

THE SECOND SERMON ON EPHESIANS III. 16-21.

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

It is the prayer of the Apostle Paul, according to the elevation of his own experience, which he wisheth and prayeth that all saints may be brought unto, that with all saints you may be 'able to comprehend what is the length, and breadth,' &c. There are several petitions, and you need seek no connexion of them one with another, as you do not in the Lord's Prayer; they are as pearls upon a string.

The Apostle doth involve and enwrap into this prayer here the principal interests and efficacies of all three persons, and what they do for us after our conversion. Here is the Spirit, and what he is principally to do for us: ver. 16, to 'strengthen us in the inner man with might by his Spirit.' Here is what more properly concerns Jesus Christ to do for us: it is 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Here is what concerns the Father: 'that you may be rooted and grounded in love,' in his love, 'and may be able to comprehend with all saints the height,' &c. I understand these words to belong to the Father, because it follows, 'that ye might know the love of Christ.' And there is the height of all, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: 'that you may be filled with all the fulness of God,' and that which is in God. That is the first observation; it comprehends all three persons.

I put it in, it is what they do for us after conversion; for when he says, 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,' he doth not mean that you are to be converted, but he supposeth an inner man; it is not the union with Christ, but Christ after dwelling in us, it is what is done for us after conversion. He prays for men supposed already converted; he prays for them, and all saints, who are already saints. So as this thing concerns men converted already.

The third is, he prays for such things as are attainable in this life. Why? 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Faith is not in the other life; Christ doth not so dwell here in our hearts, neither are we so rooted in love against all doubts and diffidences of the love of God towards us. And this that is the last, to be 'filled with all the fulness of God;' there is a forerunner of what is in heaven in the hearts of believers here.

Fourthly, Observe that they are the highest things attainable by Christians. Paul prays here according to the utmost latitude he would have Christians attain unto, when he prays here that they may comprehend with

all saints the height, &c. His meaning is not that all saints did attain it, but he prays that they may attain it; to enjoy all the fulness of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is the highest thing in heaven, when God shall be all in all; it is a thing beyond the love of God and the love of Christ, it comes after all; it is the highest thing he prays for, yet attainable. And because it is the highest he could ask, therefore it is he concludes his prayer thus: 'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think, according to the power,' &c. The meaning I take to be this. He here asks such high things for you, as are beyond the thoughts, the ordinary thoughts of Christians; he doth not intend to ask heaven now, but to ask what is in this world to be given, and they are so great things as you need go to a God that is able to do above what you are able to ask or think, in the abundance of his grace; above all you are able to think by what experiences you yet have had and ordinarily have attained unto. It is as if he had said, There are things attainable comprehended in what I have prayed for beyond what you think, and beyond what I have asked, and yet they are attainable.

Fifthly, They are attainable by all saints, though not attained. Therefore he prays that they may 'comprehend with all saints;' not that they do, but that they may: and therefore they are attainable.

The use of these animadversions or observations.

First, It is matter of comfort. Most saints will say, I have not the experience of these things in that height he speaks of. But thou mayest be a saint notwithstanding.

Secondly, Another is a use of provocation, that we would set ourselves to seek God for these things. In respect of spiritual attainments that we never thought of, we content ourselves, and think it a great matter to be in a state of grace, and to have an interest in Christ; but be not so content, but ask for things that are above what you are able to ask or think: so doth the Apostle here. I have done with the general.

I come to the second petition, ver. 17, 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' This I would open as my present task and work; I shall do it by degrees; attend from one step to another.

There may be these questions made upon it:—

Quest. 1.—Why doth (he mentions the three persons, as you heard) why doth he not say, That the Spirit may dwell in you by faith? that God the Father may dwell in you by faith? He ascribes that as more proper to the Spirit, that he strengthens them in the inner man; but when he comes to Christ's part, 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith:' why are faith and Christ thus coupled?

The answer is easy. It is because Christ is appointed between us and the Father as the means by whom and through whom he conveys all to us, and that through faith. Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,' &c. He hath set him forth, and there he is for you to exercise your faith upon. As he hath ordained Jesus Christ to be the great medium or means betwixt us and himself, so he hath ordained faith as the principal instrument in us to treat with Christ. Look in Acts xx. 21: 'Testifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' You see that conversion, or turning the soul, that is attributed to God, to him as the object of it especially; but faith is pointed to Jesus Christ. 'Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.'

I will not enlarge further upon this than thus. Brethren, when the soul turns to God, the orderly method is that it should go to Jesus Christ, immediately and first to him, and through him to God, and in him to God, for pardon, and all else. John xiv. 6, 'No man comes to the Father, but by me,'—they are places well enough known to you,—therefore in John vi. 45, 'They shall be all taught of God' to come to me, says our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Father, when he means to save a soul, directs that soul to his Son; the soul comes humbly before God the Father, and God the Father says, Go to my Son; he secretly teacheth the soul. 'No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. It is written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of God. Every one therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.'

Brethren, it is certain that of all things else, we in our own natural dispositions are most remote in going to Christ. We go to the Father, and to God; that all nations do by a natural instinct; they have in their hearts some knowledge of a God, and will run to their own performances, and they will turn to God, and leave their sins, and set up duties that God requires, which they have omitted, but still they will not go to Christ till the Father put an instinct into them. Why did the beasts go into the ark? God put an instinct into them, that they should go by couples; so God puts an instinct into the soul to go to Christ: and hence, he that hath heard and learned of the Father, comes to me, says he. And therefore faith and Christ are coupled, as you see, and yoked in this place. And when the soul hath come to Christ, by observing and seeing, as Joseph's brethren did the countenance of Joseph, what his countenance is, what his entertainment is, how he looks upon them: 2 Cor. iv. 7, therein we see 'the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.'

That is the answer to the first question, Why faith and Christ are thus coupled together in a more immediate conjunction, that when he would pray, that he say, 'that Christ may dwell in the heart by faith?'

Another question is, How Christ is said to dwell by faith, and how the Holy Ghost is said to dwell?

But a second thing I would speak to, is this: What is this same dwelling in Christ by faith, and the extent of it?

Truly, brethren, I shall answer it at last more fully. In the meantime, it is not justifying faith only; when we hear of Christ and faith, presently we think it is putting forth an act of justifying faith. No, brethren, it is not so here, Christ doth not dwell in us only, nor most properly, by faith justifying. It is called justifying faith because it justifies; but this is a dwelling, Christ dwelling. Christ justifying us is but one act, or one benefit which he bestows; but here is a dwelling, and this extends further. The Apostle supposeth the soul justified, but that he may dwell. John xv. 3, 4, 'Now are ye clean through the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you.' *Abiding* here in John, and *Christ dwelling* in Paul, are all one. Says he, 'You are clean;' that is, You are now, through my grace and Spirit put upon you, purified by faith, you are regenerated, and it hath been wrought much by my word that I have spoken to you. What remains? All the rest of your lives to dwell in me, and I to dwell in you. 'Abide in me, and I in you.' Now that you are thus made clean, that is the next thing you are called upon to do

My brethren, you must know there is a twofold union with Christ, and Christ with us:—

1. *A relative union;* that is, whereby he takes upon him the relation of

being a husband, and to be one with us all sorts of ways, which the relations of unity do express. And this union is fully and completely done when first we are turned to God, and when Christ first takes us, as ever it shall be. Your relation doth not increase, it hath not degrees; your union with Christ, that he is one with you, and you with him, in respect of the relation to him, is complete. As in marriage, you know that persons, before they come to communion one with the other, are as much man and wife as ever they shall be, for the relation; but then he takes her home to his own house, and dwells with her, forsakes father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and, as the apostle Peter says, they dwell together. Just so it is here; the relative union whereby Christ is one with us, and we with him, as man and wife, as all relations else that speak oneness, is full and complete at first. When you are in heaven, you are not more in Christ than when first turned.

2. But after he hath taken you, there is both a *substantial union* and a *communicative union*, which is expressed here by indwelling, whereby he communicates to you all those things which the relative union serves for. A man is married but once, but they do communicate one with the other all their lives, dwelling together, being helps one to the other, being one flesh, &c. This gives some light to John xvii. 22, 23, 'The glory thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be perfect in one.' Perfect in one! not till they are in glory. So then the communication of holiness, and the communication of glory, are but still consummating that union which the relation first brought in. So then, you may understand what it is for Christ to dwell in the heart. Take the first, it is for him to communicate all good things that the Father hath appointed him to bestow upon us; but then, secondly, it imports that we receive them by faith, and by faith fetch them from him. This is the ground why it is called an indwelling, and what is meant by it.

The next question will be, What faith is towards Christ, by which he dwells in us, as the apostle here prays?

Brethren, it is not faith justifying only; I do not find that Christ is said to dwell in us by that, though it is part of it; but it is that faith wherewith we any way deal with Christ, for anything whatsoever. Faith in Christ is not only faith justifying; faith hath to do with Christ for a multitude of things to be communicated to the soul besides justification. I use to say there are three things adequate one to the other. There is God the Father's grace bestowing, Jesus Christ's redemption meriting and bestowing, and there is faith in us to apprehend and apply all these. These three are adequate, that is to say, of like extent in the subordination of the one to the other. For example, all that was in God's heart to bestow, all grace, of what kind soever, that Jesus Christ was made the instrument of purchasing; there is not anything which God the Father means to bestow, but God the Son hath purchased it, and serves God and his purposes in bestowing it upon us: so as there is not that thing in the heart of God to be given to us, but Jesus Christ answerably procures it, and endows us with it. So that Christ is adequate to all God's purposes whatsoever. Then come we to ourselves. There is a little principle called *faith*, which goes out of itself both unto God and unto Christ; and—mark what I say—all that ever Jesus Christ purchased, and that Jesus Christ shall bestow on us, faith is the instrument that shall receive it, and go to Christ for it. There is not that thing in the heart of God but Christ hath purchased; there is not that thing Christ hath purchased and means to bestow, but faith is the instrument to apprehend

hend and apply it. Now justification is but one piece, but there are many things, I know not how many things else, which Christ hath to bestow upon us besides justifying us; and we have a principle, namely, faith, in us, that serves not only for justifying, but sanctifying, for strength, obedience, everything. Hence then it is not only faith justifying, but faith upon Christ all sorts of ways; faith answers to the whole of Christ, and it is not only faith justifying, but faith in the whole extent of it, wherein we do receive, or may receive, anything from Christ, and thereby he dwells.

The next question is, What is it to have Christ thus dwell in the heart by faith?

Supposing faith taken in this large sense, I shall answer two ways:—

1. By the reality of the thing.

2. By the metaphor of dwelling.

First, By the reality of the thing. Take it as the Apostle prays for it, and he prays for the highest, it is to have a spiritual sight and knowledge of Christ, which makes him present to the soul, whole Christ, and especially his person, and with him all that we know of him, or hear of him, as occasion is to make use of it; which sight and knowledge doth withal let Christ down into the heart, and affects all there, takes possession of the heart, and doth this in a constancy; this, as Paul prays for it, is the indwelling of Christ by faith. I shall speak to every one of these.

First, It is to have Jesus Christ continually in one's eye, an habitual sight of him. I call it so, because a man actually thinks not always of Christ; but as a man doth not look up to the sun continually, yet he sees the light of it, so here faith, in John vi. 40, is called the seeing of Christ: 'Every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him.' And our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, speaking of himself, says, Psalm xvi., 'I have set the Lord always before me.' So therein ye should carry along, and bear along in your eye, the sight and knowledge of Christ, so as still there is at least a presence of him accompanies you which faith makes.

Secondly, It is a spiritual sight of him, it is to know him as the truth is in Jesus, really, that makes faith to differ from all the faith that is in the world.

Thirdly, It is whole Christ to dwell, and the whole of him, to dwell in you by faith; it is Christ in the text, not Christ as justifying or dying only, but the whole of him; for there is that in faith that is capable to take in the whole of him, and for him to affect the heart accordingly. There is a parallel scripture to this, Gal. i. 16, 'When it pleased God to reveal his Son to me.' For Christ the Son to reveal himself to a man, it is for the whole of himself to dwell in the heart by faith. It is not only revealing Christ to me, but it is revealing Christ in me. Oh, it hath been a vain and wicked imagination, that every man hath a Christ within him, only it is not revealed, and the work of salvation is but revealing what is in the heart already: whereas for Christ to be revealed in us, is for Christ to be so revealed as to be in the midst of us, and for Jesus Christ to dwell in the heart continually, receiving in abundance of him; and to have the image and representation of all he is, and that I know by him, in my heart; and it is whole Christ, not one piece of Christ. Brethren, the whole of Christ, and not one piece of him only, all his words, and all his speeches, is Christ dwelling in you by faith; you receive all them, it is whole Christ.

Fourthly, It is all of Christ, all about him. You read of a great many things of Christ, of his dying, rising, how he walked, what he is to his people in his relations, in his dealings. If faith hath Christ present with the soul,

and knows but any one thing, more and more of Christ, thereby is Christ said to dwell in the soul, by letting him into the soul and into the heart, and affecting the heart with him. Saith the Apostle, Gal. iv. 19, 'I am in travail with you till Christ be formed in you.' He speaks it of the point of justification. Christ justifies by restoring their faith to that again, and drawing their hearts to seek it in Christ: this is Christ formed in them, for that thing to take my heart and possess my soul, is for Christ in and by that particular thing to dwell in me. John xv., 'If you abide in me, and my words abide in you,' &c.; abiding is dwelling. Let him dwell and have a power upon my soul, this is for Christ to abide; every beam of Christ is Christ dwelling himself, being present by faith to the soul.

Fifthly, When Christ, and all of Christ, every beam of him, is not only known, but takes and affects my heart. You see the heart is made the subject of Christ's dwelling; it is not to dwell in the notion, in your brains. You have no more of Christ dwelling than as your hearts are affected. This is express, 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all, beholding with open face the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.' First, there is spiritual beholding; he speaks of Christ: and of what of Christ? Not only of his person, but of all that is to be known of Christ. Adam's graces had not glory, but all of Christ hath. It is such a beholding as, letting Christ and his glory into the soul, doth change it, turn it, leave the impressions upon a man; and this is done by the Spirit of the Lord. By the Spirit of the Lord, the Holy Ghost is not meant; for he said in the words before, 'The Lord is that Spirit.' Christ himself is, and he by his force and power, when he comes into the soul, doth change it, fill it, quicken, strengthen it, and leaves impressions upon it. As the burning-glass contracts all the beams of the sun to a point, but it is the beams of the sun that sets on fire the cloth, so it is the Spirit of the Lord that fires our hearts. Thus to know Christ is to dwell in him.

Lastly, I said in a constancy; that is it Paul prays for, the very word 'dwelling' imports so much. What! by faith as sleepy, idle? No, it is by faith as acting. What! to possess him by fits? No, to enjoy him, and to have the heart taken with him, for some constancy. The expressions for 'dwelling' in Scripture are plain. 'Abide in me,' says he; do not stir out of doors from me, for I dwell in you; do you 'abide in me, and I in you.' Jesus Christ is ordained to be—if we had faith enough to keep him in our hearts—a constant dweller by faith, and he dwells actually. 'We will come and make our abode with him,' says he, John xiv. 23.—By this you have explained what it is for Christ to dwell in the heart by faith.

To give you some particulars:—

First, Take the person of Christ, to have a sight of his person, to have that along in the preciousness of it, in the valuation of it. I have seen the King of Glory, saith Isaiah. He speaks it of Christ. To have Christ dying, and Christ rising, and Christ ascending, and not only so, but Christ himself. Brethren, the intercourse between this indweller and our souls is between persons, those that dwell in the same house, the familiarity is between persons; therefore our eyes are to him. 'To you he is precious,' saith he; John xiv., 'I will manifest myself to him.' That is one particular.

This is attainable, nay, it is the strength of the import of Christ's dwelling by faith, as you heard out of the 16th Psalm, 'I will always set the Lord before me.' This should so take the heart, that your souls should always have the impression, the image of the grace of that person, of his meekness, holiness, fear of the Lord. He was quick in understanding, discerning what

was the will of God, and what not ; he had the fear of God upon him, he was aiming and seeking the glory of God continually. These were the graces of his person. To have the impressions of these graces left upon the soul, this is for Christ to dwell in you by faith. You shall not need to be told Christ was meek and lowly ; no, this is more than a sermon concerning Christ.

Again, It is to know Christ in all his work of mediation, what he did : that he was circumcised, that he was derided, crucified, died, rose again, ascended, sits in heaven ; faith taking all these things of Christ, if it be high, raised, spiritual faith, such as Paul here prays for, it will leave the image of all these acts upon your hearts.

Brethren, though we content ourselves with an inner man, which inner man is a conformity to the law of God and his grace, such as Adam had, and such as saints under the Old Testament had ; and that it is true, and perfect, and good grace, I acknowledge ; and it is a piece of Christ, for Jesus Christ had the law written in his heart, hating sin, loving righteousness, as well as we, as Ps. xl. shews. But there comes upon the holiest conformity to the law in us, which is the new creature, a new tincture. The substance was, the conformity to the law, the holiness that is agreeable to the law ; but faith comes and reveals Christ, and God by faith reveals his Son in us ; and what then ? Whereas I had hatred to sin before, I looking upon Christ crucified, I die to sin, upon the faith and consideration of it. Here hatred of sin is now dying with Christ after the similitude of his death. Here what Christ did by way of mediation for us leaves impressions and frames the heart accordingly. Faith should be so powerful that we should no sooner think of Christ's dying but lusts should die : in like manner, that Jesus Christ rose, that when I consider that Jesus Christ rose again for me,—Christ is risen alive, as the primitive Christians used to say,—that therefore the soul should be moved to live in newness of life, finding a virtue to come from the thoughts thereof. Here faith brings in by spiritual sight the resurrection of Christ, leaves impressions suitable ; and the image of these things are wrought in the soul, and become motives to a man to die to sin and rise to holiness.

O brethren, that all of Christ were but turned into our hearts, still as we know him, and think of him ; no sooner to think of his death, but to die withal to the world ; no sooner to think of his being crucified, but to find lusts tortured and shrinking : so no sooner to think of Christ circumcised, but to cast off the foreskin of your heart, which is self-love. So as not only a conformity to the law may appear in it, but that Christ should come over again with a new image of his, in all things whereby we may be affected of him.

Further, if you grow up to assurance,—for here he prays for such as are rooted and grounded in the love of God,—let assurance of these things come in, that Christ did all this for me ; and then let the soul deal with Christ about every particular of him, in their kind, as done for it. And, oh, how powerfully will every particular affect the heart, with suitable reflections answering thereunto ! The love of Christ shewn in every particular, will constrain us into affections correspondent thereunto. Such a faith, working by love, will work, directly and naturally, dispositions towards Christ in the heart.

Now faith of assurance will be able to apply all that ever Christ hath done, as done for itself. Such a one will run over all the Scriptures again and again ; and when there he finds Jesus Christ died for sinners, This is for

me, saith he; God laid the iniquities of us all upon Christ, and I am one of the number; he bore my iniquities, God laid them all upon him. Jesus Christ is risen, this he did for me, that I should rise in newness of life here; and in the meantime he is gone to heaven, and there he keeps a place for me. And this way of application I understand to take up much of Paul's sense in that Gal. i., 'He revealed his Son in me;' I know all he did was for me. And this application of Christ you find in Gal. ii., 'I live, yet not I, but Christ in me, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

And if you obtain this kind of application of Christ by way of assurance, it will cause Christ to dwell in you, and yourselves to dwell upon Christ to purpose. You shall not need to force your thoughts into the meditation of him, but it will cause your thoughts to dwell upon Christ to purpose, that hath done thus and thus for you; and that continually your whole life in the flesh, as Paul there, will be your living by faith on the Son of God.

Thus I have instanced in some particulars how far off are we Christians in this age from what was in the hearts of those times, and was in this great saint's experience, who prayed for all saints after this rate, to the end of the world.

Although we have not attained all this, yet let us seek after these things, to attain them. Let us not content ourselves that Christ is ours, as to our state; but let us seek that he may operatively dwell in us thus by faith. This we should pray for, this we should contend after. It is in this life to be had, and that in some constancy, else he would never have prayed for it thus. Do not content yourselves that Christ hath a relation to you, but seek this completive communicative oneness, which is the filling up of that relation.