

## THE SAINT'S PRIVILEGE.\*

---

*When he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment: of sin, because they believe not in me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. Especially the 10th verse. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you shall see me no more.—JOHN XVI. 8–10.*

OUR blessed Saviour descending from heaven to earth for the redemption of man, after he had accomplished that great work, he ascended thither again. And knowing his disciples would take his departure very heavily, he labours to arm them against the assaults of all grief and sorrow that might otherwise oppress them; and that by many arguments. Among the rest, this is not the least, that when he is gone away he will 'send the Comforter unto them.' God never takes away anything from his children but he sends them a better. And this Comforter whom he promised to send shall bear them through in all their ministry, all function; and in effect he thus bespeaks them. You my disciples are to encounter with the world; be of good comfort, my Spirit shall go along with you, and 'he shall reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.' Of yourselves you are too weak, but the Spirit shall strengthen you, and make way into the hearts of those that shall be saved, by convincing them of 'sin, righteousness, and judgment.' So that be not discouraged; the Spirit shall breathe courage into you, and make way for your doctrine. 'When the Comforter is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and judgment: of sin, because they believe not in me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.'

\* 'The Saint's Privilege' appears to have been a favourite with the public. Besides more modern reprints, I possess the following editions:—(1.) 1638, 18mo. Its title-page is as follows:—'The Saints Priviledge or a Christians constant Advocate; Containing a short but most sweet direction for every true Christian to walke comfortably through this valley of teares. By the faithfull and Reverend Divine R. Sibs, D.D. and sometime Preacher to the Honourable Society of Grayes-Inn. London, Printed by G M for George Edwards dwelling in Green-Arbour at the signe of the Angell. 1638.' (2.) 1638, 4to. (3.) 1641, 4to. (4.) 1650. Appended to successive editions of 'The Returning Backslider. (Cf. Vol. II. page 250.) The first edition, which is our text, has Marshall's portrait of Sibbes prefixed, with the usual inscription.—G.

There are three main parts of salvation.

Knowledge of our misery, knowledge of our deliverance, and a life answerable. The Holy Ghost shall work all these. He shall convince the world of their own sin, of righteousness by a mediator, and of a reformation of life. So that the Holy Ghost shall go along with you in the carriage of the whole business of man's salvation. Where he begins, he makes an end. Where he convinces of sin, he convinces of righteousness, and then of a necessity of a reformation. He bears all afore him, and he doth it in a spiritual order.

1. First, He 'convinces the world of sin,' then 'of righteousness,' then 'of judgment;' because it were in vain to convince of the righteousness of Christ unless he hath before convinced of sin. For who cares for balm that is not wounded? Who cares for a pardon that is not condemned? Therefore he convinces of sin first. I have spoken heretofore of convincing of sin.

Here is a threefold convincing; of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and every one of these hath a reason added thereto. 'Of sin, because they believe not in me;' 'of righteousness, because I go to my Father;' 'of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.'

The Holy Ghost begins with convincing of sin. What is this convincing? It is a clear and infallible demonstration of our condition. It brings a commanding light into the soul. It sets down the soul and takes away all cavils, all turnings and windings. To 'convince' is to make a man, as the psalmist's\* phrase is, 'lay his hand upon his mouth.' Light is a convincing thing. Now we see the sun we see it is day. Though ten thousand men should say it is not day, we would not believe them, because the convincing hereof is undeniable, that he must be an unreasonable man that gainsays it.

So then, the Spirit of God brings a commanding light into the soul undeniable. Thou art thus and thus; here no shifting, no winding and turning will serve the turn when the Holy Ghost comes with this light. I do but plainly unfold this.

This conviction of the Holy Ghost is not in general only, that all men are sinners, but particular and strong. 'Thou art a sinner, and thou art in danger of damnation.' And it is universal, taking in sins of nature, sins of life, sins of the understanding, will, and affections; and it is not of sin only, but of the misery by sin, of the danger, folly, and madness of sin, and of the aggravations that greaten sin, as of stifling so many good motions, withstanding so many means, abusing so many mercies. The Holy Ghost convinces us thoroughly, that we can have nothing to reply. Because I have spoken of this before, I am short. Beloved, unless the Holy Ghost 'convince,' there will be no convincing. Our deceitful hearts have so many windings and turnings; proud nature arms itself with defences, as a hedgehog winds himself round and defends himself by his pricks. So you have many clothe themselves with strong words, ill translations upon others,† frivolous mitigations; the way of the multitude, as with a coat of mail to keep out this conviction, that did not the Holy Ghost strike in hard with their consciences, 'Thou art the man,' this work would never be done.

*Quest.* But you will ask me this question, How shall we know common conviction of conscience from this of the Spirit? For carnal men that go

\* Qu. 'Job'?—ED.

† That is, 'blaming others.' Cf. Genesis iii. 12, *seq.*—G.

to hell are 'convinc'd' by a common conviction. What is this saving conviction ?

*Ans. Difference 1.* I answer, *common conviction by the light of nature is a weak conviction.* A little spark will shew a little light, but it will not enlighten a room. It must be the work of some greater light, as the sun. The Spirit is a strong light, stronger than natural conscience. Natural conscience, and common light, is of some breaches of the second table. Natural conscience never 'convinceth' of corrupt nature, but the Spirit doth most of all, as you may see in David, Ps. li. 5, he resolves all into this, as if he should say, What should I tell you of my murder and adultery, 'in sin did my mother conceive me;' so a true Christian doth not look to the branches so much as to the root.

*Difference 2.* Then again, *a natural conscience, when it convinceth a man, it is against his will.* It makes him not the better man. He mends not upon it, but he is tortured and tormented. But a man that is 'convinc'd' by the Holy Ghost, he takes God's part against himself; he is willing to be laid open that he may find the greater mercy. So that there is a grand difference between common conviction of nature and the conviction of the Spirit. The conviction of the Spirit is the light of the Spirit, which is of a higher nature than that of natural conscience: 'I will send the Comforter,' when he comes he will greatly enlighten and overpower the soul.

*Difference 3.* Again, *the conviction of the Spirit sticks by a man, it never leaves the soul.* But that of an ordinary conscience it is but for a flash, and after they are worse than they were before.

I must cut off these things, because the time is always past upon these occasions before we begin.

*Use 1.* Come we therefore to make some *use.* The Spirit doth 'convince of sin.' But how? By the ministry ordinarily, though not alone by the ministry. Therefore we must labour willingly to submit to the ministry 'convincing of sin.' Conscience will convince first or last. Is it not better to have a saving conviction now to purpose, than to have a bare desperate conviction in hell? Oh, beloved, all the admonitions we hear, if we regard them not now, we shall hereafter. Therefore labour to make good use of this 'sword of the Spirit' of God; and it is an argument of a good heart to wish, Oh that the ministry might meet with my corruption; that it may be discovered to me to the full. A true heart thinks sin the greatest enemy, and of all other miseries it desires to be freed from the thralldom thereof. For that defiles heaven and earth, and separates God from his creature. It is that that threw angels out of heaven, Adam out of paradise. What embitters blessings, and puts a sting into all afflictions but sin? If it were not for sin, we would take up any cross, and bear any affliction more quietly than we do.

Therefore as we desire to be saved, and to stand with comfort before God at the day of judgment, let us desire and endeavour to be thoroughly convinced of sin. Take heed of resisting the Spirit of God in the ministry. Why are many led captive of their lusts, but because they hate the ministry of the word? They look upon it as Ahab did upon Elias: 'Hast thou found me, O my enemy,' 1 Kings xxi. 20. They naturally are in love with their sins, and there is none so much hated as those that present themselves. A man, take him in his pure naturals, is a foolish creature; his heart rises against conviction. You see the pharisees, wise men, learned men, being convinced, they hated Christ to the death. Why? Because he did untomb them and discover the dead men's bones within, Mat. xxiii. 27.

So many now-a-days, that are convinced, hate any that by life or speech discover their sins unto them, if it were possible, and in their power, to the death. Thus the Holy Ghost convinces of sin. But before I leave this point, let me add this from the reason or ground of this conviction, 'Because they believe not in me.' That unbelief makes all other sins damnable. No sin is damnable if we could believe and repent. Therefore we are convinced of sin, because we do not believe; as we say of a man that is condemned, because he cannot read, therefore he is condemned. He should escape if he could read, being for no great fault.\* So it is here. It is not believing in Christ and repenting makes all other sins deadly.

The differing of one man from another is their faith and repentance. Some there be whose sins are greater than others, yet by the Spirit of God and faith, they work them out every day. It is faith in the 'brazen serpent' that takes away the sting of the fiery serpents, Num. xxi. 9.

I have done with the conviction of sin. Let us now come to speak of the conviction of righteousness.

'Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you shall see me no more.' It is a fit time for the Holy Ghost to convince God's people of righteousness when they are convinced of sin before. Then they can relish Christ. Balm is balm indeed when the wound is discovered and felt. Oh then a pardon is welcome when the party is condemned. The reason of this conviction of righteousness is, 'because I go to my Father, and you shall see me no more.' The Holy Ghost, as he sets on sin upon the conscience, so he takes off sin by applying to the conscience the righteousness of Christ. This is his office, first, to convince the world of sin, and then to convince of righteousness, whereby we stand righteous before God.

And this righteousness here, is not our own inherent, but the righteousness of Christ a Mediator, God and man.

The Holy Ghost convinces of righteousness in this order of a fourfold gradation.

First, That there must be a righteousness, and a full righteousness.

The second is this, that there is no such righteousness in the creature.

Thirdly, That this is to be had in Christ the Mediator.

Fourthly, That this righteousness is our righteousness.

1. First, *There must be a righteousness*; for we have to deal with a God who is righteousness itself; and no unclean thing shall come into heaven, Rev. xxi. 7. Unless we have a righteousness, how shall we look God in the face, or how can we escape hell?

2. Now for the second, *that it is not in any creature, men or angels*. We have not a righteousness of our own; for there are divers things to be satisfied, God himself, and the law, and our own consciences, and the world. Perhaps we may have a righteousness to satisfy the world, because we live civilly.† Oh but that will not satisfy conscience. And then there must be a satisfaction to the law, which is a large thing that condemns our thoughts, desires, but God is the most perfect of all. Put case we have a righteousness of a good carriage among men; this will not satisfy God and the law; it will not satisfy conscience. Men they are our fellow-prisoners. Conscience will not be contented but with that which will content God, when conscience sees there is such a righteousness found out by the wisdom of God, that contents him, else conscience will be always in doubts and fears.

3. Thirdly, *This righteousness is to be had in Christ*. What is the right-

\* The reference is to 'Benefit of Clergy.' Cf. note, Vol. V. page 408.—G.

† That is, 'morally.'—G.

eousness of Christ? The righteousness of Christ is that righteousness that is founded upon his obedience: active, fulfilling the law; and passive, discharging all our debts, satisfying God's justice. The meritoriousness of both of them is founded upon the purity of his nature. All his sufferings and doings had their excellency from the personal union of God and man; in reference to which union we may without blasphemy aver that God performed the law, God died for us.

4. Fourthly and lastly, *This righteousness is our righteousness.* The Spirit convinces that this belongs to all believers, for\* it is better than Adam had. His righteousness was the righteousness of a man, this righteousness is the righteousness of a mediator; and it is such a righteousness, that when we are clothed with it, we may go through the justice of God. We may have access with boldness to the throne of grace, and say, 'Lord, I come in the righteousness of Christ, that hath appeased thy wrath and satisfied thy justice. This the Holy Ghost convinces of.

*Quest.* But you will ask me, How doth the Holy Ghost 'convince' me of the righteousness of Christ?

*Ans.* I answer, first, the Holy Ghost *presents to the soul the knowledge of this excellent righteousness, and then creates a hand of faith to embrace it, being proposed.* You that are humble and broken-hearted sinners, here is Christ for you. The Spirit of God doth not only reveal the excellency of Christ, but that this belongs to me, that Christ is given for me, and that 'revelation of the Spirit' doth sway the soul; when the Spirit doth not tell in general only that Christ is an excellent Saviour, but shall relate to a Christian soul, God gave Christ for thee. This sways the heart to rest upon Christ, whereupon the marriage is made up between the soul and Christ. The soul says, 'I am Christ's, and I give myself to Christ,' and to whatsoever accompanies Christ. And then as it is in marriage, the persons, by virtue of that relation, have interest into each other's substance and estate; so when this mystical marriage is made up between Christ and us, we have a right unto Christ by all rights, by titles of purchase and redemption. He hath purchased heaven for us, and us for heaven. All that Christ hath is ours; all his good is ours; our sins his, and his righteousness ours. So when the Holy Ghost convinces me of Christ's righteousness, and gives me faith to embrace it, then Christ is mine with all he hath. By this I have spoken, you may see how the Spirit convinces. Do but imagine what a blessed condition the soul is in when this match is made!

But you will ask me why is the sending of the Spirit necessary for the 'convincing of this righteousness'?

I answer, for divers reasons.

*Reason 1.* First, *Because it is above the conceit † of man* that there should be such a righteousness of God-man. Therefore it is discovered by the Spirit; and when it is discovered, the Spirit must open the eyes of the soul to see, else we shall have a natural knowledge of supernatural things; for a man, by a natural knowledge, may understand them, so as to be able to discourse of them; therefore, to change the soul, there must be a supernatural sight to see supernatural things. A devil incarnate may know all things, and yet want to see. Only the Holy Ghost gives inward sight, inward eyes, and works faith to see Christ as mine.

*Reason 2.* Again, the sending of the Holy Ghost is necessary for this conviction; *because he alone must set down the soul and make the conscience*

\* Qu. 'and'?—G.

† That is, 'conception.'—G.

quiet, who is greater than the conscience. Conscience will clamour, 'Thou art a sinner;' the Holy Ghost convinces, 'In Christ thou art righteous.' The Holy Ghost only knows what is in the heart of God the Father, and in the heart of every man. He only knows the intent of the Father to every Christian, and can answer all inward objections and cavils of flesh and blood raised up against the soul; therefore the convincing of the Holy Ghost is necessary. Howsoever Christ hath purchased our peace, yet the Holy Ghost must apply it; for the conscience is so full of clamours, that unless the Holy Ghost apply what Christ hath done, conscience will not be satisfied. God the Father hath appointed Christ, and Christ hath wrought it; but the third person must apply it to the soul, to assure us that this belongs to us. The application of all good things to the soul that Christ the Son hath wrought, is the proper office of the Third Person. In civil contracts here, there must not only be a purchase, but a seal. Though Christ hath wrought righteousness for us, the Spirit must seal it to every soul: 'This righteousness belongs to you;' 'Christ is yours, with all that is his.'

*Reason 3.* Again, it must needs be a work of the Spirit; because flesh and blood is full of pride, and would fain have some righteousness of their own. The Jews were of this temper; and it hath been the greatest question from the beginning of the world till this day, what is that righteousness whereby we must stand before God? But God's Spirit answers all objections. Beloved, the best of us, though in an estate of grace, if the Holy Ghost do not convince us, we shall be in darkness, and call all into question. Therefore we must not be convinced only at the first, but in a continued course of Christianity. Unless the Holy Ghost doth this, we shall fall into a dungeon of darkness; therefore the convincing of the Holy Ghost is necessary.

Beloved, this should make us take heed how we hear and how we read, even to beg this convincing of the Spirit in every ordinance: O Lord! vouchsafe 'the Spirit of revelation,' and take the scales off mine eyes, that as these are truths of themselves, so they may be truths to me; sway my soul, that I may cast myself upon thy mercy in Christ, &c.

*Obj.* I must answer some cases that many a poor soul is troubled withal: Alas! I am not 'convinced by the Spirit that Christ is my righteousness,' therefore what case am I in?

*Ans.* I answer, some are more strongly convinced, and some less. Let a man be careless of holy duties, and he is less convinced; but let him be constant therein, and he shall find the Holy Ghost convincing him more strongly that the righteousness of Christ is his. There are many presumptuous persons that 'turn the grace of God into wantonness,' Jude 4; who because through the enthusiasm of Satan, they never question their estate, but conceit themselves to be good men and in the estate of grace, think this to be the convincing of the Holy Ghost; whereas this is a general rule, spiritual convincing is not total, but always leaves in the heart some drugs\* of doubting; as a ship that rides at anchor, though it may reel to and fro, yet is it safe for the main. So is it with the soul that is truly convinced. It is safe for the main, yet it is tumbled and tossed with many doubts and fears, but their anchor is in heaven.

Take this for a ground of comfort subscribed unto in the experience of all believers, that the Spirit of God so far convinces them of Christ's righteousness, as preserves in them such a power of grace as to cast them-

\* Qu. 'dregs'?—G.

selves upon the mercy of God in Christ; and God will not quench that spark. Though there be little or no light, yet there will be heat. God will send his Spirit into the heart, so far as it shall not betray itself to despair, and let such a beam into the soul as all the power in hell shall not be able to keep out. But it is our own neglect that we are not more strongly convinced, so as to break through all. This is the privilege of a constant, careful Christian, to be strongly convinced of the righteousness of Christ.

*Use.* Thus we see how the Holy Ghost convinceth us of righteousness. Other things I must omit. If this be so, I beseech you, *let us not lose our privileges and prerogatives.* Doth God give grace, and give Christ with all his righteousness, and shall not we improve them? Let us use this righteousness in all temptations. Let us plead it to God himself, when he seems to be our enemy: Lord, thou hast ordained a righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, that hath given full satisfaction to thy justice, and he hath given me a title to heaven. Howsoever my soul be in darkness, yet, Lord, I come unto thee in the name of my Saviour, that thou wouldst persuade my soul of that righteousness. I would glorify thy name. Wherein wilt thou be glorified? In mercy or justice? Oh, in mercy above all. I cannot glorify thee in thy mercy, unless thou persuade me 'of the righteousness of Christ.' Can I love thee except thou love me first? Canst thou have any free and voluntary obedience from me, unless I be convinced that Christ is mine? Now, Lord, I beseech thee, let me be such as thou mayest take delight in. Beloved, since we have means of such a gift, let us never rest till we have it. If Satan set upon us, hold this out. If he tell thee thou art a sinner, tell him I have a greater righteousness than my own, even the righteousness of God-man; I have a righteousness above all my unrighteousness. Satan saith God is displeased with me: ay, but he is more pleased with me in Christ, than displeased with me in myself. Satan saith I have sinned against God; ay, but not against the remedy. Send Satan to Christ. Oh, but thou hast a corrupt nature that makes thee run into this sin and that sin; but there is a spring of mercy in God, and an over-running fountain of righteousness in Christ, an overflowing sea of the blood of Christ. Therefore let us labour to improve this righteousness of Christ to God and Satan against all temptations, yea, against our own consciences. I am thus and thus, yet God is thus and thus; all his attributes are conveyed to me in Christ. Let us exalt God and Christ, and set up Christ above our sins, above any thing in the world, as St Paul, who 'counted all things dung and dross for the excellent knowledge of Christ,' Philip. iii. 8.

*Quest.* You will ask me, How shall we know whether we be convinced of this righteousness or no?

*Ans.* I answer, We may know by the method Christ uses in convincing. First, he convinces of sin, and then of righteousness. For a man to catch at righteousness before he be convinced of sin, it is but an usurpation; for the Holy Ghost *first* convinces of *sin*.

Therefore you have many perish because they never were abased enough. Beloved, people are not lost enough and not miserable enough for Christ; and not broken enough for him; and therefore they go without him.

*Quest.* But how shall I know that the Holy Ghost hath convinced me enough of sin, so that I may without presumption apply the righteousness of Christ unto myself?

*Ans.* Only thus: if the Holy Ghost have discovered my sinful condition of nature and life, so as to work in me an hatred of sin, and to alter my

bent another way, and so make Christ sweet unto me, then I am sufficiently convinced of sin.

This in answer to that question by the way. To return; in the next place, I may know I am convinced thoroughly of the righteousness of Christ *by the witness and work of the Spirit*. The Spirit brings light and faith. The work of the Spirit hath a light of its own; as I know I believe, when I believe. But sometimes we have not the reflect act of faith whereby to evidence our own graces to ourselves; but ever he that is convinced of the Spirit of God, his heart will be wrought to bear marvellous love to God. Upon this apprehension that God is mine, and Christ is mine, the soul is constrained to love; whereupon ensues an enlargement of heart, and a prevalency of comfort above all discomfort, for love casteth out fear. This one comfort that our sins are forgiven, and that we have a right and title to heaven, when the soul is convinced of this it is in a blessed condition. Then what is poverty and what is imprisonment? Not worthy to be reckoned in respect of the glory that shall be revealed.

Again, where the Holy Ghost convinces enough, *there is inward peace and great joy suitable to the righteousness*. As the righteousness is an excellent righteousness of God-man, so, that peace and joy that comes from it is unspeakable peace and joy. So that then the heart sees itself instated in peace and joy, as you have it, Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace towards God;' not only inward peace and joy, but a peace that will shew itself abroad; a glorious peace, a peace that will make us glory: ver. 3, 'We glory in tribulation.' A hard matter to glory in abasement. Not only so, but we glory in God. God is ours, and Christ's righteousness ours. When Christ hath satisfied God's wrath, then we may make our boast of God.

Again, where this conviction of righteousness is, *it answers all objections*. The doubting heart will object this and that, but the Spirit of God shews an all-sufficiency in Christ's obedience; and that sets the soul down quietly in all crosses, and calms it in all storms in some degree. Where the soul is convinced of the righteousness of Christ, there the conscience demands boldly: 'It is God that justifies, who shall condemn? It is Christ that is dead, and risen again, and sits at the right hand of God. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?' Rom. viii. 33. So that a convinced conscience dares all creatures in heaven and earth. It works strongly and boldly. I shall not need to enlarge this. You know whether you are convinced.

*Use.* To end the point, I beseech you, *labour to live by this faith*. Here is an evidence if we can live by it. How is that? Every day to make use of the 'righteousness of Christ,' as every day we run into sin. Be sure we have our consciences sprinkled with the blood of Christ; that as we increase new guilt, so we may have a new pardon. Therefore every day labour to see God as reconciled, and Christ as our advocate with the Father. Christ is now in heaven. If we sin, make use of him. This should be the life of a Christian, to make use of Christ's righteousness. When you find nature polluted, go to God, and say, Lord, my nature, though foul in itself, yet is holy and pure in Christ. He took the weakness of the human nature unto him, that he might communicate the worth and efficacy of his divine nature unto me. And for my actions, I am a sinner; but Christ hath fully discharged all my debts, and is now in heaven. He hath performed all righteousness for me. Look not upon me as in myself, but look upon me in Christ. He and I are one. This should be



every day's exercise, to see ourselves in Christ, and so see him and ourselves one. I should enlarge the point further, but I will speak a word of the reason.

What is the reason why the Comforter may and shall convince of righteousness? 'Because I go to the Father.' What strength is there in that reason? Why this: Christ took upon him to be our surety; and he must acquit us of all our sins ere he can go to his Father. If one sin had been unsatisfied for, he could not have gone to his Father; but now he is gone to his Father, therefore all our sins are satisfied for. So that now the ascension of Christ is a sufficient pledge to me that my person is accepted, and my sins pardoned; because he is gone to his Father, to appear before the Father for us, which he could not have done had he not fulfilled all righteousness.

But wherefore did he go to the Father? Why, *to make application of what he had wrought*. If Christ should not have gone to the Father, he could not have sent the Holy Ghost to us. Therefore there is great use of this going to his Father. Satan pleads before God we are such and such. Ay, but saith Christ, I have shed my blood for them; and there he perfumes all our weak prayers. If we were not imperfect, what need we a Mediator in heaven? Therefore he is gone to heaven to disannul all Satan's accusations, and to provide a place for us. Die when we will, our place is ready.

Then again, he is gone to the Father *to clothe us with a sweet relation*, to make the Father our Father. For he saith, John xx. 17, 'I go to my Father and to your Father,' so that he is not ashamed to call us brethren. By virtue of this, we may go to God and call him Father; and when we die, we may without presumption say, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,' Luke xxiii. 46; for the Father loves us as he loved Christ, with one and the same love, though in a far different degree. What a comfort is this, that when we die, we go to our Father that is better than any earthly father. Therefore it should joy us when the time of our departure comes. We see old Jacob, when he saw the chariots come out of Egypt, how his heart leaped because he should go to see his son Joseph, Gen. xlv. 27, so when death is sent to transport us to Christ, to heaven, had we a strong faith we should be exceeding glad.

And let us learn here the art of faith from Christ. 'I go to the Father,' saith he. There was a great deal of time yet to pass, no less than forty days after his resurrection, before he went to the Father, yet he saith, 'I go to the Father,' to shew that faith presents things future as present, faith sees heaven as present, and the day of judgment as present, and doth affect the soul as if they were now existent. If we had a spirit of faith, it would thus present things far off as nigh at hand. Therefore when we meet with anything that may make our way to heaven seem long or troublesome, exercise your faith, and make your term present to your spirits. Though remote from sense, say, I go to the Father. What, though I go through blood and a shameful death, yea, perhaps a tormentful death, yet I go to the Father! When a man is once persuaded that God is his Father in Christ, it will make him walk to heaven before his time.

*Use.* Let us make use of this point of Christ's going to the Father. Beloved, there is not a point of religion but hath a wonderful spring of comfort; and it is want of faith that we do not draw more comfort from them. When, therefore, we part with our friends by death, think they are gone to their Father. If ye loved me, saith Christ, ye would rejoice because I said

'I go to the Father.' If we love our friends, we should rejoice when they die. Beloved, this should comfort us, Christ is gone to his Father! Oh, what welcome was there of Christ when he came into heaven. The same welcome will there be when we go to the Father. How joyful entertainment shall we have of the Father and the Son. Therefore death should not be troublesome to us; say, Christ's righteousness is mine; therefore I know I shall go to the Father. What care I, then, what kind of pains I go through. If a man be going to a desired place, howsoever the way be troublesome, the sweetness of the end will make him forget the discouragements of his passage. Perhaps we must wade to heaven through a sea of blood. It matters not. The end will recompense all. Though we lose our limbs by the way, it is better to limp to heaven than dance to hell.

*April 10. 1638. Imprimatur THO. WYKES.*