

THE WITNESS OF SALVATION.*

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.—ROM. VIII. 15, 16.

THE apostle in this Epistle sets down a platform of Christian doctrine, whereupon all persons and Christian churches might safely build themselves ; shewing therein a sure way how those might come unto the Lord Jesus, who are to obtain salvation by him : which he delivereth in three heads.

1. First, Shewing *how God will convince the world of sin.*

2. He discovereth unto them *what that righteousness is, which without themselves is imputed unto them.*

3. He setteth forth *that righteousness inherent, created in us by sanctification of the Spirit, with the effects thereof and motions that help us thereunto.*

Answering that threefold work of the Spirit, John xvi. 8, where Christ promiseth that when the Comforter cometh, he shall reprove the world, 1. Of sin ; 2. Of righteousness ; 3. Of judgment.

First, He shews the comforter shall work a *conviction of sin*, leaving a man as vile, empty, and naked as may be. Not a bare confession of sin only, which a man may have and yet go to hell ; but such a conviction which stops a man's mouth that he hath not a word to speak, but sees a sink of sin and abomination in himself, such as the apostle had, Rom. vii. 18 : ' For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing,' &c. To attain unto this sight and measure of humiliation, there must be work of the Spirit.

* 'The Witness of Salvation' forms No. 12 of the original 'Saints' Cordial,' 1629. It was withdrawn in the after-editions. Its separate title-page is as follows :—'The Witnes of Salvation : or, God's Spirit Witnessing with ovr Spirits, that wee are the Children of God. In One Sermon. Wherein is shewed, What the spirit of Bondage is. Why God suffers his Children to be terrified therewith. The paralleling of the Witnesses in Heaven and Earth. What the witness of our spirit is. How to discerne of it. The order of the Witnesses. What the witenesse of Gods Spirit is : and, How to discerne the truth thereof. Præluendo Pereo. Vprightnes Hath Boldnes. Job 27. 5. God forbid that I should justifie you : till I dye I will not remove my integritie from mee. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it goe : my heart shall not reprove me as long as I live. London, Printed in the yeare 1629.'—G.

First, therefore, the apostle begins with the Gentiles in the first chapter, who failing grossly in the duties of the first table, God had given also over to err in the breach of all the duties of the second. Then the second chapter, and most part of the third, are spent on the Jews. They bragged of many excellent privileges they had above the Gentiles; as to have the law, circumcision; to be teachers of others; to have God amongst them; and therefore despised the Gentiles. The apostle reproves them, shewing, that in condemning the Gentiles they condemned themselves, they having a greater light of knowledge than they; which should have led them unto the true and sincere practice of what they were instructed in. Then he goes on, and shews naturally all to be out of the way, the 14th verse of the third chapter; and so concludes them to be under sin, 'that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world found guilty before God.' This is an end of the first part.

Now, this being done, in the latter end of the third chapter he goes on and proceeds to that second work of the Comforter, to convince the world of righteousness. But upon what ground? 'Because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;' that is, he shall assure the conscience that there is now a righteousness of better things purchased for us; that Christ is wounded, condemned, and arraigned for us; that he was imprisoned, but now he is free, who was our surety; yea, and that he is not freed as one escaped, who hath broken prison and run away, for then he could not have stayed in heaven, no more than Adam in paradise after his fall: but now that Christ remains in heaven perfectly and for ever co-enthronized with his Father, this is a sure ground to us that the debt is paid, and everlasting peace and righteousness is brought in for our salvation.

This the apostle enlargeth, and shews this to be that righteousness only which Adam had, and which all we must trust unto, unto the sixth chapter. Then the apostle goes on unto the third point, and comes unto the convincing the world of *judgment and righteousness*, in the eighth chapter, which are two words signifying one thing; but because he had named righteousness before, which was that righteousness without a man, in Christ Jesus, in justification, he calls the third judgment, which is that integrity inherent, bred, and created in us, as we may see in that place of Isaiah xlii. 3. It is said of Christ, 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, till he bring forth *judgment* unto victory.' He shews judgment there to be a beginning of righteousness in sanctification, even such a one as can never be extinguished. So Job xxvii. 2, the word is taken, where he expostulates the matter: 'As the Lord liveth, who hath taken away my judgment from me, all the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue deceit. God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, I will not let it go.' Here you see by judgment is meant integrity and that righteousness which is created and inherent in us, so that the ground of that place of Isaiah is, that God will never give over to advance and make effectual that weak righteousness and sanctification begun in us, until it shall prevail against and master all our sins and corruptions, making it in some a victorious sanctification. And the ground thereof is, 'For the prince of this world is judged;' he is like one manacled, whose strength and power is limited, so that now though he be strong, yet he is cast out by a stronger than he, that he cannot nor shall ever rule, as in times past. This strain of doctrine, the apostle holds in this epistle, shewing that, as that justi-

fication of righteousness by the blood of Christ is a thing without us, so sanctification is righteousness inherent and created in us, and is the ground of the witness of our spirit, as we shall hear in its own place. So that the blood of Christ doth two things unto us: 1. It covers our sins in justification; 2. And then in sanctification it heals our sins and sores; so that if there be any proud* flesh, it eats it out and then heals the wound. 'Therefore, saith he, not under the law, but under grace.' He that sees the law to be satisfied by another, and all to be under grace, he will not much stand on anything in himself for his justification, but fly unto grace, and be much in thankfulness; therefore we are commanded that sin have no dominion over us, 'for we are not under the law, but under grace.' Then he proceeds unto the particulars, and shews divers things, especially verse 12th of this eighth chapter, he drives unto the point of sanctification; as though he should say, You are freed from the law, as it is a judge of life and death, but yet the law must be your counsellor. You are debtors of thankfulness, seeing whence you are escaped, that ye may not live after the flesh. And then he proceeds to shew them how they should walk; that seeing they have received the Spirit, they should walk after the Spirit. Now that they had received that which should subdue and mortify the flesh and the lusts thereof, they should be no more as dead men, but quick and lively in operation, to live after the Spirit; otherwise they could not be the sons of God. And then he comes unto the words which I have now read, verse 15th, 'For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.'

'For the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God.'

Here the apostle shews the ground of our union and communion with Christ, because having his Spirit, we are of necessity his; as St John speaks, 1 John iii. 24, 'And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.' What ties and makes one, things far asunder, but the same Spirit of life in both? So that Spirit which is in him, a full running-over fountain, dropping down and being also infused in us, unites us unto him; yea, that very Spirit communicated to me in some measure, which is in him in such fulness, that Spirit doth tie me as fast unto Christ as any joint ties member to member, and so makes Christ dwell in mine heart. As the apostle to this purpose speaks, Eph. ii. 21, 22, 'That thus by one Spirit we are built up and made the temple of God, and come to be the habitation of God by the Spirit.' So that now by this means we are inseparably knit and united unto him. For, I pray you, what is it that makes a member to be a member to another? Not the nearness of joining, or lying one to or upon another, but the same quickening spirit and life which is in both, and which causeth a like motion. For otherwise, if the same life were not in the member, it should be corrupt, dead, and of no use to the other; so that it is the same spirit and life which is in the things conjoined that unites. Yet to explain this more—as I have often in the like case spoken—imagine a man were as high as heaven, the same life and spirit being in all parts, what is that now that can cause his toe to stir, there being such a huge distance betwixt the head and it? Even that self-same life which is in the head being in it; no sooner doth the head will the toe to stir but it moves. So is it with us; that very Spirit which is in him being in us, and he in us, thereby we are united to him, grow in him, and live in him, rejoice in him, and so are kept and preserved to be glori-

* That is, 'inflamed.'—G.

fied with him. He is the 'second Adam,' from whom we received the influence of all good things, showering* down and distilling the graces of his Spirit upon all his members, that look, as it was said of Aaron, who was a type of the second Adam, and of that holy oil representing the graces of the Spirit, 'Which did not only run down his head and beard, but the skirts of his garments, and all his rich attire about,' Ps. cxxxiii. 2; so when I see the oil of the Spirit of grace not only rest upon the head, but also descend to his heel and run upon the members, making me now as one of them, in some sort another thing than I was or my natural state made me, by the same Spirit I know I am conveyed into Christ and united unto him. To this purpose is that which Christ so stands upon, John vi. 63, unto the Jews, where, speaking of the eating of his flesh, and that bread of life which came down from heaven, lest they should mistake him, he adds, 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' So that we see it is the Spirit that gives a being unto the thing; and therefore the apostle also proceeds to shew, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,' Rom. viii. 13, 14; that look, as Christ is the true natural Son of God, so we as truly, by the conveyance of the same Spirit unto us, are his sons by adoption, and so heirs of God. This he begins to shew, ver. 15, that now being in this excellent estate, they were not only servants or friends—a most high prerogative—but they were 'the sons of God,' having 'the Spirit of adoption,' whereby they might boldly call God Father. In which verse he opposeth 'the spirit of bondage,' which doth make a man fear again, 'unto the Spirit of adoption,' which frees a man from fears, so as boldly to call God Father.

Now two things may be observed hence: first, *the order that the Spirit of God keeps*. Ere it comforts, it shakes and makes us fear. This the apostle speaks of, Heb. ii. 14, where he shews the end of Christ's coming was, that 'Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part with them; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' The first work then of the Comforter is to put a man in fear. Further, hence is shewed, that until this Spirit doth work this fear, a man doth not fear. The heart holds out. The obstinacy is so great, that if hell gates were open, a man will not yield till then that the Spirit worketh it. So St John speaks of the Comforter, that 'when he comes, he will convince or reprove the world of sin,' John xvi. 8; that is, he will convince and shew a man that he is but a bondman; and so he makes us to fear.

No man must think this strange, that God deals with men at first in this harsh manner, as it were to kill them, ere he make them alive; nor be discouraged, as if God had cast them off for ever as none of his; for this bondage and spirit of fear is a work of God's Spirit, and a preparative to the rest. But it is but a common work, and therefore, unless more follow it, it can afford us no comfort.

Obj. Why then doth God suffer his children to be terrified first with this fear?

Ans. I answer, that in two respects, this of all other is the best and wisest course to deal with us by the Holy Ghost, or else many would put it off, and never rightly come unto a sense of mercy. 1. In respect of God's glory; 2. In regard of our good.

* Misprinted 'shewing.'—G.

1. But now, let us see why is such a course good in respect of *God's glory*. Because, as in the creation, so in the work of redemption, God will have the praise of all his attributes. In the former, there appeared his infinite wisdom, goodness, power, justice, mercy, and the like, so would he in the greater work of redemption have all these appear in strength and brightness; for in so doing, we honour him. It is honour to acknowledge all these things to be in him in high perfection, whereby the contrary, it is his dishonour when we acknowledge not the excellency of his infinite attributes. Yea, I may safely say, the work of redemption was the greater; for therein appeared all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in conveying it unto the church.

(1.) For his *wisdom*. There appeared infinite wisdom in so ordering the matter to find out such a means for the redemption of mankind, as no created understanding could possibly imagine or think of.

(2.) For his *mercy*. There could be no mercy comparable unto this, in not sparing his own Son, the Son of his love, to spare us, rather than we should perish, who had so grievously transgressed.

(3.) So there could not be so much *justice* seen in anything as in sparing us, not to spare his Son; in laying, as it were, his Son's head upon the block, and chopping it off, in renting and tearing that blessed body, even as the veil of the temple was rent—which was a type of him—so did he, as it were, tear him for us, and break him, when he 'made his soul an offering for sin.' This was the perfection of justice, and thus was he just, as the apostle speaks, 'that he might be a justifier of them who are of the faith of Jesus,' Rom. iii. 26. God would therefore in this great work have justice and mercy to meet and kiss each other. And that for two reasons: for the magnifying, 1. of his justice; 2. of his mercy.

1. *Justice*. For the former, the Spirit must first become a spirit of bondage and fear, for the magnifying of his justice, that God may have the glory thereof, as we see the prophet David, having sinned, was driven to this pinch: Ps. li. 4, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightst be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.' Thus he, an holy man, was brought to confess, to give God the glory of his justice. And so to this end, that a man might pass by, or through, the gates of hell into heaven, the Lord will have his justice extended and spread abroad to the full view; and therefore, for the present sight of mercy, he turns the law loose to have its course; and thus, as in the work of redemption, he would have the height of justice to appear. So neither, in the application thereof, would God suffer justice to be swallowed up of mercy. But even as that woman, 2 Kings iv. 1, who had nothing to pay, was threatened by the creditors to take away her two sons and put them in prison, so the law is let loose upon us, though we have nothing to pay, yet to threaten imprisonment and damnation; to affright and terrify us, to magnify the justice of God. This is the first cause.

Further, God hath set forth many terrible threatenings against sin and sinners. Shall all this be to no purpose? The wicked are insensible of them; must they therefore be in vain? Some people there be on whom they must work. 'Shall the lion roar, and no man be afraid?' Amos iii. 8. Since, then, those who should will not, some there are who must tremble, and those even his own dear children. This the prophet excellently sets forth, Isaiah lxvi. 2, where the Lord sheweth whom he will regard: 'But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit,

and trembling at my words.' So that you see even some of his own must thus tremble and be humbled of necessity, and that it is not without just cause that God doth deal with his own children in this manner, though it be sharp in the experience. We must fear, tremble, and be humbled, and then we shall receive a spirit not to fear again.

That vain courage which some have to brag of, 'I fear not death,' this is not that meant here; for, alas! such braggers, out of ignorance of the thing, and desire to be out of misery in this life, may embrace death willingly, hoping it may put an end to their miseries. But this spirit not to fear again, is such a spirit that assures me of the forgiveness of all my sins, shewing me my freedom in Christ Jesus from hell and eternal condemnation, making me live an holy life, and from hence not to fear; and so seals us up unto the day of redemption, as we shall hear anon, when we come unto the witness of this Spirit. This is for the glory of his justice.

2. *Mercy.* Secondly, It is requisite that the Comforter should work a fear in men, for the glory of *his mercy*, which would never be so sweet, nor relish so well, nor be esteemed of us, if the awful terrors of justice had not formerly made us smart; as we may see in that parable, Mat. xviii. 23, whereunto our Saviour likens the kingdom of heaven, of that man who owed ten thousand talents unto the king his master. He shews he forgives him all. But what did he first? He requires the whole debt of him; and because he had nothing to pay, he commands him, his wife and children, and all that he had, to be sold, that payment might be made. First, he would have him pinch, thoroughly to know how much he was indebted; and in that case how high that favour was which he received in forgiving him all. Thus a king, for great faults, casts men into prison ere he pardon them, and then mercy is mercy indeed. So God deals with us. Many times he puts his children in fear, shews them how much they owe, how unable they are to pay, casts them into prison, and threatens condemnation in hell for ever. After which, when mercy comes to the soul, then it appears to be a wonderful mercy, yea, the acts of exceeding mercy. Why do so many find no savour in the gospel? Is it because there is no witness or matter of delight in it? No. It is because such have had no taste of the law and of the spirit of bondage; they have not smarted, nor found a sense of the bitterness of sins, nor of the just punishment due unto the same. Even as a king will suffer the law to pass on some grievous malefactor for high treason, and cause him to be brought to the place of execution, and lay his head on the block, ere he pardon, as we have had experience in this country. A man who otherwise would not cry, nor shed a tear for anything, despiseth death, and would not fear to meet an host of men, such a one now having at this instant a pardon brought from the king, it works wonderfully upon him, and will cause softness of heart and tears to come when nothing else could; whilst the wonder of this mercy is admired; which now appeareth so sweet and seasonable, that he is struck, and knows not what to say. So therefore, for this cause, God shews us first a spirit of fear and bondage, and prepares us to relish mercy; and then the Spirit of adoption, not to fear again.

And thus, by this order, the one is magnified and highly esteemed by the foregoing sense of the other.

If, therefore, this terror and fear be hard and troublesome unto us, yet if it be for God's glory, let us endure it. If he will give me over to a wounded, terrified conscience, to fears, tremblings, astonishments, yea, or to draw me to the fire itself, or to any other punishment, since it is for his

glory, I must be contented. But what do I say? God gets nothing by us. All that we do is for ourselves. Our acknowledgment of him makes him no wiser, stronger, juster, nor better than he is, Job xxxv. 6, 7; but, in glorifying him, we do glorify ourselves, and so pass from glory to glory, until we be fully transformed into his image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And herein consists our happiness in acknowledging of his wonderful attributes, that, by reflex of the knowledge of them, we may grow in them as much as may be for our good. He was as glorious, powerful, wise, just, happy, and good before the world was made as now. For if the case be put of glorifying him, the persons of the Trinity were only worthy of so great honour, not we, as we may read Prov. viii. 30. There Wisdom shews how it 'was with the Father before all time, and that they did mutually solace themselves in the contemplation of one another's glory.' Then, says Wisdom, 'was I by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;' and John xvii. 5, there we read the same in effect, where Christ prays, 'And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' So that the beholding, magnifying, and admiring his glory as much as may be, labouring to be like him, is our glory. Thus much of the glory of God in beginning of his work in us by fear.

This second was, that this course is for our good, and that two ways,

1. In justification. 2. In sanctification.

1. *In justification.* For the first, we are such strangers unto God, that we will never come to him till we see no other remedy, being at the pit's brink, ready to starve, hopeless of all other helps. We are such wretched creatures, so hard frozen in the dregs of sin, delighting in our own ways, as we see in the parable of the prodigal son, Luke xv. 11, *seq.* He would never think of any return to his father till all other helps failed him, money, friends, acquaintance, all sort of food; nay, if he might have fed on husks with the swine, he would not have thought of returning any more to his father. This being denied him, then the text saith, 'He came to himself,' shewing us that whilst men run on in sinful courses they are madmen, out of themselves, even as we see those men in Bedlam. They are beaten, and kept under; comforts denied them till they come to themselves. Then what says he? 'I will go to my father, and confess that I have sinned,' &c. So it is with us, until the Lord humbles and brings us low in our own eyes, and shews us our misery and sinful poverty, and that in us is no good thing; that we be stripped of all helps in and without ourselves, and must perish for ever without we beg his mercy. We will not come unto him, as we see it was with that woman whom Christ healed of her bloody issue, Luke viii. 43, how long it was ere she came to Christ. She had been sick twelve years; she had spent all her substance on physicians, and nobody could help her. This extremity brought her. So that this is a means to bring us to Christ, to drive us on our knees, helpless, as low as may be,—to shew us where only help is to be found, and make us run into it.

Thus, therefore, when men have no mind to come unto Christ, he sends as it were fiery serpents to sting them, that they might look up unto the brazen serpent, or rather unto Christ Jesus, of whom it was a type, for help, Num. xxi. 8, John iii. 14. So unto others, being strangers unto him, he sends variety of great and strange afflictions, to make them come, that he may be acquainted with them. As Absalom set Joab's corn on fire because he would not come at him, being twice sent for, 2 Sam. xiv.

30, so God dealeth with us before our conversion many times; and with an iron whip he lasheth us home, turning loose the avenger of blood after us, and then we run and make haste unto this city of refuge for our life. Thus, I say, God doth shoot off his great ordnance against us, to make us run unto him. So John the Baptist in this manner came preaching of repentance, in attire, speech, diet, all strange; clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of skin about his loins, his meat locusts and wild honey; the place, in a wilderness; the speech, harsh and uncomfortable, thundering in voice, calling them generation of vipers, and telling them that now was the axe also laid to the root of the tree or under the wood, that every tree that brought not forth good fruit was hewn down and cast into the fire, Mark i. 6, *seq.*

As also we know in this manner, the Lord came unto Elias, 1 Kings xix. 11, *seq.* First, a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after them went an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. These were as a peal of great ordnance, shot off to prepare the way for him, to shew the King his coming. And after the fire a still small voice, and there the Lord was. So the Lord rends, tears, and shakes our consciences oftentimes to prepare the way for him, and then he comes unto us in that still and soft voice of consolation.

2. *For our sanctification.* It is good for us that the Comforter's first work is to work fear in us; for we are naturally so frozen in our dregs, that no fire in a manner will warm and thaw us. We wallow in our blood; we stick fast in the mire of sin up to the chin, that we cannot stir. So that this fear is sent unto us to put us from our corruptions, and to make us more holy. As we see a man having a gangrene beginning on his hand or foot, which may spread further and be his death, he is easily persuaded to cut off that, that it go no further. So doth God deal with us in this fear of bondage, that we may be clothed anew with his image, in holiness and righteousness.

Now, to effect this, the sharpest things are best. Such as are the law and threatenings of condemnation, the opening of hell, the racking of the conscience, and a sense of wrath present and to come. So hard-hearted we are by nature, being as children of the bond-woman, unto whom violence must do the work. Even as we see a man riding a wild and young horse to tame him, he will run him against a wall that this may make him afraid, ride him into deep and tough lands, or taking him up unto the top of some high rock, from whence bringing him to the bank thereof, he threatens to throw him down, and so makes him shake and quake for fear, whereby at last he is tamed. So deals the Lord by us. He gives us a sight of sin, and the punishment due thereunto, a sense of wrath; sets the conscience on fire; fills the heart with fears, horrors, and disquietness; opens hell thus unto the soul; brings one as it were unto the gates thereof, and threatens to throw him in; and all this to make us more lowly, or the more to hate sin. So that by this we see there must be strange mortifying and subduing of us by strong hand, to bring us unto Christ, for our sanctification.

Obj. Ere I proceed, give me leave to answer one objection of a troubled soul, which may arise from hence: Oh, may one say, 'what comfort, then, may I have of the first work of the Spirit in me, for as yet I have found none of these things? I have not been thus humbled, nor terrified,

nor had such experience, as you speak of, in that state under the spirit of bondage.'

Ans. I answer, This, though it be the work of the Spirit, yet it is not the principal, sanctifying, and saving work of the Spirit. Yea, a child of the devil may come to have a greater measure of this than God's own dear children, whom for the most part he will not affright, torture, nor afflict in that terrible manner as he doth some of them; but the consequent of this is more to be accounted of than the measure, to see whither that measure I have, whatsoever it be, leads me. For if the measure were so absolutely necessary to salvation, then all God's children should have enough of it; for I make a difference still betwixt humiliation and humility, which is a grace of itself, and leads me along with comfort and life. Thus, therefore, I think of humiliation. If I have so much of it as may bring me to see my danger, and run unto the medicine and city of refuge for help, to hate sin for the time to come, and set myself constantly in the way and practice of holiness, it is sufficient. And so, I say, in the case of repentance. If a man could have a heart firmly set upon the sight of sin past, against all sin to come, the greater and firmer this were, the lesser measure of sorrow might suffice for sins past. As we see a wise father would never beat his child for faults past—he takes no delight in that but for prevention of what which is to come, for we see the child cries out in the time of correction, I will never do so more!—so God deals with us. Because our promises and resolutions are faint, and fail, and that without much mourning, humiliation, and stripes we attain not this hatred of sins past, and to have strength against them, therefore it is that the measure of our humiliation and sorrow must be proportionable to that work which is to be done, otherwise any measure of it were sufficient which fits us for the time to come.

I will add, there are indeed divers measures of it, according unto which the conscience is wounded. When there is a tough, melancholy humour, that the powers of the soul are distracted, good duties omitted, and the heart so much the more hardened; when upon this the Lord lets loose the bond of the conscience, oppressing the same with exceeding terrors and fears, this the Lord useth as a wedge to drive out a hard piece of wood to be cut. God then doth shew us, because we would not plough ourselves, we shall be ploughed: 'If ye would judge yourselves,' saith the apostle, 'you should not be judged,' 1 Cor. xi. 31. And therefore the church confesseth and complains, Ps. cxxix. 2, that 'the ploughers ploughed upon her back, and made deep furrows.' Why, how came this? 'She did not plough up her own fallow ground.' Wherefore the Lord sent her other ploughers, that ploughed her soundly indeed. Wherefore doth God thus deal? Because he is the great and most wise husbandman, who will not sow amongst thorns. Therefore when he is about to sow the seed of eternal life in the soul, which must take deep root and grow for ever, he will have that ground thoroughly ploughed.

The way, then, to avoid these things, so harsh and displeasing to flesh and blood, is to take the rod betimes and beat ourselves. When we are slow, secure, and omit it, God doth the work; yet he makes a difference of good education in those who have kept themselves from the common pollutions and gross sins of the time. It pleaseth God that faith comes upon them, they know not how for the time. Grace drops in by little and little, now a little and then a little by degrees. Sin is more and more hated, and the heart inflamed with a desire of good things in a con-

scionable life. But in a measure, I say, such must have had, or have, or shall have, fears or terrors, so much as may keep them from sin, to go on constantly in the ways of holiness; or when they fly out of the way, they shall smart for it, and be whipped home again. Yet for the main they find themselves as it were in heaven, they know not how. But if a man have stuck deep and long in sin, he must look for a greater measure and more certain time of his effectual calling. There must be haling and pulling of such a man out of the fire with violence. That man must not look for peace and comfort with ease. God will thunder and lighten in this man's conscience in mount Sinai ere he speak peace unto him in mount Sion.

A second time also there is of a great measure of humiliation, which is, though a man be free of worldly pollutions and gross sins, when the Lord intends to shew the sense or feeling of his mercy to any in an extraordinary measure, or to fit them for some high service, then they shall be much humbled before, as we see Paul was, Acts ix. 8. God did thunder upon him, and beat him down in the highway, being stricken with blindness three days after.

And thus much shall suffice to have spoken of the 15th verse, touching 'the spirit of bondage' and the 'Spirit of adoption.' The apostle tells them, they may thank God the spirit of fear thus came, that hereafter they might partake of the Spirit of adoption to fear no more. He stirs them up, as it were, to be thankful, because now they had obtained a better state. Why, what estate? A very high one: ver. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witnesseth with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' The thing is then to know ourselves to be the children of God. There must be sound evidences. Here then are two set down, whose testimony cannot fail. I will touch them, by your patience, as briefly as I can, and so make an end.

1. The witness of our spirit. 2. The witness of God's Spirit with our spirit.

These be two evidences, not singly but conjoined, wherein you see there must be some work of our own spirit.

Obj. Our spirit is deceitful; how can our spirit work then in this manner to testify this?

Ans. I answer in this place, Our spirit is taken as an evidence of God from heaven; as it were a love-token given, and assuring me from good grounds that I have not misapplied the promises; that though God do write bitter things against me, yet I love him still, and cleave unto him; that for all this, I know that I hunger and thirst after righteousness; that I will not be beaten off, nor receive an ill report of my Lord and Saviour; that I rest, wait, serve, and trust in him still. In a word, the witness of our spirit I take to be a sanctified resolution upon deep sorrow and mature judgment both of God's mercies bestowed, and my obedience to the will of God; whence the soul gathers strength to wait and depend upon God, and serve him in all holiness, though for the present he hide his face and seem an enemy. When thus our valour and faith is tried, then comes the same Spirit, and seals with our spirit, that we are the children of God. When our seal is first put, then God seals with our spirit the same thing by his Spirit. To this effect, 1 John v. 8, we read of three witnesses there set down,

1. The Spirit; 2, the water; 3, the blood.

'And these three agree in one.' These three witness that we have

everlasting life, and that our names are written in heaven. How do these three agree with these two witnesses? Very well, Saint John ranks them according to the order of their clearest evidence.

1. The Spirit; 2, then the water; 3, then the blood.

The apostle here ranks them according to their natural being: first, our spirit in justification; and sanctification is put next, and then God's Spirit. For the Spirit, of all other things, is the clearest evidence; and when this is bright and manifest, there needs no more. The thing is sealed. So the testimony of water is a clear evidence whereby is meant sanctification. This is put next unto the Spirit; for when the Spirit is silent, yet this may speak. For though I have many wants and imperfections in me, yet if my spirit can testify unto me that I have a desire to please God in all things, that I have resolved to set up his service as the pitch of all my utmost endeavours; that I with allowance will cherish no corruption, but have set myself against all: this water will thus comfort. It holds up a man from sinking, as we see in all the sore troubles of Job, chap. xxvii. 2-5, he still stood upon the integrity of his own spirit, and would not let that go though he were sore beaten of the Almighty, and slandered of his friends for a wicked person. But the water may be muddy, and the struggling of the flesh and spirit so strong, that we cannot well judge which is master. What then? In this case faith lays hold of the blood of justification, which though it be the darkest testimony, yet is it as sure as any of the other. Now in comparing these witnesses together in Saint John and in my text,

1. I rank the water and the blood with the testimony of our spirit. And,

2. The Spirit mentioned in St John and in my text to be all one.

Not as though we wrought them, but that we do believe them to be so. If a man ask, how I know that I am sanctified? the answer must be, I believe, I know it to be so. The work of working these things in me comes of God; but the work of discerning them is certain, how our affection stands in this case—comes of us. But yet to come nearer to the matter.

'The testimony of our spirit.'

I conceive to be, when a man hath taken a survey of those excellent things, belonging unto justification and sanctification; when according to the substantial truths which I know in the word belonging thereunto, I observe and follow as fast as I may what is there commanded; when I take the candle of the word, and with that bright burning lamp search what is to be done, and therewith lance my corruptions, *and so bring it home*, then is it mine. This is the ground-work of the witness of our spirit. As in the blood, with my spirit I must see what is needful to be done to be justified; what free promises of invitation belong thereunto. I must see how God justifies the sinner, what conditions on our part are required in justification, and my interest therein. I must see what footings and grounds of life give way, and hope for a graceless man to be saved, yea, even unto the worst person that may be. In this case a man must not look for anything in himself as a cause. Christ must not be had by exchange, but received as a free gift, which the apostle shews, Rom. iv. 16, 'Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed,' &c. I must therefore bring out* the receiving of Christ a bare hand; first, it must be of grace. God for this cause will make us let fall everything before we shall take hold of him. Though qualified with humiliation, I must let all fall; not trusting unto it, as to make me the worthier to receive Christ, as some think. When thus at first for my

* Qu. 'unto'?—Ed.

justification I receive Christ, I must let anything I have fall, to lay hold on him, that then he may find us thus in our shirts, as it were—in our blood—and in this sort God will take us, that all may be of mere grace.

Another thing is required, *that the promise may be sure*. If anything in us must be as a cause or help to our justification, a man should never be sure; therefore it is all of grace, that the promise may be sure. As though God should say, I care for nothing else, thou canst bring me in this case. Bring me my Son, and shew me him, and then all is well. And in this you see he doth not name hope or love, or any other grace, but faith. For the nature of faith is to let fall all things in laying hold of Christ. In justification faith is a sufferer only. But in sanctification it works and purgeth the whole man, and so witnesseth the certainty and truth of our justification, and so the assurance of salvation.

Hence, from the nature thereof in this work, 2 Pet. i. 1, the apostle writes unto them who had received the like precious faith. In this case, it was alike to all in virtue in this work, whatsoever the measure be. And I may liken it thus: Paul, we know, says, 'with these hands I got my living,' 1 Cor. iv. 12. Now, though strong hands may work more than weak, and so earn a great deal, yet a beggar who holds out his hands may receive more than some other can earn; so faith doth justify us by receiving, not working, as you may see, John i. 12, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.' What then should we do to be saved? Why, receive him: that is, believe in him now. Come and take sure hold, as in the Revelation, 'and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely,' Rev. xxii. 17.

1. *Open house*. Now when I see that God keeps *open house*, come who will, without denying entertainment unto any, and when God's Spirit hath wrought the will in me, and I come and take God at his word, and believe in Christ, laying hold by degrees on the other promises of life, winding and wrapping myself in them as I am able, this is faith; but that persuasion, that I have, that I shall go to heaven, which many think to be faith, is not so, but rather a consequent thereof. The promise is made unto those who believe in Christ; for in him, saith the apostle, 'all the promises are yea and amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20. If a man weep much, and beg hard for the forgiveness of sins, he may weep and be without comfort unto the end of the world, unless he have received Christ, and applied his virtue home unto the trembling soul. A man must first receive Christ, and then he hath a warrant to interest himself in all the promises. So that now this being done, if such a man were asked, Hast thou a warrant to receive Christ? He will answer, Yes, I have a warrant. He keeps open house unto all who come, welcoming all, and I have a will to come. This is a good and sufficient warrant; if I have a will in me wrought for to come, and do come. And this is the first thing to be observed in the witness of our spirit.

2. *Invitation*. Now if a man do stagger, for all that the King keeps open house, so as he will not or doth not come, then in the second place comes *invitation*. Because we are slow to believe, therefore God invites us: Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Many object, Oh, I am not worthy to come! But you see here is invitation to encourage me; yea, the sorer and heavier my load is, I should come so much the rather. So that if in this case the question should be asked of such a one, Friend, how came you hither?

What warrant had you to be so bold? Then he shews his ticket, as if he should say, Lord, thou gavest me a word of comfort, 'a warrant to come.' My load and burden indeed was very heavy, and my unworthiness great; but at thy invitation, in obedience to thy word, and faith in thy promise, I came hither. Now this invitation is directed to them who have no goodness yet wrought in them. When, then, my spirit warrants thus much unto me, that upon this word of promise and invitation, I have come in for relief and ease of my miseries unto Christ Jesus, the great physician, relying on him for cure, and lying, as it were, at his foot for mercy, this is the testimony of my spirit, that I do believe, and a ground for me to rest on, that now I am in the way of life, and justified by his grace.

3. *Entreaty.* Thirdly, Sometimes Christ meets with a slow and dull heart, lazy and careless, in a manner, what become of it; not knowing or weighing the dangerous estate it is in; making excuses. There Christ might justly leave us; for is it not too much that the King should invite us for our good, as he did those in the gospel, who, for refusing to come to his supper, were excluded from ever tasting thereof, and strangers were fetched in in their places? God might so deal with us; but you see, 2 Cor. v. 20, 'God sends an embassy to *entreat us*;' erects a new office, as it were, for our sakes. Says he, 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God.' This may seem to be needless; we being weaker than he; ambassadors are sent to the stronger. The apostle reasons the matter: 'Are we stronger than he? Do we provoke the Lord to anger?' But here we see and may admire his infinite rich goodness, that he doth come to sue to us to be reconciled with him. We know it might be counted a kind of indignity for the king of Spain, so great a monarch, to sue unto the Hollanders for peace, who are so far inferior unto him. This dishonour God puts up at our hands, and says* unto us first, when rather it becomes us on our knees to beg for it. The effect of the embassy is, that we would be friends with him, and receive that which is so highly for our advancement. When, therefore, I see this quickness in my heart, so that, as St James speaks of the engrafted word to save our souls, I can bring it home, having some sweet relish and high estimation of it in my heart, that it begins to be the square and rule of my life, then I am safe. If this or any of these fasten upon the soul, and thereupon I yield and come in, it is enough to shew that I am a justified person, and from hence our spirit may witness, and that truly. This is a third thing in the witness of our spirit.

4. *Command.* Fourthly, If none of all this will do, then comes a further degree, a *command from the Highest*, You shall do it, as 1 John iii. 23, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandment.' In the parliament of grace there is a law of faith, which binds one as strictly to believe as to keep any of the commandments. Saith the apostle, Rom. iii. 27, 'Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.' So that if I will not believe on the Lord Jesus, who easeth me from the rigour of the law, and so is my righteousness, I shall perish for ever. What, may one object, *must* I needs believe? Yes, thou art as strictly bound to believe, as not to murder, not to be an idolater, not to steal. Nay, I will add more, that thy infidelity and contempt of that gracious offer, thy disobedience to the law of faith, is

* Qu. 'sues'?—Ed.

greater than thy disobedience to the law of works; when thou dost fling God's grace in his face again, and, as it were, trample under foot the blood of the covenant. See for this John xvi. 9. What is that great sin which Christ came to reprove? Even this infidelity, says he, 'because they believe not in me;' which in two respects is a great sin. First, because it sins against God's mercy; secondly, because it is a chain which links and binds all other sins together. Thus faith is sure, when it lies on the word, otherwise all other thoughts are but presumption, and will fail a man in the time of need. For what is faith, I pray you, but my assent to believe every word of God. He hath commanded me to believe, and to endeavour the practice.

5. *Threatenings.* Fifthly, If all this will not do, then comes *threatenings*. Then God swears, that such as refuse shall never enter into his rest. If the prince should sue unto a beggar's daughter for marriage, and she should refuse and condemn his offer, do you think he would be well pleased? So it is with us when the King of heaven's Son sends to us, will you be married to me? If we refuse, the Son doth take on wonderfully; and therefore, Ps. ii. 12, he says, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those that put their trust in him.' So Hebrews iii. 18: God swore because of infidelity those unbelieving Jews should never enter into his rest. All the rest of the threatenings in the law were not with an oath. There was some secret reservation of mercy upon the satisfaction of divine justice; but here there is no reservation. God hath sworn such shall never come to heaven. Look not for a third thing in God, as a mitigation of his oath. It cannot be. He hath sworn no unbeliever shall ever enter into his rest.

These five things are the grounds of faith even to the worst and unworthiest persons that may be, which, once wrought in the heart and the spirit, and the Spirit of God renewing our spirits, discerneth the same spirit. These are the witness of our spirit.

Now, our spirit having viewed all these things and the promises upon which they are grounded, thus it witnesses, as if one should demand of one, Are all these things presented to thy view true? Yes, will he say, true as the gospel. Then the next thing is, Are they good and profitable? Oh yes, saith he, all are very good and desirable. Then the upshot is, Are all good to thee? If then thou accept of this and warp and fold thyself in the promises, thou canst not wind thyself out of comfort and assurance to be in Christ Jesus; for, I pray you, what makes up a match but the consent of two agreeing. So the consent of two parties upon this embassy makes up the match between us and Christ, and unites and knits us unto him.

There are also, being now incorporate, other means to make us grow up in him, by which time discovers what manner of engrafting we have had in him. As we see four or five scions* may be engrafted in a stock and yet some of them not take root, but wither, so, many are by the word and sacraments admitted as retainers and believers of the promises who shrink and hold not out, because they never took root, but it only swimmeth in the brain. Yet, howsoever, all that come to life must pass this way, if they look for sound comfort. Thus much shall suffice for the witness of our spirit in justification; but our spirit's testimony goes further, wherein I might shew you how in sanctification our spirit says, 'Lord, prove me, try me if there be evil in me, and lead me in the way for ever,' Ps. cxxxix.

* That is, 'scions,' = grafts.—G.

23. He loves the brethren, desires to fear God, as Nehemiah pleads, Neh. i. 11, 'Be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name,' &c. This is the warrant that I am partaker of that inward true washing, and not of that outward only of the hog, which being kept clean, and in clean company, will be clean till there be occasion of returning to wallow in the mire again. But when I find, though there were neither heaven to reward me nor hell to punish me, if opportunity were, yet my heart riseth against the sin because of him who hath forbidden it, this is a sure evidence, and testifies that I am the child of God. Thus much is for the first thing in bringing a man in to survey the promises concerning justification and sanctification, whereupon our spirit doth truly witness the assurance of our salvation.

Secondly, When I find Christ drawing and changing my nature, that upon the former reasonings and view, and laying hold of Christ, making me now have supernatural thoughts and delights,—for this a man may have,—then, certainly, my spirit may conclude that I am blessed; for, saith the Scripture, 'Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to come unto thee,' Ps. lxxv. 4.

But some like drones do dream of this, I know not on what grounds; these men can have no comfort. But do I this waking with my whole soul? Doth my spirit testify it upon good grounds? Then I may rest upon it; it is as sure as may be. This is the testimony of our spirit. Yet, ere I come to the witness of God's Spirit with our spirit: there may be often an interposing trial betwixt; God may write bitter things against me, seem to cast me off, wound me for all this as with the wound of an enemy, and remove the sense of the light of his countenance from me. What then is to be done? What doth the witness of our spirit now? Why then I will trust in him, though he kill me, Job xiii. 15. Sure I am I have loved and esteemed the words of his mouth, more than mine appointed food, Job xxiii. 12; as Job speaks, 'I have laid hold of them to shew their power and believe them, I have desired to fear him and yield obedience to all his commandments.' If I must die, I will yet wait on him and die at his feet. Look here is the strength of faith. Christ had faith without feeling when he cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' When sense is marvellous low, then faith is at the strongest. We must walk here by faith; we shall have sense and sight enough in another world. The apostle saith, 'We walk by faith, and not by sight, and by faith we stand;' as we may see a pattern in that woman of Canaan, Mat. xv. 22, *seq.* She was repulsed as a stranger, yet she went on; then she was called a dog. She might have been dashed and given over her suit; but see, this is the nature of faith, to pick comforts out of discomforts; to see out of a very small hole those things which raise and bring matter of consolation. She catcheth at that quickly, Am I a dog, Lord? Why yet it is well, 'The dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table.' Thus faith was strong in her; and when this trial was past, then Christ says unto her, 'Woman, great is thy faith, have what thou wilt.'

I have done with the testimony of our spirit. And then from our believing God in generals and valorous resting upon him, taking him at his word, comes 'the testimony of God's Spirit, witnessing with our spirit, that we are the children of God.'

I say, this being done, and God letting us have trial what his strength is in us, he will not let us stand long in this uncomfortable state, but will come again and speak peace unto us; after two days gather us up, and the

third day revive us, that we may live in his sight. As if he should say, What! hast thou believed me on my bare word? Hast thou honoured me so as to lay the blame and fault of all my trials on thyself for thy sins, and clear my justice in all things? Hast thou honoured me so as to magnify my mercy, to wait and hope in it for all this? Hast thou trusted me so as to remain faithful in all thy miseries? Then the Lord puts to the seal of his Spirit. As we may read Eph. i. 13, saith the apostle, 'In whom also ye trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance,' &c.

Here is the difference betwixt faith and sense. Faith doth take hold of general promises, applies them, makes them her own, and lives and walks by them; and so squares his life by those rules in all things, as without sense she leads us on to heaven; but sense is another thing, when as Ps. xxxv. 3, there is a full report made unto the soul of its assured happiness. As in that place, 'Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.' When a man hath thus been gathered home by glorifying him and believing his truth, then comes a special evidence unto the soul and says, 'I am thy salvation,' which, in effect, is that which Christ in another place speaks, 'He that loveth me shall be beloved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him,' John xiv. 21. And as it is Cant. i. 2, 'He will kiss us with the kisses of his mouth,' so as we shall be able to say, 'My well-beloved is mine, and I am his.' When God hath heard us cry a while until we be thoroughly humbled, then he takes us up in his arms and dandles us, making his Spirit after a sensible manner seal unto us the assurance of our salvation. So that a meditation of the word being past, a man having viewed his charter and his evidences, surveying heaven and the promises and privileges, with the glory to come, then the Spirit comes in and makes up a third guest; then comes joy unspeakable and glorious, and in such a measure that the soul is wonderfully pleased. It shall not continue always so, but at some times we shall have it; yet it endures so as that it shall never be taken quite away, as our Saviour's promise is, John xvi. 22: 'And you now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you.' This is the root of all consolation, that God will not forsake us for ever, but he will come at last and have compassion of us, according unto the multitude of his mercies.

Obj. Here some may object, What! doth the Spirit never seal but upon some such hard trials after the witness of our spirit?

Ans. I answer, The sealing of God's Spirit with our spirit is not always tied to sore, hard, and such foregoing trials immediately; for a man may be surveying heaven, or the glory to come, or praying earnestly in much humility, with a tender melting heart, applying the promises and wrestling with God; then at these or some such times God's seal many times may be, and is put to our seal: 'For as the wind bloweth where it listeth, and no man discerneth the coming thereof,' John iii. 8, so may the Spirit of God seal at divers times and upon divers occasions; yea, and why may it not seal in the time of some great suffering for the truth, as we read of the apostles, Acts v. 41, who went away from the council 'rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer any shame for his name'?

Lastly, *for trial*; we must now see how to distinguish this testimony of the true Spirit from the counterfeit illumination of the *Anabaptists* and some friars, who will now and then have some strange sudden joys, the devil, no

question, transforming himself into an angel of light to deceive them. This trial is made, 1. By three things going before; 2. By three things following after.

First, *See that the ground-work be sure.* If a man be in the faith, and do believe the word; if, upon believing, meditation, opening unto the knock of Christ at first, not delaying him off, like the lazy spouse in the Canticles, if in this case the Spirit come and fill the heart with joy, then all is sure and well. It comes with promise, because then he hath promised to enter. If a man have a dull, dead, delaying ear to open unto Christ, or apply him upon good grounds, and therewith great fantastic joys, he may assure himself they are but idle speculations, not wrought in him by the right sanctification of the Spirit; but if this joy come upon the surveying of charters, evidences, &c., it is sure, we may build upon it.

Secondly, *A man must consider, if he hath as yet overcome strong passions and temptations, and passed through much hazard and peril,* having been buffeted with divers temptations, over which he hath obtained mastery. For this seal of God's Spirit with our spirit comes as a reward of service done; as we may see Rev. iii. 17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it;' whereby he means, in such a case he will give a secret love-token unto the soul, whereby it may rest assured of the unspeakable love of God and freedom from condemnation.

The Athenians had a custom, when malefactors were accused and arraigned, to have black and white stones by them, and so according to the sentence given, those acquitted had a white, those condemned had a black stone given them. Unto this the Holy Ghost here alludes, that this seal shall assure them of an absolute acquittance from condemnation, and so free them from the cause of fear. Again, he shews Christ will give a man a new name, that is, his absolution written in fair letters upon the white stone with a clear evidence; as if he should say, 'When Christ hath seen a man overcoming, and how he hath buckled with temptations, and yet holds out, pressing on for his crown unto the end of the race, he will come in then, and stroke him on the head, ease all his pains, fears, and sorrows with such a sweet refreshing as is unspeakable. When a man hath won it in sum, he shews he shall wear it.

Thirdly, *If the Spirit seal after meditation in the word,* it is right. The apostle saith, 'In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,' Eph. i. 13. Examine the root of your joys. The Spirit gives no comfort but by the word. If a man do meditate on the promises, and thereupon have a flame kindled, when he knows his interest in them, this is sure. A man may say, the word did stir it up. If it be God's comfort, assure thyself God would have his word to make way unto it. Those who find no sweetness in the word, what is the cause thereof? Because they chew not the cud to imprint it in their memories and hearts. If comfort comes whilst a man is meditating on the promises, and wedging them home upon the heart, it is of God, otherwise it is but counterfeit and false. These and divers others may be the forerunners to this seal. Now three things follow after, which the Spirit leaves behind it.

1. First, *Humility*; as in his knowledge, so in his sense, it makes a man more humble. There is naturally in all a certain pride which must be overcome; yea, of all sorts, spiritual pride is the most dangerous. Wherefore know the holiest are ever the humblest people. The apostle saith,

'What hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received it, why boastest thou?' &c., 1 Cor. iv. 7. By the contrary, the more near a man comes unto the glory of God, the more he sees him, and is truly acquainted with him, so much the more rottenness he finds in his bones; as we see in Job, what he says of himself in this case: Job xlii. 5, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee.' His inference is—'wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' And the prophet Isaiah, he cries out, Isa. vi. 5, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people that is of unclean lips.' But wherefore is all this? saith he. 'For mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts.' It is a certain thing, an humble soul is a sure and certain habitation for the Spirit of God. 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is the Lord of Hosts: I dwell in the high and lofty place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble,' &c., Isa. lvii. 15. A proud spirit, therefore, but in vain brags of this seal of God's Spirit, which leaves a man humble, and the vilest of all others in his own sight; for then the brightest and best light hath shewed him more than ever his manifold and darkest corruptions, which abase him in his own eyes, seeing how far short he comes of what he should and ought to be.

2. A second thing which the Spirit leaves behind it, if it seal rightly, is, *a prevention of security to come.* In this case we must look for a new encounter. A false persuasion makes a man to fall into security; because Satan is then most malicious and busy, a man must stand faster than ever. The devil, he hates those most which are most endowed with God's image, whom, because he cannot reach, he persecutes his members. And therefore in this case, it must be with us as it was with Elias in his feast, 1 Kings xix. 8. After such an enlightening, a man must now think that he hath a great journey to go, and so walk on in the strength of that, long time. The devil, you see, watcheth a man at the best, then to overcome him, as we see in Adam and Eve. No sooner were they placed in that estate of innocency but he buckled with them. How much more a man having a sweeter taste of the Spirit and less strength now, may he look to be set upon? And therefore in these feasting days had need to be more in his watch and pray more; for we have more given unto us than Adam had. We have a new name give us, a secret love-token. Further, we see Christ saith, Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man will open unto me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.' Now, in such a case, if we be such parties who let our hearts fly open to let him in, we are safe; as if he should say, if you would be sure of reconciliation to be at peace with me, sup with me, and I will sup with you. For we know, if men formerly enemies be brought to keep company and eat together, we use to say, all is done and lapped up in the napkin; old reckonings are forgotten and taken away. Now they are certainly friends. But if, like the spouse in the Canticles, we let him stand knocking, and will not let him in, we may have great, many, and sound knocks ere we find him again, as we know it befell the church then, when she had lost her communion with him. Our Saviour, you see, knowing the devil's violence and subtilty in taking us unprovided, how often doth he command us to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation. 'That I say unto you I say unto all men, Watch,' Mark xiii. 37. If we would therefore retain our comfort after such a sweet taste, or having lost it, recover the same, let us watch chiefly at that time, and prepare for a new assault. Then

again, in a loss, let us mark the knocks of the Spirit, when, as it is Isa. xxx. 21, 'A voice behind us says, Walk this way, and that way,' &c., and grieve him not by withstanding holy motions, and then we shall find him sealing our salvation, and witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God. Men, you see, wait for the wind, and not the wind for them, else they may be long enough ere they reach home. So must we watch the knocks of Christ to let him in, that so his Spirit may seal us up to the day of redemption. Oh, how happy were it for us if thus we could do, and still watch and be ready for a new encounter! For let no man think to have more freedom from temptations than our blessed Saviour had, of whom it is written, Luke iv. 13, 'That when the devil had ended all his temptations against him, he departed from him *for a season.*'

The third thing the true Spirit leaves behind it is *love*. It makes a man the more enkindled with love to God. If a man do not love God more after such an enlightening, it is false and counterfeit. Saith the prophet David, 'I will love thee dearly, my Lord, my God, because thou hast heard my voice.' And the apostle saith, 2 Cor. v. 14, 'For the love of God constraineth us,' &c. And therefore, if we be obedient sons, we must shew it in loving and honouring our Father more and more; as Mal. i. 6, 'A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if I then be a father, where is mine honour?' Yea, then, this love will break forth unto others like fire, to warm and comfort them. 'Come unto me, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul,' &c., saith the prophet, Ps. lxxvi. 16; so a holy soul in this case finds a fire like that of Elihu. It is like new wine in bottles that cannot hold. There is an holy rejoicing, an holy praising; holy flames sent towards others. Much love increased to them; admiration of such excellent surpassing things as remain in the life to come, if a taste be so much here.

I cannot go on further now. These, in brief, may serve us for a trial of the truth of God's Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God, which now let us pray for, 'O Lord our God,' &c.