

carry thee to thy Redeemer: fear not dying, not happy but by dying.

Uſe ult. Of exhortation. Long for the time when you ſhall have a full and perfect redemption in heaven, an eternal jubilee; when you ſhall be freed not only from the power but from the preſence of ſin. Here a believer is as a priſoner that hath broken priſon, but walks with a fetter on his leg: when the banner of glory ſhall be diſplayed over you, you ſhall be as the angels of God, you ſhall never have a ſinful thought more; no pain or grief, no aching head or unbelieving heart. You ſhall ſee Chriſt's face, and lie for ever in his arms: you ſhall be as Joſeph, Gen. xli. 14. They brought him haſtily out of the dungeon, and he ſhaved himſelf, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. Long for that time, when you ſhall put off your priſon-garments, and change your raiment, and put on the embroidered garment of glory. O long! yet be content to wait for this full and glorious redemption, when you ſhall be more happy than you can deſire, when you ſhall have 'that which eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into man's heart to conceive.'

OF FAITH.

GAL. ii. 20. *The life that I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.*

THE Spirit applies to us the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt, by working faith in us.

CHRIST is the glory, and faith in Chriſt the comfort of the goſpel.

Q. *What are the kinds of faith?*

Ans. Fourfold: 1. An hiſtorical or dogmatical faith, which is the believing the truths revealed in the word, becauſe of divine authority.

2. There is a temporary faith, which laſteth but for a time, and vaniſheth, Matth. xiii. 21. 'Yet hath he no root in himſelf, but dureth for a while.' A temporary faith is like Jonah's gourd, which came up in a night and withered, chap. iv. 10.

3. A miraculous faith, which was granted to the apoſtles, to work miracles for the confirmation of the goſpel: This Judas had; he caſt out devils, yet was caſt out to the devil.

4. A true juſtifying faith, which is called, 'A faith of the operation of God,' Col. ii. 12. and is a jewel hung only upon the elect.

Q. *What is juſtifying faith?*

Ans. I shall shew, (1.) *What it is not.* It is not a bare acknowledgement that Christ is a Saviour; indeed there must be an acknowledgement, but that is not sufficient to justify. The devils acknowledged Christ's Godhead, Matth. viii. 29. 'Jesus the Son of God.' There may be an assent to divine truth, yet no work of grace on the heart: many assent in their judgments, that sin is an evil thing, but they go on in sin, their corruptions are stronger than their convictions; and that Christ is excellent: they cheapen the pearl, but they do not buy.

(2.) *What justifying faith is?* I answer, true justifying faith consists in three things.

1. *Self-renunciation*: faith is a going out of one's self; a man is taken off from his own bottom, he sees he hath no righteousness of his own to save him, Phil. iii. 9. 'Not having my own righteousness.' Self-righteousness is a broken reed, the soul dares not lean on. Repentance and faith are both humbling graces; by repentance a man abhors himself; by faith he goes out of himself. It is with a sinner in the first act of believing, as with Israel in their wilderness march; behind them they saw Pharaoh and his chariots pursuing them, before them the Red-sea ready to devour them: so the soul behind sees God's justice pursuing him for sin, before, hell ready to devour him; and, in this forlorn condition, he sees nothing in himself to help him, but he must perish unless he can find help in another.

2. *Recumbency*: the soul casts itself upon Jesus Christ; 'faith rests on Christ's person.' Faith believes the promise; but that which faith rests upon in the promise, is the person of Christ: therefore the spouse is said to 'lean upon her beloved,' Cant. viii. 5. 'And faith is described to be a believing on the name of the Son of God,' John iii. 23. viz. on his person. The promise is but the cabinet, Christ is the jewel in it which faith embraceth; the promise is but the dish, Christ is the food in it which faith feeds on. And as faith rests on Christ's person, so on his person under this notion, 'as he was crucified.' Faith glories in the cross of Christ, Gal. vi. 14. To consider Christ as he is crowned with all manner of excellencies, doth rather stir up admiration and wonder; but Christ looked upon as bleeding and dying, is the proper object of our faith; therefore it is called 'faith in his blood,' Rom. iii. 25.

3. *Appropriation*, or the applying Christ to ourselves: a medicine, though it be never so sovereign, yet if not applied to the wound, will do no good, though the plaister be made of Christ's own blood, yet it will not heal, unless it be applied by faith; the blood of God, without faith in God, will not save. This applying of Christ is called a receiving of him, John i. 12. The hand receiving of gold, enricheth; so the hand of faith receiving Christ's golden merits with salvation enricheth us.

Q. How is faith wrought?

A. By the blessed Spirit; it is called the 'spirit of grace,' Zech. xii. 10. because it is the spring and efficient of all grace. Faith is the chief work which the Spirit of God works in a man's heart. In making the world God did but speak a word, but in working faith he puts forth his arm. Luke i. 51. 'The Spirit's working faith is called, 'The exceeding greatness of God's power.' What a power was put forth in raising Christ from the grave, when such a tomb-stone lay upon him, 'the sins of all the world!' yet he was raised up by the Spirit: the same power the Spirit of God puts forth in working faith, the Spirit irradiates the mind, subdues the will: the will naturally is like a garrison, which holds out against God; the Spirit with a sweet violence conquers, or rather changeth the will, making the sinner willing to have Christ upon any terms, to be ruled by him as well as saved by him.

Q. Wherein lies the preciousness of faith?

A. As faith is the chief gospel-grace, the head of the graces; as gold among the metals, so is faith among the graces, Clem. Alexandrinus calls the other graces the daughters of faith. Indeed, in heaven, love will be the chief grace; but, while we are here militant, love must give place to faith; love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth, 1 John v. 4. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

2. As faith hath influence upon all the graces, and sets them a-work, not a grace stirs till faith set it a-work. As the clothier sets the poor a-work, he sets their wheel a-going: faith sets hope a-work. The heir must believe his title to an estate in reversion, before he can hope for it; faith believes its title to glory, and then hope waits for it. Did not faith feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets love a-work, Gal. v. 6. 'Faith which worketh by love;' believing the mercy and merit of Christ causeth a flame of love to ascend. Faith sets patience a-work, Heb. vi. 12. 'Be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' Faith believes the glorious rewards given to suffering. This makes the soul patient in suffering. Thus faith is the master-wheel, it sets all the other graces a-running.

3. As faith is the grace which God honours to justify and save: thus indeed it is 'precious faith,' as the apostle calls it, 2 Pet. i. 1. The other graces help to sanctify, but it is faith that justifies, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith.' Repentance or love do not justify, but faith.

Q. How doth faith justify?

A. Faith doth not justify, 1. As it is a work, that were to

make Christ of our faith; but faith justifies, as it lays hold of the object, viz. Christ's merits. If a man had a precious stone in a ring that could heal, we say the ring heals; but properly it is not the ring, but the precious stone in the ring heals. Thus faith saves and justifies, but it is not any inherent virtue in faith, but as it lays hold on Christ, so it justifies.

2. Faith doth not justify as it exerciseth grace: it cannot be denied, faith doth invigorate all the graces, it puts strength and liveliness into them, but it doth not justify under this notion. Faith works by love, but it doth not justify as it works by love, but as it applies Christ's merits.

Q. *Why should faith save and justify more than any other grace?*

Ans. 1. Because of God's sanction: he hath appointed this grace to be justifying: and he doth it, because faith is a grace that takes a man off himself, and gives all the honour to Christ and free grace, Rom. iv. 20. 'Strong in faith, giving glory to God.' Therefore God hath put this honour on faith, to make it saving and justifying: The king's stamp makes the coin pass for current; if he would put his stamp upon leather, as well as silver, it would make it current: so God having put his sanction, the stamp of his authority and institution upon faith, this makes it to be justifying and saving.

2. Because faith makes us one with Christ, Eph. iii. 17. It is the espousing, incorporating grace; it gives us coalition and union with Christ's person: other graces make us like Christ, faith makes us members of Christ.

1st Use, *Of exhortation.* Let us above all things labour for faith; *Fides est sanctissimum humani pectoris bonum:* Eph. vi. 19. 'Above all taking the shield of faith.' Faith will be of more use to us than any grace: as an eye though dim, was of more use to an Israelite than all the other members of his body; not a strong arm, or a nimble foot; it was his eye looking on the brazen serpent that cured him. It is not knowledge, though angelical, not repentance, though we could shed rivers of tears, could justify us: only faith, whereby we look on Christ. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6. and if we do not please him by believing, he will not please us in saving of us. Faith is the condition of the covenant of grace; without faith, without covenant; and without covenant, without hope, Eph. ii. 12.

2d Use, *Of trial:* Let us try whether we have faith. There is something looks like faith, and is not; a Bristol-stone looks like a diamond. Some plants have the same leaf with others, but the herbalist can distinguish them by the root, and taste. Something may look like true faith, but it may be distinguished by the fruits. Let us be serious in the trial of our faith; there

is much depends upon our faith: if our faith be not good, there is nothing good comes from us; our duties and graces are adulterate.

Q. Well then, how shall we know it is a true faith?

A. By the noble effects: 1. Faith is a Christ-prizing grace, it puts an high valuation upon Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 7. 'To you that believe he is precious,' St. Paul did best know Christ, 2 Cor. ix. 1. 'Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?' Paul saw Christ with his bodily eyes in a vision, when he was wrapped up into the third heaven; and saw him with the eye of his faith in the holy supper: therefore he best knew Christ. And see how he styles all things in comparison of him, Phil. iii. 8. 'I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ?' Do we set an high estimate upon Christ? could we be willing to part with the wedge of gold for the pearl of price? Greg. Nazianzen blessed God, he had any thing to lose for Christ's sake.

2. Faith is a refining grace, 1 Tim. iii. 9. 'Mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Faith is in the soul, as fire among metals; it refines and purifies: morality may wash the outside, faith washeth the inside, Acts xv. 9. 'Having purified their hearts by faith.' Faith makes the heart a sacrary or holy of holies. Faith is a virgin-grace; though it doth not take away the life of sin, yet it takes away the love of sin. Examine if your hearts be an unclean fountain, sending out mud and dirt, pride, envy: if there be legions of lusts in thy soul, there is no faith. Faith is an heavenly plant, which will not grow in an impure soil.

3. Faith is an obediential grace, Rom. xvi. 26. 'The obedience of faith.' Faith melts our will into God's: faith runs at God's call; if God commands duty (tho' cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys, Heb. xi. 8. 'By faith Abraham obeyed.' Faith is not an idle grace; as it hath an eye to see Christ, so it hath an hand to work for him. Faith doth not only believe God's promise, but obey his command. It is not your having knowledge, will evidence you to be believers; the devil hath knowledge, but wants obedience, and that makes him a devil. And the true obedience of faith is a chearful obedience; God's commands do not seem grievous. Have you the obedience, and obey chearfully? what say you to this? Do you look upon God's command as your burden, or privilege; as an iron fetter about your leg, or a gold chain about your neck?

4. Faith is an assimilating grace; it changeth the soul into the image of the object, it makes it like Christ. Never did any look upon Christ with a believing eye, but he was made like Christ. A deformed person may look on a beautiful object, but not be made beautiful; but faith looking on Christ transforms a man, and turns him into his similitude. Faith looking on a

bleeding Christ, causeth a soft bleeding heart: looking on an holy Christ, causeth sanctity of heart; looking on an humble Christ, makes the soul humble. As the camelion is changed into the colour of that which it looks upon; so faith looking on Christ, changeth a Christian into the similitude of Christ.

3. By the growth of it; if it be a true faith, it grows: living things grow, Rom. i. 17. 'From faith to faith.'

Q. *How may we judge of the growth of faith?*

A. Growth of faith is judged, *1st*, By strength. We can do that now, which we could not do before. When one is man-grown, he can do that which he could not do when he was a child; he can carry a heavier burthen; so thou canst bear crosses with more patience.

2dly, Growth of faith is seen by doing duties in a more spiritual manner, viz. with fervency; we put coals to the incense, from a principle of love to God. When an apple hath done growing in bigness, it grows in sweetness; thou dost duties in love, and now art sweeter, and come off with a better relish.

Obj. *But I fear I have no faith?*

Ans. We must distinguish between weakness of faith and nullity; a weak faith is true. The bruised reed is but weak, yet it is such as Christ will not break. Though thy faith be but weak, yet be not discouraged.

1. A weak faith may receive a strong Christ: a weak hand can tie the knot in marriage, as well as a strong: a weak eye might have seen the brazen serpent. The woman in the gospel, that but touched Christ, received virtue from him. The touch of faith.

2. The promise is not made to strong faith, but to true. The promise doth not say, whosoever hath a giant-faith, that can remove mountains, that can stop the mouths of lions, shall be saved; but whosoever believes, be his faith never so small. Though Christ sometimes chides a weak faith; yet that it may not be discouraged, he makes a promise to it, Mat. v. 3. *Beati qui esuriunt.*

3. A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things multiply most; the vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful. Weak Christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith!

4. Weak faith may be growing. The seeds spring up by degrees; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Therefore be not discouraged; God who would have us receive them that are weak in faith, Rom. xiv. 1. will not himself refuse them. A weak believer is a member of Christ; and though Christ will cut off rotten members from his body, yet not weak members.