

THE CHRISTIAN'S CHARTER

by Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson's exposition of 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 showing that believers possess all things through Christ, presenting the rich inventory of spiritual privileges available to every Christian.

7 Chapters

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00 The Christian's Charter

The Christian's Charter Showing the Privileges of a Believer by Thomas Watson "All things are yours!"

1 Corinthians 3:21

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Part 1

The Christian's Charter Showing the Privileges of a Believer by Thomas Watson

"All things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come—all are yours, and you belong to Christ, and Christ to God." 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 Chapter 1. The Porch or Entrance into the Words, together with the Proposition.

Happiness is the mark and center which every man aims at. The next thing that is sought after being, is being happy. Surely, the nearer the soul comes to God, who is the fountain of life and peace, the nearer it approaches to happiness. Who is so near to God as the believer, who is mystically one with him? he must needs be the happy man. If you would survey his blessed estate, cast your eyes upon this text, which points to it, as the finger to the dial: "All things are yours." The text may not unfitly be compared to the tree of life, which bore twelve kinds of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; there are many precious clusters growing out of this text, and being skillfully improved, will yield much excellent fruit. In the words we have the inventory of a Christian, "All things are yours!" A strange paradox! when a believer can call nothing his, yet he can say, all things are his. I have often thought a poor Christian who lives in a prison, or some old cottage, is like the banker, who, though he goes poor, and can hardly find himself bread, yet has thousands at his fingertips. So it is with a child of God, "as having nothing—yet possessing all things." What once the philosopher said, "Only the wise man is the rich man." But I say, "only the believer is the rich man!" Here is his estate summed up, "all things are his."

Objection. Before I come to the words, there is an objection must be removed. If all things are ours, there seems to be a community; what is one man's is another's.

Answer. The apostle does not speak here of civil possessions. Paul was no leveler, he did not go about to destroy any man's property; for though he says, "all things are yours"; yet he does not say, what any man has is yours.

Objection: But is it not said, They had all things common? Acts 2:44.

Answer. It is true; but this was purely voluntary; there was no precept for it, or obligation to do it.

If it be objected, that this was set down as an example to imitate;

1. I answer—Examples in scripture are not always precepts. The prophet Elijah called for fire from heaven, to consume the captains and their fifties; but it does not therefore follow, that when one Christian is angry with another, he may call for fire from heaven. Thus the primitive saints, out of prudence and charity, had all things common; it will not therefore follow, that in every age and century of the church, there should be a common stock, and everyone have a share.

2. I answer—Though the disciples had all things common—yet still they held their ownership, as is clear by Peter's speech to Ananias, "While it remained, was it not your own? and after it was sold,

was it not in your own power?" It is true in one sense, what the primitive church had, was not their own; so much as could be spared, was for the relief of the saints; thus all things were common. But still they kept a part of their estate in their own hand. There is a double right to an estate, a right of Ownership, and a right of Charity. The right of charity belongs to the poor—but the right of ownership belongs to the owner. For instance, God made a law, that a man must not put his sickle into his neighbor's grain. We read that the disciples being hungry when they went through the fields on the Sabbath, did pluck the ears of corn—there was Charity; but they must not put the sickle into the corn—here was ownership. This I the rather speak, because there are some, that when God has made a gift to one, would make all common. The Lord has set the eighth commandment as a fence about a man's estate; and he who breaks this hedge, a serpent shall bite him. Thus having taken that objection out of the way, I come now to the next. The text falls into three parts.

1. The inventory, "all things,"
2. The proprietors, "all things are yours."
3. The tenure, "You are Christ's." Which three branches will make up this one proposition.

Doctrine. That all things in heaven and earth are the portion and privilege of a believer. "He who overcomes shall inherit all things." A large inventory! "All things!" We cannot have more than all; and the apostle doubles it, to take away all hesitancy and doubting from faith.

Chapter 2. The Arguments proving the Proposition.

There are two reasons which will serve to illustrate and confirm the proposition, "All things are a believer's."

Reason 1. All things are a believer's, because the covenant of grace is his. The covenant is our Great Charter, by virtue of which God settles all things in heaven and earth upon us. By sin we had forfeited all; therefore if all things are ours, the title comes in by a covenant: until then we had nothing of our own. This covenant is the end plan and outcome of God's love; it is the legacy of free-grace. This covenant is enriched with mercy, it is embroidered with promises: you may read the Charter, "I will be their God." And there is a parallel to it, "I am God, even your God." This is a sufficient dowry. If God is ours, then all things are ours.

1. God is eminently good. One diamond does virtually contain many lesser pearls: the excellencies in the creature are single, and lack their adjuncts. Learning has not always noble parentage; honor has not always virtue. No individual can be the receptacle of all perfections. Those excellencies which lie scattered in the creature, are all united and concentrated in God—as the beams in the sun, or the drops in the ocean.

2. God is superlatively good. Whatever is in the creature, is to be found in God after a most transcendent manner. A man may be said to be wise—but God is infinitely so. A man may be said to be powerful—but God is eternally so. A man may be said to be faithful—but God is unchangeably so. Now in the covenant of grace, God passes himself over to us to be our God, "I am God, your God!" Psalms 50:7 This expression, "I am your God," imports three things:

1. Pacification. You shall find grace in my sight, I will cast a favorable aspect upon you. I will take off my armor, I will take down my standard, I no more will be enemy.

2. Donation. God makes himself over to us by a deed of gift, and gives away himself to us. He says to the believer, as the king of Israel said to the king of Syria, "I am yours—and all that I have!" This is a hive of divine comfort! All that is in God is ours! His wisdom is ours to teach us; his love is ours to pity us; his Spirit is ours to comfort us; his mercy is ours to save us. When God says to the soul, "I am yours,"—He cannot say no more!

3. Duration. I will be your God—as long as I am a God. "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end." Psalms 48:14.

Reason 2. All things are a believer's, because CHRIST is his. Jesus Christ is the pillar and hinge upon which the covenant of grace turns. Without Christ, we have nothing to do with a covenant. The covenant is founded upon Christ, and is sealed in his blood. We read of the mercy-seat, Exodus 25:17, which was a divine emblem, typifying Jesus Christ. "There will I meet you, and I will commune with you from above the mercy-seat," verse 22, to show that in Christ, God is propitious. From above this mercy-seat he communes with us, and enters into covenant. Therefore it is observable, when the Apostle had said, "All things are yours," he presently adds, "You are Christ's." Belong to Christ, gives us the title to all things. This golden chain, "Things present, and things to come," are linked to us, by virtue of our being linked to Christ. By faith we have a saving interest in Christ; having an interest in Christ, we have an interest in God; having an interest in God, we have a title to all things.

Chapter 3. Things PRESENT are a Believer's.

Question. And now I come to that great question, What are the things contained in the Charter?

Answer. There are two words in the text that express it, "Things present, and things to come." I begin with the first.

1. Things present, are a believer's. Among these things present, there are three specified in the text; Paul and Apollos, the world, life, etc. Here is, methinks, a chain of pearls! I will take every one of these pearls asunder, and show you their worth; then see how rich a believer is, who wears such a chain of pearl about him.

Section 1. Paul and Apollos are yours.

1. Under these words, "Paul and Apollos," by a figure are comprehended all the ministers of Christ, the weakest as well as the most eminent. "Paul and Apollos are yours," namely, their labors are for edifying the church. They are the helpers of your faith; the abilities of a minister are not given for himself, they are the church's. If the people have a taint of error, the ministers of Christ must season them with wholesome words; therefore they are called "the salt of the earth." If any soul is fainting under the burden of sin, it is the work of a minister to drop in comfort, therefore he is said to hold forth the breast as a nursing mother. In this way, Paul and Apollos are yours—all the gifts of a minister, all his graces, are not only for himself, they are the Church's. A minister must not monopolize his gifts to himself, this is "to hide his talents in a napkin." "Paul and Apollos are yours." The ministers of Christ should be as musk among linen, which casts a fragrancy; or like that box of spikenard, which being broken open, filled the house with its fragrance. So should they

do by the fragrance of their ointments. A minister by sending out a sweet perfume in his doctrine and life, makes the church of God as a garden of spices. "Paul and Apollos are yours," that is, they are as a lamp or torch to light souls to heaven. Chrysostom's hearers thought they had better be without the sun in the sky, than Chrysostom in the pulpit. Paul and Apollos are springs which hold the water of life; as these springs must not be poisoned, so neither must they be shut up or sealed. A minister of Christ is both a granary to hold the corn, and a steward to give it out. It is little better than theft—to withhold the bread of life! The lips of Apollos must be as a honeycomb, dropping in season and out of season. The graces of the Spirit are sacred flowers, which though they cannot die—yet being apt to wither, Apollos must come with his water-pot. It is not enough that there is grace in the believer's heart—but it must be poured into his lips. As Paul is a believer, so all things are his; but as Paul is a minister, so he is not his own, he is the church's. There are three corollaries I shall draw from this.

Use 1. If "Paul and Apollos are yours," every minister of Christ is given for the edifying of the church; take heed that you despise not the least of these, for all are for your profit. The least star gives light, the least drop moistens, the least minister is no less than an angel. There is some use to be made even of the lowest abilities of men: there are "gifts differing," but all are yours. The weakest minister may help to strengthen your faith. In the law, all the Levites did not sacrifice, only the priests, as Aaron, and his sons; but all were serviceable in the worship of God. Those who did not sacrifice—yet they helped to carry the ark. As in a building, some bring stones, some timber, some perhaps bring only nails; yet all these are useful, these all serve to fasten the work in the building. The church of God is a spiritual building, some ministers bring stones, are more eminent and useful; others timber; others less, they have but a nail in the work—yet all serve for the good of this building. The least nail in the ministry serves for the fastening of souls to Christ, therefore let no true minister be despised. Though all are not apostles, all are not evangelists, all have not the same dexterous abilities in their work; yet remember, "All are yours," all edify. Oftentimes God crowns his labors, and sends most fish into his net, who, though he may be less skillful—is more faithful; and though he has less brain—yet he has more heart. An ambassador may deliver his message with a trembling lip, and a stammering tongue—but he is honorable for his work's sake—he represents the king's person.

Use 2. If "Paul and Apollos are yours," all Christ's ministers have a subserviency to your good, they come to make up the match between Christ and you—then love Paul and Apollos. All the labors of a minister, his prayers, his tears, the usefulness of his abilities, the torrent of his affections—all are yours; then, by the law of equity—there must be some reflections of love from your hearts towards Paul and Apollos, such as are "set over you in the Lord."

1. Show your love, by honoring them. Manoah would know the angel's name, that he might honor him. And the apostle calls for this, "We beseech you, brethren, know those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and esteem them very highly." They are co-workers with God. God and his ministers (to speak with reverence) drive one and the same trade; and "they labor among you," therefore esteem them very highly. Next to sending out Christ and the Spirit, God never honored the world more than in sending out his Pauls and Apolloses. Kings may be your fathers to nurse you up in peace—but ministers are your fathers to beget you to Christ. The earthly father is an instrument of conveying nature, the spiritual father of conveying grace. Therefore Chrysostom thinks that the ministers should not only more revered than kings and judges—but more than

our natural parents as well. What shall we say then to those who make no more reckoning of their ministers, than the Egyptians did of their shepherds! "Every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians."

"Know those who labor among you"; many can be content "to know them" in the baseness of their parentage; "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Or to know them in their infirmities—but not to know them in the apostle's sense, so as to give them double honor. Surely, were it not for the ministry, you would not be a vineyard—but a wilderness! Were it not for the ministry, you would be destitute of the two seals of the covenant, baptism and the Lord's supper; you would be infidels, for "faith comes by hearing." "How shall they hear without someone preaching to them?" O therefore honor Paul and Apollos; though they may be lowly—yet their office is honorable.

2. Show your love to the ministers, by pleading their cause, when they are unjustly traduced and calumniated. It is counted by some, a piece of their religion—to defame a minister. Others who would be thought more modest, though they do not raise a report—yet they can receive it as a welcome present. This is contrary to that apostolical rule, "against an elder" (or minister) "receive not an accusation—but before two or three witnesses." Constantine was a great honorer of the ministry; it is reported of him, that he would not read the envious accusations brought in against them—but burned them. O, if you love Paul and Apollos, stand up in their defense, become their advocates! It was a law the Egyptians made, that if a man found another in the hands of thieves, and did not deliver him when it was in his power, he was condemned to die. Just so, when your ministers fall among thieves who would rob them of their good name—you must seek to deliver them. We have too many who labor to clip the credit of God's ministers, to make them weigh lighter. O, you must put some grains into the scales! Do they open their mouths to God for you, and will not you open your mouths in their behalf? Certainly if they labor to save your souls, you ought to save their reputation.

3. Show your love to your ministers, by encouraging them, and by being a screen to keep off injuries from them. If they seek your establishment, you must seek their encouragement. If they endeavor your salvation, you must endeavor their safety. The very name of an ambassador, has been a protection from wrongs. What an unnatural thing is it, that any should strive to bring them to death, whose very calling is to bring men to life! The minister is a spiritual father; it was a brand of infamy on them, "For this people are as those who strive with their priest." Was there none to strive with, but the priest, even he who offered up their sacrifices for them! Is it right for men to quarrel with their spiritual fathers! even those whom they once had a venerable opinion of, and acknowledged to be the means of their conversion! Either love your spiritual fathers, or there is ground of suspicion that yours was but a false birth.

Use 3. If "Paul and Apollos are yours," they are for the building you up in your faith; then endeavor to get good by the labors of Paul and Apollos, I mean such as labor in the word and doctrine. Let them not plough upon the rock; answer God's end in sending them among you. "Labor to profit;" you may get some knowledge by the word, such as is discursive and polemical, and yet not profit.

Question. What is it to profit?

Answer. The apostle tells us, "When we mingle the word with faith," that is, when we so hear that we believe, and so believe that we are transformed into the image of the word. "You have obeyed

from the heart that form of doctrine into which you were delivered." It is one thing for the truth to be delivered to us, and another thing for us to be delivered into the truth. These words are a metaphor taken from lead or silver cast into a mold. This is to profit when our hearts are cast into the mold of the word preached: as the seed is spiritual, so the heart is spiritual. We should do as the bee, when she has sucked sweetness from the flower, she works it in her own hive, and so turns it to honey. So when we have sucked any precious truth, we should by holy meditation work it in the hive of our hearts, and then it would turn to honey. Then we would profit by it.

O, let the labors of Paul and Apollos have an influence upon us. A good hearer should labor to go out from the ministry of the word, as Naaman out of Jordan—his leprous flesh was healed! So though we came to the word proud—we should go home humble. Though we came to the word earthly—we should go home heavenly. Our leprosy should be healed. Ambrose observes of the woman of Samaria, who came to Jacob's well—she came a sinner—she went away a prophetess. Such a metamorphosis should the word of God make. Let not the ministers of Christ say upon their deathbeds, that they have spent their lungs and exhausted their strength; but know not whether they have done anything, unless they preached men to hell.

It is Augustine's note upon those words of the apostle, "That they may give up their accounts with joy." "When" (says he) "does a minister give up his account with joy—but when he has been working in the vineyard and sees fruit appear?" Brethren, this will be his joy, and your joy also in the day of the Lord. O, labor to grow; some grow not at all, others grow worse for hearing. "Evil men shall wax worse and worse," as Pliny speaks of some fish which swim backward: they grow dead-hearted under preaching; they grow covetous, they grow apostates. It were far easier to write a book of apostates in this age, than a book of martyrs! Men grow riper for hell every day!

O, labor to thrive under the spiritual dew that falls upon you. Let not the ministers of Christ be as those "which beat the air." Is it not sad when the spiritual clouds shall drop their rain upon a barren desert! —when the minister's tongue "is as the pen of a ready writer," and the peoples' heart is like oiled paper that will take no impression. O, improve in grace. If you have a barren piece of ground, you do all you can to improve it, and will you not improve a barren heart!

It is a great compliment and honor to the ministry, when people thrive under it: "Need we as some others, epistles of commendation?" Paul esteemed the Corinthians his glory and his crown; hence says he, though other ministers have need of letters of commendation—yet he needed none; for when men should hear of the faith of these Corinthians, which was wrought in them by Paul's preaching; this was sufficient certificate for him, that God had blessed his labors, there should need no other epistle; they themselves were walking certificates, they were his testimonial letters. This was a high commendation; what an honor is it to a minister, when it shall be said of him, as once of Octavius when he came to Rome—he found the walls of brick—but he left them walls of marble! So when the minister came among the people, he found hearts of stone—but he left hearts of flesh. On the other side, it is a dishonor to a minister when his people are like Laban's sickly lambs, or Pharaoh's lean cows. There are some diseases which they call the reproach of physicians—as they cannot be healed. And there are some people who may be called the reproach of ministers—as they will not be mended. What greater dishonor to a minister, than when it shall be said of him, he has lived so many years in a parish, he found them an ignorant people—and they are so still! That he found them a dull slothful people, (as if they went to the

church as some use to go to the apothecary's shop—to take a medicine to make them sleep) and they are so still! That he found them a profane people—and so they are still. Such a people are not a minister's crown—but his heart-breaking. Beloved, when God's stars shine in the sky of the church, will you still walk in the dark! when for the work of Christ they are "near unto death," will you be as near unto hell as ever? when these golden bells of Aaron sound, shall you not chime in with Christ? I beseech you, "let your profiting appear to all." God sends Paul and Apollos as blessings among a people, they are to be helpers of your faith; if they "toil all night and catch nothing," it is to be feared that Satan caught the fish, before the ministers threw their net.

Section 2. Showing, that the WORLD is a Believer's.

1. The lawful use of the world is a believer's.

2. The special use of the world is a believer's.

1. The "LAWFUL use of the world" is yours. The gospel does somewhat enlarge our charter. We are not in all things so tied up as the Jews were; there were several kinds of meat which were prohibited to them; they might eat of those beasts only, which chewed the cud, and parted the hoof. They might not eat of the swine, because though it divided the hoof—yet it did not chew the cud; it was unclean. But to Christians who live under the gospel, there is not this prohibition. "The world is yours," that is—the lawful use of it is yours. Every creature "being sanctified by the word and prayer," is good, and we may eat, asking no question for conscience sake. The world is a garden; God has given us permission to pick off any flower. The world is a paradise; we may eat of any tree that grows in it—but the forbidden tree—that is, sin. Yet even in things lawful, beware of excess. We are apt to offend in lawful things. The world is yours to use; only let those who buy, "be as if they bought not." Take heed that you do not drive such a trade in the world, that you are likely to break in your trading for heaven.

2. The SPECIAL use of the world is yours.

1. The world was made for your sake.

2. All things which happen in the world, are for your good.

1. The world "was made for your sake." God has raised this great fabric of the world, chiefly for a believer. The saints are "God's jewels." The world is the cabinet where God locks up these jewels for a time. The world is yours—it was made for you. The creation is but a theater to act the great work of redemption upon. The world is the Field, the saints are the Corn, the ordinances are the Showers, the mercies of God are the Sunshine which ripens this corn, death is the Sickle which cuts it down, the angels are the Harvesters who carry it into the barn. The world is yours; God would never have made this field, were it not for the corn growing in it. What use then is there of the wicked? They are as a hedge to keep the corn from foreign invasions, though oftentimes they are a thorn hedge.

Question. But alas, a child of God has often the least share in the world; how then is the world his?

Answer. If you are a believer, that little you have, though it be but a handful of the world, it is blessed to you. If there is any consecrated ground in the world, that is a believer's. The world is yours! Esau had the venison—but Jacob got the blessing. A little blessed is sweet. A little of the

world with a great deal of peace, is better than the "revenues of the wicked." Every mercy a child of God has, swims to him in Christ's blood, and this sauce makes it relish the sweeter. Whatever he tastes is seasoned with God's love; he has not only corn, but money in the mouth of the sack; not only the gift but the blessing. Thus, the world is a believer's. An unbeliever may be wealthy—yet the world is not his—as he does not taste the quintessence of it. "Thorns and thistles does the ground bring forth to him." He feeds upon the fruit of the curse, "I will curse your blessings"; he eats "with bitter herbs". Thus, properly the world is a believer's. He only has a scripture-tenure, and that little he has, turns to cream! Every mercy is a present sent him from heaven.

2. All things which happen in the world, are for your good.

1. The lack of the world is for your good.

2. The hatred of the world is for your good.

1. The LACK of the world is for your good. By lacking the honors and revenues of the world—you lack the temptations which others have. Physicians observe that men die sooner by eating an abundance of food, than by scarcity. It is hard to say which kills most—the sword or surfeit. A glutton digs his own grave with his teeth! The world's beauty tempts—but it is like a fair plant to the eye—but poison to the taste. The lack of the world is a mercy.

2. The HATRED of the world is for your good. Wicked men are instruments in God's hand for good—albeit they do not intend this. They are flails to thresh off our husks, files to brighten our graces, leeches to suck out the noxious blood. Out of the most poisonous drug—God distills his glory, and our salvation. A child of God is indebted even to his enemies; "The ploughers ploughed upon my back"; if they did not plough and harrow us, we should bear but a very thin crop. After a man has planted a tree, he prunes and dresses it. Persecutors are God's pruning-scissors, to cut off the protrusions of sin! The bleeding vine is most fruitful. The envy and malice of the wicked shall do us good. God stirred up the people of Egypt to hate the Israelites, and that was a means to usher in their deliverance. The frowns of the wicked, make us the more ambitious for God's smile! Their incensed rage, shall only carry on God's decree (for while they sit backward to his command, they shall row forward to his decree) so it shall have a subserviency to our good. Every cross wind of Providence shall blow a believer nearer to the port of glory! What a blessed condition is a child of God in! Kill him—or save him alive—it is all working to his good. The opposition of the world is for his good. The world is yours.

Section 3. Showing, that LIFE is a Believers.

"Life is yours." Hierom understands it of the life of Christ. It is true, Christ's life is ours; the life which he lived on earth, and the life which he now lives in heaven; his satisfaction and his intercession both are ours, and they are of unspeakable comfort to us. But I conceive by LIFE in the text, is meant natural life, that which is contra-distinguished to death. But how is life a believer's? Two ways.

1. The privilege of life is his.

2. The comfort of life is his.

1. The PRIVILEGE of life is a believer's. That is, life to a child of God is an advantage for heaven; this life is given him to make provision for a better life. Life is the porch of eternity; here on earth, the believer dresses himself, that he may be fit to enter in with the Bridegroom. We cannot say of a wicked man, that life is his. Though he lives—yet life is not his, he is "dead while he lives." He does not improve the life of nature—to get the life of grace. He is like a man who takes the lease of a farm, and makes no benefit of it. He has been so long in the world—but he has not lived. He was born in the reign of such a king, his father left him such an estate, he was of such an age, and then he died. There is the end of him—his life was not worth a prayer—nor his death worth a tear. But life is yours; it is a privilege to a believer; while he has natural life, he "lays hold upon eternal life." How does he work out his salvation! What ado is there to get his evidences sealed! What weeping! What wrestling! How does he even take heaven by storm! Just so, that life is yours. It is to a child of God a season of grace, the seed-time of eternity; the longer he lives—the riper he grows for heaven. The life of a believer is as a figure engraved in marble; the life of an unbeliever, as letters written in dust.

2. The COMFORT of life is a believer's. "As sorrowful—yet always rejoicing." Take a child of God at the greatest disadvantage, let his life be overcast with clouds—yet if there be any comfort in life, the believer has it. Our life is often sickly and weak—but the spiritual life administers comfort to the natural life. "Man" (says Augustine) "is compounded of the mortal part, and the rational part; the rational serves to comfort the mortal part." So, I may say, a Christian consists of a natural life, and a spiritual life; the spiritual revives the natural. Observe how the spiritual life distills sweetness into the natural, in three cases.

1. In case of Poverty. This often eclipses the comfort of life. But what though poverty has clipped your wings? "Poor in the world—yet rich in faith," James 2:5. Poverty humbles, faith revives.

2. In case of Reproach. This is a heart-breaking, Psalms 69:20. "Reproach has broken my heart." Yet a Christian has his cordial by him, 2 Corinthians 1:12. "For this is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience." Who would desire a better jury to acquit him—than God and his own conscience!

3. In case of Losses. It is in itself sad, to have an interposition between us and our dear relations. A limb as it were pulled from our body, and sometimes our estates strangely melted away. Yet a believer has some gleanings of comfort left, and such gleanings as are better than the world's vintage. "You took joyfully the confiscation of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance," Hebrews 10:34. They had lost their estate—but not their God. Here is you see, the dry rod, blossoming. The spiritual life distills comfort into the natural life. Take the sourest part of a Christian's life, and there is comfort in it. When you hear him sighing bitterly, it is for sin; and such a sigh, though it may break the heart—yet it revives it. The tears of the godly are sweeter than the triumph of the wicked. The comfort that a wicked man has is only imaginary, it is but a pleasant delusion. He is as rejoicing—yet always sorrowing. He has that within, which spoils his music. But life is yours! When a believer's life is at the lowest ebb—yet he has a spring-tide of comfort.

Chapter 4. The Augmentation of the Charter.

Among these "things present," there are yet two other eminent privileges which are in the believer's charter.

1. Remission of sin.

2. Regeneration.

Section 1. Remission of Sin is a Jewel of the Believer's Crown. To pardon sin, is a privilege belonging to God alone. Pope's pardons are like blanks in a lottery—good for nothing but to be torn up and thrown away. Who can forgive sins but God alone? Mark 2:7. Now this remission or pardon is, 1. A costly mercy.

2. A choice mercy.

1. Pardon of sin is a COSTLY mercy. That which enhances the price of it is that it is the great fruit of Christ's sacrificial death. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Christ bled out our pardon: he was not only "a lamb without spot," but a lamb slain. Every pardon a sinner has, is written in Christ's blood.

2. Pardon of sin is a choice mercy. This jewel God hangs upon none but his elect. It is put into the charter; "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." This is an enriching mercy, it entitles us to blessedness; "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him." Psalms 32:1-2. Of all the debts we owe, our sins are the worst! To have the book cancelled and God appeased; to hear God whisper by his Spirit, "son, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven; I will not blot your Name out of my book—but I will blot your Sins out of my book,"—this is a mercy of the first magnitude. "Blessed is that man"; in the original it is in the plural, "blessednesses." "Have you but one blessing, my father," says Esau. But here is a plurality, a whole chain of blessings. Pardon of sin draws the silver link of grace, and the golden link of glory after it. It is a voluminous mercy, there are many mercies bound up with it. You may name it Gad, for behold, "a troop comes." When God pardons a sinner, now he puts on (if I may so speak) his brightest robe. Therefore when he would proclaim himself in his glory to Moses, it was after this manner, "The Lord, the Lord merciful." Exodus 34:6. His mercy is his glory: and if you read a little further, you shall see it was no other than pardoning mercy: "Forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin," etc. This is a high act of indulgence. God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss. This made David put on his best clothes and anoint himself. It was strange, his child newly dead, and God had told him that the sword should not depart from his house; yet now he falls anointing himself. The reason was, David had heard good news, God sent him his pardon by Nathan the prophet; "The Lord has put away your sin!" This oil of gladness which God had poured into his heart, made way for the anointing oil.

Question. How shall I know that this privilege is mine?

Answer. He whose sins are pardoned, has something to show for it. There are three scripture-evidences:

1. The pardoned sinner is a WEEPING sinner. Never did any man read his pardon with dry eyes. Look upon that weeping penitent, "she stood behind Christ weeping." Tears were distilled out of her penitent heart! O, how precious were Mary's tears! surely more costly in Christ's esteem than her ointment. They dropped from her eyes—as so many pearls. Her amorous eyes, whose

sparkles had so often set on fire all her lovers, she now seeks to be revenged on them, and washes Christ's feet with her tears! Her embroidered hair, which had so often as a net, ensnared others—she now makes it a towel to wipe Christ's feet! Here was a pardoned penitent. A pardon will turn the stony heart into a spring of tears! O sinner, ask yourself the question—Is your heart dissolved into tears? does it melt for sin? God seals his pardons only upon melting hearts.

Question. But to what purpose is all this cost? What is the need of weeping after pardon?

Answer. Because now sin and mercy are drawn out in more lively colors than ever. The Spirit comes thus to a sinner; "You have sinned against God, who never intended you evil; you have abused his mercy; all this you have done—yet behold, here is your pardon! I will set up my mercy above your sin, nay, in spite of it!" The sinner being sensible of this, falls a weeping, and wishes himself even dissolved into tears. He looks upon a bleeding Christ with a bleeding heart. Nothing can so melt the heart of a sinner as the love of God, and the blood of Christ.

2. He whose sins are pardoned, his heart burns in a flame of LOVE. Thus we read of Mary Magdalene—as her eyes were broached with tears—so her heart was red with love to Christ, "for she loved much." God's love in pardoning a sinner has an attracting power. The law has a driving power—but love has a drawing power.

3. He whose sins are pardoned, is willing to pardon others. He does forbear and forgive those who have offended him, Ephesians 4:32. Some will pray, go to church, give alms—anything but forgive! It is the brand set upon the heathens, "unmerciful," Romans 1:31. Those who live without forgiveness, cannot pray the Lord's prayer, or if they do, they must pray against themselves; they pray that God will forgive them "as they forgive others," which is in effect to pray that God will not forgive them. Surely he who has tasted of pardon will think it but rational and Christian, that he should forgive his offending brother.

Section 2. Showing that Regeneration goes along with Remission, and is a Branch of the Charter.

Privilege 2. Regeneration—which is nothing else but the transforming the heart, and casting it into a new mold. You have a pregnant verse for this, Romans 12:2, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." In the Incarnation, Christ did assume our human nature; and in Regeneration, we partake of his divine nature. This blessed work of regeneration, is in scripture called sometimes the "new birth," because it is begotten of a new seed, the Word, James 1:18, and sometimes the "new creature"; new, not in substance but in quality. This is the great promise, Ezekiel 36:26, "A new heart also will I give you." Observe, remission of sin and regeneration are two twins; when God pardons he takes away the rebel's heart. Where this work of regeneration is wrought, the heart has a new bias, and the life a new bent. How great a privilege this is, will appear two ways.

1. Until this blessed work of regeneration, we are in a spiritual sense, DEAD. "Dead in trespasses and sins," Ephesians 2:1.

A. He is dead in respect of WORKING. A dead man cannot work. The works of a sinner in scripture are called "dead works"; bid a natural man do anything, you had as good set a dead man about your work; bring him to a sermon, you do but bring a dead corpse to church; bring him to the sacrament, he poisons the sacramental cup; it is as if you should put bread and wine into a dead man's mouth. "Reprove him sharply for sin"; to what purpose do you strike a dead man?

B. He is dead in respect of HONOR. He is dead to all privileges; he is not fit to inherit mercy. Who sets the crown upon a dead man? The apostle calls it the crown of life, Revelation 2:10. It is only the living Christian, who shall wear the crown of life.

2. Until this blessed work of regeneration, we are in a spiritual sense, ILLEGITIMATE. The Devil is his father. "You are of your father the Devil." Thus it is, until Christ be formed in the heart of a sinner; then his reproach is rolled away from him. Regeneration ennobles a person; therefore such a one is said to be "born of God," 1 John 3:9. O how beautiful is that soul! I may say with Bernard, "O divine soul, invested with the image of God, espoused to him by faith, dignified with the Spirit! A person regenerate is embroidered with all the graces; he has the silver spangles of holiness, the angels' glory shining in him; he has upon him the image of Christ's beauty. The new creature is a new paradise set full of the heavenly plants. A heart ennobled with grace (to speak with reverence) is God's lesser heaven.

Chapter V. Showing that things to COME are a Believer's. And so I slide into the second part of the text, "Things to come," are yours! Here is portion enough! It is a great comfort that when things present are taken away—yet things to come are ours. Methinks the very naming this word, "things to come," should make the spirits of a Christian revive. It is a sweet word; our happiness is "to come"—the best is ahead! Truly if we had nothing but what we have here on earth, we would be miserable; here on earth, are disgraces and martyrdoms; we must taste some of that gall and vinegar which Jesus Christ drank upon the cross. But, O Christian, be of good cheer, there is something to come! The best part of our portion is yet to be given—"all things to come are yours!" God deals with us as a merchant who shows the worst piece of cloth first. We meet sometimes with coarse usage in the world; that piece which is of the finest spinning, is kept until we come at heaven. It is true, God does chequer his work in this life—white and black. He gives us something to sweeten our pilgrimage here—some tastes of his love—these are the pledge and first-fruits. But what is this to that which is to come? "Now we are the sons of God," 1 John 3:2, "But it does not yet appear what we shall be." Expect that God should keep his best wine until last; "things to come are yours!"

What are those things which are to come? There are twelve things yet to come, the which I call Twelve Royal Privileges, with which the believer shall be invested. The first is set down in the text, which I will begin with.

Chapter 6. The first Royal Privilege of a Christian, is DEATH.

"Death is yours!" Death in scripture is called an enemy, 1 Corinthians 15:26. Yet here it is put in a Christian's inventory of royal privileges, "death is yours." Death is an enemy to the mortal part—but a friend to the spiritual. Death is one of our best friends, next to Christ. When Moses saw his rod turned into a serpent, it did at the first affright him, and he fled from it; but when God bade him take hold of it, he found by the miraculous effects which it wrought, it did him and the people of Israel much good. Just so, death at the first sight is like the rod turned into a serpent—it affrights. But when by faith we take hold of it, then we find much benefit and comfort in it. As Moses' rod divided the waters, and made a passage for Israel into Canaan; so death divides the waters of tribulation, and makes a passage for us into the "land of promise." Death is called the king of terrors—but it can do a child of God no hurt; this snake may hiss and wind about the body—but the sting is pulled out. The bee by stinging, loses its sting. While death did sting Christ upon the cross,

it has quite lost its sting to a believer; it can hurt the soul no more than David did king Saul, when he cut off the lap of his garment. Death to a believer is but like the arresting of a man for debt—after the debt is paid! Death, as God's sergeants at arms, may arrest us, and carry us before God's justice; but Christ will show our discharge—the debt-book is crossed in his blood!

Question. How is death ours?

Answer. Two ways 1. Death is the outlet to sin.

2. Death is the inlet to happiness.

1. Death to a believer, is an outlet to SIN. We are in this life under a sinful necessity; even the best saint: "There is not a just man upon earth, that does good and sins not." Evil thoughts are continually arising out of our hearts, as sparks out of a furnace. Sin keeps house with us whether we will or not; the best saint alive is troubled with these evil inhabitants; though he forsakes his sins—yet his sins will not forsake him.

Sin does indisposes to good. "How to perform that which is good I find not," Romans 7:18. When we would pray, the heart is a violin out of tune; when we would weep, we are as clouds without rain.

Sin tempts to evil. "The flesh lusts against the spirit." There needs be no external wind of temptation, we have tide strong enough in our hearts, to carry us to hell. Consider sin under this threefold notion.

1. Sin is a "body of death," and that not impertinently.

First, it is a body for its weight. The body is a heavy and weighty substance: so is sin a body, it weighs us down. When we would pray, the weights of sin are tied to our feet that we cannot ascend. Anselm, seeing a little boy playing with a bird, he let her fly up, and presently pulls the bird down again by a string: so, says he, it is with me as with this bird; when I would fly up to heaven upon the wings of meditation, I find a string tied to my leg; I am overpowered with corruption; but death pulls off these weights of sin, and lets the soul free.

Secondly, sin is a body of death, for its annoyance. It was a cruel torment that one used, he tied a dead man to a living man, that the dead man might annoy and infest the living. Thus it is with a child of God, he has two men within him—flesh and spirit—grace and corruption. There is the dead man tied to the living man. A proud sinful heart is worse to a child of God, than the smell of a dead corpse. Indeed to a natural man sin is not offensive; for, being "dead in sin," he is not sensible: but where there is a vital principle of spiritual life, there is no greater annoyance than the body of death: insomuch that the pious soul often cries out, as David, "Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar." So says he, "Woe is me, that I am constrained to abide with sin! How long shall I be troubled with evil inhabitants! How long shall I offend that God whom I love! When shall I leave these tents of Kedar!"

2. Sin is a tyrant, it carries in it the nature of a law; the apostle calls it the "law in his members." Romans 7:14. There is the law of pride, the law of unbelief; it has a kind of jurisdiction, as Caesar over the senate. "What I hate, that I do"; verse 15. The apostle was for the present like a man carried down the stream, and was not able to bear up against it. Whence are our carnal fears?

whence our sinful passions? whence is it that a child of God does that which he does not want to do? yes, sometimes against knowledge? The reason is, he is captivated under sin. But be of good cheer, where grace makes a combat—death shall make a conquest!

3. Sin is a leprous spot. It makes everything we touch unclean. Thus in every man naturally, there is a fretting leprosy of sin, pride, unbelief, impenitency, etc. These are leprous spots. In conversion, God makes a change in the heart of a sinner—but still the leprosy of sin spreads; then at last death comes and pulls down the stones and timber of the house, and the soul is quite freed from the leprosy. Sin is a defiling thing, it makes us red with guilt—and black with filth Sin is compared to a "menstruous cloth"; we need carry it no higher. Hierom says, there was nothing in the law more unclean than the menstruous cloth: this is sin. Sin draws the Devil's picture in a man; malice is the Devil's eye; oppression is his hand; hypocrisy is his cloven foot! But behold, death will give us our discharge; death is the last and best physician, which cures all diseases and sins—the aching head and the unbelieving heart. Sin was the midwife which brought death into the world, and death shall be the grave to bury sin! O the privilege of a believer! he is not taken away in his sins—but he is taken away from his sins. The Persians had a certain day in the year, wherein they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures: such a day as that will the day of death be to a man in Christ. This day the old serpent dies in a believer, which has so often stung him with his temptations! This day the sins of the godly, these venomous creatures, shall all be destroyed. They shall never more be proud; they shall never more grieve the Spirit of God; the death of the body shall quite destroy the body of death.

2. To a believer, death is the inlet to eternal happiness. Samson found a honeycomb in the lion's carcass; so may a child of God suck much sweetness from death. Death is the gate of life! Death pulls off our rags, and gives us glorious raiment. All the hurt death does to us—is to put us into a blissful condition. Death is called in scripture a sleep, 1 Thessalonians 4:14. "Those who sleep in Jesus"; as after sleep the spirits are exhilarated and refreshed, so after death, "the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord." Death is yours. Death is a believer's ferryman, to ferry him over to the land of rest! Death opens the portal into heaven! The day of a Christian's death—is the birthday of his heavenly life! Death is his ascension-day to glory! Death is his marriage-day with Jesus Christ! After his funeral, he begins his marriage!

Well then might Solomon say, "The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth." Death is the spiritual man's advancement, why then should he fear it? Death, I confess, has a grim visage to an impenitent sinner; so it is ghastly to look upon; it is a messenger to carry him to hell. But to such as are in Christ, "death is yours!" Death is like the "pillar of cloud," it has a dark side to a sinner: but it has a light side to a believer. Death's pale face looks ruddy, when the "blood of sprinkling" is upon it; in short, faith gives us a property in heaven, death gives us a possession: fear not your privilege, the thoughts of death should be delightful. Jacob, when he saw the wagons, his spirits revived. Death is the chariot which carries us to our Father's house! What were the martyrs' flames but a fiery chariot to carry them up to heaven! This world we live in, is but a desert; shall we not be willing to leave it for paradise! We say, it is good to be here; we try to have an earthly paradise. But grace must curb nature.

Think of the privileges of death. Though naturally we desire to live here on earth, as we are made up of flesh—yet grace should be as the master wheel, which sways our will, making us long for

death. "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far!" 2 Corinthians 5:2, "We groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling." We would put off the earthly clothes of our body, and put on the bright robe of immortality. "We groan," it is a metaphor taken from a mother, who being pregnant, groans and cries out for delivery. Augustine longed to die, that he might see that head which was once crowned with thorns. We pray, "May Your kingdom come"; and when God is leading us into his kingdom, shall we be afraid to go! The times we live in should, methinks, make us long for death. We live in dying times, we may hear, as it were, God's death bell ringing over these nations. They are well—who are out of the storm—and have gotten already to the haven!

Question. But who shall have this privilege?

Answer. Death is certain; but there are only two sorts of people to whom we may say "Death is yours!" It is your preferment.

1. Such as die daily. We are not born angels; die we must, therefore we had need carry always a death's head with us. The basilisk, if it sees a man first—it kills him; but if he sees it first—it does him no hurt. The basilisk death, if it sees us first, before we see it—it is dangerous; but if we see it first by meditating upon it, it does us no hurt. Study death, often walk among the tombs. It is the thoughts of death beforehand, that must do us good. In a dark night, one torch carried before a man is worth many torches carried after him: one serious thought of death beforehand, one tear shed for sin before death—is worth a thousand shed after, when it is too late. It is good to make death our familiar friend, and in this sense to be in deaths often: that if God should presently send us a letter of summons this night, we might have nothing to do but to die.

Alas, how do many put off the thoughts of death! It is almost death to them—to think of death. There are some who are in the very threshold of the grave, who have one foot in the grave, and the other foot in hell; yet "put far from them the evil day." I have read of one Lysicrates, who in his old age dyed his gray hairs black, that he might seem young again. When we should be building our tombs, we are building our houses! Die daily, lest you die eternally! The holy patriarchs in purchasing for themselves a burying place, showed us what thoughts they still had of death. Joseph of Arimathea erected his sepulcher in his garden: we have many that set up the trophies of their victories; others that set up their trophies, that they may blaze their honor. But how few that set up their sepulchers; who erect in their hearts the serious thoughts of death! O remember when you are in your gardens, in places most delicious and fragrant, to keep a place for your tombstone; die daily! There is no better way to bring sin into a consumption, than by often looking on the pale horse, and the one that sits thereon. By thinking on death, we begin to repent of an evil life; and so we disarm death before it comes, and cut the lock where its strength lies.

2. Such as are in heaven before they die. Death is yours! If we must be high-minded, let it be in setting our mind upon heavenly things. Heaven must come down into us before we go up there. A child of God breathes his faith in heaven; his thoughts are there: "When I awake I am still with you," Psalms 139:17. David awaked in heaven; his conversation is there; Php 3:20, "For our conversation is in heaven." The believer often ascends mount Tabor, and takes a prospect of glory. O that we had this celestial frame of heart! When Zaccheus was in the crowd, he was too low to see Christ; therefore he climbed up into the Sycamore tree. When we are in a crowd of worldly business, we cannot see Christ. Climb up into the tree by divine contemplation! If you would get Christ into your heart, let heaven be in your eye! "Set your affections upon things

above," Colossians 3:2. There needs be no exhortation for us to set our hearts on things below. How is the curse of the serpent upon most men! "Upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life." Those who feed only upon dust, golden dust, will be unwilling to return to dust. To them, death will be terrible! The tribes of Reuben and Gad desired that they might stay on this side Jordan—and have their portion there; it being a place convenient for their cattle. It seems they minded their cattle more than their passage into the holy land! Just so, many professors, if they may have but a little grazing here in the world, in their shops, and in their farms, they are content to live on this side the river, and mind not their passage into the land of promise! But you who are in heaven before you die—death is yours! An earthly saint is a contradiction. The Greek word for saint signifies a man refined and separated from the earth. If an astronomer, instead of observing the planets, and the motions of the heavens, should take a reed in his hand, and fall a measuring of the earth, would not this be counted a contradiction! And is not it as great a contradiction in religion, when men pretend to have Christ and heaven in their eye—yet mind earthly things! Php 3:19. Our souls, methinks should be like to a ship, which is made little and narrow downwards—but more wide and broad upwards. So our affections should be very narrow downwards to the earth—but wide and large upwards towards heavenly things.

Thus we see death is a privilege to believers; death is yours! The heir while he is under age, is heir of the land he is born to—but he has not the use or the benefit of it, until he comes of age. Be as old as you will, you are never of age for heaven—until you die. Death brings us to age, and then the possession comes into our hands!

Chapter 7. The second Royal Privilege of a Christian, is that he shall be carried up by the angels.

Now I proceed to the second privilege, which is yet to come: what holy David says of Zion, "Glorious things are spoken of you, O you city of God," Psalms 87:3. In this life, a believer is carried by the saints; they lift him upon the wings of their prayers; and when they can carry him no longer, after death, the angels take him, and carry him up. Wicked men, when they die, they shall have a black guard of angels to carry them. You who are an old sinner (who has a hoary head—but your heart is as young in sin as ever) I may say to you as Christ said in another sense to Peter: "When you are old, you shall stretch forth your hands, and another shall gird you, and carry you where you would not." So I say, You old sinner, the time is shortly coming, when you shall stretch forth your hands on your death-bed, and another shall bind you, and carry you where you would not; you shall be carried by a black guard! But a believer shall be carried by the angels into heaven: "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Abraham's bosom is a figurative speech, representing the seat of the blessed. There poor Lazarus was carried by the angels. When he was upon earth, he had no friends but the dogs which licked his sores. But when he died, he had a convoy of angels. After our fall, the angels (as well as God) fell out with us, and became our enemies; hence we read that the angels (the cherubim) stood with a flaming sword, to keep our first parents out of Paradise, Genesis 3:24. But being now at peace with God, we are at peace with the angels. Therefore the angel comes with an olive-branch of peace in his mouth, and proclaims with triumph the news of Christ's incarnation. Luke 2:11, "For unto you is born, in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord!" The angels bless God for man's redemption, verse 13. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly multitude praising God, and saying, glory be to God in the highest." The angels love mankind (especially where there is the new man) and are ready to do all friendly offices for us. As in our

lifetime, they are our supporters, Psalms 91:11. "He shall give his angels charge to keep you;" so after death they are our porters. Lazarus was carried by the angels. The angels are called ministering spirits; they are willing to minister for the good of the saints. Hence some observe, it is said, Lazarus was carried by the angels, in the plural, not by one angel—as if the angels had been ambitious to carry Lazarus, and each one strived which should have a part. O in what pomp and triumph did Lazarus's soul now ride! Never was Dives so honored in his life—as Lazarus was at his death. For a king to help to carry the coffin of one of his subjects, were a high honor; but a believer shall have a guard of angels to conduct him. Amasis king of Egypt, that he might set forth his magnificence, would have his chariot drawn by four princes, which he had conquered in the war. But what was all this, compared to the chariot in which Lazarus, and the soul of every believer, shall be drawn at their death! They shall be carried by the angels of God!

Part 2

The Christian's Charter Showing the Privileges of a Believer by Thomas Watson "All things are yours!"

1 Corinthians 3:21

Chapter 8. The Third Royal Privilege of a Believer is—that he shall "be with Christ in glory." Php 1:23, "I desire to be depart," or loosen anchor—and to be with Christ! This is a privilege of the first magnitude! Surely we can be no losers, by being with Christ. A graft or scion, though it is taken out of the tree, it does not perish—but is set into a better stock. Thus it is with a Christian, while he is here, (even after conversion) there is much of the wild olive still in him; now when this scion, by death is cut off, he does not perish—but is set into a more noble stock—he is with Christ, which is far better. Well might the apostle say, "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far!" Is not a state of perfection better than a state of imperfection? Our graces are our best jewels—but they are imperfect, and do not give out their full luster; grace is but in its infancy here on earth, it will not be of full growth until we are with Christ. The best Christian in this life—is but a child in grace. Here on earth, we have but some imperfect buddings of grace; when we are with Christ, our graces shall be fully ripe and matured. In this life we are said to receive but "the first fruits of the Spirit." We must not expect a full crop until we are with Christ! Grace while we are here in this world, is mingled with corruption. It is like gold in the ore; or as the pillar of cloud, it has its dark side as well as its light side. Our faith is mingled with unbelief; our humility is stained with pride! The flame of grace is not so pure, but it has some smoky vapors. Our life of grace is said to be hidden. It is hidden indeed, under much corruption, as the sun is hidden under a cloud; or as the corn is hidden under chaff; or as a pearl may be hidden in the mire. Though grace cannot be lost—yet it may be hidden. David so clouded his graces by sin, that others could hardly see the cloth of gold under the filthy garments. Is it not far better to be with Christ? our graces then shall shine forth in their perfection! This is a glorious privilege, we shall be with Christ.

It is a blessed thing to be with Christ while we are here on earth. "I am ever with you." What is it, which the pious soul desires in this life? Is it not to have the sweet presence of Christ! He cares for nothing, but what has something of Christ in it. He loves duties only as they carry him to Christ. Why is prayer so sweet—but because the soul has private conference with Christ! Why is the Word precious—but because it is a means to convey Christ to him! He comes down to us upon the wings of the Spirit; and we go up to him upon the wings of faith! An ordinance without Christ—is but feeding upon the dish—instead of the meat. Why does the wife love the letter—but because it brings news of her husband! Here on earth, we enjoy Christ by letters, and that is sweet; but what will it be to enjoy his presence in glory! Here is that which may amaze us—we shall be with Christ! Christ is all that is desirable! Nay, he is more than we can desire! A man that is thirsty, he desires only a little water to quench his thirst; but bring him to the lake—and here he has more than he can desire. In Christ there is not only a fullness of sufficiency—but a fullness of abundance; it overflows all the banks! A Christian that is most energized by faith, has neither a head to devise,

nor a heart to desire—all that which is in Christ! Only when we come to heaven, will God enlarge the vessel of our desire, and will fill us as Christ did the waterpots with wine—"up to the brim." Now this privilege of being with Christ, has six privileges growing out of it.

1. The First Privilege of being with Christ—VISION.

Job 19:26. "In my flesh shall I see God"; the sight of Jesus Christ will be the most sublime and ravishing object to a glorified saint. When Christ was upon earth, his beauty was hidden. "He has no form or loveliness;" the light of the divine nature was hidden in the dark lantern of the human; it was hidden under reproaches, sufferings; yet even at that time there was enough of beauty in Christ to delight the heart of God. "My Elect in whom my soul delights." His veil was then upon his face; but what will it be when the veil shall be taken off, and he shall appear in all his embroidery! It is heaven enough—to see Christ. "Whom have I in heaven but you!" Angels and archangels do not make heaven. Christ is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory!

2. The Second Privilege of being with Christ—UNION. We shall enter into a marriage union with Christ. We shall so behold him, as to be made one with him. What nearer than union? what sweeter? Union is the spring of joy, the ground of privilege; by virtue of this blessed union with Christ, all those rare beauties with which the human nature of the Lord Jesus is bespangled, shall be ours. Let us compare two scriptures: John 17:24, "Father, I will that they also whom you have given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." That is, the glory of the human nature. But this is not all, verse 22, "The glory that you have given me, I have given them." Christ has not his glory only for himself—but for us; we shall shine by his beams. Here on earth, Christ puts his graces upon his spouse, and in heaven he will put his glory upon her. No wonder then the king's daughter is "all glorious within," and "her clothing of wrought gold." How glorious will the spouse be, when she has Christ's jewels upon her! Judge not of the saints by what they are—but by what they shall be. "It does not yet appear what we shall be," 1 John 3:1. Why, what shall we be? "We shall be like him." The spouse of Christ shall not only be made one with Christ—but she shall be made like Christ; in other marriages, the spouse changes her condition—but here she changes her complexion! Not that the saints in glory shall receive of Christ's essence, they shall have as much glory as the human nature is capable of; though Christ conveys his image—yet not his essence. The sun shining upon a glass leaves a print of its beauty there; and it is hard to distinguish between the glass and the sunbeam: but the glass is not the beam, the sun conveys only its likeness, not its essence.

3. The Third Privilege of being with Christ—NOBILITY. This consists in two things.

1. The saints shall sit with Jesus Christ when he judges the world. "Know you not, that the saints shall judge the world?" The saints shall sit with Christ in judicature, as the justices of peace with the judge. The saints are Christ's assessors; they shall be with him upon the bench, applauding his righteous sentence. O what a glorious tribunal will that be! Here on earth, the world judges the saints—but there the saints shall judge the world.

2. They shall sit nearer the throne than the angels. The angels are noble and sublime spirits—but by virtue of our marriage union, we shall be ennobled with greater honor than the angels! The angels are Christ's friends—but not his spouse! This honor have all his saints. As the saints' robes in glory shall be brighter than the angels: theirs being only the righteousness of creatures—but

these having upon them the righteousness of God, so their dignity shall be greater. Here on earth, we are prisoners at bar—but there favorites at court! The saints shall sit down in glory above the angels.

4. The Fourth Privilege of being with Christ—JOY. This joy of the saints proceeds from union; when our union with Christ is perfect, then our joy shall be full. Revelation 21:4, "And God shall wipe away all tears, and there shall be no more sorrow."

1. There shall be no WEEPING. Jesus Christ has provided a handkerchief to wipe off the tears of the saints. Here on earth, the spouse is in sable, it being a time of absence from her husband. But in heaven, Christ will take away the spouse's mourning; he will take off all her black and bloody apparel, and will clothe her in white robes, Revelation 7:13. White, as it is an emblem of the saints' purity, so it is a type of their joy. Heaven would not be heaven—if there were weeping there. Hell indeed is called a place of weeping; those who would not shed a tear for their sins while they lived, shall have weeping enough; but we never read of weeping in heaven. Christ will take down our harps from the willows; there he will call for his heralds and trumpeters. The angels, those blessed choristers, shall sing the divine anthems of praise, and the saints shall join in that heavenly concert. If it were possible that any tears could be shed when we are with Christ, they should be the tears of joy, as sometimes we have seen a man weep for excessive joy! Christ will turn all our water there, into wine.

2. There shall be no SORROW. One smile from Christ's face will make us forget all the afflictions of our earthly life. Sorrow is a cloud gathered in the heart, upon the apprehension of some evil: and weeping is the cloud of grief dropping into rain. But in heaven the sun of righteousness shall shine so bright, that there shall not be the least interposition of any cloud. There shall be no sorrow there, nor anything to breed it. There shall be no sin to humble. Heaven is such a pure soil, that the viper of sin will not breed there. There shall be no enemy to molest. When Israel had conquered Canaan—yet they could not get rid of all the Canaanites, they would live among them; "But the Canaanites would dwell in that land!" But when we are with Christ, we shall never more be troubled with Canaanites. "In that day, there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord." God will keep the heavenly paradise with a flaming sword, that none shall come near to hurt: "Upon all that glory shall be a defense." There shall be nothing to breed sorrow in heaven. There are two things that usually raise the clouds of sorrow, and both shall be removed when we are with Christ.

1. The frowns of great men. How ambitious are men of the King's smile? but alas, that quickly sets in a cloud, and then their comforts are in the wane, they are sad! But when we are with Christ, we shall have a perpetual smile from God! The saints shall never be out of favor, Jesus Christ is the great favorite at court; and as long as God smiles upon Christ, so long he will smile upon the saints, they having on Christ's beauty; and being part of Christ.

2. The loss of dear friends. Friends imparts secrets; friendship is the marriage of affections, it makes two become one spirit. David and Jonathan took sweet counsel together, their heart was knit in one. Now here is the grief—when this precious knot must be untied. But be of good cheer, if your friend is one of the elect, after you have parted with your sins—you shall meet with him and never part. If your friend is wicked, though he were your friend on earth, you will cease to be his friend in heaven. The pious wife will not complain she has lost her wicked husband; nor the pious

parent, that he has lost his wicked child. All relations are infinitely made up in Christ, as the whole constellation in the sun, that great lamp of heaven. When a man comes to the lake, he does not complain that he lacks his cistern of water. Though you sucked comfort from your relations; yet when you come to the ocean, and are with Christ, you shall never complain that you have left your cistern behind!

There will be nothing to breed sorrow in heaven; there shall be joy—and nothing but joy. Heaven is set out by that phrase, "Enter into the joy of your Lord." Here on earth, joy enters into us; there we enter into joy. The joys we have here on earth, are from heaven; those joys are in heaven! The joys that we shall have with Christ, are without measure and without mixture. "In your presence is fullness of joy," Psalms 16:11.

1. The HEART shall be filled with joy. Nothing but Christ can replenish the heart with joy: the understanding, will, and affections, are such a triangle, that none can fill but the Trinity. As Christ's beauty shall amaze the eye, so his love shall ravish the heart of a glorified saint! Must it not needs be joy to be with Christ? What joy, when a Christian shall pass the great gulf between heaven and hell! What joy when Christ shall take a believer into the wine cellar, and kiss him with the kisses of his lips! What joy when the match shall be at once made up, and solemnized between Christ and the soul! These are the more noble and entire delights.

2. All the SENSES shall be filled with joy—and at once! The eye shall be filled. What joy shall it be, to see that orient brightness in the face of Christ! There you may see the lily and the rose mixed, white and ruddy, Cant. 5:10. The ear shall be filled. What joy to the spouse—to hear Christ's voice! The voice of God was dreadful to Adam, after he had listened to the serpent's voice. "I heard your voice in the garden—and was afraid," Genesis 3:10. But how sweet will the bridegroom's voice be! What joy to hear him say, "My love, my dove, my undefiled one!" What joy to hear the music of angels, even the heavenly multitude praising God? If the eloquence of Origin, and the golden mouth of Chrysostom, did so affect and charm the ears of their auditors, O then what will it be to hear the glorious tongues of saints and angels, as so many divine trumpets sounding forth the excellencies of God, and singing hallelujahs to the lamb! The smell shall be filled. What joy to smell that fragrance and perfume which comes from Christ! All his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. The sweet breath of his Spirit blowing upon the soul, shall give forth its scent as the wine of Lebanon. The taste shall be filled. Christ will bring his spouse into the banqueting-house, and she shall be inebriated with his love! O what joy to be drinking in this heavenly nectar! This is the water of life! This is the wine on the lees well refined. The touch shall be filled—the saints shall be ever in the embraces of Christ; "Behold my hands and my feet; handle me, and see me," Luke 24:39. That will be our work in heaven; we shall be forever handling the Lord of life! Thus all the senses shall be filled with joy. Well might the apostle say, to be with Christ is better by far! If Christ's sufferings are full of joy, what then are his embraces! If the dew of Hermon hill is so sweet—the first-fruits of Christ's love; what will the full crop be! In short, there will be nothing in heaven but what shall add infinitely to the joy of the saints. The very torments of the damned shall create matter of joy and triumph. I may allude to that of the Psalmist, "The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance." "And again they shouted: Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever!" Revelation 19:3. The Elect shall rejoice upon a double account— to see God's justice magnificently exalted, and to see themselves miraculously delivered. There shall be no unpleasant object represented; nothing but joy. Such will that joy be, when we are with Christ, that

it is not possible to now even imagine! "He was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell." 2 Corinthians 12:4. We read that Joseph gave his brethren money and provisions for the way; but the full sacks were kept until they came to their father's house. Just so, God gives us something by the way; some of the hidden manna; some taste of his heavenly joy in this life—but the full sacks of blessing are kept for heaven! O what joy to be with Christ! Surely if there were such joy and triumph at Solomon's coronation, that all the earth rang with the sound of it, what joy will be on the saints' coronation-day, when they shall be eternally united to Jesus Christ!

5. The Fifth Privilege of being with Christ—REST. A Christian in this life is like quicksilver, which has a principle of motion in itself—but not of rest. We are never quiet—but are like the ship upon the waves. As long as we have sin—we will not have rest. A child of God is full of motion and disquiet; "I have no rest in my bones by reason of my sin," Psalms 38:3. While there are wicked men in the world, never look for rest. If a man is poor, he is thrust away by the rich. If he be rich, he is envied by the poor. Sometimes losses disquiet, sometimes law-suits vex. The saints in this life are in a pilgrim condition; the apostles had no certain dwelling place, 1 Corinthians 4:11. We are here on earth, in a perpetual hurry, in a constant fluctuation. Our life is like the tide, sometimes ebbing, sometimes flowing.

Here on earth, is no rest—and the reason is, because we are out of center; everything is in motion until it comes at the center; Christ is the center of the soul. The needle of the compass trembles—until it turns to the North pole. Noah's dove found no rest for the sole of her foot—until she came at the ark. This ark was a type of Christ. When we come to heaven, the kingdom which cannot be shaken, we shall have rest, Hebrews 4:9. "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God." Heaven in scripture is compared to a granary, Matthew 3:12, an emblem of rest. Wheat, while it stands on the ground, is shaken to and fro with the wind—but when it is laid up in the granary it is at rest. The elect are spiritual wheat, who while they are in the field of this world, are never quiet—the wind of persecution shakes this wheat, and everyone who passes by, will be plucking these sacred ears of corn. But when the wheat is in the heavenly garner, it is at rest. There remains a rest for the people of God. Not but that there shall be motion in heaven, (for spirits cannot be idle) but it shall be without lethargy and weariness. It shall be a labor full of ease; a motion full of rest. When a believer is in heaven, he has his rest. The lower earthly region is windy and tempestuous. When we are once gotten into the upper region of glory, there are no winds or noxious vapors—but a serene calmness; this is to be with Christ.

6. The Sixth Privilege of being with Christ—SECURITY. It is possible that a man may have a few minutes of rest; but he is not secure, he knows not how soon eclipses and changes may come. He is still in fear, and fear makes a man a slave, though he knows it not. There is torment in fear, 1 John 4:18. He who has great possessions thinks thus: "How soon may I fall from this pinnacle of honor? how soon may the plunderer come?" Nay, a believer who has durable riches—may still be wavering and doubting concerning his condition.

1. He sometimes questions whether he is in the state of grace or not; and thus he thinks with himself; "Perhaps I believe; I have something that glitters, perhaps it is but a counterfeit pearl. Perhaps my faith is presumption, my love to Christ is but self-love." And after the Spirit of God has wrought the heart to some sound persuasion, he is soon shaken again; as a ship that lies at

anchor, though it is safe—yet it is shaken and tossed upon the water; and these fears leave impressions of sadness upon the heart.

2. But secondly, he fears that though he is in the state of grace—yet he may fall into some scandalous sin, and so grieve the Spirit of God, sadden the hearts of the righteous, wound his own conscience, harden sinners, discourage new beginners, put a song into the mouth of the profane, and at last God hide his face in a cloud. A child of God after a sad declension, having by his sin put black spots in the face of religion, though I deny not but he has a title to the promise; yet he may be in such a condition, that he cannot for the present apply any promise—he may go weeping to his grave.

These sad fears, like black vapors, are still arising out of a gracious heart. But when once a believer is with Christ, there is full security of heart; he is not only out of danger—but out of fear. Take it thus; a man that is upon the top of a mast, he may sit safe for the present—but not secure. Perhaps the pirates may shoot at the ship, and take it; perhaps the winds may arise suddenly, and the ship may sink in the storm. But a man who is upon a rock, he stands impregnable; his heart is secure. A Christian in this life is like a man upon the top of a mast; sometimes the pirates come aboard, namely, cruel persecutors, and they shoot at his ship, and often, though the passenger (the precious soul) escapes—yet they sink the ship; sometimes the winds of temptation blow; those northern winds; and now the Christian questions whether God loves him, or whether his name is enrolled in the book of life. And though being in Christ, there is no danger—yet his heart hesitates and trembles. But when he is with Christ, off from the top of the mast, and is planted upon the rock—his heart is fully secure; and you shall hear him say thus, now I am sure I have passed the gulf, I am now passing from death unto life, and none shall pluck me out of my Savior's arms!

Chapter 9. The Fourth Royal Privilege—the blessed inheritance.

Let worldlings place their happiness in this life; a believer's happiness is in the future—the golden world is yet to come. I pass to the next privilege, which is the blessed inheritance. Colossians 1:12, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." This world is but a tenement, which we may be soon turned out of; heaven is an inheritance, and a glorious one. Heaven cannot be hyperbolized. If the skirts and suburbs of the palace, namely, the stars and planets are so glorious, that our eyes cannot behold the dazzling luster of them; what glory then is there in the celestial palace itself! Of this blessed place we have a figurative description in Rev. 21. John was carried away in the Spirit, and had a vision of heaven, verse 2. "And I saw no temple therein;" while we dwell upon earth, there is need for a temple, we shall not be above ordinances until we are above sin; but in heaven, God will be our meeting place—instead of a temple, "he shall be all in all."

Verse 25, "there shall be no night there." No city is to be found, not the most glorious metropolis under heaven, where it is always day: for though some regions which lie immediately under the pole, have light for several months together; yet when the sun withdraws from the horizon, they have as long a night as before they had a day. But says the text, "There shall be no night there." In hell it is all night—but in heaven the day will be ever lengthening. Now this blessed inheritance which the saints shall possess, has eight properties, or rather privileges worth our serious thoughts.

1. Sublimeness. It is set out by a great and high mountain, Revelation 21:10. It is placed above the airy and starry heaven, says Musculus. It is the empyrean heaven which Paul calls the third heaven. For the situation of it; it is far above all heavens, where Christ himself is. This is the royal palace where saints shall dwell. The men of this world are high in power and in pride—and if they could build their nests among the stars, the elect shall shortly be above them; they shall take their flight as high as Christ: here is a preferment worth looking after.

2. Magnificence. It is set out by gems and precious stones, the richest jewels. If the streets are of gold—what is the furniture and decorations! What is the cabinet of jewels! No wonder that "the violent take it by force!" Matthew 11:12. I rather wonder, why others are not more earnest for this inheritance. What are all the rarities of the world, compared to this! The coasts of pearl, the islands of spices, the rocks of diamonds! What a rich place must that needs be, where God will lay out his cost—where infinite wisdom contrives, and infinite bounty disburses!

Fulgentius, beholding the pomp and splendor of the Roman senate-house, cried out, "If the earthly senate-house is so glorious—O how beautiful is the celestial Jerusalem!" In this blessed inheritance there is nothing but glory. There is the king of glory; there are the vessels of glory; there are the thrones of glory; there is the weight of glory; there are the crowns of glory; there is the kingdom of glory; there is the brightness of glory! This is a purchase worth getting! What will not men adventure for a kingdom!

3. Purity. Heaven is set forth under the metaphor of "pure gold, and transparent glass," Revelation 21:11. The apostle calls it "an undefiled inheritance." Heaven is a pure place; it is compared to the sapphire, Revelation 21:19. The sapphire is a precious stone of a bright sky color, and it has a virtue in it, says Pliny, to preserve chasteness and purity. Thus heaven is represented by the sapphire; it is a place where only the refined pure spirits enter. Heaven is compared to the emerald, verse 19, which (as writers say) has a precious virtue to expel poison. Heaven is such a pure soil, that as no fever of lust, so no venom of malice shall be there. There shall not enter into it anything "which defiles," Revelation 21:27. It is a kingdom wherein "dwells righteousness," 2 Peter 3:13. In this lower earthly region, there is little righteousness; "They set up wickedness by a law," Psalms 94:20. The wicked devours his neighbor, "who is more righteous than he," Habakkuk 1:13. The just man is oppressed because he is just. One says, there is more justice to be found in hell—than upon earth. For in hell no innocent person is oppressed; but here on earth, righteousness is the thing that is persecuted. A man can hardly tread two steps—but either into sin or into suffering. In this world, the sinner need not fear any punitive vindictive act of justice; rather he who reproves sin may fear. Holiness is the mark which the Devil shoots at! But heaven is a kingdom wherein dwells righteousness; there is the judge of the world, "who puts on righteousness as a breastplate; who loves righteousness."

4. Peaceableness. The word Peace, comprehends all blessings. Peace is the glory of a kingdom: this white lily is the best flower of a prince's crown. How happy was the reign of Pompilius—when it was so peaceful, that the bees made their hives in the soldiers helmets! But where shall we find an uninterrupted peace upon earth? Either there are divisions at home, or wars abroad, the beating of the drums, the roaring of the cannons, the sounding of the trumpets. Solomon's kingdom was peaceable a while—but how soon had he an alarm given him! 1 Kings 11:14, "The Lord stirred up an adversary against him." How soon do the clouds of blood drop after a little

sunshine of peace! But the heavenly inheritance to come is peaceable. There is the "Prince of Peace"; there the saints enter into peace. The harp, in ancient times, was made the emblem of peace; in heaven there shall be the "voice of harpers harping." The saints in this life wear "garments rolled in blood"; but in a state of glory, they are said to wear "white robes," which shall not be stained with the blood of war any more! In heaven righteousness and peace shall kiss each other.

5. Amplitude. The inheritance is sufficiently spacious for all the saints. The garner is wide enough to receive all those infinite grains of wheat which shall be laid in it. Though there are innumerable companies of saints and angels in heaven—yet there is infinitely room enough to receive them: "In my Father's house are many mansions." Some are of opinion that every believer shall have a particular mansion in glory. "Every saint shall have his kingdom," says Jansenius. We know our Savior told his apostles that they would sit upon twelve thrones. Certainly the saints shall not be straitened for room. The world of glory is wide enough for the most sublime spirits to expatiate in!

6. Safety. It is an inheritance which the saints cannot be defrauded of; it is in safe hands. God keeps the inheritance for them, 1 Peter 1:4, and keeps them for the inheritance, 1 Peter 1:5, so that there can be no defalcation, nothing can hinder the saints from taking possession.

7. Light. It is called an inheritance "in light." If every star were a sun, it could never shadow out the bright luster of this celestial paradise. Light is a glorious creature; without light, what would all the world be—but a dark prison? What beauty is there in the sun when it is masked with a cloud? Light does actuate the colors, and makes every flower appear in its fresh beauty. Heaven is a bright body, all over embroidered with light. It is not like the starry heaven—here and there bespangled with stars—but other parts of it like chequer-work interwoven with darkness. Here Christ as a continual sun, shall give light to the whole heaven. "The Lamb shall be the light thereof!" Indeed all other light, in comparison of this, is but like the twilight, or rather the midnight. Here alone are the shining rays of beauty, which every glorified eye shall be enabled both to behold and to possess! This light shall have no night to eclipse or extinguish it; when once the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon the soul, it shall never set any more. This is a high privilege of the glory of heaven—that it is an inheritance in light. When the scripture would set forth the blessedness of God himself; it makes it consist in this, "He dwells in light."

8. Permanency. It is an incorruptible inheritance. It runs parallel with eternity. Eternity is a circle which has neither beginning nor end. Eternity is a sea which has neither bottom nor banks! This is the glory of the celestial paradise—it abides forever! If we could by our arithmetic reckon up more millions of ages than there have been minutes since the creation, after all this time (which were a short eternity) the inheritance of the saints shall be as far from ending as it was at the beginning. "This world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever." 1 John 2:17. Everything is fading away! It is good to look upon the world as the heathens did upon pleasure; they looked upon the back parts of pleasure, and saw it going away from them and leaving a sting. The world is fading away—but heaven never fades, therefore heaven's eminency is its permanency. With evil things, (such as pain and misery,) length of time makes them worse; but good things, (as joy and pleasure,) length of time makes them better! Heaven's eminency is its permanency. Things are prized and valued by the time we have in them. Lands or houses which are owned—are esteemed far better than leases, which soon expire. The

saints do not lease heaven; it is not their landlord's house—but their Father's house! This house never falls to decay; it is a mansion-house, John 14:2. There is nothing excellent (says Nazianzene) that is not perpetual. The comforts of the world are wavering and uncertain, like a fading garland; therefore they are shadowed out by the tabernacle, which was transient. But heaven is set out by the temple, which was fixed and permanent. It was made of strong materials, built with stone, covered with cedar, over-laid with gold. Eternity is the highest link of the saint's happiness! The believer shall be forever bathing in the pure and pleasant fountain of bliss! The lamp of glory shall be ever burning, never wasting. As there is no intermission in the joys of heaven, so no expiration. When once God has set his plants in the celestial paradise, he will never more pluck them up! He will never transplant them; never will Christ lose any member of this body; you may sooner separate light from the sun, than a glorified saint from Jesus Christ. O eternity, eternity! what a spring of delight will that be—which shall have no autumn! What a day will that be—which shall have no night! Methinks I see the morning-star appear, it is break of day already!

Concerning the glory of this blessed inheritance, let me super-add these four things.

1. The glory of heaven is ponderous and weighty. It is called "a weight of glory," 2 Corinthians 4:17. God must make us able to bear it. This weight of glory should make sufferings light: this weight should make us throw away the weights of sin—though they be golden weights! Who would for the indulging of a lust, forfeit so glorious an inheritance! Lay the whole world in scales with it—it is lighter than vanity!

2. The glory of heaven is infinitely satisfying. There is neither lack, nor excess. This can be said properly of nothing but heaven. You who court the world for honor and preferment, remember what the creature says concerning satisfaction, "It is not in me!" Heaven alone, is commensurate to the vast desires of the soul. Here the Christian cries out in a divine ecstasy, "I have enough, my Savior, I have enough!" "You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand!" Psalms 16:11. "You feed them from the abundance of your own house, letting them drink from your rivers of delight!" Psalms 36:8. Not drops—but rivers! These only can quench the thirst. Every day in heaven, shall be a feast! There is no lack at this feast! There shall excellency shine in its perfection. This present world is but a jail, the body is the fetter with which the soul is bound. If there is anything in a jail to delight—what is the eternal palace and the throne! If we meet with any comfort in Mount Horeb, what is in Mount Zion! All the world is like a picture of a landscape; you may see orchards and gardens curiously drawn in the landscape—but you cannot enter into them. But you may enter into this heavenly paradise, 2 Peter 1:11, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom," etc. Here is soul-satisfaction.

3. Though an innumerable company of saints and angels have a part in this inheritance, there is never the less for you. Another man's beholding the sun, does not make me to have the lesser light: thus will it be in glory. Usually here on earth, all the inheritance is divided among the several heirs—some are put off with smaller portions. In heaven all the saints are heirs; the youngest believer is an heir, and God has land enough to give to all his heirs. All the angels and archangels have their portion paid out; yet a believer shall never have the less. Is not Christ the heir of all things? Hebrews 1:2, and the saints co-heirs? Romans 8:17. They share with Christ in the same glory. It is true, one vessel may hold more than another—but every vessel shall be full.

4. The souls of the elect shall enter upon possession immediately after death! 2 Corinthians 5:8, "We are willing rather to be absent from the body—and to be present with the Lord." There is an immediate transition and passage from death—to glory, "the soul returns to God who gave it." Christ's resurrection was before his ascension; but the saints' ascension is before their resurrection. The body may be compared to the bubble in the water, the soul to the wind that fills it; you see the bubble rises higher and higher, at last it breaks into the open air; so the body is but like a bubble, which rises from infancy to youth, from youth to age, higher and higher; at last this bubble breaks, and dissolves into dust, and the spirit ascends into the open air—it returns unto God who gave it. Be of good comfort, we shall not wait long for our inheritance. It is but winking—and we shall see God. O the glory of this paradise! When we are turned out of all, let us think of this inheritance which is to come; faith itself is not able to reach it! It is more than we can hope for—or even imagine! I may say of this celestial paradise, as once the children of Dan said of Laish, Judges 18:9-10. "We have seen the land, and behold it is very good; a place where there is no lack of anything." Faith being sent out as a spy to search the land of promise, returns this answer, "There is no lack of anything." There can be no lack where Christ is, who is "all in all," Colossians 3:11. In heaven there is health without sickness, plenty without famine, riches without poverty, life without death. There is unspotted purity, unstained honor, unparalleled beauty. There is the tree of life in the midst of paradise; there is the river which waters the garden; there is the vine flourishing, and the pomegranates budding, Cant. 6:11. There is the banqueting house, where are all those delicacies and rarities, with which God himself is delighted. While we are sitting at that table, Christ's "spikenard will send forth its fragrance," Cant. 1:12. There is the bed of love, there are the curtains of Solomon, there are the mountains of spices, and the streams from Lebanon! There are the cherubim, not to keep us out—but to welcome us into paradise! There shall the saints be adorned, as a bride with gems of glory! There will God give us abundantly, "infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope for!" Ephesians 3:20. Is not this enough? What more could we ask for!

Haman's aspiring heart could have asked not only the king's royal robe, and the ring from his hand—but the crown from his head too. A man can ask for million of worlds—but in heaven God will give us more than we can ask; nay, more than we can ever imagine! We could imagine—what if all the dust of the earth were turned to silver; what if every stone were a wedge of gold; what if every flower were a ruby; what if every blade of grass were a pearl; what if every sand in the sea were a diamond! Yet all this is nothing—compared to the glory of heaven! It is as impossible for any man in his deepest thoughts, to comprehend glory, as it would be for him to measure the heavens with a ruler; or drain the great ocean with a thimble. O incomparable place!

Methinks our souls should be big with longing for this blessed inheritance! All this that I have told you of heaven, may make you say as Monica, Augustine's mother, "What am I doing here? Why is my soul held with the earthen fetter of this flesh?" Cleombrotus having read Plato's piece of the immortality of the soul, being ravished with desire of those golden delights in the other world, killed himself. Though we must not break prison—until God opens it—yet how should we long for delivery from this earthly jail! How should we be inflamed with desire to taste of those rare and sweet delicacies, which are above at God's right hand! O what madness is it for men to spin out their time, and tire out their strength—in pursuing the vanities of this world! This is to imitate Dionysius, who busied himself in catching flies!

Surely, were we "carried away in the Spirit," I mean, elevated by the power of faith—to the contemplation of this royal and stately palace of glory—I know not whether we should more wonder at the luster of heaven, or at the dullness of such as mind earthly things. The world adored—though is but a painted pageant or shadow! It is reported of Caesar, that traveling through a certain city, as he passed along, he saw the women, for the most part, playing with monkeys and parrots; at which sight he said, "What! have they no children to play with!" So I say, when I see men toying with these earthly and beggarly vanities, "What! are there not more glorious and sublime things to mind!" That which our Savior said to the woman of Samaria, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, Give me to drink, you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water!" The same may I say, did men know these eternal mansions, and what it were to be digging in these rich mines of glory. Would God give them a vision of heaven a while, as he did Peter, who saw "heaven opened," Acts 10:11, how would they fall into a trance, (being amazed and filled with joy!) and being a little recovered out of it, how importunately would they beg of God, that they might be adopted into this stately inheritance! But why do I expatiate? these things are unspeakable and full of glory. Had I as many tongues as hairs on my head, I could never sufficiently set forth the beauty and resplendency of this blissful inheritance! Such was the curious art of Apelles in drawing of pictures, that if another had taken up the pencil to touch up the painting, he would have spoiled all Apelles' work. Such is the excellency of this celestial paradise, that if the angels should take up their pencil to delineate it in its colors, they would but stain and eclipse the glory of it. I have given you only the dark shadow the picture, and that but crudely and imperfectly! Such is the beauty and bliss of this inheritance, that as Chrysostom says, "if it were possible that all the sufferings of the saints could be laid upon one man—it would not compare with his being in heaven for one hour!"

Some of the learned are of opinion, that we shall know our friends in heaven. This seem very probable to me—for surely our knowledge there shall not be eclipsed or diminished, but increased. And that which Anselm asserts—that we shall have a knowledge of the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, all that were before us, and shall be after us, our predecessors and successors, to me seems very rational. For society without acquaintance is not comfortable, and methinks the scripture does hint this much. If Peter and James, having but a glimpse of glory, (when our Lord was transfigured on the mount), were able to know Moses and Elijah, whom they had never seen before; how much more shall we, being infinitely irradiated and enlightened with the Sun of Righteousness, know all the saints, though we were never acquainted with them before! This will be very comfortable. Certainly there will be nothing lacking—which may complete the saints' happiness!

Now that this glorious inheritance is the saints' privilege, I shall evince by two arguments.

1. It is so—in respect of the many OBLIGATIONS which lie upon God for performing this. As,

1. In regard of his promise, Titus 1:2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, has promised." God's promise is better than any man's bond.

2. In regard of his oath. "He who is truth has sworn." Hebrews 6:17.

3. In regard to the price that is paid for it—Christ's blood. Heaven is not only a promised possession—but a purchased possession, Ephesians 1:14.

4. In regard of Christ's prayer for it: "Father, I will that they also whom you have given me, be with me where I am." Now God can deny Christ nothing, being his only favorite. "I know you always hear me," John 11:42.

5. In regard of Christ's ascension. He is gone before us to take possession of heaven for us. He is now making preparations for our coming; John 14:2, "I go before to prepare a place for you." We read that our Lord sent two of his disciples to prepare "a large upper room for the Passover," Mark 14:15. Just so has Jesus Christ gone before—to prepare a large upper room in heaven for the saints.

6. In regard of the dwelling of the Spirit in the hearts of the godly, giving them an assurance of heaven; and stirring up in them passionate desires after this glorious inheritance. Hence it is, we read of the pledge of the Spirit, 2 Corinthians 1:22, and the first-fruits of the Spirit, Romans 8:23, and the seal of the Spirit, Ephesians 1:13. God does not still his children with rattles. Heaven is already begun in a believer, so that the inheritance is certain. You see how many obligations lie upon God, and to speak with reverence, it stands not only upon God's mercy—but upon his faithfulness to make all this good to us!

2. The second argument is in respect of the UNION which the saints have with Jesus Christ. They are members of Christ, therefore they must have a part in this blessed inheritance. The member must be where the head is. Indeed the Arminians tell us that a justified person may fall finally from grace, and so his union with Christ may be dissolved, and the inheritance lost. But how absurd is this doctrine! Is Christ divided? can he lose a member of his body? then his body is not perfect; for how can that body be perfect which lacks a limb? If Christ might lose one member from his body—he might lose all! And so he would be a head without a body. But be assured, the union with Christ cannot be broken, John 17:12, and the inheritance cannot be lost. What was said of Christ's natural body, is as true of the mystical body: "a bone of it shall not be broken." See how every bone and limb of Christ's natural body was raised up out of the grave, and carried into heaven. Just so, shall every member of his mystical body, joined to him by the eternal Spirit, be carried up into glory. Fear not, O you saints, neither sin nor Satan can dissolve your union with Christ, nor hinder you from going to that blessed place where your Head is.

Question. Here it will be asked, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" Psalms 24:3. Who shall be a citizen of this new Jerusalem which is above?

Answer. The new creature: this you read of, 2 Corinthians 5:17. This new creature does prepare us for the new Jerusalem. This is the divine and curious artifice of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, forming Christ in us. The same Holy Spirit who overshadowed the Virgin Mary, and formed the human nature of Christ in her womb—does work and produce this new creature. O blessed man and woman—in whom this new creature is formed! I may say to you, as the angel to Mary, "That which is conceived in you, is of the Holy Spirit!" Of all God's creatures, the new creature is the best.

Let me ask—are you a new creature? are you a branch cut off from the wild olive tree of nature, and ingrafted into a new stock, the tree of life? Has God defaced and dismantled the old man in you? Does some limb drop off every day? Have you a new heart? Until then you are not fit for the new heaven! Are you new all over? Do you have a new eye to discern the things that differ? Do

you have a new appetite? Does the pulse of your soul beat after Christ? It is only the new creature, who shall be the heir of the New Jerusalem. When you were sailing to hell, (for we have both wind and tide to carry us there), have the north and south winds awaked? Has the gale of the Spirit blown upon you, and turned your course? Are you now sailing to a new port? Has the seal of the Scripture stamped a new and heavenly print upon you? Then I am speaking all this while to you; this blessed inheritance is entailed upon you! But if you are an old unrepenting sinner, expect that heaven should be kept, as paradise, with a flaming sword—that you may not enter! Be assured, God will never put the new wine of glory, into an old musty bottle. Heaven is not like Noah's ark, which received both clean and unclean animals into it! Nor is heaven like Pharaoh's court, where the vermin came! This inheritance does not receive all comers. It is only the wheat, which goes into Christ's garner; what has the chaff to do there! This inheritance is only for "those who are sanctified," Acts 20:32. Is your heart consecrated ground? We read that in the time of Ezra, after the return of the people from the captivity, some who were ambitious for the priesthood, sought the writings of the genealogies—but they were not found among the numbers of the priests, "therefore they were put aside as polluted, from the priesthood." So whoever they are, who think to have a part in this blessed place, if their names be not found; that is, if they are not enrolled among the new creatures, they shall be put away from this inheritance, as polluted!

Chapter 10. The Fifth Royal Privilege—our KNOWLEDGE shall be clear.

Knowledge is a beautiful thing; such was Adam's ambition to know more, that by tasting the tree of knowledge, he lost the tree of life. In heaven our knowledge shall be full and clear. Many things we have now but in the notion, which then we shall see perfectly; now, "we know but in part." The best Christian has a veil on his eye, as the Jews have upon their heart; hereafter the veil shall be taken off. Here on earth, we see through a glass darkly—in a riddle, mystery; then, we shall see face to face; that is, clearly.

There are five mysteries which God will clear up to us when we are in heaven.

1. The great mystery of the TRINITY. This we know but in part. Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, where one makes three, and three make but one: this is bad arithmetic—but good divinity. We have but dark conceptions of it: it is a mystery so deep, that we may soon wade beyond our depth.

Augustine being to write his books of the Trinity, was taught modesty by a child, who was attempting to empty the sea into a little spoon; to whom Augustine said, that he labored in vain; for his little spoon would not contain the sea. To whom the child answered, "my little spoon will sooner hold this vast ocean, than your shallow brain can contain the depth of the Trinity!" How little a portion is known of God! If Job asked the question, "who can understand the thunder?" We may much more ask, "who can understand the Trinity?" But in heaven we shall see God as he is, that is, perfectly.

Question. But shall every saint enjoy God so perfectly, that he shall have the same knowledge that God has?

Answer. We shall have a full knowledge of God—but not know him fully—yet we shall take in so much of God as our human nature is capable of; it will be a bright and glorious knowledge. Here on earth, we know him but by his power, wisdom, mercy—we see but his back-parts; there we shall see him face to face.

2. The mystery of the INCARNATION. Christ assuming our human nature, and marrying it to the divine. Therefore called God-man, God with us. A mystery which the angels in heaven adore. God said, "The man has become as one of us," Genesis 3:22—but now we may say, God himself is become as one of us! There was nothing within the sphere of natural causes to produce it. The incarnation of Christ is a golden chain made up of several links of miracles. For instance, that the Creator of heaven should become a creature; that eternity should be born; that he whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, should be enclosed in the womb; that he who thunders in the clouds, should cry in the cradle; that he who rules the stars, should suck the breasts; that he who upholds all things by the word of his power, should himself be upheld; that a virgin should conceive; that Christ should be made of a woman, and of that woman which himself made; that the creature should give a being to the Creator; that the star should give light to the sun; that the branch should bear the vine; that the mother should be younger than the child she bore; and the child in the womb bigger than the mother; that he who is a Spirit, should be made flesh; that Christ should be without father, and without mother—yet have both; without mother in the God-head, without father in the manhood; that Christ being incarnate, should have two natures, (the divine and human), and yet but one person; that the divine nature should not be infused into the human, nor the human mixed with the divine—yet assumed into the person of the Son of God; the human nature not God—yet one with God. Here is, I say, a chain of miracles.

I acknowledge the mercy of the incarnation was great, we having now both affinity and consanguinity with Jesus Christ: Christ's incarnation is the saint's inauguration. The love of Christ in the incarnation was great; for herein he did set a pattern without a parallel. In clothing himself with our flesh, which is but walking ashes, he has sewed, as it were, sackcloth to cloth of gold—the humanity to the Deity. But though the incarnation is so rich a blessing—yet it is hard to say which is the greater, the mercy or the mystery. It is a sacred depth—how does it transcend reason, and even puzzle faith! We know but in part, we see this only in a glass darkly—but in heaven our knowledge shall be cleared up, we shall fully understand this divine riddle!

3. The mystery of SCRIPTURE. The hard knots of scripture shall be untied, and dark prophecies fulfilled. There is a sacred depth in scripture which we must adore: some places of scripture are hard in the sense, others dark in the phrase, and cannot well be translated in regard of ambiguity; one Hebrew word having such various, and sometimes contrary significations, that it is very difficult to know which is the genuine sense. As it is with a traveler who is not skilled in his way, when he comes to a turning where the way parts, he is at a standstill, and knows not which of the ways to take; such difficulties and labyrinths are there in scripture. It is true, all things purely necessary to salvation, are clear in the word of God; but there are some sacred depths that we cannot fathom, and this may make us long after heaven, when our light shall be clear.

Just so for prophecies, some are very abstruse and profound; divines may shoot their arrows—but it is hard to say how near they may come to the mark: it is dubious whether in such a particular age and century of the church, such a prophecy was fulfilled. The Jews have a saying when they meet with a hard scripture they don't understand, "Elijah will come and interpret these things to us." We do not expect Elijah; but when we are in heaven, we shall understand prophecies; our knowledge shall be clear.

4. The great mystery of PROVIDENCE shall be cleared up. Providence is the queen of the world; it is the hand which turns all the wheels in the universe! Chrysostom calls it "the pilot which steers the ship of the creation." Providences are often dark; God sometimes writes in short-hand. The characters of providence are so various and strange, and our eyes are so dim, that we know not what to make of providence. Hence we are ready to censure that which we do not understand. We think that things are very eccentric and disorderly; God's providence is some times secret—but always wise. The dispensations of providence are often sad, "Judgment beginning at the house of God," and the "just man perishing in his righteousness," Ecclesiastes 7:15; that is, while he is pursuing a righteous cause. Though his way be pious, it is not always prosperous. On the other side, "those who do evil get rich, and those who dare God to punish them go free of harm," Malachi 3:15.

Though now our candle is in a dark lantern, and the people of God cannot tell what God is a doing—yet when they are in heaven they shall see the reason of these transactions: they shall see that every providence served for the fulfilling of God's promise, namely, "That all things shall work together for good," Romans 8:28. In a watch the wheels seem to move contrary one to another—but all carry on the motion of the watch, all serve to make the watch work properly. Just so, the wheels of providence seem to move contrary—but all shall carry on the good of the elect; all the lines shall meet at last in the center of the promise. In heaven, as we shall see mercy and justice, so we shall see promises and providences kissing each other. Our light shall be clear. When a man is at the bottom of a hill, he cannot see very far; but when he is on the top, he may see many miles distant. Here on earth, the saints of God are in the valley of tears, they are at the bottom of the hill, and cannot tell what God is a doing. But when they come to heaven, and shall be on the top of the mount, they shall see all the glorious transactions of God's providence; never a providence but they shall see either a wonder or a mercy enrap't up in it. A painter first makes a crude draught in the picture—here an eye, there a hand; but when he has painted it out in all its parts and lineaments, and laid them in their colors—it is beautiful to behold. We who live in this age of the church, see but a crude draught, as it were some dark pieces of God's providence represented; and it is impossible that we should be able to correctly judge of God's work, by pieces. But when we come to heaven, and see the full body and portraiture of God's providence drawn out in its lively colors, it will be a most glorious sight to behold! Providence shall be unriddled!

5. The mystery of HEARTS. We shall see a heart-anatomy. "For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil." Ecclesiastes 12:14. We shall see the designs and cabinet-counsels of men's hearts revealed; then the hypocrite's mask shall fall off. Oh the black conclave that is in the heart of man! The heart is deep: it may be compared to a river which has fair streams running on the top—but when this river comes to be drained, there lies abundance of vermin at the bottom. Thus it is with man's heart, there are fair streams running on the top—a civil life, a religious profession; but at the day of judgment, when God shall drain this river, and unveil hearts; then all the vermin of ambition, lust, and covetousness shall appear—all shall come out! Then we shall see whether Jehu's design was zeal for God, or the kingdom. We shall see clearly whether Jezebel had more mind to keep a fast, or to get Naboth's vineyard. Then we shall see whether Herod had more mind to worship Christ, or to worry him. All the secrets of men's hearts shall be laid open! Methinks it would be worth dying to see this sight. We shall then

see who is the Achan, who is the Judas. The women's paint falls off from their faces when they come near the fire. Just so, before the scorching heat of God's justice, the hypocrite's paint will drop off, and the hidden motives of his heart will be visible! These mysteries will God reveal to us—our knowledge shall be clear.

Chapter 11. The Sixth Royal Privilege—our LOVE shall be perfect. Love is the jewel with which Christ's bride is adorned. In one sense, love is more excellent than faith; for love never ceases, 1 Corinthians 13:8. The spouse shall put off her jewel of faith, when she goes to heaven—but she shall never put off her jewel of love. Her love shall be perfect.

1. Our love to GOD shall be perfect. The saint's love shall be joined with reverence; for a filial disposition shall remain—but there shall be no servile fear in heaven. Horror and trembling is proper to the damned in hell; though in heaven there shall be a reverencing fear—yet a rejoicing fear: we shall see that in God which will work such a delight that we cannot but love him! This love to God shall be,

1. A FERVENT love. Our love to God in this life, is rather a faint desire—but in heaven the smoke of desire shall be blown up into a flame of love. We shall love God with an intenseness of love, and thus the saints shall be like the seraphim who are so called, from their burning. Here on earth, our love is lukewarm, and sometimes frozen: a child of God weeps that he can love God no more. But there is a time shortly coming, when our love to God shall be fervent, it shall burn as hot as it can! The damned shall be in a flame of fire, the elect in a flame of love!

2. A FIXED love. Alas, how soon is our love taken off from God! Other objects presenting themselves, steal away our love. "Your goodness is like a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goes away": in the morning you shall see the grass covered with drops of dew, as so many pearls—but before noon all is vanished; so it is with our love to God. Perhaps at a sermon, when our affections are stirred, the heart melts in love; and at a sacrament, when we see Christ's blood, as it were, trickling down upon the cross, some love-drops fall from our heart; but within a few days all is vanished, and we have lost our first love: this is matter of humiliation while we live. But O you saints, comfort yourselves, in heaven your love shall be fixed, as well as fervent; it shall never more be taken off from God! Such beauty and excellency shall shine in God, that as a divine magnet, it will be always drawing your eyes and heart after him.

2. Our love to the SAINTS shall be perfect. Love is a sweet harmony, a tuning and chiming together of affections.

1. It is our duty to love the saints—though they are of bad dispositions; sometimes their nature is so abrasive and unpolished, that grace does not cast forth such a luster. It is like a gold ring on a leprous hand, or a diamond set in iron. Yet if there is anything of Christ—it is our duty to love it.

2. It is our duty to love the saints—though they in some things differ from us. Yet if we see Christ's image or portraiture drawn upon their hearts, we are to separate the precious from the vile. But alas, how defective is this grace! how little love is there among God's people! Herod and Pilate can agree: wicked men unite when saints divide. Contentions were never more hot, love never more cold. Many there are whose music consists all in discord; they pretend to love truth—but hate peace. Divisions are Satan's powder-plot to blow up religion.

It would not be strange to hear the harlot say, "Let the child be divided;" but to hear the mother say so, this is sad! If pope, cardinal, Jesuit, all conspire against the church of God, it would not be strange; but for one saint to persecute another—this is strange! For a wolf to worry a lamb is usual—but for a lamb to worry a lamb is unnatural. For Christ's lily to be among the thorns, is ordinary; but for this lily to become a thorn, to tear and fetch blood—this is strange! How will Christ take this at our hands! Would he not have his coat rent, and will he have his body rent! O that I could speak here weeping!

Well, this will be a bright foil to set off heaven the more—there is a time shortly coming when our love shall be perfect, there shall be no difference of judgment in heaven; there the saints shall be all of one mind. Though we fall out along the way—we shall all agree in the journey's end. The cherubim, representing the angels, are set out "with their faces looking one upon another"; in this life Christians turn their backs one upon another—but in heaven they shall be like the cherubim with their faces looking one upon another.

It is observed that the olive tree and the myrtle tree have a wonderful sympathy, and if they grow near together, will mutually embrace, and twist about each others roots and branches. Christians in this life are like tearing brambles—but in heaven they shall be like the olive and myrtle—and sweetly embrace one another! When once the blessed harp of Christ's voice has sounded in the ears of the saints, the evil spirit shall be quite driven away! When our strings shall be wound up to the highest pitch of glory, you shall never more hear discord in the saints' music! In heaven there shall be a perfect harmony!

Chapter 12. The Seventh Royal Privilege—the resurrection of our bodies. Trajan's ashes after death were brought to Rome and honored, being set upon the top of a famous pillar. So the ashes of the saints at the resurrection shall be honored, and shine as silver dust! This is an article of our faith. Now for the illustration of this, there are three things considerable: 1. That there is such a thing as the resurrection. 2. That this is not yet past. 3. That the same body that dies, shall rise again.

1. I shall prove the proposition that there is a resurrection of the body. There are some of the Sadducees of opinion that there is no resurrection; then "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," 1 Corinthians 15:32. To what purpose are all our prayers and tears? and indeed it were well for them who are in their lifetime as brute beasts, if it might be with them as beasts after death. But there is a resurrection of the body, as well as an ascension of the soul; which I shall prove by two arguments.

1. Because Christ is risen, therefore we must rise. The head being raised, the rest of the body shall not always lie in the grave, for then it would be a head without a body. His rising is a pledge of our resurrection, 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

2. In regard of justice and equity. The bodies of the wicked have been weapons of unrighteousness, and have joined with the soul in sin! Their eyes have been a casement to let in vanity! Their hands have been full of bribes! Their feet have been swift to shed blood! Therefore justice and equity require that they should rise again, and their bodies be punished with their souls!

Again, the bodies of the saints have been members of holiness! Their eyes have dropped down tears for sin! Their hands have relieved the poor! Their tongues have been trumpets of God's

praise. Therefore justice and equity require that they should rise again, that their bodies as well as their souls may be crowned!

There must be a resurrection, else how should there be a remuneration? We are more sure to rise out of our graves—than out of our beds! The bodies of the wicked are locked up in the grave as in a prison, that they may not infest the church of God; and at the day of judgment they shall be brought out of the prison to trial. And the bodies of the saints are laid in the grave as in a bed of perfume, where they mellow and ripen until the resurrection. Noah's olive tree springing after the flood, the blossoming of Aaron's dry rod, the flesh and sinews coming to Ezekiel's dry bones—what were these, but lively emblems of the resurrection!

Part 2 cont'd

2. That this resurrection is not yet past. Some hold that it is past, and make the resurrection to be nothing else but regeneration, which is called a rising from sin, and a "being risen with Christ"; and do affirm, that there is no other resurrection but this, and that only the soul is with God in happiness, not the body. Of this opinion were Hymeneus and Philetus, 2 Timothy 2:18. But the rising from sin is called the first resurrection, Revelation 1:6, which implies that there is a second resurrection; and that second I shall prove out of Daniel 12:2. "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake." He does not say they are already awake—but they shall awake. And John 5:28, "The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; those who have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Observe, Christ does not say, they have come forth of the grave already—but they shall come forth.

Here a question may be moved, Whether the bodies of some of the saints are not in heaven already? then it will seem that their resurrection is not yet to come; as we read that Elijah was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot; and Enoch, Hebrews 11:5, "was translated, that he might not see death."

Answer. I know the question is controverted among divines. Should it be granted that they are bodily in heaven, by an extraordinary writ, or dispensation from God—this does not at all disprove a general resurrection to come. But there are some reasons do incline me to think that Enoch and Elijah are not yet bodily in heaven, nor shall be until the resurrection of all flesh, when the rest of the elect, like a precious crop, being fully ripe, shall be translated into glory. The first is Hebrews 11:13, where it is said, "these all died in faith," where Enoch was included: now why we should restrain this word, these, only to Abel, Noah, Abraham, and not also to Enoch, I see no rational ground.

Question. But is it not said, he was translated, "that he might not see death"; how can these two stand together, that Enoch died—yet he did not see death?

Answer. These words, that he might not see death, I conceive (with some other divines) the meaning is, that he might not see it in that painful and horrid manner as others: his soul had an easy and joyful passage out of his body; he died not after the common manner of men. Seeing and feeling are often in scripture—the one is put for the other.

2. My second argument is, 1 John 3:2 : "We know when he shall appear, we shall be like him." We read in scripture but of two appearings of Christ, his appearing in the flesh, and his appearing at the day of judgment. Now his appearing in this text, must needs be meant of his last appearing: and what then? "We shall be like him," that is, in our bodies, Php 3:21. The spirits of just men being already made perfect, Hebrews 12:23, whence I infer, Enoch is not yet ascended bodily into heaven, because none of the bodies of the saints shall be fully made like Christ until his second appearing.

3. Besides this, may be added the judgment of many of the Fathers, who were pious and learned. It is not probable that Enoch and Elijah should be taken up in their bodies into heaven, says Peter Martyr; and he urges that saying of our Lord, "No man has ascended into heaven"; (that is, physically) "but the Son of man that descended from heaven." Of this opinion also is the learned Doctor Fulk, who in his marginal notes upon the 11th to the Hebrews, has this descant: "It appears not," says he, "that Enoch now lives in the body, no more than Moses; but that he was translated by God out of the world, and died not after the common manner of men." And concerning Elijah, the same author has this passage: "It is evident that he was taken up alive; but not that he continues alive." And again, "Because we read expressly, that he was taken up into heaven, 2 Kings 2:1, it is certain" (says he) "that his body was not carried into heaven." Christ being the first that in perfect humanity ascended there, 1 Corinthians 15:20, "Christ has become the first fruits of those who sleep." He is called the first fruits, not only because he was the most excellent, and sanctified the rest—but because he was the first cluster which was gathered; the first that went up in a physical manner into the place of the blessed: hence we see that the resurrection is yet to come.

3. At the resurrection every soul shall have its own body. The same body that dies, shall arise. Some hold that the soul shall be clothed with a new body—but then it were improper to call it a resurrection of the body, it should be rather a creation. It was a custom in the African churches to say, I believe the resurrection of this body. I confess, the doctrine of the resurrection is such, that it is too deep for reason to wade: you must let faith swim. For instance, suppose a man dying is cast into the sea, several fish come and devour him, the substance of his body goes into these fishes, afterwards, these fish are taken and eaten, and the substance of these fishes go into several men. Now how this body, thus devoured, and as it were, crumbled into a thousand fractions, should be raised the same individual body, is infinitely above reason to imagine; we have scarcely faith enough to believe it.

Question. How can this be?

Answer. To such I say as our blessed Savior, Matthew 22:19, "You are in error—not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."

1. You are in error—not knowing the scriptures. The scripture tells us expressly that the same body that dies shall rise again; Job 19:26, "In my flesh shall I see God," not in another flesh. And verse 27, Job 19:27, "My eyes shall behold him," not other eyes. So 1 Corinthians 15:53, "This mortal shall put on immortality," not another mortal—but this mortal, and, 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." Not in another body. Death in scripture is called a sleep. It is far easier with God to raise the body, than it is for us to awaken a man when he is asleep!

2. You are in error—not knowing the power of God. That God, who created all things out of nothing—can he not reduce many things to one thing? When the body is gone into a thousand substances, cannot he make a compilation, and bring that body together again? The chemist can, out of several metals mingled together—as gold, silver, and tin—extract the one from the other, the silver from the gold, the tin from the silver, and can reduce every metal to its own kind? And shall we not much more believe that when our bodies are mingled and confounded with other

substances, the wise God is able to make a divine extraction, and reinvest every soul with its own body!

Use 1. This is comfort to a child of God. As Christ said to Martha, John 11:23, "Your brother shall rise again," so I say to you, your body shall rise again. The body is sensible of joy as well as the soul; and indeed, we shall not be perfect in glory until our bodies are reunited to our souls. Therefore in scripture, the doctrine of the resurrection is made matter of joy and triumph! Isaiah 26:19, "Yet we have this assurance: Those who belong to God will live; their bodies will rise again! Those who sleep in the earth will rise up and sing for joy!" Death is as it were the fall of the leaf—but our bodies shall flourish as a herb, in the spring of the resurrection. That body which is mouldered to dust shall revive.

Sometimes the saints sow the land with their bodies, Psalms 142:7, and water it with their blood, Psalms 79:3. But these bodies, whether imprisoned, beheaded, sawn asunder—shall arise and sit down with Christ upon the throne! O consider what joy there will be at the reuniting of the body and soul at the resurrection! As there will be a sad meeting of the body and soul of the wicked, they shall be joined together as briars, to scratch and tear one another; so, what unspeakable joy will there be at the meeting together of the soul and body of the saints—how will they greet one another (they two being the nearest acquaintance that ever were). What a welcome will the soul give to the body! "O blessed body, you allowed yourself to be martyred, and crucified, you were kept under control by watchings, fastings, etc. When I prayed, you attended my prayers with hands lifted up, and knees bowed down. You were willing to suffer with me, and now you shall reign with me! Cheer up, my dear friend; you were sown as seed in the dust of the earth with ignominy—but now are raised a spiritual body. O my dear body, I will enter into you again as a heavenly sparkle, and you shall clothe me again as a glorious vestment!"

Use. 2. It shows the great love and respect God bears to the weakest believer; God will not glorify the bodies of his dearest and most eminent saints, not the patriarchs or prophets, not the body of Moses or Elijah, until you rise out of your grave. God is like a master of a feast that stays until all his guests are come. Abraham, the father of the faithful, must not sit down in heaven until all his children are born, and the body of every saint perfectly mellow and ripe for the resurrection.

3. If the bodies of the saints must arise—then consecrate your bodies to the service of God! These bodies must be made one with Christ's body. The Apostle makes this use of the doctrine of the resurrection, 1 Corinthians 6:14, "And God will raise our bodies from the dead by his marvelous power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead." There is the doctrine. "Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which belongs to Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never!" Verse 15; There is the use. It is enough for wicked men to adulterate and defile their bodies. The drunkard makes his body a tunnel for the wine and liquor to run through. The epicure makes his body a living tomb to bury the good creatures of God. The adulterer makes his body a slave to his lust. The body is called a vessel in scripture; these vessels will be found musty at the resurrection, fit only to hold that wine which you read of, Psalms 75:8, "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red"; this is the wine of God's wrath. It is enough for those bodies to be defiled, which shall be joined to the devil! But you who are believers, that expect your bodies shall be joined with Christ's body, oh cleanse these vessels! Take heed of putting your bodies to any impure services. Present your bodies a living sacrifice, Romans 12:1. Have a care to

guard all the passages which sin might come in at. Sometimes the devil comes in at the eye; therefore Job made a covenant with his eyes. Sometimes sin goes out at the tongue; therefore David set a watch before his lips. Surely those who have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, that is, the guilt of known sin, will have a care to have their bodies washed with clean water.

Part 3

The Christian's Charter Showing the Privileges of a Believer by Thomas Watson "All things are yours!"

1 Corinthians 3:21

Chapter 13. The eighth Royal Privilege—The bodies of the saints shall be enameled with glory! "So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body! For our perishable earthly bodies must be transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die!" 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 1 Corinthians 15:53. In this life the body is infirm, physicians have much work to repair it and keep it going! It is like a house out of repair—every storm of sickness it rains through. How does a holy soul often lodge in a sickly or deformed body! The body is like a piece of rotten wood, diseases like worms, breed there. Fevers, aches, etc. But this body shall be made glorious at the resurrection; it shall neither have diseases nor defects! Leah shall no more complain of her bleary eyes, nor Barzillai of his lameness. There are five properties of our glorified bodies.

1. They shall be AGILE and nimble. The bodies of the saints on earth are heavy and weary in their motion—but in heaven there shall be no gravity hindering; but our bodies being refined, shall be swift and facile in their motion, and made fit to ascend, as the body of Elijah. This is the apostle's meaning when he calls it a spiritual body; that is not only a body made fit to serve God without weariness—but a body that can move swiftly from one place to another. In this life the body is a great hindrance to the soul in its operation: "The spirit is willing—but the flesh is weak." When the soul would fly up to Christ, the body as a leaden lump keeps it down. Here on earth, the body is a clog; in heaven it shall be a wing. The bodies of the saints shall be agile and lively, they shall be made fully subject to the soul, and will in no way, impede or hinder the soul in its progress.

2. The bodies of the saints shall be transparent, full of clarity and BRIGHTNESS. They shall be as Christ's body when it was transfigured, Matthew 17:2. Our bodies shall have a divine luster put upon them! Here on earth, they are as iron when it is rusty; there they shall be as iron when it is filed and made bright, as the sun in its splendor; nay, "seven times brighter!" says Chrysostom. Here on earth, our bodies are as the gold in the ore—drossy and impure. In heaven they shall be as gold when it sparkles and glitters! So clear shall they be, that the soul may venture out at every part, and sparkle through the body as the wine through the glass.

3. They shall be BEAUTIFUL. Beauty consists in two things.

1. Symmetry and proportion, when all the parts are drawn out in their perfect lineaments.

2. Complexion, when there is a mixture and variety in the colors. Thus the bodies of the saints shall have a transcendency of beauty upon them. Here on earth, the body is called a vile body. It is

vile in its origin—it is made of the dust of the earth. The earth is the most ignoble element. The body is also vile in the use that it is put to; the soul often uses the body as a weapon to fight against God. But this vile body shall be ennobled and beautified with glory; it shall be made like Christ's body!

How beautiful was Christ's body upon earth! In it there was the rose and the lily; it was a mirror of beauty! For all deformities of body issue immediately from sin—but Christ being conceived by the Holy Spirit, and so without sin, he must needs have a beautiful body, and in this sense he was fairer than the children of men, Psalms 45:2. There was graceful majesty in his looks. Christ's body, as some writers aver, was so fair by reason of the beauty and grace which shined in it, that no artist could ever draw it exactly. And if it was so glorious a body on earth, how great is the luster of it now in heaven! That light which shone upon Paul, "surpassing the glory of the sun," was no other than the beauty of Christ's body in heaven. O then what beauty and resplendency will be put upon the bodies of the saints! they shall be made "like Christ's glorious body."

4. The bodies of the saints shall be **IMPECCABLE**. Not but that the body when it is glorified, shall have such a passion as is delightful, (for the body is capable of joy) but it will have no passion which is hurtful; it shall not be capable of any noxious impression; in particular,

1. The bodies of the saints shall be free from the **NECESSITIES** of nature, such as hunger and thirst. Here on earth, we are pinched with hunger: "David waxed faint," 2 Samuel 21:15. Here on earth, we need continual supplies for nature. Christ "took compassion on the multitude," and wrought a miracle, lest they should "faint by the way," Matthew 15:32. Nature must have its supplies; these are as necessary to maintain life, as the oil is to maintain the lamp. But in heaven we shall hunger no more, Revelation 7:16. Hunger implies a need and lack, which cannot be in heaven; there we need not pray, "Give us our daily bread."

Question. But does not Christ say, "I will not drink this day of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom"; which implies there will be eating and drinking in heaven, and by consequence hunger?

Answer. We must not understand the words literally; our Savior only alludes to the metaphor of the vine. It is as if Christ had said, as drinking the fruit of the vine now with you, is an action of familiarity and pleasantness; so when you shall be with me in the kingdom of heaven, you shall be filled with such joy and delight, as if all the time were a time of feasting and banqueting.

2. Glorified bodies shall be free from the **INFIRMITIES** of nature, such as cold and heat. Heaven is a temperate zone: there is no nipping frost or scorching heat, nothing will be there in extremity—but joy.

3. The bodies of the saints shall be free from the **BURDENS** of nature, such as labor and sweating. There will be no more ploughing or sowing—what is the need of that—when the saints shall receive the full crop of joy! When the farmer works in the field, he needs his rake, his spade, etc. But let this same farmer be advanced to the throne, and now he has no more use for the spade—he is freed from all those labors! So though now we must "eat our bread with the sweat of our brows," yet when we are in heaven, and shall be advanced to the throne—there will be no more need of our working tools! Labor shall cease! Our sweat as well as our tears shall be dried up!

4. The bodies of the saints shall be free from the INJURIES of nature, such as sufferings. We run the race of our life on the track of misery! We go from one suffering to another. We never finish our troubles—but merely change them! "Man is born to trouble," he is the natural heir to it. Where the body is, there will afflictions like vultures be gathered together. Job was smitten with boils, and Paul did bear in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Afflictions, like hard frosts, nip the tender buds of our comfort; but before long the saints shall be impeccable, they shall have a protection from injuries granted them.

5. The bodies of the saints shall be IMMORTAL. Here on earth, our bodies are always dying. It is improper to ask, "When shall we die?" We should rather ask, "When shall we be finished dying?" First, the infancy dies, then the childhood, then the youth, then the old age—and then we are finished dying! It is not only the running out of the last sand in the glass which spends it—but all the sands which run out before. Death is a worm that is ever feeding at the root of our gourds! But in heaven "our mortal shall put on immortality." As it was with Adam in innocency, if he had not sinned, such was the excellent temperature and harmony in all the qualities of his body, that it is probable he would have never died—but had been translated from paradise to heaven! Indeed, Belarmine says that Adam would have died, though he had not sinned. But I know no ground for that assertion, for sin is made the formal cause of death!

However there is no such thing disputable in heaven, as the bodies there are immortal. Luke 20:36, "Neither can they die any more": heaven is a healthful place, there is no sickness or dying; we shall never more hear a death-bell ring! As our souls shall be eternal, so our bodies immortal. If God made manna (which is in itself corruptible) to last many years in the golden pot, much more is he able by a divine power, so to fashion the bodies of the saints, that they shall be preserved to eternity. God "will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain." Revelation 21:4.

Chapter 14. The Ninth Royal Privilege is—that we shall be as the angels in heaven! Matthew 22:30, "They will be like the angels in heaven." Christ does not say, we shall be angels—but like the angels.

Question. How is that?

Answer. Two ways.

1. In regard of our manner of WORSHIP. The angels fulfill the will of God, 1. Readily. 2. Perfectly.

1. The angels fulfill the will of God READILY. When God sends the angels upon a commission, they do not hesitate or dispute the case with God—but immediately obey. The cherubim are pictured with wings displayed—to show how ready they are in their obedience, it is as if they had wings, Daniel 9:21. As soon as God speaks the word, the angels are eager to obey. When we get to heaven—we shall be as the angels! This is a singular comfort to a weak Christian! Alas, we are not as the angels in this life! When God commands us to service, or to mourn for sin, or to take up the cross—O what a dispute is there! how long is it sometimes before we can get permission from our stubborn hearts to go to prayer! Jesus Christ went more willingly to suffer, than we do often to pray! How badly do we perform our duties! God had as good almost be without it! O but (if this is our grief) be of good comfort—in heaven we shall serve God swiftly—we shall be winged in our obedience, even as the angels!

2. The angels fulfill the will of God PERFECTLY. They fulfill God's whole will; they leave nothing undone! When God commands them upon duty, they can shoot to a hair's breadth. Alas, our services—how lame and bedridden are they! We do things by halves. We pray as if we prayed not; we weep for sin as if we wept not; how many blemishes are there in our holy things! as the moon when it shines brightest, has a dark spot in it. How many grains would we lack, if Christ did not put his merits into the scales! Our duties, like good wine, do smell of a bad cask. The angel pouring sweet fragrances into the prayers of the saints, Revelation 8:3, shows that in themselves they yield no sweet savor, unless perfumed with Christ's incense. But in heaven we shall be even as the angels—we shall serve God perfectly! How should we long for that time!

2. We shall be as the angels in regard of DIGNITY. There is no question—but in regard of our marriage-union with Christ, we shall be above the angels. But behold our human nature, simply and entirely considered, shall be parallel with the angelic nature. Luke 20:36, "they shall be equal to the angels." I shall show the dignity of the angelic nature, and the analogies between the saints glorified, and the angels. The dignity of the angels appears,

1. The dignity of the angels appears in their SAGACITY. The angels (who are God's courtiers) are wise, intelligent creatures. Tyre in regard of wisdom is styled a cherubim, or angel, Ezekiel 28:3-4, Ezekiel 28:16. The angels have a most critical exquisite judgment, they are discerning spirits. Thus the saints shall be as the angels—for wisdom and sagacity. Christ the wisdom of God is their oracle.

2. The dignity of angels appears in their MAJESTY. An angel is a beautiful glorious creature. They saw Stephen's face "as it had been the face of an angel," Acts 6:15. The angels are compared to lightning, in regard of their sparkling luster, Matthew 28:3. Such beams of majesty fall from the angels, that we are not able to bear a sight of them. John the apostle was so amazed at the sight of an angel, that he fell at his feet to worship him, Revelation 19:10. Thus shall we be as the angels—for splendor and majesty. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," Matthew 13:43, not that the saints shall not surpass the sun in brightness, says Chrysostom; but the sun being the most noble and excellent creature, therefore our Savior takes a resemblance thence, to express the saints' glory. They shall not only be of a sun-like brightness—but angel-like brightness! The beams of Christ's glory will be transparent in them.

3. The dignity of angels is seen in their POWER. Angels "excel in strength," Psalms 103:20. We read of one angel which destroyed an army of a hundred and eighty-five thousand at one blow! An angel would be able to merely look us dead! Thus shall we be as the angels. Here on earth, we have our fainting fits, we wrestle continually with infirmities; but in heaven the weak reed shall be turned into a cedar! We shall put on strength, and be as the angels of God.

4. The dignity and nobility of angels consists in their PURITY. Take away holiness from an angel, and he is no more an angel—but a devil. Those blessed spirits are sinless, spotless creatures; no unholy thought enters into their mind. They are virgin spirits; therefore they are said to be "clothed in pure white linen," Revelation 15:6. And they are represented by the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat, which were made "all of fine gold," to denote the purity of their essence. In this sense we shall be as the angels—of a refined, pure, sublime nature. Therefore the saints are said to have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," Revelation 7:14. Christ's blood washes white! We read of "the spirits of just men made perfect."

5. The dignity of angels appears in their IMMUNITY. The angels are privileged by their immunities—and thus shall we be as the angels. There is a two-fold immunity.

1. We shall be immune from the DIFFICULTIES of piety. Duties are irksome to the flesh. But in heaven, we shall be as the angels; no more praying or fasting, no more repenting or mortification. When we are above sin—then we shall be above ordinances! I do not say we shall be free from serving God—but we shall be freed from all that is tedious and unpleasant! The angels serve God—but it is with cheerfulness. It is their heaven to serve God—when they are singing hallelujahs they are ravished with holy delight! Though being spirits, they need no food—yet it is their food and drink to be doing the will of God: "the joy of the Lord is their strength." Thus the saints shall be as the angels, "they shall rest from their labors," Revelation 14:13. They shall not rest from serving God—but from their labor in serving him. Their service shall be sweetened with so much pleasure and delight, that it shall not be a task—but a recreation! What joy will it be to sing in the heavenly choir! The angels begin the music—and the saints join in the concert!

2. We shall be immune from TEMPTATION. The angels, those blessed spirits, have no temptations to sin—thus shall we be as the angels. It is sad to have atheistical, blasphemous thoughts forced upon us. It is sad always to lie under the Devil's spout, to have temptations dropping upon us! And though we do not yield to the enemy—yet to have the garrison continually assaulted, is a great grief to a child of God! But this is a believer's privilege—he shall be shortly as the angels—not subject to temptation. The Devil is cast out of paradise! The old serpent shall never sneak into the New Jerusalem. Heaven is pictured out by an exceeding high mountain, Revelation 21:10. This heavenly mount is so high, that Satan's fiery darts cannot shoot up to it—it is above the reach of his arrow!

6. The dignity of angels consist in their IMPECCABILITY. The blessed angels are not only without sin—but they are in an impossibility of sinning. The angels have a clear sight of God! They are, by the sweet influence of that vision, so enamored with the beauty and love of God, that they have not the least motion or will to sin. "They are confirmed by the power of God," says Augustine, "that they cannot sin!" The angels are immoveable in holiness.

Indeed Origen affirms that there is a possibility of sinning even in the angels; but this opinion is, 1. Contrary to the current of the fathers—that the angels are of that invincible sanctity, that they cannot be drawn by any violence to sin. 2. That it should be possible for the angels to be stained with the least tincture of sin—is repugnant to scripture; for if the angels may sin, then they may fall—but they cannot fall. The minor proposition is clear: elected angels cannot fall—but the angels are elected; the apostle proves the election of angels. 1 Timothy 5:21, "I charge you before God and the elect angels." The angels are called stars, Job 38:7. These angelical stars are so fixed in their orb of sanctity, that they cannot have the least erring, or retrograde motion to sin. Does not all this set forth the privilege and comfort of believers? They shall be in this sense as the angels—in an impossibility of sinning! Here on earth, it is impossible that we should not sin; in heaven it is impossible that we should sin! There we shall not only be exempted from the act of sinning—but from the capacity of sinning—for we shall be as the angels of God! What a blessed privilege is this! We who are now accounted as the off-scouring of men—shall be as the angels!

Oh how may this excite the most profane people to the study of piety! Fly from sin! Sin will not make you angels—but devils! "Follow after holiness!" The huntsmen pursues the deer with

earnestness. Pursue holiness as the huntsman pursues his game! Here is reason enough— you shall not only be with the angels—but you shall be like the angels! If while you live, you live as saints—when you die, you shall be as angels!

Chapter 15. The Tenth Royal Privilege is—the vindication of our REPUTATIONS. Fulgentius calls a good name the godly man's heir, because it lives when he is dead. A good reputation is the best temporal blessing—yet all do not wear this garland. Those who have a good conscience, have not always a good name. The old serpent spits his venom at the godly—through the mouths of wicked men! If Satan cannot strike his fiery dart into our conscience—he will put a dead fly into our reputation. The people of God are represented to the world, in a very bad light. How strangely does a saint look—when he is put in the Devil's dress! Some primitive Christians that were clothed with bear's skins, and painted with red devils. Job was represented to the world as a hypocrite—and by his friends too—which was very painful to him. Paul was called a seditious man. He suffered (in the opinion of some) as an evildoer, 2 Timothy 2:9. "Wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds." He did not only bear Christ's mark in his body—but in his name. Our blessed Savior was called a glutton and a drunkard, and a deceiver of the people. It has always been the manner of the wicked world—to paint God's children in very strange colors.

It is a great sin to defame a saint, it is murder; better take away his life than his name! It is a sin which we can never make him reparation for; a flaw in a man's credit being like a blot in white paper, which will never come out. The defaming of a saint is no less than the defaming of God himself! The saints have God's picture drawn in their hearts: a man cannot abuse the picture of Caesar, without some reflection upon Caesar's person. Well, either God will clear his peoples' innocency here, which he has promised, Psalms 37:6, "And he shall bring forth your righteousness as the light." Your good name may be in a cloud—but it shall not set in a cloud; or else God will clear his peoples' innocency at the day of judgment. In this life the godly are called the troublers of Israel, seditious, rebellious and what not! but a day is shortly coming, when God himself will proclaim their innocency. Believe it, as God will make inquisition for blood, so also for names! The name of a saint is precious in God's esteem—it is like a statue of gold which the polluted breath of men cannot stain. And though the wicked may throw dust upon it—yet as God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people—so he will wipe off the dust from their name! The time is shortly coming when God will say to us, as once to Joshua, "I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you." Even as it was with Christ, the Jews rolled a great stone upon him, and as they thought, it was impossible he should rise again; but an angel came and rolled away the stone, and he arose in a glorious triumphant manner. So it shall be with the godly, their good names or titles are buried, a stone of calumny and reproach is rolled upon them; but at the day of judgment, not an angel—but God himself will roll away the stone, and they shall come forth from among the pots, where they have been blackened and sullied, "as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." O what a blessed day will that be, when God himself shall be the saints' vindicator.

Chapter 16. The Eleventh Royal Privilege is—the sentence of ABSOLUTION. Here take notice of two things.

1. The process in law. "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged

according to what they had done as recorded in the books." Revelation 20:12. This is a metaphor taken from the manner of our courts of judicature, where there is the whole process, every circumstance considered, and the witnesses examined. So here—the books are opened, the book of God's accounting, and the book of conscience! Now observe, "another book was opened, which is the book of life"; that is, the book of God's decree, the book of free grace, the book which has the saints' names written in it, and their pardon! The elect shall be judged out of this book! Surely the sentence cannot be dismal, when our husband is judge—and will judge us by the book of life!

2. The sentence itself. Matthew 25:34, "Come you who are blessed by my Father!"

1. This implies the saints' ACQUITTANCE. The curse is taken off; they have their discharge in the court of justice, and shall have the broad seal of heaven, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all setting their hands to the pardon, and this Christ shall proclaim.

2. This implies the saints' INSTALLMENT. "Come you who are blessed." As if Christ should say, "You are the heirs to the crown of heaven! Come in—enter upon possession!" And this sentence can never be reversed to eternity; but as Isaac said, "I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed!" At the hearing of this wondrous sentence, O with what ineffable joy will the saints be filled! it will be like music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart! Even as Elizabeth once said to the virgin Mary, as soon as the voice of your salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy! Just so, the heart of a believer will leap inside him—at the hearing of this blessed sentence, and be ready to leap out of him for joy. O what trembling now among the devils! What triumph among the angels!

Chapter 17. The Last Royal Privilege is—that God will make a public and honorable mention of all the good which the saints have done. This I ground upon three scriptures. Matthew 15:21, "Well done—good and faithful servant!" The world maligns and censures us. When we discharge our conscience, they say "Badly done!" But God will say, "Well done—good and faithful servant!" He will set a trophy of honor upon his people, "He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. Then the King will say to those on the right—Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me!" Matthew 25:33-36.

King Ahasuerus had his book of records; and when he read in his book, he took notice of Mordecai's good service, and caused him to have public honor. Be assured—God has his book of record, and will openly take notice of all the good service you have done, and he himself will be the herald to proclaim your praises! 2 Corinthians 4:5, "Then shall every man have praise from God."

I speak this the rather, to encourage you in God's service. Perhaps you have laid out yourself for the cause of God, but it came to nothing, and you begin to think that it was a foolish venture—and all is lost. No! your faith and zeal are recorded; your service is written in heaven, and God will give you a public testimony of honor, "Well done—good and faithful servant!" What a whetstone is this to duty? How should it add oil to the flame of our devotion? You perhaps have prayed a great while, and watered this seed with your tears. Be of good comfort—your tears are not lost! God bottles them as precious wine, and it will not be long before he will open his bottle, and this wine

which came from the wine-press of your eyes—shall sparkle forth in the sight of men and angels!

More—God will not only take notice of what we have done for him—but what we would have done, if we could have. David had an intention to build God a house, and the Lord interpreted it as if he had done it, 1 Kings 8:18. "Whereas it was in your heart to build a house unto my name, you did well that it was in your heart." Intentional goodness is recorded, and shall add to our crown!

What a good and generous God we serve! Who would ever change such a master! It were, one would think, enough that God should give us wages for our work (especially seeing that he was the one who gave us the ability to work). But what a marvel it this—that God should applaud us with a "Well done!" Think how sweet it will be to hear such a word from God—how amazing and ravishing, when he shall say openly, "These are the servants of the most high God! These are those who feared to sin! These are those who have wept in secret for that which it was not in their power to perform! These are those who have kept their garments pure—who have valued my favor above life—who rather choose to honor me than humor men! These are those who were willing to wash off the stains from the face of religion with their blood, and to make my crown flourish, though it were in their ashes! Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord!" Thus shall it be done to those whom God delights to honor!

These are those glorious things which are to come! I have led you to the top of the mount, and given you a prospect of heaven! I have shown you just a glimpse. I shall say of this glory of heaven, as once the queen of Sheba said of Solomon's pomp and magnificence, "The half of it has not been told!"

Chapter 18. The First Inference drawn from the Proposition.

It shows us what a high valuation and esteem we should set upon the godly. They are, we see, men "greatly in favor with God," as the angel once proclaimed to Daniel, and they are invested with glorious privileges. They are of a heavenly descent, born of the Spirit; they are very rich, for they are heirs of the kingdom! God has not only laid out some parcels of land, or divided heaven to them, as Canaan was divided to Israel by lot: the tribe of Judah to inhabit in one country, the tribe of Reuben in another, etc. God, I say, does not parcel out heaven thus to the saints. No! heaven is theirs, with all its privileges, blessings, and royalties. There are no enclosures or fences in heaven; there can be no confinement where everything is infinite. Oh what a high value and estimate then should be put upon the saints! they are heirs of God! How does the world respect great heirs! What honor then should we give to the godly! They are adopted into all the stately privileges of heaven. How rich is he when possessed of the inheritance! How rich shall the saints be, when God shall pour out of his love, and shall empty all the treasures of glory into them! The saints are jewels—but their worth and riches are not known; therefore they are trampled upon by the world. "It does not yet appear what they shall be!" All things are theirs!

Chapter XIX. The Second Inference drawn from the Proposition.

It shows us a main difference between the godly and the wicked. the godly man has all his best things to come. The wicked man has all his worst things to come. As their way is different, so their end. "You in your lifetime received your good things." The wicked have all their good things here on earth; their worst things are to come. Why—what is to come? The apostle answers, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, "Wrath to come!" And here I shall briefly show you the wicked man's

charter—which consists in five things.

Section 1. The first thing to come, is the awakening of conscience. Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, his viceroy. A wicked man does what he can to unthrone conscience, and put it out of office. Conscience is God's echo, and sometimes it is so shrill and clamorous, that the sinner cannot endure the noise—but silences conscience. By frequent sinning, conscience begins to be sleepy and seared; "having their conscience seared with a hot iron," 1 Timothy 4:2. This conscience is quiet—but not good; for the silence of conscience proceeds from the numbness of it. It is with him as with a sick patient, who having a confluence of diseases upon him—yet being asleep, is insensible of his diseases.

Time was when conscience was tender—but by often sinning, he is like the ostrich which can digest iron; or as it is said of Mithridates, that by often accustoming his body to poison, it never hurt him—but he could live upon it as his food. That sin which was before as the wounding of the sensitive eye; now is no more painful than the cutting of the finger nail.

Well, there is a time coming when this sleepy conscience shall be awakened! Belshazzar was drinking wine in bowls, when "the fingers of a human hand writing on the plaster wall of the king's palace. The king himself saw the hand as it wrote, and his face turned pale with fear! Such terror gripped him that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way beneath him!" There conscience began to be awakened.

Conscience is like a looking-glass; if it is foul and dusty, you can see nothing in it; but wipe away the dust, and you may see your face in it clearly. There is a time coming, when God will wipe off the dust from the looking-glass of a man's conscience, and he shall see his sins clearly represented! Conscience is like a sleeping lion; when he awakes—he roars and tears his prey. When conscience awakes, then it roars upon a sinner, and tears him!—as the devil did the man into which he entered; he "rent him, and threw him into the fire." When Moses' rod was turned into a serpent, he was afraid and fled from it. Oh what is it when conscience is turned into a serpent!

Conscience is like the bee, if a man does well—then conscience gives honey, it speaks comfort; if he does evil—it puts forth a sting. Conscience is called a worm, Mark 9:44, "where the worm never dies." It is like Prometheus' vulture, it is ever gnawing. Conscience is God's bloodhound, which pursues a man. When the jailor saw the prison doors open, and, as he thought, the prisoners were missing, he drew his sword and would have killed himself. Just so, when the eye of conscience is opened, and the sinner begins to look about him for his evidences, faith, repentance, etc. and sees they are missing, he will be ready to kill himself! A troubled conscience is the first-fruits of hell; indeed it is a lesser hell. That it is so, appears two ways:

1. By the testimony of scripture. Proverbs 18:14, "A wounded spirit who can bear?" a wound in the name, in the estate, in the body, is sad; but a wound in the conscience, who can bear? especially when the wound can never be healed—I speak of such as awake in the night of death.

2. By the experience both of good and bad.

- A. By the experience of good men; when the storm has risen in their conscience (though afterwards it has been allayed) yet for the present, they have been in the suburbs of hell. David complains of his broken bones, he was like a man that had all his bones out of joint. What is the

matter? You may see where his pain lay, Psalms 51:3, "My sin is ever before me!" He was in a spiritual agony: it was not the sword which threatened; it was not the death of the child—but it was the roarings of his conscience! Some of God's arrows fast stuck there! Though God will not damn his children—yet he may send them to hell in this life!

B. By the experience of bad men, who have been in the perpetual convulsions of conscience. "I have sinned!" says Judas. Before, he was nibbling at the silver bait—the thirty pieces. But now the hook troubles him, conscience wounds him. Such was Judas' horror, being now like a man upon the rack, that he hangs himself to quiet his conscience. This shows what the hell of conscience is; that men account death easy—to get rid of conscience; but in vain. It is with them as with a sick man, he moves out of one room into another, and changes the air—but still he carries his disease with him. O sinner, what will you do when conscience will begin to fly upon you, and shall probe you with scourgings? It is a mercy when conscience is awakened in time; but the misery is when the wound is too late, there being then, no balm in Gilead.

Section 2. The second thing to come is, his appearing before the judge. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." Hierome thought he ever heard that sounding in his ears, "Arise you dead, and come to judgment!" What solemnity is there at court, when the judge comes to the bench, and the trumpets are sounded! Thus Christ the Judge shall be accompanied with angels and archangels, and the trumpets shall be blown; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God!" This is the great and general judgement. Then shall Christ sit down upon the throne of judgement, holding his sword in his hand, and a flame coming out of his mouth. Now the sinner being summoned before him as a prisoner at bar, he has his guilt written in his forehead; he is condemned before he comes, I mean in his conscience, which is the petty judgement; and appearing before Christ, he begins to tremble and be amazed with horror! And not being covered with Christ's righteousness, for lack of a better covering, he cries to the mountains to cover him! "And the kings and the great men said to the mountains and rocks—fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" Nothing so dreadful as the sight of mercy abused. Now the Lamb will be turned into a Lion; and he who was once a Savior will be a Judge!

Section 3. The third thing to come is, his charge read. "I will reprove you, and set your sins in order before you," Psalms 50:21. As God has a bottle for the tears of his people; so he has a book to register men's sins, Revelation 20:12, "the books were opened." Oh what a black charge will be read against a sinner! not only the sins which have damnation written in their forehead—such as drunkenness, swearing, blasphemy, shall be brought into the charge—but those sins which he slighted, as,

1. Secret sins, such as the world never took notice of. Many a man does not forsake his sins—but grows more cunning in concealing them. His heart gives as much vent to sin as ever. His care is rather that sin should be concealed, than cured. He is like him who shuts up his shop windows—but follows his trade within doors; he sits brooding upon sin. He does with his sins, as Rachel did with her father's idols, she put them under her that he might not find them; so does he put his sins in a secret place. But all these sins shall be set in order before him! Luke 12:2, "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed!" God has a key for the heart!

2. Little sins, as the world calls them. The majesty of God—against which it is committed, does accent and enhance the sin. Besides, little sins (suppose them so) yet multiplied, become great! What is less than a grain of sand? Yet when multiplied, what is heavier than the sands of the sea? A little sum multiplied, is great. A little sin, unrepented of, will damn! Just as one leak in the ship, if it be not looked to, will sink it. You would think it is no great matter to merely forget God—yet it has a heavy doom, "Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue!" Psalms 50:22. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psalms 9:17. The non-improvement of talents, the world looks upon as a small thing; yet we read of him who "hid his talent in the earth," Matthew 25:25. He had not wasted it. Only not trading it, is sentenced. "You wicked and lazy servant!" "Now throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!"

3. Sins that in the eye of the world were looked upon as virtues; sins that were colored and masked over with zeal of God, and good intentions, etc. Men put fine glosses upon their sins, that they may obtain credit, and be the more commendable. It is said of Alcibiades, that he embroidered a curtain with lions and eagles, that he might hide the picture underneath, full of witches and satyrs. So does Satan embroider the curtain with the image of virtue, that he may hide the foul picture of sin underneath. The devil is like the spider—first she weaves her web, and then hangs the fly in it. Just so, the devil helps men to weave the web of sin with religious pretenses, and then he hangs them in the snare! All these sins shall be read in the sinner's charge, and set in order before him!

SECTION 4. The next thing is, the passing of the sentence. Matthew 25:41, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!" At the hearing of this sentence, the heart of a sinner will be rent through with horror; that heart which before would not break with sorrow for sin, shall now break with despair. At the pronouncing of this dreadful sentence, "depart from me," the sinner would be glad if he could depart from himself, and be annihilated. O it will be a sad departing! We use to say, when a man is dead, he is departed. But this will be a departing without a deceasing. As soon as Christ has pronounced the curse, the sinner will begin to curse himself. "Oh what have I been doing! I have lain in wait for my own blood! I have twisted the noose of my own damnation!" While he lived, he blessed himself; "oh how happy am I, how does providence smile upon me!" Psalms 49:18, "Though while he lived he blessed his soul," yet when this sentence is passed, he is the first who will curse himself.

SECTION 5. The pouring out of the vial. Psalms 75:8, "For the Lord holds a cup in his hand; it is full of foaming wine mixed with spices. He pours the wine out in judgment, and all the wicked must drink it, draining it to the dregs!" This is the sad execution. Hell is pictured out by Tophet, Isaiah 30:33, which was a place situated near Jerusalem, where they offered their children in the fire to Moloch. This is a fit metaphor to picture out the infinite torments of hell—the sinner shall lie in the furnace of God's wrath, and the breath of the Lord, as a pair of bellows, shall blow the fire!

Hell is said to be prepared, as if God had been sitting down to study and devise some exquisite torment. Hell is pictured out as fire, and in another place by darkness—to show that hell is a fire without light. The hypocrite, while he lived, was all light, no fire; and in hell he shall be all fire, no light! In hell there is nothing to give comfort! There is no music but the shrieks of the damned! There is no wine but what is burnt with the flame of God's wrath: "There shall be weeping, and

wailing, and gnashing of teeth!" The weeping hypocrite shall go to the place of weeping: while he lived, he lifted up his eyes in a false devotion, and now being in hell he shall lift up his eyes in torment. He who gnashed his teeth at the godly, shall now have gnashing enough! Before he gnashed in envy—now in despair—and this forever!

"He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire!" The word unquenchable scorches hotter than the fire! The fire of hell is like that stone in Arcadia, I have read of, which being once kindled, could not be extinguished. Eternity is the hell of hell! The loss of the soul is irreparable! If all the angels in heaven should put together a purse, they could not make up this loss. When a sinner is in hell, shall another Christ be found to die for him? or will the same Christ be crucified again? Oh no! They are everlasting burnings!

Thus the sinner has all worst things to come; but a believer has all his best things to come—the things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, namely, the beatific vision, the crystal streams of joy that run at God's right hand! His heaven is to come!

Chapter 20. A Serious Scrutiny about the Believer's Charter.

I hear, methinks, a Christian say, "Great are the privileges of a believer; but I fear I have no title to this glorious charter." Were there a dispute about our estate, whether such an inheritance did belong to us, we would desire that there should be a trial in law to decide it. Here is a large inheritance, 'things present and things to come;' but the question is—whether we are the true heirs to whom it belongs? Now for the deciding this, we must seriously examine what right we have to Christ; for all this estate is made over to us through Christ. "All things are yours, and you are Christ's"—there comes in the title. Jesus Christ is the great treasury and storehouse of a Christian, he has purchased heaven with his blood. If we can say we are Christ's, then we may say, "all things are ours!"

Question. But how shall we know that we are Christ's?

Answer. Those that are Christ's—Christ is in them, 2 Corinthians 13:5. "Know you not that Christ is in you?"

Question. But how shall we know that?

Answer. If we are in the faith. It is observable, before the apostle had said, "Know you not that Christ is in you"; first he puts this query, "Examine whether you are in the faith." Christ is in you, if you are in the faith. Here lies the question, Have you faith? Now for the deciding this, I shall show, The antecedents, the concomitants, the genuine act, and the fruits of faith.

Section 1. Showing the ANTECEDENTS of Faith.

1. Antecedent to faith, is KNOWLEDGE. Faith is an intelligent grace; though there can be knowledge without faith—yet there can be no faith without knowledge. "Those who know your name will put their trust in you," Psalms 9:10. One calls it, quick-sighted faith. Knowledge must carry the torch before faith, 2 Timothy 1:12, "For I know whom I have believed." As in Paul's conversion, a light from heaven 'shined round about him," Acts 9:3; so before faith be wrought, God shines in with a light upon the understanding. A blind faith is as bad as a dead faith. That eye may as well be said to be a good eye, which is without sight; as that faith is good, which is without

knowledge. Devout ignorance damns! This condemns the church of Rome, which teaches that ignorance is the mother of devotion! But surely, where the sun is set in the understanding, it must needs be night in the affections. So necessary is knowledge to the being of faith, that the scriptures do sometimes baptize faith with the name of knowledge, Isaiah 53:11, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;" knowledge is put there for faith. This knowledge which is antecedent to faith and does usher it in, consists in the apprehension of four things: the soul through this optic glass of knowledge sees,

1. The soul, by faith, sees a PRECIOUSNESS in Christ, "he is the chief of ten thousand." There is nothing in Christ but what is precious: he is precious in his name, in his nature, in his influences, in his privileges. He is called a precious stone, Isaiah 28:16. He must needs be a precious stone—who has made us living stones, 1 Peter 2:5.

2. The soul, by faith, sees a FULLNESS in Christ, the fullness of the Godhead. Colossians 2:9, "all fullness," Colossians 1:19. Christ has a fullness of merit—his blood is able to satisfy God's justice. Christ has a fullness of spirit—his grace able to supply our needs.

3. The soul, by faith, sees a SUITABLENESS in Christ; nothing can be satisfactory but what is suitable. If a man is hungry, bring him fine flowers, this is not suitable; he desires food. If he be sick, bring him music, this is not suitable, he desires medicine. In this sense there is a suitability in Christ to the soul: there is a fitness as well as a fullness. He is (as Origen speaks) everything which is desirable. If we hunger, he is the food of the soul, therefore he is called the bread of life. If we are sick unto death, his blood is the balm of Gilead. He may be compared to the trees of the sanctuary, which were both for food and medicine, Ezekiel 47:12.

4. The soul, by faith, sees a propensity and readiness in Christ to GIVE out his fullness. There is bounty in Christ as well as beauty. Isaiah 55:1, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost!" Behold, at what a low price does God set his heavenly blessings! it is but thirsting: bring but desires. Behold the readiness in Christ to dispense and give out his fullness: "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost!" A strange kind of buying! As he is all fullness, so he is all sweetness—he is of a noble and generous disposition. This is the enticer of the affections; this draws the eyes and heart of a sinner after him. What are the promises—but Christ's golden scepter held forth? What are the motions of the Spirit—but Jesus Christ coming a wooing?

Such a knowledge of Christ does necessarily precede and go before faith; now the soul begins to move towards him.

2. The second antecedent to faith is CREDENCE; a setting our seal to the truth of the word; a giving credit to that which the Word asserts concerning Christ: namely, that he is the true Messiah, that there is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved; that whoever believes in him shall not perish; that he delights in mercy. It is delightful to the mother to have her breasts drawn. Just so, it is pleasing to Christ, that sinners should draw the breasts of the promises. An assent, and giving credence to all that the scripture holds forth concerning Christ, is necessary to precede faith. Dogmatic faith goes before justifying faith.

3. The third preparatory or antecedent to faith, is deep CONVICTION and HUMILIATION. The seed that lacked depth of earth withered; so will that faith which is not laid in deep humiliation.

Christ is never sweet, until sin is bitter! He never gives ease, but to those who feel their burden, Matthew 11:28. Indeed, until a man feels his burden, he cannot cast it upon Christ. A man must see himself as lost. Many are lost for lack of knowing their lostness. Acts 2:37, "they were pricked at their hearts," etc. as if a balloon were pricked and the wind let out. Just so, the swelling of pride, was let out by humiliation, Romans 7:9, "when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." As if Paul had said, "when the law of God came, and showed me the spots of my soul, sin revived; that is—sin began to appear in its bloody colors, striking horror and amazement into my soul, and I died! The good opinion which before I had of myself—died!" As it was with the people of Israel, they saw the Red Sea before them, and Pharaoh pursuing behind. So the sinner after some legal bruising, being affrighted, sees the sea of his sins before ready to swallow him up, and the justice of God pursuing and ready to overtake him, and no way to extricate or help himself; only there is a brazen serpent lifted up, and if he can look upon that, he may be saved!

4. The fourth antecedent to faith is self-renunciation, or a disclaiming and renouncing anything in a man's self that can save. This is certain—before a man can come to Christ, he must come out of himself. Before he can trust in Christ, he must despair in himself; Php 3:7, "Not having my own righteousness." Men would like to have something of their own, to trust to. They would bow down to their own righteousness, their duties and moralities, Romans 10:3. Oh but if you will lean on Christ—throw away these rotten crutches! You must use duty, as the dove did her wings—to fly. But trust to Christ the ark—for safety. A man must be first transplanted; he must be taken out of the old soil, and have nothing of his own to grow upon, before he can be engrafted into Christ the true olive tree. As the angel said to Mary when she looked for Christ in the sepulcher, "he is not here," Matthew 28:6, so I may say to that man who seeks to make a Christ of his duties, and moral excellencies, "Christ is not here, you must look higher! Salvation is not to be found within you—but in something without you, in something above you."

5. The fifth antecedent, or that which goes before faith, is a secret persuasion in the soul of man, that Christ is willing to show mercy to him in particular. Mark 10:49, "Arise, he calls you." Just so, the Spirit secretly whispers to the soul, "Arise out of your sins, Jesus Christ calls you! He bids you believe in him." Then the soul begins to think thus, "Did Jesus Christ come to save sinners, such as are humble and penitent? Does he not only invite them—but command them to believe in him, 1 John 3:23. Then why do I not believe? What is it which keeps me off from Christ? Is it my unworthiness? Behold there is merit enough in Christ to make me worthy! Is it my impurity? "The blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin," 1 John 1:7. His blood is a balsam to heal me, a laver to wash me! Though I have nothing whereby to ingratiate myself into his favor—yet my comfort is, that Jesus Christ does not require that I should carry anything to him—but, fetch everything from him. I need carry no water to this well of salvation—only an empty vessel—only a humble broken heart. If God justifies the ungodly—why should I hold off from Christ any longer? Romans 4:5. Why then should not I think that there is mercy for me? Surely there is! Methinks I see Christ beckoning to me to come to him, methinks I hear the soundings of his affections. These are the preparations to faith.

SECTION 2. Showing the ATTENDANTS of faith.

1. CONSENT is the first attendant of faith. The soul now consents to have Christ, and to have him upon his own terms.

1. As a Head. The head has a double office—it is the fountain of spirits, and the seat of government. The head is, as it were, the pilot of the body, it rules and steers it in its motion. The believer consents to have Christ, not only as a head to send forth spirits, that is comfort—but as a head to rule. A hypocrite would take Christ's promises—but not his laws. He would be under Christ's benediction—but not his jurisdiction. A believer consents to have whole Christ; he does not pick and choose. As he expects to one day to sit down with Christ upon the throne, so he now makes his heart Christ's throne.

2. The believer consents to have Christ for better for worse—a naked Christ, a persecuted Christ; for he sees a beauty and glory—in the reproaches of Christ, 1 Peter 4:14, and will have Christ not only in his royal purple—but when with John Baptist he is clothed in camel's hair. He can embrace the fire—if Christ is in it. He looks upon the cross as Jacob's ladder by which he ascends up to heaven. He says, "Blessed be that affliction, welcome that cross—which carries Christ upon it."

3. He consents to have Christ purely for love. If the wife should give her consent only for her husband's riches, she would marry his estate rather than his person; it were not properly to make a marriage with him—but rather to make a merchandise of him. The believer consents for love. He loves Christ for Christ. Heaven without Christ is not a sufficient dowry for a believer; there is no ulterior motive in his consent—it is not sinister; there is nothing forced—it is not for fear; that would rather be a constraint than consent; a forced consent will not hold in law. The believer's consent is voluntary; the beauty of Christ's person and the sweetness of his disposition draws the will, which as the master-wheel, carries the whole soul with it.

4. The believer consents to have Christ, never more to part. He would have an uninterrupted communion with him. He will part with life—but not with Christ. Death, when it slips the knot between the soul and the body—it ties it faster between the soul and Christ!

5. The believer does so consent to have Christ, as he makes a deed of gift—resigning up all the interest in himself, to Christ. He is willing to lose his own name, and surname himself by the name of Christ. He is willing to lose his own will and be wholly at Christ's disposal, 1 Corinthians 6:19. He resigns up his love to Christ. In this sense the spouse is said to be a spring shut up, Cant. 4:12; she has love for relations—but the best of her love is kept for Christ. The world has the milk of her love—but Christ has the cream of it. The choicest and purest of her love is a spring shut up; it is broached only for Christ to drink!

2. The second attendant of faith is DESIRE. Psalms 42:1, "As the deer pants after the water-brooks, so pants my soul after you, O God!" "Oh!" (says the soul) "that I had Christ, that I might but touch the hem of his garment!" "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem!" 2 Samuel 23:15. So says the thirsty sinner, "Who will give me to drink of those streams of living water, which run in Christ's blood? O that I had this morning star—to enlighten me! O that I had this pearl of great price—to enrich me! O that I this tree of life—to quicken me. Oh that I had a sight of Christ's beauty, a taste of his sweetness! There is such a thirst raised in the soul, that nothing can quench it but the blood of Christ! Nothing but the breast will quiet the child; nothing will quiet the longing soul—but God's opening the breasts of free-grace, and giving his Son out of his bosom!

3. The third attendant of faith is a spirit of CONTRITION. The soul is even melted into tears, Zechariah 12:10, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced—and shall mourn!" The Spirit of grace drops as dew upon the heart, and makes it soft and tender. The poor sinner weeps for his sins of unkindness against Christ! "Oh," says he, "that I should sin against so sweet a Savior!" He looks upon a broken Christ with a broken heart! He washes Christ's wounds with his tears! Before, he wept for fear; now, he weeps for love! Mary stood at Jesus feet—weeping!

Section 3. Showing the genuine ACT of Faith.

Then follows the genuine and proper act of faith, namely recumbency. The soul rests upon Christ, and Christ alone for salvation. This is the very door by which we enter into heaven. Faith casts itself upon Christ, as a man that casts himself upon the stream to swim. The believer stays himself upon Christ, therefore faith is called a "leaning upon Christ," Cant. 5:8. Believers are called living stones, 1 Peter 2:5, and they rest upon Christ the corner-stone, Isaiah 28:16. The believer catches hold of Christ, as Adonijah caught hold of the horns of the altar, 1 Kings 1:51, or as a man that is sinking catches hold of a bough. Faith makes a holy venture upon Christ, as Queen Esther did upon king Ahasuerus, "If I perish, I perish!" Esther 4:16; and this venturing upon Christ, is by virtue of a promise: else it is not faith—but presumption. Faith has its warrant in its hand, John 6:37, "he who comes to me, I will never cast out." This is the proper act of faith—the soul's resting with a humble affiancement upon Jesus Christ. Bernard, being a little before his death (as he thought) brought before God's tribunal, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him for his sins, he runs to Christ, and he says, "Satan I am sinful and unworthy as you say—but though you do magnify my disease, I will magnify my physician. I know the Lord Jesus has a double right to the kingdom of glory, not only by heritage—but conquest; and he has conquered for me. So that I am not confounded while I look on Christ as my Savior, and heaven as my inheritance!" It was a saying of Augustine, "I can rest securely, while I lay my head on Christ's bleeding side."

Now concerning this faith I shall lay down two rules.

1. That faith justifies not as a formal cause—but purely as an instrument, namely, as it lays hold on Christ the blessed object, and fetches in his fullness. In this sense it is called a precious faith. But the worth lies not in the faith—but in Christ, on which it does center and terminate. Faith in itself considered, is not more excellent than other graces. Take a piece of wax, and a piece of gold of the same magnitude, the wax is not valuable with the gold; but as the wax seals the label of some will, by virtue of which a great estate is confirmed and conveyed, so it may be of more worth than the gold. So faith considered purely in itself, does challenge nothing more than other graces, nay in some sense, it is inferior, it being an empty hand. But as this hand receives the precious alms of Christ's merits, and is an instrument or channel through which the blessed streams of life flow to us from him; so it does challenge a superiority above other graces.

Indeed, some affirm that the very act of believing, without reference to the merits of Christ, justifies. To which I shall say but this,

1. Faith cannot justify, as it is an act; for it must have an object. We cannot (if we make good sense) separate between the act and the object. What is faith, if it does not fix upon Christ—but fancy! It was not the people of Israel's looking up that cured them—but the fixing their eye upon the brazen serpent!

2. Faith does not justify, as it is a grace. This would be to substitute faith in Christ's place, it were to make a savior of faith. Faith is a good grace—but a bad savior!

3. Faith does not justify, as it is a work. Which must needs be, if the stress and virtue of faith lies only in the act, but then we should be justified by works, which is contrary to Ephesians 2:9, where the apostle says expressly, "not of works." So that it is clear, faith's excellency lies in the apprehending and applying the object Christ! Therefore in scripture we are said to be justified through faith—as an instrument which lays hold on Christ the blessed object, and fetches in his fullness.

2. The second rule is, that faith does not justify, as it exercises grace. It cannot be denied but faith has an influence upon the graces; it is like a silver thread which runs through a chain of pearls. Faith puts strength and vivacity into all the virtues; but it does not justify under this notion. Faith begets obedience. By faith Abraham obeyed—but Abraham was not justified because he obeyed—but as he believed. Faith works by love—but it does not justify as it works by love. For as the sun shines by its brightness, not by its heat (though both are inseparably joined); so faith and love are tied together by an indissoluble knot. Yet faith does not justify as it works by love—but as it lays hold on Christ. Though faith is accompanied with all the graces—yet in point of justification, it is alone, and has nothing to do with any of the graces. Hence that speech of Luther, "In the justification of a sinner, Christ and faith are alone; as the bridegroom and bride in the bed-chamber." Faith is never separated from the graces—yet sometimes it is alone. And thus I have shown you the essentials of faith.

Section 4. Showing what are the FRUITS and Products of Faith.

I proceed to the products of faith. There are many rare and supernatural fruits of faith.

1. Faith is a HEART-QUICKENING grace. It is the vital artery of the soul: "The just shall live by his faith," Habakkuk 2:4. When we begin to believe, we begin to live. Faith grafts the soul into Christ, as the scion into the stock, and fetches all its sap and juice from the blessed vine. Faith is the great quickener; it quickens our graces and our duties.

Faith quickens our graces. The Spirit of God infuses all the seeds and habits—but faith is the fountain of all the acts of grace; it is as the spring in the watch, which moves the wheels. Not a grace stirs, until faith sets it to work. How does love work? By faith! When I apprehend by faith, Christ's love to me—this attracts and draws up my love to

Him in return. How does humility work? By faith! Faith humbles the soul; it has a double aspect; it looks upon sin, and a sight of sin humbles: it looks upon free-grace, and a sight of mercy humbles. How does patience work? By faith! If I believe God is a wise God, who knows what is best for me, and can deliver not only from affliction—but by affliction. This spins out patience. Thus faith is not only alive—but gives life. It puts forth a divine energy and operation into all the graces.

2. Faith animates and quickens our DUTIES. What was the blood of bulls and goats, to take away sin? It was their faith in the Messiah which made their dead sacrifices become living sacrifices. What are ordinances, but a dumb show, without the breathings of faith in them? therefore in scripture it is called the prayer of faith, the hearing of faith, and the obedience of faith. Dead things have no beauty in them; it is faith which quickens and beautifies our duties.

3. Faith is a HEART-PURIFYING grace. "Having purified their hearts by faith," Acts 15:9. Faith is a virgin grace, of a pure and heavenly nature. Faith is in the soul, as the storm, which purifies the air. Faith is in the soul, as fire to the metals, which refines them. Faith is in the soul, as medicine in the body, which works out the disease. Faith works out pride, self-love, hypocrisy. Faith consecrates the heart. That which was before the devil's thoroughfare, is now made into God's enclosure; 1 Timothy 3:9, "Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience." Faith is a heavenly plant, which will not grow in an impure soil. Faith does not only justify—but sanctify. As it has one work in heaven, so it has another work in the heart. He who before was under the power of some debasing corruption, as soon as faith is wrought, there is a sacred virtue coming from Christ, for the enervating and weakening of that sin: "the waters are abated." The woman that did but touch the hem of Christ's garment, felt virtue coming out of him. The touch of faith has a healing power! Faith casts the devil out of the castle of the heart, though still he keeps the out-works. Satan has a party in a believer—but there is a duel fought every day: and faith will never give up, until, as a prince, it prevails. "This is the faith of God's elect."

You that say you Believe, has your faith removed the mountain of sin, and cast it into the sea? What, a believer—and a drunkard! A believer—and a swearer! A believer—and a worldling! Shame! Either leave your sins, or leave your profession! Faith and the love of sin can no more exist together, than light and darkness.

Part 3 cont'd

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4. Faith is a HEART-PACIFYING grace. Peace is the daughter of faith, Romans 5:1. "Being justified by faith—we have peace with God." Faith is the dove that brings an olive branch of peace in its mouth. Faith presents a reconciled God—and that gives peace. What is it which makes heaven—but the smile of God? Faith puts the soul into Christ—and there is peace. "That in me—you may have peace." When the conscience is in a fever, and burns as hell, faith opens the orifice in Christ's side, and sucks in his blood—which has a cooling and pacifying virtue in it!

Faith gives us peace in trouble; nay, out of trouble as well!

1. Faith gives peace in trouble. Faith is a heart-pacifying, because a heart-securing grace. When Noah was in the ark, he did not fear the deluge; he could sing in the ark. Faith shuts a believer into the ark, Christ! "Lead me to the rock which is higher than I," was David's prayer. Faith plants the soul upon this rock. The West Indians built their palaces upon the tops of hills: in the flood the waters covered the hills. But a believer is built higher: "These are the ones who will dwell on high. The rocks of the mountains will be their fortress of safety." Isaiah 33:16. His place of defense shall be the munition of rocks. But a man may starve upon a rock; therefore it follows, "Food will be supplied to them, and they will have water in abundance." Faith builds a Christian upon the power, wisdom, and faithfulness of God—this is the munition of rocks. And faith feeds him with the hidden manna of God's love—here is bread given him. The way to be safe in evil times, is to get faith; this ushers in peace, and it is such a peace as does garrison the heart, Php 4:7. "The peace of God shall guard your heart"; it shall guard it as in a tower or garrison.

2. Faith gathers peace out of trouble. It gathers joy out of sorrow; glory out of reproach. This is the key to Samson's riddle, "out of the eater came meat"; this explains that paradox, "Can a man gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Yes, of trials and persecutions, faith gathers joy and peace: here are figs of thistles. How were the martyrs ravished in the flames! the Apostles were whipped in prison—but it was with sweet-briar. O how sweet is that peace which faith breeds! it is a plant of the heavenly paradise; it is a Christian's festival! it is his music: it is as Chrysostom speaks, the anticipation of heaven.

5. Faith is a HEART-STRENGTHENING grace. A believer has a heart of oak—he is strong to resist temptation, to bear afflictions, to foil corruptions; he gives check to them, though not full mate. An unbeliever is like Rueben, unstable as water, he shall not excel. A state of unbelief is a state of impotency. A believer is as Joseph, who though the archers shot at him, his bow abode in strength. If a Christian is to do anything, he consults with faith; this is the sinew, which if it be cut, all his strength goes from him. When he is called out to suffering, he harnesses himself with faith—he puts on this coat of armor. Faith gives suffering strength, furnishes the soul with suffering promises, musters together suffering graces, and propounds suffering rewards. But how is it, that faith is so strong?

Answer. 1. Because it is a piece of God's armor. It is a shield which God puts into our hand. Ephesians 6:16, "Above all, taking the shield of faith." A shield will serve for a breast-plate; a sword, if need be; and a helmet; it defends the head, it guards the vitals; such a shield is faith.

Answer. 2. Faith brings the strength of Christ into the soul. Php 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." The strength of faith lies outside of itself, it grafts upon another stock—Christ. When it would have wisdom, it consults with Christ, whose name is Wonderful, Counselor. When it would have strength, it goes to Christ, who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Christ is a Christian's armory, faith is the key that unlocks it! Faith hangs upon the lock of Christ, all its strength lies here; cut it off from this lock, and it is weaker than any other grace. Christ may be compared to that tower of David, on which there hung a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men: the faith of all the elect, these shields hang upon Christ. Faith is a heroic grace; the crown of martyrdom is set upon the head of faith. "By faith they quenched the violence of the fire"; the fire overcame their bodies—but their faith overcame the flame.

5. Faith is a LIFE-FRUCTIFYING grace. It is fruitful. Julian, upbraiding the Christians, said, that their motto was, "only believe." Indeed, when faith is alone, and views all the rare beauties in Christ, then faith sets a low value and esteem upon works. But when faith goes abroad in the world, good works are the handmaids which wait on this queen! Though we place faith in the highest orb, in matter of justification—yet good works are in conjunction with it—in matter of sanctification. It is no wrong to good works—to give faith the upper hand, which goes hand in hand with Christ. Good works are not separated from faith—only faith claims the higher rank. Faith believes as if it did not work, and it works as if it did not believe. Faith has Rachel's clear eye, and Leah's fruitful womb! Romans 7:4, "That you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead—that you should bring forth fruit unto God." Faith is that spouse-like grace which marries Christ; and good works are the children which faith bears.

Thus having briefly shown you the nature of faith, I now come to the application: Have you true faith or not? And here let me turn myself, first to unbelievers, such as cannot find that they have this uniting, this espousing grace. What shall I say to you? Go home and mourn; think with yourselves, "What if you should die this night? what if God should send you a letter of summons to judgement? "What would become of you? You lack that faith, which entitles you to Christ and heaven! Oh, I say, mourn! Yet mourn not as those who are without hope, for in the use of means, you may recover a title to Christ. I know it is otherwise in our law-courts; if a title to an estate is once lost, it can never be recovered. But it is otherwise here; though you have no title to Christ today—yet you may recover a title: you have not sinned away the hope of a title, unless you have sinned away the sense of sinning. To such as are resolved to go on in sin, I have not a word to say—except that they shall shortly go to hell. But to you that have been prodigal sons—but are now taking up serious resolutions to give a bill of divorce to your sins, let me encourage you to come to Christ, and to throw yourselves upon his blood; for yet a title to heaven is recoverable.

Objection 1. "But," says the sinner, "Is there hope of mercy for me? surely this is too good news to be true! I would believe, and repent—but I am a great sinner."

Answer. And whom else does Christ come to save! whom does God justify—but the ungodly! Did Christ take our flesh on him, and not our sins?

Objection 2. "But my sins are of no ordinary dye."

Answer. And is not Christ's blood of a deeper purple than your sins? Is there not more virtue in his blood, than there can be venom in the your sin? What if the devil magnifies your sins? Can you not magnify your physician? Cannot God drown one sea in another—your sea of sins, in the ocean of his mercy?

Objection 3. "But my sins are of a long standing."

Answer. Can Christ's blood only heal new and fresh wounds? We read that Christ raised not only the daughter of Jairus, who was newly dead, and the widow's son who was carried forth to burying; but he also Lazarus, who had lain four days in the grave, and had begun to putrefy! Has Christ less virtue now in heaven, than he had upon earth? if yours is an old wound—yet the medicine of Christ's blood, applied by faith, is able to heal it! Therefore, do not sink in these quicksands of despair! Judas' despair was worse in some sense than his treason. I would not encourage any to go on in sin, God forbid! It is sad to have old age and old sins. It is hard to pull up an old tree that is deeply rooted; it is easier to cut it down for the fire! But let not such despair: God can give an old sinner a new heart! He can "make springs in the desert!" Have not others been set forth as patterns of mercy, who have come in at the twelfth hour? Therefore break off your league with sin, throw yourself into Christ's arms! Say, "Lord Jesus, you have said—Those who come to you, you will never cast out!"

2. Let me turn myself to the people of God, such as upon a serious scrutiny with their own hearts, have solid grounds to think that they have faith, and being in the faith, are engrafted into Christ. Read over your charter, "All things are yours!" Things present and to come! You are the heir on which God has settled all these glorious privileges. "Give wine," says Solomon, "to those who are of heavy hearts." But while I am going to pour in this wine of consolation, methinks I hear the Christian sadly disputing against himself, that he has no right to this charter.

Part 4

The Christian's Charter Showing the Privileges of a Believer by Thomas Watson "All things are yours!"

1 Corinthians 3:21

Chapter 21. The Believer's Objections answered.

There are three great objections which he makes.

Objection. 1. "Alas!" says he, "I cannot tell whether I have faith or not."

Answer. Have you no faith? How did you come to see that? A blind man cannot see. You cannot see the lack of grace—but by the light of grace.

Question. "But surely, if I had faith I would be able to discern it?"

Answer 1. You may have faith, and not know it. A man may sometimes seek for that, which he has in his hand. Mary was with Christ, she saw him, she spoke with him—yet her eyes were blurred, that she did not know it was Christ. The child lives in the womb—yet does not know that it lives.

Answer 2. Faith often lies hidden in the heart, and we see it not, for lack of search. The fire lies hidden in the embers—but blow aside the ashes, and it is discernable. Faith may be hidden under fears, or temptations; but blow away the ashes! You prize faith. If had you a thousand jewels lying by, you would part with all of them—for this jewel of faith! No man can prize grace—but he who has it. You desire faith; the true desire of faith, is faith. You mourn for lack of faith; dispute not—but believe! What are these tears—but the seeds of faith.

Objection. 2. "But my faith is weak. The hand of faith so trembles, that I fear it will hardly lay hold upon Christ."

Answer. There are seven things which I shall say in reply to this.

1. A little faith is faith; as a sparkle of fire is fire. Though the pearl of faith be little—yet if it be a true pearl, it shines in God's eyes. This little grace is the seed of God, and it shall never die—but live as a sparkle in the main sea.

2. A weak faith will entitle us to Christ, just as well as a stronger faith. "To those who have obtained like precious faith," 2 Peter 1:1. Not but that there are degrees of faith—as faith sanctifies, so all faith is not alike, one is more than another. But as faith justifies, so faith is alike precious. The weakest faith justifies, just as well as the faith of the most eminent saint! A weak hand is able to receive great alms. For a man to doubt of his grace because it is weak, is to rely upon his grace, rather than upon Christ.

3. The promise is not made to strong faith—but to true faith. The promise does not say, Whoever has a faith which can move mountains, or which can stop the mouths of lions—shall be saved; but

whoever believes—be his faith ever so small. The promise is made to true faith, and for the most part to weak faith. What is a grain of mustard seed, what is a bruised reed—but the emblems of a weak faith? Yet the promise is made to these: "A bruised reed he will not break." The words are a figure of speech, where the lesser is put for the greater. He will not break, that is, he will bind it up! Though Christ chides a weak faith—yet that it may not be discouraged, he makes a promise to it. Hierome observes upon the beatitudes, there are many of the promises made to weak grace; Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit"; "blessed are those who mourn," verse 4, "blessed are those who hunger," verse 5. Matthew 5:3-5

4. A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things may multiply most. The vine is a weak plant, it must be borne up and under-propped—but it is fruitful; it is made in scripture the emblem of fruitfulness. The thief on the cross, when he was newly converted, had but a weak faith; but how many precious clusters grew upon that vine! Luke 23:40. He chides his fellow-thief, "Do you not fear God?" He falls to self-judging, "we indeed suffer justly." He makes a heavenly prayer, and believes in Christ when he says, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom!" Here was a young plant—but very fruitful. Weak Christians often are most fruitful in affections. How strong is the first love to Christ, which is after the first planting of faith!

5. A Christian may mistake, and think he is weak in faith, because he is weak in assurance. But faith may be strongest—when assurance is weakest. Assurance is rather the fruit of faith. The woman of Canaan was weak in assurance—but was strong in faith. Christ gives her three repulses—but her faith stands the shock. She pursues Christ with a holy obstinacy of faith, insomuch that Christ sets a trophy of honor upon her faith, "O woman, great is your faith!" It may be a strong faith, though it does not see the print of the nails! It is a heroic faith which can swim against wind and tide, and believe against hope. Christ sets the crown upon the head of faith—not of assurance! John 20:29, "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed."

6. God has most care of weak believers. The mother tends the weak child the most. "God will gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom." The Lord has a great care of his weak tribes: when Israel marched towards Canaan, the tribes were divided into several companies or brigades: now it is observable, all the weak tribes were not put together, lest they should discourage one another, and so have fainted in their march. But God puts a strong tribe with two weak tribes; as Issachar, Zebulun, two weak tribes, and Judah a victorious tribe. Therefore he gives the lion in his standard. Surely this was not without a mystery, to show what care God has of his weak children! Christ the lion of the tribe of Judah shall be joined to them.

7. Weak faith is a growing faith. It is resembled by the grain of mustard-seed, which, of all seeds, is the least. But when it is full-grown, it is the "greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches." Faith must have a growing time. The seed springs up by degrees, first the blade, and then the ear; and then the full corn in the ear. The strongest faith had once been weak. The faith that has been renowned in the world, was once in its infancy. Grace is like the waters of the sanctuary, which rose higher and higher. Wait on the ordinances, these are the breasts to nourish faith. Do not be discouraged at your weak faith; though it be now in the blossom and bud, it will come to the full flower.

Objection. 3. "But," says a child of God, "I fear I am not elected!"

Answer. What! a believer—and not elected? Who told you that you were not elected? Have you seen your name in the black book of reprobation? Even the angels cannot unclasp this book—and will you meddle with it? Which is our duty to study, God's secret will, or his revealed will? It is a sin for any man to say he is a reprobate—as that which keeps him in sin, must needs be a sin. This opinion keeps him in sin, it cuts the sinews of endeavor. Who will take pains for heaven—who gives himself up for lost? O believer, be of good comfort, you need not look into the book of God's decree—but look into the book of your heart, see what is written there! He who finds the Bible copied out into his heart—his nature transformed, the bias of his will changed, the signature and engravings of the Holy Spirit upon him—this man does not look like a reprobate! When you see the fruits of the earth spring up, you conclude the sun has been there! It is hard to climb up into election. But if we find the fruits of holiness springing up in our hearts—we may conclude the Sun of Righteousness has risen there, 2 Thessalonians 2:13. "God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit." By our sanctification we must calculate our election. Indeed, God in saving us, begins at the highest link of the chain, election; but we must begin at the lowest link of the chain, sanctification, and so ascend higher.

Therefore laying aside all disputes, let me pour in of the wine of consolation. You who are a believer, (and though you will not affirm it—yet you cannot deny it without sin) let me do two things, show you your happiness, then your duty.

1. Behold your happiness! All the things which you have heard of, present and to come—are your portion and privilege! What shall I say to you? All my expressions fall short! When I speak of things to come, I know not how to express myself but by a deep silence and astonishment. O the magnitude and magnificence of the saints' glory! The ascent to it is so high, that it is too high for any man's thoughts to climb! The most sublime spirit, would here be too low and insipid. How happy are you, O believer! If God himself can make you blessed, you shall be so! If being invested with Christ's robes, enameled with his beauty, replenished with his love—if all the dimensions of glory will make you blessed, you shall be so! O the infinite superlative happiness of a believer! All things to come are his!

What! To have a partnership with the angels, those blessed spirits! Nay, to speak with reverence, to have a partnership with God himself! To be enriched with the same glory which sparkled forth in the human nature of Christ! How amazing is this! The thoughts of it are enough to swallow us up! O what an inheritance is he born to, who is new-born! Suppose he is poor in the world, and despised, I say to him as our Savior, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God!" All things to come are yours! Who would not be a believer! O that I might tempt such to Christ—who as yet hold out against him!

Chapter 23. Showing the DUTIES of a believer—in response to God's astonishing mercy.

There are several duties which I would press upon believers; and they branch themselves into ten particulars.

1. If you have such a glorious inheritance to come—admire, and thankfully adore the love of God in settling this rich charter upon you! You who are mirrors of mercy should be monuments of praise. How was David affected with God's goodness? 2 Samuel 7:19, "You have spoken of your servant's house for a great while to come." So should we say, "Lord, you have not only given us

things present—but you have spoken of your servants for a great while to come, nay, forever!" It will be a great part of our work in heaven, to admire God; let us begin to do that work now—which we shall be forever doing.

Adore free grace! Free grace is the hinge on which all this astonishing mercy turns! Every link in this golden chain is richly enameled with free grace! Free grace has provided us a plank after shipwreck. When things past were forfeited—God has given us things to come! When we had lost paradise—he has provided heaven! Thus are we raised a step higher—by our fall. Set the crown upon the head of free grace! O to what a seraphic frame of spirit, should our hearts be raised! How should we join with angels and archangels in blessing God for this! It is well there is an eternity coming; and truly that will be little enough time, to praise God.

Say as that sweet singer of Israel, Psalms 103:1, "Bless the Lord, O my soul"; or as the original will bear, "Bow the knee, O my soul, before the Lord!" Thus should a Christian say, "All things in heaven and earth are mine, God has settled this great portion upon me! Bow the knee, O my soul!" Praise God with the best instrument, the heart, and let the instrument be pitched up to the highest pitch—do it with the whole heart. When God is tuning upon the string of mercy—a Christian should be tuning upon the string of praise! I have given you a taste of this new wine—yet so full of spirits is it, that a little of it would inflame the heart in thankfulness. Let me call upon you, who are the heirs apparent to this rich inheritance, "Things present and to come;" that you would get your hearts elevated, and wound up to a thankful frame!

It is not a handsome posture, to see a Christian ever complaining when things go contrary. O do not so look upon your troubles—as to forget your mercies. Bless God for what is to come! To heighten your praises, consider God gives you not only these things—but he gives you himself! It was Augustine's prayer: "Lord," says he, "Whatever you have given me, take all away, only give me yourself!" Christian! You have not only the gift but the Giver! O take the harp and violin! If you do not bless God—who shall? Where will God get his praise? He has but a little in the world. Praise is in itself a high angelic work, and requires the highest spirited Christians to perform it. Wicked men cannot praise God. Indeed, who can praise God for these glorious privileges to come—but he who has the seal of the Spirit to assure him that all is his? O that I might persuade the people of God to be thankful, "make God's praise glorious." Let me tell you, God is much pleased with this thankful frame. Repentance is the joy of heaven; but thankfulness is the music of heaven! Let not God lack his music! Let it not be said, that God has more murmurers than musicians. "Whoever offers praise, glorifies me."

2. If we have such a glorious inheritance to come—LIVE suitable to these glorious hopes! You who look for things to come, let me tell you, God looks for something present from you; namely, that you live suitably to your hopes. "What kind of people ought you to be?" 2 Pet. 3:21. You have heard what kind of privileges you shall have; yes—but what kind of people ought you to be! Those who look to differ from others in their condition, must differ from them also in their conversation and lifestyle. Therefore beloved, "seeing you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot." We would all be glad to be found of God in peace—then labor to be found without spot. Spot not your faces, spot not your consciences; live as those who are the citizens and nobles of this New Jerusalem above. Walk as Christ did, when he was upon earth. There are three steps, in which we should follow Christ.

1. Live HOLY. His life was a holy life. "Who of you convinces me of sin?" Though he was made sin—yet he knew no sin. The very devils acknowledged his holiness: "We know you who you are—the Holy One of God." O be like Christ; tread in his steps. In the sacrament, "we show forth the Lord's death," and in a holy walk, we show forth his life. The holy oil, with which the vessels of the sanctuary were to be consecrated, was compounded of the purest ingredients. This was a type and emblem of that sanctity which should rest upon the godly: their hearts and lives should be consecrated with the holy oil of the Spirit. Holiness of life is the ornament of the gospel, it credits religion. Sozomen observes, that the devout life of a poor captive Christian woman moved a king and his whole family to embrace the Christian faith. Whereas how does it eclipse, and as it were, entomb the honor of religion, when men profess they are going to heaven—yet there is nothing of heaven in them? If there is light in the lantern—it will shine out. Just so, if grace is in the heart—it will shine forth in the life. The looseness of professors lives—is a great sin to be bewailed. Even those whom we hope (by the rule of charity) have the sap of grace in their heart—yet do not give forth such a sweet fragrance in their lives! How many under the notion of Christian liberty, degenerate into libertinism! The lives of some professors are so bad—that it would make profane men afraid to embrace the Christian religion!

If a stranger should come from beyond the ocean, and see the loose lives of many professors—their covetousness, and their licentiousness; and had he no other Bible to read in, but the lives of some professors, he would turn back again and resolve never to be made a Christian. What a shame is this! Did Christ walk thus—when he was upon earth? His life was a pattern of sanctity! You who are professors, your sins are sins of unkindness; they go nearest to Christ's heart. Do you live as those who have hope of eternal felicity? Is Christ preparing heaven for you—and are you preparing war against him? Is this your kindness to your friend! O consider how you wound religion! Your sins are worse than others! A stain in a black cloth is not easily seen or taken notice of; but a spot in a piece of white linen, everyone's eye is upon it. The sins of wicked men are not much wondered at, they can do nothing else but sin—theirs is a spot on black. But a sin in a professor, this is like a spot on white linen, everyone's eye is upon it! How does this dishonor the gospel? Is it not sad, that others should make a rod of your sin—to lash the gospel? The deviation of the godly, is as odious as the devotion of the profane. O that there were such a luster and majesty of holiness in the lives of professors, that others might say, "These look as if they had been with Jesus! They live as if they were in heaven already!" Aaron must not only have bells for sound—but pomegranates, which were for savor. It is not enough to discourse of godliness, or to make a noise by a profession. What are these bells without the pomegranates; namely, a life which casts no fragrance in the church of God!

2. Walk as Christ did, in HUMILITY. His life was a pattern of humility. He was the heir of heaven, the Godhead was in him, "yet he took on him the form of a servant," Php 2:7. O infinite humility—for a Savior to become a servant; for the Lord of glory to lay aside his robe, and put on rags; as if a king should leave his throne, and serve at table! Nay, that is not all—but Christ washes his disciples' feet. "He poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel," John 13:5. No wonder it is said that he came in the form of a servant; he stands here with his basin of water and a towel! Yes, to express the depth of his humility, he was made in the likeness of men. O how did Christ abase himself in taking flesh! it was more humility in Christ to humble himself to the womb—than to the cross. It was not so much

for flesh to suffer—but for God to be made flesh—this was the wonder of humility! We read that Christ's flesh is called a veil, Hebrews 10:20. "Through the veil, his flesh"; indeed the taking of flesh was the wearing of a veil. By putting this dark veil upon himself, he eclipsed the glory of the Deity. This was Christ's "emptying of himself," Phil. 2. The metaphor may allude to a vessel full of wine that is drawn out; Christ, in whom all fullness dwells, by humility seemed to be so drawn out, as if there had been nothing left in him. Behold here a rare pattern of humility!

You who look for the eternal inheritance—tread in this step of Christ— be humble! Grace shines brightest through the mask of humility! Humility is such a precious herb as grows not in the garden of philosophy, that is rather humanity than humility. Humility beautifies us. The humble saint looks like a citizen of heaven. Humility is the veil of a Christian: Christ's bride never looks more beautiful in his eyes, than when she has on this veil of humility. "Be clothed with humility." Or as the Greek word is, be knotted. Humility is the spangled knot in the garment of our graces.

Humility sweetens our duties. Incense smells sweetest when it is beaten small. When the incense of our duties is beaten small with humility, then it sends forth its most fragrant perfume. The violet is a sweet flower; it hangs down the head so low, that it can hardly be seen, and only discovers itself by its scent. This is the emblem of humility. The humble Christian studies his own unworthiness. He looks with one eye upon grace—to keep his heart cheerful; and with the other eye upon sin—to keep it humble. Better is that sin which humbles me, than that duty which makes me proud! As humility hides another's error—so it hides its own graces. Humility looks upon another's virtues—and its own infirmities. The humble man admires that in another which he slights in himself. He is one who does not deny only his evil things—but his good things. He is one who does not deny only his sins but his duties. He desires to have atonement made even for the pious duties. The humble Christian is no murmurer—yet he is ever complaining. The more knowledge he has, the more he complains of ignorance. The more faith he has, the more he complains of unbelief. In short, the humble Christian translates all the glory—from himself—to Christ. Constantine use to write the name of Christ upon his doors. Just so, does the humble soul write Christ and free-grace upon his duties! "I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I—but the grace of God which was with me!" When he prays, he says—"it is the Spirit who helps my infirmities." When he mourns for sin, he says, "the Almighty makes my heart soft." When his heart is in a good frame, he says, "By the grace of God I am what I am." When he conquers a corruption, he says, "It is through Christ, who strengthens me." As Joab, when he had gotten a victory, sends for king David that he might carry away the crown; just so does the humble Christian, when he has gotten the victory over a corruption, he sets the crown upon the head of Christ! O blessed humility! You who look for things above, let me tell you—the way to ascend is to descend! The lower the tree roots—the higher it shoots up! Would you shoot up in glory, would you be tall cedars in the kingdom of God? Be deeply rooted in humility. Humility is compared by some—to a valley. We must walk to heaven, through this valley of humility. Humility distinguishes Christ's spouse, from harlots. Hypocrites grow in knowledge—but not in humility. "Knowledge puffs up," 1 Corinthians 8:1. It is a metaphor taken from a pair of bellows that are blown up and filled with wind. He who is proud of his knowledge, the devil cares not how much he knows. It is observable in the old law, that God hated the very semblance of the sin of pride. He would have no honey mingled in their offering; "You shall burn no leaven, nor any honey in any offering of the Lord made by fire," Leviticus 2:1. Indeed, leaven is sour—but what is there in honey that should

offend? Why no honey? because honey, when it is mingled with meal, makes it to rise and swell: therefore the people of Israel must mingle no honey in their offering. This was to let us see how God hated the semblance of this sin of pride. Be humble.

3. Be like Christ in LOVE. Christ's life was a life of love. He breathed nothing but love; he was full of this sweet perfume! As his person was lovely, so was his disposition! He was composed all of love: his lips dropped honey, his side dropped blood, his heart dropped love. You who expect these glorious things to come—live as Christ did—live in love! O that this spice might send out its fragrant smell among Christians! "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." Do you love the person of Christ, and hate the picture? "Everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too." There are two devils which are not fully cast out of God's own people; the devil of vain-glory, and the devil of uncharitableness! Are we not fellow-citizens? Do we not all expect the same heaven? Nay, are we not brethren? This should be a sufficient bond to knit us together in amity. We have all the same Father, God; we are born of the same mother, the Church; we are begotten of the same seed, the Word; we suck the same breasts, the promises; we feed at the same table, the Table of the Lord; we all wear the same clothing, the Robe of Christ's Righteousness; we are partners in the same glory, the inheritance of the saints in light. Shall we not love one another!

You who look for things to come—live suitably to your hopes! Walk as Christ did, that some of his beams may shine in you, and his life may be copied out in yours!

3. If we have such a glorious inheritance to come—be content, though you have the less of present things. A believer is to be valued, according to that which is in eternity. Things to come are his. If you were to take an estimate of a man's estate—would you value it by that which he has in his house, or by his land? Perhaps he has little in his house, little money or decorations. But he has a rich inheritance coming—there lies his estate. While we are in this house of clay, we have but little. Many a Christian can hardly keep life and soul together; but he has a rich inheritance coming! So be content with less of present things. It is sufficient if we have but enough for our necessities, until we come to heaven! An heir who has a great estate beyond the sea, will be content, though he has but little money for his voyage there! Should not Hagar have been content, though the water were spent in her bottle, when there was a well so near? God has given Christ to a believer, and in him all things, "things present and to come," grace and glory! Is not this enough to make him content? "But," says the Christian, "I want present comforts." Consider, the angels in heaven are rich—yet they have no money. You have things to come—angels' riches, so be content then, with the less of present things. If you complain of anything—let it be of your complaining.

4. If we have such a glorious inheritance to come—labor for such a high degree of faith, as to make these future blessings, to become present realities. Faith and hope are two sisters, and are very alike. But they differ thus; hope looks at the excellency of the promise, faith looks at the certainty of it. Now faith looking at the infallible truth of him who promises, thus it makes things to come, present. Faith does antedate glory; it does substantiate things not seen. Faith alters the tenses—it puts the future into the present tense, Psalms 60:7, "Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine, Ephraim is the strength of my head," etc. Those places were not yet subdued—but God had spoken in his holiness, he had made David a promise, and he believed it, therefore he looked

upon it as already subdued: Gilead is mine, etc. "Just so," says faith, "God has spoken in his holiness; he has made me a promise of things to come; therefore heaven is mine already!" When one will shortly have the inheritance of a house, he says, "this house is mine!" O that we had this art of faith, thus to anticipate heaven, and make things to come present. You who are a believer—heaven is yours now! Your head is already glorified; nay, heaven is begun in you—you have some of those joys which are the first fruits of it. A Christian, by the eye of faith, through the telescope of the promise—may see into heaven. Faith sees the promise fulfilled before it is fulfilled. Faith sets it down as already received—before it is paid. Had we a vigorous faith, we might be in heaven before our time! That which a weak believer hopes for—a strong believer does in some measure, possess. Oh that we could often take a prospect of the heavenly paradise: "Go, inspect the city of Jerusalem. Walk around and count the many towers. Take note of the fortified walls, and tour all the citadels," Psalms 48:12-13. So, go and inspect your heavenly inheritance, see what a glorious situation it is, go count her towers, see what an inheritance you have! O that every day—we could thus look by faith into our heavenly inheritance! Do not say, "all this shall be mine;" but say, "all this is mine already! My head is there, my faith is there, my heart is there!" Could we thus, living up to the height of our faith, realize and enter into things to come—how would all present things vanish! If a man could live in the sun—the earth would not appear! When Paul had been enraptured up into the third heaven, the earth did hardly appear ever after! See how he scorns it, "I am crucified to the world!" It was a dead thing to him, he had begun heaven already. Thus it is with a man who is heavenized. You saints who are earthly—the eye of your faith is bloodshot! It is the character of a sinner, "he cannot see afar off"; like a man who has bad eyes, who can see only things which are just before him. Faith carries the heart up to heaven—and brings heaven down into the heart!

5. If we have such a glorious inheritance to come—then walk CHEERFULLY with God. Put on your white robes! Has a believer a title to heaven? What—and sad! "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God!" Romans 5:2. It is but a little while—it is but putting off the earthly clothes of our body—and we shall be clothed with the bright robes of glory! And can a believer be sad! See how Christ does secretly check his disciples for this, Luke 24:17. What, sad—and Christ risen! So I say to believers—things to come are yours! How can you be sad? Let them be sad—who have no hope. O rejoice in God! When the lead of the flesh begins to sink, let the cork of faith swim above! How does the heir rejoice in hope of the inheritance! How does the slave rejoice to think of ending his time of service! Here on earth, we are harassed by sin, and a child of God is forced sometimes to do the devil's work—but shortly death will make us free! There is an eternal jubilee coming, therefore "rejoice in hope of the glory of God!" Can wicked men rejoice that have their portion in this life? And cannot he rejoice, who has an inheritance in heaven? Can the waters of Abanah and Pharpar compare to the waters of Jordan?

O you saints, think into what a blessed condition you are now brought! Is it not a sweet thing to have God appeased? Is it not a matter of joy to be an heir of the promise? Adam in paradise had choice of all the trees, one only excepted. The promises are the trees of life—you may walk in the garden of the Bible, and pluck from all these trees. Who should rejoice—if not a Christian? He has never so much cause to be sad—as he has to be cheerful.

Objection: 1. But my sins trouble me.

Answer. This is true. That sin will not forsake you—is matter of sadness; but that you have forsaken sin—is matter of joy! Sin is a heavy weight upon you. That you cannot run so fast as you desire, in the ways of God, is matter of sadness. But that you go without halting (in regard of righteousness) this is matter of joy! And for your comfort remember, shortly you shall sin no more—all things shall be yours—but sin!

Objection: 2. But we are bid to mourn.

Answer. I would not speak against holy mourning; while we carry fire about us, we must carry water. That is, as long as the fire of sin burns in our breasts, we must carry tears to quench it. But consider,

1. Spiritual joy and mourning are not inconsistent. Sometimes it rains and shines at once: when there is a shower in the eyes, there may be a sunshine in our heart. Mourning and music may stand together; the great mourner in Israel, was the sweet singer of Israel.

2. The end why God makes us sad, is to make us rejoice; he does not require sorrow for sorrow—but it is ordained to be as sauce to make our joy relish the better. We sow in tears—that we may reap in joy.

3. The sweetest joy is from the sourest tears. Christ made the best wine—from water. The purest and most excellent joy, is made of the waters of true repentance. The bee gathers the best honey from the bitterest herbs. Tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. After Hannah had wept, she went away, and was no longer sad. Those clouds are very uncomfortable, which never have any sunshine. Just so, that mourning which dyes the soul all in sable, which has no place for rejoicing, I would rather think it despair, than true remorse. The same God who has bid us mourn, has also bid us rejoice, Php 4:4. It is an excellent temper to be serious—yet cheerful. Jesus Christ loves the joyful Christian. Joy puts liveliness and activity into a Christian, it oils the wheels of the affections. A heavy mind makes a dull action. The joy of the Lord is your strength. The pensive, melancholy Christian, disparages the glory of heaven. What will others say? Here is one who speaks of future glory—but surely he does not believe it—see how sad he is! What ado is here on earth, to make a child of God cheerful! Must we have to force an heir, to rejoice in the estate which has befallen him? Let me tell you, you who refuse consolation, are not fit people to praise God—it is a contradiction to praise God with a sad heart: "I will sing praises," Psalms 108:1. It is more proper to sing praises, than to weep them. Rejoice, O Christian, lift up your crest, triumph in the hope of these things to come. It is not enough that there is joy within the Christian's heart—but it must shine forth in his countenance.

6. If we have such a glorious inheritance to come—let him not envy those who have only present things. God often wrings out the waters of a full cup to wicked men; but there are dregs at the bottom! Indeed, the prosperity of sinners is a great temptation. David stumbled at it, and had almost fallen. Psalm 73, "My feet had well near slipped!" It is not matter of envy but pity—to see men thrive in a way of sin! Do you envy a fool is in mirthful clothes? Do you envy a condemned man, who is going up the ladder to be hung—simply because he has a rich coat? "Those who will be rich, fall into temptations and a snare," 1 Timothy 6:9. Do you envy a man who is fallen into a snare? Wicked men have that guilt which embitters their comforts. They are like a man who has great possessions—yet having a fit of the stone or gout, while he is in that torment, he may be said

not to have them, because the comfort of them is taken away. A believer has better things than these—an blissful inheritance! Wicked men have a crown of unrighteousness, but you have a crown of righteousness! They have rich robes, but you have the bright robe of glory. "Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways." Better is sanctified adversity, than successful impiety.

7. If we have such a glorious inheritance to come—be supported in lack of spiritual comfort. Spiritual joy is a sweet thing; this is the hidden manna, the cluster of grapes which grow upon the true vine; this is the saints' banqueting stuff; how sweet is it to have Word, and Spirit, and Conscience speaking peace! in the mouth of these three witnesses, faith is confirmed. "But," says the poor soul that goes mourning, "It is not so with me, I have not the secret seal of heaven, I lack assurance." Well, do not give up waiting. We read that the disciples were in the ship, and there arose a great storm, "And when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus." This, O Christian, may be your case: there is a tempest of sorrow risen in your heart; and you have rowed from one ordinance to another, and have no comfort! Well, be not discouraged, do not give up rowing; you have but rowed three or four miles; perhaps when you has rowed a little more—you may see Jesus, and have a comfortable evidence of his love! But suppose you should row all your life long, and not have assurance—yet this may be a pillar of support—things to come are yours! It is but waiting a while—and you shall be brimful of comfort! A believer is now an heir of this joy; let him wait until he is of age, and he shall be fully possessed of the joys of heaven. For the present, God leaves a seed of comfort in the heart; there is a time shortly coming, when we shall have the full flower; we shall drink of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of heaven! As Paul said of Onesimus, Philem. verse 15, "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that you might receive him forever." So I say of the comforts of God's Spirit—that they may be withdrawn for a season, that we may have them forever! There is a time coming when we shall bathe ourselves in the rivers of divine pleasure.

8. If we have such a glorious inheritance to come—let us zealously contend for it against all oppositions. We have a city above—but there are enemies in the way which we must give battle to. God would give Israel Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; but first they must encounter with the sons of Anak. So he will bestow upon us a crown—but we must fight for it. Heaven is not taken without storm. Hence it is the scripture bids us to "fight the good fight of faith," 1 Timothy 6:12, that we may not through a slothful negligence lose the recompense of a reward. Christians must be military people; it befits the children of light to put on the armor of light. The apostle reckons up our several pieces of armor; the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breastplate of righteousness; and our weapons—the sword of the Spirit, the cannon-bullet of prayer. Indeed in heaven our armor shall be hung up in token of victory and triumph; but now it is a day of battle, and no cessation of arms, until death. And there is a threefold regiment we must fight against, which would hinder us of our eternal crown.

1. The enemy within, namely, a treacherous HEART. This is a sly enemy; "A man's enemies are those of his own house," Micah 7:6, nay, of his own heart! Man by his fall lost his head-piece, namely, spiritual wisdom, and ever since he is an enemy to himself. He lays a snare for his own blood, Proverbs 1:18, therefore Augustine prays, "Lord deliver me from that evil man—myself!" The heart is a conclave of wickedness. It is an armory and magazine, where all the weapons of unrighteousness lie. The heart holds conference with Satan—and it sides with him—at every turn is ready to deliver up the keys to him. This is good reason why we should gird on our armor, and

give battle to this bosom traitor, which stands in our way to the heavenly crown.

It is reported of Basil, that to shun the allurements and flatteries of the world, he retired and fled into the wilderness; but when he was there, he cries out against his heart, "I have forsaken all—but my evil heart is still tempting me!" Luther used to say, that he feared his heart more than pope or cardinals. Your heart, O Christian, would supplant you of the eternal inheritance. O therefore make a brave fight, run the sword of the Spirit up to the hilt, in the blood of your sins! Stab your heart-lusts to the heart with the knife of mortification! If the flesh does war against us, good reason we should war against the flesh.

2. The second regiment that stands in the way to salvation, and which we must arm against, is the DEVIL. He may be called a regiment, for his name being Legion. This is the red regiment! How furiously does he make his onset upon us, sometimes with temptations, sometimes with persecutions, that if possible we might let fall our armor, and so let go our crown! The devil, that roaring lion, while we are marching to heaven, raises all the bands of hell against us; "whom resist, steadfast in the faith," 1 Peter 5:9. Our enemy is beaten in part already, he knows no march but running away.

3. The third regiment which stands in our way to heaven is the WORLD. This enemy courts us. It smiles that it may deceive. It kills by embracing! It has a golden apple in one hand—and a dagger in the other! Marcia gave to the emperor Commodus poison, in sweet wine. Such an aromatic cup does the world present us with—that we may drink and die. The ivy, while it clasps about the oak, sucks away the heart of it for its own leaves and berries; such are the world's embraces. "The one I kiss," says Judas, "is the man; arrest him and lead him away." So, whom the world kisses—it often betrays. The world is a silken halter. The world is a golden fetter. Some have been drowned in the sweet waters of pleasure! Others have been choked in silver mines! Oh arm, arm against this flattering enemy! "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God." James 4:4

If the world's music enchants us, and we fall asleep upon our guard, then the devil falls on, and wounds us. Fight it out against all these regiments.

Consider the excellency of the prize! Things to come! What striving is there for earthly crowns and scepters! with what zeal and alacrity did Hannibal continue his march over the Alps, and Caesar's soldiers fight with hunger and cold? Men will break through laws and oaths, run a thousand hazards for those things which, when they have them, will prove damnable gains. But "things to come are yours." You expect salvation, which is the crown of your desires, the flower of your ambition; oh therefore muster and rally together all your forces against this three-headed adversary which stands in your way to hinder you from taking possession. Fight it out to the death, you have a good captain; Christ is "the Captain of your salvation," Hebrews 2:10. If a flock of sheep have a lion for their captain, what need they fear? So, fear not little flock, you fight under the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

9. If we have such a glorious inheritance to come—if all Christ's things are ours—then all our things must be Christ's.

Justice and equity require it. There is a joint interest between Christ and a believer Christ says, "All that is mine—is yours!" Then the heart of a believer must echo back to Christ, "Lord, all that is mine—is yours!" It was the saying of a holy man, "Lord, you are my all; and my all is yours." Oh be willing to spend, and be spent; do, and suffer for Christ.

1. Let us, with all our might, advance the honor and interest of Jesus Christ! Alas, what is all that we can do? If a king should bestow upon a person, a million dollars per year, with this proviso—that this person shall pay a peppercorn every year to the king; what proportion is there between this man's payment—and his revenue? Alas, we are but unprofitable servants; all that we can do for Christ is not so much as this peppercorn! Yet up, and be doing! Christ hates compliments: we must not only bow the knee to him—but, with the wise men, present him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Do not be like the sons of Belial, who brought their king no presents. "But," says the Christian, "I am poor, and can do little for Christ." Can you not bestow your love upon Christ? In the law, he who could not afford a lamb for an offering, if he brought but two turtle-doves, it was sufficient. The woman in the gospel threw in only her two mites—yet she was accepted. God is not angry with any man because he has but one talent—but because he does not use it.

2. Suffer for Christ, be willing to sell all, nay, to lose all for Christ. We may be losers for him, we shall never be losers by him. If he calls for our blood, let us not deny it him; we have no such blood to shed for Christ—as he has shed for us. It was Luther's saying, "That in the cause of God he was content to endure the odium and fury of the whole world." Basil affirms of the primitive saints, they had so much courage in their sufferings, that many of the heathens, seeing their heroic zeal, turned Christians. They snatched up torments as so many crowns! O think nothing too dear for Christ! We who look for things to come, should be willing to part with things present for Christ.

10. Lastly, If we have such a glorious inheritance to come—be content to wait for these great privileges. It is not incongruous to long for Christ's appearing, and yet to wait for it. You see the glory which a believer shall be invested with; but though the Lord gives a large portion, he may set a long day for the payment. David had the promise of a crown—but was long before he came to wear it. God will not deny his promise—yet he may delay his promise, to teach us to wait. It is but a shortsighted faith, which cannot wait. The farmer waits for the seed. There is a seed of glory sown in a believer's heart; wait until it springs up into a harvest.

Truly, it is a hard thing to wait for these things to come. There are so many discouragements from without, so many distempers from within, that the Christian desires to be at home with Christ. Therefore we need patience, Hebrews 10:36, "For you have need of patience." But how shall we get it? Nourish faith. verse 35, "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded." Patience is nothing else but faith spun out; if you would lengthen patience, be sure to strengthen faith.

There are great reasons why a believer should be content to wait for heaven.

1. God is faithful who promises. God's word is security enough to venture upon. All the world hangs upon the word of his power; and cannot our faith hang upon the word of his promise? We have His hand and seal, nay, his oath!

2. While we are waiting, God is tuning and fitting us for glory. "Giving thanks to the Father, who has made us fit for the inheritance," Colossians 1:12. We must be made fit. Perhaps our hearts are not humble enough, or not patient enough. Perhaps our faith is but in its infancy. We should be content to wait a while, until we have gotten such a vigorous faith as will carry us full sail to heaven! As there is a ripening and a fitting of vessels for hell, Romans 9:22, so there is a ripening and a preparing of the vessels of mercy, verse 23. A Christian should be willing to wait for glory, until he is fit to take his inheritance.

3. While we are waiting, our glory is increasing. While we are laying out for God—he is laying up for us, 2 Timothy 4:8. If we suffer for God, the heavier our cross—the heavier shall be our crown. Would a Christian be in the meridian of glory? Would he have his robes shine bright? Let him stay here and do service; God will reward us, though not for our works—yet according to our works, Mark 16:27. The longer we keep the principal, the greater will the interest be. The longer a Christian lives, the more glory he may bring to God. Faith is an ingenuous grace; as it has one eye at the reward, so it has another eye at duty. The time of life is the only time we have to work for God. Heaven is a place of receiving; this world is a place of doing. Hence the apostle being inflamed with divine love, though he desired with all his heart be with Christ—yet he was content to live a while longer, that he might build up souls, and make the crown flourish upon the head of Christ.

It is self-love which says, "Who will show us any good?" Divine love says, "How may I do good?" The prodigal son could say, "Father, give me my portion!" He thought more of his portion than his duty. A gracious spirit is content to stay out of heaven a while—that he may be a means to bring others there. He whose heart has been divinely touched with the love of God, his care is not so much for receiving the talents of gold, as for improving the talents of grace. O wait a while! Learn from the saints of old, they waited patiently. If we cannot wait now, what would we have done in the times of the long-lived patriarchs? Look upon worldly men, they wait for pleasures. Shall they wait for earth—and cannot we wait for heaven! If a man has the promise of a grand estate, when such a lease is out, will he not wait for it? We have the promise of heaven when the lease of life is run out; and shall we not wait?

Look upon wicked men, they wait for an opportunity to sin; the adulterer waits for the twilight; sinners "lie in wait for their own blood," Proverbs 1:18. Shall men wait for their damnation, and shall not we be content to wait for our salvation? Wait without murmuring, wait without fainting! The things we expect are infinitely more than we can hope for. And let me add one caution; "wait on the Lord and keep to his ways," Psalms 37:34. While we are waiting, let us take heed of wavering. Go not a step out of God's way, though a lion be in the way. Do not avoid duty—to meet with safety. Keep to God's highway, "the good old way," Jeremiah 6:16, the way which is paved with holiness, Isaiah 25:8. "And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness." Avoid crooked paths, take heed of turning to the left hand, lest you be set on the left hand! Sin crosses our hopes; it barricades up our way. A man may as well expect to find heaven in hell, as in a sinful way. My last use is to such as have only present things—that they would labor for things to come. You have seen the blessed condition of a man in Christ; never rest until this be yours. Alas, how poor and contemptible are these present earthly enjoyments, when laid in balance with things to come!

1. What is honor— which is the highest elevation of men's ambition? One calls honor—the gallant madness. It was foretold to Agrippina, Nero's mother, that her son would be emperor, and that he would afterward kill his own mother; to which Agrippina replied, "let my son be emperor, and then let him kill me and spare not"—so thirsty was she of honor. Alas, what are swelling titles but rattles to applaud men's ambition? Honor is like a gale of wind which carries the ship; sometimes this wind is down, a man has lost his honor, and lives to see himself entombed: sometimes this wind is too high: how many have been blown to hell, while they have been sailing with the wind of popular applause! Honor is but a glorious nothing! Acts 25:23. It does not make a man really the better—but often the worse. A man swelled with honor, lacking grace—his bigness is his disease and doom.

2. What are riches—that men so thirst after them? Amos 2:7, "Who pant after the dust of the earth." Golden dust will sooner choke than satisfy! How many have pulled down their souls to build up their houses! What a transiency and deficiency is there in all things under the sun? Christ, who had all riches, scorned these earthly riches. He was born poor—the feeding-trough was his cradle, the cobwebs his curtains. He lived poor—he had nowhere to lay his head. He died poor; he made no will; he had no crown-lands, only his coat was left, and that the soldiers parted among them. His funeral was fitting; for as he was born in another man's stable, so he was buried in another man's tomb; to show how he did despise earthly dignities and possessions. His kingdom was not of this world.

Suppose an hour of adversity comes, can these present earthly things quiet the mind in trouble? Riches are called thick clay, which will sooner break the back, than lighten the heart. When pangs of conscience and pangs of death come, and there is no hope of things to come, what peace can the world give at such a time? Surely it can yield no more comfort, than a silken stocking to a man whose leg is out of joint. A fresh color delights the eye; but if the eye be sore, this color will not heal it. "Riches avail not in the day of wrath." You can not hold your wedge of gold as a screen to keep off the fire of God's justice.

Let this sound a retreat to call us off from the immoderate pursuit of present things, to labor for things to come. What are these lower springs—compared to the upper springs? As Abraham said, "Lord, what will you give me, seeing I go childless?" So say, "Lord, what will you give me, seeing I go Christless?" Luther did solemnly protest, God should not put him off with these worldly things. Oh labor for those blessings in heavenly places. Earthly things may be pleasing—but they are not permanent. Do not be content with a few earthly gifts: Abraham gave unto the sons of the concubines gifts, and sent them away; "but unto Isaac, he gave all that he had." Reprobates may have a few jewels and earrings which God scatters with an indifferent hand: these, like the sons of the concubines, are put off with a few earthly gifts. But labor for the eternal inheritance! Get into Christ, and then all is yours! So says the Apostle, "All things are yours, and you belong to Christ!"

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