the matter of sealing.

First, *For the person.* Let us speak to that a little. The Apostle had mentioned the work of the other two persons before: he had mentioned the work of God the Father; 'Blessed be God the Father, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings;' so ver. 3 and 4. He had mentioned God the Son before; 'In whom we have redemption through his blood,' and we are 'chosen in him,' &c. But he had not mentioned the Spirit before; yet he had mentioned the work of the Spirit before too, the work of faith and the work of vocation, working prudence and wisdom, as I shewed before out of the 8th verse. What is the mystery of this?

Obs.—The thing I observe out of this is, That it is the special work of the Holy Ghost to comfort and assure the hearts of believers of their salvation. It is a most special work of the Holy Ghost. I will give you but two evidences out of Scripture for it. The first is out of John xiv. 26. Our Saviour Christ did forbear to comfort them, for he telleth them there is a Comforter to come; 'But the Comforter,' saith he, 'who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things,' &c. Our Saviour Christ would not take the office out of his hands, he is to be your Comforter, saith he, and I will refer all to him. As he is called by the special name of the Comforter, to shew what is his special work and office,

so answerably you shall find that joy is called 'joy in the Holy Ghost,' 1 Thess. i. 6. It is the Father's love which is sealed up to us, it is the Son in whom we are sealed, so it is the Holy Ghost by whom we are sealed. The Father prescribed all the cordials, the Son tempered them, but the Holy Ghost applieth them. 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, As the spirit of a man only knoweth the things of a man, and he to whom this spirit in him will reveal it: so, saith he, it is the Spirit of God that revealeth the deep things of God, that everlasting love of his. Who else but he is to do it? It is his office.

Therefore, my brethren, you must give the honour of all the comfort you have to the Holy Ghost in a more special manner. Give it not to your graces, though the Holy Ghost witnesseth with them; there is no comfort you have but in the power of the Holy Ghost; there is an express place for it, Rom. xv. 13. Therefore look not to your graces; I mean, do not ascribe it to your graces, do not pore and dote upon them; it is the Holy Ghost always comforteth when they comfort. As it would derogate from Christ to ascribe justification to any other, so it derogates from the Holy Ghost to ascribe comfort to any other. And remember, that the special thing upon which mention of the Holy Ghost is made is, when comforting, when assuring, when sealing cometh to be mentioned.—So much for that observation.

Come we now to the description of the Holy Ghost here, as he is a sealer. First, he is called *the Spirit of promise*. Secondly, he is called *the Holy Spirit*. 'Ye are sealed,' saith he, 'with that holy Spirit of promise.'

He is called the Spirit of promise for two reasons and considerations. First, because, take him as he is a sealer and comforter of them that believe, he is promised; we have a promise that the Holy Ghost shall comfort us and seal us. Therefore, because the Holy Ghost is the thing promised, and that as a sealer, we are said to be sealed by the Spirit of promise. And, in the second place, he is called the Spirit of promise as a sealer; because he never sealeth but by a promise, as I shall shew by and by; it is *ab effectu*. To speak of both these—

The Holy Ghost is called the *promise*, and that as a sealer, (that is the first thing,) because he is promised. Our Saviour Jesus Christ was the great promise of the Old Testament, but the Holy Ghost is the great promise of the New. I need not quote you places to shew you that Christ was the great promise of the Old Testament. You have it Acts xiii. 32, and Heb. xi. 39. Many places might be brought. The Holy Ghost is the great promise of the New; he is called the 'promise of the Father,' Acts i. 4, ii. 33, and Gal. iii. 14. 'That we may receive,' saith he, 'the promise of the Spirit.' He is called the promise there, because he is the thing promised.

My brethren, God doth give forth all three Persons in promises, (it is a good observation by the way.) He hath a Son, he promiseth him; well, he hath given him, that promise is ceased,—I mean in the exhibition of Christ in the flesh,—is fulfilled. He hath a Spirit, you shall have him one day fully; but in the meantime you have him under a promise. He hath given us his Spirit also, saith he; that also cometh in 2 Cor. v. 5. He had given us his Son before, he giveth us his Spirit too; he hath promised it. There is God the Father, you have him promised too; for the time will come, as it is 1 Cor. xv. 28, that 'God will be all in all.' You have all three Persons in promises. God hath put forth all out of himself, he hath more blessings than one, he hath promised all in himself. But the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of promise, as he is a sealer. That is the point I must stand upon.

The word here is, in the original, *ἐν τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ*, of that promise; he hath

put the article to every word, τῷ πνεύματι, that Spirit, τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ, of that promise—namely, of sealing, to seal believers. There is a special promise, my brethren, unto believers, that they shall have the Spirit to seal them, if they sue it out. Many want it, but there is a promise for it, that same 14th of John which I quoted before. The apostles, they were believers, ver. 1; they had the Spirit dwelling in them, ver. 17; yet he promiseth them the Spirit both in ver. 16, 20, and 26. He doth not promise him as a sanctifier, but under the notion and in the name of a Comforter; not only as one that should give gifts to them and make them apostles, but should comfort them. They believed already; but that the Holy Ghost should come unto them as a Comforter, here was a special promise yet to be fulfilled. Look into Acts i. 4, 5, and you shall find this to be true; he biddeth them there wait at Jerusalem ‘for the promise of the Father, which,’ saith he, ‘you have heard of me; for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.’ And still observe it, for it is spoken of him as a Comforter; for so Christ promised him, though indeed he came with enlargement of gifts upon them too as apostles.

You will say, the apostles had this promise, who were extraordinary men, have believers the same?

Read first Acts ii. 33. Saith he, Christ being ascended, ‘and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.’ They were filled with the Holy Ghost as with wine, as the Apostle’s expression is in the Ephesians, so that they said they were drunk. But doth this belong to believers? See what he saith to the men that were pricked in their heart, ver. 38, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,’—that is, for assurance of remission; for otherwise a man must believe before he be baptized, for so they did, and so they were, as appeareth, ver. 41, ‘They that gladly received the word were baptized,’ or, they should be baptized, that they might receive the remission, or the assurance of the remission of their sins,—‘and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise’ (mark it, that promise that was made to us, and you have seen fulfilled to us) ‘is unto you and to your children; and to all that are afar off,’—to the Gentiles afar off to the end of the world,—‘even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.’ Mark that, to all believers. There is a promise of it, you may sue it out; and therefore you shall find, Gal. iii. 14, there is mention of the receiving of the promise of the Spirit after believing, ‘That they might receive,’ saith he, ‘the promise of the Spirit through faith.’ What promise of the Spirit is it that a man receiveth through faith? A man must have the Spirit to work sanctification, (mark that;) then to have the Spirit as a worker of faith, as a beginner of sanctification, cannot be the meaning of it; but there is an eminent promise yet to be fulfilled to believers, for they received the promise of the Spirit through faith. What promise of the Spirit is that? The Spirit as a sealer, the Spirit as a comforter; for so he was promised to the disciples after they believed.

Obs.—What is the observation from thence? Plainly this: You that are believers, wait for a further promise of the Holy Ghost as a sealer, and sue it out with God; for you see here the great promise, it is the promise of the Spirit as a sealer. So you shall find, Acts i. 4, that the apostles were to wait for the promise of the Spirit: so do you. My brethren, those that did receive the word gladly, as the text saith, Acts ii. 41, had a promise of the Holy Ghost to be expected as a comforter, as a sealer, as the place there evidently implieth. Though you have some joy wrought in you by faith,

yet there is some further promise still to be expected; 'For the promise,' saith he, 'is to you, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord shall call.' You shall find in John vii. 38—that I may not stand reckoning up many places—that our Saviour Christ saith, 'He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,' of water to comfort and refresh him. 'But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given' (mark,) 'because that Jesus was not yet glorified.' My brethren, let me vent that notion to you, for I believe it will hold, that the giving of the Holy Ghost as a sealer with joy unspeakable and glorious, was reserved to the times after Christ was glorified. Men had the Spirit to work faith before, they had faith under the Old Testament; but for the Spirit to come and work joy unspeakable and glorious in ordinary believers, was not till Jesus Christ himself was glorified. It is true that David and some other saints in the Old Testament had it, who were eminent types of Christ, that was to be anointed with the oil of gladness; but the ordinary saints under the Old Testament had a spirit of bondage upon them; there was a spirit of adoption too, but not to seal up to a man his sonship. This is the great promise of the gospel, which cometh to believers when Jesus Christ is glorified, when he is ascended up to heaven, and there is 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows;' then he poureth out the Spirit upon men, which will sue out this promise.

My brethren, it is the great fruit of your baptism; you have not that great fruit of your baptism till you have this. The circumcision of old was a seal of the righteousness of faith, and of the promised seed, of Christ to come, of a bloody Saviour, to redeem by blood; for so circumcision was by blood. Now as circumcision was then, so now that Christ is come and glorified, our baptism is the seal of the Spirit; it is the proper work that answereth to baptism. Therefore you shall find it is called 'baptizing with the Holy Ghost,' because it is that which is the fruit of baptism, it answereth that outward seal; and therefore you may read that Peter biddeth them be baptized, and they should receive this promise, Acts ii. 38.

You that believe are to wait for this promise; as the Jews waited for the coming of Christ, so are you to wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost into your hearts. It is said that the fathers served God night and day, waiting for the promise, namely, Christ to come, Acts xxvi. 6. Serve your God day and night faithfully, walk humbly; there is a promise of the Holy Ghost to come and fill your hearts with joy unspeakable and glorious, to seal you up to the day of redemption. Sue this promise out, wait for it, rest not in believing only, rest not in assurance by graces only; there is a further assurance to be had. It was the last legacy Christ left upon earth. Look John xiv. 16; he saith there that he would send the promise of the Father; this very promise of sending the Comforter; read Luke xxiv. 49. Therefore sue out the will of Christ, sue out that last legacy of his. It was the fruit of his ascension; when he was ascended up and received this promise, then he poured it out.

And let me add this too—I thought to make it a distinct observation—from the persons here that were to be sealed. 'Ye were sealed;' ye, who? Ye Ephesians; they were ordinary believers, they were not apostles, they had not all miraculous gifts, yet he saith of them, 'Ye were sealed with the Spirit of promise after ye believed.' Read over all the epistles, and you shall find almost all the saints in the primitive times sealed; thus the Corinthians they had it, 2 Cor. i. 22, 'God hath stablished us with you, and hath also sealed us.'

The Ephesians had it you see, they were sealed ; for afterward, chap. iv. 30, he exhorts them not to grieve the Holy Spirit, by which they were sealed. The Thessalonians had it, 1 Thess. i. 10. They received the word with such joy, that he saith they waited for the coming of Jesus Christ from heaven ; for that is the next step, heaven is next unto it, and to wait for Christ when you are thus sealed. Those that Peter wrote to had it, 1 Pet. i. 8, 'In whom believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Thus ordinary it was in the primitive times ; where the defect lies God knows ; but certainly it might be more common if men would sue it out ; such a promise there is. He is therefore called the Spirit of promise, because he is promised as a sealer.

Only, my brethren, let me give you a direction or two. First, believe this promise, wait for it by faith, make it the aim of your faith ; we are said to 'receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,' Gal. iii. 14. Believe there is such a thing, aim at it, wait for it, and serve God day and night in all humility to obtain it, rest in no other lower and under assurance ; and in the end the Lord will give it. The reason why men attain it not is, because they rest in other assurance, and they do not aim at this ; they content themselves with bare believing, and that their consciences are quieted. But, my brethren, there is such a work as sealing by the Spirit, if you have faith ; there is a Spirit, and a Spirit of promise made to believers, which you may receive by faith. This is the first reason why he is called a Spirit of promise, because he is promised to believers as he is a sealer.

I mentioned a *second reason* why he is called the Spirit of promise as he is a sealer. What is that ? Because he always sealeth by a promise. These truths, my brethren, are worthy your laying up, not only to clear the doctrine of this great work of the Spirit, (and I still speak what is proper to the text,) but also to direct you, and to try whether you have it, you that boast of it. It is always, I say, by a promise ; when he sealeth he bringeth a promise home to the heart. He is therefore called the Spirit of promise, because he useth a promise in sealing ; as we say of a soldier, he is a man of the sword, because a sword is the weapon he useth ; so he is called the Spirit of promise because he useth a promise. As we are said to be heirs of the promise, because the promise belongeth to us, so he is called the Spirit of promise because he comforteth us by a promise. There is a Spirit lieth hid and dwelleth in the promise to comfort us, if faith could but draw him down to come into our hearts and set them on.

My brethren, we heard that Jesus Christ was sealed when he was baptized ; but he was sealed by a promise, it was not by an immediate revelation only, but by bringing home a truth to his heart. What was it ? 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' This is a Scripture promise, you shall find it in Isa. xlii. 1, 'This is my servant, in whom I delight ; my elect, in whom my soul is well pleased.' That which had been spoken before of the Messiah is brought home to his heart. He sealeth not up his Son when he speaks from heaven immediately, but he doth it by a promise ; therefore much more, my brethren, doth he seal up you. The Word and the Spirit are joined ; they are joined in the new Jerusalem, much more now. Isa. lix. 21, the promise there, that 'my Word and my Spirit shall not depart out of thy mouth,' is spoken of the calling of the Jews plainly, for the Apostle quoteth it in Rom. xi. 26, and it is the only place he quoteth for their call. 'The Redeemer shall come out of Zion,' are the words just before. When Jesus Christ gave the promise of the Holy Ghost as a sealer and Comforter to the apostles, he calleth him a Comforter indeed ; but how ?

Saith he, 'He shall bring all things to your remembrance, for he shall take of mine and shew it unto you;' for if the Holy Ghost do not come with a word, and take of Christ's and set that upon your heart, it is a delusion; he sealeth by a promise still, and therefore in all that discourse of Christ, where he promiseth him as a Comforter, in John xiv., he calleth him a 'Spirit of truth,' as well as a Comforter. Therefore when we say, it is an immediate testimony, the meaning is not that it is without the Word; no, it is by a promise; but the meaning is, it is immediate in respect of using your own graces as an evidence and witness: but he bringeth home a promise to the heart, some absolute promise or other; he 'rideth upon the wings of a promise,' as you may read in the Book of Martyrs, concerning Bilney. He is a Spirit of promise, my brethren, when he sealeth. Therefore let me tell you this, all your revelations that are without the Word, or would draw you from the Word, are naught and dangerous. We do not speak for enthusiasms; it is the Spirit applying the Word to the heart that we speak of. It is not to write new Scripture, to make words, to be guided by the Holy Ghost without the Word. No, we detest all such; but it is to draw you to the Word; he fasteneth the Word upon your hearts, sealeth you by a promise; therefore he is called a *Spirit of promise*.

There is one thing more that I must make an end of; it was necessary to open these truths unto you, for I could not open the words else. The last thing he is described by as he is a sealer is, *that he is a holy Spirit*. The Holy Ghost hath put a mighty emphasis upon this, as you shall see by and by; he hath put an article upon every word, as they that understand the Greek know, it is $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ ἁγίῳ, 'sealed with that Spirit of that promise, that holy.' There is not the like again in any place. There is a special promise of him as a sealer; and he sheweth himself to be a holy Spirit, if in any work, in sealing. And, which is more, he doth not say, 'that Holy Spirit,' $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ πνεύματι ἁγίῳ; indeed we translate it so, we put holy to Spirit; but the truth is, the word *holy* cometh in divided from the other, and *promise* cometh in between, in the Greek, $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ ἁγίῳ, it is 'that Spirit of that promise, that holy.' This is the true reading of it according to the original, to shew that this title of holy is not given to the Spirit himself, but as an effect of his in sealing. It is true, indeed, he is holy in himself, and it argueth him to be so, if he make us so when he sealeth us; for look what impress is left upon the wax must needs be in the seal much more; if he make us holy when we are sealed, he himself must be holy much more originally. But that is not the aim of it, only to shew that he is holy; but to shew that when he sealeth then he works holiness; therefore the Holy Ghost here putteth an emphasis upon it, by putting to the article 'that.'

Observe from hence this, that all assurance that is true assurance, and the true seal of the Holy Ghost, it makes a man holy. If ever anything makes him holy, this doth it. Is he a holy Spirit in working faith? Doth he purify your hearts by believing? He will purify your hearts much more when he sealeth you, when he works joy in believing, unspeakable and glorious.

Yea, my brethren, God doth not give this promise of his Spirit as a sealer till a man be very holy. John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' God doth not put these cordials into a foul stomach; and when a man hath these, they make him wonderful holy. Take the apostles for an instance. The

apostles, as I told you, were believers, they had a promise of the Holy Ghost as a sealer and a Comforter; but they were to wait for it, as you read in Acts i. 4. Now all the while they waited for it, what did they? They continued all the while, till they had it, in prayer and supplication; the text saith so; they were exceeding holy, especially before. Well, when they had it, how holy did it make them! It is of purpose made the preface to the Book of the Acts. You see how full of boldness they were, how full of zeal, because full of the Holy Ghost, and full of the joy of the Holy Ghost. The apostles were poor low Christians as any are, almost. When Jesus Christ was to die, how sleepy were they! When Christ was administering the sacrament to them, and told them what he should suffer, they talked presently 'who should be the greatest amongst them.'

Thus carnal were they, they had not received the Spirit as a sealer; but when once they had received him as a sealer, read the story of the Acts, read their Epistles, and see what a spirit of boldness and zeal they had. 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' It is a new conversion, it will make a man differ from himself in what he was before in that manner almost as conversion doth before he was converted. There is a new edition of all a man's graces, when the Holy Ghost cometh as a sealer. Self-love bustleth before, and keepeth a coil to secure itself; but when once self-love is secure, and the love of God is shed abroad in a man's heart, it makes a man work for God ten times more than before, or else at least more kindly. I know there are ways wherein the soul can glorify God more, in a way of recumbency, when he hath not assurance, by submitting himself to God whatsoever becometh of him, and by pure trusting of God, though he know not whether he will save him or not, which is the greatest trust in the world. But yet in matter of holiness and obedience, the assurance of the love of God, when it is shed abroad in the heart, will constrain a man, as the apostle's phrase is. 'He that hath this hope,' he speaks of assurance in that 1 John iii. 3, 'purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' My brethren, it is the next thing to heaven, therefore it must needs make a man heavenly. If there were nothing but self-love in a man, it is true he would abuse it when he hath assurance; but when this love shall stir up love to God, and bring a greater increase of love to God above a man's self, how will that work! I appeal to you, good souls, if Christ do but look toward you a little, how holy doth it make you! Much more, then, when the Holy Ghost is poured out upon you, and when you are baptized with the Holy Ghost as a Comforter. Look, as when the sun cometh near to the earth, then is the spring; it was winter before; so when the Holy Ghost cometh in this manner upon the heart, it was winter before, but it will be spring now.

My brethren, to end this, therefore all those comforts,—mark what I say, try yourselves, and try others by it,—all those revelations and comforts that make men loose and unholy, unclean and carnal, are not these comforts of the Holy Ghost. I confess, a holy man may, when they are gone, abuse the remembrance of them; but while they are upon the heart, they do carry a man's soul in all up to God. The apostle Jude doth not know how to speak words bitter enough against those men that turn the grace of God into wantonness. 'They are ordained of old,' saith he, 'to this condemnation.' Read how bitterly he speaks of such men from the third verse to the end of his epistle; especially when men shall be loose in their opinions, as he saith, 'corrupt themselves' in what they know naturally to be sin. My brethren, he is a holy Spirit, nothing is more opposite to this holy Spirit than looseness, than uncleanness, and such sins are. 'If we say,' saith he, 1 John i. 6.

‘that we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie.’ What doth he mean by fellowship here? He meaneth assurance plainly. These things we write to you, that you may know ye believe in the Son of God; (it is the scope of that epistle,) he that saith he hath fellowship with God, and walketh in darkness, lieth; let him be what he will. The apostles are vehement, their spirits are up against no men more. He is a holy Spirit of promise that sealeth men to salvation.

Let this therefore be made a motive to seek it at God’s hands; urge him with this, besides his promise; tell him it will make you holy. It is a great motive to seek it, it is a motive to you to seek it, and it is a motive to you to urge God to obtain it.

I conclude with this: a seal hath two ends and uses, the first is to assure and certify, and the other is to stamp an image; for so always a seal doth. Now they are both here. He is called the Spirit of promise, because he bringeth home the promise to a man’s heart and assureth him of an interest. He is called the Holy Spirit of promise in sealing, because he stampeth the image of holiness upon you, and makes you more holy than before.

So you have the meaning of these words, ‘In whom ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,’ with all those concurring scriptures that were necessarily to be brought for the opening of them.