

A Knowledge of Christ, and of Interest in Him

by John Gill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in Christ, highlighting the object of faith, the knowledge of Christ, and the persuasion of Christ's ability to keep what we have committed to him.

Scripture: Ephesians 2:8, 2 Timothy 1:12

Topics: "Assurance of Salvation", "Faith in Christ"

Description

John Gill preaches on the profound knowledge of Christ and the believer's interest in Him as the ultimate support in life and death, particularly in light of the passing of Mr. Joshua Hayes. He emphasizes that true faith is not merely historical but involves a deep, personal knowledge of Christ, who is able to keep what we commit to Him. Gill illustrates how this knowledge provides comfort and assurance, especially in the face of death, as believers can trust in Christ's ability to save and sustain them. He reflects on the importance of committing one's soul to Christ, highlighting that this relationship is essential for both present peace and future hope. The sermon concludes with a call to recognize the significance of knowing Christ and the comfort it brings in all circumstances.

Transcript

A KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST,
AND OF INTEREST IN HIM,
THE SUPPORT OF A BELIEVER
IN LIFE AND IN DEATH.

A Discourse occasioned by the Death of Mr. Joshua Hayes.

2 TIMOTHY 1:12

I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

THE occasion of my reading these words, at this time is the decease of Mr. Joshua Hayes, late member of this church of Christ: who frequently made use of them, and expressed his faith in a living Redeemer by them. It was therefore thought, by his friends, that they would be very suitable for the subject of a Funeral

Discourse; in compliance with whose request, I have read them unto you. In the 9th and 10th verses of this chapter, we have the sum and substance of the everlasting gospel; which lies in salvation by the free grace of God (in distinction from the works of men), according to the eternal purpose of God, and the wise scheme of things formed in the divine mind from everlasting: where it was a secret and hidden thing, but now made manifest by the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ in our nature; who by his obedience, sufferings, and death, hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

All this you will see in the verses I have referred to, which run thus: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel. Which exactly agrees with what the apostle elsewhere affirms, that we are saved by grace not by works, lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2:9) And that these, who are the chosen of God are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus; according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:3, 4) Christ incarnate is become the high Priest of these great things laid up in the everlasting purpose, covenant, and promise of God: and has abolished death, even corporal death, as a penal evil, and destroyed the second death, so that it shall have no power over those whom he has redeemed by his precious blood and by his obedience, sufferings and death, hath opened a way for them to enjoy eternal life.

He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10) This is a compendium of the grace of the gospel; of that gospel, of which the apostle says he was appointed a preacher. And a gospel preacher indeed he was. Never was the gospel more freely, fully, faithfully, and powerfully or constantly preached, than it was by him. He was appointed to this work from all eternity. He was a chosen vessel of salvation (as the Lord himself says) to bear his name among the Gentiles. (Acts 9:15) He was also appointed by a gospel church at Antioch: for, said the Spirit of God in the prophets there, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (Acts 13:12) He was an apostle of Jesus Christ, and had all the signs of apostleship in him.

An apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ: (Gal. 1:1) sent forth, commissioned and qualified by him for the important work of preaching the everlasting gospel. And particularly he was, as he said, a teacher of the Gentiles: for though all the apostles and ministers of the word were included in the same commission, and commanded to go into all nations, teaching and baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; yet our apostle had a special and particular commission to preach the gospel among the Gentiles.

As the gospel of the circumcision was committed to Peter (for he was the person more particularly pitched upon to preach the gospel to the circumcised Jews), so Paul was particularly pitched upon to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, And it is not easy to say, to how many nations he was sent, and among whom he preached the gospel, and among whom he was made successful in founding and raising churches for the honour and glory of God. Now, on the account of this his office, and the faithful execution of it, he met with much persecution.

For the which cause (says he), I also suffer these things; (2 Tim. 1:12) for he was at this time a prisoner at Rome. Again, he says, I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elects' sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. And this was no other than what he always expected wherever he came. He

knew, from the nature of things, and from divine appointment, that bonds and afflictions awaited him wherever he went; and he cheerfully endured them for the good of souls, and the glory of the divine name.

For the which cause, I also suffer these things, verse 12, that is, for being a preacher of the gospel, an apostle of Christ. He was hated by Jews and Gentiles on this account: of the Jews, partly because he preached the gospel, and partly because he preached it to the Gentiles, that they might be saved; than which nothing more provoking to them. Hated by the Gentiles, because they thought he introduced a new religion among them, and that he was a setter up of strange Gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection; (Acts 17:18) because his ministry tended to the demolishing of idolatry and superstition amongst them.

Wherefore he was hated by them, and endured the things he did; to all which he was appointed, as well as to be a preacher of the gospel. Nevertheless, (he adds) I am not ashamed. Not ashamed of the sufferings I endure in a righteous cause: not ashamed of the gospel, for which I suffer these things, which is the power of God unto salvation. Nor am I ashamed of Christ, the sum and substance of this gospel; not ashamed of my faith in him, nor of my hope of eternal life and salvation by him; for hope makes not ashamed. (Rom. 5:5) Now the ground of all this, lies in the words I have read: For I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day.

This was the foundation of the apostle's joy and comfort, of the satisfaction of soul, and serenity of mind, which he enjoyed amidst all the sufferings he endured for the sake of the gospel. He had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew the object in whom he had believed. He knew him at first conversion; and had, throughout the whole of his ministrations, committed his natural life, and the preservation of it, into the hands of a good God, and a blessed Redeemer. He was therefore easy, come what would.

Whatever suffering he endured, he knew all was safe. I know whom I have believed. I know he will never leave me, nor forsake me; he will preserve and bring me safe to his everlasting kingdom and glory, where I shall enjoy the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day. (2 Tim. 4:8) And that which was the ground and support of him, under all his trials and exercises, may be, and often is, the support of the people of God under all their trials and exercises; or what gives them relief under their present troubles, and in the view of an eternal world, This will better appear, and we shall have a clearer understanding thereof, by enquiring into, and observing the following things.

I. Who the object of the apostle's faith was, or who it was he believed and trusted his all with I know whom I have believed, or trusted. II. The knowledge he had of this object of Faith whom he believed and trusted. I know, &c. IN. The persuasion he had of the ability of this person he had believed in, to keep what he had committed to him against a certain day. IV. The support this was to him in his present circumstances, and in the view of death and eternity, which he saw was near at hand; for he says in a following passage, I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. (2 Tim. 4:6) I.

Let us consider who it was that was the object of the apostle's faith, and is the object of the faith of every true believer. Now this can be no other than our Lord Jesus Christ. How often do we hear him speak of his faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! This was the constant course of his spiritual life. This he assures us himself. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20) From hence it is clear, that the object he believed in, or trusted, was the Son of God: the Messiah: the Lord

Jesus Christ.

And he is the object of every true believer's faith, and ought to be so. Our Lord himself directs unto it when he says to his disciples, Ye believe in God, believe also in me. (John 14:1) There is the same reason to believe in Christ as in God the Father because he is equally God with him; so is as proper an object of faith as the first person in the blessed Trinity. And it is unto him that souls, made sensible of their lost state and condition by nature, are encouraged to look, to believe in, and exercise faith upon, as you will observe in the instance of the Jailor.

When he came in trembling and said, "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?" they answer at once, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. (Acts 14:31) Christ is the object of a sensible sinner's trust: the object of a true believer's faith in the business of salvation. But then let us enquire a little into the nature of this faith he exercises upon Him. It is not to be considered as a mere historical faith: a bare assent to a set of propositions concerning Christ, his person, offices, and the like; no, the devils have a faith; they have a creed, and in many respects a more orthodox one too than some that call themselves Christians.

The devils believe that there is a God, and that there is one God; though they tremble at it. They know and believe, that Jesus Christ is the Holy One of God; yea, that he is the Son of God, and that he is the Christ, the Anointed of the Lord, sent into the world to be the Saviour of men. All this they believe, and a great deal more that they are obliged to believe, and cannot help it, concerning the Son of God; but this is not the faith of God's Elect. There are some weak people in our days that talk of a bare belief of the simple truth, and call this, faith in Christ Jesus; but it falls greatly short of it.

For a man may have all faith of this kind, may believe every thing that is proposed and revealed in the word of God, and yet not have that faith which is of the operation of God. Special faith is a spiritual thing. It is a spiritual sight of Christ. Yea, faith is the eye of the soul, the enlightened eye of the soul opened by the Spirit of God, to see the glory, the excellency, there is in our Lord Jesus Christ: to see his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth to see him as the able, willing, all-sufficient, and most suitable Saviour.

Faith is said to be the evidence of things not seen. It has a sight of unseen things, as of the unseen Saviour; and in its continual and constant actings is a looking unto Jesus. Looking off from every other object (a man's own righteousness, and every thing else) unto Jesus Christ the Lord our righteousness, as the living Redeemer, the only and all-sufficient Saviour. It is no other than a soul's going out of itself to Christ, to lay hold upon him, and trust in him for everlasting life and happiness.

Expressed often by a coming to him, influenced by his Spirit and grace, and the declarations of grace he makes, saying, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give rest. (Matt. 11:28) And all that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37) A poor sinner, sensible of his wretched lost state by nature, and of what he deserves, is encouraged to go out of himself to lay hold on Christ, who is the tree of life to them that lay hold upon him.

It is, I say, a going forth and laying hold of Christ, under a sight of sin and a sense of danger, of ruin and destruction without him. Some people in our days talk of faith as a very easy thing--only believe--only believe, say they; but it is to be feared these persons that talk in this manner, and make such an easy thing of believing in Christ, never saw their lost state by nature, the sinfulness of sin, and the ruin and destruction that it brings: never saw themselves upon the precipice of hell, dropping as it were into

everlasting damnation.

Let a person be in these circumstances, and then let him tell me, whether it is an easy thing for him to believe in Christ for life and salvation: and yet this is done, and herein lies the trial of faith. This shews the genuineness of it, when a soul under a sense of all its iniquities, with all their aggravating circumstances, demerits and deserts, can venture his soul upon Christ. Give me this man. It is he that knows what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But he finds a great many discouragements, doubts, and fears; a thousand objections before he can do this.

He does not find it a very easy thing: it is a work of almighty power and efficacious grace. It was under such a sense of sin as I have mentioned, that the apostle trusted in Christ; and he considers that grace as exceeding abundant which communicated faith and love to his soul who had been before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious. 1 Timothy 1:13, 14. And his faith arose to a full assurance, as the words of our text expresses; and elsewhere he says, The life I live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20) He had a firm belief of interest in Christ: an assurance of faith in Christ.

And it is what the Lord is pleased to grant unto some of his children that have not that share of grace and gifts as that great man had; Let us (he says) draw near with a true heart. (Heb. 10:22) He does not mean himself only, and his fellow apostles, or men of the highest gifts and character in the church; but the children of God in general; believers in common: Let us, all of us, draw near to God with a true heart, in a full assurance of faith. In full assurance of the object of faith prayed unto; that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

In full assurance of having those petitions put up unto him that are agreeable to his will answered; in full assurance of a Mediator between God and man, and of an interest in his prevailing mediation and intercession; "Let us draw near with true hearts in full assurance of faith," by the blood of Jesus. For that is the ground and foundation of all assurance: even the precious blood of Jesus, shed for many for the remission of sins. Now this faith, whether in a higher or in a lower degree, as to the principle of it, is of God.

It is not of a man's self; no, it is by the grace of God, and the power of God, that it is wrought. All men have not faith: (2 Thess. 3:2) no, far from it. The greater part appear to have none, no true faith; and it is to be feared, that many that talk of it, are destitute of it, and know not what the thing is. And they that have it, have it not of themselves: By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. (Eph. 2:8) Hence our Lord says, No man can come unto me, (that is, believe in me) except it be given unto him of my Father. (John 6:65) Special faith is a gift of God's grace; and it is of the operation of the Spirit of God in the soul.

He works it there. It is he that gives this spiritual eye, the eye of faith; which communicates light to the understanding, and enables the soul to go out of itself to Christ, and venture upon him for life and salvation. It is the fruit and effect of electing grace; and therefore it is sometimes called the faith of God's elect. (Titus 1:1) It is an exceeding precious grace in all, it is like precious faith; (2 Peter 1:1) for those that have the least degree of it, obtain the same precious faith as the greatest and strongest believer.

It is precious faith, it can never be lost; it is more precious than gold which perisheth. Gold is a very durable metal, but it perishes; but faith never does. Christ, who is the object and the author of it, he is the finisher of it; and he prays for his people, as he did for Peter, that their faith fail not. That same Spirit of

grace that works faith in the soul, performs the work of faith with power upon the soul. Those that truly believe in Christ, shall most certainly receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

So much for the first thing, the object of faith; and the exercise of faith upon the object. I know whom I have believed. II. I am to consider the knowledge the apostle had of the object of his faith; and which every true believer also has. I know whom I have believed. Faith in Christ, is not a blind and implicit thing, a faith in an object unknown; no, it is in a known object. Faith and knowledge go together! where the one is, the other is also. Though there may be, and is, faith in an unseen Christ, that is, who is not seen with the bodily eyes; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: (1 Peter 1:8) yet an unknown Christ can never be the object of faith.

He must be known, or he can never be believed in. Our Lord said to the blind man, whom he had cured, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? (John 9:35) The poor man made answer, and very wisely, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? Suggesting, that he must know him, before he could believe in him. He knew there was such a person as the Messiah, that was to come into the world as the Saviour of Sinners; but as yet he did not know him, and therefore says, Who is he? There is an external knowledge and hearing that is necessary, even to a bare assent; before any can know or believe in him; For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? (Rom. 10:14) so there is a special knowledge necessary to special faith.

And as a man's knowledge is, so is his faith: if he has only an historical knowledge of Christ, he has only an historical faith: if he has a special knowledge of Christ, he has a special faith. And as his knowledge increases, so does his faith, They that know the Lord, follow on to know him; and as they know more of him, faith grows stronger and stronger in him. They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee. (Ps. 9:10) And the more a soul knows of Christ, the more will he trust him; the stronger will his faith be in him.

As it is among men, the more we know a man, a friend, the greater confidence we put in him; so the more we know of Christ, and of God in Christ, the stronger will our faith be in him. But then, this knowledge is not to be understood of a speculative knowledge: it is not a mere notional knowledge of Christ, of his person, his nature, and his offices: or, as he is revealed in the sacred Scriptures, as the Saviour of men; it is a more spiritual knowledge than this. Men may have a great deal of knowledge of Christ, and of things relative to him, and yet have no spiritual knowledge.

They may have that kind of knowledge that may enable them to preach him to others, and plead in the great day, "Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils: and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matt. 7:22) To whom Christ will say, "Depart from me, I never knew you." And therefore you may depend upon it, they never knew him, notwithstanding all the knowledge they may pretend to have had; or otherwise, he would not thus address them. Spiritual knowledge of Christ is joined with spiritual affection to him.

It is a knowledge of approbation: a knowledge of his person, as the chiefest among ten thousand. It is a knowledge of Christ as a Saviour, altogether suitable and all sufficient; and which determines a soul at once to look to no other but him, and to say, He also shall be my salvation. (Job 13:26) He first knows him, then believes in him, and commits his all unto him. And this is an experimental knowledge of Christ, which is expressed by the various senses; for there is that in the new man which answers to all the senses of the outward man, It is a seeing the Son, and believing on him; (John 6:40) It is a hearing his voice, so as to

distinguish it from that of a stranger. (John 10:4, 5) It is a tasting that the Lord is gracious. (1 Peter 2:3) A handling the word of life; (1 John 1:1) and a savoring the things of God, and not of man; smelling a sweet smell in Christ's garments, which smell was of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. (Ps. 45:8) These expressions set forth the exercise of faith in Christ, on a true knowledge of him, and show that knowledge to be not merely notional, but really experimental.

This is also an appropriating knowledge, more or less; a soul that thus knows Christ, is able to appropriate him, in a measure, to himself, and sometimes arrives to such a confidence as to point him out, and say with the church, This is my beloved, and this is my friend. (Song 5:16) And with Thomas, My Lord and my God! (John 20:28) and with the apostle, Who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20) The nature of the expression in the text is such, as when the apostle says, We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God: (2 Cor. 5:1) that is, we are assured of it; it is not a mere conjectural knowledge, but a thing we are quite satisfied about.

So Job expresses his faith in a living Redeemer, in such language, I know that my Redeemer liveth. (Job 19:25) He not only knew there was a Redeemer, and that he would appear upon the earth another day; but he knew him to be his, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Every degree of knowledge has something of certainty in it, or else it would be skepticism, a mere conjectural knowledge; but this is not the case with the knowledge of true believers, they can say with the apostles, We believe, and are sure, that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. (John 6:69) This knowledge, though it is imperfect in the present state, yet it is a growing knowledge.

There is such a thing as growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, by means of the ministration of the word, and the administration of the ordinances. The path of the just is as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day. Every degree of this spiritual knowledge of Christ has salvation inseparably connected with it, For this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (John 17:3) And therefore it must be the most excellent of all knowledge, which made the apostle say, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. (Phil. 3:8) What signifies what a man knows, if he don't know Christ crucified: and the way of life and salvation by him?

All his knowledge in things natural, civil, or even in religious matters, is of no avail. What if his eyes are opened as Balaam's were, who saw the vision of the Almighty, and who said, he should see him (the Saviour) but not nigh? What signified all the prophetic knowledge and light he had, while he was destitute of a spiritual knowledge of Christ? Nothing short of this will be of any avail: and if a man has but this, it is enough.--If he has but the smallest degree of it, he shall be saved; for every one which seeth the Son (it is not said, whoever has such and such a degree of spiritual sight) and believeth on him (even though his faith be but small) shall have everlasting life. (John 6:40) Now this spiritual knowledge comes from God, as faith does; it comes from God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All the three Divine Persons are concerned in communicating this spiritual light and knowledge. The Father. To him our Lord ascribes it, when he says to Peter, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood, (carnal sense and reason) hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in heaven. (Matt. 16:17) Sometimes it is attributed to God the Son, We know (says the apostle John) that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ. (John 5:20) And sometimes to the blessed Spirit, who is styled a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. (Eph. 1:17) And it is a special gift of God's grace, and

for which we should be thankful who have any share in it.

III. We may observe the firm persuasion the apostle had of the ability of the person he had believed in, to keep what he had committed unto him against a certain day. We will here enquire what he committed to him. Not his labors and sufferings, expecting they would hereafter be brought forth to his advantage. They were, indeed, great: but they were performed by the grace of, and through strength communicated from God. As for his sufferings, they were many indeed, more than others of his fellow-laborers in the gospel; but then he knew that the sufferings of this present life, were not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in him.

Rather he may mean the souls of the persons he had been instrumental in the conversion of; and we find him sometimes commending such persons to God and to the word of his grace. (Acts 20:32) These he committed to Christ, and believed that he would keep them, and that he should meet them as his joy and crown of rejoicing in another day: or it may be interpreted, of his natural life which he had committed unto the hands of his Redeemer, who he knew would take care of it, who told him, at first setting out, not to be afraid.

And he had experienced many a time, that he had saved it when in imminent danger: though it seems best of all to understand it of his precious and immortal soul, and the everlasting concerns thereof. This he committed to his dear Redeemer at first conversion, when he first knew him, and he knew he was able to keep it safe against the day here referred to. So every true believer does the like; commits and commends his immortal soul into the hands of his Redeemer, and there he leaves it.

This Let of committing it to Christ, supposes knowledge. No man that is wise, will commit any thing or worth into the hands of one unknown to him; and much less will any commit his immortal soul into the hands of one unknown. No, he must know him, they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee; (Ps. 9:10) and it implies the giving the preference to Christ, above all others. We may consider the apostle as looking about among all the sons of the mighty upon earth, and angels in heaven, to see whether any of those were fit to commit his soul unto, and finding none of them were, he says, Whom have I in heavens but thee? and there is none upon earth, that I desire beside thee.

He saw on insufficiency in all others; that they were unequal to the task of saving his soul; that salvation was not to be hoped for from the mountains; that truly in the Lord, and in him only, was salvation to be found. Such a view have all true believers, and therefore say they, Ashur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the works of our hands, ye are our Gods ;for is thee the fatherless find mercy. (Hosea 14:3) Each of them addresses Christ, as Ahab did Benhadad, I am thine, and all that I have. (1 Kings 20:4) "I give up my soul, and all that I have, to be saved in thee, with an everlasting salvation."

It denotes trusting in Christ for grace here, and glory hereafter: leaving all with him, believing that he is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him. As to the day here referred to, this may be understood of the day of death. Death is appointed by the Lord, to every man; (Heb. 9:27) and against this day, the apostle committed, and so every true believer commits, his soul into the hands of Christ, when he hopes to meet with the Lord, and to be for ever with him, out of all danger from every enemy.

Or it may be understood of the day of the resurrection. The first resurrection. The dead in Christ shall rise first, and happy will they be; for on them the second death shall have no power, and they shall be for ever with the Lord. Or it may be understood of the day of judgment, in which they must all appear before the

judgment seat of Christ, in which he will make an open acknowledgment of them, and say, "These persons are the gift of my Father unto me: I have redeemed them with my blood; and by my grace they have been enabled to commit themselves into my hand: lo! here am I, and the children which God hath given me," The ground and foundation of this trust in Christ, arises from his proper Deity.

He being God over all, blessed for evermore, it is this that encourages a soul at first, and that from the declaration Christ himself has given, Look unto me, and he ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am GOD, and there is none else. (Isa. 45:22) His being the former and the maker of all things, forming all things by the word of his power, is another argument. "He whose hands laid the foundation of the earth, and whose right hand hath spanned the heavens," may well be considered as able to keep the soul which is committed to him against that day.

His having already performed the work his Father gave him to do, is another foundation from whence this trust and confidence in him arises. He came, and his own arm has brought salvation. The work is done. He has obtained eternal redemption for all his people; and seeing it is done, what encouragement is here for a poor soul to commit himself into the hands of Christ; believing that he is able to keep him. To which may be added, the consideration of God the Father trusting Christ with the souls of his people.

He has put all his beloved ones into the hands of his Son; he has trusted him with all their persons, grace, and glory; and he is faithful to him that appointed him, and will at last say, "Lo! here am I, and the children which thou hast given me." "Well then, (may a soul say) If God the Father hath trusted him with thousands of souls, surely I may trust him with mine. If he hath been faithful to him that appointed him, in keeping the souls that were committed to him; I may believe that he will keep mine."

IV. I pass on now to the last thing, namely, that this is the support of every true believer, in life and in death; that they know whom they have believed, This was the apostle's support under all his trials, afflictions, and sufferings, for the sake of the gospel. Hear his own words, For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed. (2 Tim. 1:12) "I am easy under them, I know whom I have believed." So let the believer's afflictions and sufferings be what they will, if he knows whom he has believed, he is sure that they will all work together for his good; that ere long he shall be free from them, and be for ever with the Lord, into whose hands he has committed his immortal soul.

This the apostle knew, that though men were able to kill the body, they could not reach the soul. That was in the hands of Christ, and therefore it was safe; bound up in the bundle of life; hid with Christ in God; laid and built upon that Rock of Ages, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. The apostle was now in the view of death and eternity; and this was his support in the view of an eternal world. And the same upholds every true believer, more or less. O what a support must this be to a dying saint, that though he is leaving the world, and all things in it; though he has no more an interest in his worldly substance, relations, friends, and acquaintance, and soul and body are parting, yet still his interest in a blessed Redeemer continues!

He knows whom he has believed. When flesh and heart, and every thing else fails him, God is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. Christ is his Redeemer and Saviour; who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. What a supporting consideration must this be to him; that when he is brought to the streams of Jordan's river, that blessed Redeemer, who has been his God and guide through life, will not leave him now; but will be with him through the valley of the shadow of death; therefore he fears no evil.

Now he is not at a loss for a surety and Saviour; he knows whom he has believed. He knows the Lord his Righteousness; and that he has a righteousness in him that will answer for him in time to come. How delightful the thought, when he is just upon the borders of another world, that now he is departing from hence, to be for ever with the Lord to be lodged in those mansions his Saviour and Redeemer is gone before to prepare for him; that he may be with him where he is, and for ever behold his glory.

But these are but some short hints of what gracious souls more largely experience under present troubles, and in the views of death and eternity. This knowledge of Christ was the support of our deceased friend, whose death has been the occasion of my discoursing on these words. His standing in this church has been but a short time; though an ancient professor and disciple of Jesus Christ. He belonged to other churches in the country; who gave him the character of an upright man.

For the time that he hath been with us, he has behaved as one that made a good profession of the grace of God. He walked answerable to it; and appeared to have a great deal of affection to, and a liveliness in, divine and spiritual things. In his last illness he was very comfortable. To one that visited him, he said, he had been many years walking through a dirty narrow lane; but hoped he was now come near the end of it and he desired to depart, and be with Christ. He had no darkness nor fears upon his mind; all was bright and serene.

He expressed his faith in Christ, as that foundation that will never give way: he knew whom he had believed. And so I find he continued, until he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus: and there we must leave him till the resurrection morn. Upon the whole we may see, of what importance an interest in Christ is; to know whom we have believed, and to commit our souls to him. Of what use is this, both in life and in death! A soul may well say, "Give me an interest in Christ, or I die." There is no happiness without it and a knowledge of that interest how comfortable it is!

As to those of us who have made a profession, let us enquire what is the object of our faith and trust? Is it any thing of our own, or is it Jesus Christ? If we trust in a wrong object it will do us no good. We should also consider what our knowledge of Christ is, whether it is notional or experimental; as it is the latter only which issues in eternal life. As to those of you who are trembling, doubting believers, I would say, Give not way to unbelief. Were not you enabled years ago to give up yourselves unto Christ: to venture your souls on him.

And is he not the same yesterday, today, and for ever? Why then should you give way to an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God? Leave all with him, and fear not. To conclude, what encouragement is there for poor sensible sinners, to commit their souls into the hands of Christ, who is able to save to the uttermost; and who hath assured us, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

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