

FAITH TRIUMPHANT.*

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, they were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.—HEB. XI. 13.

THIS chapter is a little book of martyrs. It discovers the life and death of the holy patriarchs, and by what means God's children are brought into possession of that that they have an interest and right unto upon earth. It is by faith. By faith we do and suffer all that we do and suffer, all that God hath ordained us to go through, till he have brought us and invested us to heaven, which is prepared for us.

In the former part of the chapter there is an induction, the instances of particular blessed patriarchs; and after he had named diverse particulars, he sums them up in this general, 'All these died in faith.'

In this verse there is,

First, The general set down, 'All these died in faith.'

And then the particular unfolding of this. 'They received not the promises, having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.' He sets down their faith particularly, hereby setting down what might hinder it and yet did not hinder it, 'the not receiving of the promises.' 'They received not the promises, and yet they believed the promises;' that is, the things promised. They were afar off, and yet they saw them.

'They saw them.' That is the first degree.

'They were persuaded of them.' That is the second.

'They embraced them.' That is the third.

'They confessed they were pilgrims and strangers.' That is the fourth.

'All these died in faith.'

[†] *There is one faith from the beginning of the world.* As there is one Christ, one salvation, so there is one uniform faith for the saving of our souls. We hope to be saved by Jesus Christ as they were. I do but touch that.

* 'Faith Triumphant' forms 'five' of the Sermons of 'Evangelical Sacrifices' (4to, 1640). Its separate title-page is as follows:—'Faith Triumphant. In five Sermons, on Heb. 11. 13. By the late Learned and Reverend Divine, Rich. Sibbs. Doctor in Divinity, M^r of Katherine Hall in Cambridge, and sometimes Preacher to the Honourable Society of Grayes-Inne. Luke 7. 50. And hee said to the woman, thy faith hath saved thee, goe in peace. London, Printed by T. B. for N. Bourne, at the Royall Exchange, and R. Harford, at the guilt Bible in Queenes-head Alley in Pater-noster-Row. 1639.'

Then again, here is implied *a continuance and perseverance in faith*. 'All these died in faith;' that is, they lived in faith and by faith till they died, and then they died in faith. Faith first makes a Christian, and then after, he lives by faith. It quickens the life of grace, and then he leads his life by that faith. He continues in it till he come to death, which is the period of all, and then he dies by that faith. But of perseverance to the end and the helps to it, I spake at large upon another occasion, therefore I omit it.* 'All these died in faith.' Faith carried them along all their lifetime till death itself. Now that faith that helped them through all the difficulties of this life, that faith by which they lived, in that faith they died.

'They died in faith.'

In the faith of the Messiah, in faith of Canaan, in faith of heaven. For the patriarchs, they had not Canaan till many hundred years after. It was a type of heaven. They had not Christ till some thousands of years after. So they died in faith of Christ, of Canaan, and of heaven. The benefits by Christ is the upshot of all this. 'They died in faith.' He doth not say how otherwise they died, because it is not material whether they died rich or poor, great or mean. God takes no great notice of that, nor a Christian takes no great notice of it. 'They died in faith.' Whether they died a violent or a peaceable death it is no matter; they died blessed, in that they died in faith. 'They died in faith,' which in other phrase is, 'to die in the Lord,' 'to sleep in the Lord;' because whosoever dies in faith, dies in Christ. Faith lifts them up to Christ, and they sleep in Christ. It is a happy thing to die in Christ. Now those that die in faith, they die in Christ. 'Blessed are those that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours,' saith the apostle, Rev. xiv. 13.

'All these died in faith.'

They continued in faith to death, and then they ended their days in faith. When death closed up the eyes of their bodies, then with the eye of faith they looked upon Christ, upon God in Christ reconciled to them. The point is clear, that

Doct. The grace of faith, it is such a grace that it carries a Christian through all the passages of this life.

It enableth him to hold out to the end, to suffer those things that he is to suffer, and in the end by it he dies. And when all things else leave him in death, when riches leave him, when friends leave him, when honour and great places leave him, when his life and senses leave him, when all leave him, yet faith will never leave him till it have put him in full possession of heaven, and then it ceaseth when it hath done the work it hath to do, which is to bring us to heaven. Then it is swallowed up in vision and sight, and hope into fruition, and enjoying of the thing hoped for. It is a blessed grace, that stands by us, and goes along with us, and comforts us in all the passages of this life, and even in death itself, in those dark passages. It never forsakes us till it have put us in possession of heaven.

'All these died in faith.'

Quest. What is it to die in faith?

Ans. To die in faith, as I said, is to die in the Lord by faith; and it looks to the time past, present, to come.

1. *To the time past.* To die in faith is to die in assurance of the forgiveness of sins, when by faith and repentance we have pulled out the sting of sins past. For faith looks upon Christ, and Christ hath taken the sting

* The perseverance of the saints will be found frequently discussed by Sibbes throughout his works. For references see the Index.—G.

of death in his own, and death ever since hath been stingless and harmless to his members. He hath disarmed it. Death had nothing to do to kill Christ. Now seizing upon him, who should not have died, who was our surety, death hath lost his sting. So that to die in faith is to die in assurance of forgiveness of sins past by Christ.

2. *For the present.* In the present instant of death, to die in faith is to see God reconciled to us in Christ, and with the eye of Stephen, to see Christ ready to receive our souls, Acts vii. 59, to see Christ sitting at the right hand of God, to break through all that is between, to see ourselves sitting 'at the right hand of God, in heavenly places with Jesus Christ,' Eph. i. 20. This is to die in faith; to see ourselves there with our head, where we shall be ere long. Faith makes things to come present. To die in faith is to die in assurance of that blessed salvation presently, even at that instant of time, at the parting of soul and body, that Christ will receive our souls, that are redeemed with his precious blood, that cost him so dear. He will not suffer the price of his blood to miscarry. Faith apprehends that Christ will go down with us to the grave. As God said to Jacob, 'Fear not to go down into Egypt; I will go with thee,' Gen. xli. 3, so God would not have us fear to go down into the grave, those dark cells and dungeons; God will go down with us. 'Our flesh shall rest in hope,' Ps. xvi. 9, because Christ, our surety, was raised out of the grave, and sits in heaven in glory and majesty. Therefore 'our flesh rests in hope;' as it is, Ps. xvi. 10, 'Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.' Therefore our flesh rests in hope till the resurrection; because God did not suffer his Holy One to see corruption. This is to die in faith.

3. *And for the time to come.* To die in faith is by faith to overcome all the horror of death. Death is a terrible thing; and of all the passages wherein we have occasion to use faith, it is most exercised in death. It requires more to die in faith than to live in faith; for then the soul it looks to the horror of the grave, it sees nothing there but dust and rottenness. It looks to the pangs of death, sense and nature doth. And likewise the soul, so far as it hath nothing but nature in it, it looks to the dissolution of two friends, the body and the soul, who have been long coupled together, and their parting is bitter. And then it looks to the parting with friends here, with whom they have lived lovingly and sweetly. In death, nature sees an end of all employment in this world, of all the comforts of this life, &c., and therefore it is a terrible thing. Now to die in faith is to die in conquering all these, with a spirit above all these. What doth faith in the hour of death? It overcomes all these, and all such like.

For when the soul by faith considers the horror of the grave as the chambers of death, faith considers they be but resting places for the body, that it sleeps there awhile till the day of the resurrection, and then they meet again. And it considers that the flesh rests there in hope of a glorious resurrection; and faith sees a time of restoring, as St Peter saith, 'There shall be a day of restoring of all things,' Acts iii. 21. There is a day of refreshing and restoring to come, when those eyes wherewith we now look up to heaven, and those feet that carry us about our callings, and about the exercises of religion, and those hands that have been lift up to God, that body that hath been the vessel of the soul, shall be restored, though it be turned to dust and rottenness. Faith seeth the faithfulness of God, that God in Christ hath taken these bodies of ours in trust. 'I know whom I have believed, and he is able to keep that I have committed

to him,' 2 Tim. i. 12. I have committed to him my soul, my body, my whole salvation. I know he is able to keep that I have committed to him. 'And I know that my Redeemer liveth,' saith Job. It was his comfort in all extremity, that he should see him with his very same eyes.

And then for the pangs of death, which nature trembles and quakes at, faith considers of them as the pangs of child-birth. Every birth is with pangs. Now, what is death but the birth to immortality, the birth of glory? We die to be born to glory and happiness. All our lifetime we are in the womb of the church, and here we are bringing forth glory. Now death, I say, it is the birth-day of glory, and a birth is with pain. Faith sees it is a birth-day. It sees that presently upon it there shall be joy. As with a woman after she hath brought 'a man-child into the world,' John xvi. 21, so it comforts itself against the pangs of death. Again, faith sees them short, and sees the glory after to be eternal. It is a little dark passage to an eternal glorious light.*

Then for the dissolution and parting of two friends, soul and body, faith sees that it is but for a while, and then that that parting is a bringing in a better joining; for it brings the soul immediately to her beloved, our Saviour Christ Jesus; and faith sees that it is not long till body and soul shall be re-united again for ever, 'and they shall be for ever with the Lord.'

And then for friends. Faith sees, indeed, that we shall part with many sweet friends; but faith saith we shall have better friends. We go to God, we go to the souls of perfect men, we go to [an] innumerable company of angels, Heb. xii. 22, we go to better company a great deal.

And for all the employments we have here, that we have below, faith sees that there will be exercise in heaven. We shall praise God with angels and all the blessed and glorious company of heaven. So consider what you will that is bitter and terrible in death, faith conquers it. It sees an end of it, and opposeth to it better things; because, notwithstanding death cuts off many comforts, yet it brings better. It is a blessed change; it is a change for the better every way. Faith sees that there is a better place, better company, better employment, better liberty,—all better. And, which is more, to die in faith is to die in assurance that all is ours, as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. iii. 16. Even death is ours. Paul is yours, Christ is yours, death is yours. This is our comfort when our days shall be closed up with death. Faith believes that death is ours, that is, it is for our good; for, as I said, it brings us to our wished haven; it brings an end to all misery, an end to our sins, an end to our pain, an end to our vexations, an end to our discomfords, and to all scandals here below; an end to all the temptations of Satan. 'The Lord will wipe all tears from our eyes then,' Rev. vii. 17. And it is the beginning of happiness that shall never end. So, indeed, faith sees that the day of death is better than the day of birth. When we come into misery, it is not so good as when we go out of misery, and enter into happiness. This is to die in faith. For the time past to see the forgiveness of all our sins, to see the sting pulled out; and for the present to look to Christ, ready to receive our souls, and to see him present with us to comfort us, to strengthen us against the pangs of death; and for the time to come, by faith to overlook the grave, to overlook death and all, and to see all conquered in Christ; to see ourselves in heaven already with Christ. And thus a Christian being upheld with this grace, he ends his days in faith.

* Cf. note c, Vol. I. p. 350.—G.

Use. This should stir us up, if this be so, to get this grace of faith; above all graces, to get assurance that we are in Christ Jesus, that so we may live with comfort, and end our days with comfort, and live for ever happy in the Lord. It is only faith, and nothing else, that will master this king of fears,—this giant that subdues all the kings of the earth to him. This monster death he outfaceth all (a). Nothing can outface him but faith in Christ, and that will master him. As for your glorious speeches of pagans, and moral, civil men, they are but flourishes, vain, empty flourishes. Their hearts give them the lie. Death is a terrible thing when it is armed with our sins, and when it is the messenger of God's wrath, and citeth us before God. It is the end of happiness and the beginning of torment. When we look upon it in the glass of the law and in the glass of nature, it is the end of all comforts. It is a curse brought in by sin. It is a terrible thing. Nothing can conquer and master it but faith in Christ. Oh, let us labour, therefore, to get it while we live, and to exercise it while we live, that we may live every day by faith.

It is not any faith that we can die by. It must be a faith that we have exercised and tried before. It is a tried, a proved faith, that we must end our days by. For, alas! when death comes, if we have not learned to live by faith before, how can we end our days in faith? He that, while he lives, will not trust God with his children, that will not trust God with his soul; he that will not trust God with his estate, but will use ill means, and put his hand to ill courses to gain by; he that will not trust God for his inheritance, that will not 'cast his bread upon the waters,' Eccles. xi. 1, and trust God to see it again; he that will not do this while he lives, how shall he trust God for body and soul and all, in death? He cannot do it. It must be a faith that is daily exercised and tried, whereby we must commit our souls to God when we die, that we may die in that faith; that we may be able to say, All the days of my life I had experience of God's goodness; I depended upon him, and I have found him true in all his promises. I committed myself and my ways to him, and I found him good and gracious in blessing me. I found him giving me a good issue; and now I am strengthened thereby to trust God, that hath been so true to me all my lifetime. I will trust him now with my soul that he will never fail me.

Let us all labour for this faith; for though it cannot be said of us that we die rich, or that we die great in the world, perhaps we may die a violent death, as there be divers diseases that lead the body into distempers. It is no matter how we die distempered, and in any estate, so it may be said of us we die in a blessed faith.

Obj. But it may be objected that all God's children die not in faith, because some die raging and distempered, and in such fits.

Ans. But we must know that they die in faith notwithstanding all that, for then they are not themselves. The covenant between God and them was made before: they have given up themselves to God, and committed their souls to God before; for a Christian gives up himself every day. He commits himself, soul and body, continually to God, as a blessed sacrifice of a free-will offering; so he learns to die daily, daily labours to live in the estate he would die in. He ought to do thus; and many Christians do thus. Therefore, notwithstanding these distempers, the covenant between God and the soul remains still, and he dies in faith. It is said here, they 'all died in faith.' He saith not they all died in feeling. A man may die in faith, and yet not die in feeling; and sometimes the strongest faith is with the least feeling of God's love. Feeling may be reserved sometimes

for heaven. Yet notwithstanding, we must not take it so as if there were no feeling where there is faith; for there was never faith yet but upon the touch of faith, the soul drew some strength and some inward feeling. Though it be not discerned of the soul in regard of the immoderate desire of the soul to have more, yet there is always so much feeling, and strength, and comfort, that supports the soul from despair, take the child of God at the worst. Therefore when I speak of feeling, I speak of a glorious demonstration that God sometimes takes away from his children. They died in faith, though not alway in feeling of it; they died in faith, though not alway by a fair death or in a comely manner outwardly, to the applause of the world. It is no matter for that; they all died in faith, and that is sufficient.

It is the desire of God's children that they may die in faith and die in Christ, as they have lived in faith and lived in Christ. Faith is a blessed grace. By it we live, by it we stand, by it we conquer and resist, by it we endure, by it we die, by it we do all those worthy matters we do, in spite of the devil and his kingdom. This is that excellent grace of faith by which we live and by which we die.

'These all died in faith.'

For they lived as they died, and died as they lived. It is a usual general rule, as men live, so they die. He that lives by faith, dies by faith. He that lives profanely, dies profanely. If we suffer the devil to lead us and abuse us all the time of our life, we must think God in just judgment will give us up, that he shall delude us and abuse us at the hour of death. Carnal confidence disposeth men to think they shall step out of their filthy blasphemous course of life, out of their sinful cursed condition, to leap to heaven presently. It is no such matter. Alas!* heaven it must be entered into on earth. There must be a fitting and preparing time on earth for heaven. We must look to die as we live. There is but one example of a man that died by faith that did not live by faith; that is, the good thief; and yet that little time of life we see how fruitful it was. But the rule is, all that will die in faith must live in faith; and usually men are affected and disposed, and their speeches and carriage are on their death-bed as they were when they lived, God in just judgment giving them up to that course.

Many wish that they may live in popery, and enjoy the liberty of that carnal religion, but they would not die by that religion. They live by that religion, and die by ours. When they have had the sweetness and liberty that is given them there to sin, and then open all in confession and be clean, and then sin again; and such easy courses they have that betrays thousands of souls to damnation. Now this is their course: when conscience is awakened, they fly to salvation by Christ, if they understand any thing at all, or else they die desperate, if they look to be saved by that religion as they live by it. If we look to die by faith, we must live by it.

'These all died in faith, not having received the promises.'

For God promised them Canaan, and they died many hundred years before. Their posterity came into Canaan. He promised them Christ, and they died long before Christ came. He promised them heaven, and they entered not into heaven till death. So they received not the promises, that is, they received not the things promised; for else they received the promise, but not that that was promised. They received not the type, Canaan, nor the things typified,—Christ and heaven. This is

* Another example of Sibbes's peculiar use of 'alas'—G.

added as a commendation of their faith, that though they received not the things that they looked for, yet notwithstanding they had such a strong faith, that they continued to live by faith and died in faith. The promises here are taken for the blessed things promised.

This should teach us this lesson, that God's promises are not empty shells; they are real things. And then, whatsoever God promiseth it is not barely propounded to the soul, but in a promise. It is wrapped up in a promise. He gives us not empty promises nor naked things; but he gives us promises of things which we must exercise our faith in, in depending upon him for the performance of them till we be put in possession. For here all the blessings they looked for is wrapped up in the name promises. 'They received not the promises.' The meaning is, they received not Canaan; they received not Christ in the flesh, nor life everlasting. Now the believing soul, it looks upon all the good things that it looks for from God, not nakedly, but as they are involved and wrapped and lapped* up in promises. It must have a word for it; it looks to God's word. For the soul looks not now immediately, as it shall do in heaven. It looks not to God and to Christ directly; but it looks to Christ, and heaven, and happiness, as it is in a promise. It dares not expect any thing of God but by a promise. Alas! the guilty soul, how dares it look God in the face but by a promise, except he have engaged himself by promise? And he hath engaged himself by promise that he will do it. He hath pawned his faithfulness that he will do it. And then the soul looks to the promise; and in that it looks to Christ and grace, and heaven and happiness, and all good things.

A presumptuous idle person, that knows not what God is, that he is a 'consuming fire,' he rusheth into God's presence. Faith dares not go to God, but first it pleads his word to him; it pleads his promise to him; it looks on God by a promise. The very phrase enforceth this upon us that we should make great account of the promises, because we have all good wrapped in them. The promises are the swaddling clouts.† Christ and heaven is wrapped in them. And when we have a promise, let us think we are rich indeed; for God will perform his promise. From the promise then the soul goes to the nature of God. Then he thinks of his justice: his justice ties him to perform it. It thinks of his mercy and truth, 'faithful is he that hath promised,' Heb. x. 23. Then it thinks of that great name Jehovah, that gives being to the world, gives being to all things, nay, and that will turn all things that are now to nothing; as when they were nothing he gave them being at the first. That Jehovah hath made these promises of life everlasting, of necessary grace to bring us thither. He hath made a promise of perseverance and of comfort under the cross and affliction; a promise of provision and the like. That great God Jehovah, that gave being to all, is faithful: he hath bound himself; he hath laid his faithfulness to pawn, that he will make all good that is here promised. The soul, after it sees the promise, it riseth up and looks to God. 'They received not the promises,' that is, the things promised. So much I desire to observe from the phrase.

'They received not the promises.'

He speaks in the plural number, though he mean but one main promise, that is, the Messiah, for all other were types of him. Believers are called 'children of the promise,' Gal. iv. 28. Here they are called promises, for the repeating of them. The promise of the same thing it was made oft:

* That is, 'covered up,' *e.g.* lap, a covering.—G. † That is, 'clothes.'—G.

there was no new promise. The promise of the same thing it was seven* times repeated and renewed to Abraham presently one after another. So they are called promises, to shew that the promise can never be too much thought on, though it be the same promise of life everlasting; the same promise of grace and of comfort; the same promise of the resurrection, &c. All the promises of good things to come we cannot think of too oft, nor receive the sacrament, the seal of the promise, too oft. God knows what we are. He will have us oft receive the sacrament, and oft hear the same things. We see the prophet Isaiah and the rest, how oft they inculcate the same promises of comfort to the people in captivity, concerning their deliverance out of it. They repeat it again and again. The same reason should enforce the soul to have recourse to the promises again and again; when there is any doubt or darkness ariseth, to comfort the soul with the promise again and again. Satan puts clouds and darkness before the soul every day. There is a repeating of sin, of infirmities and darkness every day. We should every day repeat the promises still, though it be the same promise, and the seal of them. This I observe from the number.

‘They received not the promises.’

There is a distinction of the words *Evangelion* and *Epangelia* in the Greek.† They have a different signification. *Epangelia* is of the time of the promises that were before Christ, and they were all in expectation of the promise, of the promised Messiah. The time of that dispensation was *Epangelia*; *Evangelion*, that was the time of the gospel, when the promise was brought into performance, when our salvation was wrought by Christ in his first coming. So they lived under the promise, but they lived not under the things promised. They had *Epangelia*, the promise made to them; but they had not *Evangelion*, that is, the dispensation of time wherein Christ lived; which were indeed glorious times, when Christ came in the flesh. They received not those, yet notwithstanding they died in faith, to shame us, that have so many means and helps, and yet notwithstanding are so earthly-minded, and so stagger and doubt in matters of salvation, and have our faith to seek; when all these blessed worthies, the patriarchs, died in the faith that they lived in, and yet ‘they received not the promises,’ no, not the type of the promises. They received not Canaan, which was an earthly type of heavenly Canaan, which was promised them. They came not to reap that till long after, when they came out of Egypt; as for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they lived in the land of promise as strangers.

‘They received not the promises.’

They were comforted notwithstanding, that their posterity should receive them. Canaan was a type of Christ and of heaven. I observe this by the way that,

Obs. God doth not reveal all things at all times.

God doth leave diverse things to be revealed in diverse ages of the church. God doth not reveal everything in every time, to comfort all ages of the church. We see not everything in our times; we must be content.

There is to come the conversion of the Jews. Many good souls desire that. There is to come the confusion of antichrist, and many good things that God will bring to pass in another age. Our posterity they shall see it. Let it comfort us. By faith we see the promises. Though we do not receive the things promised, we have the promise in the Scriptures.

* Qu. ‘several’?—Ed.

† That is, *εὐαγγέλιον. ἐπαγγελία*.—G.

Let us comfort ourselves in that, that the benefit is reserved to our posterity. Every age hath several privileges: that that one age hath not, another hath. These grand patriarchs saw not what their posterity saw. Their posterity saw not what those that lived in the time of Christ saw. Those in Christ's time saw not the discovery of antichrist which we see. Our posterity shall see the confusion of antichrist, which, it may be, we shall not see.

Again, this should help us against the common infirmity that Christians are subject unto. We should be thankful for some things, though we have not all that we would have. These 'received not the promises.' They had the promise, they had the word, though they had not the things promised; and that comforted them. Though they had not the thing, no, not so much as the type of the thing, not Canaan,—these blessed patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—yet they were thankful and cheerful, and died in faith.

It is a common infirmity which our nature is too prone to. If the church be not in all things as we would, we will not hear, we care for nothing. Like curst children, if they have not all they would have, they care for nothing. These all, they had the promises, they had not the things promised; but did they take pet upon this? Oh no! 'they embraced the promises,' and looked for the things promised in due time, though they had them not themselves. So it is with particular Christians. Other Christians they see go comfortably in their Christian course, and they have nothing,—no grace, no faith, no love, no goodness. Because they have not all they would have, therefore they have nothing. What an ill affection is this! We should be thankful for that we have, that we can deny ourselves; and we should be content to wait for that we have not. This is the disposition of a Christian that is in a right temper; and that is it which holds many from comforts, that they do not thankfully acknowledge that they have. Our covetousness and greediness of that that we have not, and yet would have it, makes us that we do not see that we have already. We all look forward, we would have more and more, and are not thankful for the present grace. The patriarchs were not so. They wanted many things that they desired heartily to have, and yet they comforted themselves, and died in faith. Though 'they did not receive the promises,'

'They saw them afar off.'

'They saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them,' &c. This is the order of God's Spirit; first to open the eye to see, and by sight to persuade, and upon persuasion to stir up the heart and affections to embrace; for good things are brought into the soul through the understanding, by the spiritual sight of the understanding, and from that into the will and affections by embracing the things we know. This is God's course daily. Therefore he saith they first saw them, and then were persuaded of them, and then embraced them.

'They see them afar off.'

Indeed, they saw them afar off. They were not fulfilled till many years and generations after, yet they see them.

By what eye?

By the eye of faith. Faith makes things present, though in themselves they be far off. It is the nature of faith to make things that are absent to be present to the believing soul; and it affects the soul somewhat as if it were present. We know things work not upon the soul but as present; a

danger that is many years to come, it affects not the soul unless it be apprehended as present; nothing affects the soul but as present. Now there are two ways of things being present. One is, when the things themselves be present; that is, when we shall be in heaven and enjoy Christ and all the joys of heaven, then the things are present themselves. And then there is a presence of faith. When faith apprehends the things promised to us as present, faith makes the things present in some sort, not in all respects, for then faith were all one with vision and possession, but in regard of certainty they are present, and in regard of sound comfort. Therefore God gives other graces, between faith and possession, to strengthen and enable faith that it do not sink in the work. Between faith and the full possession of the good things we believe, we have patience and hope, and many other sweet graces; but all dispose the soul comfortably to wait for the accomplishment of the things believed. Now, though the presence of faith affect not so much as the presence of sight, yet it doth affect. What is the reason that a holy man is so much affected with heavenly things? He feels no more* joy many times than a wicked man. It is the nature of faith that so represents them to him, and sets before his eyes the excellency of the things that he sees them as present.

Faith hath her eye, faith hath her senses, faith hath feet of her own, whereby she goes to Christ; faith hath arms of her own to grasp and to clasp Christ. Faith hath ears of her own to hear the word of God and believe it. Faith hath eyes of her own; and what kind of eyes? To see things afar off; to see things invisible; to see things within the veil; to see things that are upward, things that sense and reason can never reach unto. Reason sees more than sense; but faith sees more than reason. Faith sees the resurrection of the body; faith sees the glory in heaven, that all the eyes in the world cannot see. Faith correcteth the error of reason; reason corrects the error of sense. 'They saw him afar off,' with the blessed eye of faith. Faith hath an eye that sees afar off; it sees things remote both in time and place.

1. It sees things far off in place. Faith sees things in heaven; it sees Christ there; it sees our place provided for us there; it sees God reconciled there; by it we see ourselves there, because we shall be there ere long. Faith sees all this; it breaks through and looks through all; it hath most piercing beams, the eye of faith. And it works in an instant; it goes to heaven in a moment and sees Christ.

And for distance of time, the eye of faith it sees things past and things to come. It sees things past. It sees the creation of the world; it sees the redemption of us by Jesus Christ; it sees our sins there punished in Christ our surety; it sees us crucified with Christ Jesus; it sees all discharged by him. Faith sees this in the sacrament: when we take the bread, faith hath recourse presently to the breaking of the body of Christ and the shedding of the blood of Christ. Then Christ is crucified to us and dies to us. When we believe Christ was crucified for us and died for us, faith makes it present.

And so for the time to come, faith hath an eye that looks afar off. It sees the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Faith sees the general judgment. It sees eternal happiness in heaven; it sees things afar off. It is the evidence of things not seen.

What is the reason of it?

It makes things not otherwise seen be seen, and presently seen; it gives

* Qu. 'feels more'?—Ed.

a being to things. It is a strange power that faith hath. Faith is the eye of the sanctified soul; it is the light of the soul.

In the dark, though things have a colour and a lustre in them, yet till light come to make them clear, they are all as if they were not, they are not seen; but when the light discovers them, then those things that were impossible to be seen and had in them colour and lustre, they come to be actually seen. So it is with faith; there is the happiness of a Christian; there is glory and grace. Reason, it seeth not this. Here is a night of all these things, if there be not light in the eye of faith. Now, when there comes the promise of God as a light discovering them, and the eye of faith to see all this, then here is an evidence of the things, a clear sight of them, which without faith are as excellent things in the night, that no eye can see. Faith is a further light, a light beyond all, a supernatural heavenly light and sight. It sees beyond all other eyes, beyond the eye of the body, or beyond the other eye of the soul, which is reason.

Now this work of faith is called sight; among other respects for this, that sight is the most capacious and comprehending sense. It apprehends its object quickly; and sight it works upon the affections. So faith hath a quick eye-sight; it pierceth through the dark things of the world; it pierceth through contraries. God's children, though they see their estate oftentimes contrary to the promise, as if God did not regard them, yet they break through that. You know God's manner of working is in contrary estates. When we die, faith sees life; when we most apprehend our sins, faith sees the forgiveness of sins; when we are in the greatest mystery, faith hath so quick a sight that it sees happiness and glory through all. It sees afar off, notwithstanding the interposing of anything contrary by flesh and blood.

Faith is sometimes called taste, and by the name of other senses; but especially by the name of sight. As in sight there is both the light outward and a light in the eye, and the application of the light in the eye to the object, so in faith there is a light in the things revealed, a promise and discovery of it by the light of the gospel, and an inward light in the soul answerable to the inward light in the eye. For a dead eye sees nothing, and a quick living eye sees nothing without the light of the air. So there is a double revelation, by the word and by the Spirit. The Spirit works an eye of faith in the soul, and then it discovers to it the things of God.

'They saw them afar off.'

God created a new eye in the soul, a new sight which they had not by nature; for even as the natural eye cannot see things that are invisible, so the natural man cannot see the things of God, which are seen not by a natural, but by a supernatural eye. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for his children,' 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. The eye therefore that must see things afar off, it must be a supernatural eye; and the light that must discover them must be the light of God's truth. For reason cannot see the resurrection of the body, and the life to come, and such glorious things as the word of God reveals to us.

Quest. If you ask why this sight of faith is so necessary, this supernatural sight;—

Ans. I answer, nothing can be done in religion without the supernatural eye of the soul, nothing at all; for a man may see heavenly things with a natural eye and be never a whit the better. A man may see the joys of heaven; he may hear much of heaven and happiness and forgiveness, and

think, Oh, these are good things ; but yet notwithstanding he doth not see these things with a supernatural eye ; he doth not see these things to be holy and gracious, and to be fit for him ; he wisheth them with conditions, but not with the altering of his disposition. As a man may see an earthly thing with a heavenly eye, because he sees God in it, and there is somewhat of God in it to lead him to see him, so a man may see heavenly things with a carnal eye, as Balaam wished 'to die the death of the righteous,' Num. xxiii. 10. A carnal man may be ravished with heavenly things ; but he must look upon them as things suitable, or else all is to no purpose.

Quest. How doth faith see this ? How comes faith to have this strength ?

Ans. Because faith sees things in the power of God. It sees things in the truth of God. He is Jehovah ; he gives being to things. Therefore, as God Almighty gives being to things in their time, when they are not, so faith in his promises sees that these things will be. — It sees things in the truth of God, in the promise of God. There it hath these eyes to see afar off. Itself is wrought by the mighty power of God in the soul, for it is a mighty power for the soul to neglect the things it sees, to neglect riches, and honours, and pleasures, and to stand admiring of things that it sees not. For a man to rule his course of life upon reasons which the world sees not, because there is a happiness to come and a God that he believes in, &c., it is a mighty power that plants such a grace in the heart. Faith is wrought by the mighty power of God. As itself is wrought by the power of God, so it lays hold upon the power of God, that the promises shall be performed. In all the promises it sees and lays hold on the mighty power and truth of God, and therefore it hath such an eye.

Use. Our duty then is to labour to have our faith clear, to have this eye of faith, to have a strong faith, a strong sight.

Quest. When is the sight of faith strong ?

Ans. When it is as the faith of these patriarchs was.

There are three things that makes a strong sight, that makes us conceive that the sight of faith is a strong sight.

1. *When the things are far off that we see*, then if the eye see them, it is a strong sight. A weak eye cannot see afar off.

2. Secondly, *When there are clouds between, though the things be near.* Yet when there are clouds between, to break and pierce through them, there must be a strong sight.

3. Then, thirdly, *when there is but a little light.* When there are many obstacles in the midst, and to break through all by a little light to see things remote, here is a strong eye ; and this was the sight of these blessed men. They had a strong eye.

1. For the things they looked on *were remote, afar off.* Divers thousands of years, they saw Christ by faith. The soul mounted up on the wing of faith. It flew over many thousands of years in a moment, and saw Christ the Messiah, and saw heaven itself typified in Canaan.* So swift is the eye of faith, it mounts over all in a moment. As the eye of the body in a moment can look to the visible heavens ; so a strong faith it sees Christ in heaven.

2. And then between them and that they looked to *what difficulties were there !* Blessed Abraham, who was a type of Christ, how many difficulties had he, besides other of the patriarchs ! We see God commanded him to slay his son, a command one would think against reason, against affection, against hope. It was faith against faith, as it were. It was against reason

* 'Saw,' misprinted twice 'see.'—G.

in the eye of flesh. Now in this case to strive against all these difficulties, what a-many clouds must Abraham break through here, against sense and against affection. He must hope against hope ; he must have faith against faith, he must deny affection, he must go and take his only begotten son Isaac, and he must be the executioner and butcher himself, and slay him for a sacrifice. Here must be a strong faith in the power of God, that must see God raising Isaac from the dead, as he did after a sort ; for when he was bound for a sacrifice ready to be slain, he caused a ram to be taken in the thicket, and to be offered, and Isaac escaped. It was a strong faith to break through all these. Indeed, blessed Abraham saw more excellency and power in the work of God than in his beloved Isaac. So faith that is strong, it sees more comfort, and joy, and matter of benefit and blessing to the soul in the promises and in the word of God than in Isaac ; that is, than in the dearest thing in our own account that we have, that the faithful soul had rather part with all than with God. It will not part with his promises for all that is in the earth, not for the dearest thing in this world ; Isaac shall go rather.

3. Then for their light to go by, *it was but little*. What a little light had they ! Promises. They saw things in types and glasses, a few promises. And what was that they sought ? A heritage far off. We, on the contrary, have all set nearer hand that may help us ; but we have a weaker faith. One would think it should greatly help us to lead our lives till we come to heaven ; for that that we believe is nearer, heaven is nearer. How little a time is between us and the day of judgment ! How little a time between us and the glory that is to be revealed ! For the clouds that we have between they are none in comparing our light with theirs. How many promises have we discovered beforehand ! We have Christ come in the flesh and risen again ; we have the Gentiles called, and all these things. We have light upon light. We have larger promises, and a larger unfolding of divine truths. The canon is enlarged, the Bible is enlarged more than it was then. There are many books added, and the New Testament. Now how doth it come to pass that we see not so well as they, nor so strongly as they ? I answer, the reason is this,—their light was less, but their sight was stronger. We have more light and less sight. We have things nearer, but our sight is weaker ; the more shame for us. A strong eye may see afar off by a little light, when a weak eye cannot see so far by a greater light. The eye of their soul, the eye of faith was stronger and more lightsome. The Spirit of God was stronger in Abraham, but his light of revelation was lesser, he had fewer promises ; for he desired to see Christ's day, and saw it not.

So it is with Christians sometimes ; when there is a great strength of faith, yet it may be there is not so much light. A weak Christian may have more light, but he hath a weaker eye, and he in that respect sees better than a stronger. To a stronger, God doth not discover to him so much outwardly sometimes, suitable to his inward. God's dispensations are diverse in this kind.

Now to help our sight to heaven, this sight of faith, that we may every day ascend with the eye of our souls with this blessed sight.

1. *Let us take heed of the god of this world, Satan*, that he do not with the dust of the world dim our sight. What is the reason that many cannot see the glorious things of God ? 'The god of this world,' saith the apostle, 'hath blinded their eyes.' He casts dust in their eyes. They are covetous, they are blind in their affections, they have dark souls. The

soul when it is led by affections and lusts, when the affections will not suffer it to see, it covers the eyes of it. And then the outward things of the world, they are cast into the eyes. We must take heed of these inward and outward lets; take heed of Satan, that he do not with outward objects bewitch us. For as it is in prospective glasses, you know such glasses, some are of that nature they represent to a man things that are afar off as if they were near; so faith it is a kind of prospective glass, it presents to the soul by reason of this supernatural light, things that are far off as if they were near. Now, as God hath his prospective glasses to see afar off, so the devil hath prospective glasses that when things are near he makes them seem afar off,—as such glasses there are too. When death, and danger, and damnation are near; when a man carries the sentence of damnation in his bosom, when he carries a stained, defiled conscience, the devil with his prospective glass makes him see death and destruction as afar off. I may live so many years and enjoy my pleasure and my will. Now this is but a false glass, the devil abuseth them; for your life is but a death, and when we begin to live we begin to die. Why should we account therefore of the time to come? Death and life go in equal pace one with another. Every day we live, so much is taken from our life, and then the cutting off of all is uncertain. Let us take heed that Satan blind us not.

2. And withal *desire God to open our eyes every day*, to take the scales from the eye of our souls, that we may see the promises, that we may see Christ, that we may see God shining on us in Christ; that he would take away the veil from the things by exposition, that he would open the truth to us by his ministers, and that he would take away the veil from our hearts, that our hearts may join with the things; that when by ministerial means the things are clear, that there may not be a veil of infidelity on our hearts, but that our hearts may sweetly join with them. Let us beg daily that God would take away the things that hinder, inward and outward, that we may see the things afar off; that we may not be, as Peter saith, mop-eyed (*b*), that we cannot see afar off; but that we may set heaven before our eyes, and the judgment and the happiness to come, that we may see, and view, and eye those things by faith, and that we may square our lives answerable.

3. Then, again, to help our sight of Christ and happiness, *let us get a fresh sight of our corruption and sin every day*; let us every day look on that terrifying object of our corruption of nature, hang it in the eye of our souls as an odious object, to humble us. Let us see every day what a corrupt heart we carry about us; see how odious these things are to God, how it offends him; see how it exposes us to the wrath of God, if he should take us in the midst of our sins and corruptions. Let us have these things fresh in our eyes every day, and that will clear our sight. Men are loath to look in the book of their consciences, because they are loath to be disturbed from their pleasures.

Let us see what need we stand in of Christ. The view of our corruptions will make us glad to see a better object. It will make us turn our eyes to Christ, to the promises, and all things that we have by Christ; we shall be glad to look to him. What is the reason we have no more delight to see the glorious things afar off? We see not the dimensions of our corruptions, for then we would be glad to see all the dimensions of God's love in Christ; the height, and breadth, and depth and all. So much for that.

'They saw them afar off.'

‘They were persuaded of them.’

It was such a sight of the things as was with convincing, with persuasion. And indeed this follows well upon sight, for sight of all other senses persuades best. Hearing is not so persuasive as sight (*c*). Supernatural sight brings forth supernatural persuasion. Sight is a convincing sense, even outward sight. So inward sight it is a convincing thing; it persuades and sets down the soul that a thing is so, when a man sees it. All the men in the world cannot persuade the weakest man in the world when it is day or night, when the sun shines or it is dark, that it is not so. When he sees it, he will believe his own eyes more than all the world besides. And as it is in sensible things we believe our own eyes, so much more in spiritual things we believe our eyes. When there is a spiritual light of revelation in the word discovering such things, and also to spiritual light a spiritual eye, when the Spirit puts an eye into the soul to see supernatural things that reason cannot attain to, then there is persuasion. Though all the world should persuade the soul that such a thing were not so, it would say it is so, it will believe its own eyes. If all the world should persuade a Christian that there is no such excellency in religion, that his ways are not good, that he is but foolish, &c., he knows the contrary, and will not be scorned out of his religion, and driven out of it by any contrary persuasion of men whom he pities—though perhaps they are otherwise beyond him—in the state of nature, for sight it is a convincing thing.

Especially when there is some taste with sight, for taste together with sight convinceth of the goodness of things; as we see in those that lead their life by tasting and feeling. The creatures maintain their life by tasting some proportionable food fit for them; so a Christian, when once he hath tasted of spiritual things, the proper food of his soul, when he hath seen and tasted of them, he will never be driven out of his religion and his course by any means; when he hath seen and tasted, he is thoroughly persuaded. A man must not dispute against taste. When he hath tasted a thing to be so, talk to him otherwise, he saith, I have tasted, and feel, and see it to be so; and therefore we see that after sight comes persuasion.

Now, this persuasion is a supernatural persuasion, and it is general and particular.

A general persuasion of the things, of the general truths, and a particular personal persuasion of our interest in them. When we are persuaded that the truths are so, generally, that are revealed in the word of God, and when we are persuaded, by the help of the Spirit, that we have a particular interest in them, a portion in them; and both are here meant. ‘They saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them;’ they were convinced both of the truth and goodness of them, and of the truth and goodness to them in particular.

Now, persuasion is a settled kind of knowledge. Persuasion comes divers ways. There be divers degrees tending to persuasion.

1. First, The poorest degree of the apprehension of things is *conjecture*, a guessing that such a thing may be so or otherwise, but I guess it rather to be so.

2. Beyond conjecture there is *opinion*, when a man thinks it is so, upon more reasons swaying him one way; and yet in opinion there is fear on the contrary, that it may be otherwise.

3. And the third degree beyond opinion is *certain knowledge*; when a

man is not only conceited* that the thing is so, his opinion is so upon some reasons inducing him, but he knows it by arguments and reasons. That is science and knowledge when the mind is persuaded by arguments. But that is not so much here meant, the persuasion by argument.

4. There is another degree then of knowledge, which is *by the authority of the speaker*, a persuasion from thence. When I know not the thing by the light of the thing so much, because I see the reason of the thing, but because I know such a one saith it, that is the persuasion of faith; when one is persuaded of a thing not so much out of his own knowledge, out of the principles of the thing, setting out the causes of the thing, as out of the credit of the person that speaks. Now, this persuasion riseth out of faith in the authority of the person. When I believe a thing for the authority of the speaker, it ariseth from the knowledge of him that speaks, that he is able, and that he is true, and that he is honest, and good; that he will not deceive because he is good, and he will not be deceived because he is wise. We conceive that he is wise, and holy, and able withal; one that we trust. If together with this knowledge and persuasion from the authority, and truth, and goodness, and wisdom of the speaker, there be joined sense and experience, we see it proved; and when there is experience, there is reason why we should believe that he saith, because we have found the thing to be so. So when there is both the authority of the speaker and some inward sense—some sight, and taste, and feeling, and experience of the thing spoken—here comes that settled persuasion, for he is undoubtedly true that hath spoken it, and I have found in some degree the thing true that he hath spoken. Now, both are here meant in some degrees, 'they saw the things afar off,' both by the authority of the promise, as likewise by their own sight, and some taste they had.

For God reserves not all for heaven. God gives his children some taste and feeling, some little joy and comfort, the 'first-fruits of the Spirit' here, Rom. viii. 23. So they were persuaded from the authority of the speaker, and some sense and feeling of the thing in some measure.

Now, this persuasion hath its degrees.

There is a *full persuasion*.

And there is a *persuasion that is not so full*, that is growing to further persuasion still.

And this persuasion hath degrees, both in the general persuasion of the truths themselves, and in their particular interest; for all Christians are not alike persuaded of divine truths themselves, nor all Christians are not alike persuaded of their particular interest in those truths. There be degrees in both respects.

1. *For the things themselves*, we may grow stronger and stronger persuaded; even as the light and our eye grows clearer the stronger is our sight, so our persuasion while we are here may grow stronger and stronger. It was strong in Abraham; yet not so uniformly strong, but that it was weaker some times than others, as we see in the story.

2. And so for *particular persuasion*. The Spirit of God may give assurance that may be shaken; ay, but he recovers himself presently. The tenor of a Christian's life is usually a state of sight and persuasion, when he is himself and when he remembers his own principles.

To come particularly, you see here that

Spiritual persuasion is necessary.

Both of the things in general, and of our interest in them.

* That is, 'conceives'—G.

Quest. It may be asked, whether there may be a persuasion of the truth in general, without a persuasion of our own particular interest in them?

Ans. I answer, No; not a sound, undoubted, spiritual persuasion. There is a double conviction, a conviction when a man cannot tell what to say against it; but spiritual conviction is when a man is convinced of the truth and goodness of the thing, and this always draws the other with it, first or last. A man may be convinced that he cannot tell what to say against the truth, but that is not properly persuasion. A man is persuaded by divine truth that all the promises are true in the gospel, and it draws with it a particular light; he sees, and is persuaded, of his own interest in it, first or last. For a strong persuasion of divine truth, of God's word, when I know it is God's word, it works in my flesh, it changeth me, it lifts me up, it casts me down, &c. So that a Christian knows that the word of God is the word of God by a spiritual persuasion, wrought by the efficacy of the word, from an intrinsecal principle in the word itself.

But sometimes it falls out that a Christian may be convinced of the truth of the word in general that it is God's word, and that the promises of salvation are true, and yet notwithstanding he may not feel the particular persuasion of the forgiveness of his sins, and of his acceptance to life everlasting, and his interest in Christ. These two are sometimes separable in regard of feeling. A Christian hath alway a persuasion of the truth of God, of the things, but he hath not alway a like persuasion of his own interest in them.

Quest. How do you prove that these are severed sometimes?

Ans. Thus: there is the birth and infancy of a Christian. When a Christian is in his birth, he is not persuaded of his own good estate, as he is after when he is grown. Then he knows his estate. A soul that is in the state of grace, that hungers and thirsts after good things, at that time it may be it is not acquainted that it shall be satisfied; it is not acquainted of its own interest, but stretcheth itself forward for entire satisfaction, and it shall be satisfied; that is, the soul that hungers and thirsts after the persuasion of God's love in Christ, and the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting, there is never soul that thus hungers and thirsts, but God satisfies it at length; for the most part in this world, or else certainly in the world to come for ever. But alway where there is this persuasion supernatural, that the word of God is true indeed, that there is salvation to all true believers, when it is wrought by the Spirit, there is either a persuasion of our interest, or somewhat tending to persuasion, some hungering and thirsting, some desire that God accepts for the deed, to shew that such a man is in the state of grace.

I speak this the rather, because some are deceived in their own estates. They do not conceive aright of themselves. They think they are not in the state of grace, when they find not that particular, strong, assured persuasion.

I answer, they may be in the state of grace notwithstanding. A Christian knows not his own estate alway, at all times. It is one grace to be in a good estate, and another to have the knowledge of it. They be different gifts of God, and God suspends the knowledge of a man's being in a good estate for several ends.

1. Sometimes, among the rest for this one, to *humble us*, to keep us from security, to make us careful and diligent; to make us know that he hath the keeping of our feeling and persuasion in his own hands. As he hath the keeping of all our grace, so he hath the keeping of the knowledge

that we have grace, and of our comfortable walking, that we may know we have everything from him, both grace and the feeling of grace; and if we take liberty to ourselves, he will take liberty to keep our feeling at that time, to make us humble, and to make us seek reconciliation again. It is one part of God's dispensation with his children to hinder their persuasion of their particular interest sometimes.

Sometimes the children of God may be in such a condition, as that they may think for a time in their judgment, that they be in a contrary estate; they are mispersuaded of themselves not to be God's children, as it were. God may suffer this, that they shall not only have a weak, staggering persuasion, but a persuasion to the contrary, though it be a false persuasion.

Quest. But how shall they know that they are God's children at that time? They say they are so shaken, and at a stand, they are so conceited* that they are none of God's; that God hath left them, and forsaken them.

Ans. You may know it by this, that at the same time they are *conscionable*† of all heavenly duties, at the same they neglect no means of salvation; at the same time they complain against their own corrupt course of life that hath given God occasion to leave them thus to themselves; at the same time they strive against this, and labour to be persuaded of God's truths in general. And though the devil sometimes shake that persuasion, that God's truth is not God's truth, and make them question whether it be the word of God or no, and whether there be such a thing as life everlasting,—the devil shakes us in principles sometimes,—but yet a Christian in such temptations, though he be shaken in his principles by the force of wickedness, yet he attends upon the means, and goes on more conscionably, he doth not give back, but labours for satisfaction and further settling still, and is ashamed of himself that he should have such beastly thoughts, as the psalmist saith, 'so foolish was I and ignorant, and as a beast before thee,' Ps. lxxiii. 22, when he began to stagger in the principle of the providence of God. So sometimes a Christian is brought to stagger in principles, in the main general persuasion of the word of God; but he likes not himself, he accounts himself as a beast, and labours for satisfaction still in sanctified means, and never gives over, though he have not particular persuasion, he gives not over holy duties, but goes on in spiritual duties; he labours to obey God in all things; he is conscionable to God in fear and trembling, in the least thing. A man may say to such a soul, it shall find peace at the length; for God's ways are unsearchable. God hath cause and reason why he keeps such a soul under for a time, and withholds some sense and persuasion; but usually God's comforts come more abundantly to such a soul, he reserves it for the time of affliction or the hour of death.

The truth is, it is a constant rule, that though it may be thus with some in some cases, yet ordinarily God's children may be persuaded of their particular condition; yea, and they ought to labour after this persuasion and assurance, that their souls may be filled with marrow and fatness, and that they may joy in God, and have boldness to come before God in prayer, that they may be fruitful in all holy duties; that they may be strong to suffer afflictions, and to resist temptations. Therefore though God sometimes, in his wise dispensation, suffer them to be hindered, yet notwithstanding, this [is] a thing that is both attainable, and that they ought to labour for, and never give their hearts rest till they attain to it.

* That is, 'they so conceive.'—ED.

† That is, 'conscientious.'—G.

I say we ought to labour for it; for the soul is never in such a frame as it ought to be but when it hath gotten some assurance of God's love. But I must add this, we must labour that this persuasion be supernatural, by the Spirit of God, both of the truths in general, of the promises in general, and of our interest in particular in them. We must labour that it be by the Spirit to our spirits; that the Spirit may seal them to our spirits. For it is not sufficient to know the word of God to be the word of God, and the promises to be the promises, because we have been brought up in them, and can say them by heart, and it were a shame for us to conceive the contrary. That is not sufficient, for that will deceive us. We must labour (as I said of knowledge, that we may be supernaturally convinced, so also that is from that knowledge), that it may be spiritual, or else it will deceive us.

Quest. How do we prove that?

Ans. To make it a little clearer, because it is a point of some consequence, even as I shewed of what consequence the sight of faith is, so I may say of this persuasion. We must labour therefore to know how we come by this persuasion, and whether it be such as we can hold out in; whether it be such by which we can stand out in the time of temptation. If there be nothing but that argument of breeding, and of general light, of discourse, that we see one thing how it follows from another, I say it will deceive us, because constant obedience will never follow upon such a persuasion; nor constant holding out to death, nor constancy in death, if the conscience be once awakened; neither will we be fruitful in our lives and conversations. To make this clear.

1. If the soul be not persuaded by the Spirit of God, together with the Spirit of the Scripture; for the same Spirit that is in the Scripture must be in our spirit, working our natures suitable to the Scriptures to be holy; if we do not, by that Spirit by which the Scripture was indited, know those truths, *we shall never be obedient to them, not constantly.* For what is the reason that men when they are told, God doth forbid you to take his name in vain; God forbids you to seek after earthly things; God forbids you by the Scriptures to defile your vessels; he forbids you to seek these things below; he forbids you these courses? * Now a man that hath knowledge that is not supernatural, that hath it not by the Spirit, he hears these things with a kind of scorn, and despiseth them as niceties; he never makes scruple of these things, because he knows they are forbidden or commanded of God, because he hears so. But he hath not known by the Spirit of God that penned the Scriptures, that these indeed are God's divine truths. The Spirit hath not sealed these truths to his soul, this is God's word. He hath not felt it in converting his soul, in mortifying his corruptions, in raising him being cast down, in working wonders in his conscience, in bringing all into a spiritual subjection. When he hath not felt the word work thus, for all his general knowledge by education, and breeding, and reading, he may be a disobedient wretch, and live and die a rebel, and bitter opposite against the power of grace, because he hath not knowledge of the word of God, and of particular truths by the Spirit of God, it is no persuasion of the Spirit.

And this is that that men wonder at, that know not the mystery of these things, to see great scholars, men of great knowledge, perhaps divines, that are preachers to others, to see such an one vicious, to see him carnally disposed as others. When a man seeth this he thinks, What, do you talk

* The sentence is left thus unfinished.—G.

of the word of God? If there were such a thing, men that know these things must needs lead their lives after the rule. It is no wonder. The devil hath knowledge enough, but he is no divine at all, because he hath it from his nature, being a spirit. So a man may be a devil incarnate, he may have knowledge of these things, and yet no true divine. But he that is taught by the Spirit of God the things in the word of God, the Spirit works a taste in them. Historical truths are known by their own light. There is no such need of the Spirit to discover them; but the promises, and threatenings, and such things are known by the Spirit. A man feels the power of the word of God. Then a man is convinced. Otherwise if the Spirit do not reveal these things, a man will never obey, but be rebellious.

2. And as there will be no obedience, *so there will be no holding out in time of peril and temptation.* The persuasion that a carnal man hath, that is not a sanctified persuasion, it will not hold out in the hour of death, in the time of temptation, in strong temptation, either on the right hand by preferments and favours, or on the left hand by threatenings and persecutions. It is but a seeming persuasion. When anything comes that is stronger than it, it will not hold. When there is afflictions and persecutions in the church, we see many excellent learned men hold not out in their profession. Why? They were drawn to the profession of religion by dependence on such kind of men, or they only followed religion as they saw reason for it, or they have been so bred in it, &c. Now reason may be brought against reason. When men have no other motives than these; when persecution comes that they must lose their preferments or their friends, or their life, they fall away altogether, because that persuasion that they seemed to have before, it was no spiritual persuasion wrought from intrinsecal grounds of divine truth, that hath a majesty and a spiritualness in itself, but it was merely wrought out of foreign grounds. Now we see a meaner man that hath his knowledge wrought by the Spirit of God, the same Spirit it seals that knowledge to him with the word of God that indited the Scripture, and acted the holy men of God that wrote the Scriptures. As his portion is incomparably great, so he is persuaded of his interest in those good things. The same Spirit that convinceth him of the truth, and of the certainty of the things, it convinceth him likewise of his part in them, and this supernatural persuasion, together with his interest in those good things persuaded of, sets down the soul so as it will not move. He holds out in persecution, because he hath felt the work of divine truth in his soul. He hath found the Spirit of God casting him down, and raising him up to comfort, therefore he holds out in his persuasion in all trials, and never apostatiseth from that estate and condition.

3. And so for *unfruitfulness in conversation.* Notwithstanding all those motives we have in the word of God, a man that is not convinced spiritually of those excellent things, he goes on deadly, as if there were no motives, because the Spirit of God hath not sealed them to his spirit. He hath not given him an apprehension of the divine encouragements wrapped up in the promises in the Scripture; and when death and danger come, for the most part such men are desperate, notwithstanding all their learning and knowledge literal that they have; for it will not hold water. All knowledge that is not wrought by the Spirit of God sealing divine truth to the soul, with some evidence of the power of it, it will not hold out in the trial.

Especially when Satan with his fiery darts comes with strong temptations, for the soul never felt the working power of the word. It feels then the temptation, it apprehends the poisonous fiery temptation, but it

hath not so inwardly digested the truths of the Spirit, and therefore is surprised with horror and despair. There is not wrought in the heart an experimental feeling of knowledge, and therefore the heart cannot beat back the temptation.

When the devil shall come and tell men, You have been thus and thus, and they have not felt the truth of that they seemed to believe, conscience tells them, It is true I have heard and read such and such things; I never believed them; they never sunk deeply into my heart. When temptation shall be nearer the soul than the truth shall be, when temptation presseth sore, they are swallowed up of despair. Therefore let us labour that our general knowledge from the word, and our particular knowledge and persuasion, that it may be spiritual.

Quest. Now how doth the Spirit work this particular persuasion?

Ans. I answer, the Spirit of God works it in the soul together with the word: the Spirit and the word go together. All the men in the world cannot persuade the soul without the Spirit of God join. Paul preached, but God opened Lydia's heart, Acts xvi. 40, *seq.* We have it not of ourselves. It must come from without, from God's Spirit opening our eyes, and persuading and convincing our hearts: 'God persuades Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem,' Gen. ix. 27. No creature can do it. It is passive. It is said here 'they were persuaded.' That persuasion that is sound, that carries a man to heaven, by which he dies in faith, it must be from the Spirit of God. All the words of the ministry, and all reasons, nothing will do it but God. God must persuade the soul.

Quest. Now what doth the Spirit here?

Ans. The Spirit enlightens the understanding, which I spake of before. It opens the understanding in persuasion. It doth propound arguments and motives from the excellency of the things promised, and the privileges of religion, and the good things we have by Christ, &c.; and, together with propounding these excellent encouragements and motives, the Spirit strongly works upon the disposition, upon the will, and affections. It works upon the soul, and so doth persuade and convince.

And thereupon comes embracing, which I shall have occasion to speak of afterward. The soul being persuaded, embraceth.

Now this persuasion is not only by propounding of arguments by the word and Spirit, but likewise a working upon the will; from whence there follows an inclination of the will, and an embracing of the things we are persuaded of.

For let all the arguments in the world be brought to a man to persuade him that God will be merciful to him in Christ, tell him of the free offer, 'Whosoever will, let him come in,' Rev. xxii. 17; all that will: a large offer; let him join to that offer of mercy the inviting, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28, and I will ease you; a sweet inviting; join with the invitation a command, 'It is his command that we should believe in his Son Jesus,' Acts xvii. 30; let him strengthen that command with the threatening, 'He that believes not is damned already,' John iii. 18; let a man remove all objections that the soul can make of its unworthiness, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you,' though you groan under the burden of your sin; let a man object again, I have nothing worthy in myself; why, come and buy, though you have no money; let him strengthen all these proposals with examples of the mercy of God to Manasseh, to Peter, to Paul, a persecutor, to Mary Magdalene, and the like; let all these arguments be won-

drous effectually propounded, the soul will not yield, unless God's Spirit join with these arguments, and all in that kind, and convince the soul of our particular interest in these things, and persuade the will to embrace these things offered.

That, God hath reserved in his own power to bring our hearts and the promises together, to bring our hearts and divine truths together. Let there be never so much set before us in the ministry, he hath reserved this prerogative and authority, that our hearts and the truth should close together to embrace them in hearing. All things depend upon the Spirit; when we do not regard the Spirit in hearing and reading, &c., let all the things the Scripture hath be propounded, and set on with all the excellency and eloquence that may be, God hath reserved it to himself, by his Spirit, to give faith to persuade our souls that these belong to us, and to incline and draw the will.

I have shewed you, then, the kinds of persuasion, general and particular, and how it is wrought by the Spirit; that unless this persuasion be wrought by the Spirit, we shall never hold out in it. Though we have all the arguments in the world, we shall be disobedient. Disobedience comes when things are not discovered by the Spirit, and apostasy when the persuasion is not wrought by the Spirit, and desperation when the knowledge is not spiritual.

Now the manner is by removing contraries, and moving the heart, and drawing it. With the word of man, God enters into the very will and affections; for, as he made the soul, and framed it, so he knows how to work upon it, and to draw it sweetly by reasons, but yet strongly, that it may be carried to the things revealed. God at the same time works strongly by carrying the soul, and sweetly with reasons. For God first comes into the soul by divine light, by reasons, and then he sinks into the soul by his Spirit, to draw the soul to these reasons. Without this, we never yield to those reasons, but stand out in rebellion.

1. God persuades the soul *sweetly of the truth*, by shewing a man the goodness of it, and the suitableness to our condition, and the reasons of it, how they agree to our nature. He doth not force the soul, but doth it with reasons and arguments sweetly.

2. And he doth it *strongly*, that the soul, when it is persuaded, would not for all the world be of another mind. It is so strong, that the persuasion and the promises are stronger than the temptations of Satan* and the corruptions of the flesh, or than the scandals of the world; that nothing can separate us from Christ, nothing can drive us from our faith and hope. The persuasion is set so strongly upon the soul, because it is a divine persuasion.

It is a strong work to persuade the soul.

For the Spirit of God, when it brings a light into the soul, it brings a great many graces with it. When it shines upon the soul, and discovers better things, it brings other graces to persuade, and to embrace the things it discovers.

As it is an infinite mercy and goodness of God to discover to our souls such excellent things as we may be persuaded of, as of our estate to be such as indeed it is above our comprehension in this world—'Neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him,' Isaiah lxiv. 4,—so likewise it is God's infinite work of power to frame the soul to be persuaded of this. It is as much power to work the soul to this persuasion, as it is

mercy to discover them in a manner. There is such inward rebellion and distrust in the soul calling these truths into question, as if these things were too good to be true. Considering our own unworthiness and vileness, and the excellency of these things, laying these together, the unbelieving heart of man is prone to unbelief above all other sins. He can hardly conceive that there are such things for God's children, except the heart be mightily wrought on; unless, together with persuasion, there be some work in the soul whence it may gather by the work of the Spirit that they are those to whom such good things belong, because the Spirit of God hath singled them out, and set his seal and stamp on them, above other men, by some evidences of grace.

It is another manner of work than the world takes it to be; for, as I said before, together with the Scripture, there must a Spirit of persuasion go. There is a secret messenger goes with the outward speech both of the preacher and of the Scripture, or else all the arguments will not be to purpose; they will be of no efficacy.

As the Israelites they had arguments and motives enow to persuade them of God's love and care to them, yet notwithstanding God gave them not a heart, Deut. xxix. 4. In Christ's time what miracles did they see! Yet their hearts were hardened, because God, together with his shining in the outward means, did not subdue the rebellion of their wills and affections; and therefore the more they saw, the more they were hardened, the Scribes and Pharisees, and some of their desperate followers.

Use. Well, then, considering that the Spirit doth this great work, *let us labour that our knowledge may be spiritual*; that our persuasion of divine truth in general, and our part and portion in divine truth, that it may be spiritual. For, as St Paul divinely and excellently sets it down, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, that 'as no man knows the things that are in man, but the spirit that is in man: so no man knows the things of God's word,' divine truths, nor his part and portion and interest in them, but by the Spirit of God. If we bring the engine of our own wit and parts to God's truth, to sermons and books, we may never be the better, if we come not with a spiritual intention,* with reverent and humble hearts, and implore the teaching of the Spirit, that together with the revelation of the word there may be a removing of the veil by the Spirit; that with the outward teaching there may be the inward teaching of the Spirit; that with the sound opening the ear there may be the opening of the heart; that he that hath the key of David may open, and incline, and persuade the heart; that he may 'persuade Japhet,' as the Scripture phrase is.

It is sacrilegious presumption to come to holy places, and to set upon holy duties, to hear or read the word of God, without lifting up our hearts to God for his Holy Spirit. We cannot plough without his heifer. Can we know the mind of God without the Spirit of God? What arrogancy is this to think I shall be saved; and the Spirit never tells us with the word so: but it is only a presumptuous conceit. This is a sacrilegious usurpation upon God's glory. The Spirit of God knows what things are in God towards us, and reveals to our spirits God's inward love to us. 'The Spirit teacheth us to know the things that are given us of God.' We only know the good that God means us by his own Spirit; and therefore let us labour every day more and more to be spiritual and heavenly-minded.

And, above all things, to make it the pitch of our desires, as it is Luke xi. 13, to pray for the Spirit, 'he will give his Holy Spirit to them that

* That is, 'intentness.'—G.

beg it.' It is the best and the chief gift of all; for this makes our knowledge heavenly, our persuasion heavenly, and sound and constant in life and death. And this Spirit carries the whole soul with it: this Spirit makes us like the word of God. Because it is spiritual, it makes us so; and we love it in our inward man, and consent to it, and joy in it. Whereas naturally there is inward rebellion in the greatest scholar in the world against the word of God. The heart riseth against divine truths. They are as opposite as fire and water, as heaven and hell. The proud heart of man slights the promises of mercy, as nothing to petty things of the world. It slights the comforts of the word to carnal comforts, and the commandments of God in respect of the commandments of men. The proud man looks scornfully upon the things of conscience and of the Spirit; only the Spirit of God brings the proud heart of man to be subject to the word of God. Nothing that is not spiritual will hold out. Whatsoever is not spiritual, Christ will not own at the day of judgment. If the Spirit seal us and set a stamp upon us, Christ will look on his own stamp of the Spirit; where the first fruits are not, the harvest will not follow. The Spirit is an 'earnest.' Where the 'earnest' is not, the bargain will not follow. I beseech you, let us labour for the Spirit in the use of all means: let us attend upon the word, 'which is the ministry of the Spirit,' and we shall find that the Spirit will alter and change us, and shew us our interest in the promises, and the goodness of them. The more we attend upon the means, the more we shall see it; and the more we pray, the more we shall have the Spirit; and the more we obey God, the more we shall have the Spirit of God. God gives his Spirit to 'them that obey him.'

Use. And this should *teach us when we come to hear or to read the word of God*, Lord, open mine eyes! Lord, persuade my soul! Lord, bow the neck of my soul! of my inward man, that iron sinew. Lord, take away my hard heart, and give me a heart of flesh, teach my heart. Thou must persuade and incline me; incline my heart, Lord!

We want religious carriage in this. We come presumptuously upon confidence of our wit, to hear sermons, and to read the word; and so we come away worse than we went. Why? We do not pray to God to persuade us.

'They were persuaded of them.'

Mark here, first, he opens the eyes, and so he persuades. God persuades the inward man with enlightening. He shews a reason. The devil, and antichrist his vicar, they persuade by darkness, by maintaining a kingdom of darkness. The devil allures: he shews no reason; he keeps the soul in darkness and blindness. Antichrist persuades men to their religion. How? By fleshly allurements; not instructing them and opening their eyes, enlightening their understandings; but God opens their eyes to see, and then teaches and persuades. The devil's instruments they persuade, and so they teach and draw away. They persuade with carnal objects and the like, to draw and bewitch the affections, and so the judgment is dark still; but where there is true dealing there is no fear of the light.

Therefore, those that are enemies to the means of salvation, that fear God's people should know too much, they take a course contrary to God. For God enlightens, and then persuades; and knowledge enlighteneth: so that knowledge is necessary. All divine persuasion of faith hath the name of knowledge. They were persuaded by the Spirit of God of the truth of God, having their eyes opened.

It is an evidence we are not persuaded. We come to church, and attend

upon the means. We go on in a course of sin : we are not divinely persuaded. God hath not persuaded our hearts. He hath not enlightened us ; for if the covetous man were persuaded, ' that neither covetous, nor extortioners, should enter into the kingdom of heaven,' 1 Cor. vi. 10, would he not leave that course ? Light and persuasion always rule the action : for we work as we see and are persuaded in every thing.

The very beasts do as they see, and as sense leads them. An ass bears burdens. You know nature hath framed and made him for it ; but can you drive the silly creature into the fire ? He knows that will consume him. So that men they are brutish : they will not be persuaded by the Spirit of God. They run into courses that, if they had light in their souls, and if they were persuaded whither it tends, they would never run into hell fire. If there were a pit open before a man's eyes, would he plunge himself into that pit that were before his eyes ? A man that lives in sins against conscience, he runs into a pit. There are no manner of liars, of whoremongers, of covetous persons, of such wretches as take the name of God in vain, that shall escape unpunished. Men lead a life in a course wherein they see a pit before them, and yet they run on. Are they persuaded ? No, no ! Certainly they are not persuaded.

And so for the means of salvation. Men that care not for hearing the word, are they persuaded it is the word of God to salvation ? They are not persuaded. We may know the truth of our persuasion by the power it hath to rule our lives and conversations. What is the reason that a simple man, a weak man, he lives Christianly, and dies in the faith he lived by, whereas a great man, in conceit in knowledge, he lives wickedly, and dies worse ? Because the one hath not this knowledge of the Spirit. The Spirit of God never opened his eyes : the Spirit of God never persuaded him. He hath it in books, and by education and the like. There are none that ever hold out but those that have the Spirit of God to be their teacher and persuader. We must see things in their own proper light. The Spirit of God hath to deal with the heart. God hath only power of that. He must deal with the heart. We must not trust therefore to education, or to outward things. If a man should ask the reason of men, Why do you leave these courses ? why do you do this good ? A Christian doth not say, I was brought up to this, or I cannot do otherwise ; but I do it from a principle of the ' new creature.' Let us desire God, that we may do things from reasons of Scripture, from reasons of pleasing God ; that we may do them from a holy sanctified affection ; that we may be persuaded by the Spirit, and then it will hold out. ' They were persuaded of them, ' And embraced them.'

They embraced the promises, the good things promised : Christ's coming in the flesh, and Canaan, the type of heaven, and heaven itself. Though they had not these things, yet they embraced what they had, they embraced the promises. That is the nature of faith. If it have not that it looks for, as it hath not till it come to heaven, yet it makes much of that it hath ; it embraceth the promises, and in the promises the thing itself promised.

Now these things follow one another in a most natural order ; for sight brings persuasion, sight and conviction brings strong persuasion, and persuasion breeds embracing. For we embrace that in our affections that we are persuaded of to be good. According to the strength of conviction and persuasion is the strength of the affections. Those things that we have a weak persuasion of we have a weak affection to. Those things that we are fully persuaded of, and are great withal, the affections cannot but stretch

forth themselves to embrace them. When the understanding was enlightened to see the truth, and to be persuaded of the truth of the promises, then the will and affections, they join and embrace those things. The will makes choice of them, and cleaves to them, the affection of desire extends itself to them, the affection of love embraceth them, the affection of joy delights in them. Spiritual conviction always draws affection. For God hath framed the soul so, that upon discovery of a good out of itself, it doth stretch out itself to embrace that object, the good thing presented. It cannot be otherwise.

We see the eye, it cannot but delight in beautiful objects, so the understanding of itself, it delights in true things, and the will in things that are good, that are delightfully good, or spiritually and conveniently good to the person. It cannot but be so.

The author of nature, God, doth not overthrow nature, but preserves it in its own work. Therefore where he gives a light to discover and persuade, both of the truth in general and of our particular interest in those things, he gives grace likewise to the will and affections, to that part of the soul that is carried to good things to embrace them. And upon discovery of evil, in that part of the soul that is affected to evil, there is an aversion and loathing of things that are inconvenient and hurtful. It must needs be so in the light of reason.

We may know whether the Spirit of God have wrought anything in us by our embracing of good things; for, as I said, God hath made our souls thus, when the soul is convinced of the truth and goodness of a thing, and is persuaded, the affections will always follow that that is shewed to be the best. Now when the Spirit of God discovers to the soul the excellencies of religion to be above all other excellencies whatsoever, 'that the favour of God is better than life itself,' Ps. lxxiii. 3, and discovers to the soul the vanity of all other things, then comes the soul to embrace them. For the soul cannot but embrace that which the understanding being convinced designs to be best, and best for me; in comparison of all other things, this is now at this time, all things considered, best for me to do. Hereupon comes embracing always. The affections follow spiritual persuasion.

There be two main branches of faith: one is spiritual conviction and persuasion that things are so good, and that they belong to us; another branch of faith is to go out, and close, and meet with the things. Upon discovery of the excellency of the things, the heart opens itself to let in those things.

It is in grace as it is in nature: the heart is open upwards, and pointed downward. So the heart and soul of a man opens to heavenward. When those things are discovered by the soul to be best, the Spirit opens and closeth with those things.

A man may know what he is in religion by his affections, by his affection of love; for the affection of love will open to the things that are discovered to be best, whereof he is persuaded. And his affection of joy; he will delight in those things. And his affection of grief; his heart will be shut to things that are contrary; and his affection of zeal in the pursuit of the means, and in opposing that that is an enemy to that good. It is always so. The heart embraceth what we are persuaded of.

God hath made the affections of the soul for supernatural things, he hath made our understanding to conceive of the heavenly light, and those prerogatives and privileges, and he hath made our affections to embrace those heavenly things. And then a man is in his right subordination, in his right

state under God; he is framed as he should be. He is in a right frame of soul, when his soul is convinced of the excellency of the best things, and when his affections of joy and love and delight, of zeal and trust, and all are set on those things. For then a man is raised above the condition of an ordinary man. Such a man is come to his perfection. He is come out of that cursed estate that naturally all are in. For now the soul is set upon things that make it better than itself. For the soul is as the things are it is carried to. When the soul is persuaded of heavenly things and of its interest in them, and is carried to them by the sway and weight of the affections of love, and joy, and delight,—which is called here embracing,—then the things embraced transform the soul to be like them, as they be heavenly, and glorious, and excellent. There is nothing in the world to be named with them. All else is dung and dross. Then a man comes to be holy, and heavenly, and spiritual. He is raised in a condition far above others, above all other men, though he be never so mean in the world. When his soul is enlightened, and answerable to the light, there is heat; when there is light in the understanding, and heat in the affections accordingly to embrace, then the soul is in a right temper, a man is a holy and happy man. Therefore no wonder if upon persuasion and sight they embraced those things.

Let us try the truth of our estate by our affections, by our embracing of good things, by opening our hearts to the best things, by our joy and delight in them. Is there a holy wonderment at them? 'Oh how I love thy law!' Ps. cxix. 97; and 'one day in thy courts is better than ten thousand elsewhere,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10; and 'Oh the depth of his mercies!' Rom. xi. 33; and 'one thing have I desired of the Lord; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,' Ps. xxvii. 4. When the soul stands in admiration of God and good things, when it is ready to welcome Christ and heavenly things and the state of religion: now away all former vanities! away all lusts of youth! away all confidence in beauty, and strength, and riches! All these are but dung to the soul. The soul hath seen better things. There is a discovery of better things; and now the respect of all other things falls down in the soul when there is a discovery of better things.

The soul cannot do otherwise when it is convinced supernaturally. The same Spirit that discovers better things opens the soul to follow them. It is so with every soul that hath the true work and stamp of the Spirit in it. It is set upon heavenly things. It saith with St Paul, 'I account all dung and dross in comparison of the excellent knowledge of Christ,' Philip. iii. 8. There is an attractive, a drawing, magnetical power in heavenly things when they are propounded to the soul by the Spirit, to draw the affections, and to make us spiritual like themselves.

Let us therefore labour more and more to have our affections wrought upon. As we are in our affections, we are in religion.* It is impossible that a Christian should be spiritually convinced that there are such excellent things belong to religion, and that he hath his part and portion in them, and not be transformed to a spiritual state and frame of soul, to love and delight in holy things, and to despise that which is contrary.

And when he is in such a state, what is all the world to him? What cares he for riches, or pleasures, or honours, when the soul sees incomparable better things? 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and what do I desire on earth in comparison of thee? saith David, Ps. lxxiii. 25, when

* Cf. Edwards's Treatise of 'The Religious Affections,' which is only a splendid expansion of this sentiment, as developed in the sequel.—G.

he had a little meditated of the vanity of earthly things, and saw the goodness of God to his children. 'It is good for me to draw near unto God,' Ps. lxxiii. 28. It is a speech of conviction. The soul is convinced that it is good and best to draw near to God in holy means, and in holy duties to keep close to him, and then it cries out, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?'

Therefore let us never rest in such a knowledge of holy things as doth not convince us of the goodness of them, and of our interest in them, so far as may draw and work upon our affections to embrace those things.

When we find our hearts and affections wrought on, that holy things, as they are excellent in themselves, so they have an answerable place in our hearts, that as they are holy, and high, and best, so they have a high place in our hearts, then a man is in the estate of a Christian, or else a man may very well doubt of his estate, when he can hear of heaven, and happiness, and of the excellency of the children of God, that they are heirs of heaven, &c., and his heart be not affected with these things. He may well question himself, Do I believe those things? Here are rich and precious promises, but where is my precious faith to close with and to embrace these things? Do I believe them? If I do, how is it that I am no more affected with them? And so let us stand in the meditation of the excellencies of religion so long till our hearts be affected and warmed with them. This will follow affections, a desire to think oft of them; as David joins both together: 'Oh, how do I love thy law! it is my meditation continually.' That that a man loves he oft thinks of. That stirs up love, and love makes him oft consider of it; and when it is thus with a man, he is in such a condition as these holy patriarchs, fit to live and die by his faith. 'They saw them, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.'

Therefore, I say, we may know whether we have this spiritual light, whether we have true faith or no, if we have these embracings. If we be so persuaded of them that we embrace them with delight, and desire, and love, and joy; if we make choice of them, and esteem them highly, and cleave constantly to that which is revealed to us: then it is a divine light and persuasion, because we embrace them.

Certainly there is nothing in religion divine, unless the affections be carried with it. True faith carries the whole soul, to whole Christ, out of a man's whole self. It carries the understanding to see, and the will to choose and to cleave; it carries the affections to joy and delight and love; it carries all. Therefore, those that when holy things are discovered they have not a high esteem of them; that they prize them not above earthly things; that they cleave not to them with a disesteem of other things; that they joy not in them as their best portion; that they do not embrace them: there is no true faith at all, for where there is true faith there is this embracing.

God hath made the soul, as I said, for these heavenly things; and when the soul and they close together, there is a sweet embracing. Then the soul is raised above itself; the soul is quieted, and stilled, and satisfied. There is nothing in the world else will better the soul but the embracing of these things; nothing else will beautify and adorn the soul in God's sight. Our souls are made for them, our desires are made to embrace them, our love and our joy to delight in them, our wills to cleave to them and make choice of them above other things.

We abuse our souls. They are not made to close and grasp with the world; they are not made for those things that are baser than ourselves. We abase our souls. A covetous man makes himself worse than he is;

therefore he is called the world,* because he hath nothing in him better than the world. If we embrace Christ and the promises of salvation, the things of another life, the embracing of these raiseth the soul to be excellent like the things, and it doth quiet and rest the soul. For nothing will rest but in its own element. As the heavy bodies rest not but in the centre, in the middle point of the earth, and light bodies rest coming to their place above, so the soul it rests in God and in Christ. Faith resting in the power of God quiets the soul, carrying it to the thing it is made for. As these holy men, in all the turmoils and troubles of the world, in all confusions, the souls of these blessed men rested in Christ.

We may say of all earthly things, as Micah hath this sentence of them, Micah ii. 10, 'Go ye hence, here is not your rest.' So we may say to the soul concerning riches, and honours, and friends, 'Here is not your rest.' You were not made to embrace and to cleave to these things. Our rest is in Christ and in the good things we have by him. These good men embraced him with their whole soul.

This shews that many men have not faith; they know not what it means. Where there is true faith, there is alway love, and joy, and delight in the things believed. It carries the soul with it. In what measure we apprehend the goodness of a thing, in that measure our love is to it. In what measure we apprehend the greatness and fitness of a thing, in that measure our affections are carried to it. The understanding reports it to the affections of love and liking, and they are naturally carried to that which the soul makes report of to be useful. The understanding makes them follow it. Therefore it is a sign our understandings are not persuaded, our eyes are not opened, when we love not good persons and good things, when we cleave not to them above all things. Those that do not embrace and cleave in their will and affections to good things, let them say what they will, they do not believe. If there were but a light conjecture in men, if there were but a guessing that there were such a happiness and that there were such horrible torments for sinners that live in sin, they would live otherwise than they do. Therefore deadness in the affections discovers atheism in the judgment and heart; it shews there is unbelief. For how is it possible that a man should not be carried in his affections to a good that he is persuaded of. And how is it possible he should not loathe ill and destructive things? If he were persuaded that hell were such as it is, and that these courses lead to hell and destruction, and estrange him from the favour of God, 'whose loving-kindness is better than life itself,' Ps. lxxiii. 3, if men were persuaded of these things in any strength, their souls would not be affected as they are.

Therefore if we would know whether nature be corrupted or no, we may do it by this. You have some men that are conceited, especially when they are in their ruff† and have all things plenty. Divines talk much of the corruption of nature and such things. They think all is well. Oh, but do but lay these things together, the excellency of the things promised and the terror of the things threatened, and our indisposition to these things in regard of persuasion, that we live as if we did not think these things to be true. What a disposition of soul is that that calls divine truths into question! To believe the lies of our own hearts and the temptations of the devil, and the world that lies in mischief, before the resolved truth of God itself, that is sealed with the oath of God. And yet the heart of man is naturally carried to believe these things more than God himself. Witness

* Cf. 1 Cor. ii. 12, xi. 32, *et alibi* (?).—G. † That is, = in state, grandeur.—G.

the lives of men who have dead, carnal, base affections in regard of heavenly things, they shew that they are not persuaded of them, notwithstanding all the sweet arguments and persuasions that the Scripture hath. They do not profess that they call them in question, yet they live as if they made no doubt that they are all false. It is a folly not to believe those things that are sealed by so many evidences as divine things are; but it is more desperate folly to live as if we did not believe them at all.

If these things were digested, they would make us out of love with our own natural estate, and to labour for a spirit of faith to persuade our souls, both that those things are so indeed that God hath revealed, and to get assured persuasion of our part and interest in them. Indeed, a dead faith is no faith at all. It is the effect of the whole Epistle of St James, that it is no faith that is dead; it doth not work upon the heart and affections, nor the life and conversation. A dead faith is no faith at all.

Let us shame ourselves therefore: Lord, do I profess I see things above nature? that I see Christ in heaven and see myself there? and do I profess that I am persuaded that the word of God is true, and am I no more affected? Where is my love? Where is my joy? Where is my comfort? Doth my heart run after other things, that profess myself to be persuaded of better things? Let us never rest, but be angry and wroth with our hearts and affections, for they are made for these promises. Our precious faith is made to embrace precious promises, and to carry the whole soul to them.

And let us help this with complaining of ourselves and with prayer. Lord, thou hast discovered excellent things in thy word, and hast persuaded me. Lord, open my heart; the heart is thy throne; the heart, and will, and affections thou dealest with especially. Lord, incline my heart, enlarge my heart. The Lord hath promised in the new covenant to teach our bowels to love; Lord, teach my heart to love thee. Thou hast opened my understanding to conceive holy things, or else I had never been able to understand thee and thy truth. Teach my bowels also to love; teach them to cleave to the things; take off my love, my joy, and delight from earthly things, and plant them where they should be; enlarge them the right way; fill my heart with thyself, as thou hast made it for thyself. This should be our desire.

Quest. What be the affections whereby the soul embraceth these good things it is persuaded of?

Ans. The soul embraceth these things in the affections of faith and hope in the first place; for faith is an empty grace in itself; it is carried to somewhat out of itself that it embraceth and layeth hold on; and hope is with faith alway. Together with the work of faith and hope there is a sanctified affection of the embracing soul; there is a love of the things promised, which is embracing, and a love of the means, and likewise joy and delight in them expressed by thankfulness. As you see the patriarchs in the story of Genesis, when God discovered holy things to them afresh, that he would give them the land of Canaan and the Messiah to come, and all that happiness, there was thankfulness, presently they built altars to God; and which alway accompanies thankfulness, humility. As Abraham, Gen. xvii. 3, down he falls when God made him such a large promise; he falls down on his face, as if he were unworthy of such a thing. So this disposition alway accompanies a soul that embraceth. Together with faith and hope, that leads the affections after them, there is love, expressed in a constant obedience and care of duty to God many ways, as it is an affection that will not be concealed. And joy and delight, with thankfulness and

humility, considering the excellency of the things and our unworthiness ; that we cannot but have this disposition alway, thankfulness and humility. And likewise contentment to end our days, a disposition that follows embracing in faith ; for, where embracing of faith and love is in an imperfect estate, there will be joy when that comes that makes way to full embracing ; that is, in heaven itself, as Simeon rejoiced when he embraced Christ in his arms. What did the old man, think we, when he came to heaven, when Christ and he met there ? And Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day with the eye of faith ; and likewise embraced it with faith, and that wrought joy. What did Abraham then when he came to heaven, when he saw all ended there ? I say, death, that makes way to full enjoining* and embracing, in this very respect it is not only patiently entertained of God's children, but comfortably, as letting them in to the good things that they esteem above all the world besides ; to the possession of Christ ; to heaven and happiness. Let us consider of these things.

To come to direct us a little about this embracing in faith, and hope, and love, and joy, and the whole soul, when the soul as it were goes out to the things we are persuaded of.

Quest. How shall this be wrought upon the soul ?

Ans. This embracing we see it follows upon persuasion, and persuasion follows seeing : 'They saw them far off, and were persuaded of them, and thereupon they embraced them.'

1. Therefore *let us labour for a clear understanding of divine things.* That which the eye sees, the heart grieves for in ill, and that that the eye sees the heart embraceth in good. And in what measure our eyesight of heavenly things is clearer, and our persuasion stronger, in that measure our embracing is lovely and full of joy and delight. Therefore let us labour to grow in knowledge, in supernatural spiritual knowledge, and that our persuasion may be stronger every day more and more ; for answerable to that our affections will grow, and will be carried to the things discovered.

And there is nothing more effectual to commend knowledge to us than this, that it is a means to work a holy and heavenly disposition and temper in us, especially if it be spiritual. And let us meditate upon what we seem to know and are persuaded of ; let us dwell upon things still, to work them upon the will and affections ; let us dwell upon them till our hearts be warmed well with the things known, and that we profess ourselves to be persuaded of.

And join with it an inquiry upon the soul, Are these things so ? Do I know these things ? and am I persuaded of these things that they are so ? How is my disposition answerable then ? am I so affected as I should be ? Is my love so hot, and my joy so working, and spiritly,† and quick as it should, or no ? And hereupon take occasion to stir up ourselves, and to check our own souls : Alas ! that I should have such things discovered, and that I should see such things, in such a strong persuasion in the book of God, and profess myself to be persuaded of these things, and yet be so dead at all times.

And if we find our affections anything working, that we are disposed to embrace these things, then we cannot but be in an excellent temper, and bless God that vouchsafed, together with the excellency of the things themselves, to shew us our portion by his Holy Spirit, to enlighten our understandings, and to persuade us. Let us bless God for this, for it is a work above nature.

* Qu. 'enjoying'?—G.

† Qu. 'sprightly'?—G.

And withal, because the soul cannot close with and embrace these things but it must let loose other things (for, you know, in embracing there must be a letting go of those things that were formerly within the grip), if we would grip these things in our affection and will, *we must have them only; we must not think to grasp the world and them together*, the things here below and them together; as we shall see after in that point, 'they accounted themselves strangers' to earthly things. Therefore this is one way to come to this embracing, to come to the sight of the vanity and insufficiency of all things in comparison of Christ, and the happiness we have by Christ. To see in matter of judgment the insufficiency of works and merit, and such like, in the matter of justification, the insufficiency of all such trash as the popish religion abuseth the world withal. And so in matter of conversation, to see the insufficiency, and emptiness, and vanity, yea, the vexation of all things besides these good things here offered. The good things that God's Spirit offers to the eye of our souls, that he offers to our wills and affections, what are all to these? And effectually think so, think what should draw a man's affections after it. Beauty or strength! Consider what will become of these ere long.

And then withal consider the excellency of the estate of the body and soul in heaven, if we carry ourselves as we should do, and preserve ourselves in our spiritual condition. Let us lay these things together, and then we shall see how infinitely the one is beyond the other. If it be for honour and favour of the world, consider the vanity of them and how short a time we may enjoy them, and the things themselves are subject to alteration. And withal consider the constant excellency of the favour of God in Christ Jesus, which will comfort us in life, in death, and for ever. And so for riches and possessions in this world, consider how soon all here must be left, and how the soul is larger than all these things, if we had a thousand times more abundance than we have; and that our souls that are more large and more excellent, they are not made for these things, but for better; and what use we shall have of better things when these fail, the soul being immortal and eternal. This will make us let go earthly things in our affections, and hold them in their place, in a secondary place, as things serviceable in the way to heaven, and not to grasp them in our affections, for then they pierce the soul to death and damnation.

And if we would be affected as we should be to good things, *let us keep our affections tender*, and keep them clear from the guilt of any sin that may work fears and doubts, for together with sin goes fears and doubts. They are bred in sin naturally; therefore if we would maintain this embracing, oh let us keep our souls! As we keep our understandings clear, so keep our affections tender by all means, and keep our consciences unspotted, that so our affections of joy, and delight, and love, may be ready pressed to good things, even to the best things.

Another way is in particular *to meditate of the love of Christ, the love of God in Christ, and of his embracing of us*; for we must know that we embrace in upon persuasion of God's embracing of us. We embrace not the promises of Christ as a man embraceth a dead post, that cannot return embraces to him again. This embracing of Christ and heaven, it is a mutual embracing; and it is a second, reflexive embracing. We embrace God and Christ, because we find God in Christ embracing our souls first in the arms of his love; therefore we embrace him again in the arms of our affections, because we find Christ embracing us in the arms of his affections.

Therefore let us attend upon the means, upon private reading of the word and upon the ministry; for what are the ministers but to contract Christ and the soul together? They are 'friends of the Bridegroom,' to discover Christ's love to us, and his loveliness,—his loveliness in himself, his riches in himself, and his love to us, to allure us again to Christ. The ministry is for this end especially, to draw Christ and the soul together. And what is the Scripture in the intent and scope of it, but to discover to us the excellency of Christ, and the good things we have by him, his love and good intention to our souls? Now, hearing these things in the ministry, they are effectual, together with the Spirit, to draw our affections back again to him; and, naturally, we cannot but love those that love us. Now, when we are persuaded of God's love to us in Christ, and Christ's love to us (God having made our souls for love to himself, and friendship with himself, and the nearest and sweetest conjugal friendship, now therefore) the more his love is discovered to us, the more we shall love him.

Therefore *let us be constant in attending upon good means.* We shall always hear something that will either strengthen our faith in the promises of God, or shew us our duty to God again. We shall have something discovered whereby the Spirit will be effectual to help this embracing. Let us go to reading and hearing with this scope and intention. Now, I come to hear, I come to have my soul wrought on, I come to hear some message from heaven, to hear some good thing to draw my mind from the world and worldly things; and upon hearing our duty to God, to walk lowly in thankfulness for those good things that we have, and that we hope for in another world. It is no wonder that men lose their affections that are careless in the use of means; and if they lose them, will they not lose all? The best man living, if he be careless in using the means of salvation, and give himself to the world altogether or to his calling,—things not in themselves unlawful,—his affections will be dead, he shall lose them; for God hath ordained that our affections should be quickened by heavenly means, and God knoweth better than we ourselves, that hath sanctified these means to this purpose. In attending upon the means, we shall hear a discovery of good things, and hear comforts, and have our light strengthened by new discovery of new Scripture, or by old Scriptures lively applied; something to increase the life of our persuasion, at every sermon and reading good books, and by every good company. And that which increaseth knowledge and persuasion, makes our affection and embracing stronger.

I beseech you, let us take these courses, or else all is to no purpose. The main thing in religion is the will and affections, and when the will and affections are wrought on, the work is done in the matter of grace. And there is no other way to know whether the former work of the understanding and persuasion be effectual and to purpose or no, but this; to know whether the will choose and cleave to good things, and whether our affections joy and delight in them. There is the trial of the main work. The work indeed is especially in the judgment, when it hears soundly and supernaturally of the ills that are to be avoided, and of the good things that are to be embraced, but where is the trial of the judgment, but when it carries the whole soul with it, when it carries the stern of the soul with it? Now that which is immediate to our souls is our affection of joy and delight, and the like. Therefore let us take to heart these things, and never think we are anything in religion till our hearts and affections be wrought upon; till our knowledge be such as may sway that whole inward man.

Again, consider the excellency of those good things that we have discovered to us in the gospel, that are the object of our embracing, together with the necessity of them, that without them we are wretched creatures, there is no hope for us. Let us every day consider what ground of hope we have, though the things be not yet possessed, whether the things be true that we hope for, whether they be confirmed to be true or no, and how we rest on them. For let things be never so excellent and necessary, unless the soul conceive of them as things attainable, as things belonging to us, all is to no purpose, this effect of embracing will not be wrought in the soul. Therefore consider more and more *the hopefulness of them*. That may help this embracing.

A Christian, when he believes and hopes for that happiness that shall be revealed to him, the things promised, what a world of grounds of hope hath he for it? He hath the word of God for an 'inheritance immortal and undefiled,' 1 Peter i. 4; he hath the will of Christ: 'Father, I will that where I am, they may be,' John xvii. 24. His prayer to his Father is his will, and his will must be performed; for he lives for ever to make good his own legacy to his church. And he is now in heaven, preparing that happiness for us that we so embrace with faith. And he hath left us here his Spirit to be a pledge that he will come again. He hath left his Spirit, and hath taken our flesh to heaven, to strengthen our hope, that this shall follow. Our flesh is in heaven in him already, and his Spirit is in earth in us; as a mutual *depositum* in trust between him and us; and all to strengthen the hope of that happiness that is reserved.

Besides the *seal of the sacrament*, the end of which is to cherish hopefulness of Christ, and of all the good we have by him, his oath is added to his promise, that all things might be immutable and unchangeable of the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting, &c. Now especially when we find our hearts to sink downward, and not to have that life as they should have, by meditating on these things, of their excellency and necessity, and to conceive in Scripture the grounds of hope of them, it will quicken us.

Add likewise, for our own interest, what work of the Spirit we have, and then what singular promises we have, that where God hath begun he will make an end. For why is the work of the Spirit called an earnest, but that God will make good the bargain? Consider what work of the Spirit we have; for whatsoever is spiritual is eternal in a man. What joy is spiritual, what love is spiritual, what knowledge is spiritual, it shall be made up in perfection, it shall never be taken away.

See then how the Spirit seals us by the work of it, and what earnest we have, in peace of conscience and the work of it. This will cherish hope; for that is part of this embracing, to embrace them with faith and hope.

And this should be a daily course, to work upon the affections, to estrange them from all things, and from the meditation of all things, else. And as I said before, to consider the love of God to us, and to love him again. And consider likewise the hopefulness of good things, that nothing in the world is so made good to us as the things of a better life; the things of grace and glory. And God hath borrowed from all assurance amongst men, terms to shew the assurance of the good things we have in hope and faith. The pledge of the Spirit, the earnest of the Spirit, the seal of the Spirit, the witness of the Spirit.* What terms are there used among men that may confirm anything, that you have not used to strengthen this super-

* Cf. Eph. i. 14; Rev. viii. 2; 1 John v. 9.—G.

natural assurance of these supernatural good things? God herein succours our weakness, knowing how prone we are to call these things into question. And consider especially our own unworthiness, our vileness and baseness, that we deserve none of this. When conscience is once awaked to know aright our own unworthiness, then we shall find it a difficult thing to believe these things. Therefore it is a work worthy of our daily endeavour, to search the Scriptures, which applies itself to our capacity, and confers all the help in the world to increase our grounds of hope of the best things, and then our disposition is as it should be.

And let us deeply consider of the necessity of heavenly things, and the foulness of sin, and the danger of our natural condition, and this will make us embrace better things. He that sees himself in danger of drowning will embrace that that may stay him. He that sees himself in danger to be pulled away from that that upholds him from sinking, he will clasp about it fast. Let us consider what a-many things we have in this world to pull us away from God and good things, and to loose our grip, that we may not lay such hold of them. The devil envies our embracing of these things, and there are many things to loose our affections from them. Consider the danger, and withal the necessity of these good things, that if they be lost, we do not only lose them, but we lose them with the loss of our souls, with eternal damnation in the world to come. We do not simply lose them, but we plunge ourselves into the contrary. Let us consider of this, and it will make us clasp fast, and keep our hold by all means possible. In that measure that we apprehend the danger, in that measure we shall embrace these excellent things.

Case. Now to answer a doubt and a case or two by the way. How happens it, then, that God's children sometime, when their judgment is convinced, yet their affections are not so quick, they are something flat in their affections? As God's people complain sometimes, Alas! that I should believe such a happiness as heaven is, and such glory, and yet find my affections no more stirred! Is it possible that I should be the child of God, and believe these things, and find myself no more affected?

Sol. Indeed, this troubles the peace of God's children sometimes; and good reason: for we see here, *after sight comes persuasion, then embracing.* The will and affections cannot but entertain that good they are persuaded of, and so there is great ground for the objection.

But there may be some mistake in this; for sometimes the judgment may be convinced, and yet the affections not be so quick, because there may be a diversion at the same time. There may perhaps be some present cross that may befall thee, or some present thing lawfully loved, that takes up the affections at that time. As, for example, the presence of father, mother, wife, or children, or of other friends, may take up the affections for the time. Now the affections running that way at that time, perhaps not sinfully neither, they are not so enlarged to heavenly things. God knows our capacity, and what our affections can do.

Then again, *there may be some present grief upon them*, that God, to humble a man, may take up his affections, so that at that time he shall not be so affected with good things, though ordinarily he comfort himself with the best things; and so he doth afterward, when he hath given his grief and his present affections some liberty. There is a love of intention* and of valuing: a man may be deceived that way. A man values his child more than a stranger that he entertains, yet for the present he may give a

* Cf. Glossary, *sub voce*.—G.

stranger better looks and better entertainment. Though he set more value on his child, or his dear friend that he hath secured himself of, yet he will not shew such countenance to them as to a stranger on the sudden.

So it is here. God's children their constant joy is in the best things, and they are judiciously carried to the best things; but on the sudden there may be an entertaining of some other thing, and perhaps not unlawful neither. Perhaps it may be sinful, to humble God's children; but that is but on the sudden. His course is to carry his affections above all earthly things.

Again, in another case, *God's children are deceived this way sometimes*; for they think they have no affections when they have affections. How is that seen? In case of opposition. Let God, and Christ, and heavenly things be opposed, and you shall see then that they have affections. Those that, for want of stirring up the grace of God in them, or for want of good means, or by indisposition of body, seemed to be dull in their affections, let religion be disgraced or opposed any way, and you shall find then their affections deep in their hearts to heavenly things; but they appeared not before, because there was no opposition. These, and such like thoughts, we may have to content the soul that is disquieted this way. But the rule is certain, that a man's affections are as his persuasion is, and his persuasion as his light is. As he hath a heavenly light, discovering heavenly things, so is his persuasion of a better estate than the world can yield; and, answerable to his persuasion, his soul is raised up to delight in the best things. This is his course. If it fall out to be otherwise, there be reasons for it, which we must discreetly judge of, and not trouble the peace of a good conscience. To go on.

'They confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.'

These words contain what they were in regard of earthly things; their disposition and carriage to all things besides the promises, to the things below. They were strangers and pilgrims in regard of their condition below. It sets down how they apprehended themselves to be, and how they discovered themselves to the world to be.

They were in regard of heaven indeed, heirs of happiness, heirs of a kingdom; in regard of the world and earthly things they were 'strangers and pilgrims.' And as they were, so they made themselves to be no better than they were. They confessed it. They were not ashamed of it. They apprehended themselves to be as they were, and they carried themselves answerable. Their life and course spake as much as their tongues. They confessed both in word and in deed that they were 'strangers and pilgrims.'

Now in the words I say you have their disposition and their profession, their condition and their confession; their disposition and carriage, and state and condition; 'they were strangers and pilgrims.'

The discovery of it, 'they confessed' they were so. And this confession is double.

Their confession was either verbal, as Jacob confessed when he came before Pharaoh: 'Few and evil have the days of the life of my pilgrimage been,' saith old Jacob, Gen. xlvii. 9.

Or it was a real confession, discovered by their carriage that they were strangers: their course spake louder than their words.

Those that in the whole course of their life shew a weaned affection to earthly things, though they talk not gloriously, as some idle persons do in a bravery, 'we are but strangers here, and we must be gone,' &c. Though, I say, they do not speak thus, as some do that never think so, yet, not-

withstanding, their carriage bewrays it; their course, and company, and conversation shews that indeed they 'confess themselves pilgrims and strangers.'

Now the order of the words is this, 'strangers and pilgrims.' There is little difference between these two. 'Strangers' shews our absence from home, that we are abroad in another country, that we are in another place.

And 'pilgrims' shews our carriage to our country, our going home: a pilgrim or traveller is he that is going homeward. They confessed themselves that they were not at home, but they were going toward that that was their home, toward heaven, to that city 'whose builder and maker was God himself,' Heb. xi. 10. We are 'strangers,' to shew what we are here on earth. In regard of heaven we are strangers on earth, and not mere strangers that rest, and do nothing, but such strangers as are passing home toward their country; 'we are strangers *and* pilgrims' on earth. The one implies our absence, the other implies our moving to the place of our abode.

The points considerable are, first, this, *that God's children upon earth here are strangers and pilgrims*; They are not at home, but are travelling toward their country.

The second is this, that

They profess themselves to be so. They know they are so, and they confess that they are so. They are not ashamed of it.

For the first,

Doct. It is the disposition of him that hath truly interest in better things (though but in faith and hope) to be a stranger and a pilgrim in regard of all things here below.

And this follows the other; for where the eyes of the understanding are opened, and a man is persuaded, there is an embracing of better things as our proper good things; there is a considering of all other things as things that do not belong to us; in a manner we are strangers. When faith apprehends Christ and heaven and happiness to be our own, and our country to be above, faith apprehending and grasping these things, and embracing them, at the same time it is to be supposed, and necessarily follows, that we are strangers.

It follows out of the necessity of the thing itself; for, upon the very consideration that a man is an heir of heaven, that he hath another country and condition, out of the necessity of the thing itself, though there were no other reason for it, the affections of the soul will be closed up, as it were, to other things, and he will consider of other things in an inferior condition as they are.

For the things, though they be good in their kind and order, both the things above and the things below, yet there being such a difference in these good things and the things here below, the contentments here on earth being so meanly good, and so short in continuance, and so weak in their satisfaction of the soul, that they cannot be possessed, together with the blessed assurance of better things, but with the affections of strangers and pilgrims, this follows, I say, from the nature of the thing, that in whose eyes heavenly things are great, in his eyes earthly things are mean. They are accounted as they are, secondary, mean things of the way, to help him forward home.

If a man were on the top of a great mountain, he would see the things below to be very little, and the things above would appear greater to him; so when the soul is raised up to see great things, though they be afar off,

as these did with the eye of faith, at the same time, his soul looking to things below must needs apprehend them to be little in quantity, as indeed they are.

If a man were in body lift up to heaven, and should look upon the earth, what were the earth but a poor silly point, the whole earth itself, much more a man's own possession; so when the soul is lifted up to heaven by faith,—which sets a man in heaven before his time,—when it looks from thence to the earth and earthly things, it must of necessity consider them, as they are, to be poor mean things. Therefore this follows, that being persuaded of the promises, that is, of the good things promised in religion in the word of God, to earthly things they were 'strangers and pilgrims.'

He that is from home, and hath another home which he is not at, he is a stranger; but Christians have another home.

1. For, first, *they are bred from heaven, they are born from heaven, they are born in Jerusalem that is from above; they are born in the church by the seed of the word and Spirit.* Now as they are from heaven, so their bent is to heaven again; for everything naturally riseth as high as it springeth. As we say of water, it mounts as high as the head of it is, so our affections mount as high as the spring of them is. Now a Christian being born from heaven, he tends to that in his affections, that is his country. It is his country, because his Father is there in his glory, and his Saviour is there, and a great part of his kindred are there; the souls of perfect men, and the glorious angels in a most glorious manner,—though they be in their attendance upon the earth,—there is his country, his city, his house, there is his happiness, his home. I shall not need, therefore, to prove that the godly are strangers. If heaven be his country, earth must needs be the place of his pilgrimage; there is no question but that follows.

It is said here 'they were pilgrims and strangers upon earth.' 'Upon earth;' because, wherever a Christian is, if it be upon any place upon earth, he is a stranger and a pilgrim. If he be in his own house, he is upon earth, and therefore he is a stranger in his own house; if he be in his own possession, he is upon earth, and therefore he is a stranger in his own possession. As David confessed, though he were a king, 'I am a stranger and a pilgrim here, as all my fathers were,' 1 Chron. xxix. 15. A king in his kingdom is upon God's earth, and therefore he is a stranger in his own kingdom here. As Austin saith very well, '*Quisque domus suæ,*' &c., every man is a stranger in his own house.* We are strangers here on earth, therefore. It is not any condition on earth that exempts a child of God from being a stranger, when the greatest kings in the world have confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims; so that all Christians, of what condition soever they are, from the highest to the meanest, they are all strangers upon earth. It is a clear point.

And it must needs be so, for the head of Christians was a stranger. His love made him a stranger; for he left his Father's bosom. His love drew him from heaven to earth, and here he conversed as a stranger. He dwelt in his body here as a tabernacle, which he laid aside for a while, to work the work of our redemption, and then after to dwell in it for ever. He was the prime stranger of all strangers. He that makes us all strangers here, and citizens of heaven, he was a stranger on earth. He was not indeed a stranger, for he was Lord of heaven and earth, yet in regard of his state of exaltation that was to come after, in regard of dispensation, he was here as a servant: he lived here as a stranger. And indeed he was as strangely

* Sibbes's previous sentences are a paraphrase of Augustine *in loco*.—G.

used; 'for he came among his own, and his own knew him not,' as it is in John i. 10. He was not known among his own countrymen the Jews; 'he was a stranger on earth.'

He conversed with us here, and was among us as a stranger. You see how his speech and carriage and conversation on earth it was as a stranger's. He was talking alway of his Father's house and of the kingdom of heaven. When he speaks of the estate of the church, which is the only company of people here in whom God rules by his Spirit, yet because they are ordained for the kingdom of heaven, he calls them strangers here, and terms them by that that they are ordained to. All his mind was of the kingdom of heaven. We see after he was risen, the matter of his discourse, as the gospel tells, it was of the kingdom of heaven. He talked of things that belonged to the kingdom of God; all his speeches were that way, and his comparisons were fetched that way. 'The kingdom of heaven is like' to such a thing and such a thing. And all his work was to draw men from the earth. As it was his grand work to redeem men from the earth, that is, from hell, and from their cursed condition, so the matter of his teaching was answerable to his work, to draw men to heaven. All the pains that he took before and after his death, till he was taken into heaven, it tended that way.

He came from heaven to earth to woo us to be a spouse to himself. He came from heaven into a strange country, to take us for his spouse, to take our nature, and in our nature to win us, to die for us. He carried himself as a stranger every way; he regarded not earthly things. Now answerable to our head Christ, must all Christians be in their affections and dispositions. We must be conformable to him; we must be strangers as he was.

All that look to die in the faith of Christ, and to be happy for ever, they must witness their believing and loving of better things by an answerable carriage to all things here below; they must have the affection of strangers and travellers. Faith doth enforce this. It is the nature of the soul, from a principle and ground of nature, that when the soul is carried up one way, it is shut another; when it cleaves unto, and embraceth better things, when it is open to heaven, the point of the soul is shut to the earth; and we look upon these things as strangers and pilgrims, only for necessary use.

These holy men the patriarchs were strangers.

1. Strangers *in their own esteem*. As Abraham and Jacob, they confess they were sojourners; and David, though he were a king, yet he saith 'he was a stranger, as all his fathers were.' So all the patriarchs they professed themselves to be strangers and sojourners; and they did it not in word only, but in deed. They shewed it by dwelling in tabernacles and tents; poor things, fit for strangers. Heaven was their house. Tabernacles are moveable, weak things, that have no foundation; so they knew their life was like a tabernacle here. And their manner of life shewed what they looked for; they carried themselves as those that hoped and looked for better things. They were strangers in their dispositions; they affected things above, and cared no more for these things than for necessary use, to help them to serve God in their places; and those that are strangers in their dispositions, they desire to be at home.

2. Again, they were strangers *in God's esteem*. God termed them so; and so it is with all that believe in Christ. When we once believe, and are new creatures, new born to a better inheritance, presently at the same time we are strangers here.

3. Strangers likewise *in the esteem of the world*. The world used them as strangers, strangely. When a man leaveth the world and cleaveth to God, presently the world setteth on him by reproaches, and all they can. Because they think he will disgrace them by his change, therefore they labour to make him as black as they may that way: they use all strangely that break from them. God will have it so. Because he will have his children not to love the world, therefore he will have the world hate them. So they are strangers in that respect: they think it strange that they do not as they did formerly; that they do not as they do. Wicked men think it strange that they 'run not with them into the same excess of riot,' 1 Pet. iv. 4: so they are strangers in the esteem of wicked men.

4. So they are strangers *in regard of their place*. Heaven is their hope. They are 'begotten to an inheritance immortal, undefiled,' &c., 1 Pet. i. 4; they live in a place where they are strangers; they are every way strangers.

Obj. But you will say, Wicked men are strangers, and pilgrims too?

Ans. I answer, They are indeed so, for in regard of the shortness of their lives, and the uncertainty of the things they enjoy,—for they outlive all their happiness here,—they are snatched hence before they be aware, therefore they are but travellers here; but they go from ill to worse. Yet in regard of their affections they are no strangers, but account themselves at home from a spirit of infidelity, and pride, and earthliness. Therefore they are called men of the earth, and those that 'dwell on the earth,' in the Revelation, Rev. iii. 10, because they look no further than the earth; and here they root and fix their affections upon this earth. They do not fix their hearts and affections upon the things above; they look not after them; they care not for them; they value them not, nor esteem them. Therefore, answerable to their thoughts, and bent of their soul and mind, is their discourse, their speech and carriage; and thereupon they are called 'men of the earth,' and called 'the world,' because they love nothing but the world; they are as it were changed into the things they love; they are earth, as the prophet saith, 'O earth, earth,' &c., Jer. xxii. 29; and they are the world, because their affection of love joins them to these earthly things. The church in the Revelation is called heaven; but the beast is said 'to rise out of the earth,' Rev. xiii. 11; for that which bred the carnal religion of popery, it was nothing but earth and earthly respects. Therefore, however they are strangers here, that they cannot be here long, and they have souls that are of an everlasting continuance; yet because their affections and the bent of their souls are all here, they account themselves at home here, and here they plant themselves and their posterity; therefore, though in some sense they be strangers, yet not in that sense that the children of God are.

Every Christian is born from above, and born to things above, and he is a stranger here. All his course, from his new birth till he come to the possession of his inheritance in heaven, it is nothing but a travelling. He never sits down, but is alway in his motion and passage. Every good work is a step of his way: he is in motion still; he takes degrees from better to better, from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, till he come to his home.

Let us make a trial of ourselves, how our affections stand to these things, whether our hearts be weaned from earthly things. Undoubtedly, if we have embraced Christ, we shall use the world as though we used it not. We shall be transformed into the image of Christ; and he used the things

of this world as a stranger, only to comfort him in the way. We shall have the same mind that he had. We shall carry ourselves as strangers, as those that hope for a country in heaven. Therefore I will name some particulars, to shew the condition and carriage of a stranger.

1. First of all, a stranger *is travelling to another country*—to join both in one; for the one follows the other. He that is a stranger, that apprehends what he is, and apprehends that he hath a country to go to, he travels toward it.

2. A stranger that is travelling homeward, he *is content with his present condition*, for he knows he shall have better at home. In Jer. xlv. 4, God, by Jeremiah, speaks to Baruch, a good man: 'I will destroy all these things; and dost thou seek great things for thyself?' If a Christian did consider, I am going to heaven, to God, what do I seeking great things here, which God will destroy? What will become of heaven and earth, and all things here ere long? And if the time be long ere heaven and earth be destroyed, yet what will become of me ere long? I shall be turned to earth, and shall I seek great things here upon earth? Shall I not be content with my portion? Certainly a stranger is content with his present portion. He that is a traveller, when he comes to his inn, if perhaps things be not so clean, if his usage be not so good, he thinks it is but a night and away: it is no great matter. This is not the main. He will not be over much discontent, and quarrel at any unkind usage in the way, for he knows he shall have better usage when he comes home. Therefore, as he will be content with little, be it what it will be, he knows it is not the main.

3. So he will be *patient* if he meet with unkind usage: he will not stand quarrelling by the way, and so hinder himself in his journey; he will be patient in the injuries and wrongs in this life. If a prince be misused in another country, he is contented, and thinks with himself, I have a country where I shall be more respected; and therefore he bears it the more willingly. So a Christian is a king, he is an heir; and being a stranger, he shall meet with dogs in this world; as, who do dogs bark at, but at strangers? Now being strangers we must look for dogged usage. It is no wonder that dogs bark at strangers; it is their kind. They consider it is the disposition of wicked men to do so; they do but their kind. Would a man have dogs not to bark? And would we have wicked men that have evil tongues not to scorn that they know not? To do otherwise is to forget their kind. A Christian knows they do but their kind. He pities them; and he doth not stop his journey and his course for it. He will not be scorned out of his religion by a company of profane spirits; he will not be laughed out of his course; he knows what he doth better than they. They are mad and fools; he knows it, and they shall know it themselves ere long. He knows that he is in a serious judicious course that he can approve, and they cannot theirs; therefore he will not be scorned out of his course.

Thus faith in Christ makes him that is a stranger here, content and patient. He whose soul hath embraced Christ is contented with anything: anything is sufficient to his soul that is filled with better things. Nothing will content a covetous earthly man, a man of earth. Such men think themselves at home; they make a league with hell and death. The men of the world they think they shall live here alway; but a Christian that embraceth a better life with Christ in happiness to come, he knows he shall not be here long. He is here but as a stranger, and shall shortly be at home; and therefore he is contented with anything.

4. Likewise the knowledge of this that we are strangers and pilgrims, it will make a man not only content and patient, *but thankful, for any kindness he finds in this world*; that God sweetens his absence from heaven and his pilgrimage on earth [some]what; that God should love me so, not only to give me heaven, but to give me contentments on the earth to sweeten my way to heaven: what a mercy is this! He is thankful for any contentment; he is thankful to the world, to those that do anything for him, that afford him any courtesy here that may help him in his pilgrimage, and make it less troublesome and cumbersome to him.

All the saints in former time were wondrous thankful for that they had; for what can a traveller look for but discourtesies and hard usage? And if he find anything better he will be thankful: certainly it is more than I looked for, saith he. When a man is bent toward heaven, he cannot but look for hard usage from the world. We see when Christ did but look toward Jerusalem, the Samaritans had enough; they began to malign him. Why? 'His face was toward Jerusalem,' Luke ix. 53. So when base worldlings see that a man will to heaven, and leave their company and courses, they cannot digest this. A man with an ill conscience, when he sees another oppose that course that he resolved to stick to, he sees he confutes his course, he sees his face is toward heaven, and therefore labours to disgrace him. As the wench said to Peter, 'Thou speakest as one of Galilee; thy speech bewrays thee,' Mat. xxvi. 73; so when a man is going toward heaven, every base person, the veriest rascal of all, hath pride enough to scorn religion. So we see they make not much of the world, nor the world of them; therefore they are contented and thankful if they find better; for what can a stranger look for but strange usage in a strange place?

And therefore we see in Scripture how thankful they were, even for refreshings, for meat and drink. Our Saviour Christ was known by 'breaking of bread.' He used to be thankful. 'In all things give thanks,' Eph. v. 20. They saw the favour and love of God in a crumb of bread, and in a drop of refreshing in any kind. Oh, here is a blessed God, that hath given us these comforts in the way. The saints of God are wondrous thankful for the comforts of their pilgrimage, the comforts of this life.

And this should make us more thankful, because all men's pilgrimages are not alike; for do we not see the life of some more cumbersome? Some live in a great deal of want; some live in a great deal of opposition more than others do; others go in a smoother way to heaven. God sees his children's weakness; he sees they have not strength; and if in pity he keeps them that they shall not encounter with opposition, but lead them a better way than others, it is special matter of thankfulness to God and men too.

5. He that is a stranger, *he is glad of any good company*. Oh, if he meet with a man of his own country, he is a man alone for him; so it is with a Christian that walks in the way to heaven with him, he is comforted much in it.

6. A stranger, *he hath his prime intention* home to his country*, and what he doth in the way, it is in virtue of his prime intention, though he doth not, in every particular action that he doth, think of it. A traveller when he rides on the way he doth not think of home in every step. Ay, but he doth that that he doth in virtue of his prime intention when he first set out, and calls to remembrance oftentimes as he goes home; he thinks of his journeys. And by the way,

* Cf. Glossary, *sub voce*.—G.

I observe this note of some weak Christians that think they are not heavenly-minded, except they do nothing but think of heaven and heavenly things. That is but a weak and silly conceit. It should be our thought in the morning. Our thoughts should open with that. It should be the key to open the morning, the thought of this course what will become of us ere long in heaven. But then all that we do should be in virtue and strength of that prime intention to please God, and to go to heaven. Though we think not alway of the present business, yet it is good as much as may be to quicken our endeavour.

7. And hence it is that there is another property of a stranger that is going to a place, *perhaps he may step out of the way, yet notwithstanding, by virtue of his first intention, he gathers himself homeward again.* If he take other matters in hand, he gathers home still, though he go out of his way, in he comes; he considers, this is not my way. So a child of God, sometimes he diverts and turns aside, yet notwithstanding he considers, doth this way lead to Godward, to heavenward? Be these actions Christian actions? Are they the way to heaven? If he see they be not, though he have stepped awry, he comes in again, and is gathering homeward. Though he may perhaps forget himself a little—a traveller—yet his bent is homewards. So a Christian man, though perhaps in some particular he may forget himself, yet he is alway gathering home; his bent is home, and his course is godly. Take a Christian, perhaps he may step awry, but his course is godly, and he labours to recover himself; and if a traveller stay at any time by the way, he makes amends afterwards by making more haste. So doth a Christian, if we consider him with his affections loose to good things; yet he recovers himself again, and sets upon religious actions and courses with more violence of spirit, and recovers his former loss again.

8. A traveller and stranger *he provides beforehand for all encumbrances.* He knows though he meet not with troubles, yet he may, therefore he will be sure to go with weapons, and he will go with that that may sustain him by the way. Religion teacheth a man to gather out of the word of God comforts beforehand, and munition beforehand, to carry with him. Put the case he never use them; he may have cause to use them, and then if he have them not, what will become of him? He lies open to adversaries by the way. Therefore there is a spirit in a Christian, an instinct that stirs him up; he will be reading the word of God, and good books, and hearing the word. This I may have use of at such a time; this I will lay up for such an occasion. Put the case that such an occasion come not, he loseth nothing. He seasoneth his soul in the mean time, and prepares it for worse things if worse come.

Woe to those that have not laid up strength and comfort against evil times beforehand. If a man go to sea, and be not provided beforehand; if he take a journey, and be not provided beforehand, then when a storm comes, what a case is he in! It pleaseth God to teach us by these resemblances heavenly things. Therefore because they are fit means to convey holier things unto us, it is good to take this help that God affords us, considering that he shews us by these shadows better things. When we travel, and are going on in our journey towards heaven, it is good to consider higher things, it is a good meditation. Therefore to go on a little further.

9. A traveller and stranger *is inquisitive of the way,* whether he be in the way or out of the way. He asks not at random. That doth not content him, whether he go west, or north, or south, or east; it doth not content

him to ask where lies my country, eastward ? &c. No ; but he will ask the particular towns, and particular turnings and windings, how he may avoid going out of his way, and which is the right way, and he will ask upon every occasion, because he knows if he go but a little out of his way it will be a long time ere he shall recover it, and he will be ashamed to come back again ; and the more he goes out of the way, the more trouble it is to come back again. So it is with a Christian, he doth not only desire to know in general, but he desires to have daily direction, what shall I do in such a case of conscience, and in such a case ? How shall I overcome such a temptation if I meet with it ? And so he is willing to have daily direction how to walk with God day by day, that he go not out of his way in anything.

For even as every step that a man takes is a part of his journey, so every action of a man's life it is a part of his journey to heaven, and therefore he is willing to have direction for every step, that he may walk step upon step upon good ground. Therefore he goes upon good grounds of a good conscience, in the duties of Christianity. He will have sound conviction what is good, and what is true in religion ; what religion is true that he may venture his soul upon, and what use he may make of his particular calling ; what he may do with a safe conscience, and what not ; and what he may not do that he will not meddle with, and what is clear to his conscience that he will do. So every step he takes, though it be in his particular calling, it helps him forward. As St Paul saith, in the Epistle to the Colossians, of servants, that they serve God in serving their master, so a poor servant in his drudgery may serve God. So in our ordinary professions we are in the way to heaven, if they be sanctified by prayer beforehand, and do it in conscience and obedience to God, that hath set us in this way.

There are two callings, our general and particular calling, and we shew religion, that is our general calling, in our particular calling, as we are placed in this or that calling ; and what we do in either of these callings is the way to heaven. Now the care of a Christian is, that he be well advised what to do, and on what ground.

10. And even as a traveller considers of things by the way as they make to his end, *to further his journey or hinder his journey*, he looks to heaven as his country that he hopes for, and therefore he doth not tangle himself with any more than may help him home. If they hinder him once, away they go ; if they may help him, he takes them. A Christian in his travel in the way to heaven considers of things that may fall out by the way, as they may help and further him to heaven. If I find that things, though they be indifferent in themselves, if they trouble me in my way to heaven (it may be they are not so to another, but they are to me), though another can do it, yet I must consider whether I can do it, and find myself enlarged to heaven as at other times. If not, away with it. It is not indifferent to me, because it hinders my journey to heaven. A wise traveller will venture upon things and courses as they serve or hinder the main, though they be things perhaps that he cannot over-well spare, yet if they trouble him in his journey, off they go, that he may be more expedite and right in his way.

I wonder at the boldness of many that profess themselves religious, and yet dare venture upon anything. Undoubtedly, if they did search their own hearts, they could not but say that such courses do dead and dull them, and make them forget religion ; that such company is not safe to keep. I find myself the worse by it, why should I venture upon anything that may stop and hinder, or cool and dead me in my way to heaven ?

If a man be wise, he will consider of things as they help or hinder him to that.

As for sins whereof we are convicted, it is the apostle's counsel, Heb. xii. 1—he puts it out of all question—‘We must cast off all that burden, that presseth down,’ &c. A traveller will not have a burden upon him. The sin that hangs so fast on we must labour to mortify, to kill our lusts and corruptions more and more, and never leave till we have cast them off. These things are undeniable. I spake before of things in themselves indifferent, and to other men indifferent, if they have a larger measure of wisdom; but for corruptions and sins, they fight against the soul, they fasten us to the world, therefore above all things we must cast off them; as St Peter saith excellently, in 1 Peter ii. 11, ‘I beseech you, brethren, as pilgrims and strangers, abstain from fleshly lusts, which fight against your souls:’ insinuating that pilgrims and strangers should altogether abstain from lusts, from the cherishing of carnal lusts, for these fight against the soul, they fight against the comforts of the soul, against the graces of the soul, and against the eternal well-being of the soul. The more a man cherisheth base lusts, the more it damps his comfort and grace, and weakens his assurance of life everlasting. They fight against all good in the soul; therefore let us abstain ‘from fleshly lusts, that fight against the soul.’ That is clear; all confess that. But the other that I spake of before, carefulness of things indifferent, if we find them not so to us, till we get more mastery of ourselves, we must even be careful of our liberties, and not give ourselves those liberties that others do, if we find they hinder us in particular. Yet with a secret concealing of it, not to entangle the consciences of other men, who perhaps may use those things with less hindrance than we do: a wise Christian will be wary in that kind. If he find the things of the world to hinder him, he will not have his heart eaten up with the world, nor eaten out with lawful things. Being therefore to prepare for a better life, and to do God's business, he will only take the things of this life as they may make for a better life, and be a furtherance of him to his home. He winds home by all means, he useth all advantages to come nearer to God, and whatsoever hinders him he labours to avoid.

11. Again, he that accounts himself a stranger here, *he doth not value himself by outward things*. Faith teacheth a man, when he is an heir of heaven, not to value himself by earthly things. He thinks himself a stranger in his own house, as David did, though he were a king, as I said. Every Christian is a stranger at home. He values not himself by his honours, nor dignity, nor by the things that he hath here; nor he doth not disvalue himself by poverty or disgrace. He knows he is a stranger; he is going home; therefore he values himself by that he hath at home. Christians are kings and heirs; they esteem not or disesteem of themselves by what they have here below; they account them as things in the way, that God gives them, if they be good, to sweeten their pilgrimage; if they be ill, to sharpen their journey. It is necessary that God should give them these things, good things to sweeten their journey; and if they loiter in their way to heaven, then that they should have crosses to drive them homeward.

In all confusions in the world, faith teacheth a man to stand as a man upon a rock immoveable, because he is a stranger. If anything fall out in the city or place where a stranger is, he carries his own jewels and things about him, and so goes away, his goods are not of that place; so

in all confusions of the world, a Christian hath good things of another world. The good things he carries with him are not subject to losses or crosses, they are not subject to the misusing of the world. When all things shall be on fire, a Christian hath his treasure laid up in heaven, in a place where no earthly creature hath power of it. It is not subject to any ill, and that makes him in all estates contented and patient. Let heaven and earth go together. A Christian when he hath embraced better things, a Christian thinks himself a stranger that is going home; therefore in all his life he carries himself as a stranger. To go on a little further.

12. A traveller in his way *must of necessity have refreshings by the way, or else he will fail*; therefore sometimes he sings, and sometimes useth other refreshings. Now, what saith David? 'Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage,' Ps. cxix. 54; that is, when I want other comforts, they are my song, my joy, and delight. A traveller must needs have comforts that may revive him in his fainting; he must have some pleasant walks for meditation. Let us therefore, when we grow weary, refresh ourselves in walking, in holy meditation. Take a turn there, to think of the vanity of all earthly things, and how soon they come to an end; and of the excellency and eternity of our glorious condition and estate when we come home, and then think of the helps and comforts by the way, and such like. The art of divine meditation is an art for this end, that since we are all travellers, that we are from home, and that we are going home, we may walk in wisdom. Let us learn that art, to feed and strengthen our souls with such meditations as may clear them by the way, to set some time apart when we grow dull and indisposed in religion. Then let us think how to cherish and refresh our souls with those excellencies, that are indeed above our comprehension; our hearts cannot conceive of it. It is set out in the word of God to our conceit, but as it is we cannot conceive here what is reserved for us when we shall come home. Therefore let us do as travellers, often think of home, and what is at home for us; and that will make us when we are in the way, and any comfort would draw us out of our way, to think, Oh, these are good comforts, but this is not my home. I have better at home than this, and this will stay me from home. Therefore the cross is necessary for travellers, that they may know they are not at home, that they may embitter his comforts. This consideration, that he is not at home, and that this is not his country, as it will keep a Christian from temptations, so it will draw him on to constancy in his love and in going on; for a traveller sits not down to stay there. He thinks, Here I am, and home I must go, and I shall not come home by sitting here.

So the oft thinking of home, it will both sweeten our troubles, and likewise the comforts that we meet with in this world. It will make us that we shall not be ensnared with them; because, though they be comfortable things, yet, alas! what are these? These indeed are fit to make a man forget home, to forget heaven, as a man that sees goodly things, goodly houses. These things, saith he, are they that make a man unwilling to go out of the world (*d*). But he that is assured of a country, and knows that he hath a better home than all these earthly things, that are shadows and vanity, he thinks these are very goodly things; but what are these to that that is reserved? And if I sit down by these, if a traveller sit down by delights, and gaze upon things by the way, when shall he come home? Let us think oft of home; there be many uses to think and meditate of

that blessed day; this among the rest, that it draws us on forward and forward still, that we shall not sit quiet, but go on still, and not rest till we come home.

And the nearer we are home, the more busy and the more cheerful we should be; as a traveller, when he comes near home he is more cheerful, when he hath home in his eye; when he sees the smoke of his country, he rejoiceth. As these patriarchs, they saw the promises afar off. As men when they see the tops of steeples and houses, they think, Now we have them continually in our eye, we see something of home; and the nearer they come the more they see, and the nearer they come still the more they see. So the longer a Christian lives, the nearer and nearer he comes home. If he understand himself, and have any assurance in any degree, it makes him more joyful towards his end.

Thus it was with God's people. When they were nearer their end, then they sung sweetly the swan's song, and then they were enlarged in their spirits; as Jacob, when he was dying we see what a will he made, what legacies to his children. And Joseph, when he was dying, and Moses the man of God; the song of Moses, and David, the 'sweet singer of Israel.' The last words of David, what sweet words they were! And St Paul, when he was to go out of the world, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,' &c., 2 Tim. iv. 7. And our blessed Saviour, toward his end, we see how heavenly he was in his prayer. And good Simeon, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace,' &c., Luke ii. 29. When he had grasped Christ once, he was loath to live any longer. So it should be with Christians as it is with travellers: the nearer they are home, the more and more comfortable they should be still.

It is a shame for old men to fear when they come near their end, when they are near the haven, then to fear. It is as if a man in a storm should fear the haven; or a man that travels and sees a city, to be afraid of his own house; whereas he should rejoice and think he is nearer his happiness than other men, as Saint Paul tells the Romans, 'Your salvation is nearer now than when you first believed,' xiii. 11. So we should think our salvation and happiness in heaven is nearer now than when we first believed; and therefore the less time we have to travel here with incumbrances in the way to heaven, the more joyful we should be. The nearer we are to death, the nearer to our preferment, the nearer to our country and our home. These are the advised thoughts of a Christian; and when other thoughts come into a man, when he is stricken in years, surely they are not in him as a Christian, but as he is weak and wants faith and assurance of salvation. Oh let us therefore labour to get assurance of another, a better country; for what made these holy men confess themselves strangers and pilgrims here? 'They saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them;' and in that measure they were assured of a better condition, 'they carried themselves as strangers and pilgrims here.'

To wind up all in a word, you see here their disposition. I beseech you, make this text your pattern to be moulded into. You see how these blessed men long ago lived in faith when their light was less than ours is; and they died in faith, and will welcome us when we shall come to heaven. We shall go to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of the patriarchs and holy men. It will be a blessed time when all the blessed men that have gone before shall welcome us to heaven. If we look to be happy as

they are, we must live as they did, and die as they did. Though we cannot so strongly as they did see that with the eye of faith that no eye else can see, yet let us desire God to persuade us of these truths more strongly than the devil of* our own lusts shall persuade us to the contrary; let us desire God to set on his truths so strongly that all other things may not hinder us, that we may embrace them with our best affections of love, of desire, of contentment; that we may witness all this by our demeanour to earthly things; by our base esteem of them, and carry ourselves as pilgrims and strangers on earth. If we do thus live in faith and die in faith, we shall live with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven eternally.

* Qu. 'or'?—ED.

NOTE.

(a) P. 418.—'Death . . . this king of fears.' Cf. note *c*, Vol. IV. page 38. I would supplement this note with a fuller quotation from Aristotle, to whose blank despair, when he treats of death, Sibbes alludes repeatedly: *Eth. Nic. iii. 5, 4, φηβρώτατον δ' ὁ θάνατος. πέρας γὰρ, καὶ οὐδὲν ἔτι τῷ τελευτῶντι δοκᾷ ὡς ἄγαθόν οὔτε κακὸν εἶναι.*

(b) P. 427.—'As Peter saith, mop-eyed.' Cf. 2 Peter i. 9. Mop-eyed means short-sighted, and very well translates *τυφλός*, = natural state of *blindness*, and worse—closing the eyes to the light as follows: *μύωψ* = contracting the eyelids as one who cannot see clearly = short-sighted.

(c) P. 428.—The author seems to have had in his mind the well-known lines of Horace—

'Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.'

(d) P. 459.—'These things, saith he, are they that make a man unwilling to go out of the world.' This remark anticipates by more than a century a similar one ascribed to Dr Samuel Johnson, to Edmund Burke, and to John Foster the essayist, 'These are what make a death-bed terrible.' It seems to be one of those memorable things that have got inwrought into our language. G.