SERMON XXVII.

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, &c.

—VER. 19, 20.

For the opening of these words, I have despatched two things already. Whereof the first is, that they are meant and intended principally by the Apostle of the power that God putteth forth in the work of conversion, or quickening us when we were dead in sins and trespasses, as himself interpreth it in the chapter following, from the 1st verse to the 11th.

The second thing that I have already despatched in opening of these words is this, what it is in the work of conversion that draweth forth and requireth the manifestation of so great a power; ‘the exceeding greatness of his power.’ I shall repeat nothing of these.

In the third place, I entered upon this, to shew you what was the occasion of the mistake, as I apprehend it, why that it is denied by some that so great a power as there is mentioned is not needful to convert men unto God.

The ground of this mistake I resolved much into this: that there are indeed inferior workings of the Holy Ghost, wherein so great a power is not manifested; not such a power as raised up Christ from death to life. There are workings of the Holy Ghost upon corrupt nature, wherein he works but upon the common principles that are in corrupt nature already, and he doth proportion and apply those workings to the liberty of man’s will exceeding much, he doth but strive with them, that oftentimes they do resist them, and yet they close with them; yet because he works but upon flesh, it remaineth flesh still. Their turning to God, if I may call it so, is but a fruit of the flesh, and therefore withereth and decayeth as all fruits of the flesh do. There is indeed an under work of the Holy Ghost which men fall from, wherein God doth not put forth, in the manifestation of his power, so great a power as this here mentioned. And, my brethren, although the preservation of man’s natural liberty of his will be the great armoury whence all the arguments are fetched to shew that the power of God in conversion is not infallible, yet the groundwork which occasioneth and strengtheneth men in this dispute—a real experience, which the most men’s hearts that live under the gospel, more or less, can seal to—is this, that there are workings upon their hearts which they oftentimes do resist, which have higher effects in some than in others. Some are so far overcome as to close with them, and yet because flesh is only wrought upon, it remaineth flesh still; hence they fall away; and these workings men take for all the work of conversion, therefore they deny any further power in a further work.

Now, the scope of my undertaking is this. It is not to discourse so much of the work itself, and of the particular differences between a true work and a false, or rather an under inferior work of the Spirit and that which putteth a man into the state of grace; as it is to shew the different make or workmanship, the different woof, or the different power rather, that goeth to these two works. And to handle this I judged not impertinent to the text,
for when he saith, 'the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the might of his power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead;' he seemeth to make a kind of difference from all other workings that are upon the hearts of other men.

These inferior workings of the Holy Ghost upon the hearts of men, the highest of them that are mentioned in the Scripture are in Heb. vi., from the 4th verse and so on. He speaks of men enlightened, that taste of the powers of the world to come, and are partakers of the heavenly gift, and taste of the good word of God, if they shall fall away; he makes a supposition of it. And you shall find it likewise in the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii., Mark iv., Luke viii. There is the stony ground that received the word with joy, and there is the thorny ground that held it out in persecution.

For the understanding fully my scope, what I aimed at, to clear my meaning concerning these inferior works of the Holy Ghost upon men's hearts, I did the last time give you two premises.

The first was this: That the Holy Ghost in his working,—being a free agent, for he worketh according to his will; so saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 11, 'There are diversities of operations, but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, according as he will;'—though there be the same omnipotent power, that is, for the root of it, in all the works the Holy Ghost doth, for all are works of omnipotency in that sense; yet compare work with work, there is a greater manifestation of power in one than in another, according as he willeth; as, though his mercy be the same he sheweth to all mankind, to all his children,—it is the same mercy in God, and there is no difference, take mercy in the root of it, as it is an attribute of God,—yet in the manifestation of it, he sheweth more mercy to one man than another, to godly men than to wicked men, upon whom yet he sheweth a great deal of mercy.

The second premise I gave was this: That seeing he works according to his own will, and proportioneth his work accordingly, he meaneth to try conclusions with corrupt nature in all things where he doth not mean to convert. He will try how far corrupt nature will be raised and elevated to good, and yet not changed, and will therefore proportion his working accordingly. He tried, as I shewed before, how far the corrupt nature of man would go under the mere light of nature; so he did in Socrates. He tried how far corrupt nature would go under the mere light of the law; so he did in Paul. And he trieth how far corrupt nature will go, being assisted,—yet remaining corrupt, take in that too,—under the gospel; as in these, Heb. vi., and the parable of the sower. Which he doth to convince all mankind of that weakness and impotency that is in corrupt nature to attain to true good of itself; that when he shall carry it on to all the good it is capable of, yet it falleth short of that true good that is saving, all might see their own weakness and fly unto Christ. This is intimated as the reason in Rom. viii. 3, 'What the law,' saith he, 'could not do, through the weakness of the flesh.' Men are apt, corrupt nature is, to boast they can do something. God trieth the weakness of it, and how is it tried? By nothing more than this: saith the Holy Ghost, I will assist you, I will help you thus and thus far, and yet all that help, if I will not put forth more, shall be but weak through the corruption of your flesh, it shall not be able to save you. That was the second premise.

These two things being premised, I come to particulars of this great point in hand, which is this: That there is an under work of the Spirit of God, in
which, compare work with work, there is not that exceeding greatness of power shewn as there is in true grace. What power is shewn in working true grace I have shewn formerly; I must not now repeat it. Compare, I say, work with work, for that is the state of the question, and there is not that proportionable measure of power put forth—manifested, I mean, take that too—in the one as there is in the other.

There are two parts of corrupt nature, and so there are answerably two parts of the image of God, or rather of the work of grace upon us. There is subduing corruption, and there is a quickening us to good, a raising of man's nature to what is good, to what is holy. Now there is an under work, an inferior work of the Holy Ghost, of a lower alloy, wherein—

First, He subdueth corruption by restraint, keepeth it in, which yet ariseth not to a killing of corruption; there is a driving in of the disease, but he doth not take it away. I expressed this in my last; I shall not need to repeat it. Then, secondly, in raising up of corrupt nature to good, there is a working upon it by way of assistancy; he joineth with corrupt nature, elevateth it, when yet he doth not work in it in new vital principles of life. And merely to elevate and assist it requireth not so much power, or at least so much power is not manifested, compare work with work, as there is in putting in of a new principle of life. For example, suppose a dead body lay here before us, you might chafe it and bring heat into it. Let an angel come and take up that body, it shall speak, it shall walk, it shall, by an assistance which he putteth into it, perform all the actions of life; yet the body is dead still. So doth the Holy Ghost join with corrupt nature; he raiseth it up to good, to much good, yet the heart remaineth dead, because he doth not put in a new principle of life, which is the thing in the text; for he saith it is the same power that raised Christ from death to life, putteth a new vital principle in him. That was the first thing I shewed, and I was large upon it.

The second particular of the demonstration concerning the Holy Ghost's working good in the hearts of wicked men, in men remaining still in the state of nature, to shew that it is not the same power manifested that is manifested in converting truly and savingly, was this: That all the workings of the Holy Ghost in inferior works are but by improving the principles that are in nature already; by adding to them, but raising and winding up to a higher key what is in the heart already without putting in a new creature; and so it is but by way of eduction—that I may speak as philosophers do—out of principles there already; ex potentia materiae, as they say, out of the power of the matter that is wrought upon; the seeds, the principles are there already; or, if you will, winding up of those principles, it is all one. But in a saving work there is a putting in a new principle, and so ariseth to a way of creation; and therefore it is that there is that exceeding greatness of power manifested in the one that is not in the other.—And that is the thing that I shall clear to you at this time.

Consult with philosophy and divinity, and what else you will, all will acknowledge, experience will do it too, that the extracting of anything out of principles already, winding them up, stretching them, and not adding new, is not a work of that difficulty answerable to a new creation. As, for example, to beget a beast, and to beget a man. To beget a beast, there is, as some say, but the raising up of those principles that are in the seed of such a creature to a sensitive soul, through natural heat, a boiling them up to life; for what is the soul of a beast? It is but the spirits of the elements, it is but a bodily thing, and therefore of beasts it is said their soul is in their
blood, because the spirits run in the blood, and that is their life. But if a man come to be begotten, there must be a new soul from heaven put in. There is not only an extraction, a winding-up of the spirits of the elements to a soul of sense, which is common to us with beasts, but there is a putting in by God a new soul, a reasonable soul, transcendent above all the workings of sense. Therefore, Heb. xii. 9, he calleth God the Father of spirits, in opposition to other fathers, that are but fathers of our bodies. The soul of man is immediately created and infused by God.

Now then, all creation, we say, is *independenter a subjecto*; it is a work that doth not depend at all upon a subject; it is not to work upon principles already, to wind up them; but creation is out of nothing. Therefore creation is incommunicable to any creature; God never used any creature to create, but he hath used the power of a creature to work upon the power of the matter, to stir up principles already in nature, and to beget something beyond what was in it at first. As, for example, to clear it yet further, the sun in the summer falleth down with the beams of it upon mud; there is a natural power accompanyeth the beams of the sun so to heat with such a kindly warmth those principles that are in the mud that a living creature is begot: for you may see in mud a great many such things crawling that have life in them. This is but merely winding up the spirits of the elements that are in the mud already, and these philosophers call *animalia ex putrida materia*, things begotten out of putrefied matter, and so come to a life. But when God came to make man, and the first beast that was, he used then no creature to do it; he did it himself immediately, he did not work upon the principles in nature in a natural way; but he wrought upon nothing, and so created.

Now, my brethren, this difference I have always thought to hold true in this very thing, that in those inferior works of the Holy Ghost which you read of in Scripture, there is indeed an educing forth of the principles that are in: the heart already, a winding them up beyond what they would be, but there is not a new creation.

I gave you before that scripture, in James i. 17, *'Every good and perfect gift,*' saith he—he speaks of regeneration plainly, read the next verse, *'Of his own will begat he us'*—'is from above.' It is *ἀπόθεσις*, wholly from above, and therefore it is a perfect work. But there are other works which are temporary works, in opposition to which James seemeth to speak, for he speaks of a temporary believer in the 8th verse, of a double-minded man, that is unstable in all his ways, a man that hath a heart, and a heart that is sometimes moved to good, but yet falleth back again. And it appeareth likewise, by the 22d and 27th verses, that he speaks this in opposition to temporaries, to inferior works of the Spirit; for, ver. 22, he speaks of men that arehearers of the word and not doers, that have not pure religion; so is his expression, ver. 27. Now here lieth the difference: the one is wholly from above; as Christ is said to be from above, so is grace. But these lower works are indeed partly from above, for if the Holy Ghost would not stir corrupt nature thus, it would not have any good in it; but they are partly from below; therefore they are not perfect gifts, for every good and perfect gift is wholly from above.

Now, my brethren, I shall explain myself, to open this thing unto you more fully, by these particulars:—

The first thing I shall say unto you by way of premise is this: That if the Holy Ghost will be pleased to work upon the heart of a corrupt man, and not change it, create nothing anew, then necessarily he must work upon some
principle that is in corrupt nature already. This all will yield. If corrupt nature remain corrupt, and the Holy Ghost mean not to change it, and yet will work upon it, he must work upon some principles that are in it already. That is the first thing.

The second thing I premise to understand it is this: There are in all men natural faculties of will, and understanding, and affections, which are both the subjects of grace, and of these inferior works too; therefore they are not the principles I mean, simply considered. A man could not love God but he must have in him the affection of love; a stone could not love God. A man could not understand spiritual things unless he had an understanding. Therefore, when I say he works upon the principles of corrupt nature already, there my meaning is not only to express this, that he works upon the faculties of the soul, and the substance is the soul in which these faculties are seated; that is not all, for that is common both to an inferior work and to this other saving work.

Therefore, thirdly, that I may speak clearly, there is in the will and understanding, besides the natural power of it, principles,—whether left in corrupt nature as relics of the image of God, as men call them, or whether put in, I will not now dispute,—but there are principles in them which the Holy Ghost works upon and windeth up as far as they will go, yet there is no true grace, no thorough change; the heart remaineth flesh notwithstanding.

Now, that which I am to do is this: I am to shew you these two things:

First, I am to shew you what these principles are that are left in corrupt nature that may be wrought thus upon. And—

Secondly, How far they are wrought upon and the heart not changed. And when I have shewed these two things, this will plainly appear unto you, that, in a lower work of the Holy Ghost, he only works upon principles there already; whereas, in a true work, he changeth the heart, putteth in new principles instead of them. The one is but improving what is there already, the other is a putting in of new.

First, Let us consider what principles there are in the heart—I mean besides mere nature, that is, understanding, will, and affections—by which a man is capable to be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, and raised up to some good. First, I will shew you what the principles are. Secondly, I will shew you plainly that the Holy Ghost may work upon these principles, and raise them up to much good without changing the heart or putting in a new.

First of all; there are in every man's understanding seeds of truth; not only of truth to understand things of this world, but there are seeds of truth to understand the Godhead, to understand many pieces of the law of God. This you have plain by two scriptures, which I will not stand long upon, for you all know them. The one is Rom. ii. 14, 15. 'The Gentiles,' saith he, 'which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts in the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.' This is by nature, you see; that he plainly expresseth; that is, it is from a man's birth. I will not say it is from nature, for it is said to be a thing written, I believe it is by the finger of God put in, for man hath lost all light. But this is in every man's nature more or less, here is one principle whereby he knoweth many things of the law. Then here is another principle in Rom. i. 17-19, and so on. He saith, there is a truth which was
withheld by all the Gentiles in unrighteousness; so he saith at the 18th verse. What truth was that? It was a glimmering light that there was a God; 'Because,' saith he, 'that which may be known of God is manifest in them;' this was not from nature, though it was by nature, for he saith, 'God hath shewed it unto them.' It was God put it in, over and above what was the due of corrupt nature; yet there it is, and it is, you see, in all men's hearts.

Now, as there are in every man's heart seeds and principles of reason, which by education and living in the world may be improved; a man may be exceeding wise, and yet wise only so far as those principles will go and be stretched, he shall be wise in his generation: so bring this light of conscience which a man hath by nature, bring it to the word of God to be improved, it will be mightily enlarged; and yet still all the light that is added to it by the word will be but of the same kind; it will not rise to grace, to a new principle, it is but enlarging the old. As for example, take the Jews; the Apostle in Rom. ii., after he had shewed in ver. 14 what the light of nature is, in the 17th verse he saith, 'Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, an instructor of the foolish, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.' Here you see that if the light of nature be brought to the law of God, it is mightily improved. A man by nature hath some light that there is a God, let that light be brought to the law and he will be confident; he hath some light by nature about duties belonging to God, bring that light to the law and he will have a form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. So that those seeds of knowledge that are in the mind of a man by nature, of God and of the law, being brought to the law and lighted at that torch, his light is greater, but yet still it is of the same kind, there is but an improvement of the principles of nature.—There is one.

In the second place, there is in man a natural devotion to a deity; that is more. The heathens had it; they all would worship some god or other; though this was their fault, that when they knew God they glorified him not as God; so the Apostle saith, Rom. i. 21. You shall find in Acts xiii. 50, that there were devout women which the Jews stirred up against Paul and Barnabas. They had a devotion in them. There is a natural devotion in men; now bring that to the law, to the word of God, and it will come both to know the true God, and to have a reverence of the true God too. All this is by nature, nature improved.

Well, in the third place, there is a seed of light in the heart of every sinner, that he deserveth eternal death for his sin, and that this God will punish him. There is this light too, naturally, in every man's heart. Rom. i. 32, he speaks of the Gentiles there plainly; 'Who knowing,' saith he, 'the judgment of God,' ὄντως ἁμείημα, that they which commit such things are worthy of death,' worthy of eternal death, for it is the judgment of God; where by 'judgment,' ὄντως ἁμείημα, is evident he meaneth that part of the law whereby God is revealed as a judge inflicting punishment; the next words interpret it, 'they which do such things are worthy of death.' And so, chap. ii. 1, 2, it is evident that he goeth on to speak of the ἐγκρίνον, the sentence of God in punishing sinners. And so Aristotle useth the word in the 5th book of his Ethics; and in Rev. xv. 4 it is so used, speaking of the vials that were to be poured out; 'Thy judgments,' saith he—it is the same word—'are made manifest.'

Now, a man having that natural light in him, that there is such a God as
is angry when he sinneth, and will punish him; bring this man to the law, to
the word of God, then what followeth? Rom. ii. 1, 'We are sure that the
judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such
things;' speaking of the Jews. A man that cometh to be enlightened by
the word hath this natural principle mightily strengthened, confirmed, and
enlarged.

Then again, in the fourth place, if a man come once to see his sin, it is
natural for him to think of a mediator; to use somebody to intercede for
him to God. There is that principle in nature. For that I will give you
but a scripture or two. I instance in all that the heathens did; the heathens,
the wisest of them, they acknowledged that there was but one God, but they
said there were many that were lower gods, mediators; they were their τύμημα,
it is a notion that Mr Mead did much enlarge. The scripture I will give you
is 1 Cor. viii. 5, 'Though there be that are called gods, as there be gods
many and lords many, yet to us there is but one God, and one Lord Jesus
Christ.' They had many gods, or indeed rather one great God, and they called
all other gods but as mediators to this great God. This was by nature; they
could not tell how to go to God without lesser gods, which were their medi-
ators, for so they called their lords. Therefore Simon Magus, you shall find,
desired Peter to pray for him; and Pharaoh entreated Moses to intercede for
him. And it was usual amongst the heathens to offer sacrifices to these lower
gods, to mediate for them with the great God.

Well, in the fifth place, there is in every man's will and affections a natural
desire of happiness, of a greater good than what this world hath; for it
resteth not in anything in this world, it is like a bee that goeth from one
flower to another, which sheweth that it cannot be satisfied with anything
that is here.

There are all these principles in nature that is corrupt, and so you see the
principles; which was the first thing I undertook to shew you.

Now, in the second place, let me shew how the Holy Ghost may work upon
these principles, mightily raise them, and yet not change a man's heart; raise
them to a great deal of good, and yet all that he addeth to these is but of
the same kind; it is not of this creation, it is not grace. To make this mani-
fest unto you—

There are two sorts of men that live in the Church under the gospel, who
pretend to any good, that have not grace.

First, you have those that are a civil kind of men; that is, all that they
have to shew for their salvation is abstinence from gross sins, and they have
an ingenuity and honesty of nature, and they believe in Christ, and they
profess the religion of the State. To bring men to this, to improve the
principles in nature, so far, is a work of the Holy Ghost. But yet, my
brothers, this falleth mightily short of true grace. I will lay my foundation
in these; you shall see how far they are carried on to God.

I told you before that there is a natural light in every man whereby he
knoweth that there is a God, and being educated in the Church, he is
directed to know the true God. But this man's principle of knowledge is
the same that is in the heart of a Turk, who acknowledgeth the true God,
and doth ordinarily profess him, and his service to God is no more but
what an honest Turk doth; only here is his happiness, he is directed by his
education to the true God.

Well, a man living in the Church is enlightened by the law how to wor-
ship this God, more than what heathens are; he knoweth the Sabbath, and
the duties of public worship and private prayer. Education, likewise, and
living under the preaching of the word, teacheth him this. Now, the heathens had ways of worshipping their gods; they had prayers, and sacrifices, and fast-days: he, by his education, is directed to the right worship, and there is all the difference.

Then, thirdly, take heathens, take a Turk; there is a natural devotion, you heard before, in every man's heart: that natural devotion that is in every man's heart to a deity he bestoweth upon the true God, being directed to him by education, and worshippeth him with no more devotion than what a Turk doth his Mahomet. There is a devotion in every man's heart, which, being improved, may be raised up to the true God.

And then, fourthly, look what is the religion of the nation, he is zealous for, as all nations in the world are. Saith the Apostle, Rom. x. 2, speaking of the Jews, 'they have a zeal of God;' they have for their religion, for it is natural for every man to have so, to be zealous for that God he professeth, and for that religion he is educated in. The Gentiles had so.

Thus you see how far, in a civil man, these natural principles are improved.

Now, my brethren, the Holy Ghost falleth upon the hearts of many men living in the Church with a further work than this; the same common principles he windeth up still higher, and yet still that work falleth short of grace. There are the same false strings still, only he windeth them up to a higher key; but the strings are the same still, but as false in the one as in the other, only mightily improved and wound up.

To manifest this unto you—

I told you, first, that there is a light of conscience naturally in every man, whereby he hath a natural knowledge of the judgment of God, which being improved by education, a man cometh to know for certain that those that do such things deserve death. Now, the Holy Ghost goeth with the law of God that is preached, falleth upon a man's heart, and setteth this law home upon the conscience, and becometh a Spirit of bondage to a man. But yet he works but upon a principle of nature, improves it. So you have it, Rom. viii. 15, 'We have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear.' The Holy Ghost becometh a Spirit of bondage to a man, bindeth his sins upon his conscience. And whereas now he hath naturally a flickering light that there is a judgment of God against such sinners as he is, and having heard it out of the word, and learned it by education, he is confirmed in it so much that he knoweth for certain that the judgment of God is according to truth; yet he shifteth off this light. The Holy Ghost cometh upon him, and conscience is a tender thing; it is God's throne, and it is as tender to sparks; the Holy Ghost, I say, cometh and setteth this conscience on fire, all on a light flame. He works but upon the same matter that is in it already in all this, as he will do in hell at the latter day: he will then set all the consciences of wicked men on fire; all their sins shall be as so many barrels of gunpowder in their consciences, all on a light flame presently. And therefore, whereas he had before but a flickering light of the punishment of sin, now he feeleth it; God letteth into his conscience, which is a tender thing, scalding drops of his wrath. Here now a man beginneth to be mightily wrought upon, but yet it is but the same principle still thus wrought upon; for before natural light did but whisper, but now it crieth aloud.

Now, to do this, the Holy Ghost shall not need to infuse a new principle into you, or give you a spiritual understanding; the old understanding and the old conscience will serve to apprehend all this. 'The word of God,' saith he, 'is quick and powerful,' Heb. iv. 12. It will try and search every vein in a man's heart. He speaks it of temporary believers plainly; it is a
threatening against them, the types of whom were those that fell away in the wilderness, of whom he speaks in the verses just before. The comparison the Scripture useth will help us in this. It is in 2 Pet. ii. 22. I opened it in part in the last discourse; but that I shall quote it now for I did not open. He speaks of men that leave their sins through a great deal of light. He compareth them, first, to swine; I shewed that before; they were outwardly washed, it was but restraining of corruption. He compareth them, secondly, to a dog; ‘The dog,’ saith he, ‘is returned to his own vomit again.’ He compareth the natural conscience of a man to the stomach; do but make this stomach sick, give it but a pill or two to quicken nature, and it will vomit up all. So will a man’s conscience, if the Holy Ghost fall upon it; if he give it but two or three of those pills of mercury. The word of God is quick and powerful, no quicksilver is like it; it will make a man sick, and sick to death. Here is no new principle put in; it is a working upon the old stomach and humours thus, for though he vomit as the dog doth, yet he loveth it still. Sin and his soul are as nearly united as before; the dog returneth to his vomit again.

I might enlarge it to you by that example of Felix, that trembled when Paul discoursed of judgment to come, which I leave, because I will hasten.

Now, when conscience is thus wrought upon, and a man feeleth by a light of the Holy Ghost put into his conscience, which his conscience is capable of, what the wrath of God is, what saith the soul next? Oh for a physician! and nature itself, if it be thus wrought upon, will do this, will drive a man to the physician. ‘The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.’ You heard before, there is a natural principle in us to use a mediator unto God. Now, a man living under the gospel hath heard that Christ is the mediator; education hath taught him that, even as it teacheth a Turk that Mahomet is the mediator to God. And by the same principle that Agrippa believed Moses and the prophets, he believeth the gospel and Paul’s epistles, and there he readeth of a mediator, and that this mediator is Christ.

Now, my brethren, in this case, a man’s soul having a further light, that natural principle being further enlightened, that light of faith which he had by education being now further improved by the Holy Ghost, a man cometh to remember his Redeemer; he forgat him all his days before.

There is an excellent expression for this in Ps. lxxviii. 34, 35: ‘When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.’ That Christ which a man, before he was sick, had neglected, he would use him complimentally; but now he hath need of him, he remembereth him as never he remembered him before; he remembereth that he is his Redeemer, if ever he be saved. When men do come thus to stand in need of Christ, they consider him after a new manner, they remember him anew.

Well then, in the fourth place, the gospel that he knows doth not only reveal Christ to be a Redeemer to him to pardon his sin, but that there is a happiness which he bringeth with him. This standeth fully with a principle of nature too; for I told you there was this principle in nature to desire happiness beyond what is in this world, for no man is satisfied with what is here. All this suiteth with what is in nature, and nature improved by the light of the Holy Ghost will rise hitherto; therefore they are said to be ‘partakers of the heavenly gift;’ the heavenly gift is Christ. ‘If thou knewest the gift of God,’ saith he, John iv. And they are said to ‘taste of the powers of the world to come,’ Heb. vi. As they taste of hell, and know certainly there is a hell; likewise there being a natural principle in them to desire a
happiness beyond what is in this world, it is confirmed when they hear out of the word that there is a happiness; and there are some tastes of it too, of which this principle is capable.

Now, lay this for a conclusion, that all these principles in nature are but improved, and see how easily a man will be wrought upon. For there is in every man, besides all this, self-love, which is the predominant principle in man by nature; he loveth himself more than he loveth God; herein lieth the bottom of man's corruption,—mark what I say unto you,—that makes him flesh for all this. Now, if a man's conscience be thus awakened, he seeth a need of a physician; he seeth a happiness which cometh with him, to which a man hath a natural principle suited; the news of it is: If this conviction be wrought upon a man's understanding, self-love will strike in presently, and all the affections in a man; the whole heart will be exceedingly set on work, and carried on to spiritual things revealed in the word, though not as spiritual, as I shall shew you anon. Do but once awaken self-love, make it but apprehensive of the danger he is in of the wrath of God; make self-love apprehensive of a Saviour and a Redeemer, which now he remembereth, and seeth he stands in need of, and a happiness that cometh with him, besides the avoiding of danger; this natural principle of self-love will bustle, and set all other principles afloat, and yet remaineth unregenerate.

For the reason is this: unregeneracy lieth in the predominancy of self-love. Now, what will this man say out of self-love? Is there a physician to heal me, will he say; send for him; oh, who will help me to him! It may be he loves not the physician. It is one thing to send for him to marry him, another thing to send for him to heal one; in this extremity, self-love will make a man do the one, but it must be grace to make you do the other. It is nature doth this; 'Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life;' all that he hath, in hot blood, when he is put upon it. This is nature, and this nature stirred to spiritual things, to things out of this world, so I should rather express it.

To give you a plain scripture for it. It is Ps. lxxviii. 35, 36, compared. 'When he slew them, then they remembered that God was their redeemer;' he remembereth that Christ is his Redeemer; what followeth? 'Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth.' What is the meaning of flattering? It is this, when one seeks one merely out of self-love. You know there is amor amicitiae, a seeking of one out of friendship; and when one hath an enemy, if he have need of him he will seek him, but it is but flattery, it is out of self-love. Thus they sought after God, and remembered that he was their Redeemer. This, my brethren, nature calleth for; if a man be in any extremity, if nature be stirred, if conscience be made thus sick, nature calleth for it.

I will give you a scripture for it. Jonah i. 5, when they were all in a storm, —and men are often sea-sick at a sermon, and remain so a long while after, —what do they do? The text saith, 'They cried every man unto his god;' and, ver. 6, they awakened Jonah, and bade him arise and call upon his God, if so be that God would think upon them, that they perished not. A man's conscience being convinced that Christ is the Mediator and Redeemer, remembering him, self-love being thus stirred, will put a man upon it to seek after Jesus Christ; and, Oh, what shall I give for this physician!

Especially, in the second place, when he heareth too that Jesus Christ bringeth happiness with him. Balaam, you know, was enlightened to see the happy estate of the people of God hereafter, Num. xxiv.; then nature works this, 'Oh that I might die the death of the righteous!' There is
a principle in nature, if once stirred, that will desire this happiness for self's sake. And if but for self's sake, mark it, still a man is an unregenerate man; for the predominancy of self-love is the very bottom of original sin, whether it be turned to worldly things, or to things out of this world, it is all one. Therefore you read in John vi. 33, when our Saviour Christ had told them that he was the bread of life, and that he was able to make them happy; oh, say they, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread.' Yet he tells them, ver. 36, that they did not believe; and, ver. 41, they 'murdered at him;' and, ver. 66, 'many of them went back, and walked no more with him.'

Well, when Jesus Christ is sent for, the physician cometh to treat with the soul; he prescribeth to him, for so the word of God doth; first, saith he, you must leave these and these sins. He is sick, he hath taken a vomit, as I told you before. Well, it shall all come up. Peter telleth of some that 'escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ;' it is an expression of men that fall away, whom he calleth afterward swine and dogs, unchanged for all this, nature remaineth corrupt; yet through the knowledge of Christ, through the dictates of the holy commands of Christ, they leave these sins, refrain from what they have a mind to.

Yea, when they are thus sick they have no mind to their sins, that is more; yet it is but nature improved still. For if you should be sick in body or in old age, you will say of all your pleasures, 'We have no pleasure in them,' Eccles. xii. 1. So when a man is sick in his conscience, he is dead to all the pleasures in the world; and yet this is not mortification, the lusts are not killed; for when he grows well again, his lusts grow well with him, and gather up their crumbs.

Jesus Christ likewise tells him, the word tells him, and the ministers tell him, and good books that he reads tell him, when he is in this case, that he must fall to these and these duties, that he never practised in his life. If self-love be thus stirred by these principles of nature thus enlightened, thus wrought upon, he will do any thing; take up all sorts of purposes. I will give you scripture for it.  

Dent. v. 27, when God there had appeared to the people, and had appeared dreadfully, and their consciences were struck with the greatness of his majesty; 'If we hear the voice of God any more,' say they, 'then we shall die. Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.' They take up all good purposes of doing; and yet mark what God saith of them, ver. 29, 'O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always!' They wanted still a principle of regeneration; it was but self-love stirred that made them do all this.

And then, thirdly, that I may end this thing, in doing a man shall have a great deal of joy. For as the heathens in doing according to the light of their natural conscience, had peace, they had an excusing; so it is said, Rom. ii. 14; so if a man in this case shall fall to good duties, and reform his life, the Holy Ghost will give him joy. No man shall do any thing for God but he shall have a reward, joy to encourage him; you know the stony ground, they received the word with joy.

Now then, all nature being thus wrought upon, a man falling thus a-doing and reforming, and finding himself thus kindly used to encourage him, self-flattery in a man makes up a conclusion, that he is in a state of grace. And the principles of nature being thus wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, thus doth a man come to be a professor of religion, launcheth forth, walketh on
strongly; and yet all is but the principles of nature improved, and but an under work of the Spirit.

I have made up the demonstrations of it unto you. I will but give you some corollaries from it, and so conclude.

Corollary 1.—The first is, That, which indeed is the point in hand, if there be such principles in nature, which the Holy Ghost works with, raiseth and elevateth, so as he need not put in new principles, but only stir nature; the Holy Ghost beginneth indeed, but flesh endeth;—then, my brethren, such a work as this doth not hold proportion with what the text here speaks of, wherein a man is raised up from death to life, as Jesus Christ was; or whereby he is made a *workmanship created to good works," as the 10th verse of the 2d chapter hath it. For in all this working, if you mark it, there is but an artificial kind of working in comparison. As for example, to express the difference to you between one and the other: go take an old piece of cloth; by dressing of it you may raise a new tuft upon it out of the old piece, and it will seem new; but yet it is but the same principle newly raised up. But come to the work of regeneration, what is it? It is not a dressing of the old garment, but it is a putting off the old man, and putting on the new, that is the expression the Apostle hath, Eph. iv. 22–24, 'That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' To dress the old garment, to dress old nature and make it seem new; here is not a work now proportionable to the creation, here is but a raising up the principles there already. But to put it off, and to put on the new man in all holy and gracious dispositions suited to the spiritual part of the word; this is by creation: 'Put on the new man, which after God is created,' &c.

Here is indeed a new gilding over of the old heart, which a goldsmith, you know, can do; he hath an artificer in that, but to turn this heart into gold, as I may so express it, this is the difficulty; the base metal remaineth under all that gilt still; it is but flesh still, self-love still, and while that remaineth, the predominant principle in a man's heart is not changed. But to put in that which is more precious than gold and silver, the love of God, into a man's heart, this is that which turneth base metal into gold; it is not gilding of it over. The old principles do contribute to such a work as I have described. Take the old frame of the heart, hang some new weight upon it, as I may express it by a clock, and you may move it the clean contrary to what it went formerly: so here is but an artificer in this, hang but the consideration of hell and heaven upon corrupt nature, and self-love will move contrary to what it did. But, my brethren, it is a different thing for a man to be a *workmanship created unto good works;* to take this old frame in pieces, and put in a new workmanship 'created to good works,' to move naturally another way, as the word *created* implieth. The other is a work of *skill* rather than a work of *power,* though it is a work of great power too; for it doth but apply such considerations as shall work upon the heart, but putteth in no new principles.

In a word, such a work as this is not wholly 'from above,' as was the expression, James i. 17. It is partly from beneath, and partly from above; the fleshly will of a man, take self-love as the predominant principle in him, contributeth to this work, and the Holy Ghost only hangs a weight upon self-love, and so stirreth it; but where there is a perfect work, it is wholly from above, the Holy Ghost cometh and putteth in a new principle. Com-
pare for this but the 18th verse of that 1st of James with the 13th verse of the 1st of John, that I may express to you from the phrases used in both those scriptures the difference in these two works. Every perfect gift, saith James, is wholly from above. What is that gift that is thus wholly from above? It is regeneration; 'Of his own will begat he us,' and that by creation, 'that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures;' the choicest of the creatures; so it is in the original, ἀπὸ γενεσίν. Now compare with it John i. 13, where he speaks of true regeneration, 'To become the sons of God that believe in his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' What is that 'but of God' opposed unto? It is opposed unto three things—

First, it is not by 'blood,' those that are noble or the sons of holy men; it goeth not by blood. 'Say not, We have Abraham to our father;' that is, it is not therefore that you are godly, though God may draw election through the loins of his children.

Nor is it, secondly, of the 'will of man.' Thou art a holy man, and thou hast many children. Abraham would have Ishmael saved, 'O that Ishmael might live in thy sight!' God would have Isaac; he is not born of the will of man; Abraham could not have his will.

But here is a third thing; it is not a work of the 'will of the flesh. What is flesh? Professedly it is this: it is self-love in the height of it, when a man hath nothing in him but love of himself; it is the bottom of original sin, if you study it a thousand years. Well, there cometh the Holy Ghost upon a man's heart, and there is indeed a work partly from above, yet it stirreth but the flesh; it is partly from the Holy Ghost's stirring it, and partly from the will of the flesh stirred too. In opposition to which, saith James, 'Every perfect gift is from above;' that is, wholly from above; but these imperfect works, they work upon the 'will of the flesh,' they work upon self-love, and so far as that will carry a man to good, so far a man is carried. Whereas true grace is not a work of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God; it is wholly from above, for it deposeth the will of the flesh, deposeth self-love, and setteth a man on work from a new principle.

So I have done with the first corollary.

Corollary 2.—The second corollary is this: Go, take any man that hath never so high a work, where only the principles of nature have been wrought upon and improved, wound up to the highest; if God turn this man truly to him, there needeth as much power yet to do it, after all this that I have mentioned, as to create a world, as to raise up Christ from the dead.

To make this plain unto you.

All other kinds of workings upon the principles of corrupt nature, some say, are dispositions preparing for grace. And I will yield it thus far they are, that whenever God works upon any man, he beginneth to stir self-love first; for there is no other principle to begin withal. But let the Holy Ghost wind up all these principles in man never so far, never so high, yet if he will savingly convert that man, he must put a new principle into him; that requireth as much power as to make heaven and earth, and all the other will not contribute this to it. I will yield that such workings as these make a man nearer to the kingdom of heaven; but you shall see what Christ saith in Mark xii. 34. He speaks of an ingenious scribe; he went beyond the Pharisees, they put their religion in duties. No, saith the scribe; it lies in loving God above a man's self. 'Thou art near,' saith Christ, 'unto the kingdom of God.' But how near? Suppose there be two kingdoms, and
one man liveth in the borders of his kingdom, next the other; he is indeed  
and the other kingdom, higher than one that liveth in the head city, or  
in the heart of it. So here, this man is at the borders, at the utmost con-  
fines of the kingdom of death; but if he come to be translated into the  
kingdom of life, this an almighty power must do. Col. i. 12, 'Giving  
thanks unto the Father, which hath delivered us out of the power of dark-  
ness, and translated us into the kingdom of his well-beloved Son.' He is  
nearest indeed, but he is in the borders still.  
I will make a supposition or two unto you to explain my meaning.  
Suppose that opinion were true, I do not say it is, which some philoso-  
phers say concerning the forming of a man in the womb. They hold there  
are three souls in a man: the soul of a plant, whereby he groweth; the soul  
of a beast, whereby he hath sense; and the reasonable soul, which is put in  
over and above all these. Now, saith Aristotle, the child in the womb  
liveth first the life of a plant, and it groweth; then afterward it liveth the  
life of sense, the life of a beast; there is a sensitive soul added to that, as  
they interpret him. Yet when it is grown up this far, to bring the reason-  
able soul in requireth the almighty work of creation; it is created, and with  
creation infused, and with the infusion created. Just so it is here. If the  
Holy Ghost have wrought upon corrupt nature never so far, to bring in a  
true principle of spiritual faith, and to bring in a true principle of love to  
God above a man's self, wherein holiness lies; all this is no way conducing  
to it, it must be a creating anew, it can never be educed out of man's nature;  
no principle in man will be wound up to this; it must be, as the reasonable  
soul is, infused from heaven.  
I will give you another instance. And the instance I shall now give is  
more proper to the similitude in the text, which is an allusion to the raising  
of Christ from death to life. Go, take two dead bodies. I will give you  
instances of two dead bodies in the Scripture that were raised to life. Take  
one, just as the prophet Elisha did, 2 Kings iv., newly dead, within an hour  
after, when the soul is newly out of the body; and take Lazarus' body, that  
had been dead four days, and did stink. Take this child's body; the soul was  
newly out of it; there were a great many preparatory dispositions to a re-  
surrection, to bring life again, one would think. What was there? There  
was natural warmth left still; there was the blood remaining fresh in the  
veins uncorrupt; there was a body fitly linned in all the parts of it; yet  
for all this, if you will make this child live you must put the soul anew into  
it; that 'power that raised up Christ from the dead' must raise up this  
child newly dead. Come to Lazarus; he stinketh, the text saith; he had  
been buried four days. Then here is indeed a greater work in this respect,  
that the putrefaction is to be taken away more, but yet still there must be a  
putting in of a new life to both. And to put a new life into this dead child,  
there was as much power required,—that is, as almighty a power,—as into  
Lazarus' body that had been longer dead, though there were some disposi-  
tions in the one that made a fitness, more than in the other.  
So that still,—let corrupt nature be wrought upon, raised never so high,—  
if God will save a man, there must be a new principle put in by an almighty  
power, and all this will not help toward it, not to abate of the power.  
Corollary 3.—I come to a third corollary, and that is this: That look  
over all the scriptures where you find inferior workings which men fall from,  
and seem to be converted and fall away, you shall find in all those scrip-  
tures that those men are still unregenerate, they are but flesh. Look over  
them all.
I shewed how that corrupt nature may be thus wrought upon, remaining such; I shewed the reasons of it; you shall see the Scripture reckoneth those to be flesh and unregenerate. My meaning is not that there is flesh in them, for so it is in godly men; but that they remain still corrupt, unregenerate, unrenewed. Take that for a rule: while self-love is the predominant principle, though a man go never so far in supernatural actions, he is but flesh still.

It is a question that learned Camero starteth upon Heb. vi., 'Whether that a man enlightened, that falleth away, be a regenerate or an unregenerate man, or a third thing between them?' He dare not say he is a third thing. Why? Because then there must be a third place, there must be some third thing between the state of nature and the state of grace; but he would make him to be one that is in order to conversion, and so he is in the way of it, and so he is neither; as the embryo in the womb, before the reasonable soul cometh into it, is neither a man, nor a beast, nor a third thing, but a thing in order to be a man. But I do not suppose always that God useth such works to prepare men for grace; many a man that hath never been a temporary is wrought upon at first. So Paul was, and so the thief upon the cross, and the jailor, and many others.

Now this third thing, which I have mentioned by way of consequence from the former doctrine, tendeth to two things—

First, To answer all those places that are alleged for falling away from grace. The Scripture speaks of glorious works they fall from; but if it be manifested to you that they are all this while but flesh, then here is no falling from grace. Here is falling from the work they had indeed; but they are where they were, they are in a state of nature still.

The second thing for which I alleged the point is this,—it is the greatest comfort in the world,—you are troubled at these doctrines, many of them; comfort yourselves with this, Let them go whither they will go, let them be wound up never so far, they are but flesh, they are but unregenerate men still.

I shall make application of it by and by. But—

First, I say, I mention it to answer all those places that are urged for falling away.—There are three places in Scripture which are more eminently alleged for falling from grace; that men have true grace wrought in them, and yet fall away.

The first is in 2 Pet. ii. 20. I opened that before. I shewed they were unrenewed, they were swine and dogs, and escaped but the gross defilements of the world, not the corruptions that are 'through lust.' I shall not need to stand upon that now.

The second place is the parable of the sower, where there are four sorts of grounds; three were wrought upon by the Holy Ghost in hearing of the word. There is the stony ground that received it with joy; and there is the thorny ground, that goes further, and yet bringeth not forth fruits to perfection.

Then, thirdly, there is that place in Heb. vi. that hath troubled all men almost that have had any work upon them, where he speaks of men that were 'once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift,' &c. Now this is it I will prove, that all those that had these workings upon them were unregenerate men still; and that will be home to the point.

To manifest this unto you, I will begin first with the parable of the sower. It is in Matt. xiii., Mark iv., Luke vii. There are three sorts of grounds wrought upon, whereof the last is said to 'receive the word with a good and an honest heart;' and the other, one of them received it into a
'stony ground,' and received it 'with joy.' They allege this to prove falling away, for in the end they fell away, yet 'believed for a time.' Then there is the thorny ground; 'and the thorns grew up and choked it.'

The difference between these two grounds, in a word, is this: As I take it, the stony ground was one that was not much humbled, but when he had first news of heaven, and happiness, and promises of the gospel, having a new light opened to him, the news being agreeable to his natural principles, he runneth away with joy. The thorny ground being more deeply humbled, and having a sense of the wrath of God upon their consciences, they hold out in persecution; for all persecutions are less than that wrath they feel upon their consciences.

Now to prove that both these grounds remain still unregenerate men—

First, for the stony ground; it is evident they were unregenerate men, because that corrupt nature is compared to the stony heart. The same comparison is used elsewhere: Ezek. xi. 19, 'I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh;' that is, I will convert them. There is still a stony heart remaining, for they fall away, saith Christ, because it was sown upon stony ground. It is said, 'they had not much earth;' that is the expression, Mark iv. 5. But a stone lieth at the bottom of the earth. What is the meaning of that, 'There is a heart and a heart?' That is, there are some principles in them that are affected with the things that are good, that lie in the uppermost part of their affections, the slabby part, and they receive the word there with joy. But then they cannot deny themselves, there is a heart of stone lieth at the bottom, the stone is not taken away. Still, therefore, they are unregenerate, say I. I may compare them just to the earth in frosty weather. When the sun in the day-time thaweth a little, you shall find the uppermost part of the earth slabby, melting a little; but thrust but your finger in, it is hard underneath. Men are so far wrought upon as to have good desires and affections; for carnal principles in nature will afford thus much, when yet the heart is unchanged, it is stony still.

Then for the thorny ground; it is more evident that they are unregenerate; and if it be evident of them, it is much more of the other, for the thorny ground went beyond the other. He saith plainly of the thorny ground, that the thorns grew up together with the word; therefore their roots of lust were not grubbed up, there was a cutting off of the tops indeed, but the roots were not dug up. Read but Jer. iv. 4, and compare it with that place in the parable. Saith he, 'Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.' Here is the same expression the Holy Ghost useth, and what followeth? 'Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts.' If you mark it here, it is all one to sow among thorns, and to have the foreskin of the heart remain still. What is it to have the foreskin of the heart remaining? To be unregenerate. That man is not sanctified, is not circumcised. Corrupt nature, the power of it is not abated in him, for it is called a 'circumcision made without hands.' Now then, if an uncircumcised heart, and a heart that is full of thorns, though there be a sowing upon it,—if that be all one, then the thorny ground must needs be an unregenerate heart, an uncircumcised heart. Compare but the phrase of the prophet with that in the parable.

Come we next to the 6th of the Hebrews, and that will interpret the parable, and interpret all this. There you have mighty, glorious things spoken of; they are 'enlightened,' they 'taste of the powers of the world to come,' &c. Here is the highest kind of unregenerate men mentioned that
are in the whole Book of God, yet they are no other than flesh; there is still a thorny heart remaineth, there is but a sowing among thorns. They are still corrupt, and have not that true grace which the power of God works in men's hearts.

How do you prove this?

Read the place. When the Apostle had spoken such great things of men that fall away, what doth he say? That they might not be offended, he addeth two things. First, he doth give them a similitude to distinguish them from godly men that are truly sanctified, truly regenerate. And he giveth the very same similitude that is in the parable of the thorny ground. Paul interpreteth Christ. 'For the earth,' saith he, 'that drinketh up the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.' Here is the parable interpreted. Your good earth, what is that? The earth that doth bring forth fruit meet for the dresser, which God may relish, may delight in. Here is the honest and good heart in the parable. What is the earth that bringeth forth thorns and briers, that is nigh unto cursing if they do not repent, but those that have such dews from heaven, enlightenings, tastings of the powers of the world to come, and yet bring forth thorns? Their hearts remaining still unregenerate; they sow among thorns. Here you see the Apostle explaineth what Christ saith in the parable; and both express them to be unregenerate men.

In the second place, that he may bring it more home to them, saith he at the 9th verse, 'We are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.' He had spoken great things, about enlightenings of men that might fall away, discouraging things. Notwithstanding all this, saith he, we are persuaded better things of you. What better things? He speaks of graces, better than all these enlightenings in them, that accompany salvation, or, as the words in the original are, ἐκπλήρωσα τούτων, that have salvation in them. He that truly believeth hath eternal life. He that truly repenteth hath eternal life. But all these enlightenings had not salvation annexed to them, that is his scope; they were not saving works, they did not put a man into a state of grace, into the state of salvation. So that they remain still unregenerate; for why doth he say, We expect better things of you? Not better in the event only, for that is the only evasion that is for this; better, say they, in the event, because they fell away and the others held out. No, better things in themselves, things that have salvation in them. And he instanceth in two graces. The love of God, and of his saints. You will say these were poor things to be put in comparison with those glorious things spoken of before? Yet he doth. Read the 10th verse, 'For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love;' —this is a better thing than all those enlightenings,—'which you have shewed toward his name, in that you have ministered unto the saints.' To give a cup of cold water to a disciple in my name, saith Christ; so to do the least good to a saint in Christ's name as he is his, is more than all these enlightenings; these are things that accompany salvation, these are better things.

I could much more enlarge upon this point, to shew you that they are unregenerate men out of these places. Only observe this, which is a corollary drawn from this Heb. vi. : That saving workings, and all these inferior workings wherein a man remaineth still flesh,—for they are nothing else but a principle of nature wrought upon, he remaineth corrupt still,—are different kinds of
things. Here he expresseth them to be better things, the things themselves are better than all those enlightenings, &c.

In Luke viii. 18, you shall find that when Christ had ended the parable of the sower, how he concluded, 'Take heed therefore how you hear.' It is in the closure of that parable; take in that first, and so I will open it. 'Take heed therefore,' saith he, 'how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.' Mark it, he speaks it directly to interpret the parable. Take heed how you hear; for there are three sorts of hearers that are not good. There is the highway side, but we will not mention that. There is the stony ground, they receive the word with joy. There is the thorny ground, and they endure persecution; they have a greater work upon them, that is spoken in Heb. vi. Yet our Saviour Christ saith plainly in the closure of the parable, when they fall away that is taken from them that they seem to have. He seemeth to have true grace, but he hath it not; yea, he himself thinketh he hath it; he is not a perfect hypocrite in that sense; yet take him in comparison of what is true, it is but seeming to have, it is but a gilding over of corrupt nature, as I may speak. It doth differ from the other in kind.

I come now to the last thing, with which I conclude. They are unregenerate men. I speak this for the comfort of you that are saints, and have but the least labour of love in your hearts, the least love to the name of God. You read Heb. vi., and you are terrified at it. Read the 9th verse, 'We are persuaded better things of you.' What better things? You will expect some great thing? 'Your work and labour of love, which you have shewed towards his name,' saith he. Hast thou any love of God in thy heart, which is the root of thy actions? Hast thou love to the name of God in his saints and children? However men slight such signs as these are, the Apostle, you see, opposeth them to all enlightenings. I charge you therefore, and I charge you again, you that are poor good souls, never read the one but read the other too, and there is not a place in all the whole Book of God may comfort you more. That which always hath discomforted Christians so much, there is no place will comfort them more, if they have love of God in their hearts.

If you hear ministers preach of this, if they still make these to be unregenerate men, let them speak their worst, let them speak the highest; they cannot discourage thee, if thou have the love of God in thy heart. And if they wind it up further, believe them not, for you see the Holy Ghost saith there are better things than these. My brethren, they remain unregenerate men still; it is but working upon the principles that are in corrupt nature; it is but raising them up.

You will expect I shall give you some differences. I shall not do it. I will give you some rules. They are unregenerate men; they were never emptied of themselves, nor of their own righteousness. If not in righteousness past, yet they trust in what is to come, or what is in them at present. Phil. ii. 3, 'We are of the circumcision,' saith he, we have true grace and are truly circumcised; 'for we have no confidence in the flesh.' All the duties these men perform they do them after the flesh, in this, that they do them upon legal motives and they rest in them. It is made a difference between the state of nature and the state of grace: he that is under the law, turneth the gospel into law; he is moved to all duties by the law. The one is under the guidance of grace, the other is under the guidance and stirrings and workings of the law upon the con-
science. So he remaineth still an unregenerate man; he is married to the law still, he is not dead to the law, and emptied there, and married to Christ.

Then again, he is an unregenerate man, for self-ends are the most predo-
minant things in him. It is said likewise here in Phil. iii. 3, 'We worship
God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh.' What is it to wor-
ship God in the Spirit? The Apostle expoundeth it, Rom. vii. 6, 'When we
were in the flesh we did fulfil,' &c.; that is, when we were unregenerate, all
was lust, all was self-love, nothing else was the ground of all our obedience
to God; but now, saith he, 'we are delivered from the law, that being dead
wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not ir.
the oldness of the letter.' What is it to serve in newness of spirit, that is
opposed you see to the oldness of the letter? It is this in a word, to be
made a spiritual man, and then to serve God spiritually. What is it to be
made a spiritual man that is opposed to flesh, which all these men are, though
they are wrought never so much upon? In a word, a spiritual man is he
that hath a heart suited with spiritual things as spiritual,—I can give you
no other differences,—so the Apostle defineth it, 1 Cor. ii. 14; he that hath
a spiritual understanding to take in the spiritual excellencies of the things
revealed in the word; it is to see the excellencies of the things themselves.

You must know this, my brethren, there is a twofold goodness in the
things revealed in the word; there is a proper goodness, and there is an
accidental, a by-goodness. There is a proper goodness; as now take the
instance in Christ; there are his proper excellencies, as he is holy, as he is
righteous, as he is the Son of God, for which God loveth him; and all these
glories that are proper and respective to his person. Now, to have an eye
to see all these, and to have the heart taken with them, this is to be a spiritual
man; here is a new principle. Then there is an accidental goodness cometh
by Christ; you shall escape hell, you shall be happy; these things the word
revealeth too; there is the bread of life, and there is the sauce. Now, the
heart that is carnal, that loveth himself only, may be taken with that by-
goodness that is in Christ, but never with the goodness that is in Christ him-
self. If thou hast a heart suited to the spiritual things revealed in the word,
and thou findest thy heart taken with them, it is certain thou art not flesh,
but spirit.

Would you try your hearts then? Observe what considerations they
are that set your affections toward spiritual things, that set them afloat,
that set your will a-work. If they be spiritual considerations of the excel-
lencies of the things themselves revealed in the word, which you see and
find a suitableness in your souls to them, it is certain thou art a spiritual
man, thou art more than flesh; this is not working upon the principles in
nature, for the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit, for they
are spiritually discerned. If thou seeest them spiritually, and art affected with
them as such, certainly thou art spiritual.

I will end with a word or two. If any of you be yet troubled, you will
say, I find nothing in me, but merely these natural principles, for ought I
can perceive, stirring in me.

If thou dost not, let me but gain this of thee first. Though thou findest
no more, yet thou mayest have more. For when God beginneth to work
first upon any man, there is nothing but self-love in him, and all the motives
used in Scripture to seize upon a man's self are suited unto him. But when
he stirreth self-love thus in thee, he putteth love in thee to himself secretly,
which will stir thee though thou perceive it not. For you must know that
a great deal in a man's heart at first is but a temporary work; and as at the
first raising the bells there is such a jangling that the great bell cannot be heard, so the love of God that is the foundation of all, at the first it may not be discerned. But however let me obtain thus much, that because thou findest no more, do not conclude there is no more.

Secondly, let me give this counsel to thee more. Thou seest the defects of thine own heart fall short of any true work. Make this use of it; stand not examining thy heart, and poring upon it endlessly, but let all these drive thee to Christ, and thou shalt find that faith in him will cut the knot. Go to Christ for supply of all the things thou wantest, and trade with him still, and while thou dost thus live by faith, thou wilt find in the end the comfort of all thy graces come in before thou art aware of it.

Thirdly, in that God hath begun thus to work upon thee, it may help thy faith thus to go to Christ,—not as a thing to rest upon, but thus far,—that it is more probable he will own thee and receive thee to mercy than another. Why? Because he hath begun to work upon thee, whether it be a true work or no; I dare not say it is, neither oughtest thou, till the Holy Ghost reveal the contrary. Go therefore to Christ, and labour to make up the match with him, and to get all things agreed on; for this is the misery of it, when men hear of these things they are tossed up and down like a wild bull in a net, and know not how to disentangle themselves. Go to Jesus Christ to help thee to do it. Consider this, that it is more probable God may be more merciful to thee than to others, not for any good in thee,—that is not my meaning,—but because he hath begun to work in thee, which he hath not done in another; and work it out by faith, for you must live by that and die by that, and your comfort must come in too by that; and when you have renewed acts of faith, the Holy Ghost will come and renew the evidences of your graces to you before you are aware.