

YEA AND AMEN;

OR,

PRECIOUS PROMISES AND PRIVILEGES.

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NOTE.

'Yea and Amen' forms a moiety of a little volume, which consists of it and a kindred but independent treatise. The title-page is given below.* The 'Privileges' will appear in its proper place. 'Yea and Amen,' being based upon a passage in the Commentary which fills our third volume, has unavoidable repetitions, but of such a kind as rather to excite interest than weary. The illustrations are multiplied, and new phases of the 'precious promises' developed; while the language is unusually compact. Indeed 'Yea and Amen,' for insight into the 'mind of the Spirit,' and of the sorrowful and despondent believer, and tenderness of consolation, and pathetic pleading, must take its place beside 'The Bruised Reed.' G.

* YEA AND AMEN:

OR

PRETIOUS PROMISES,

AND

PRIVILEGES.

Spiritually unfolded in
their Nature and Use.

Driving at the assurance
& establishing of weak Believers.

By R. Sibbs, D.D. master of Katherine Hall in Cambridge, and
Preacher of Grayes-inne London.

Reviewed by himselve in his life
time, & since perused by T. G. & P. N.

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YEA AND AMEN;

OR,

PRECIOUS PROMISES LAID OPEN OUT OF 2 COR. I. 19-23.

But as God is true, our word towards you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God are in him yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

THE blessed apostle, that he might have the better place in the hearts of his hearers, endeavours here with all diligence to wipe off any imputation which they might have against him; that so his doctrine might come home to their souls, and have the freer access to work upon their consciences.

We have therefore in these words St Paul's apology for not coming unto the Corinthians, according to his promise. Wherein he allegeth that it was not from any inconstancy in him, but indeed from corruption in manners among them: ver. 23, 'I call God to record, that to spare you I came not.' The apostle as a man, and as a holy man, might promise many things common to this life, and might lawfully vary afterwards upon the appearance of real impediments.

But the things which he promiseth, and speaks of as an apostle, they admit of no such uncertainty. Therefore his care is to decline* all thoughts of wavering therein, and to maintain the credit of the gospel, which he had taught, to the uttermost; knowing well how ready 'false teachers' would be to persuade the people that Paul was as light in his preaching as he was in keeping his word with them. Therefore 'our word is true, as God is true,' saith he.

There is the same ground of the certainty of evangelical truths, as there is of God himself. 'Jesus Christ,' whom I preached among you, was not 'yea and nay,' saith the apostle, but 'yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever.' Whence may be observed:

Doct. 1. That the object of preaching now in the time of the gospel, is especially Jesus Christ. This is the rock upon which the church is built. Christ should be the subject matter of our teaching, in his nature, offices, and benefits; in the duties which we owe to him, and the instrument whereby we receive all from him, which is faith.

* That is, 'repudiate.'—G.

If we preach the law, and discover men's corruption, it is but to make way for the gospel's freer passage into their souls. And if we press holy duties, it is to make you walk worthy of the Lord Jesus. All teaching is reductive to the gospel of Christ, either to make way, as John Baptist did, to level all proud thoughts, and make us stoop to him, or to make us walk worthy of the grace we receive from him.

The bread of life must be broken ; the sacrifice must be anatomised and laid open ; the riches of Christ, even his 'unsearchable riches,' must be unfolded. 'The Son of God,' must be preached to all ; and therefore God, who hath appointed us to be saved by Christ, hath also ordained preaching, to lay open the Lord Jesus, with the heavenly treasures of his grace and glory. But to go forward.

Jesus Christ who was preached among you by me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay.

Obs. Here observe, that the consent of preachers in the mysteries of salvation, is an excellent means to strengthen faith in their hearers ; not in regard of the truth itself, but in regard of men. So it pleaseth God to condescend to our weakness, in adding sacraments and oath unto his promises, thereby to shew the more stableness of his counsel towards us.

By 'yea' here is meant certain, constant, invariable. The times vary, but not the faith of the times. The same fundamental truth is in all ages. Sometimes indeed it is more explicated and unfolded ; as we have in the New Testament divers truths more clearly revealed than in the Old. There is not a new faith, but a larger explication of the old faith. Divine truth is always the same. If there hath been a church always, there hath ever been a divine truth. Now it is an article of our faith in all times to believe a 'catholic church.' Certainly then there must be a catholic truth to be the seed of this church. Therefore we should search out what was that 'yea,' that positive doctrine in those apostolical times of the church's purity, before it was corrupted.

The church was not long a virgin ; yet some there were that held the truth of Christ in all ages. Our present church holds the same positive truths with the apostles before us. Therefore we say, 'Our church was before Luther,* because our doctrine is apostolical ; as also is our church that is continued thereby, because it is built upon apostolical doctrine.' Put the case we cannot shew the men, as they ridiculously urge ; what is that to the purpose ? From an ignorance of particular men, will they conclude us to be ignorant of the church of Christ, which hath ever been ?

Hence the true church may easily be discerned. The points of religion wherein our adversaries differ from us, be but patcheries† of their own. They were not 'yea' in the apostles' times. Their purgatory, invocation of saints, and sacraments of divers kinds, were devised by themselves afterwards. And indeed, for a thousand years after Christ, many of the differences betwixt us and the papists were never heard of, neither were they ever established by any council till the Council of Trent.‡

Our positive points are grounded upon the Holy Scriptures. We seek the 'old way' and the 'best way,' as Jeremiah adviseth us, Jer. vi. 16. There was no popish trash in Abraham's time among the blessed patriarchs, nor in Christ's time, no, nor many hundred years after. They came in by little and little, by human invention, for their own advantage ; a mere policy to get money and abuse the people. Indeed, they hold many of

* Cf. note *sss*, Vol. III., p. 536.—G.

† Viz., 1545 to 1563.—G.

‡ That is, 'additions.'—G.

our truths, but they add something of their own to them. They add necessity of tradition to the Scriptures, merits to faith; they add saints to Christ in divine worship. They have seven sacraments to our two (*a*). They may safelier therefore come to us than we to them. We hold all that they should hold, only their own additions we hold not; we leave them to themselves. So much for that.

Doct. 2. To touch only another point that borders a little upon it. *Divine truth is of an inflexible nature.* This crosseth another rule of theirs; for they hold that they may give what sense of Scripture they will, and that the current of the present church must judge of all former counsels. What! doth the truth vary according to men's judgments? Must we bring the straight rule to the crooked timber for to be measured? Shall the judgment of any man be the rule of God's unerring truth? Shall present men interpret it thus, and say it is so now? And shall others that succeed after say, Whatever it was then, now it is thus? and must we believe all? God forbid.

Doct. 3. This declareth *that no man can dispense with God's law.* This written word is alike in all. Truth is truth, and error error, whether men think it to be so or no. Reason is reason in Turks as well as amongst us. The light of nature is the light of nature in any country as well as here. Principles of nature vary not as languages do, they are inbred things. And if principles of nature be inviolable and indispensable, much more is divinity. Filth is filth, we all confess. Opinion ought not to be the rule of things, but the nature of the thing itself.

Therefore, what is against nature, none can dispense withal. God cannot deny himself. What is naught in one age is naught in another, and for ever naught.* There is no monarch in the world can dispense with the law of nature, or with the divine law of God. For the opinion of any man in the world is not the rule which he may comfortably live by, but the undoubted light of Christ's written word.

I speak this the rather to cross their base practices, who, when God calls them to stand for his cause and truth, they will bend and bow the sacred truth (which is always 'yea and amen') to their own by-ends and base respects. As if the opinion of any man in the world were the rule of their faith and obedience. This is to make God no God. Is not right right? Is not the law the law! Is not the word of Christ a word that alters not but remains stedfast to all eternity?

Assure yourselves there is a truth of God that we must maintain to the death, not only in opposing heresy, but resisting of impiety wheresoever we meet it. John Baptist was a martyr when he stood out against Herod, and said, 'Thou must not have thy brother Philip's wife,' Mat. xiv. 3. He would not be meal-mouthed in reproving his sin, but cried out against the unlawfulness of it, though it cost him his life. Men ought to suffer for the truth, and not, for base ends, deny the least word of God, because it is a divine sparkle from himself.

'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him are amen.'

This comes in after this manner. The word that I preached, saith Paul, is invariable, because Christ himself is always yea, and I have preached nothing but Jesus Christ among you. My preaching, then, must needs be a certain and immutable truth.

There are divers readings of the words (*b*), but the most material is (as this translation and the best expositors have it), 'All the promises of God

* That is, 'naughty,' wicked.—G.

in Christ are yea ;' that is, they are certain and constant in him. And then they are 'amen ;' that is, in Christ they are fulfilled. In him they are made, and in him they are accomplished. The whole carriage of the promises are in Christ ; for his sake they were first given, and in him they shall be performed. As Christ himself was yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever, so are all God's promises made in him, undoubtedly, eternally, and unchangeably true to all posterities.

Here are divers truths which offer themselves to our consideration.

Obs. first. Take notice, that since the fall of man, *it hath pleased our good God to establish a covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, and to make him a second Adam*, by whom we might be restored to a better estate than ever we had in the first Adam. In which happy condition there can be no intercourse betwixt God and man without some promise in his Christ, so that now God deals all by promises with us. The reason is this.

Reason 1. *How can poor dust and ashes dare to challenge anything of the great Majesty of heaven, without a warrant from himself?* How can the conscience be satisfied ? (Conscience, you know, is a knowledge together with God.)* How can that rest quiet in anything but in what it is assured comes from God ? And therefore, for any good I hope for from God, it behoves me to have some promise and word of his mouth for it, this being his constant course of dispensation to his people. While we live in this world we are always under hope. 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 2. Now, hope looks still to the promise, whereof some part is unperformed.

How doth heaven differ from earth but in this ? Heaven is a place all for performances. Here we have some performances to encourage us, but are always under some promise not yet accomplished. And therefore, the manner of our apprehension of God in this world exceedingly differs from that in heaven.

Here it is by faith and hope ; there it is by vision. Vision is fit for performance. Faith and hope look always to a word revealed ; God therefore rules his church in this manner for their greater good. Alas ! what can we have from God but by the manifestation of his own good will ? May we look for favour from God for anything *in ourselves* ? It is a fond † conceit.

Reason 2. Again, *God will have his church ruled by promises in all ages, to exercise the faithful in prayer and dependence upon him.* God will see of what credit he is among men, whether they will rely upon his bare promise or no. He might do us good, and give us no promise ; but he will try his graces in us, by arming us against all difficulties and discouragements, till the thing promised be performed to us. Promises are, as it were, the stay of the soul in an imperfect condition ; and so is faith in them, until our hopes shall end in full possession. And we must know that divine promises are better than earthly performances. Let God give man never so much in the world, if he have not a promise of better things, all will come to nothing at the last. And therefore God supports the spirits of his servants against all temptations, both on the right hand and on the left, by sweet promises. He will have them live by faith, which always hath relation to a promise. This is a general ground, then, that God now in Christ Jesus hath appointed to govern his church by way of promises.

But what is a promise ?

A promise is nothing but a manifestation of love ; an intendment of be-

* Cf. notes *hk, ii*, Vol. III., p. 532.—G. † That is, 'foolish.'—G.

stowing some good, and removing some evil from us. A declaring of a man's free engagement in this kind is a promise. It always comes from love in the party promising, and conveys goodness to the believing soul. Now what love can there be in God to us since the fall, which must not be grounded on a better foundation than ourselves? If God love us, it must be in one that is first beloved. Hereupon comes the ground of the promises to be in Jesus Christ. All intercourse between God and us must be in him that is able to satisfy God for us. The almighty Creator will have our debts discharged before he enters into a covenant of peace with us.

Now this Christ hath perfectly done, and thereby reconciled lost sinners. Hereupon the promise immediately issues from God's love in Christ to believing souls. He must first receive all good for us, and we must have it at the second hand from him. The promises in Christ are as the spirits in the body. They run through all the ages of the church. Without him there is no mercy nor comfort to be had. God cannot look on this cursed nature of ours out of Christ; and therefore whosoever apprehends any mercy from God, he must apprehend it in Christ, the promised seed. To make it clearer. Our nature since the fall is odious to God; a sinful, cursed nature remains in the best of us; and therefore that God may look peaceably upon it, he must look upon it in him that hath it undefiled, and in him whom he loves, even his only Son, like unto himself, that hath taken our nature upon him.

Now, our nature in Christ must needs be lovely and acceptable; and if ever God love us, it is for Christ alone, who was predestinated before all worlds to be a sacrifice for us, to be the head of his church, 1 Peter i. 10. He was ordained to do us good before we ourselves were ordained. Christ is the first beloved, and then we. God loves us in his beloved one. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mark i. 11. As if the Lord had said, I am pleased in him, and in all his; in his whole mystical body. Christ is the Son of God by nature, we by adoption. Whatever good is in us is first and principally in him. God conveys all by the natural* Son to the adopted sons. Therefore, all the promises are made to us in Christ. He takes them from God for us. He himself is the first promise, and all are 'yea and amen in him.' They are not directed to us abstracted from him; but we are elected in Christ, sanctified in him, acquitted from sin through him. 'By his stripes we are healed,' Isa. liii. 5. If Christ had not satisfied the wrath of God by bearing our iniquities upon the cross, we had been liable every moment to condemnation. If he had not been free from our sins, we had for ever lain under the burden of them. 'You are yet in your sins,' saith St Paul, 'if Christ be not risen,' 1 Cor. xv. 17. We are freed from our debts, because Christ our surety is out of prison. He is in heaven, and therefore we are at liberty.

The promises are a deed of gift which we have from and by Christ, who is the first object of all the respect that God hath to us. Why are the angels attendants on us? Because they attend upon Jacob's ladder; that is, upon Christ, that knits heaven and earth together. So that the angels, because they attend upon Christ first, become likewise our attendants. We have a promise of 'eternal life,' but this life is 'in his Son,' 1 John v. 11. God blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in him, Eph. i. 3, and makes us sons in him the natural Son. Whatsoever prerogative we enjoy, it is in Christ first, and so belongs to us; but no further than we by faith are made one with him. How darest thou think of God, who is a 'consuming

* That is, 'Son of his nature,' not at all in the modern sense of 'natural.'—G.

fire?' Heb. xii. 29, and not think of him as he is pleased and pacified with thy person in Christ, who took thy nature upon him, to be a foundation of comfort, and a second Adam; a public person, satisfying divine justice for all that are members of his body?

We may think upon God with comfort, when we see him appeased in his Christ. As long as he loves Christ, he cannot but love us. Never think to have grace, or salvation, or anything without Christ. Doth God love me? Doth he do good to my soul for my own sake, abstracted from his Son? No, surely. Then should I fly from his presence. But he looks upon me in his beloved, and in him accepts of my person. Therefore our Saviour prayeth, 'I desire thee, blessed Father, that the love wherewith thou lovest me, may be in them, and I in them,' John xvii. 23.

This should direct us in our dealing with God, not to go directly to him, but by a promise. And when we have a promise, look to Christ, in whom it is performed. If we ask anything of God in Christ's name, he will give it us, John xiv. 13. If we thank God for anything, thank him in Christ, that we have it in him. What a comfort is this, that we may go to God in Christ and claim the promises boldly, because he loves us with the same love he bears to his only beloved Son. If we get fast hold on Christ, and cleave there, God can as soon alter his love to him as alter his love to us; his love is every whit as unchangeable to a believing member, as to Christ the head of the body. The promises are as sure as the love of God in Christ is, upon which they are founded, and from which 'nothing can separate us,' Rom. viii. 35. For promises being the fruit of God's love, and God's love being founded first upon Christ, it must needs follow, that all the promises are both made and made good to us through him.

If a prince should love a man, and his love should be founded upon the love he bears to his own son, surely such a one may have comfort: that love will never fail him, because it is an affection natural, and therefore unalterable. He will always love his son, and therefore will always delight in him in whom his son delighteth. Now Christ is the everlasting Son of the Father—his dear and only Son, in whom he is ever well pleased, and through whom he cannot be offended with those that are his. So surely as God loves Christ, so surely he loves all that are united to him. There is nothing in the world can separate his love from his own Son; neither is there anything able to separate his love from us that are one with him, Rom. viii. 35. God loves Christ's mystical body, as well as his natural body. He hath advanced that to glory at his right hand in heaven; and will he, think you, leave his mystical body, the church, in a state of abasement here on earth? No certainly. God loves every member of his Son? for as he gave us to Christ, so him hath he sealed and anointed to be a Saviour for his people.

This is the reason why God looks upon us with a forbearing eye, notwithstanding the continual matter of displeasure he finds in us: he looks on us in his Son; his love to us is grounded on his love to Christ. And hereupon comes our boldness with God the Father, that we can go to him in all distresses with comfort, and say, 'Lord, look on thy Son whom thou hast given for us, and in him behold his poor members now before thee.' 'In ourselves we have dread, but in thy dearly beloved we have joy in thy presence.' If we come in the garments of our elder brother, we are sure to get a blessing; but in ourselves, God cannot endure to behold us. If we bring Benjamin to our father, if we carry Christ along with us, then come and welcome.

Upon what unchangeable grounds is the love of God and the faith of a Christian builded? How can the gates of hell prevail against the faith of a true believer, when it is carried to the promise, and from the promise to God's love? The love of God to Christ shall as soon fail, as the faith of a sincere Christian shall be shaken. The promises else should be of no effect; they should be 'yea and nay,' and not 'yea and amen.'

If the promises could be shaken, the love of God and Christ should be uncertain. Overturn heaven and earth, if we overturn the faith of a true, persevering Christian. There is nothing in the world of that firmness as a believing soul is; the ground he stands upon makes him unmoveable. Our union with the Lord Jesus makes us like 'mount Sinai, that cannot be shaken.' But we must know there are three degrees or steps of love, whereof a promise is the last:—

1. *Inward love.*
2. *Real performance.*
3. *A manifestation of performance intended before it be done.*

Love concealed doth not comfort in the interim. Therefore God, who is love, doth not only affect* us for the *present*, and intend us mercy hereafter; but because he will have us rest sweetly in his bosom, and settle ourselves on his gracious purposes, he gives us in the mean time many 'rich and precious promises,' 2 Pet. i. 4. He not only loves us, and shews the same in deeds now, but he expreseth his future care of us, that we may build on him, as surely as if we had the thing performed already.

By this we see how God loves us. He hath not only an inward liking and good will to us in his breast, but manifests the same by word. He reveals the tenderness of his bowels towards us, that we may have the comfort of it beforehand. God would have us live by faith, and establish ourselves in hope, because these graces fit us for the promise. If there were no promises, there could be no faith nor hope.

What is hope but the expectation of those things that the word saith? And what is faith, but a building on the promise of God? Faith looks to the word of the thing; hope to the thing in the word. Faith looks to the thing promised; hope to the possession and performance of it. 'Faith is the evidence of good not seen,' Heb. xi. 1, making that which is absent as present to us. Hope waits for the accomplishment of that good contained in the word. If we had nothing promised, what need hope? and where were the foundation of faith? But God being willing to satisfy both (that we may be heavenly-wise, in relying upon a firm foundation; and not as fools, 'trust in vanity,' Ps. iv. 2), in mercy gives us promises, and seals them with an oath for our greater supportment. That love which engaged the Almighty to bind himself to us in 'precious promises,' 2 Pet. i. 4, will furnish us likewise with grace needful till we be possessed of them. He will give us leave to depend upon him, both for happiness and all quieting graces, which may support the soul till it come to its perfect rest in himself.

Now these gracious expressions of our good God may be reduced into divers ranks. I will but touch some few particulars, and shew how we should carry ourselves to make a comfortable use of them.

First, There are some universal promises for the good of all mankind; as that God would never destroy the world again, &c., Gen. ix. 11.

Secondly, There are other promises that more particularly concern the church. And these are promises.

* That is, 'love,' 'have an affection for.'—G.

(1.) Either of *outward things*.

(2.) Or of *spiritual and eternal things, of grace and glory*.

In the manner of promising they admit of this distinction. All the promises of God are made to us either,

(1.) *Absolutely*, without any condition. So was the promise of sending Christ into the world, and his glorious coming again to judgment. Let the world be as it will, yet Christ did come, and will come again, with thousands of angels, to judge us at the last, 2 Tim. iv. 1.

Or (2.) *Conditional*; as the promise of grace and glory to God's children, that he will forgive their sins, if they repent, &c. God deals with men (as we do by way of commerce one with another), propounding mercy by covenant and condition; yet his covenant of grace is always a 'gracious covenant.' For he not only gives the good things, but helps us in performing the condition by his Spirit; he works our hearts to believe and to repent.

Thus all promises for outward things are conditional; as thus, God hath promised protection from contagious sickness, and from trouble and war; that he will be 'an hiding-place,' Ps. xxxii. 7, and a 'deliverer' of his people in time of danger, Ps. xl. 17; that he will do this and that good for them. But these are conditional; so far forth as in his wise providence he sees they may help to preserve spiritual good things in them, and advance the graces of the inward man. For God takes liberty in our outward estate to afflict us or do us good, as may best further our soul's welfare. Because, do what we can with these bodies, they will turn to dust and vanity ere long. We must leave the world behind us. Therefore he looks to our main estate in Christ, to the 'new creature;' and so far as outward blessings may cherish and increase that, so far he grants them, or else he denies them, to his dearest ones.

For we cannot still enjoy the blessings of this life, but our corrupt nature is such, that, except we have somewhat to season the same, we shall surfeit, and not digest them. Therefore they are all given with exception of the cross; as Christ saith, he that doth for him anything, 'shall have a hundredfold here,' Mat. xix. 29, but 'with persecution.' Be sure of that, whatsoever else he hath. Let Christians look for crosses to season those good things they enjoy in this life.

Use. To come now to some use of the point. Are all the promises, of what kind soever, whether spiritual or outward, temporal or eternal, are they all made to us in Jesus Christ? And are they certainly true, 'yea and amen' in him? Then I beseech you *get into Christ betimes, strengthen your interest in him by all means, out of whom we have nothing that is savingly good*. Rest not in anything abstracted from him, so as to be accepted with God.

Obj. But you will say, Doth not God do many good things to them that are out of Christ? Doth not the sun shine, and the rain fall, upon the just and the unjust; upon the evil as well as the good? Doth he not clothe, and feed, and protect wicked men daily?

Ans. He doth indeed, it cannot be denied. But are they blessings? Are these favours to them? No; but as God saith to Moses, Deut. xxviii. 16: 'If thou sin against me, cursed shalt thou be in thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep: cursed at home, cursed abroad.' They are cursed in their very blessings. A graceless, brutish person, though he swim with worldly pleasures, and have never such

revenues and comings in to maintain his bravery,* is yet an accursed creature in the midst of all. For what are we made for, think you? To live here only? Oh no. 'Then we were of all others the most miserable,' 1 Cor. xv. 19. There is an eternity of time a-coming, wherein, after a few days spent in the flesh, we shall live either in perpetual bliss, or unspeakable torment. The very best things beneath have a snare in them; they rather hinder than further our eternal welfare.

Quest. How doth that appear?

Ans. Because for the most part they make men secure and careless in the worship of God, so as to despise the power of godliness, and follow iniquity with greediness. We may see by men's conversations that outward things are snares to them. They are not promises in Christ; for then they would come out of God's love only, which alone makes mercies to be mercies indeed to us, and without which, the best of blessings will prove but a curse in the end.

If I have anything in this world, any deliverance from evil, or any positive good thing, I may know it is for my benefit, when my heart is made more spiritual thereby, so as to value grace and holiness at the highest rate; I esteeming my being in Christ above all transitory things whatsoever, above riches and honour and the favour of great persons, which at the best is fading. Our interest in him will stand by us, when all these things are withered and shrunk to nothing. Christ is a fountain never drawn dry; his comforts are permanent. The good in the creature soon vanisheth and leaveth the soul empty. Therefore get into Christ speedily, it concerns thee nearly.

For this purpose *attend upon the means of salvation*, and beg of God that he would make his own ordinances, by his Spirit accompanying the same, effectual to thy soul; that he would open the excellencies of Christ to thee, and draw thy affections to close with him.

Quest. How are we in Christ?

Ans. When, by knowing of him, our knowledge carries our hearts unto him, John xvii. 3. When our wills cleave to that which we know to be excellent and necessary for us, when I firmly adhere to Christ as the only good for me, then I love him, then I rest on him, then I have peace in him.

I may discern that I am in Christ, if upon my knowledge of him, my heart is united to him, and I find peace of conscience in him. Faith hath a quieting and establishing power. If I be in Christ, my soul will be cheered and satisfied with him alone. I know all is yea and amen in him; therefore my soul rests securely here. However our outward condition be various and perplexed, yet our estate in Christ is firm and constant.

Quest. What is a man out of Christ?

Ans. As a man in a storm that hath no clothes to hide his nakedness, or to shelter his body from the violence of the weather. As one in a tempest, that hath not house nor harbour to cover him. As a stone out of the foundation, set lightly by, and scattered up and down here and there. As a branch out of the root; what sap is there in such a thing, it being good for nothing but to be cast into the fire?

A man that is not built up in Christ, planted in him, nor clothed with him, is the most destitute, despicable creature in all the world; and if we look with a single eye, we shall so discern him. Such a man's case is deeply to be bewailed. Had we but hearts to judge righteously, we would prefer the meanest condition of God's child, before the greatest estate of

* That is, 'grandeur.'—G.

any earthly monarch, be their flourishing felicity never so resplendent. Oh ! the miserable and woeful plight that all profane wretches are in, who neglect grace and the mysteries of Christ, to gratify their base lusts. Such an one, there is but a step between him and hell ; he hath no portion in the Lord Jesus. ' I account all dung and dross,' saith St Paul, ' in comparison of Christ, to be found in him, not having on mine own righteousness,' Philip. iii. 8. Happy is that man at the day of judgment, who thus appears.

Use 2. Again, if so be that all promises are ' yea and amen in Christ,' then here *take notice of the stability of a Christian, that hath promises to uphold him.* Compare him with a man that hath present things only, with an Esau that abounds with worldly goods ; and how great is the difference ? God gives them their portion here, as he saith to Dives, ' Thou hadst thy good things,' Luke xvi. 25, *seq.* : that thou chiefly caredst for, thou hadst them here, but Lazarus had pain, misery, and poverty. Now therefore the case is altered ; he is advanced, ' and thou art tormented.'

A believing Christian enjoys the sweetness of many promises in this life (for God is still delivering, comforting, and perfecting of him ; renewing of his spirit, and supplying him with inward peace) ; but the greatest part is yet to be accomplished. Perfection of grace and glory is to come. He is a child, he is a son. The promise here is his chief estate.

Another man hath present payment, and that is all he cares for ; he hath something in hand, and swells with a conceit of happiness thereby. Alas ! what are we the better to have a great deal of nothing ? Solomon, that had tried all the world, resolves it to ' vanity and vexation of spirit,' Eccles. i. 14. All things below are uncertain, and we are uncertain in the use of them. If we have no better a life than a natural one, eternal joy appertains not to us. Take a Christian and strip him in your thoughts from all the good things in the world, he is yet a happier man than the greatest worldly favourite out of Christ ; for the one hath nothing but present things, with a great deal of addition of misery, which his ease and contentment makes him more sensible of ; as being more tender and apprehensive of an evil than other men. The other, though he want many comforts of this life, and enjoys not present performances ; yet he is rich in bills and bonds. God is bound to him, who hath promised he ' will never forsake him, but be his portion for ever,' Heb. xiii. 5. He hath a title to every communicable good. ' Godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come,' 1 Tim. iv. 8. A happy man ! Whatever is most useful for his safe conduct to heaven, he is sure to have it. He that will give us a kingdom, will not deny us daily bread ; he that hath prepared a country for us, will certainly preserve us safe, till we come there.

Besides that we have here in performance, we have many excellent promises of a greater good in expectation, which in Christ are all ' yea and amen.' They are certain, though our life be uncertain, and the comforts of our life, less than life itself, mutable and perishing. If life, the foundation of outward comforts, be but a vapour, what are all the comforts themselves, think you ?

It is a Christian's rejoicing in the midst of all changes beneath, that he hath promises invested into him from above that are lodged in his heart, and made his own by faith, which have * a wondrous peculiarising virtue to make that a man's own that is otherwise generally propounded in the gospel. A Christian, take him at all uncertainties, he hath somewhat to build on, that is ' yea and amen,' undoubtedly sure, that will stick by him.

* Qu. ' hath ' ?—Ed.

I speak this to commend the estate of a believing Christian ; to make you in love with it, seeing in all the changes and varieties of this world he hath somewhat to take to. In all the dangers of this life he hath a rock and chamber of providence to go unto, as it is Isa. xxvi. 20. God hath secret rooms to hide his children in in times of public disturbance, when there is a confusion of all things. God hath a safe abiding place for thee. 'I have many troubles,' saith David, 'but God is my defence continually,' Ps. lxxxviii. 4. He is my 'shield and strong tower;' whatsoever I want I have it in him. What a comfort is this !

A Christian knows either he shall be safe here or in heaven, and therefore rests securely. 'He that dwells in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' Ps. xci. 1, 2 ; that is, in the love and protection of God above. As Moses saith, 'Lord, thou hast been our habitation from everlasting to everlasting,' Ps. xc. 1 ; that is, thou art our sure help in the greatest extremity that can befall us in any age of the world.

Therefore build on his promise, for God and his word are all one. If we have nothing to take to when troubles come, woe unto us ! In ourselves considered, we are even as grass, and as a tale that is told, soon vanishing. But our estate in God is durable. We have here no continuing city ; sickness may come, and death may environ us the next moment. Happy are they that have God for their habitation. We dwell in him when we are dead. When we leave this world we shall live with God for ever. 'The righteous is not troubled for evil tidings,' Ps. cxii. 7. He is not shaken from his rock and stay. He fears no danger, because 'his heart is fixed,' ver. 8.

What a blessed estate is it to be in Christ, to have promises in him, to be protected and preserved, not only whilst we are in this vale of tears, but when this earthly tabernacle shall be dissolved, even to all eternity. If our hearts be fixed on God, let us hear evil tidings of war, or famine, or pestilence, let it be what it will, blessed men are we. 'Every word of God is tried as silver in the fire,' saith the psalmist, Ps. xii. 6. The promises are tried promises ; we may safely rest upon them. But if we have nothing to take to when troubles arise, we are as a naked man in a storm, without any shelter, encompassed round with distress and misery.

The promises are our inheritance, yea, our best inheritance in this life. Though the Lord should strip us naked, and take away all things else, yet if the promises remain ours, we are rich men, and may say with the psalmist, 'My lot is fallen into a good ground ; thy testimonies are better unto me than thousands of gold and silver,' Ps. xvi. 6. For the promises are as so many obligations, whereby God is bound to his poor creature. And if wretched men think themselves as rich as they have bonds, though they have never a penny in their purses, much more may a true Christian, who hath the promises of Christ for his security, esteem himself a wealthy person ; as having many bonds whereby not man, but God, is engaged to him, and that not only for temporal good things, but for heavenly favours and spiritual blessings, for all which he may sue God at his pleasure, and desire him to make good his word of truth.

There is little difference betwixt a poor Christian and him that abounds in this world's riches ; only this, the one hath wealth in his own possession, the other hath it in God's bond ; the one hath it in hand, the other in trust. As for the worldling, he hath but a cistern when he hath most ; whereas every faithful soul hath the spring-head, even God himself to fly unto in all

distresses, who will never fail him, but be a 'sun and a shield,' to defend us from all evil and preserve us in all goodness all our days. But I go on.

'Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath also anointed us, is God.'

Obs. 1. Here observe, *that the Christian needs not only converting but establishing grace.* He that hath begun any good work in us must perfect it. The God of strength must give up his promise to support our weakness, without which we cannot stand. Peter was in the state of grace, and yet when God did not stablish him, we see how he fell. The weakest believer with the establishing grace of God will stand ; and the strongest Christian, without divine assistance, will sink and fall away.

Obs. 2. Whence this may be further considered, *that the life of a Christian is a perpetual dependent life.* He not only lives by faith in his first conversion, but ever after. He depends upon God for protection and strength throughout his whole course. God doth establish us in Christ. The ignorance of this makes men subject to backsliding. For when we trust to grace received, and seek not for new supply, we are straight of Peter's condition, 'Though all forsake thee, yet will not I,' Luke xxii. 33, which occasioned his shameful fall. He had too much confidence in grace received.

God is therefore fain to humble his children, to teach them dependence. And usually where any special grace is bestowed upon sinners, God joins something therewith to put them in mind that they do not stand by their own strength. Peter makes a glorious confession, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,' Mat. xvi. 17, 18, 19 ; and Christ honoured him exceedingly, saying, 'Upon this rock will I build my church.' But yet by and by we see he calls him, 'Satan, get thee behind me,' Mat. xvi. 23, to teach us that we stand not by our own power. When we are strong, it is of God ; and when we are weak, it is of ourselves. Jacob wrestled with the Almighty, and was a prevailer, but he was fain to halt for it. Though he had the victory, and overcame at last, yet he was stricken with lameness all his days. God did this to mind him that he had that strength whereby he prevailed out of himself.

Use. *A Christian then should set upon nothing in his own strength.* Hannah saith comfortably, 'No man shall be strong in his own might,' 1 Sam. 2, 9. God is all our sufficiency. Man naturally affects* a kind of divinity, and will set upon things in confidence of his own abilities, without prayer and seeking of God's help. He thinks to compass great matters, and bring things to a good issue by his own wit and discretion. Oh ! delude not yourselves. This cannot be. 'Acknowledge God in all thy ways, and he shall direct thy paths, Prov. iii. 6. Seek unto the Lord in every enterprise thou goest about ; acknowledge him in the beginning, progress, and issue of all thy employments. What do we but make ourselves gods, when we set upon business without invocation and dependence ? A Christian is wondrous weak, even vanity of himself ; but take him as he is built upon the promises, and as he is in God, and then he is a kind of almighty person, 'He can do all things through Christ that strengthens him,' Philip. iv. 13. A Christian is in sort omnipotent whilst he commits his ways to God, and depends upon the promise ; otherwise he is weakness itself, the most impotent creature in the world.

Let God, therefore, have all the glory of our establishing, and depend on him by prayer for the same. As all comes of his mere grace, so let all

* That is, 'pretends' = chooses to appear.—G.

return to his mere glory. 'Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to thy name be given the praise,' Ps. cxv. 1. It is the song of the church militant on earth, and it is the song of the church triumphant in heaven, that *all* glory is to God in the whole carriage of our salvation. The promises are in him. He only made the covenant, and he must perform it to us: without him we can do nothing. Labour, therefore, to be wise in his wisdom, strong in his strength, to be all in all in Christ Jesus.

Obj. How shall we know that a man hath establishing grace?

Ans. His assurance is firm when his temptations are great, and his strength to resist little; and yet notwithstanding he prevails over them. Satan is strong and subtle. Now if we can stand against his snares, it is a clear evidence of greater strength than is in ourselves. In great afflictions, when God seems an enemy, and clouds appear between him and us, if then a man's faith can break through all, and in the midst of darkness see God shining in Christ upon him, and resolve, 'Though thou kill me, yet I will trust in thee,' Job xiii. 15; here is a strong establishing.

In the times of martyrdom there was fire and faggot, and the frowns of bloody men; but who were the persons suffering? Even many children, old men and women, the weakest of creatures. Notwithstanding the Spirit of God was so strong in these feeble ones, as their lives were not precious to them; but the torments and threatenings of their cruel persecutors were cheerfully undergone by them, as Heb. xi. 34, *seq.* Here was God's power in man's infirmity. If we have not something above nature, how is it possible we should hold out in great trials?

Means to obtain establishing grace.

By what means may a Christian obtain this establishing grace?

First, Labour for fundamental graces. If the root be strengthened, the tree will stand fast.

(1.) Humiliation is a special radical grace. The foundation of religion is very low. Abasement of spirit is in all the parts of holiness. Every grace hath a mixture of humility, because they are all dependencies on God. Humility is an emptying grace, and acknowledgeth that in ourselves there is nothing. If God withhold his influence, I am gone; if he withdraw his grace, I shall be like another man, as Samson was when his hair was cut off. Self-emptiness prepares for spiritual fulness. 'When I am weak,' saith blessed Paul, 'then I am strong;' that is, when I feel and acknowledge my weakness, then my strength increases; otherwise a man is not strong when he is weak; but when he is sensible and groans under the burden of his infirmities, then he is inwardly strong.

(2.) Another fundamental grace is *dependence upon God*; for considering our own insufficiency, and that faith is a grace that grows out of ourselves, and lays hold of the righteousness of another to justify us, nothing can be more necessary to quiet the soul. 'Believe, and you shall be established:' as the promises are sure in themselves, so should we repose firm confidence in them.

Obj. But how doth God establish us by faith?

Ans. By working sound knowledge in us: 'This is life eternal, to know thee,' John xvii. 3. When we know the truth of God's word aright, we have a firm ground to depend on; for the more a man knows God in covenant, the more he knows Christ and the promises, the more he will trust and rely upon them. 'They that know thy name will trust in thee,' Ps. ix. 10, saith the prophet. Therefore labour for certainty of knowledge, that thou mayest have a certainty of faith. What is the reason our faith

is weak? Because we are careless to increase in knowledge. The more we know of God, the more we shall trust in him. The more we know of a man that he is able and just of his word, the more safely we put confidence in him. So the more our security is in God's promises, as his bonds increase, so our trust will be strengthened.

(3.) Thirdly, if thou wouldst have establishing grace, *beg it earnestly of God.* Our strength in him is altogether by prayer. Bind him, therefore, with his own promise; beseech him to do unto thee according to his good word. He is the God of strength, desire of him the spirit of strength; allege to him thy own weakness and inability without him, and that if he helps not, thou shalt soon be overcome; lay open thy wants in God's presence; shew him how unable thou art of thyself to withstand temptations, to bear crosses, to perform duties, to do or suffer anything aright; turn his gracious promises into prayers; desire God that he would stablish thee by his grace; that he would prop and uphold thy soul in all extremities.

Quest. What is the reason that Christians are so daunted, and fly off in time of danger?

Ans. They have no faith in the promise. The righteous is as mount Sinai, that shall not be moved. He builds on a foundation that can never be shaken, for the heart is never drawn to any sinful vanity, or frightened with any terror of trouble, till faith lets go its hold. Out of God there is nothing for the soul safely to stay itself upon.

No marvel to see men fall that rest on a broken reed. Alas! whatsoever is besides* God, is but a creature; and can the creature be other than changeable? The comfort that we have in God never fadeth; it is an abiding, lasting comfort, such as contents the soul, and satisfies all the wants and desires of it, which things beneath can never accomplish.

We see that the heavens continue; and the earth, without any other foundation, hangs in the midst of the world by the bare word of the Almighty. Therefore well may the soul stay itself on that, when it hath nothing else in sight to rely upon.

In this case Christians should look, *first*, that their principles and foundations be good; and, *secondly*, builded strongly upon them. For the soul is as that which it relies on: if upon empty things, itself becomes poor and empty; which the devil knowing, strives to unloose our hearts from our Maker, and draw us to rely upon false objects. He sees full well, that whilst our souls cleave close to God, there is no prevailing against us by any malice or subtilty of men or devils. The saints, in him, are bold and undaunted in the midst of troubles and torments. Indeed, the sweetest communion with God is, when we are beaten from other helps: though misery upon misery encounters us below, yet there is still succour issuing from above to a believing soul. If God hath it in heaven, faith will fetch it down and enjoy the sweetness of it here. That man can never do amiss that hath his dependency upon the Almighty; there being no communion like that of a faithful heart with the Lord.

It is the office of faith to quiet our souls in all distresses; for it relies upon God for heaven itself, and all the necessary provision, till we come thither. Strengthen faith, therefore, and you strengthen all. What can daunt that soul, which in the sorest affliction hath the great God for his friend? Such a spirit dares bid defiance to all the powers of darkness. Satan may for a time exercise, but he can never wholly depress a gracious heart. True believers can triumph over that which others are slaves unto.

* That is, 'beside,' as elsewhere 'sometimes' for 'sometime.'—G.

They can set upon spiritual conflicts, and endure fiery trials, which others tremble to think of. They can put off themselves, and be content to be nothing, so their God may appear the greater; and dare undertake or undergo anything for the glory of their Maker. Considering they are not their own, but have given up themselves to Christ, 'they count not their lives, or anything that is theirs, dear for him,' Acts xx. 24.

He that stablisheth us with you is God, who hath anointed us, &c.

Messiah signifies 'anointed.' Our nature is enriched in Christ with all graces: 'He is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows' for us, Ps. xlv. 7, that we might have a spring of grace in our own nature; that God and Christ being one, and we being in the Lord Jesus, might have all our anointing of the first anointed, for 'of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John i. 16.

Quest. What are those graces which we receive from Christ's fulness?

Ans. (1.) *First*, The grace of *favour and acceptance*; for the same love that God bears to Christ, he bears to all his, though not in so high a degree.

(2.) *Secondly*, The grace of *sanctification*, answerable to the grace of sanctification in him. Every renewed work in us comes from Christ.

(3.) *Thirdly*, *The rich privileges and prerogatives* that issue to persons sanctified. We have dignity for dignity, favour for favour, gracious qualifications for gracious qualifications in Christ. God anoints us all in his Son. As the ointment that was poured upon Aaron ran down to 'the skirts of his garment,' so the weakest Christian is stablished with grace by Christ. Grace runs from the Head to the poorest member, 'the hem of the garment.' Every one that doth but touch Christ, draws virtue and strength from him.

Quest. Why is it called here an anointing?

Ans. Because, as the holy anointing, Exod. xxx. 31-33, was not to be applied to profane uses, so neither are the graces of the Spirit (God being the author of them) to be slighted and undervalued by the professors* of them.

Quest. What are the virtues of this ointment?

Ans. *First*, It hath a *cherishing power*; it revives the drooping soul, and cheers a fainting spirit. When men are ready to sink under the burden of their sins, this easeth them.

Second, Anointing hath a *strengthening power*. It makes our limbs vigorous. So doth grace fortify the soul, nothing more. Our life is a combating life with Satan, and temptations of all sorts; therefore we need continual anointing to make us nimble and active in resisting our enemy. Oil hath a suppling quality; so the Spirit of God makes pliable the joints of the soul. It supports us with hidden strength, and enables us to encounter great oppositions, and to be victorious through Christ over all.

Grace is little in quantity, but it is mighty in operation. It carries the soul through difficulties; nothing can stand in the way of a gracious man, no, not the gates of hell. The spirit of grace that is in a Christian is stronger than he that is in the world. 'A grain of mustard seed,' the very least measure of true holiness, is stronger than the greatest measure of opposition. A Christian's strength lies out of himself. He never overcomes by his own power: 'He can do all things through Christ assisting him,' Philip. iv. 13. 'Otherwise he is a most impotent creature, unable to

* Qu. 'possessors'?—G.

do or suffer anything, ready to give over at the least trouble, and sink under every pressure of affliction.

Third, Again, ointment doth excellently delight and refresh our spirits; as we see the box in the gospel, when it was opened, the whole house smelled of it, John xii. 3. So grace is a wondrous sweet thing. Before we are anointed with the Spirit of Christ, with stablishing grace, what are we but a company of nasty, abominable persons in the eyes of God? All things are accursed to us, and we are accursed in whatever we do. God cannot look on us but as loathsome creatures; as the prophet saith, 'I would not so much as look on thee, if it were not for Jehoshaphat's sake,' 2 Kings iii. 14.

That which makes a man sweet is grace. This makes our nature, that is noisome and offensive in the nostrils of the Almighty, in itself, to become pleasant and amiable. A wicked man is a vile man, an ulcerous, deformed creature. Grace is of a healing nature wheresoever it is. This cures our spiritual distempers, beautifying the inner man, and making the whole frame of a Christian's carriage sweet and delectable.

(1.) *First, to God*, who loves the scent of his own grace, wheresoever he finds it.

(2.) *Secondly, to angels.* The conversion of sinners rejoiceth them, Luke xv. 10. When our custody is committed to their charge, how are they delighted with the beauty of holiness shining in us! The graces of God in his saints are a feast to them. The very name of a godly and gracious man 'is as a sweet ointment' everywhere, Cant. i. 3.

(3.) Holy men, when they are read of in stories, *what a savour do they cast in the church!* So far as a Christian is a 'new creature,' it makes him in love with himself, scorning to be so undervalued as to defile himself with base services. So far as a man is gracious, he gives himself to honourable employments. Being a vessel of grace, he improves his abilities to glorious uses, esteeming things below too mean for him.

Grace is a wondrous pleasant thing, offensive to none but to wicked men, that have no savour of God or goodness. It sweetens the soul, makes it delectable for Christ and his Holy Spirit to lodge in, as in 'a garden of spices.' A gracious man, that hath subdued his corruptions, is wondrous amiable, both to himself and to the communion of saints. His heart is 'as fine silver.' Everything is sweet that comes from him. Grace is full of comfort to a man's own conscience, the sense of which enlargeth the soul to all holy services.

Fourthly, An ointment hath another property, it consecrates persons to holy uses. Anointed persons are raised above the ordinary rank. The graces of God's Spirit elevate men above the condition of others with whom they live. Anointed persons are sacred persons, they are inviolable: 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm,' Ps. cv. 15. We wrong the 'apple of God's eye,' Zech. ii. 8, we offer indignity to Christ himself, if we hurt these. Indeed, nothing can hurt them; but God, by his overruling power, turns all for their good.

Lastly, An ointment is a royal liquor. It will be above all. So the graces of God's Spirit, where they are, will be uppermost, they will guide and govern all. As if a man have excellent parts, grace will rule these and make them serviceable to Christ his truth and members. If we have weakness and corruption, grace will subdue it by little and little, and never leave conflicting till it hath got the victory.

What are our souls without God's anointing? Dead, stinking, offensive

to God, to good men, and to ourselves. We cannot see with peace the visage of our own souls. Who can reflect seriously into his heart and life without horror, that hath no grace? A man that sees his conscience awakened without this anointing, what is he? Surely as the body without the soul. It is not all the excellencies of the soul laid upon a dead body, or all the goodly ornaments that bedecked it, can keep it from stinking, and being a loathsome object, because it wants the soul to quicken and enliven it to good employments. Of itself it is but a piece of earth. All the vigour and life that the body hath is communicated from the soul. They are beholden to our souls for many things. Put the richest ornaments whatsoever upon the body, and not the Spirit of grace upon the soul (to cherish and refresh the same, that it may appear lovely in God's sight), all is to no purpose.

Likewise this anointing hath relation to the persons anointed: kings, priests, and prophets. Christ is primarily anointed, and all our grace is derived from him. He teacheth us divine things by a divine light. The poorest Christian in the world, whose heart is right with God, sees good things with such convincing love, that he embraces them, and ill things with such a convincing hatred, that he abhors them. A man that lives without God in the world may talk, but he cannot do; he may speak of death, but he dares not die; he trembles to think of the last tribunal, and of resigning his soul into the hands of his Maker. Such an one may discourse of suffering, but when it comes to the point, his heart fails him. Oh! how he shrinks when danger approacheth. What indirect courses will he take to save his skin! How hardly is corrupt self brought under! How heavily do men come off in this point of doing and suffering for Christ, laying down all at his feet, and resolving to be disposed of at his pleasure in everything. Men speak much of patience and self-denial, but they do not practise them. These virtues shine not forth in their conversation, which is the shame of religion. Only a true Christian hath the right knowledge of the doing of things, and is able to speak a word 'in due season,' Isa. l. 4, to reprove, to admonish, to comfort. Every member in the communion of saints hath some qualification for the good of the whole body.

A faithful man is likewise spiritually anointed a priest to stand before God Almighty. He pours out his soul for himself and for others, having God's ear open at all times to his suits. Every sincere Christian is a favourite in heaven. He hath much credit there, which he improves for the welfare of the church here below. And he keeps himself as a priest, unspotted of the world. A true Christian is taught of God, and knows the meaning of that law of his, which prohibiteth priests so much as to touch defiled things. Therefore he studies innocency; he runs not after the course of the multitude, neither is carried away with the streams of the times. He will not converse familiarly with those that may stain him but so far as his calling leads him, lest he should thereby contaminate his spirit. A Christian priest hath his heart always to the 'holy of holies,' that so he may offer up thanks and praise to God, and offer himself a sacrifice to him. His endeavour is to kill and slay those beasts, those lusts, that lurk in his heart, contrary to the Almighty.

Lastly, He that is anointed by the Spirit is a king in regard of his great possessions, for all are ours. 'Things present, and things to come, life and death, prosperity and adversity,' all help us to heaven, Rom. viii. 38. Evil things are ours in advantage and success, though in disposition they be not ours, but have a hostile disposition in them. God overpowers the evil of things, and gives a Christian a living principle of grace, to suck sweet out

of sour, and draw good out of evil. What a king is this, that even the most terrible things are at his command, and work for the best unto him ! He conquers and brings under his greatest enemies, and fears neither death or judgment, nor the vengeance to come. Knowing God in Christ to be his reconciled Father, he rests assured all things else will be at peace with him. Others have kingdoms out of themselves, but in themselves they are slaves. Every lust leads them away captive. A Christian is such a king as hath a kingdom within himself. He hath peace and joy and rest from base allurements, and terrors of conscience. He walks by rule, and therefore knows how to govern all. The glory of his Maker is the chief thing he eyes, and to that he refers every action.

‘ Who hath anointed us, and sealed us.’

Anointing and sealing go together. The same God anoints us doth also seal us. Both are to secure us of our happy condition. Now Christ is the first sealed : John vi. 27, ‘ Him hath the father sealed.’ God hath set Christ apart from others, hath distinguished him, and set a stamp upon him to be the Messiah by the graces of the Spirit, whereof he was richly beautified, and by many miracles, whereby he shewed that he was the Son of God ; by his resurrection from the dead, by his calling of the Gentiles, and many other things.

Christ being sealed himself, he sealed all that he did for our redemption with his blood, and hath added for the strengthening of our faith outward seals, the sacraments, to secure his love more firmly to us.

But in this place another manner of sealing is to be understood. For here is not meant the sealing of Christ, but the sealing of us that have communion with him. The same Spirit that seals the Redeemer seals the redeemed.

Quest. What is the manner of our sealing by the Spirit ?

Ans. (1.) Sealing we know hath divers uses. First of all, *it doth imprint a likeness of him that doth seal.* When the king’s image is stamped upon the wax, everything in the wax answers to that in the seal, face to face, eye to eye, body to body. So we are said to be sealed when we carry in our souls the image of the Lord Jesus ; for the Spirit sets the stamp of Christ upon every true convert. There is the likeness of Christ in all things to be found in him. As the child answers the father, foot for foot, finger for finger in proportion, but not in quantity, so it is in the sealing of a believer. There is a likeness in the soul that is sealed by the Spirit to the Lord Jesus. There is understanding of the same heavenly supernatural truths ; there is a judging of things as Christ judgeth, a loving of that which he loves, and a hating of that which he hates ; a rejoicing to do that which he delights in, and a grief to commit anything that displeaseth his majesty. Every affection of the soul is carried that way that the affections of our blessed Saviour are carried, in proportion ; everything in the soul is answerable to him in its degree.

There is no grace in Christ, but there is the like in every Christian in some measure. The obedience of Christ to his Father, even to the death, is to be found in every true Christian. The humility whereby Christ abased himself, it is in every renewed heart. Christ works in the soul that receives him a conformity to himself. The soul that believes that Christ hath loved him, and done such great things for him, is ambitious to express Christ in all his ways. Being once in Christ, we shall delight to be transformed more and more unto him. To bear the image of the ‘ second Adam ’ upon our breasts, to make it appear that Jesus Christ lives in us, and that we ‘ live

not to ourselves, but to him that died for us,' 2 Cor. v. 15 ; to be meek and heavenly-minded as he was, talking and discoursing of spiritual things, going about doing good everywhere ; active for God, fruitful in holiness, doing and receiving all the good we are able, drawing others from this world to meditate of a better estate, labouring for the advancement of God's kingdom, and approving ourselves to him. This is one use of sealing, to imprint a likeness.

(2.) A *second* use of the seal is *distinction*. Sealing is a stamp upon one thing among many. It distinguisheth Christians from others, as we shall see after.

(3.) Again, it serves for *appropriation*. Men seal those things that are their own. Merchants, we see, set their stamp on those wares which they have or mean to have a right unto. It pleaseth God thus to condescend unto us, by applying himself to human contracts. He appropriates his own to shew that he hath chosen and singled them out for himself to delight in.

(4.) Sealing further serves to make things *authentic*, to give authority and excellency. The seal of the prince is the authority of the prince. This gives validity to things, answerable to the dignity and esteem of him that seals.

These are the four principal uses of sealing ; and God by his Spirit doth all these to his. He stamps his own image upon us ; he distinguisheth us from others, even from the great refuse of the world. God by his Spirit appropriates us to himself ; he makes us to be his, and shews that we are his. He likewise authoriseth us, and puts an excellency upon us, to secure us against all temptations. When we have God's seal on us, we stand firm in the greatest trial. 'Who shall separate us from the love of God ?' Rom. viii. 35. We dare defy all objections of Satan, and accusations of conscience whatsoever. A man that hath God's seal stands impregnable in the most tempestuous season ; for it is given for our assurance, and not for God's. The Lord knows who are his. He seals not because he is ignorant, but for our comfort and establishment.

Quest. Whether is the Spirit itself this seal, or the work of the Spirit, and the graces thereof wrought in us ?

Ans. I answer, the Spirit of God, where it is, is a sufficient seal that God hath set us out for himself ; for whosoever hath the Spirit of Christ, the same is his. He is the author of our sealing ; so that, except you take the Spirit for that which is wrought by the Spirit, you have not the comprehension of sealing, for that which the Spirit worketh is the seal. The Spirit goes always with his own mark and impression. Other seals, when they are removed from the stamp, the stamp remains still. But the Spirit of God dwells and keeps a perpetual residence in the heart of a Christian, guiding him, moving him, enlightening him, governing him, comforting him, doing all offices of a seal in his heart, till he hath brought him to heaven. The Holy Ghost never leaves us. It is the sweetest inhabitant that ever lodging was given to. He doth all the saving good that is done to the soul, and is perpetually with his own work in joy and comfort. Though he seem sometimes to be in a corner of the heart, and is not easily discerned, yet he always dwells in his sealed ones.

Quest. What is the stamp that the Spirit seals us withal ?

Ans. 1. The Spirit works in this order for the most part. First of all, the Spirit doth, together with the word (which is the instrument, and the chariot wherein it is carried) convince us of the ill that is in us, and the misery attending on us for the same. *It convinceth us of sin*, and the fearful estate we are in by that, and abaseth us thereupon. Therefore it is

called the 'spirit of bondage,' Rom. viii. 15, because it makes a man tremble and quake, till he see his peace made up in Christ.

Ans. 2. When he hath done this, then he *convinceth us of righteousness*, by a sweet light discovering the excellencies of the Lord Jesus, and the remedy in him provided for sinners. God opens the eye of the soul, to see the all-sufficiency of his Son's sanctification,* and inclines the heart to cast itself by faith upon him.

Ans. 3. When we are thoroughly convinced of the ill that is in us, and of the good that is in Christ, and are moved by the Holy Ghost to go out of ourselves, and embrace reconciliation in the Lord Jesus, then a super-added work is vouchsafed unto us; *for the Spirit daily perfecteth his own work.* He adds, therefore, after all, his seal, to confirm us; which seal is not faith; for the apostle saith, '*After you believed, you were sealed,*' Eph. i. 13, where we see the work of faith and sealing distinguished. First, the soul is set in a good estate, and then follows assurance and establishment.

Quest. But what needs confirmation when we believe? Is not faith confirmation enough: when a man may know by a private reflect act of the soul that he is in a state of grace?

Ans. This act of ours in believing is oft terribly shaken, and God is wondrous desirous that we should be secure of his love. He knows he can have no glory, nor we any solid peace else. Therefore when we by faith have sealed to his truth, he sees that we need further sealing that our faith be current and good; for all is little enough in the time of temptation; the single witness of our soul is not strong enough in great assaults. For sometimes the Spirit is so tossed and disquieted with temptations, that we cannot reflect aright on ourselves, nor discern what is in our own breasts without much ado. Therefore God first works faith to apply the promise,

'Whosoever believes in Christ shall be saved,' Acts ii. 21. I believe in Christ, therefore I shall be saved; and then sealeth this belief with an addition of his Holy Spirit; for this sealing is a work upon believing, an honouring of faith with a superadded confirmation.

Quest. How shall we know that there is such a spiritual sealing in us?

Ans. (1.) I answer, when we truly believe, the 'Spirit of adoption,' Rom. viii. 15, *reveals unto us that we are the 'sons of God'* by a secret whispering and intimation to the soul (which the believing heart feels better than I am able to express), saying, 'Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven.' There is a sweet kiss vouchsafed to the soul: the Lord refresheth it with the light of his countenance, and assures it that all enmity is now slain. I am thy salvation. Thou art for ever mine, and I am thine. Because thou believest, behold thou art honoured to be my child.

Ans. (2.) Again the 'Spirit of adoption,' *quickens and fills the soul with heavenly ejaculations to God*; it stirs up fervent supplications to cry, 'Abba, Father.' The soul when it truly believes, hath a bold and familiar speech to God.

There are two things in the prayer of a Christian that are incompatible with a carnal man: there is, first, an inward confidence; and secondly, an earnestness in the soul, whereby he goes to God as a child to his loving father, not considering his own worthiness or means, but the constant love that is borne to him.

This spiritual speech of God to the soul, and of the soul to God, is an evident demonstration of our truth in grace, because we can do that which no hypocrite in the world can attain to.

Ans. (3.) Thirdly, This sealing of the Spirit after we believe, is *known by*

* Qu. 'satisfaction'?—ED.

the work of sanctification which it effecteth in us. The Holy Spirit seals our spirits, by stamping the likeness of Christ upon us; so as when a man finds in his soul some lineaments of the heavenly image, he may know thereby that he is 'translated from death to life,' Col. i. 13. When he finds his heart subdued to humility and obedience, to such a holy and gracious frame as Christ's was, he may clearly discern that he hath something more than the 'old man' in him. When a man can say, Naturally I am proud, but now I can abase myself; naturally I am full of malice, now I can love and pray heartily for my enemies; naturally I am lumpish and dead-hearted, now I can joy in the Holy Ghost; naturally I am apt to distrust the Lord, and be discontented with my condition, now I can rest securely upon his promise and providence; sin hath been my delight, now it is my sorrow and heart-breaking; I find somewhat contrary to corruption in me, I carry the image of the 'second Adam' about me now; I say, whosoever hath this blessed change, may rest assured of his right to happiness. 'Know you not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' saith the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. A Christian that upon a thorough search finds something of Christ always in his soul, can never want a sweet evidence that he is 'sealed to the day of redemption.'

Ans. (4.) The fourth way is by the joy of the Spirit; which is the beginning of heaven as it were, and a possessing of glory before our time. There are few of God's children, but in the course of their pilgrimage, first or last, have this divine impression wrought in them, enlarging and ravishing their souls to joy in the Almighty.

Yet this is especially seen after conflict, when the soul hath combated with some strong corruption or temptation. 'To him that overcomes will I give of the hidden manna,' saith Christ, 'and a white stone, which none can read but he that hath it,' Rev. ii. 17; that is, he shall have assurance that he is in the state of grace, and the sweet savour of goodness itself shall be his portion. Usually God gives comfort after we have conflicted with some sinful disposition and have got the victory, as we see in Job. After God had exercised that champion a long time, at the last he discovered himself in a glorious manner to him, Job xlii. 12.

In the midst of afflictions, when a Christian is under great crosses, and God sees he must be supported with spiritual strength, or else he sinks, then he puts in with supply from above. When the creature cannot help us, the Creator of all things will. Thus Paul in the midst of the dungeon, being sealed with the Spirit, 'sang at midnight' when he was in the stocks, Acts xvi. 24, *seq.*: and so David in the midst of persecution; Daniel in a lion's den; the three children in the fiery furnace, &c. God doth as parents, smile on their little ones when they are sick and dejected. He reserves his choicest comforts for the greatest exigents.* When God hath a great work for his children to do, or some sharp suffering for them to undergo, as an encouragement beforehand, he oft enlargeth their spirits that they may be able to go through all; as our Saviour Christ had James and John with him upon the mountain, to strengthen them against his ensuing suffering.

Let us then examine ourselves by that which hath been delivered. Hath God spoken to thy soul, and said, 'I am thy salvation,' 'thy sins are remitted,' and thy person received into my favour? Doth God stir up thy spirit to call upon him, especially in extremity, and to go with boldness and earnestness to his throne? Surely this is an evidence of the seal of the Spirit; for whoever wants this cannot look God in the face when

* That is, 'exigencies.'—G.

distress is upon him. Saul in this case goes to the witch, and Ahithophel to desperate conclusions. Judas in extremity, we see what becomes of him. So every one that hath not this sealing of the Spirit (to whom God speaks not peace, 'by shedding abroad the love of Christ in his heart,' Rom. v. 5), must needs sink as lead in the bottom of the sea, which hath no consistence, till it come to the centre, to hell. Did you ever feel the joy of the Spirit in holy duties, after inward striving against your lusts, and getting ground of them? This is a certain sign that God hath sealed you.

Quest. But you will say, How can that be a seal? A seal continues with the thing, but the joy of the Spirit comes after the work of the Spirit, and abides not with us.

Ans. I answer, though we have not always the joy of the Spirit, yet we have the Spirit of joy; which, though it be not known by joy, yet may be discerned by its operation and working. A Christian may have a gracious work of the Spirit in him, and yet want the delight and joy of the Spirit. Therefore when that fails, look to thy sanctification, and see what resemblance of Christ is formed in thee. See if thy heart be humble and broken; if thou have a heavenly disposition like to thy Saviour. When the joy of the Spirit ceaseth, go to the work of the Spirit, and from the work of the Spirit to the voice of the Spirit. Canst thou cry to God with strong supplications? or if thou canst not pray with distinct words, canst thou mourn and groan? 'The Spirit helps our infirmities, when we know not what to ask,' Rom. viii. 26. This sighing and groaning is the voice of God's Spirit, which he will regard wheresoever he finds it. This made Job in his distress to swim above water.

If one be in the midst of extremity, and can seriously seek to God, it is an undoubted sign that such a one is sealed, especially when the corruption of his soul joins with Satan's temptations the more to afflict him. For a sinner in the midst of storms and clouds of darkness, then to cast anchor, and quiet his soul in Christ, argues great faith. So when a temptation closes with our corruption, and affliction yields ground to further the temptation, then to pray and rely securely upon God is a gracious sign. For Satan useth the afflictions we are in as temptations to shake our faith, as thus, Canst thou be a child of God, and be so exercised, so vilified, so persecuted? Didst thou belong to Christ, would ever these crosses and losses and miseries have befallen thee? Deceive not thyself! Thus affliction is a weapon to temptation, for Satan to help his fiery darts with, he having such a dangerous party in us—as our own corruption—doth us the more harm continually.

Quest. How shall a man know whether God hath a part in him?

Ans. I answer, If he can run against the stream; if he find his soul resisting Satan's temptations, and raising him above afflictions, standing out and combating with corruptions to the uttermost. When he can check his carnal heart that draws him downwards, saying, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Ps. xlii. 5, it is a good sign.

David found inward corruptions and outward afflictions joining with Satan's temptations, to depress his spirit; hereupon he chides his own soul, 'Why is it thus with thee? why art thou dejected in this manner?' And then he lays a charge upon it, 'Trust in God,' ver. 11. Whatsoever hardship we meet with in the world, yet there is hope in God still. Though we can find little comfort below, yet there are rivers of consolation above. It argues a gracious heart to quiet one's self in God in the worst times.

Use 1. I beseech you *let us labour to have our souls sealed with the Spirit of God*, to have further and clearer evidence of our estate in grace. It is a blessed thing to have Christ live in us. The enemies of our salvation are exceeding many, and how soon death or judgment may seize us, we know not. God will set none at his right hand but his sheep, those that have his own image on them. His best sheep have no outward mark, but an inward. The world sees not their beauty; 'The king's daughter is all glorious within,' Ps. xlv. 13.

How comfortably will the soul commend itself to Christ, when it finds itself stamped with the Spirit of Christ; when he can cheerfully say, Lord Jesus, receive my soul,' Acts vii. 50. Thou that hast redeemed me by thy blood, and sealed me by thy Spirit, acknowledge thine own likeness in me. Though it be not as it should be, yet there is somewhat of thine in me.

Beloved, we must not give false evidence of ourselves, as we must not against others. What a comfort hath a sealed soul in the hour of death, and in all extremities. What a difference is there between such a soul and others in the time of affliction, as in the time of pestilence, war, and persecution for Christ. The soul that is sealed knows that he is marked out for happiness in the world to come. Whatsoever befalls him in this life, he knows that God in all confusion of times knows his own seal, and that his destroying angel shall spare and pass over those that are marked, Ezek. ix. 4, *seq.* And though our bodies escape not, yet our souls shall.

Josiah we see was taken away from the evil to come; and Lot was delivered from the judgment of the Sodomites. If we partake not of the sins of the wicked, we shall never partake of their plagues. God hath a special care of his 'little ones' in this life; and if he take them away, yet their death is precious in his sight, Ps. cxvi. 15. He will not part with them but upon special consideration. He sees if they live it will be worse for them. Their precious souls are in continual danger. He sees it is best for them to be gathered to God, and the souls of perfect ones in heaven; therefore he provides a shelter to free them from all storms on earth.

And as he hath an eye over them in regard of outward miseries, so in respect of spiritual corruption and infection, as Rev. vii. 3. God's holy ones were 'sealed,' so many of such a tribe, and so many of such a tribe, to signify that God hath always some that he will keep and preserve from the leprous contagion of sin and antichrist; even in evil times God hath his 'little flock' still.

In the obscure ages of the church, nine hundred years after Christ, when there was little learning and goodness in the world, and Egyptian darkness had overspread the earth, God had always sealed ones, marked out for himself, whom he preserved from the danger of dark times. Why then should we be afraid of evil tidings? Let any affliction, or death itself, come, Christ will know his own stamp in us. He hath a book of remembrance for those that are his; and when he gathers his jewels, they will be highly set by, Mal. iii. 17. God in common calamities suffers his luggage, wicked men, to go to wreck; but he will secure his jewels, his darlings, whatever come of it. Labour therefore to be a sealed person.

Quest. But you will say, What shall I account of myself, if there be but a little sign of grace in me?

Ans. Be not discouraged. You know in wax, though the stamp be almost out, yet it is current in law notwithstanding. Put the case the stamp of the prince be an old coin, is it not current though it be cracked? Sup-

pose the mark of the Spirit should be dim and blurred, scarce discernible in us (this ought to be our shame and grief), yet some evidences of grace are still remaining ; there are some sighs and groans against corruption, which may continually support us. If we mourn in our spirits, and do not join with our lusts, nor allow ourselves in them, this is a divine impression, though it be, as it were, almost worn out. The more comfort we desire, the fresher we should keep this seal of comfort.

Use 2. And labour to grow in faith and obedience, that we may read our evidence clearly ; that it be not overgrown with the dust of the world, so as we cannot see it. Sometimes God's children have the graces of the Spirit in them, yet they yield so much to fears and doubtings, that they can read nothing but their corruption. When we bid them peruse their evidences, they can see nothing but worldliness, nothing but pride and envy, because they grieve the Holy Spirit by their negligence and distrust. Though there be a stamp in them, yet God holds the soul from it, and gives men up to mistake their estates, for not stirring up the graces of his Spirit in them.

Honour God by believing, and he will honour thee by stamping his Spirit more clearly on thee. What a comfort is it to have the evidence of a gracious soul at all times. When a man carries about him the mark of the Spirit, what in the world can discourage such a soul ? On the contrary, if a man have not something above nature in him, when death and judgment comes, how miserable is his condition ? If a man be a king or an emperor of the world, and have not an interest in Christ's righteousness, ere long he shall be stripped of all, and adjudged to eternal torments. Oh, the excellency of man's soul ; a jewel more to be prized than a prince's diadem.

It is the folly of the times to set up curious pictures, but what a poor delight is this in comparison of the ambition of a true Christian, to see the image of Christ stamped in his soul, to find the joy of the Spirit, and God speaking peace to his inner man.

The transforming of ourselves into the image of Christ is the best picture in the world. Therefore we should labour for the 'new creature,' that as we grow downward one way, we may grow up towards heaven another ; that as the life of nature decays, so the spiritual life may be more active and working. It should be our daily study, while we live in this world, to attain that 'holiness, without which no man shall ever see God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1, *et alibi*.

There is besides the common broad seal of God, his privy seal. What is the reason that many proud-hearted persons are damned ? The truth is, they are all for external contentments, and despise the ordinances of God. For though they stand upon their admission into the church, upon the common seals and prerogatives (which in themselves are excellent), yet relying on these things over-much betrays many souls to the devil in the time of distress. It is another manner of seal than the outward seal in the sacrament, that must settle peace in the conscience. When once the beginnings of faith are wrought in us, then we may with comfort think upon our receiving of the communion ; but the special thing to be eyed is the hidden seal. If the external means work no inward sanctification in our hearts, we shall be the worse rather than the better for them ; yet we must not be so profane as to think slightly of God's ordinances ; they are of great consequence.

For when Satan shakes the confidence of a Christian, and saith, Thou art an hypocrite, God doth not love thee, these help us to hold out. Why,

saith the soul, I can speak by experience that I have found the contrary ; the Lord hath removed my fears, he hath pardoned my sin and accepted my person ; he hath given me many precious promises to support my spirit. Here is the excellency of the sacrament. It comes more home to me ; it seals the general promises of God particularly to myself ; for finding the inward work of the Spirit in my heart, and God having strengthened my faith by the outward seal, I can defy Satan with all his accusations, and look death in the face with comfort. We should labour therefore to observe God's sealing days, when he uses to manifest himself to his people ; which though it may be every day (if we be spiritually exercised), yet it is in the Lord's day more especially ; for then his ordinance and his Spirit go together.

Now there is a sealing of persons, and of truths, besides the sealing of our estates, that we are the children of God. There is a sealing of every particular truth to a Christian. For where there is grace to believe the truth, God seals those truths firmly to that soul by the comforts of his Spirit. For example, this is a truth, ' Whosoever *believes* in Christ, shall not perish but have everlasting life,' John iii. 15. Now the same Spirit that stirs up the soul to believe this, seals it fast upon the conscience even to death. There is no promise, but upon our believing the same, it is sealed by God upon us ; for those truths only abide firm in the soul which the Holy Ghost sets on. What is the reason that many forget their consolations ? The reason is, they hear much, but the Spirit settles nothing on their hearts.

Quest. What is the reason that unlettered men many times stand out in their profession to blood, whereas those that are more able and learned yield to anything ?

Ans. The reason is, the knowledge of the one is set fast upon the soul ; the Spirit brings his seal and this man's knowledge close together ; whereas the learning and abilities of the other, is only a discursive thing, swimming in the brain without any solid foundation. Their knowledge of truths is not spiritual ; they see not heavenly things by heavenly, but by a natural light. Those that would not apostatise must have a knowledge 'suitable to the things they know ; they must see spiritual things by the Spirit of God. Therefore when we come to hear the word, we should not come with strong conceits of our own, to bring all to our wits, but with reverent dispositions and dependence upon God, that he would teach us together with his ministers, and close with his ordinances so as to fasten truths upon our souls ; else shall we never hold out ; for that which must stablish and quiet the soul, must be greater than the soul.

In time of tentations, when the terrors of the Almighty encompass us, when God lays open our conscience, and writes bitter things against us, those truths that most satisfy the soul at such a time must be above the natural capacity of the soul. Therefore, saith the apostle, ' It is God that establishes,' and God by his Spirit that seals us up unto the day of redemption ; because divine truths of themselves in the bare letter cannot stir up the heart. It is only the blessed Spirit (which is above our spirits) that must quiet the conscience in all perplexities. The Lord can soon still the soul when he settles spiritual truths upon it. Therefore go to him in thy distress and trouble of mind. Send up ejaculations to God, that he would seal the comfort revealed in his word to thy soul, that as it is true in itself, so it may be true to thee likewise.

.. This is a necessary observation for us all. Oh, we desire in the hour

of death to find some comforts, that be standing comforts, that may uphold us against hell and judgment. Know that nothing will do this but spiritual truths spiritually known ; but holy truths set on by the Holy Ghost upon the soul. Oft therefore enter into thine heart, and examine upon what grounds and motives thou believest. Consider well what it is thou believest, and upon what evidences, and with what light ; otherwise expect not to find solid peace.

Quest. What course may a Christian generally take when he wants comfort and inward refreshing ?

Ans. There are, in 1 John v., ‘ three witnesses in heaven and three in earth,’ to secure us of our estate in grace. The three witnesses in heaven are, ‘ the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.’ And the three witnesses in earth are, ‘ the Spirit, the water, and blood ;’ and these three on earth, and those three in heaven agree in one.* Now by the Spirit here is meant the feelings and sweet motions thereof. The water may well be the laver of sanctification ; and by blood is understood the sufferings of Christ for our justification.

When therefore we find that extraordinary seal I spake of before—the joys of the Spirit of God—that it is not in us, what shall we do ? Shall we despair then ? No. Then go to the water. When the witness of the Spirit is silent, go to the work of the Spirit ; see what gracious dispositions are found in thee.

Quest. Ay, but what shall we do if the waters be troubled in the soul, as sometimes there is such a confusion that we cannot see the image of God upon it in sanctification.

Ans. Then go to the blood. There is always comfort. Go to the ‘ fountain set open for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in,’ Zech. xiii. 1. That is never dry. If we find much sin upon our consciences, and no peace in our hearts, apply the blood of sprinkling. That will give rest.

When thou findest nothing but corruption and filthiness in thy soul, when thou seest neither joy nor sanctification of spirit, go to the Lord Jesus, and he will purge thee from all guilt, and wash thee with clean water. But to go on.

Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts.

This is the third word, borrowed from human contracts, to set forth God’s gracious work in the soul. Anointing we had before, and sealing. Now here is ‘ earnest.’ The variety of expression shews there is a great remainder of unbelief in the soul of man, which causeth the blessed Spirit to use so many words to manifest God’s mind, and assure the soul of salvation ; stablishing, anointing, sealing, and earnest.

And indeed so it is. Howsoever we in the time of prosperity, when all things go well with us, are apt to presume our estate is good, yet in the hour of death, when conscience is awaked, we are prone to nothing so much as to call all in question, and believe the lies and doubts and fears of our own deceitful hearts, more than the undoubted truth and promise of God. Therefore the Lord takes all courses to establish us. He gives us rich and precious promises ; he gives us the Holy Spirit to confirm us in those promises, he seals us with that Spirit, and gives us a comfortable ‘ earnest’ thereof, and all to settle these wretched and unbelieving hearts of ours. So desirous is God that we should be well conceited of him, that he loves us better than we love ourselves. He prizeth our love so much, that he labours by all means to secure us of our eternal welfare ; as knowing, that

* Cf. Note *ddd*, Vol. III. page 536.—G.

except we apprehend his love to us, we can never love him again, nor delight in him as we ought to do.

Now the Spirit is an 'earnest' of our inheritance in heaven. We are sons here indeed ; but we are not heirs invested into the blessed estate we have title to. God doth not keep all our happiness till another world, but gives us somewhat to comfort us in our absence from our husband. He gives us the Holy Ghost in our hearts, as a pledge of that glorious condition, which we shall one day have eternally with him. This is the meaning of the words.

But to shew you more particularly in what regard the Spirit is called an 'earnest.'

(1.) *First of all, you know an earnest is used for security of a contract.* So the Holy Spirit doth secure us of the blessed estate we shall have in heaven for ever.

(2.) *Secondly, An earnest is part of the bargain, a part of the whole which is secured.* Though it is a very little part, yet it is a part. So it is with the Spirit of God in its gracious work upon our hearts. The joy of the Spirit is a part of that full joy and happiness which shall be revealed hereafter to us.

(3.) *Thirdly, An earnest is little in comparison of the whole.* So the Spirit, in the work and graces thereof, is little in regard of that fulness which we shall have in heaven. But though an earnest be small in itself, yet it is great in security. A shilling secures a bargain of a thousand pounds, we see. We value an earnest not for its own worth so much as for that which it is a pledge of: for the excellent bargain and rich possession which it doth interest us into. So the Spirit of God with its blessed effects in the soul, the joy and peace of the Spirit, cheering and reviving perplexed sinners ; this earnest, I say, though it be little in itself, yet it is great to us in respect of the assurance that we have by it.

(4.) Again, it hath the term of an earnest, because an earnest is given *rather for the security of the party that receives it, than in regard of him that gives it.* So God gives us the 'earnest of the Spirit,' grace and comfort in this life, not so much for God. For he means to give us heaven and happiness when we are dissolved. As he hath passed his promise, so he will undoubtedly perform the same ; he is Lord and Master of his word. He is Jehovah that gives a being to his word, as well as to every other thing. But notwithstanding, having to do with mistrustful, unbelieving men, he is pleased to condescend to our weakness ; he stoops to the lowest capacity, and frames his speech to the understanding of the simplest soul, for which purpose this term of earnest is here borrowed.

In these respects the Spirit of God, together with the graces of it, and the comforts it brings (for they are not divided) is called an 'earnest.' And thus having cleared the point, we will observe this doctrine for our further instruction.

That a Christian ought to be, and may be assured of his interest in God ; because, as I have said before, an earnest is given not so much for God's sake, as for our sakes. This then must needs follow from hence. Either none have this earnest, or else those that have it may be assured of their comfortable condition. Otherwise God is fickle, and plays fast and loose with his children, which is blasphemy to affirm. Besides, if none have this earnest, then the apostle speaks false when he saith, 'God hath stablished us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit,' which is horrible impiety once to conceive.

Quest. If this be so, then either such as have this seal and earnest of the Spirit may be assured of their estate in grace or not. And if not, where is the fault? Will not God really and truly vouchsafe unto his people this earnest of the Spirit in their hearts?

Ans. Undoubtedly he will. He is desirous that we should be persuaded of his love in all things, and therefore we may and ought to be assured of his favour towards us. St John's whole epistle* contains little else but sundry marks and evidences how we may know that we are the children of God. Wherefore was Christ himself sealed of the Father to the office of Mediator? wherefore did he die and rise again? and wherefore doth he still make intercession for us in heaven? That we should doubt of God's love, whenas he hath given us that which is greater than salvation, yea, greater than all the world, even his own Son? No, certainly. Can we desire a more ample testimony of his favour than he hath already bestowed upon us? Is it not the errand of all God's mercies to bring us nearer to himself, that we should not doubt of his love, but rest securely upon him? Why then do we distrust the Almighty, who is truth itself, and never failed any?

Yet we must know that Christians have not at all times alike assurance of their interest; for there is an infancy of grace, where we are ignorant of our own condition. And there is a time of desertion, whenas God, to make us look better to our footing, leaves us a little, as if he would forsake us quite; when indeed he only withdraws his assistance for a while to make us cleave the closer to him. There be also certain seasons, wherein, though we are assured of God's favour, yet we have no feeling or apprehension of the same, which differeth in Christians much, according as they are more or less sensible of their estates. Some again use not that care and diligence in the use of means which God requires, whereupon they are justly deprived of that inward peace and comfort which others enjoy. There is a difference likewise in growth and continuance in Christianity. Some are strong Christians, and some weak; answerable whereunto is the difference of assurance of God's love usually in the hearts of his people. Nay, it is possible that for a long time the Lord's jewels, his redeemed ones, may want this blessed comfort.

For we must conceive there is a double act of faith.

First, An act whereby a poor distressed sinner casts himself upon God as reconciled to him in Christ.

Secondly, There is a reflect act, whereby knowing that we rely upon the truth and promise of the Almighty, we have assurance of his favour. Now a man may perform the one act and not the other. Many of the saints sometimes can hardly say that they have any assurance; but yet, notwithstanding, they will daily cast themselves upon the rich mercy and free grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Besides, There are many things which may hinder this act of assurance, because (together with believing) God may present such things to my mind as may so damp and disquiet my soul, that I cannot have any definitive thoughts about that which God would especially have me to think upon.

As when God would humble a man, he takes not away the Spirit of faith wholly from him, but sets before such a sinful creature his anger and sore displeasure, together with the hellish torments and pains of the damned as due to his soul, which makes him for the present to be in an estate little differing from the reprobate. So that he is far from saying he hath any

* Viz., 1st Epistle.—G.

assurance at that time. Yet, notwithstanding, he doth not leave off nor renounce his confidence, but casts himself upon God's mercy still. 'Though the Lord kill him, yet will he trust in him,' Job xiii. 15, although he sees nothing but terror and wrath before him. This God doth to tame our presumption, and to prepare us for the enjoyment of his future glory. If we feel not sense of assurance, it is good to bless God for what we have. We cannot deny but God offers himself in mercy to us, and that he intends our good thereby; for so we ought to construe his merciful dealing towards us, and not have him in jealousy without ground. Had we but willing hearts to praise God for that which we cannot but acknowledge comes from him, he will be ready in his time to shew himself more clearly to us. We taste of his goodness many ways, and it is accompanied with much patience. And these, in their natures, should lead us not only to repentance, but to nearer dependence on him. We ought to follow that which God leads us unto, though he hath not yet acquainted us with his secrets.

These things we must observe, that we give not a false evidence against ourselves. Though we have not such assurance as we have had, yet always there is some ground in us whereupon we may be comforted that we are God's children, could we but search into it. Let us not then be negligent in labouring for the same, and in the Lord's good time we shall certainly obtain it. It is the profaneness of the world that they improve not those helps which God hath afforded for this purpose.

Nay, they had rather stagger, and take contentment in their own ways, saying, If God will love me in a loose, licentious course, so it is; but I will not 'give diligence to make my calling and election sure,' 2 Peter i. 10; I will never bar myself of such profits and delights, nor forsake all, chiefly to mind spiritual things.

Whereas we ought constantly to endeavour for assurance of grace, that God may have honour from us, and we the more comfort from him again, that we may live in the world above the world, and pass cheerfully through the manifold troubles and temptations which befall us in our pilgrimage.

A man in his pure naturals will swell against this doctrine, because he feels no such thing, and thinks what is above his measure is hypocrisy. He makes himself the rule of other Christians to walk by, and therefore values and esteems others by his uncertain condition. But the heart of a Christian hath a light in it; the Spirit of God in his soul makes him discern what estate he is in.

In a natural man, all is dark. He sees nothing, because his heart is in a dungeon. 'His eye being dark, the whole man must needs be in blindness,' Mat. vi. 22, *seq.* All is alike to him; he sees no difference between flesh and spirit, and therefore holds on in a doubting hope, in a confused disposition and temper of soul, to his dying day.

But a Christian, that labours to walk in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, cannot rest in such an unsettled estate; he dares not venture his eternal welfare upon such infirm grounds. What! To depart this life, and be tossed in uncertainty, whether a man goes to heaven or to hell! What a miserable perplexity must such a soul needs be in! Therefore, he is still 'working out his salvation,' Phil. ii. 12, and storing up of grace against the evil day.

And well may this condition challenge all our diligence in labouring for it, because it is neither attained nor maintained without the strength and prime of our care. For the sense of God's favour will not be kept without keeping him in our best affections, above all things else in the world

besides ; without keeping of our hearts constantly close and near to him ; which can never be done without keeping a most narrow watch over our loose spirits, which are ever ready to stray from him, and fall to the creature.

It cannot be kept without exact walking, and serious self-denial. But what of that ? Can we spend labours to better purpose ? One sweet beam of God's countenance will requite all abundantly. A Christian indeed undergoes more trouble and pains, especially with his own heart, than others do ; but what is that to his gains ? One day spent in communion with God is sweeter than a thousand without it. What comforts so great as those that are fetched from the fountain ! Oh, woe to him that savours not these heavenly, but lingers after carnal comforts. It cannot but grieve the Holy Spirit, when the 'consolations of the Almighty' are either forgotten, or seem 'nothing to us,' Job xv. 11.

Quest. But why doth the Spirit thus establish and seal us, and convey grace to our souls ? Why doth that do all ?

Ans. 1. Because since the fall we have no principles of supernatural good in us ; and there must be a principle above nature to work grace in our barren hearts.

Ans. 2. Again, there is still remaining in us an utter averseness to that which is spiritually good in the best. Therefore there must be somewhat to overpower their corrupt disposition.

Quest. But why the Spirit rather than the Father or the Son ?

Ans. He comes from both, and therefore is fit to witness the love of both. The Holy Ghost is in the breast of the Father and the Son ; he knows their secret affections towards us. A man's spirit is acquainted with his inmost thoughts. The blessed Spirit is privy to the hidden love of God, and of Jesus Christ to us poor creatures, which we are strangers unto. Therefore none so fit to cheer and revive us.

Indeed, the love originally is from the Father ; but in regard of application of what is wrought by the Son, all proceeds from the Holy Ghost ; he receives grace from Christ for us. It must needs be so, because no less than the Spirit of God can quiet our perplexed spirits in time of temptation. For when the conscience of a guilty person is affrighted, what man can allay its fears ? That which must settle a troubled spirit must be a spirit above our own ; it being no easy thing to bring the soul and God together after peace is broken. We have both wind and tide against us in this business, grace being but weak, and corruption strong in the best of us.

We should labour therefore for heavenly spirits, and get something more than a man in us. There can never be any true peace attained till the Spirit from above settle it in our souls. An unsanctified heart is an unpacified heart. If there be a neglect of holiness, the soul can never be soundly quiet. Where there is not a clear conscience, there cannot be a calm conscience. That is a general rule. Sin, like Jonah in the ship, will raise continual storms both within and without a man. Take away God once, and farewell all true tranquillity. Spiritual comforts flow immediately from the Spirit of comfort, who hath his office designed for that purpose.*

Quest. But how shall we know that we have the Spirit ? How may a man know that he hath a soul ?

Ans. 1. By living and moving, by actions vital, &c. Even so may a man know he hath the Spirit of God by its blessed effects and operations.

* That is, 'The Comforter' (Παρακλητος).—G.

It is not idle in us, but as the soul quickens the body, so doth the Spirit the soul. Every saving grace is a sign that the Spirit is in us. Where-soever the Spirit dwells, he transforms the soul, and changes the party, like himself, to be holy and gracious. This is an undoubted symptom of the Spirit's habitation.

Ans. 2. Secondly, All spiritual graces are *with conflict*: for that which is true is with a great deal of resistance of that which is counterfeit. 'The flesh still lusts against the Spirit,' Gal. v. 17, and Satan cannot endure to see any man walk comfortably to heaven. What, thinks he, such a base creature as this is to have the earnest of salvation, to live here as if he were in heaven already; and to defy all opposite powers! Sure he shall have little peace this way. I will disquiet and vex his spirit. If he will go to heaven he shall go mourning thither.

This is the reasoning of the cursed spirit, whereupon he labours to shake our assurance and follow us with perplexities. The grace and comfort of a Christian is with much conflict and temptations, not only with Satan, but with his own heart; which, so long as guilt remains, will ever be misgiving and casting of doubts. There must, therefore, be a higher power than the soul of man to quiet and allay its own troubles.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, The Spirit enables us *to the practice of those duties which by nature we are averse unto*, as to love an enemy, to overcome our revenge, to be humble in prosperity, and contented with any estate. It draws our affection heavenward, and makes us delight in God above all as our best portion. He that hath the Spirit joys in spiritual company and employment; he hates sin, as being contrary to that blessed 'earnest' which he hath received. He looks on things as God doth, and approves of the same, as he is made more or less spiritual thereby, and so is brought nearer to that fountain of goodness—God himself. By them he esteems his best being to be in Christ, and therefore labours more and more to be transformed into his likeness. He values nothing in the world further than it condueth to his spiritual welfare. If all be well for *that*, he accounts himself happy, whatsoever else befalls him. Indeed, where the Spirit hath taken up his firm abode, that soul will little set by any outward change. Nothing can be very ill with a man that hath all well within him.

But that I may not distract your thoughts, you shall find divers properties of the Spirit of God in Rom. viii. 1, *seq.*, which I will briefly touch. *First*, it is said that the Spirit where it is '*dwells*' in that heart, as in a house; it '*rules*' wherever it comes. The Holy Ghost will not be an underling to our lusts. It repairs and makes up all our inward breaches. The Spirit prepares his own dwelling, he begets knowledge and acquaintance of God within us. He is not in us as he is in the wicked; he only knocks at their hearts, but hath not his abode there.

Secondly, When the Spirit comes into a man, he *subdues whatsoever is contrary to it, and makes way for itself by pulling down all strongholds which oppose it*. Therefore we are said 'to mortify the deeds of the flesh' by the Spirit, ver. 13. Those that by help of the Spirit have got the victory of sin, can in no wise be led as slaves by the flesh; as, on the contrary, he that cherishes corruption and crucifies it not (by spiritual reasons, but out of civil respects to be freed from aspersions, and to uphold his reputation or the like) is a mere * stranger to the Holy Ghost's working.

Thirdly, As many as are 'led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.' As the angel went before the Israelites from Egypt into Canaan, so the

* That is, 'altogether.'—G.

Spirit of God goes along with his in all their ways, removing all lets and strengthening against all impediments in their Christian race. It conducts us sweetly, not violently, as the devil doth those that are possessed with the Spirit.* We are led strongly indeed, because it is against corruption within us, and opposition from without us ; but yet sweetly, to preserve the liberty and freedom of the soul still. We are all by nature like children or blind men. We cannot lead ourselves. The Spirit must be our conduct[or], or we shall wander and go aside presently. Those therefore that enjoy the same, submit themselves to its guidance and direction in all things.

Fourth, Again, The Spirit stirs up sighs and groans, that cannot be expressed. When we are not able to pray, or lay open the griefs of our souls, if we can but send our sighs and groans to heaven, they shall be accepted ; for God will hear the voice of his own Spirit, from whence these sobs and complaints come. How should we be overwhelmed with despair, did not the Spirit support us ? Those, therefore, that in extremity have nothing to comfort them, yet are able to send forth holy desires to the Lord, may certainly conclude that the Spirit is in them.

Fifth, Again, The Spirit makes us mourn and wait for the adoption of sons. The same Spirit that sanctifies a sinner, witnesses to his soul that God is his. Worldlings grieve not for their absence from Christ, neither at all long they for his blessed appearing, because their heaven is here. They mourn not for the hidden distempers and secret imperfections of their souls ; whereas the godly are much in condemning themselves for that which no creature can tax them of. Want of communion with their Maker, straitness of spirit, distraction in duty, that they cannot obey as they would—these exceedingly deject them, yet wait they will without despair till God have finished their course. There is such a divine power in faith, as a very little beam of it, having no other help than a naked promise, will uphold the soul against the greatest discouragements, and keep it from utter sinking.

Indeed, 'waiting' is a difficult duty, both in regard of the long day which God usually takes before he performs his promise, as also by reason of the untowardness of our natures, being ready to be put off by the least frown, did not God by a Spirit of constancy preserve the soul immoveable in all conditions, whether present or to come, so as it fails not before him : and why ? Because it knows full well that God, in whom it rests, is unchangeably good.

Alas ! we are at the best but light and vain creatures, till the divine Spirit fix and settle us. The firmer our union is here, the surer will be our standing in all danger ; for what can daunt that soul, which in the greatest troubles hath made the great good to be his own ? Such a person dares cheerfully encounter any opposition, as having a Spirit higher than the world about him ; and seeing all but God far beneath him. Though I might name more, what a many sweet evidences are here to manifest a soul truly acted and led by the Spirit of God !

Quest. How may a man obtain this blessed guest, to lodge in his soul and rule over him ?

Ans. First, Attend upon the teaching of the gospel. 'Received ye the Spirit by the hearing of the law, or of faith preached ?' saith the apostle, Gal. iii. 2. The Spirit is usually given with a clear unfolding of Christ.

Secondly, Omit likewise no means wherein the Spirit is effectual ; for as a man walking in a garden, though he think not of it, draws a sweet scent of the flowers, so the word of God, being dictated by the Spirit, leaves a

* Qu. 'his spirit' ?—Ed.

heavenly savour in such as converse with it. The spirit of a man is like water that runs through minerals. We see baths have their warmth from minerals that they run through. So it is with the soul in its holy employments. When it hath to deal with good books and good company, it draweth a spiritual tincture from these things, and is bettered by them.

Thirdly, Withal, take heed that thou 'grieve not the Holy Ghost,' for that will cause an estrangement of his presence in thy soul.

Quest. How is that done?

Ans. By cherishing contrary affections and lusts to his blessed motions, as when we hear the word, but resolve never to obey it. When God knocks at our hearts for entrance, oh how readily should we set open these everlasting doors to receive him! If Christ be willing to give us his Spirit, it must needs be our own fault if we remain carnal; there being nothing in a manner required to be spiritual, but not to resist the Spirit. What greater indignity can we offer to the blessed Comforter, than to prefer our base lusts before his motions, leading to happiness? What greater unkindness can a man do his friend, than to slight his loving direction, and embrace the counsel of a professed enemy? The Holy Ghost presses such forcible reasons upon us of heavenly-mindedness and despising earthly things, that it is more than evident none are damned in the bosom of the church but those that set a bar against the Spirit of God in their hearts. Such are damned because they will be damned, that, say the preacher whatever he will, think it better to be as they are, than to entertain such a guest as will mar and alter all that was there before.

Take heed, therefore, of resisting the Spirit in the least kind; sad* not his blessed motions, but make much of the same by yielding subjection thereunto. Lay thy soul often before the Spirit; suffer thyself to be moulded and fashioned by his gracious working. Oh consider how high the slighting of a gracious motion reaches, even to the contemning of God himself. Certainly as we use these, so would we use the Spirit himself, were he [not] invisible to us.

And converse not with carnal company; for what wilt thou gain there but sorrow to thine heart, if thou belongest to God; and as holy Lot, vex thy righteous soul with the unclean conversation of these Sodomites? It is an undoubted sign of a man destitute of grace, not to care at all what company he frequents.

Fourthly, Seeing the Holy Ghost is promised to them that ask it, *beg earnestly, for it is at God's hands.* This is the 'good thing' that God gives. Christ seems to insinuate as much, saying, What can I give you better than the Holy Ghost? Yet this 'will I bestow on them that ask it,' Mat. vii. 7, *seq.*; for indeed that is the seed of all grace and comfort. A world of promises is included in the promise of giving the Spirit.

Labour therefore, above all gettings, to obtain this high prerogative. The comforts of the Spirit are above all earthly comfort, and the graces of the Spirit enable to encounter the greatest temptations whatsoever. A man that hath this stands impregnable. God may withdraw his favour for a time, to humble us; but to quench the work of the Spirit, once wrought in the soul, all the power of all the devils in hell cannot stir it. This will carry us through all oppositions and difficulties in our Christian race. Let a man never baulk or decline a good cause for anything that he shall suffer; for the seal and earnest of the Spirit is never more strong than when we are deprived of all other comforts save that alone.

* That is, 'sadden,' as elsewhere 'dead,' for 'deadened.'—G.

What makes a man differ from himself and from other men but this ? Take a Christian that hath the 'earnest of the Spirit,' you shall have him defy death, Satan, the world, and all. Take another that is careless to increase his 'earnest,' how weak and feeble will you find him, ready to be overcome by every temptation, and sink under the least burden.

The apostle Peter, before the Holy Ghost came upon him, was astonished with the voice of a weak damsel ; but after, how forward was he to suffer anything.*

Labour not then to be strengthened in things below, neither value thyself by outward dependences. Alas ! all things here are perishing. If thou hast grace, thou hast that which will stand by thee when these fail. The Comforter shall never be taken away. What are all friends in the world to the Holy Ghost ! This will speak to God for us when no creature dares look him in the face. The Spirit will make requests with 'sighs and groans' in our behalf ; and we may be sure we shall be heard when that intercedes for us. What prison can shut up the Spirit of God ? Oh gain this, whatever thou lovest ; prefer it to thy chief treasure. The very 'earnest' of the Spirit is far more precious than the creature's full quintessence. If the promises laid hold on by faith quicken and cheer the soul, what shall the accomplishment of them do ! If the giving a taste of heaven so lift our souls above all earthly discouragements, how glorious shall we shine forth when the Spirit shall be all in all in us ! This will make us more or less fruitful, more or less glorious in our profession, and resolute in obedience through our whole course.

If we want this, we can never be thankful for anything ; for it is the love of God that sweetens every mercy to us ; and indeed is more to be valued than any blessing we enjoy besides : which if we eye not or are ignorant of, what can we expect but wrath and displeasure in all that befalls us ? Oh it is sweet to see favours and benefits issuing from grace and love. They do not always prove mercies which men oftentimes esteem to be so. We can have no solid comfort in any condition, further than God smiles upon us in it. What a fearful case must that then be, wherein a man cannot be thankful for what he hath.

Every condition and place we are in should indeed be a witness of our thankfulness to God. We must not think life was given only to live in. Our life should not be the end of itself, but the praise of the Giver thereof. It is but fit that we should refer all that is good to his glory, who hath joined his glory to our best good, in being glorified in our salvation ; which while we question and doubt of, it is impossible ever to be cheerful towards him.

Besides, how can a man suffer willingly, that knows not that God hath begun any good work in him ? How lumpish and dead is he under the cross without this assurance ! It is worth the considering, to see two men of equal parts under the same affliction, how quietly and calmly the one that hath interest in Christ will bear his grievances, whereas the other rages as a fool, and is more beaten. A man will endure anything comfortably, when he considers it proceeds from his Father's good pleasure. This breeds a holy resigning of ourselves to God in all estates ; as Eli, the 'will of the Lord be done.' His will is a wise will, and ever conduceth to his people's good.

Fearst thou danger ? Cry unto God, 'I am thine,' 'Lord, save me.' I am the price of thy Son's blood, let me not be lost. Thou hast given me

* Cf. Mat. xxvi. 71 with Acts v. 41.—G.

the earnest of thy Spirit, and set thy seal upon me for thine own, let me neither lose my bargain nor thou thine.

Hence it is that God's child can so easily deny himself in temptations and allurements which others sink under. Oh! saith he, the Holy Ghost hath 'sealed' me up 'to the day of redemption,' shall I grieve and quench the same for this base lust? It is a great disparagement to prefer husks before the provision of our Father's house. When we give content to Satan and a wretched heart, we put the Holy Ghost out of his office.

Again, without this we can never comfortably depart this life. He that hath the earnest of the Spirit in his heart, may laugh Satan in the face, and rejoice at death's approaching, as knowing there will be an accomplishment then of all the bargain. Then the marriage will be perfectly consummate; then shall be the great year of jubilee, the Sabbath of rest for ever. He that lives much by faith will find it no hard matter to die in it. But let a man stagger and doubt whether he belong to God or no, what a miserable case will he be in at the time of dissolution! Death, with the eternity of torment after it, who can look it in the face without the assurance of a happy change? This makes men, that see no greater pleasure than the following of their lusts, resolve of swimming in worldly delights still. Alas! say they, I had as good take this pleasure as have none at all; what shall become of me hereafter, who knows?

NOTES.

(a) P. 117.—'They have seven sacraments to our two,' viz., (1) The Supper, (2) Baptism, (3) Marriage, (4) Penance, (5) Confession, (6) Extreme Unction, (7) Orders.

(b) P. 117.—'There are divers readings of the words.' Instead of 'all the promises,' the Greek is 'as many promises.' Cf. Dr Hodge *in loc.* for exposition, and Alford and Webster and Wilkinson for 'variations' of text. G.