



Fire and Ice Sermon Series

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The Glory of the Gospel

by Thomas Goodwin

In Two Sermons

Sermon I.

Sermon II.

Note.

Under the common title, 'The Glory of the Gospel,' Goodwin left two works, the one consisting of two sermons, and the other a treatise divided into eight chapters. Although he probably intended that the one should supersede the other and, if he had published his works himself, would probably have suppressed the former, the greater part of the matter of which is incorporated and more fully treated in the latter, yet, as they are both included in the folio edition of his works, it has not been considered right to omit either of them in this reprint; for the reason that, as they stand, they differ too widely to be regarded merely as different editions of the same work.—ED.

SERMON I

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.—Col. 1:26, 27.

The apostle spends this chapter, from the 13th verse to the end, in three things principally.

1. In setting out Jesus Christ in all that fulness of the riches of his glory wherewith he is arrayed and represented in the gospel; from ver. 13 to 23, from whence to the 4th verse of the second chapter, he falls into a commendation and elogium of the gospel, ‘Which is that *mystery*,’ as the text hath it, ‘wherein is made known that rich glory of Christ, the glory of the mystery, which riches is Christ.’

And the apostle doth both these on set purpose (as in the 4th and 8th verses he professeth), to divert and take off these Colossians’ minds, from these vain deceitful speculations grounded on philosophy, traditions of men, &c., gaudily and speciously set out with enticing words. ‘This, I say,’ says verse the 4th, ‘lest any, &c.’ ‘Beware,’ verse the 8th, ‘lest any spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit.’ To dash and put these quite out of countenance at once, he reveals riches and glory. To reveal the beggarliness of these rudiments—as the apostle elsewhere calls the best of them, Gal. 4:9—he lays open the riches of the mysteries of Christ, and displays the glory, and the excellency of it, to spoil, and cause to vanish, and come to nothing, the enticing gloss and lustre of all other wisdom (as it is 1 Cor. 1:19), which had well nigh spoiled them.

Now, in this place of this first chapter, the words I have read to you, the current of his commendation of the gospel's excellency swells to the highest, and runs with the deepest and strongest stream, within the limits of which therefore, I will confine myself, as affording matter enough to set forth the glory of it, and that by all that doth commend unto us any knowledge.

For *first*, it is commended by the original author and revealer of it, with his intent therein; God himself, who is best able to discern what knowledge is the fullest of riches and glory, chose to reveal and make known this merely for the worth of it; namely, because the riches of glory were revealed by it. He first says God would, or was desirous to, make known the riches of glory that were in it; that moved him to it.

Secondly, If the worth of the subject matter revealed doth ennoble a knowledge, then must this be glorious, for Christ is the subject matter of it, 'which riches are Christ, the Lord of glory.'

Thirdly, If all the properties that are excellent in any knowledge will add worth to it, they centre in this,

First, If depth and profoundness, it is a *mystery*.

Secondly, If preciousness and abundance; it is full of *riches and glory*.

Thirdly, If profitableness and usefulness, it not only reveals riches of glory to the knowers of it, the saints, out of themselves, 'but makes them possessors of all the riches it reveals, and gives them certain hope of all the glory it speaks, which riches are Christ *in you*, made *your* Christ, with all his riches, for the present, and to *you* the hope of glory.

Fourthly, If secrecy commends a knowledge, as it doth, it hath been *hid* long from the beginning of the world in regard of the clear revealing of it, but now in the end of the world it is *revealed*.

And lastly, If rareness, now it is revealed, it is not made common, it is revealed *only to the saints*, who only know it in the riches and glory of it, 'To whom God would make known,' &c.

You have the scope and meaning of the apostle; mine at this time is by enlarging on these particulars to set out the glory of the gospel; that part of the word which in strict sense reveals the doctrine of God's free grace, the work of Christ's redemption, and the riches of it, justification, and sanctification, and the secrets hereof; for this is the gospel.

But you will say, To what end will all this be? I wish there were no need of it, so I never preached more, and that both in regard of the people and ministers themselves; for the people of this land, it were well for England if the contempt of this glorious gospel and the ministry of it were not their greatest sin. Happy were we if the measure of our iniquities were made so much lighter by the absence of it. I should then expect to see many more years past ere it were filled than now are likely to be. And is there no need to set forth the glory of it? And for the ministers, they might add more beauty to their own feet, and souls to God, if in their speculations and preachings they did not, as the Pharisees of old did in their practice, (if we may judge what is in the cistern by what ordinarily cometh in and out), neglect the great things of the gospel forementioned, and tithe mint and cummin, pick truths of less moment, bolt and fasten themselves to the chaff, but leave the other unsearched into and un insisted on.

But, my brethren, however we may esteem this doctrine of the gospel, and what other knowledge we may pride ourselves in, and wear out our brains in, yet it is this which is the riches of the Gentiles and saints, as this place shews, and many more: 'the pearl of the world,' Mat. 13:45; 'the glory of the ministry,' 1 Cor. 2:7; which God ordained for our glory,' namely, apostles' and ministers', the preachers of it.

The clear revealing of which was the desire and longing of the patriarchs and prophets, who though they know the legal covenants as fully as we, yet this doctrine of salvation, Christ's sufferings, God's grace, was it they 'inquired into;' that is, sought to God by prayer, 'and searched diligently,' that is, searched using all means of reading and meditating, to attain the knowledge of it, and all this diligently; spent, and thought it worthy of the chiefest of their pains, which, when it came to be revealed, the apostles counted it their glory, which Paul therefore, who had profited so much in the Jews' religion, Gal. 1:14, professeth, Phil. 3:8, that he accounted all dross and dung for this excellent knowledge of Christ. He might well say, Rom. 1:16, he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for he makes his knowledge therein his chiefest excellency, Eph. 3:4, there is a parenthesis wherein you would think he boasted speaking of his own writings, 'Whereby when you read' (saith he) 'you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.'

What do I, speaking of the study and glory of prophets and apostles? It is the study of the angels, which they think worthy of their greatest attention. Look into both these places, 1 Pet. 1:12, Eph. 1:10, 'Which things the angels desire to pry into;' these glorious creatures that know God in his legal covenant and work of creation more fully than ever Adam did, that have the immediate participation

of God himself, have his face to read lectures in, day and night, and yet glad if they can get but a peep and glimpse of the way of saving men by Christ, as being a knowledge of greater excellency than otherwise they have any; yea, and so desirous are they to learn it, that they are content to go to school to the church, Eph. 3:9, 10, 'That to principalities and powers might be made known by the church,' &c.

But what need I speak of angels, prophets, and apostles? It is the great study (if I may so speak with reverence), the wisdom and great learning of God himself, who was the first professor of it, called so κατ' ἐξοχην, 1 Cor. 2:7, speaking of the gospel, says he, 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,' and that a hidden wisdom before the world was, hid in God, Eph. 3:9; God's act, and peculiar to himself; whereas other knowledge men and angels have in common with us infused at first creation to attain to, and pick out of themselves.

But this is his wisdom, which he alone had studied, and which none knows but those to whom he revealed it, which hath brought me to the first part of my text; 'setting forth the excellency of the gospel,' that it is a mystery which God only makes known, and that to saints, for the riches of glory that are revealed in it.

1. Now, to shew you the original and the intent of framing this mystery, you have it expressed in this frame following:

Our all-wise and infinitely blessed Lord, who had from everlasting riches of glorious perfections of holiness, justice, wisdom, mercy in him, which though he himself knew and was infinitely blessed in the knowledge of them, though no saint or angel had ever been, or over knew them, yet all these his glorious perfections being crowned with goodness, both made him willing to make known what riches of glory were in him unto some creatures which yet were in Christ, his goodness moved him to it, for *bonum est sui communicativum* (good is communicated by itself), and it is the nature of perfection also to be *manifestativum sui* (manifested by itself), and that not because any perfection is added to it when made known (which makes us desire to manifest our imperfections, as being perfected when made known), but that they might perfect others. This act him upon some ways to make known his riches and his glory to some that should be made happy by it, and to that end he would have saints be *his* saints, as being beloved of him, unto whom he might as it were unbosom himself and display all the riches of glory which are in him, into whose laps he might withal pour out all his riches, that they might see his glory, and be glorified in seeing of it, John 17:8, 24.

And one way he began to manifest his glorious back-parts to angels and man in the first creation, in the law, covenant of works, and works of creation which he had done, as his eternal power, and Godhead, and goodness in the glorious workmanship of heaven and earth, and of such glorious creatures as they themselves were, Rom. 1:20. His wisdom in the ordering, governing, and guiding so great a host and armies of several creatures, to several ends, by several laws; his justice in his legal covenant, giving them life whilst they should obey; threatening damnation to the disobeyers of it; his infinite holiness in that perfect and exact rule of righteousness, the copy of his own will written in their hearts.

Here was one way whereby God made known what glorious riches were in him, which might have made him glorious in their eyes, and themselves happy; and this the angels and Adam at the first had. But all this contented him not; God would make known a further mystery, another larger, deeper way, an act found out of the depths of his wisdom, namely, this doctrine of the gospel, which he kept hid and close in his own breast; not a creature knew it, no, not the angels, who were his nearest courtiers and dearest favourites; it lay hid in God, Eph. 3:9, hid even from them, verse 10.

A mystery which, when it should be revealed, should amaze the world, put the angels to school again, as if they had known nothing in comparison of this, wherein they know over again all those glorious riches which are in God, and that more perfectly and fully than ever yet. And so after they had a little studied the *catechism* and *compendium*, there should then come out a large *volume*, a new *system*, of the riches of the glory of God, the mystery of Christ in the text, which is the last *edition* also that ever shall come forth, now set out, enlarged, perfected, wherein the large inventory of God's glorious perfections is more fully set down, and with additions.

The reasons why God did thus intend to manifest himself are:

First, Because he would shew his manifold wisdom, which is the reason given of revealing the gospel, Eph. 3:10. 'That to the angels might appear the manifold wisdom of God.'

That his wisdom is so vast and large, that he could vary and take more ways than one; and as he had two sorts of reasonable creatures to show himself unto, so a double way, a double sampler, a double method, a *systema majus et minus*.

And *secondly*, because indeed it was of itself too obscure and too imperfect.

First, Too obscure; for in the gospel, and works of redemption, they came to see all that they saw before; and this more clearly and largely, wherein they see more power in Christ, ‘the power of God,’ 1 Cor. 1:24. In raising himself up from death to life, declared with power thereby to be the Son of God, Rom. 1:4, and also the exceeding greatness of his power in raising us up also, Eph. 1:19, as might easily be shewed greater than in the creation.

Wherein they likewise see a greater and clearer instance and manifestation of his justice, in putting to death his own Son, taking on him to be a surety for sin, than if a world of worlds had been damned for ever. And in that his Son also, they came to see a greater and more transcendent righteousness than ever appeared either in the law or is inherent in the angels; for if all their righteousness were put into one, it could but justify themselves, it could not satisfy for the least breach of the law in another. But in the gospel, and work of redemption, we see a righteousness of that breadth that is able to cover the sins of millions of worlds; of that length that it reacheth to eternity, and no sin in God’s people can wear it out or nullify the virtue of it. To instance it no more,

Secondly, That other was but an imperfect way in comparison of this, or,

(First), Those attributes which God accounts his greatest riches and greatest glory, Rom. 9:23, even his mercy and free grace, which he intends most to exalt, never saw light till now; the doctrine of salvation by Christ being the stage, wherein only it is represented, and elsewhere it is not to be seen, and upon it acts the greatest part, for all passages in it tend to this, to shew, as Eph. 2:5, that ‘by grace we are saved;’ and therefore, 1 Peter 2:10, the whole work of salvation is called ‘mercy,’ all God’s ways to his people are mercy, Ps. 25:10, the whole plot and frame of it is made of mercy, and therefore the doctrine of the gospel is called grace, Titus 2:10, 11. Mercy manageth the plot, gives all other attributes, as it were, their parts to act; mercy enters in at the beginning, acts the prologue in election; and, giving Christ, continues every part of it, sets all a-work, ends the whole in glory.

But (secondly), not only more of his attributes came thus to be discovered, but, further, the glorious mystery of the Trinity came hereby to be unfolded more clearly, if not the first discovery made of the three persons hereby, there being scarce the footsteps of them distinctly and clearly to be seen in the works of creation or in the law.

But now, when the gospel came to be revealed, and the work of salvation in it, then were there discovered to be ‘three witnesses in heaven,’ 1 John 5:7, witnesses to our salvation, and their several witnessing came to be known by three

several seals and head works set severally to our salvation, bearing the stamp of their three several subsistences, so as by these three seals, of the election of Christ and us, redemption, and sanctification, we may know there are three persons, and how they do subsist. Even as in men's seals, their several arms being engraven, their houses and antiquity is known.

As, first, God the Father hath set to his seal in election, 2 Tim. 2:19,

The foundation of the Lord remains firm, having this seal, 'The Lord knows who are his;' and in this seal of election you may read the similitude of his subsistence written, and the order of it. For as his subsisting is the fountain of the other two, so is election attributed to him, which is the foundation, as that place says, both of sanctification and redemption.

Secondly, God the Son hath set to his seal, even his blood, the seal of the new covenant, in the work of redemption, to the sealing up of iniquity, Dan. 9:24, which carries in it the resemblance of his subsistence also. For as it flows from election alone, and is next to it, so his subsistence from the Father only.

And lastly, God the Holy Ghost hath his seal also set to it. Eph. 4:30, 'Wherewith we are sealed to the day of redemption;' by the work of sanctification, which bears the print and manner of his subsistence, for as it flows both from election and redemption, so doth his person from the Father and from the Son.

2. And so now in the second place let us come to the subject of the gospel, Christ, in whom the riches of glory is alone discovered, 'which riches is Christ.'

Whereas in the law and covenant of works these riches were not only imperfectly and obscurely discovered, but also manifested scatteredly and with broken beams, as the sun in water when the water is disturbed, one attribute shining in one work, another in another, and dimly too; so as a man must have read over all the larger volumes of the world, and picked out here and there several notions of God out of several works; as now we are fain to study many tongues, in which knowledge is bound up and hidden as kernels in the shells; in this second way of manifesting his glory, things are more full, large, and clearer than ever, yet all is contracted into one volume, bound up in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; who is the subject of the mystery, in whom we may fully read the glory of the Lord in Christ God-man. And therefore the gospel is called the 'mystery of Christ,' Col. 4:3, and the gospel of God concerning Jesus Christ, Rom. 1:3; he being the adequate subject of it, whom he hath set up to be 'all in all,' Col. 3:11, and therefore we are complete in him,

chap. 2 ver. 10, all fulness dwelling in him in such fulness, that we need no other object to represent these riches of glory to us.

For first, did we know God, or would we know him in the creatures, we shall not need now to look on them if we know but him; who as a creature is the first-begotten of every creature, Col. 1:15; and being man, if he were no more, hath the excellencies of them all summed up in him. He is the compendium and model of the world; whatever they express of God, is to be more fully seen in him.

Secondly, Did we know or should we have known God by his image stamped upon man, and now shining in the law more than in all the creatures else, or than in man himself without it? Turn your eyes on Christ, for he is such a man as is the head of men, 1 Cor. 11:8, yea, and of angels also, who are a part of the church, Col. 1:18, and therefore a man of those transcendent perfections, that as he is more man, that image which Adam lost, the angels yet wear and count their glory, it shines more brightly in him than in them all it should have done. Even as the head contains more of the beauty and image of a man, hath more of man in it, than all the body.

But yet, thirdly, He is the Son of God, and second person, and therefore the express image and brightness of his Father's glory, the essential substantial image of his Father, which transcends infinitely more all other pictures of him than the image of a king in his son begotten like him, and in a board or tablet. But this image, you will say, it is too bright for us to behold it shining in his strength, we being as unable to behold it in him, as we were to see his Father himself, who dwells in light inaccessible, which no eye can attain to. Therefore that yet we may see it as nigh and as fully and to the utmost that creatures could; this Godhead dwells bodily in a human nature, that so shining through the lantern of his flesh we might behold it. His human nature and divine make up one person, and being so, are united together in the highest kind of union that God can be to a creature, and the nearest and fullest communications follow always upon the nearest union. To him therefore as man are communicated these riches of glory that are in the Godhead, as nearly and fully as was possible unto a creature; and being thus communicated, must needs shine forth in him to us to the utmost that they ever could unto creatures; and therefore more clearly than if millions of several worlds had been created every day on purpose to reveal God to us. God having stamped upon his Son all his glory, that we might see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 4:6.

But yet, fourthly, this is not all whereby Christ is made the image of the invisible God to us, for thus we might have seen the fulness of the Godhead

shining in him though he had not come as a redeemer and mediator, and had acted nothing, done nothing in us or for us, but had been merely set up for us to look on and see God in, as supposing him incarnate, not in relation to redemption.

Therefore further also, and besides this, he is made to us the image of the invisible God in all these his works of mediation which flow from his person, and in the execution of all those glorious offices of king, priest, and prophet. The story of which, when it shall be all set and viewed together, makes up yet another kind of image and representation of all God's attributes and glorious riches than shine in his person as alone in itself considered, or than doth shine in the angels, or man at his first creation; and he himself being a mediator is become a middle person between God and man, so the story of those his works of mediation shews forth and presents us with a double picture and image of God, between them both there being a new and another edition of all God's attributes in the story of what he hath done, which infinitely transcends and comes nearer to the life than all those images which were or should have been stamped upon the hearts, or appeared in the works of men or angels; a brighter, clearer impression of all in God than such tablets are capable of; and indeed comes so near the life, that not only in regard of his person, but also of those his works of mediation, &c., he is called those attributes in the abstract which appear shining in them.

Men and angels, in regard of God's image stamped on them, might have been called wise, but not 'the wisdom of God,' but Christ, 1 Cor. 1:24, is called 'The wisdom of God, and the power of God,' which yet is not spoken of him in regard of his person, as he is substantially and essentially both these, as all the rest; but as in his works he is manifestative, by way of manifestation to us, all these; by reason that in the story of his incarnation, life, and death, and mediation, &c., all these are manifested. In all these, when told and set together, there appears the greatest depths of wisdom that to the creatures could be discovered, which the knowledge of him discovers. So the power of God also in the same sense, in regard of the transcendent work of his rising again, wrestling with and overcoming hell, subduing sin, &c., in which the power of God appears. And there is the like reason of all the rest of God's attributes; as because he is the foundation of all God's great and precious promises by his blood, that they are all yea and amen in him, therefore he may likewise be called the 'truth and faithfulness of God.' So as through his mediation, at his cost, the world subsists, which else would fall in pieces, Col. 1:17, Heb. 1:8, and that he governs it, and prays his Father for his forbearance of it, he may be called 'the patience and longsuffering of God.' That upon him God's justice had its full course, and by his judging the wicked at the latter day, with the transcendency of knowledge,

wisdom, righteousness, &c., which will be required to so vast a work, that he may be termed ‘the justice of God;’ for in what he hath done, doth daily, and shall do, all these attributes appear.

Now, as Christ is thus in regard of his person and works the liveliest image and representation of God’s glorious riches, which is otherwise invisible; so is the gospel the image of Christ, who otherwise should be invisible to us in this life. When he dwelt with men, the apostles and believers who saw and heard him and his works, saw his glory then, ‘as of the only begotten Son of God,’ John 1:14. But Christ was to be taken up to glory, John 16:7, ‘It is necessary that I go away.’ And though we shall see him when we are taken up also; see his glory which he had before the world was, John 17:24, yet how should believers do in the mean time to see him, and the riches of God’s glory in him? Therefore hath God framed and revealed the doctrine of the gospel, in the preaching of which, Gal. 3:1, Christ is said to be evidently set forth or pictured, προεγραφη, before our eyes. And as he is the liveliest image of God, so the gospel is the liveliest representation of Christ that could possibly be made, for it is a glass, 2 Cor. 3:18, and a glass is the liveliest way of representing things absent that over could be invented, not in dead and lifeless colours only, which pictures only do. And indeed it is a middle way of representing a man, from that either when we see his person directly before our eyes, or when we see his picture drawn in colours; for though it be less clear and perfect than seeing the man himself, yet is more lively than all the pictures in the world; for *quod videtur in speculo non est imago*, it is more than a bare image which is seen in a glass, even the person himself, though by a reflex and reverberated species, that is his likeness beaten back again to the eyes, which otherwise when we behold him face to face is received more directly; and therefore is a more obscure and imperfect way of seeing a man than to see him face to face, as the apostle says, 1 Cor. 13:1, 2, as in heaven we shall do Christ, yet in the mean time this puts down all the pictures in the world. And such is the knowledge of Christ under and by the gospel, in comparison of that knowledge which was had of him under and by the ceremonial law, Heb. 10:1, which he calls the ‘shadow,’ those representations under the gospel, ‘the image of good things to come;’ which the apostle calls but a shadow of him, Col. 2:17, drawn in wan and lifeless colours, and of that sight and knowledge we shall have of him in heaven, when we shall see him as he is; this knowledge of him in the glass of the gospel is as a middle way of seeing him between both, less lively than the one, yet infinitely more bright and real than the other, even as I said before, that the image of God in Christ which shineth in his works of mediation is a middle image or representation between that which shone in Adam and that which is substantial in his person.

For as it comes short of the one, it being substantial, so it exceeds the other, as I then shewed.

So that (to keep to the scope of the apostle in this Epistle), take all the knowledge of God and Christ discovered in the most choice and curious pieces of Grecian learning, or of the ceremonial law, which far exceeded their philosophy; both which, as it should seem by the second chapter, these Colossians so garishly doted upon: and let a believer with the eye of faith look upon Christ, as discovered in the glass of the gospel, and then with the other eye look upon the other, and what will all those other appear? At best but wan, dead, and lifeless pictures, shadows, as he calls them, ver. 17, whose rudiments and painted colours are said to be ‘the rudiments of this world,’ ‘traditions of men,’ ver. 8, whose varnish also is but ‘the enticing words of men’s wisdom,’ ver. 4. But this is lively, real, the colours rich, the varnish glory, ‘riches of glory’ being bestowed upon it; ‘whereby as in a glass we see the glory of the Lord, which cannot be painted,’ 2 Cor. 3:18.

But you will say, what is the gospel but a verbal story told us when preached, or read, or meditated on? It represents Christ to us but as words use to do, and words are but *umbra rerum*, shadows, pictures, and indeed less lively. How comes it then to represent Christ so really? And to be as a glass representing Christ to us so truly? I answer, That as a glass in itself is but an empty thing, unless the objects to be seen in it be directly placed before it, and by light discovered in it, a glass represents nothing to us; and such I confess the gospel is in itself, a mere verbal representation; but to believers, the saints in the text, the Spirit of the Lord joins with these words, presents Christ by a secret, hidden, and unheard of act to the eye of faith in the preaching or reading of it, opens heaven, and causes the glory of Christ to shine as present in it in a lively, real manner. And so it follows in that 2 Cor. 3:18, ‘We all behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;’ and lastly, which is the strangest of all the rest, ‘are changed into the same image.’ That whereas a man may look long enough upon other pictures, though never so rich and glorious, and go away as he comes, his countenance no whit altered; but this is such a representation as, by beholding of it, we are changed into the same image, and the riches of Christ are made ours; which riches are ‘Christ in you,’ says the text; the strangest glass and picture that ever yet was seen in the world.

3. The next thing that commends it is that it is a mystery; and indeed how can it be otherwise, if God’s wisdom hath been employed for the inventing of it, and that as the utmost way of manifesting himself? And therefore, 1 Cor. 2:7, it is called ‘the wisdom of God in a mystery.’ And if the doctrine of popery, which in imitation of God the devil invented, to set up his eldest son antichrist, deserveth to

be called a 'mystery of iniquity,' another gospel, and yet not another; and if the false doctrine of these in Thyatira be called depths, though of Satan, Rev. 2:24:— and indeed popery is the greatest mystery that ever created understanding hatched, if all the frame, and policies, and mysteries of it be considered:—then surely this, which is God's gospel, made for Christ, as that for antichrist, which is the masterpiece of his wisdom.

And secondly, if Christ be the subject of it, it must needs be a mystery, called therefore, Col. 4:3, 'The mystery of Christ;' and in that regard it is a mystery, and a great mystery too, 1 Tim. 3:16, 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God manifest in the flesh' being the subject of it, coming therein to reconcile the world. Which plot, considering how things stood betwixt God and us, and laying these conclusions, that God will not put up the least wrong at men's hands, now fallen, without full satisfaction, which they nor any creature is able to make, and yet that nature that did offend must satisfy;—had it been referred to a consultation of all intelligent natures, angels and men, that ever were or shall be, it would have perplexed and plunged their thoughts to eternity how it might be done, and after millions of years' consultation they would have returned answer, they could not think of nor find out any.

Great, therefore, is the mystery of godliness, God to this end manifested in the flesh, and that so great as, now it is revealed, all the world that hears and sees into the plot must needs acknowledge it so; without controversy, generally, with one mouth, as the word signifies, *ομολογουμενως*.

And in the incarnation of his Son, and the satisfaction of his justice, so many more also meet in this one mystery, things of such a seeming contradiction, as the wits of men know not how to reconcile. And this in every part of it, as in election, that God at once loves the sinner with an everlasting, unchangeable love, and yet a child of wrath; which the Remonstrants¹ therefore quarrel. In the work of redemption, that free grace, and richest mercy, and fullest satisfaction, should meet together; which the Socinians therefore are blinded in. In the work of justification, that one in whom God works inherent righteousness, should not stand righteous before God's tribunal, but be justified by the righteousness of another, which the papists stumble at, as did the Jews, to their destruction. In sanctification, how effectual calling, infallible conversion, should stand with man's free will, is a riddle to the Arminians and papists, who therefore cut the knot, not being able to untie it. All these are mysteries which God hath revealed

¹ 'The Remonstrants.' The Arminians were so called because of the 'remonstrances' which they addressed to the States of Holland in 1610.--ED.

and made up in this, on purpose to shew his wisdom, and to make wise his own, and to befool the world.

A mystery! Then it is of such depths of wisdom, as take all the poor petty plots of accommodating great difficulties, wherein the princes and wise men of the world spend their thoughts away to vanity, and yet magnify and pride themselves in; and this plot, and any one mystery in it, when once discovered, 'confoundeth and brings to nothing' all theirs, 1 Cor. 1:19; 2:8. It all vanisheth as mere folly; nothing.

And there are not only depths of wisdom, but depths of love in it also, Eph. 3:18. It reveals a breadth, height, depth of love in Christ dying for enemies, and God giving his Son for enemies, as passeth knowledge. Sin is a great depth, therefore the apostle saith, 'it doth abound,' Rom. 5:20, and is 'above measure sinful,' Rom. 7:13, and so you will find it when you plumb it to the bottom. And so the devils and damned spirits in hell shall find it, whilst they are a-studying their sinfulness in hell to all eternity (that being their business), and can never fathom it.

But yet this of God's free grace and Christ's love is a depth, which swallows up this of sin, more than the heavens do the earth. That place seems to compare it to a mighty sea, so deep, as it wants a bottom; so as though the thoughts of men and angels shall be diving into it to all eternity, they shall not come to ground. Of the length and breadth also, that it knows no shore, that though they shall be sailing over it with that small compass of their capacities for ever, yet they shall never come to land, 'it passeth knowledge.' And indeed, my brethren, these are great incitements, especially to large understandings, to search into them. For men of large understandings seek after depths, as good swimmers do after deep waters, and refuse to go into the shallows, because they cannot have scope enough to exercise their skill, and presently strike aground.

And besides, this having such depths in it, may still further be searched into with pleasure, for still it passeth knowledge. The most hidden things in other knowledge, and the causes of them, as the cause of the eclipse of the sun and moon, they are like riddles, which though admired, before revealed, yet then become trivial, and as it were below the understanding, and when you see the furthest of them they grow stale. But there are depths in this knowledge, which for ever may be dived into with pleasure; and by reason of their depth, the knowledge of them to a 'renewed understanding' will be always fresh and new; every new degree makes all seem now, as if not known before, 1 Cor. 13:10. Still as knowledge grows more perfect, that which was before is done away and

swallowed up, as if you had not yet known it; and so still it is new. And to study and hear news all the day, the minds of men are led along with pleasure.

And withal this bids men be sure they come with reverence and fear, to hear and read them.

Thirdly, It was a mystery hid and kept long secret in regard of clear revealing of it. The prophets, 1 Pet. 1:11, had inquired into it, and searched diligently, unto whom it was revealed, not unto them but us; which therefore is said to be 'our glory,' 1 Cor. 2:7, being the privilege we have above the patriarchs, who yet had knowledge of the legal covenant as clearly as we; yet in regard of this. 'the least in the kingdom of God is greater than' John the Baptist, though in regard of clearer insight into the gospel he was greater than any before him.

And this both adds to the excellency of it, so far as to commend it to us the more. Were any of these secrets which philosophers and wise men in all ages had beat their brains about, as *quadratum circuli*, &c., and the philosopher's stone, found out and revealed to us in these ages; how would we therefore prize it the more, as we do printing, the mystery of which lay hid from the beginning. Nay, this mystery and the doctrine of it, is that which the saints for four thousand years studied, and sought to God to know, all of them one after another; and still they could get no other answer but this, that 'not unto them, but us.'

Again, Where lay it hid all this while? In God's breast; *απο των αιωνων*, the *secula seculorum*, before the world was, generations since. So Eph. 3:9, 'lay hid in God,' and is his master-piece, the chiefest of his works.

If one bit of the choice books of Solomon, which had lain hid till now, were yet found, a book about the nature of trees, birds, and beasts, how would we prize it! Much more this of God's. But you will say, When was it first revealed, it had this to commend it; yet now it is sixteen hundred years since it sprang forth. It is not therefore so new to us. I answer, It is true; only consider that as the law, which though delivered in Moses' time, yet before Josiah's time lay hid long, like some rivers that run some leagues under ground, and then discover themselves again; so did the doctrine of the gospel, after the first discovery of it, lie hid many ages and generations, as the church herself did in the wilderness, when school divinity and popery, both wanting the light of the gospel, did cover the world with darkness; when it might truly be said, that the world was 'spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit, traditions of men, rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.'

Whereas, but within the compass of this age we now live in, it hath been that the ‘kingdoms of the world have become’ again the kingdoms of Christ,’ Rev. 11:15, and the ‘temple opened,’ and the ark of the testament,’ as it is in the last verse, that is Christ; and all his riches have been broken up and searched into, and discovered to the eyes of all. That as to the popish part² there hath been a new Indies discovered, full of earthly treasure, that had not been known before, which had so enriched them; so a new Indies of heavenly treasure, a new world of divinity hath been found out, that was but privately known before, which hath enriched us; and happy were we, if we prized and defended ours, as they do theirs.

And though much of the heavenly treasure was digged up at first, yet more hath since and may be, for God will find his church digging and work of discovery to the end of the world. And, my brethren, these are the times.

And lastly, Now it is revealed, it is but ‘to the saints.’ If the secrets of it were known to all, they were no secrets, and less to be regarded; but God is dainty of this knowledge, tells it but to few. ‘Father, I thank thee,’ saith Christ, ‘that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.’ The doctrines of God’s free grace, are the the most inward, practical, and experimental secrets, and ‘the deep things of God,’ as the things of the gospel are called, 1 Cor. 2:10. Which ‘secrets’ are only ‘with them that fear him (Ps. 25:14) and he will shew them his covenant.’ The things of the law may be known by natural men as fully as by others, they have a copy of them in their consciences.

And this shews the excellency of this knowledge. For if there be any knowledge better than other, God will be sure to impart it to his friends and favourites; John 15:15, ‘You are my friends, and all I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.’ This he will not tell to those who are barely servants, ‘they know not his mind,’ as it is there. Believers only ‘have the mind of Christ,’ 1 Cor. 2:16.

But you will object, This is not so, for this knowledge is made common to all. God would have the gospel ‘preached to every creature;’ and so it was, Col. 1:23.

I answer, as when Alexander objected to Aristotle, ‘that he would make his knowledge common, and so debase it when he published his books.’ He answered, they were *edita et non edita* (published but not published), for none would understand them but his scholars, and therefore entitled them περι ακροαματων (for those who will hearken to it). So this, though published to all

² I.e. the Spaniards.

the world, yet it is entitled a mystery, and a mystery hid, for none know it but the saints who are taught of God, and are his scholars, John 6:45. That place shews that there must be a secret teaching by God, and a secret learning, 'If they have heard, and been taught of God.' Now God teacheth none but saints, for all that are so taught come unto him; 'Every one who hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.'

Ay, but you will say, Do not many carnal men know the gospel, and discourse of things in it, through strength of learning? &c.

I answer out of the text, that though they may know the things which the gospel reveals, yet not the riches and glory of them; that same rich knowledge spoken of in the word, they lack, and therefore know them not; as a child and a jeweller looking upon a pearl, both look upon it, and call it by the same name; but the child yet knows it not as a pearl in the worth and riches of it, as the jeweller doth, and therefore cannot be said to know it. Now Mat. 13:45, a Christian only is likened to a 'merchantman, that finds a pearl of great price,' that is, discovered to be so, 'and sold all he had for it, for he knew the worth of it.'

But you will say, Do not carnal men know the worth of the things in the gospel, and can discourse of the rich grace of Christ, and worth of him?

I answer, Yes, as a man who hath gotten an inventory by heart, and the prices also, and so may know it; yet never was he led into the exchequer and treasury, to see all the jewels themselves, the wardrobe of grace, and Christ's righteousness, to see the glory of them; for these are all 'spiritually discerned,' as the apostle says expressly, 1 Cor. 2:14.

Uses.

Use 1. If it be a mystery, which God only makes known, as you see it is, then go to him for it; you know how to deal with him. James 1:5, 'If any lack wisdom, let him ask it,' whose promise is in the new covenant, to teach all his to know him. As you cannot see the sun without the light of itself, so nor the riches of the glory of Christ without his Spirit, who is called the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; who only knows the deep things of God, 1 Cor. 2:10, as the mysteries of the gospel are, as the context shews, that lie all at the bottom of his breast. The well is deep, we have nothing to draw.

But you will say, God hath revealed himself in the Scriptures, and it is but reading them, and I have wit enough to understand them.

I answer, It was the Spirit that wrote the word, which is not therefore (says Peter) of any private interpretation; that is, no man's nor men's private

understanding, without the assistance of that public secretary of heaven, can understand them.

He only hid the treasures of knowledge in the field, and he only knows where they lie. What an advantage is it then by prayer to unlock God's breast, and obtain the 'key of knowledge' there, that unlocks God's study, and can direct to all his notes and papers.

Secondly, get to be a saint, to whom God will make known 'the riches,' &c., otherwise you cannot receive them, you will count them foolishness, as hath been shewed; if you do, you will but take them upon trust, by the wholesale, as we use to say, and in the bundle, will not be able to see the particular secrets that are in the truths revealed in the gospel, and opened, and riches laid out.

Or if you could do all this without grace, yet a saint hath advantage,

First, In the comfort you will have in studying the mysteries of the gospel, Col. 2:2, to go no further. He wisheth them 'the knowledge of the mystery, that they might be comforted;' for, indeed, a saint, the more he sees into it, the more he knows his own riches. He tells them but over, and gets more evidence of his title to them, whereas another is but as a lawyer, that studies other men's evidences, without any great comfort to himself. The choicest flowers of gospel truths to an unregenerate man are of the stalk and yield no scent, but grow up in a saint's heart fresh and comfortable.

Secondly, In that place, Col. 2:2, you shall find 'riches of assurance joined with a saint's knowledge, which, 1 Thes. 1:4, 5, is made a note of election, and not in another. Scotus says that to get a true and perfect knowledge in divine things, *fides infusa et acquisita*, both faith infused and acquired, are necessary.

First, A principle of faith infused, which may be an 'evidence,' as it is defined, Heb. 11:1, of all the principles and fundamental truths which are revealed in the gospel and not proved; for otherwise all our knowledge acquired built thereon will want assurance, will hang upon uncertainties. Things hanging upon a pin are no firmer than the pin they hang on. Unless faith rivets the principles of divine knowledge into the heart, the conclusions hang on uncertainties, and fall down in the end.

And, *thirdly*, grace will help you to get the start of another. As for a natural man, he brings only natural parts; a regenerate man is supposed to have as good, and moreover hath a further power of discerning given him. 1 Cor. 2:15, 'The spiritual man discerneth all things.' It is his own art. And as wicked men are often 'wiser' in their art and generation than the children of light; yea, by your

leave, the reason will more strongly hold that a child of light may easilier be wiser in his, and therefore Solomon says, ‘The knowledge of the holy is understanding.’

And, *lastly*, if they be saints, God makes known the saying truths of the gospel by the writings and judgments of holy men. The angels learn these mysteries of the church, and why should not we? Ps. 29:9, In the church every one speaks of God’s glory,’ or, as others read it, In the church God utters all his glory.’ The saints, especially, that are or have been of the church, they speak of the glory of his kingdom and of his power, and make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. The ways of grace and mysteries of the kingdom are seldom made known but unto them.

And if God reveals the mysteries of grace to his saints only, trust not the judgments of natural men in the matters of grace; this is a godly man’s art, and not a wicked man’s, though never so learned, and a man would trust an artist in his own trade rather than another. ‘The knowledge of the holy is understanding,’ says Solomon, Prov. 9:10, especially in ways of holiness.

Take the controversies which are now on foot. Shall they judge of election who are reprobate to every good work themselves? Or they of the universality of God’s free grace who turn the grace of God into wantonness? Or they of the power of God in conversion that deny the power of godliness? Or those of the perseverance of faith who care not to make voluntary shipwreck of it, men of corrupt minds, whose God is their belly, gain their godliness, preferment their religion, and who will cut their own opinions accordingly?

I will end all with one place, Isa. 35:8. In the former verses he evidently speaks of the kingdom of Christ coming to preach the gospel, by which he shews there should be a ‘way’ revealed, an ‘highway,’ which is the common road to heaven, there being but one way which Christ and all his go in, which shall be called, ‘The way of holiness.’ Take heed you miscall it not, and call it a way of schism, faction, &c., as the Jews did call it heresy. But yet this way the unclean shall not pass over; but wayfaring men, who desire to know the way to heaven (though fools) shall not err therein; but the unclean (as the opposition shews) shall err therein, though never so learned.

SERMON II.

“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”—Col. 1. 26, 27.

We have done with the subject and author of it, let us come to the properties of it.

1. It is *rich*; 2. *Glorious*.

1. First, *Rich*; so chap. 2 ver. 3, he tells us that in it or him, that is, the gospel or Christ, of both which he speaketh, are ‘hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.’ Now the riches of this knowledge appear in three things.

(1.) In abundance; (2.) Preciousness; (3.) Gainfulness. And such is the knowledge of Christ.

(1.) First, *Abundant*. For that place tells us that it is ‘all knowledge,’ *via eminentiae*; as metaphysics is said to be all knowledge, because of the fulness, largeness of the subject of it, all truths and axioms in other sciences being swallowed up in its principles. Such is this knowledge also, the subject of it being Christ; and therefore, as Christ contains in him, *via eminentiae*, all the treasures of perfection that are in any creature, and is ‘full of grace and truth,’ John 1:14, so doth the knowledge of Christ contain in it all the treasures of wisdom, and all that is worth knowing; treasures which can never be drawn dry or exhausted, which the mind of man can never waste; but bringing in new revenues of new notions

daily, so as the more is spent, the more may be. Other knowledges being but of the creature, are but imperfect; for the things known are such, and cannot fill the mind with abundance of knowledge, for the things have not wherewithal to do it, though they be known to the utmost. 'But in him all fulness dwells,' verse 19: fulness of truth to fill the mind, as well as fulness of grace to fill the will, John 1:14. And indeed, for abundance, 'unsearchable riches,' Eph. 3:8.

(2.) Secondly, It is a rich mystery for the preciousness of it. The promises of it are 'exceeding precious,' 2 Pet. 1:4. Every truth in it is precious, so Paul tells us, 1 Cor. 3:12. All truths of the gospel built upon the foundation, Christ, he calls pearls, and gold, and silver; and all the enticing words of man's wisdom, hay and stubble. Yea, Prov. 3:15, 16, Solomon says, wisdom and understanding is better than gold and silver, which yet commands all in the world. And if rubies and precious stones be more worth than gold, 'she is more precious than rubies.' And what is it that makes things precious, that is not found in the saving truths and promises of the gospel?

[1.] Antiquity makes things precious; so small pieces of coin and medals, if ancient, are precious. And this was coined in heaven, and in God before all ages and generations, and bears the image of the great King. It is 'the everlasting gospel,' Rev. 14:6.

[2.] Things fetched from afar are precious. Not a word of this but fell from heaven. Christ came from heaven, where he heard and saw all the truths revealed in it, and so delivered them to us, John 3:31, 32. And this difference is put between the law and the gospel, Heb. 12:25. The law was spoken from the earth, the gospel from heaven.

[3.] Things dearly bought are precious. Every truth of the gospel cost Christ his blood to make it so; 'the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' As grace cost his blood, so truth also; for both cost the same price. 'All the promises are yea and amen in him.' They had all been blanks if he had not set his blood as a seal to them.

[4.] Things carefully laid up are precious. The gospel hath had the richest cabinet in the world, God's breast; there is the original of it, Eph. 3:9. The original copy lies there, the counterpart in the heart of God's elect, 2 Cor. 3:3. 'Ye are the epistle of Christ, written by the Spirit of the living God.' In whom therefore it is said to 'abide for ever,' 1 Pet. 1:25, locked up in the church, the pillar and ground of truth.

[5.] Things which perish not are precious, especially if still they preserve themselves from what attempts to corrupt them, 1 Pet. 1:7. Faith is therefore said to be precious, because it perisheth not, though ‘tried in the fire.’ Such are the truths of the gospel, which though men have endeavoured to corrupt it by a world of the dross of human errors and inventions, yet God hath still come with fire and tried it. And still the more men labour to mingle dross with God’s truth, still it endures the fire, and comes out clearer and clearer in every age. Ps. 12:6, ‘The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.’ There is no truth of God but hath been tried in one age or other. Heresies have been brought in, yet it remains pure, maintains itself. The truth was as mingled with dross in Pelagius’s time, and then purified. So in Bradwardine’s³ time, and then also it came out purer; and so now with fine dross, but God will purify it.

(3.) A third thing in riches is *profitableness*; and in that respect the gospel to the saints is a rich gospel. It talks not only of riches as stories do, as that of Solomon’s time, when silver was as stones of the streets; nor doth it open heaven’s treasury gates, and show them the riches of it only, as Hezekiah did the ambassadors that came to visit him—a man may thus hear and see the riches of another, and be a poor man still—but riches is ‘Christ in you,’ saith the text. When he hears and receives the gospel aright, it fills his lap full, he carries Christ and all his riches home with him.

Well might Solomon say, as Prov. 3:14, 15, ‘Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and that gets understanding; for her merchandise is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.’ And if anything in the world be better than these, which yet the world hath, as rubies and precious stones seem to be, ‘She is more precious (saith he) than rubies.’ And if still the heart of man should enlarge its vast desires and wide gapings to some more conceived precious things than these, though unknown; do, says Solomon, stretch the compass of your desires to as great a wideness as you can; desire what you can, ‘and all you can desire is not to be compared to her.’ It is not only exceeded, but there is no comparison. And this he speaks not of the preciousness, as in itself, but of the gain and profit it brings to the possessors. ‘Their gain,’ says he, &c.

But you will say, Wherein consists these riches of the gospel?

³ Bradwardine (Thomas), Archbishop of Canterbury about the middle of the fourteenth century, noted as a mathematician, and a defender of Christianity. Samuel Ward (Works, p. 142) calls him as thankful an English heart as ever wrote.’--ED.

Answer, 'Which (riches) is Christ in you.' And can you make an inventory, and ever value and appraise his goods? Surely, No.

First, Christ is worth all God is worth, as he is the Son of God; for he is the only Son, the 'well-beloved Son, in whom God is so well pleased,' that he will not give a penny away from him; he is the heir, and shall have all. And the gospel makes him yours, with all his riches, which riches is 'Christ in you.' Thus the apostle argues and pleads the evidence of the right a Christian hath to all things, 1 Cor. 3:22, 23, 'All things are yours, for you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'

God himself can be worth but all things, Christ is worth what God is, for all things that are God's are Christ's. And you have as much as Christ hath. What riches are here! All things are given to be inherited, Rev. 21:7, by the same. And as sure a title as Christ, Rom. 8:17, we are put into God's will, 'joint heirs with Christ,' though not joint purchasers, for he purchased all, and all these gives freely; no debts are to be paid, nor legacies or portions out of them. Rom. 8:32, 'If he hath given us Christ, shall not he with him give us all things freely?' Christ is not only worth all things as the heir, and we are worth so much because Christ is given to us, but he paid for all things dearly. And look what the revenues of Christ's blood come to; that and so much is a Christian worth.

For Christ paid ready down, at his death, an invaluable sum of merit into his Father's hands (as a deposit), as a common stock or bank, to be employed for the good and use of all his saints, who are to have the full worth of them out to eternity. 'You know,' says the apostle, 2 Cor. 8:9, 'the grace of Christ; how, when he was rich, he became poor' (mark it), for your sakes,' to enrich you. Now what must these riches come to, think you, which are laid up for you; whenas Christ was as rich as God himself, 'thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' Phil. 2:6, as good in estate every whit? Now of all these riches he emptied himself, ver. 8, left himself not worth one farthing, and 'became poor,' had not a hole left to hide himself in, 'made himself of no reputation,' of no account or reckoning, making overall for you. And what must this come to? The riches of God put out to use, to be received with advantage again, if possible, and put into sure hands, even God the Father's, who hath bid us 'owe no man anything but love.' And surely he loves his own too well to owe them anything.

If they should doubt, he hath entered into bond, and the gospel is that bond, which is therefore called a 'rich gospel,' because it is the promise of all these riches; Eph. 3:6, 'partakers of the promise of the gospel.' It is the gospel that makes us partakers of the promise, that is, the things promised; and they are, ver. 8, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' So as if you desire particularly to have the

value of them, or in gross, the total sum, they are unsearchable riches which cannot be counted over to eternity, much less be spent. Riches in justification, to have all debts paid the first day, and that would enhance unsearchable riches. Set a price on all angels, all creatures, it would not pay one note, the least bill. All other things are not worth so much; it cost more to redeem souls than so. And besides, to have still left so rich righteousness as purchased 'riches of grace,' to have the Spirit poured out richly, as Tit. 3:6. The word in the original is 'riches of glory,' Eph. 1:18. In respect of which all riches in the world are but as crumbs of the rich man's table, or relics given to the poor. The kingdom of Turkey (as one called it), but a crust thrown to a dog. And is it not a rich knowledge then, that enriches the knowers of it, which should invite men to learn it? For if men think other knowledge in itself so rich, as to be content to spend their estates, to attain but notions to fill their brains, not purses; then how much more for this, which as it is precious, so it brings in all these riches as the gain of it?

Angels are invited to search it for the preciousness of it, and yet these riches are not 'Christ in them,' but 'Christ in you.' But then do but know and study your own riches and evidences for them; therefore in Eph. 3, where the end of revealing these riches is laid open, ver. 8, there are two sorts of creatures, says he, to whom God intended to reveal them, first, *men*, ver. 9; secondly, *angels*, ver. 10; but with this differing intent, that the angels might know the wisdom which was in the gospel, ver. 10. The harmony in the plot is what the angels are taken with; and this, though men may also see in the gospel, yet further the end was, that they 'might know the fellowship of the mystery,' that is, that they might be made partakers of it.

2. Secondly, *glorious*; as it is a rich mystery, so also glorious, 'What is the riches of the glory,' &c., which words, as other Hebraisms, are convertible; 'rich glory,' or 'glorious riches,' so as no man can say whether the riches or the glory of it be greater.

Now this glorious title the apostle gives often unto the gospel, as 1 Tim. 1:11. And 2 Cor. 4:4, 'lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine into them.' And in the third chapter of that epistle throughout, he fully displays the glory of it, which the apostle doth by comparing it with the law, or covenant of works, because there was no question of any other knowledge never so excellent, yet revealed, that could stand on terms of comparison with it.

The law indeed, says he, it was a glorious law, though written but in stones and dead letters; and therefore, when it was ministered. the 'glory of God appeared on the mount,' Exod. 24:16, 17, to note out, that that law was the

glorious image of his will. And therefore also even the ‘face of Moses,’ 2 Cor. 3:7, by whose hands it was administered, ‘shining, so as the people could not behold it for the glory of his countenance.’ And ‘so terrible was the sight,’ saith the author to the Hebrews, that Moses said, ‘I quake and tremble,’ Heb. 12:21.

But yet says Paul, ver. 8, 9, The gospel, it ‘exceeds in glory,’ yea, and so far exceeds, as ver. 10, as the law which was thus made glorious, had no glory in respect of this glory which excelleth; but like as the sun, when it ariseth, puts out the lesser eyes of heaven, dims, yea clean obscures these otherwise glorious tapers, so as they have no glory in this respect, so the gospel exceeds the law. And if you ask wherein it exceeds in glory, the answer is, Because it is the ministration and revealer of far more glorious things to the saints than ever the law could do.

If you ask, What glorious things are communicated and revealed therein? I answer out of the 3d and 4th chapters, which explain the glorious work of the gospel on men’s hearts, when they are brought to God. For when any man is converted at the preaching of the gospel, first, before the word works, the Holy Ghost falls on a man; as when Christ was baptized, heaven opened, and ‘the Holy Ghost descended and rested on him:’ so in Acts 10:44, when the gospel was preached by Peter, ‘the Holy Ghost fell on them;’ and of the Spirit the gospel is the ministration, and not the law. Gal. 3:2, ‘I would ask of you, received you the Spirit by the works of the law, or of the hearing of faith?’ that is, the gospel, for so faith is taken for the doctrine of faith. And this ministration of the Spirit is by virtue of a covenant made (Isa. 59:21) with Christ; that Spirit that was in him, and word that was in his mouth, to wit, the gospel, should not depart out of the mouth of his seed’s seed for ever, but it should accompany his elect.

And is not then the gospel a glorious gospel, that makes men partakers of the Holy Ghost, and that for ever? Which Spirit is a ‘Spirit of glory,’ 1 Pet. 4:14, which rests on his; the ‘Spirit of glory,’ because it fills the man it dwells in with glory. For look, as when God descended into the visible temple, it was filled with glory, 2 Chron. 7:1; and by reason of that presence the ark itself was called ‘the glory,’ Rom. 9:4: so when God fills the preaching of the gospel (whereof the ark was a type) with his glorious Spirit, and by it fills the heart of a man with that Spirit also, as Eph. 5:18, there is a new glory put upon that man.

But Secondly, This gospel is by the power of this Spirit the ministration of righteousness to the man God means to call, and therefore also glorious, as the apostle there argues; that is, this gospel, by the help of the Spirit working faith in his heart, reveals the righteousness of Christ to be made his, and that exceeds in glory; for it is this ‘righteousness’ which in the last verse of that third chapter is

called ‘the glory of the Lord,’ viz., Christ; who being the ‘Lord of glory,’ the ‘King of glory,’ 1 Cor. 2:8, what a glorious righteousness must this be which the gospel thus reveals? And it reveals it not by engraving or dead colours, as the law did; but as in a glass. And as that glass is glorious wherein the sun shines, the very image there puts down all the stars, so this glass, the gospel, must needs be glorious, wherein the ‘Sun of righteousness’ shines, as he is called, Mal. 4:2. Neither doth it reveal it only, but dispenseth it, it is the ministration of righteousness; Christ’s righteousness, which is the glory of the Sun, the King of glory, made ours to justify us. And therefore, Rev. 12:1, the church appears ‘clothed with the sun,’ even with Christ himself and his glory, who is therefore said to be ‘our righteousness,’ Jer. 23:6. Hereby, as Christ said of the lilies, Mat. 6:29, that ‘Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these;’ so may I say of all the angels—who yet are the bright morning-stars, that ‘sang when the world was made,’ Job 38:7—that they are not clothed with such a glory as the gospel dispenseth to us; such a robe never came on their backs, nor never shall. And is not this a glorious gospel then?

Thirdly, In the sight and dispensation of the glorious righteousness of Christ, we come yet to see a further glory shining on us, and still in the gospel; so in the 4th and 6th verses of the next chapter, 2 Cor. 4. For the gospel gives ‘the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;’ that is, through the righteousness of Christ we come to see the glorious sunshine of the favour of God, the light of his countenance lift up upon us. For when Moses would see his glory, the Lord proclaimed only this, Exod. 34:6, ‘The Lord merciful and gracious.’ And as he is ‘the Father of glory,’ Eph. 1:17, so his mercy is ‘the riches of his glory,’ Rom. 9:23, and Ps. 90:14, 15, 16. The church, praying for mercy and favour, says, ‘Let thy glory be on thy servants;’ and therefore is not this a glorious gospel, that reveals this to a man also, that God graciously accepteth us in the beloved?

Fourthly, The beholding thus the glory of Christ, viz., his righteousness in the gospel, it changeth us into the same image, from glory to glory, verse the last of the third chapter; that is, makes grace in us, which is truly glorious, and therefore, Ps. 45, the church is said to be all glorious within, Eph. 5:26, 27, ‘He sanctifies his church, that he might present it a glorious church.’ Justification not only makes us glorious, but sanctification also, and this is dispensed by the gospel, for that sanctifies us to the end of the world, John 17:17, and is the glass we are changed by.

Nay, fifthly, The very light itself whereby we do behold these things in the gospel, and are thus changed, is glorious, 1 Pet. 2:9, ‘We are called of darkness to

a marvellous light.’ And the joy that ariseth out of beholding Christ’s righteousness as ours, and God’s favour, it is ‘joy unspeakable and glorious,’ 1 Pet. 1:8.

And last of all, It gives us certain hope of a further glory yet to be revealed, as the text hath it, and verse 17 of the 4th chapter, ‘an eternal weight of glory.’ All the glory of this world it bears no weight, κενη δοξα, empty, frothy glory, as the apostle calls it, but this is an exceeding weight of glory, which if all that glorious lustre men doat on so, were weighed, it would be but as a dust balanced against it; so weighty as flesh and blood, that is, the infirmity of man’s nature, if not changed and made capable, could not subsist under it, 1 Cor. 15:50.

And all the glory here is a fading glory, but that is eternal, 1 Pet. 1:24, ‘All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withers, and the flower falleth away,’ but the glory of this estate fades not, ver. 4, but is a flower always green. And the reason is, because the glory of things is one thing, and the things another, the grass one thing, and the flower another, and therefore the glory fades and is clean gone, when yet the things remain. But glory is *de essentia* to the things above, the very essence of them is glory itself, and so called; and therefore, whilst the things remain (as they do for ever), their glory doth. And is not this a glorious gospel?

Uses

Use First, If the gospel and the riches of it be thus great, then buy it, Prov. 23:23, ‘Buy the truth, and sell it not;’ he names no price, for you are not like to lose by it, cost what it will. This place⁴ hath been the greatest mart of truth, and of the mystery of the gospel, that I know under heaven. Wisdom hath as it were cried all her wares at this great cross.

This truth has been purchased for you, and that dearly; it cost the blood of many martyrs to derive it to you, the sweat of many preachers, the prayers of many saints, and cost God the riches of his patience to see it contemned. Buy it therefore at any rate.

⁴ Cambridge, as appears afterwards.--ED.

Especially you who are scholars, you come hither and live under those, read those who are wholesale men,⁵ and you should, whilst you are here, treasure up as much and as many precious truths as you can, and grace withal to dispense by retail in the country, when you are sent abroad.

First, Inquire and learn where these treasures are to be had, even in the Scriptures. The merchant who knew the pearl, was fain to buy the field; Timothy, from a child had known the Scriptures, and so should you do, 'they are able to make a man wise unto salvation, and make the man of God perfect.' As the books of nature, when thoroughly known, make a perfect physician for the body, so doth this a perfect divine. 'Search the Scriptures,' says Christ, 'for they speak of me.' As Christ is the treasury of all knowledge, so the Scriptures are of Christ. These treasures lie scattered in all the veins of the prophets and apostles; dig for them as for silver, take pains and travel to understand them, as Dan. 12:4, when he was bidden to seal up his prophecy in the letter, 'Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' That is, by doing as merchants do, travelling from place to place, comparing one with another, knowledge will be increased.

Secondly, Go to the markets and warehouses of those who have laid in or revealed much of this treasure; that is, use the help of godly men's writings and conferences. The angels do learn of the church, and why not we? Even Paul desires to see them at Rome, that he might be comforted by their mutual faith.

Therefore exchange, and truck one with another to that end. Christ hath given several gifts to perfect his body in knowledge, Eph. 4:12.

The knowledge of any one man is imperfect, some have more skill in one point, and some in another, and so in several ages several truths have been delivered and revealed, Heb. 1:1, *πολυμερως*, by fragments and by pieces, and therefore use the help of all. None of us are as Paul, to whom nothing can be added (Gal 2:6).

Thirdly, Go to him above all who hath the key of knowledge, Jesus Christ, Rev. 3:7, pray to him. In 1 Peter 1:10, 'they searched and inquired,' that is, they studied and prayed; use both. And so the apostles did spend the time in both, Acts 1.

Fourthly, Highly prize and esteem every truth. If a fool hath a price in his hand, he hath no heart to use it, Prov. 17:16, because he esteems it not. Count all

⁵ That is, who supply their students with that stock of truth, which they are afterwards to dispense to their congregations.--ED.

dross and dung for the excellent knowledge of Christ, dote not on human learning too much, lest it spoil and rob you of this.

Fifthly, Exchange all for it, sell all for it, sell all that you have for it, your sins; no saving truths can be yours whilst sin is yours, John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:22, they 'purified their souls by obeying the truth;' for if you receive the truth as you ought, it will cast out all. Especially lay down pride of parts, Ps. 25:12, he will teach the humble his secrets, he will not teach proud scholars. God will not deal nor trade with a wicked man, 1 Tim. 6:4; men being corrupt of dispositions, are destitute therefore of the truth.

Sixthly, Carry all home, and make them your own. It is not your own whilst it is in your brains, as no more meat is your own but what you eat; Let it be 'the ingrafted word,' James 1:21. Be you evangelised.

Use Second, If the gospel be so precious, sell it not, for you can never get the full worth of it; 'Buy the truth,' saith Solomon, Prov. 23:23, 'and sell it not,' that is, part not with it at any hand. And this know for your encouragement, that God takes it not away from any man or nation, until they willingly part with it or put it away; for why else doth he bid them not sell it? His meaning is, if you do not, I will never deprive you of it.

To this purpose is the example of Esau brought, Heb. 12:16. For, speaking of this rich grace offered in the gospel, he bids them take heed that there be no profane person, as Esau was, that sold his birthright. That look, as God would not have deprived Esau of the blessing unless he had freely sold it, Jonah 2:8, Job 33:26, so nor them of the precious gospel.

And he adds this, to enforce this exhortation the more, that a man must not think to receive it when he will; afterwards he would have inherited the blessing, sought it with tears, but could not, ver. 17. And as he takes it not from a particular man, so neither from a nation.

In Acts 13:46, the church of the Jews had been the ancient pillar of truth, and market for the gospel; God had new precious wares to be offered for sale, which had lain hid from all eternity, as this text shews. See what Paul and Barnabas say, who were his sales representatives to trade for him. 'It is necessary they should first be spoken to you.' It is strange, 'it was necessary,' for God's custom is not to offer his precious wares to new customers till the old had refused them. But now, says he, you shew yourselves unworthy; 'Lo, now we turn to the Gentiles;' we will go seek customers all the world over, rather than you shall have the offer of them any more. And as in an estate of land wherein three have a right,

until all give over, it is not sold, so in this kingdom there are three, there are magistrates, ministers, people. If either of these do what they can to keep it, it is not sold. Therefore to these three doth God look, Jer. 5:1; to the magistrates, to see if that there were a man that sought truth; secondly, to the common people, who know not the law; and last of all, to the prophets and priests; and when all conspired, then ‘what shall you do in the end thereof?’

And if the truth be thus rich and precious, let me speak freely to you. Let the market stand open, take heed how you prohibit any truth to be sold in your markets; but let the word run and be glorified, and let wisdom cry all her wares. If every truth be thus precious, is it not an impoverishing of the kingdom to hinder the traffic of any? Nay, is it not a hindering the king’s custom? Revenues of God’s glory ariseth out of the custom of these wares. Those times are in a great danger of selling away these truths, that cannot endure (as Paul speaks, 2 Tim. 4:3, 4) wholesome doctrine.

Secondly, Take heed of suffering falsehood to be sold for truth. Rev. 2:20, one of the churches is blamed for suffering Jezebel to teach and to seduce Christ’s servants. If we do so, we shall have popery bought for truth, Arminianism for truth, and so by degrees sell away that blessed inheritance which our forefathers left us; as heirs do sell away their lands, first one lordship and then another, piece by piece, till all be gone; and so our silver by little and little becomes dross, as Isaiah speaks, chap. 1:22. This will provoke God (if anything) to sell you into your enemies’ hands for nought, Ps. 44:12.

But, thirdly, if it be thus precious, ‘hold it fast,’ as Paul speaks to Titus, chap. 1:9, ‘hold fast the faithful word.’ The word signifies to hold against contrary pulling it away, *αντεχομενοι*. If a man would not sell the inheritance left him, much less would he suffer it to be taken from him. Suppose it be but a trifle, yet men in a case of right will spend their estates to hold their own, though the suit will not bear its own charges. But when you contend for the truth once given, as the apostle Jude exhorts, you labour to preserve not your own only, but God’s right. It is not about a trifle, but for that which Christ once spent his blood; and it is ‘the faithful word,’ as the apostle calls it, a cause that will stick to you, and maintain itself, be sure to overcome; and not bear its own charges only, but brings a crown with it, 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, ‘I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, henceforth a crown is laid up for me.’ Christ did witness so before Pontius Pilate, 1 Tim 6:13.

And, last of all, if it be thus rich as well as precious, let it ‘dwell richly in you,’ as the word is, Col. 3:16. Give it not poor but rich reception, as you would

do a rich kinsman who means to make you his heir, and estate you in all his riches.

And to that end, labour to grow rich in the knowledge of it, and speech of it, as Paul speaks, 1 Cor. 1:5, ‘that you may be enriched in all knowledge, and in all utterance,’ or speech about it, as men labour to know what they are worth, and love to talk of it.

Bestow riches of assurance on it, as Col. 2:2, that you may have ‘the riches of full assurance of understanding;’ and James 2:5, to be rich in faith.’ Trust in him, as men that are rich use to do in their riches, Prov. 10:15. And though their riches be uncertain, and not able to do what they expect, yet this is profitable for all things, having so many rich promises made for you to rely upon.

Bestow riches of obedience on it, endeavouring to grow ‘rich in good works,’ as the apostle speaks, 1 Tim. 6:18. Spend the most precious of your time and thoughts upon it.

Uses of that doctrine,—the glory of the gospel.

First, For trial; whether a man hath savingly received it or no. For if it be thus glorious, then they, are still blinded to destruction that see it not in the glory of it. This is the direct consequence of the apostle himself in 2 Cor. 4:4. For he having discoursed of that rich and excellent glory which it reveals, then, says he, those that have lived so long under the preaching of it are ‘lost,’ into whose hearts the light of this glorious gospel hath not shined. And certainly, saith he, ‘the god of this world hath blinded their eyes,’ that is, the devil,—by varnishing over the vain glittering scheme and gloss of the things of this world, as he did to Christ, Mat. 4:8,—dazzles them so, that they see no more glory in the things which the gospel reveals, than blind men do. The fault must certainly be in men’s eyes; for this glorious gospel, wherever it shines, is as the sun in itself, it is *primum visibile* (the original illuminator).

Blind men are never the better for the sun. Though they may have eyes to see the things the gospel propounds, yet not the glory, the worth, and excellency of them, so as to be intimately and deeply affected with them; as to be content to leave house, lands, father, and wife, for the gospel’s sake, as Christ speaks, Mark 10:29, that is, to enjoy those things you hear spoken of in the gospel.

And this is that which Christ expressly, out of Isaiah, speaks of the blind Pharisees, to whom the glory of Christ was preached in the gospel, John 12:40, 41. For, says he, Isaiah seeing that his glory spoke this of them, 'that God had blinded their eyes, &c., that they should not see;' that is, not see that glory of Christ as preached to them, so as Isaiah saw it, and all saints, to be humbled and converted by it.

Examine yourselves therefore. You go up and down in the world here, and you view daily the riches of it, and the pleasures of it, the beauty, the credit, the glory of it. And from viewing these things, you often come here to the word, which as a glass that the sun shines in reveals Christ to you, the necessity, the worth of his Spirit, righteousness, and graces, which are laid open to your view daily. Now seriously tell me, or rather thy own heart, in which of these dost thou see most glory, by which art thou most intimately allured? Shall I tell thee? If ever thou hadst savingly seen the glory of the things of the gospel, all the excellencies of the world would seem no excellencies. When thou goest from the church again into the world, the devil's varnish would melt off, as women's makeup doth against the sun; and as candles burn dim and wan when set against the sun, so these.

The things thou didst account most glorious before thy eyes were opened, would seem to have no glory in comparison of this glory, as the apostle speaks of the law, 2 Cor. 3:10, of this glory that so excelleth, *excellens sensibile destruit sensum* (overpowering sensation to the destruction of the senses). It would put out the carnal eye quite and clean. This you may see, Isa. 40:5, 6, where the Holy Ghost speaks expressly of the preaching the gospel by John the Baptist, whom in the third verse he calls the 'voice of a crier;' and Peter applies the place to the preaching of the gospel, 1 Pet. 1:25. Now (says he, ver. 5) the glory of the Lord Christ should thereby be revealed, and so revealed, that all flesh should see it, that is, many believers both of Jews and Gentiles, for so 'all flesh' is taken also, Ps. 65:2. See it namely in this mirror and glass, 2 Cor. 3:18, and what is the effect of it? Why, 'all flesh is grass,' and the goodness or glory thereof, as Peter calls it, 'as the flower of the field.' And in their eyes now, that have seen 'the superexcellent glory,' it withers and fades; all the glory of the world appears like withered flowers, for the Spirit of the Lord, which reveals this glory in the gospel, blasts, blows upon them all, so as they lose their gloss and esteem in men's hearts; they can never dote on them again as before.

What is learning, thinks the poor soul, in comparison of grace? What is all the world to the righteousness of Christ? And then all the glowworm righteousness of a man's self, which civil men glory in, so vanisheth, which once

shined in the dark, so when this sun ariseth. So it did with Paul, Philip. 3. Then, however a man thought of himself before, as thinking he had many excellencies in him, yet having seen this glory, he falls down, as Isaiah did in like case, Isa. 6:5, 'I am undone,' I am unclean, a vile wretch, that deserves undoing and destruction.

Secondly, If it be thus glorious, see if thou art able to behold the glory of it, comfortably and joyfully, without winking. In 2 Cor. 3:18 the apostle brings all believers to the same trial that the eagle doth her young ones; for as she brings them to the sun, and if they be able to behold it without dazzling or winking, then she accounts them of a right breed; now, so doth the apostle bring all believers to 'the glory of the Lord,' shining in the mirror of the gospel ('and we all,' says he, 'with open face behold the glory of the Lord') to *look full* upon it. And so indeed unto eagles are they compared in Matthew; for why, their hearts are changed into the same image, so as there is a suitableness between them and it. The strictest preaching, that reveals the glory and beauty of grace in its strictest and most spiritual hue, a good heart can look full upon it and love it. That ministry that darts in the clearest and hottest beams is the most welcome, and hath the most comfortable influence into their hearts.

In the 4th of Malachi, where the prophet speaks of the preaching of the gospel by Jesus Christ, as appears by the 5th verse, where he speaks of John Baptist before the day of Christ's appearing, 'Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth as calves of the stall;' that is, Jesus Christ, who then ariseth in men's hearts, when by the gospel God gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus, as 2 Cor. 4:6, 2 Pet. 1:19. Now those precious truths, and the beams thereof, he compares to wings, because the beams of the sun are spread forth, even as the wings of the eagle, brooding over all the earth, and the things in it, and by them flying into all the corners of it.

So doth Jesus Christ spread forth beams of truth into believers' hearts, and by them comes into their hearts, as the sun is said to do; when the beams of it come into a house, you say the sun comes in. Now these beams, if they should not heal and change our hearts into the same image, they would dazzle and confound men's consciences; therefore it is added, they have healing with them, and therefore now, like calves, they can go forth, and rejoice and leap for joy in the light of it. Whereas sore eyes, that are not healed, are amazed and terrified at the sight of it; and therefore in the first verse he says, 'They shall be burnt up,' as they in Rev. 16:8, 9, that are scorched with the heat of the sun, and so blasphemed and opposed the word. And as in hot countries some have cursed the sun when it ariseth, so they the gospel and the light of it. They hate it, rejoice when any of the

‘witnesses’ are dead, as they, Rev. 11:10, because ‘they tormented them that dwelt on the earth.’ Like swine laid on their backs against the sun, they cease not crying till they be on their feet again; or if they cannot avoid it, yet they wink with their eyes, as they, Mat. 13:15. For if men be unholy and profane, whoremongers, liars, &c., then the glorious gospel is contrary unto them, as 1 Tim. 1:10, 11, compared.

But if thou beest not able to behold the glory of the gospel, how wilt thou behold Christ coming in his glory, to render vengeance with ‘flaming fire’ to them that obey not this gospel?

Thirdly, If it be thus glorious, then see if thou endeavourest to glorify and admire this gospel, and bring honour to it, which is a third consequence whereby you may know whether you receive it in the glory of it or no; for all things we apprehend glorious, we labour to glorify and set forth as much as we may; and this ground on 2 Thess. 3:1. ‘Pray,’ says the apostle, ‘that the word may run and be glorified,’ &c., that is, that it may have not only free progress in the world, run upon wheels, as the word signifies, but when it is entertained according to the glory and worth of it, as it was amongst these Thessalonians, who received it as the ‘word of God, and not of man,’ 1 Thess. 2:13. ‘Turning from idols, to serve the living God,’ chap. 1:9; parting with all their sins, and setting up God in their hearts; receiving it ‘in much affliction,’ ver. 6, yet rejoicing in it 9 with joy unspeakable and glorious;’ being content to part with lands and all for the gospel’s sake, as Mark 8:35; having a care of their conversation in all things, that it may be as becomes the gospel, as he exhorts, Phil. 1:27; when men contend for every truth of it, as Paul in the next words, ver. 28, ‘striving together for the faith of the gospel,’ continuing immovable, not removing from the ‘hope of the gospel,’ as Col. 1:2, 3; leaving all for the hopes of what it reveals, accounting this the greatest blessing and privilege they can enjoy in this life to enjoy it; rejoicing in it more than in wisdom, learning, strength, riches; glorying that a man knows God merciful and gracious, which is the message of the gospel, as Jer. 9:23, as the Galatians did, Gal. 4:14, 15, when they first received Paul, they received him as an angel: ‘Where was then the blessedness you spoke of?’ They so magnified this mercy, that they counted it the greatest blessing of all other, that though a people be blessed, when their garners are full, &c., yet, as if nothing were to be accounted of, he says, ‘Happy is that people whose God is the Lord,’ &c., Ps. 144:15.

Use 2. If the gospel be thus glorious, then see and acknowledge what is truly the glory of any people, and the lack whereof leaves them in the most miserable and inglorious condition; even the gospel. The law, which as this 2 Cor. chap. 3 tells us, had not any glory in this respect, yet made the people of the Jews a great nation in the eyes of all round about them, Deut. 4:6-9. The nation that

should hear of all these statutes should say, ‘This is a great nation, that hath God so nigh them; and what nation so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law?’

That which anciently made one commonwealth excel another, to flourish more and continue longer, was the excellency and righteousness of the laws and form of government among them. This made Lacedemonia great, kept the Venetian state standing these 1300 years, and hath made them accounted a great, and a wise, and an understanding people. But all the nations had not such a law as this in all parts; ‘all this law,’ so just, so holy, it being that law by which man in his holy state was governed, which the angels in heaven live by, which set not up men as their kings and rulers, but sets God up as their protector, makes him ‘nigh them,’ ver. 7. Therefore, Ps. 76:1-4, in that God was known in Judah, this made it ‘more excellent than the mountains of prey.’ He compares all the kingdoms of the world besides to wild waste places, where outlaws dwell, savage and cruel wild beasts, that prey upon one another, in the absence of the knowledge of this law to civilise and tame them.

And, therefore, though the Israelites were famous for deliverances above all the nations of the world, fuller of inhabitants than any nation, as the sands of the sea (which is the glory of a kingdom, Solomon says, Prov. 14:28), flowing more with outward blessings than any nation else; in a word, though their privileges were much every way above the Gentiles, Rom. 3:2, yet chiefly (says he) ‘that to them were committed the oracles of God.’ This you see is made the top and height of all.

Now, if the law made them thus glorious, and the obscure revealing of the gospel, and indeed but the ‘shadow,’ as Heb. 10:1, the shine and glimmering as it were of the glory of the gospel, how much more must that make a people glorious (whenas it comes to be fulfilled) which Habakkuk foretold, Hab. 2:14, that ‘all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.’ And if in any age or in any coast it is or hath been full tide, it is now in England.

In 1 Sam. 4:22, when the ark was taken, it was said, ‘the glory of Israel is departed.’ Now, the ark, which was covered with the mercy-seat and the cherubims, was the place where God appeared, sitting between the cherubims, and shining bright, as Ps. 80:1, and met the people, Exod. 25:22, whence he spake and gave oracles, Num. 7:89; and therefore is called the ‘speaking-place,’ *debir*, 1 Kings 6:23. And therefore the ark was called the ‘glory,’ Rom. 9:4; and ‘cherubims of glory,’ Heb. 9:5. Now, what was this ark a type of, which was thus

the glory of Israel? Of the gospel. For, Heb. 9:23, they were all patterns of things in heaven.

Now, as the temple was the type of the church under the gospel, Rev. 11:1, so the ark was of Christ, revealed in the preaching of the gospel, in the last verse of that chapter. There was seen in his temple the 'ark of his testament,' wherein Jesus Christ comes and meets his people, and speaks from heaven, and wherein believers behold his glory, 2 Cor. 3:18; and therefore they are called the 'oracles of God,' 1 Pet. 4:11. So as when we prophesy, men fall down convinced and say, 'God is amongst you,' 1 Cor. 14:25. And the cherubims, between which God sits and speaks, are ministers of the gospel, as you shall hear anon.

So as indeed the manifestation of the gospel is called 'the glory,' as the ark was of old. So, I take it, that place is to be understood, 1 Pet. 1:10-12, where, speaking of our privilege who enjoy it, he says, 'the patriarchs did foretell the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that followed;' namely, that spreading of the gospel, shedding forth of the Spirit, and gifts, which made those times glorious times after Christ's ascension. Yea, in this respect, the congregations assembled to hear this gospel, God manifesting his presence, are called 'the glory;' I say the assemblies are, Isa. 4:5, which place is to be understood of the times of the gospel, and the calling of the Jews; 'God will create upon her assemblies a cloud by day, and a shining fire by night,' to guide them as in the wilderness, 'for upon all the glory shall be a defence;' that is, upon all those assemblies, which, for the presence of God thus gloriously amongst them, he calls 'the glory.'

And this gospel hath made this kingdom and this town as a 'crown of glory in the hand of the Lord;' and 'the glory of the whole earth,' as Jerusalem is called, Isa. 62:7; the glorious diamond in the ring of the world.⁶

⁶ It is not easy to ascertain whether the town referred to here is Cambridge or London. There is no doubt that the sermons were originally preached in Cambridge; but it is possible that they might be afterwards delivered in London, and that some sentences might then be added, whilst those having special reference to Cambridge might be allowed to remain by the editors of the Works. Still, it ought to be observed that he represents the glory of the 'kingdom and town,' as consisting in wisdom and understanding, and that may be thought more applicable to Cambridge than to London. It is not unworthy of notice that the comparison of the world to a ring, and London to the diamond set in it, is

And this it is which did raise that great opinion in the hearts of other nations, that we were accounted a great people, as Deut. 4:6, 7, a wise and an understanding people, and full of humanity and amiableness of carriage; whereas others are accounted rude and barbarous, that lack it in the power that we have it. For when the earth, or any land, is filled with 'the knowledge of the Lord,' it takes fierceness and wildness away from the inhabitants of it. Not from these only whom it converts, but whom it convinceth, Isa. 11, from the wolves and the lions, so as not to hurt, verse 9.

'Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.'

(Morality softens those not allowed to be fierce.)

It makes men more noble and ingenuous, as those of Berea were, having received the gospel, Acts 17:11. That is it which hath struck much terror in former times into the hearts of our enemies, as in Jehoshaphat's days; when he was careful to send Levites to teach in every city, 'fear fell upon all the kingdoms round about, so as they made no war,' 2 Chron. 17:10. And God being 'known for a refuge in our palaces,' 'fear took hold of the kings of the earth,' Ps. 48:3 and 6 compared.

That is it which hath been our defence; for, Isa. 4:5, where the glory of God is, there is a defence upon all the glory; that when they combined together to make an attempt, as in Eighty-eight.⁷ As it is in the same Psalm, 48:4-7. Kings were assembled, a great many, as appears by the 7th verse, and they passed by all along our coasts, but they were troubled, and they wasted away; and God broke the ships of Tarshish with the east wind, God being known for a refuge, verse 3. And where the gospel runs without rub, and is glorified, there, when enemies come in like a mighty flood, thinking to bear all before them, Isa. 59:19, when 'they fear the name of Jehovah from the west' (which is thought to be meant of these western churches, as they have been always called), 'and his glory from the rising of the sun: when the enemy comes in as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.' Ps. 76:1-3, 'In Judah is God known, and his dwelling-place is in Zion: there brake he the arrows, and the bow, and the shield, and the sword, and the battle.' And so, on the contrary, when we go against others, on just quarrels, if the gospel be glorified amongst us, the promise is, Isa. 58:8,

employed, in almost the same words, by Thomas Adams (Practical Works, vol. 11. p. 332), What was once said of Ormus is true of this city, "Turn the world into a ring, and this is the diamond of it."--ED.

⁷ That is, 1588, the year of the Spanish Armada.--ED.

‘the glory of God shall be thy rearguard;’ shall make an army for us, to fight for us. This defended this town from the plague.

This is that which, when sought and embraced above all things, makes other blessings be cast into the bargain, as Christ promiseth, find to which also we owe all the peace, plenty, and abundance of all things, which since the day we had the gospel we have enjoyed, which, if we had not, yet it is blessing enough. Rom. 15:29, ‘I shall come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel,’ which whoso enjoys they lack no blessing. It is full of blessing when it comes to a place, and it carries all away when itself removes. Look upon a town where once the king’s court was kept, and then it flourished and abounded with blessings, which haply before was poor as Newmarket;⁸ but when that is once removed to come no more, look on it then again, and how poor, how desolate, doth such a town grow!

And Christ, where he comes in, enricheth the place he keeps court in. He did good to men’s bodies, and souls also, when on earth, and so now in heaven, where his tabernacle is pitched. But when he removes, Mat. 23:38, ‘Behold your houses are left unto you desolate.’ Why? ‘For I say, Ye shall not henceforth see me, till ye say, ‘Blessed is he,’ &c.” Judea, that once did flow with milk and honey, is now barren—

‘Insula dives opum Priami dum regna manebant.’
(Riches remained on the island during the reign of Priam.)

Great must the misery of that place be, then, from which the glory is departing, for then their defence is gone, and they are left naked, exposed to the fury of their enemies, as the people were in the sight of their enemies, Exod. 32:25, stripped of all their ornaments and armour, and therefore ‘the people mourned,’ chap. 33, and then destruction doth certainly and inevitably follow.

Ezek. 9:3. Before the executioners of vengeance came with their slaughterweapons, the glory of the Lord went away from the cherub, and then the wrath of God falls upon men to the utmost, as upon the Jews, 1 Thes. 2:16, that is, in greater extremities than upon any other. Neither is the tenure of us Gentiles so sure as was theirs; it was as their freehold, Rom. 9:4. ‘To them appertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the promises.’ Rom. 11:21, ‘If God spared not the natural branches, take heed how he spare not thee: be not high-minded, but

⁸ Charles I. kept his court at Newmarket in 1642. Goodwin had before this left Cambridge, but would naturally take an interest in the neighbourhood.--ED.

fear.’ ‘Towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou shalt be cut off,’ ver. 22. And yet they are cut of, and have been these sixteen hundred years, and that glory which belonged to them is departed from them, and not yet returned; and have we not cause to fear?

To that end, let us consider some signs of the departure of this glory from a people, and this in those degrees wherein usually it departs.

First, When those outward privileges, which I mentioned before, which have been pawns of its presence, are a-going, and a people is bereft of them; for when you see the train departing and the followers sent away, you expect the court removes shortly. When God ‘turneth the glory’ of a kingdom ‘into shame,’ as Hosea 4:7, he threateneth, makes it ‘base in the eyes of its neighbours,’ as, Ezek. 17:14, he did that of Judah before captivity, so as they are made a derision to those to whom they were a terror. When we see blessings ebb, attempts blasted, armies blown away and dissolved as dust-heaps in a nation that was once honourable, victorious, terrible, prosperous. Winter is nigh when leaves fall off.

And so God did with the Jews, before that final taking of the gospel from them, by taking first away their beauty, their honour and glory, and outward liberties and privileges of a nation, which once they had enjoyed, broke the ‘staff of beauty,’ and then ‘of bands,’ Zech. 11:10, 14, then disuniting and scattering them over the face of the earth.

The *second* thing that departs before the gospel departs is the inward, glorious presence of God’s Spirit which once did shine in his ordinances, that though men enjoy the outward, visible signs of his presence, have the ark and preaching of the gospel and cherubims among them, yet the Spirit is gone. Ezek. 9:3, it is said that ‘the glory went up from the cherubims’ before the destruction that followed, that though the cherubims and temple and ark still remained, yet the glory was gone. Now, the cherubims signified the ministers of the gospel, as you shall hear anon.

Now, when God withdraws his Spirit from us, then the glory goes hence, for in this 2 Cor. 3. This is that which makes the gospel glorious, ‘the ministration of the Spirit;’ so that, as the glory of the body is gone when the soul is out, so the glory of the gospel is gone when the Spirit is departed, for without it it is but a dead letter. ‘For the kingdom of God’ (Paul speaks it of preaching of the gospel, 1 Cor. 4:20) ‘consists not in word, but in power;’ so that when that power is gone, the kingdom is gone. Now, whilst that power goes forth, so long God hath elect to call, 1 Thes. 1:4, 5, ‘Knowing your election to be of God, because our gospel was

not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. And when the elect is gone, God takes away the gospel.

But when you shall hear sermons, and lay open the excellent things of the law, and reveal the secrets of the gospel, which the angels pry into, and yet the Holy Ghost withdraw himself, that neither wicked are convinced to fall down and say, 'God is amongst them,' the high fortresses of carnal opinion, corrupt practices, are not cast down in the congregations that hear them, nor are they reformed at all, but they that were filthy are filthy still; when the best are dead, and dull, and cold under it, their hearts are not warmed as they were wont to burn with them, as the disciples' hearts were when they went to Emmaus; when God ceaseth to shew himself terrible to the wicked in his holy place, Ps. 68:35, but then when the sentence of damnation is clearly pronounced against men, yet they all hear it as the song of one can sing well; when God creates not a cloud and a pillar of fire upon our assemblies, as Isa. 4:5, to guide, enlighten, and clear our hearts in the ways of godliness; when few are added to the church and none to God, it is a sign God hath his elect out, and that the glory is going.

The second temple was more glorious than the former, Hag. 2:9, yet the former was outwardly more glorious. If Christ be present, he makes the glory with less learned teaching. And it is for your sakes God assists, 1 Thes. 1:5, 'What manner of men for your sakes.'

Thirdly, Then the Spirit is withdrawing, when wicked hearts grow weary of it—even the wicked a while rejoiced in John's light—and godly men are indifferent whether they enjoy it or, no, this is a further sign of its departure, and an effect of the former. Amos 8:5, men cried there, 'When will the Sabbath be gone,' and sermon over, that we may get back to work again, and not lose too much time?

And what follows on this? He upon this threateneth, ver. 9, that 'their sun shall go down at noon;' that glorious light God had set up amongst them, should set in the very noon and height, when it might have run a course many years after; an eclipse, a total one came on the sudden, even at noonday. And if the place should not be meant of the light of the word, as I think it is, yet verse 11 expressly threateneth upon this, 'a famine of the word,' &c. That word which before had rained down as manna, and they were weary of it and would scarce go out of doors to hear it, now they should run from sea to sea, and not find it.

Or suppose they be not weary of it, as the godly are not, yet if they be not earnest with God by prayers for it, and continuance of it, when they do not strive together, as Paul exhorts them, Rom. 15:30, but they sit still and let all go, and

strive not; and if God will provide for them, and send forth labourers, so it is; whereas Christ tells them they must pray, Mat. 9:88. You are bidden pray for daily bread, and it must cost you sweat besides; and do you think to enjoy bread of heaven without praying daily for it, yea, and that sweating in prayer also? Jesus Christ looks to be constrained to stay with a people, as with those disciples, Luke 24:28, 29. Whereas otherwise he would have gone further, and certainly would. When the keys are laid aside that should unlock the cupboard, whence the children should have bread, they are likely to lose their suppers. Now these keys are prayers. If Paul be given them, it must be by prayer, Philem. 22.

A fourth sign of the departure of this glory is when men begin to let error and idolatry creep in, which is an effect of the former; for (2 Thes. 2:10) men having no pleasure in truth, but in unrighteousness, God gave them up to lies, and they provoke the Lord to departure, Gal. 2:6.

In case of circumcision, says Paul, 'I would not yield, or give way, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.' As if he had said, If I had given way to a small error, it had endangered the continuance of the gospel with you; how much more, when gross errors, contrary to our points of catechism, and principles of religion, are admitted in a church and suffered to be taught, and grow upon us; but much more must this glory depart when idolatry gets footing. Then God's glory departs amain. Ezek. ix., When did the glory go from the cherub to the threshold of the door? When, chap. 8, idolatry was committed in the secret chambers, yea and in the temple, in worshipping towards the east; then there was no room left for God, he withdrew himself to the threshold, shewing he would fain have had a room amongst them, but he was justled out, glad stand at the threshold, one foot in, another out, for what fellowship hath God with idols? 2 Cor. 6:16. God will not walk among you where idols are.

And then, *Fifthly* and lastly, the glory wholly departs when the cherubims do ascend or are removed, Ezek. 11:22. When the cherubims lift up their wings, then the glory went from the city quite. Now cherubims are angels, both celestial, and these on earth, namely, ministers of the gospel. For if you would see what these cherubims were, see Ezek. 1:5, 6. They were four beasts, who had faces of a lion, a man, an ox, an eagle, and wings full of eyes. Now in the 10th chapter, verses 1, 14, and 20, these are called cherubims. Now, if you would see what these beasts are, see Rev. 4:6, where the same living creatures are in the same manner described with the same faces, wings, and eyes; Rev. 5:11. And there they are made distinct from the twenty-four elders, that is, the saints and angels; and therefore by them are meant the ministers and magistrates, especially ministers, whereof some are lions for zeal and courage, and terror in preaching; others *oxen*,

for their pains, and diligence, and constancy, and plainness; others are *men*, preach more rationally to convince the gainsayers; others *eagles*, that have more deep insight into heavenly mysteries, and soar high and aloft.

Now, when error is let in, and idolatry is admitted, then look for the cherubim to ascend, to be removed. And in any state, or in the mean time, when a cherub ascends up to heaven, that had the face of 'a man and an eagle,' from a particular place, the glory of God sometimes goes with him; as when old Eli died, the wife of Phinehas said, 1 Sam. 4:20, 'The glory was gone,' not only because of the ark, but also because of her father-in-law.

And now let me exhort you, of this place and kingdom, seriously to consider the state and condition of the gospel, standing amongst you, and whether many of these signs are not fulfilled before your eyes. For the present, to let the kingdom go, look homeward to yourselves. Is not the glory of this place exceedingly vanished of late years in men's opinions abroad? Do they not suspect unsoundness in doctrine, and otherwise? Doth God fill his ordinances as sails with the wind he had wont to do. Your hearts know best, who have had experience of former times. Remember the breathings and warnings of former times. It may be our faults, yet sure I am, we are assisted 'for your sakes' especially, 1 Thes. 1:5. And accordingly do our tongues cleave to the roof of our mouths. Do not your hands, which should be lift up to God for supply, even then when your losses and fears are greatest, grow slack and flag, and your hearts faint? Do you seek God with mourning and weeping, and stir up one another to do so? Do not errors bordering on popery creep in upon us apace, and begin to overgrow us, and our silver to become dross? Is not one of the cherubs ascended, others removed, your sun set at noon, a total eclipse threatened?

Yet at length, brethren, bestir yourselves. Would you have the word dwell with you? 'Let the word dwell in you,' Col. 3:15. Get acquaintance with it, be familiar to it, keep it company in your thoughts, converse with it, meditate in it day and night, let it lie, sleep, wake, walk, sit, ride with you.

Also be valiant for truth, 'Hold fast the things you have been taught,' Rev. 2:24, 25. However other opinions may be thrust upon you under pretence of depths, as there are, 'yet hold fast till I come;' so you may enjoy it till Christ come.

Take heed of having pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 Thes. 2:10. It will give you up to lies to be damned. Turn from folly, and return to it no more, but fear the Lord, Ps. 85:8, 9, compared. 'Let them not return to folly.' Salvation is nigh to them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.'

Bless God for, and prize the meanest that bring the glad tidings of salvation in power and faithfulness, Mat. 23:39. 'I will go hence,' says Christ, 'till they say, Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord,' and then will I return again.

You young ones, get you grace into your hearts, and the word rooted there, that when it dies in old men, there may be a succession of it in you.

Above all, be earnest with God, pray that he thrust forth labourers into his harvest. 'God feeds the ravens that cry to him,' Job 38:41, that wander up and down, know not where to have a meal's meat next; and as Christ argues, 'Doth God take care for lilies and birds,' Matt. 6:26, 'and are not you better than they?' Are not you children? And is not the word children's bread? That is, it is theirs, appointed for them, Mat. 15:26. No prayers of children pierce their parents' ear more than when they cry for bread, for those that are born must be kept. Lam. 4:3, 'Sea monsters⁹ give their breasts to their young ones,' much more God.

God is loath to remove from an ancient dwelling-place, as you may see by his lingering in Ezek. 9:3. To the threshold, thence to the midst of the city, &c.

His promise is to give them pastors according to his own heart, if there be but one or two in a city, Jer. 3:14, 15; and there are more in this town.

And Ps. 132:11, 'God swore to David, that if his children keep my covenant, &c., they should sit upon his throne,' and God would make it his rest, ver. 14. It is a trouble to him to remove, and therefore at the 17th verse he says, 'He will ordain a lamp,' that is, when one candle is out he will give another; so 1 Kings 15:4 it is interpreted.

Now, the same promises are to you all for the sure mercies of David; I say, are promised to be established to all that are in covenant. As one light is out, God will set up another; as of magistrates, so of ministers, Jer. 33:17, 18. I say as Samuel, 1 Sam. 12:22-24, 'For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if you shall still do wickedly, you shall be consumed,' &c.

⁹ 'Jackals' in modern translations.

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