

The Trial & Triumph of Faith

SERMON 21

By **Rev. Samuel Rutherford**

“Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith,” etc.

THIS is the last passage of the text, containing a commendation of the woman, given to her by Christ in her face. (2.) An answer according to her desire. (3.) The effect of her praying with instancy and pressing importunity of faith: the devil is cast out of her daughter.

Christ acknowledgeth here, that instancy of praying in faith, will overcome God, and Satan, and all the saddest temptations that can befall the child of God. Hence, observe what acts of efficacious power instant and earnest prayer putteth forth upon God, and how the clay-creature doth work upon, and prevail with the great Potter and former of all things.

1. Prayer is a messenger, and a swift and winged post dispatched up to court. David sent away this post early in the morning, with morning wings: “My voice shalt thou hear in the morning.” (Psalm 5:3.) The post is himself, for the word is, I will address my person, as in battle array. “Set thyself in order before me, (and) stand up,” saith Elihu to Job; or, I will address my words, (Job 33:5). “Now he hath not directed his words against me.” (Job 32:14.) The seventy render it *parastesomai soi*; and David sent himself to heaven, not only as a post, but as the word (*Atsappeh*) soundeth, ‘I will look up, or, espy;’ as one that keepeth watch and ward, waiting for an answer from God, as the word is, (Hab. 2:1, and Psalm 18:6.) “In my distress I called upon the Lord,—and my cry came before him, even into his ears.”

2. Prayer putteth a challenge upon God, for his covenant’s sake and his promise; that is greater boldness, than to speak to God and wait on; “Our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary: We are thine, thou never barest rule over them, they were not called by thy name,” (Isa. 63:18,19). “Behold, O Lord, and consider, to whom thou hast done this.” (Lam. 2:20.) “O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants’ sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.” (Isa. 63:17.) Hence is there a holy chiding with God: “O my God, I cry in the daytime, and thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent.” (Psalm 22:2.) “How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?” (Psalm 13:1.)

3. It putteth God to great straits and suffering, even to the moving of his soul, (Jer. 31). When God heareth Ephraim bemoaning himself in prayer, it putteth God to a sort of pinch and condolency: "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him." (verse 20.) Is Isaac, an earthly father, moved, and his heart rent and torn with the weeping and tears of Esau, his son, so as he must confer some blessing upon him; far more must the bowels of our Father, infinite in mercy, be turned within him, at the weeping and tears of a praying and crying Church.

4. When God seemeth to sleep, in regard that his work, and the wheels of his providence are at a stand, prayer awakeneth God, and putteth him on action: "Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies; awake for the judgment thou hast commanded," (Psalm 7:6). "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord! Arise, cast us not off for ever." (Psalm 44:23.) Both the words (Gnurah and Hakitsa) signify to awake out of sleep: so prayer putteth God on noble acts of omnipotency, as to bow the heavens and come down, (Isa. 64:1,) to shake and put on work all creatures in heaven and earth, for the saving of one poor man, (Psalm 18); as when the sick child crieth for pain, all the sons and servants, yea, the father of the house, and mother, are set on work, and put to business for his health. Hence when David prayed, "The earth shook, the foundations of the hills were moved, for the Lord was wroth; smoke and fiery coals went out of his mouth; he bowed the heavens and came down, he rode upon a cherub, and did fly upon the wings of the wind." (Psalm 18:6,7.) So it did put the Lord to divide the Red sea; to break the prison doors and iron chains, to deliver Peter, Paul, and Silas.

5. It acteth so upon God, that it putteth the crown upon Christ's head, and heighteneth the footstool of his throne; so much doth that prayer, "thy kingdom come," hold forth; and that last prayer of the church, which the Spirit and the Bride uttereth, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," (Rev. 22,) is a hastening of that glorious marriage-day, when the Bride, the Lamb's wife shall be married on Jesus Christ; and a ripening of the glory of God, and of Christ the King and Head mystical of his body the Church. The glory of infinite justice, and saving grace in the redemption of men, is like a fair rose, but enclosed within its green leaves in this life. But when Christ shall appear, this rose shall be opened and cast out in breadth, its fair and beautiful leaves to be seen and smelled openly by men and angels. In very deed, this prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," is summons for the last judgment, for the full manifestation of the highest glory of Christ, in the final and consummate illustration of free grace and mercy, in the complete redemption of all the prisoners of hope, only for the declaration of the supreme Judge's glory; who shall then do execution on Satan, his angels, Antichrist, and all slaves of hell: so that though prayer made not the world, yet it may unmake it, and set up a new heaven and a new earth.

6. Prayer is a binding of God, that he cannot depart; and layeth chains on his hands, and buildeth a wall or an hedge of thorns in his way, that he cannot destroy his people: "And there is none that calleth upon thy name, and stirreth up himself to take hold of thee;" (Isa. 64:7;) there is none to lay hands on thee; "And I sought for a man amongst them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap, (or in the rupture made by war,) before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none." (Ezek. 22:30.) If a Moses or a Samuel should intercede by prayer, that the Lord would spare the land, his prayer should be a hedge or a wall to stand in the way of justice, to hinder the Lord to destroy his people.

7. Prayer is a heavenly violence to God expressed in divers powerful expressions; as, (1.) The faithful watchmen pray and cry to God so hard, that they give the Lord no rest, no silence, till he establish Jerusalem. (Isa. 62:6,7.) (2.) Praying is a sort of striving with the Lord: "I beseech you,—strive with me, in prayers to God for me." (Rom. 15:30). (3.) Jacob by prayer wrestled with the Lord; and the Lord, as if he had been straitened, saith, "Send me away, dismiss me. And Jacob said, I will not dismiss thee, till thou bless me:" (Gen. 32.) Which is well expounded by Hosea, chapter 12:4. Jacob had a princely power over the Angel, and prevailed, he wept, and made supplication to him. [He] is a Prince, or as many render it, *Rectus fuit cum Deo*, or *Directus fuit, vel prosperum successum habuit*, Which may note either a principedom in prayer over God, which is the true reason of the name Israel; or, as others think, he stood right up, and his prayer did not bow, nor was broken, when a temptation lay on him as heavy as a mill-stone: even when the Lord said he would depart from him, yet he prevailed under that weight. So, (Exod. 32:10,) when Moses was praying for the people, the Lord said to Moses, "Let me alone that I may destroy them." The Chaldee translates it, 'Leave off thy prayer before me.' All which tendeth to this, that prayer is a prince, and a mighty, wrestling, prevailing king, that hath strong bones, and strong arms, to be victorious with God. We know the parable of the widow, (Luke 18,) who by importunity obtained of the unjust judge, that he should avenge her of her adversary. The scope of which parable is, that prayers without fainting, putteth such a labour and a trouble upon God, that he must hear and answer the desires of his children. So doth the Lord resemble himself to a master of a family gone to bed with his children, who yet being wearied by the knocking of his neighbour, cannot choose but rise in the night, and lend him bread, to strangers come to his house.

8. Some also say, that prayer commandeth God, as Isa. 45:11: "Ask of me things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hand command ye me." Which place, though it may well bear another interpretation, yet is this not beside the scope of the text; for sure it is, that God hath laid a sort of law on himself, in regard of his binding promise, to hear the prayers of his children; and that he cometh down from the throne of his sovereignty, to submit himself to his own promise of hearing prayers, (Psalm 34:15; 65:2; 145:18,19; Matt. 7:7,8; John 14:13,14).

USE 1. If prayer prevail over God and Christ, even to the overcoming of the Devil, then much more will a praying people prevail over hell and malignants. It were wisdom then for malignants, to yield and strike sail to those, who can by prayer set Omnipotency on work, and engage the Strength of Israel against them. Amalek had Omnipotency against them, and a harder party than spears, and bows, and armed men, in that praying Moses was against them. The third Psalm was a strong piece against Absalom and Ahithophel, and all that conspired against David. Christ's prayers for the perfecting of his own body, and gathering in his first-born, include in them a curse upon all those that hinder the gathering in of his flock. Woe to the enemies, then, against whom our Intercessor prayeth curses; the prayers of Christ against his enemies shall blast them and their counsels, and all their War-undertakings.

USE 2. Some are discouraged; they can neither fight for Christ, nor do any thing to promote this cause, as wanting strength of body and means. Nay, but if thou canst pray, thou dost set the whole wheels of Omnipotency on work, for the building of the Lord's house; in which regard, the prayer of a sick and poor man shall do more in war for the cause of God, than twenty thousand men. It was not Ahasuerus, nor the grace that Esther found in the eyes of the king, that saved the whole church of the Jews from destruction, but the prayers of Esther and her maids. It is true, an angel brought Peter out of prison, (Acts 12,) but what stirred that wheel in heaven? Here's the cause, "Prayer was made without ceasing to God for Peter, by the church:" (verse 5). Prayer, prayer can put a reeling and tottering on king and court, pope, prelate, and Babylon: we are to pray the king of the bottomless pit, the man of sin, the graven images of apostate Rome, out of the world. Prayer can yoke all the swords in Europe against the Whore. Every one who hath the spirit of adoption, though poor and rejected of men, by prayer hath powerful influence on all the nations of the earth, on all Europe, on the ends of the earth, on the hearts of the Jews, on Turks and Indians. Prayer can reach as far as Omnipotency, accompanied by the wise decree of our Lord; and the poorest girl or maid that can pray, doth lend a strong lift to heighten the footstool of Christ's royal throne. Children and poor maids, by prayer, may put the crown on Christ's head, and hold up his throne, and may store and increase heaven by praying, "Thy kingdom come," and enlarge hell, and fill the pits with the dead bodies of Christ's enemies; and may, by prayer, bind kings in fetters, chain up and confine devils, subdue kingdoms.

"Great is thy faith." For the clearing of these words, we are to consider three points; (1.) What faith is. (2.) What a great faith is. (3.) Why he saith 'thy faith,' appropriating it to the woman. Now, of faith I shall speak, [1.] A word of preparations for faith; [2.] Of the grounds and necessary motives to faith; [3.] Of the ingredients of faith; [4.] Of the sinner's warrants to believe; [5.] Of divers sorts of false and ill rooted faiths.

There is a preparation going before faith.

1. There be some preparations which go before faith: (1.) Faith is a seed of heaven; it is not sown by the "good husbandman" in unploughed and in fallow ground; Christ soweth not amongst thorns. We are "builded on the faith;" stones are hewn, rubbish removed, before one stone be laid. (2.) Every act of grace in God is an act of Omnipotency, and so requireth not time or succession: God might have set up the frame of the world in all its fullness, with less than one thought, or act of his will put forth by Omnipotency. Yet did our Lord subject the acts of creating the first world to the rule of time, and to a circle of evening and morning, nights and days; so doth the Lord set up a new world of faith, in a soul void of faith, by degrees. There is a time, when there is neither perfect night nor perfect day, but the twilight of the morning; and God, notwithstanding, created the morning, no less than the noon-day sun. There is a half summer, and a half spring, in the close of the spring, which God made. The embryo, or birth, not yet animated, is neither seed only, nor a man-child only; so is a convert in his first framing, neither perfectly untamed corruption, because there is a crack and a throw in the iron-sinew of the neck; nor is he a thorough child of light; but as we say, in the dead-throe, "in the place of breaking forth of children," as Hosea speaketh. A child with his head come forth of the womb, and no more, and so half born only; so is the convert, while he is in the making, not taken off Christ's wheels; half in the borders of hell, and looking afar off at the suburbs of heaven, not far from the kingdom of heaven.

There's no necessary and intrinsical connexion between preparations going before faith & faith.

But, 2. This bridge over the water, between the kingdom of darkness and the state of saving grace, hath no necessary connection with that kingdom of the Son of God's love, but such as it hath from the sole and mere decree of the free election of grace; and therefore, many reprobates may enter the bridge, and never go along to the other bank of the river. God breaketh the bridge, this being the very division and parting of these two unsearchable ways of election and reprobation, yet so as the sin in cutting the bridge, is the guilt of the reprobate man;—as many births die in the breaking forth out of the womb, divers roses in the bud are blasted, and never see harvest, through the fault of the seed, not of the sun.

Affections going before conversion and following after differ specifically.

3. It is true, the new creation and life of God is virtually seminaliter in these preparations, as the seed is a tree in hope, the blossom an apple, the foundation a palace in its beginning: so half a desire in the non-converted, is love-sickness for Christ in the seed; legal humiliation is, in hope, evangelical repentance, and mortification. But, as the seed and the growing tree differ not gradually only, but in nature and specifically; as a thing without life, is not of that same nature and essence, with a creature that hath a vegetative life and growth; so the

preparatory good affections of desire, hunger, sorrow, humiliation, going before conversion, differ specifically from those renewed affections which follow after; the former being acts of grace, but not of saving grace, which goeth along with the decree of the election of grace, and of like latitude with it; the latter being the native and con-natural fruits of the Spirit, of which the apostle speaketh, (Gal. 5:22,23). In which regard, no man is morally, and in regard of a divine promise, such as this—Do this, and this, and God shall bestow on you, the grace of conversion—fitter, and in a nearer disposition to conversion than another:

All are alike unfit for conversion.

(1.) Because we read not of any such promise in the gospel; (2.) Because amongst things void of life, all are equally void of life, and here there are no degrees of more or less life, no intention, no remission or slacking of the degrees of life. For even as an ape or a horse are as equally no men, as stones and dead earth are no men; though an ape or a horse have life common to them with men, which stones and earth have not, yet they are equally as destitute of reason and an intellectual life, which is the only life of a man as a man, as stones and earth are; so Saul, only humbled by the terrors of the law, and sick of half-raw desires of Christ, is no less yet a creature void of the life of God, than when he was in the highest pitch of obstinacy, spitting out blood and murders on the face of that Lord Jesus whom he persecuted. And in this regard, conversion is no less pure grace, every way free to Saul humbled, and so, having only half a thirst and desire of Christ, than if he were yet in the fever of his highest blasphemy, thirsting after the blood of the saints.

Some nearer conversion than others are.

4. Yet are the saints thus prepared and humbled, but not converted materially, physically, or as it were, passively nearer Christ; and in relation to God's eternal election of grace, who maketh this a step relative to his eternal love, they are under the reach of Christ's love, and at the elbow of the right arm of the Father, who draweth souls to the Son, (John 6:44). And in the gospel-bounds and fields, or lists of free grace, as the height and rage of a fever is near a cool and a return to health, and yet most contrary to health; and the utmost flowing of the sea, when it is at the remotest score of the coast, is a disposition to an ebbing, though most contrary to a low ebb; so are the humbled souls who have some lame and maimed estimative power of light, to put half a price on Christ, and find apprehended sin, the mouth, throat, and out-entry of hell, in that case most contrary to Christ. A fish within that circle of the water that the net casteth, is no less living in its own element of water, than if it were in the bosom of the ocean, some hundred miles distant from fisher or net; yet is it in a near disposition to be caught.

Three grounds and motives of believing.

For grounds of faith to lead us on to believing, consider, (1.) two words, (Col. 1:27,) spoken of the object of faith. [1.] It is named "The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles;" [2.] "which is," saith Paul, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

[1.] Now, faith leadeth us to a mystery that none knoweth, but such as are the intimate friends of Christ, and are put upon all Christ's secret cabinet councils. (2.) Glory is so taking a lover, that it will deprive a natural man of his sleep; but the glory of a kingdom revealed in the gospel, is the flower, marrow, and spirits of all glory imaginable. (3.) What is riches of glory? "That I should preach, the gold mine of the riches of the glory of Christ," (Eph. 3:8,) so deep, that none can find them out, and so large, that when they are found out, men and angels shall not find their bottom. Oh, what foldings, and turnings, and inextricable windings of glory, are lapped up in Christ! Yea, treasures, all treasures are in him, (Col. 2:3,) so it is called, (2 Cor. 4:17,) baros doxes, a weight of glory. But, (2.) A weight eternal, a weight aged, and full of ages of glory. (3.) An exceeding great weight, and not that only; but, (4.) a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Do but weigh how weighty precious Jesus Christ is, how heavy and how massy and ponderous the crown is, and what millions of diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and precious stones do shine, and cast out rays and beams of pure and unmixed glory out of his crown! What smiles and kisses breathing out glory on thy now sinful face, shall come out of Christ. Now the light of faith, even as a lantern, or a day-star in a cloudy dawning, leadeth thee up to this.

[2.] "Christ in you the hope of glory." How in them? By faith, (Eph. 3:17). Christ, the hope of glory, is Christ the glory hoped for, by a figure; that is, faith putteth Christ and heaven in you by hope. So, in the believer, there is Christ the Lamb, the throne, the glorified angels, and sinless and blessed musicians that stand in a circle about the throne, praising Him that liveth for ever. All these are in the believer by faith; and in him is heaven, the tree of life, the higher paradise, the river of water of life; unto all these faith entitleth the soul, and they be all nothing to Christ, the hope of glory. Even the only-begotten son and heir of a king, is called the hope of his house, the only hope of his house; but, in regard the heirs of mortal kings are mortal, the house is weak, and standeth but upon one foot, when he hath but one mortal heir. Now, it is the infinite perfection of God, that he can have but one son who is infinite, and the same eternal and immortal God with the Father, and that he cannot die. So Christ standeth the only hope of the house of heaven, a king by hope, the king of hope; and all hope of the captives and sons of hope, and all the glory of his Father's house hangeth upon him: Christ hath all the heirs upon his shoulder, and faith investeth the believer to all this power and glory.

2. Faith's object the marrow of God's attributes to speak so.

(2.) Faith must be so much the more precious, as that it layeth hold, for its possession, on God, and on the garland, marrow (if any comparison here can

stand) and flower of all God's attributes, [1.] the righteousness of Christ. [2.] The free grace of God, the most taking, heart-ravishing attribute in God, and most suitable to our sinful condition. [3.] The high and deep love of God, and love which dwelleth in and with the noble and excellent blood that satisfieth infinite justice. There is no such glory, by any act of obedience tendered to God, by Adam in his innocent condition, or by angels which never sinned.

3. Faith a Catholic Grace required in our actions natural & civil as well as spiritual.

(3.) There is as great a necessity of faith as of life; for the justified man must "live by faith." There is no grace so catholic: it being of necessity interwoven in all our actions, as they fall under moral consideration; not only in supernatural actions, but also in all our natural and civil actions, insofar as they must be spiritualized, in relation to God's honour, (1 Cor. 10:31). So as Joshua, Baruch, Samson, David, did fight battles, kill men, subdue kingdoms by faith, (Heb. 11:32,33,) so must the soldier now fight by that same faith, and so are the saints to eat, drink, sleep, journey, buy, sell by faith. We are not to put on faith as a cloak, or an upper garment, when we go to the streets, fields, or church, and then lay it aside in the house, at table, or in bed; yea, the renewed man is not to eat and sleep, because the light of reason and the law of nature teacheth him so to do, or the convenience of a calling; for then, all those actions shall be resolved in the same principles, and formal reason of moral performance of them, in the believer, as in the carnal man, in whom a natural spirit is steersman; and then we do but, in these actions, "walk in the light of our own fire, and the sparks that we ourselves have kindled," and shall not see to go to bed, "but lie down in sorrow," (Isa. 50:11). But we are to set faith as the plummet and line to regulate these actions, to do them, (1.) Because He who hath bought us with a price, commandeth us by the light of nature. (2.) And the light of faith is to moderate us in eating, drinking, sleeping, according to Christian sobriety, in the measure of the action. (3.) Faith teacheth us not to eat, that we may eat, or for a natural or civil end. Grace heighteneth the natural intention to a supernatural end, and to do all these for God and his service, (1 Cor. 10:31). And "whatsoever we do" (though but civil service, as servants to earthly masters in a civil calling, in trading, in arts), "we are to do all as to the Lord, not unto men," (Col. 3:23).

Then Christ, acting and moving by the light of faith, is the formal reason and principle in which lastly and formally (ultimaté) all our actions are resolved. (2.) Look of how much worth and price thy soul is; of as great necessity is faith, except thou wouldst look for the gospel vengeance, the day, or the ages of eternal vengeance at Christ's appearance, (2 Thess. 1:8; Isa. 61:2; John 3:18-36; 8:24).

Objection. "But if it be so, that faith is required in all that I do, the business of salvation (may some say) is hard and difficult work. Where shall I have faith for every stirring of my foot?"

Answer. I answer, as all our actions, except where imagination is principle of the act, must be deliberate, and so the actions of a rational man, so must they be moral. Now, there is no morality in a man who is a citizen of the church, but the morality of faith; for it is a duty laid upon every one within the visible church, that all his actions moral be watered and lustered with faith. And the truth is, the work of our salvation being compared to sailing, (Heb. 6:19,) and to fighting, (2 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:3,4,) it is very like a ship, which requireth many hands, and much attentive carefulness in the owner and sailors. Now the mast is hurt, then somewhat wanting in the deck; now the helm is faulty, then the cords are to be repaired; or the anchor is broken, or she taketh in underwater, or the sail is torn, or the motion slow. There is charge to the owner, and much work to all hands. And how many things are required to a huge body of an army? So many thousand men must be liable to so many thousand wants. Some are sick, some wounded, some a-dying, some hungry, some naked, some fall off the army, and are caught by the enemy; some be faint, some too bold and precipitate; yea, armour, houses, bread, drink, fire, tents, physicians, workmen, mattocks, spades, bridges, ladders, homes, engines of war, art and skill, medicine, counsel, courage, intelligence, and a thousand things of this kind are requisite; and seldom is an army, but there be some one inconvenience or other in this needy and cumbersome huge body. And when is the business of salvation not at a stand one way or other? Is there not either one piece or other, the shield of faith, or the anchor of hope, or the breast-plate of righteousness, or some the like, broken or faulty? Is not our Guide, who hath seven eyes, ten times a-day cumbered with us? Must not Christ solder our broken weapons, sew our torn sails, repair one breach or other in us? In a thousand the like, faith is to improve the free grace, the omnipotence, the unchangeable love of Christ, to promote his own work, and to "work in us to will, and to do, according to his good pleasure," (Phil. 2:13).

Now, for the ingredients of faith: (1.) There be in us, (2 Cor. 10:5,) Logismoi, great forts raised against the light of faith; these natural discourses in the mind, that are great works and heights, strongholds builded against Christ. The prime faculty, reason, the discursive power (dianoia,) that thinketh she hath wit enough against Christ, and to keep the man out of all danger of eternal salvation, overtoppeth and outgroweth all gospel truths: Christ must overpower carnal, fat, rank and heady soldiers, called thoughts, every thought, and so kill some that will not be taken, and lead captive other thoughts to the obedience of faith. Reason is a predominant bone in itself. The carnal mind neither will, nor can keep rank as an obedient soldier under the law of God, (Rom. 8:7). It is much for fine, silken, and golden reason, to say to Christ, Lord, there is more of a beast in me than of a man, I have not the understanding of a man. (Prov. 30:2.) The learned, the schoolmen seldom believe, except grey-haired wit turn a child, and go to school again, to learn from Christ the new art of believing; for there was never an act of unbelief in any, but it grew out of this proud and rank stalk of a lofty wit. Therefore, Christ breaks out a new window in the soul, and brings in a new sun

that flesh and blood never saw, nor heard of before, (Matt. 16:17). (2.) Faith hath low and creeping affections to the creature: but when the affections are big with child of the creature, as, [1.] They are strained and swelled in their acts, faith is no faith, but a delusion. The rich man speaketh with all his heart, and with good-will of his full barns; and it is clear, he had neither faith nor hope towards eternity, (Luke 12:19,20). For every word being (as we say) of the length of a cubit, a foot and a half, he casteth forth words of pulling down, building greater houses, and scraping in all; his goods are, Ta gennemata mou, kai ta agatha mou, "my goods, all my births and bowels, and all my good things;" for he had no other good things, and there is no apostrophe in the words: he speaketh them with a full sound, and we speak with good will these things that we tell to our soul. Faith hath but half words and half affections touching the world; half acts, or broken acts in the affections, closing with the creature, smell of a faith with child of eternity. To make the excellency of the creature a matter of mere opinion; to reckon the world's witchcrafts of lust, gain, glory, but uncertain and topic arguments to conclude a Godhead, and a golden heaven in the creature, is the height of the wisdom of faith. So Paul, "I am crucified with Christ." (Gal. 2:20.) O then (may some say), Paul, you are a dead man. He saith, No. "Nevertheless, I live," but I live the life of faith, "For Christ liveth in me." All his motions toward the creature were half dead, like the vital motions of a crucified man half out of the world, and his acts of faith were lively and vital, and high-tuned, like the highest note in the music-song. Faith cannot break, and violently rend asunder the two sides of the affections, with too violent and intense acts of love, joy, fear, desire, sorrow, as these are terminated upon the creature. It is true, faith clippeth nothing from the utmost and most superlative pitch of the love of God, of desire, fear, sorrow, joy, as they act upon God; but addeth wind to the sails in that flux of the soul's way toward God. But Faith moderateth and lesseneth all these in relation to the creature; so the faith, which hath its direct aspect toward eternity, and looketh on the shortness of sliding away time, and the transient wheeling away of the poor figure of this world, (1 Cor. 7:29-31,) turneth all these acts into but half a face on the creature, and into leisurely and leaden motions, or half to non-acts, as if made up of heavenly contradictions: "Having wives, having not wives; weeping, not weeping; rejoicing, not rejoicing; buying, not possessing; using the world, not using the world." (verses 29-31.) When the saints throng through the press and crowd of the creatures (for the world is a bushy and rank wood), thorns take hold of their garments, and retard them in their way. Faith looseth their garments, and riddeth them of such thorny friends as are too kind to them in their journey. Who diggeth for iron and tin in the earth with mattocks of gold? What wise man would make a web of cloth of gold, a net to catch fish? Expenses should overgrow gains. There is much of the metal of heaven in the soul. Faith would forbid us to wear out the threads of this immortal spirit; such as are love, joy, fear, sorrow, upon pieces of corruptible clay. Alas, is it faith's light that setteth men a-work to make the soul a golden needle, and the precious powers and perfections thereof, threads of silver, to sew together pieces of sackcloth and old rotten rags? What better, I pray you, is the finest of the web in the whole system of creation? Certainly, the heavens must be a thread of better

wool than the clay earth; yet, if you should break your immortal spirit, and bend all the acts to the highest extent of your affections, to conquer thousands of acres of ground in the heavens, and entitle your soul to that inheritance, as to your only patrimony without Christ, faith's day-light should discover to you, that this finest part of that web of creation, with which you desire to clothe your precious soul, is but base wool, and rotten thread, and though beautiful and well dyed to the eye, yet, "The heavens, even all of them, shall wax old like a garment." (Psalm 102:26.) And the wisdom of faith knoweth a shop, where there is a more excellent suit of clothes for the soul, and a more precious piece of the heaven to dwell in; even a house which is from heaven, with which you shall be clothed, when life shall eat up death and mortality. (2 Cor. 5:1,2.)

2. The creatures are below the affections of the believer, and his affections conquer them, as having the vantage of the mount above all the creatures. So Paul maketh an elegant contrariety, (Phil. 3:19,20,) between those whose heart, senses, mind, find neither smell, taste, nor wisdom, but in earthly things, and those who by faith look to heaven, and dwell there. And the temporary's heart is below the world, and the creatures are up in the mount above him. So (Matt. 13:7-22,) the thorns or cares of riches have the fore-start of the earth, add sap above faith, or the good seed: for the seed was cast in the earth, when the thorns had been there before, and had the vantage of the season and the soil both. The first love is often strongest. The martyrs (Heb. 11:35,) had poor and weak thoughts of this life, and would not accept and welcome life and deliverance from death; but had strong acts of faith and love toward a better resurrection. It is a soul's strong faith, that bringeth him to wonder at nothing; never to love much, nor fear much, nor sorrow much, nor joy much, nor weep much, nor laugh much, nor hope much, nor despair much, when the creature is the object of all these acts. There is nothing great, not the world's all things, to him who is possessed with that "righteousness which is of God by faith," (Phil. 3:8,9). Men that talk with good will and all their heart, of their learning, books, of their own acts, good works, wisdom, court, honour, valour in war, flocks, lands, gold, monies, children, friends, travels, are to examine if faith be not a chaste thing, and that acts of whoredom with the creature, and of believing in Christ, are scarce consistent. Let your affections move toward the creature without great sound of feet.

3. There must be self-forsaking in believing. (1.) An affirming, and an Ay to grace, is a negation and denial to itself: "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me." (1 Cor. 15:10.) To deny that you are Christ's, or that you have any grace (if Christ have any thing of his in you), is not self-denial, but grace-denial, and God-denial; deny the work of the Spirit, and deny himself. It is a saying of humility, "I am black;" and of faith, "but comely as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon;" (Cant. 1:5;) and, "I slept, but my heart waked." (Cant. 5:1.) It is faith to hold fast your state of adoption: "Lord, I am thine." (2.) When our self maketh a suit to self, and putteth in a bill to the flesh, "O pity thyself; Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth," it is self-renouncing to deny this request to the flesh. And faith only can give an answer to self-declining the cross:

“He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father and his holy angels,” saith Christ. And another answer faith giveth, (Rom. 8:12). I am not debtor to thee, O flesh; I owe thee nothing. And it is faith’s word of answer, “But know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee unto judgment.” (Eccles. 11:9.) (3.) Faith putteth the soul into that condition, that self may be plucked from self without great violence, as an apple full of the tree and of harvest sap is with a small motion plucked off the stalk. “I am ready,” Ego etoimos echo, I have myself in readiness, “not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 21:13.) Certainly, faith saw here more in Jesus of excellency and sweetness, than there could be of bitterness in bonds and death, to self.

4. There is a denial of the creature, and a bill of defiance sent to all the lovers of the world, when Ephraim is brought to this act of believing; “For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.” (Hos. 14:3.) Then it is said, “Ashur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses.” That creature that we trust on, we ride upon it, as Israel did upon the horses of Assyria and Egypt. But, in this regard, faith dismounteth the believer, and abaseth him to walk on foot. All the creatures are ships to the believer without a bottom; they are empty and weak. David forbiddeth us to ride on a prince, (Psalm 146:3,4,) for that horse shall faint, and fall to clay. God alloweth Scotland to help England, but will not have the souls of his children in England to ride upon an army of another nation, and to trust in them for salvation. To make fire, is not so proper to fire,—to give light, not so kindly to the sun,—as salvation is God’s only due; and, therefore, let England in this, walk on foot, and trust in the Lord.

5. The fifth ingredient also in faith is, that it is bottomed upon the sense and pain of a lost condition. Poverty is the nearest capacity of believing. This is Faith’s method,—Be condemned, and be saved,—be hanged, and be pardoned; be sick, and be healed; (Matt. 9:13; James 4:7,8; Matt. 11:28; Luke 19:10). Faith is a flower of Christ’s only planting, yet it groweth out of no soil, but out of the margin and bank of the lake of fire and brimstone, in regard there be none so fit for Christ and heaven, as those who are self-sick, and self-condemned to hell. This is a foundation to Christ, that because the man is broken and has not bread, therefore he must be sold, and Christ must buy him, and take him home to his fireside, and clothe him, and feed him. The chased man, pursued upon death and life, who hath not a way for life, but one nick of a rock; if he miss that, he is a dead man, had he a hundred lives. So is the believer pursued for blood; there is but one city of refuge in heaven, or out of heaven; this is only, only Jesus Christ, the great rock. And it is true, it is in a manner forced faith, and forced love cast upon Christ, upon a great venture; yet we may make necessity here the greatest virtue, or the highest grace, and that is,—to come to Christ. Satan doth but ride upon the weakness of many, proving that they are not worthy of Christ; which is the way of a sophist, to prove an evident truth that cannot be denied. But there is no greater vantage can be had against sin and Satan than this; Because I am unworthy of Christ, and out of measure sinful, and I find it is so, (Satan and

conscience teaching me that truth, to bring me on a false conclusion,) therefore ought I,—therefore must I,—come to Christ, unworthy as I am. For free grace is moved from within itself from God's good will, only without any motion or action from sin, to put itself forth upon the sinner, to the end, that sin, being exceeding sinful, grace may be abundantly grace. And no thanks to Satan, for suggesting a true principle—Thou art unworthy of Christ—to suggest a false conclusion, Therefore thou art not to come to Christ; for the contrary arguing is gospel-logic. Satan's reasoning should be good, if there were no way but the law to give life. But because there is a Saviour, a gospel, and a new and living way to heaven, the contrary arguing is the sinner's life and happiness.

6. The sixth ingredient in faith is, that the sinner can lay hold on the promise, (1.) Not simply, but with relation to the precept; for presumptuous souls plunge in their foul souls in fair and precious promises; and this is the faith of Antinomians: for the promise is not holden forth to sinners as sinners, but as to such sinners; for we make faith to be an act of a sinner humbled, wearied, laden, poor, self-condemned. Now, these be not all sinners, but only some kind of sinners. Antinomians make faith an act of a lofty Pharisee, of a vile person, applying with an immediate touch, his hot, boiling, and smoking lusts to Christ's wounds, blood, merits, without any conscience of a precedent commandment, that the person thus believing should be humbled, wearied, laden, grieved for sin. I confess this is hasty hot work, and maketh faith a stride, or one single step; but it is a wanton, fleshly, and a presumptuous immediate work, to lay hold on the promises of mercy and be saved. This is the absolute and loose faith that Papists and Arminians slander our doctrine withal, because we reject all foregoing merits, good works, congruous dispositions, preparations moving God to convert this man, because he hath such preparations, and to reject and to leave another man to his own hardness of heart, because he hath no such payment in hand, by which he may redeem and buy conversion, and the grace of effectual calling especially, they building all upon a Babel of their own brick and clay, that free will in all acts of obedience before or after conversion, is absolutely indifferent; to do, or not do; to obey, or not obey; to choose heaven and life, hell or death, as it pleaseth, as being free and loosed from all predetermination, and foregoing motion, acting or bowing of the will, coming either from God's natural, or his efficacious or supernatural Providence. And so the Papist and Arminian on the one extremity, enthroneth Nature, and extolleth proud merit, and abaseth Christ and free grace. The Familist, libertine, and Antinomian, on a contrary extremity and opposition, turn man into a block, and make him a mere patient in the way to heaven; and, under pretence of exalting Christ and free grace, set up the flesh, liberty, license, looseness on the throne, and make the way to heaven on the other extremity, as broad, as to comply with all presumptuous proud, fleshly men, walking after their lusts, and yet, as they dream, believing in Christ.

2. The soul seeth Christ in all his beauty, excellency, treasures of free grace, lapped up with the curtain of many precious promises. Now, the natural man, knowing the literal meaning and sense of the promises, seeth in them but words

of gold, and things afar off; and in truth, taketh heaven to be a beautiful and golden fancy, and the gospel promises, a shower of precious rubies, sapphires, diamonds, fallen out of the clouds only in a night dream; and therefore jeers and scoffs at the day of judgment, and at heaven and hell, (2 Pet. 3:1-3). For, can every capacity smell and taste the unsearchable riches of Christ, the fullness of God in the womb of the promises, by meditating on them, and sending them, in their sweetness and heavenly excellency, down to the affections to embrace them? No, it cannot be, that words, and sounds, and syllables, can so work upon a natural spirit. If you show not to a buyer precious and rare commodities, and bring them not before the sun, he shall never be taken so with things hidden in your coffers, as to be in love with them, and to sell all he hath and buy them. Preachers cannot, nay, it is not in their power to make the natural spirit see the beauty of Christ. Paul preacheth it, but the gospel is hidden from the blinded man, (2 Cor. 4:3). If I cannot communicate light, far less can I infuse love in the soul of a lost man.

3. Literal knowledge of Christ, is not in the power of natural men; but laying down this ground, that a Pharisee lend eyes and ears to Christ and his miracles, the light of the gospel worketh as a natural agent; for, make open windows in a house, whether the indweller will, or he will not, the sun shall dart in day-light upon the house. "Then cried Jesus, in the temple, as he taught, saying, ye both know me, and ye know whence I am." (John 7:28.) And there is a covering upon the spiritual senses and faculties of the soul of natural men, that though eyes, and ears, and mind, and soul be opened, yet it is as impossible for the natural spirit, or the preacher, to remove that covering, as to remove a mountain, it being as heavy as a mountain. And therefore, there be three bad signs in a natural spirit:—

[1.] His light, which is but literal, is a burden to him; it but vexeth him to know Christ; and if a beam of light fall in on the apple of the eye of a natural conscience, it is as a thorn between the bone and the flesh; the man shall not sleep, and yet he is not sick. I doubt if either Ahithophel or Judas, wakened with their light, could sleep.

[2.] Though a promise should dispute and argue Christ in at the door of the natural man's soul, as the gospel, by way of arguing, may do much, (John 7:28; 12:37; Heb. 11:1), the word of the gospel being a rational convincing syllogism, as Christ saith, "But now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father; (John 15:24); yet men may see the principles and the conclusion, and hate and practically suspend the assent from the conclusion.

[3.] Conversion is feared as a great danger by natural men, lest the promises put them on the pain, and the main mill of godliness. For men do flee nothing but that which they apprehend as evil, dangerous, and so the true object of fear. Now, when Felix and Agrippa were both upon the wheels, I cannot say that conversion formally was begun; yet materially it was. The one trembled, and so was afraid,

and fled, and did put Paul away till another time; then he saw the danger of grace: (Acts 24:25,26:) the other saith, he was half a Christian, (but it was the poorest half,) and “he arose and went aside,” (Acts 26:28,30,31). The natural spirit may be convinced by the promises, and have the pap in his mouth, but dare not milk out the sap and sweetness of the promises: “Their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” (Matt. 13:15.) So is it, Isa. 6:10, in which words, conversion is feared as an evil, as is clear. So one wretch said, he was once in danger to be caught, when a Puritan preacher, as he said, ‘was preaching with divine power, and evidence of the Spirit of God.’

4. The true believer’s soul hath influence on the promises to act upon them, to draw comfort out of them: “Unless thy law had been my delight, I should have perished in mine affliction.” (Psalm 119:92.) “My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.” (verse 81.) And there is a reciprocation of actions here; the word acteth upon the soul again: “This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.” (Psalm 119:50.) A dead faith is like a dead hand; a living hand may lay hold on a dead hand: but there is no reciprocation of actions here, the dead hand cannot lay hold on the living hand. So the living wife may kiss and embrace the dead husband, but there can come no reciprocal act of life from the dead husband to her, nor can he kiss and embrace her. The promise may act upon the natural spirit, to move and affect him; but he can put forth no vital act upon the promise to embrace it, or lay hold upon the promise. But the promise acteth upon the believer to quicken him, and he again putteth forth an act of life to embrace the promise, and putteth forth on it some act of vital heat to adhere and cleave to, and with warmness of heart to love it. And here the case is as when the living hand layeth hold on the living hand; they warm one another mutually, according to that which Paul saith, “But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:12.) Here be two living things, Christ, and believing Paul, acting mutually one upon another; there is a heart and a life upon each side.

5. Faith under fainting, and great straits, can so improve the promise, as to put an holy and modest challenge upon God. So afflicted David saith, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope;” (Psalm 119:49;) and the Church, “Do not abhor us, for thy name’s sake; do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us.” (Jer. 14:21.) And the Lord commanded that this challenge be put on him, “Put me in remembrance, let us plead together:” (Isa. 43:26). Then he giveth Faith leave to plead on the contrary with God. Natural spirits faint, and cannot so far own the promise, as to plead with God by their right and just claim to the promise.

Now, the fourth point concerning faith is, What grounds and warrants the sinner hath to believe?

4. It is an ordinary challenge made by Satan, conscience, and the Arminian. Since Christ died not for all and every one of mankind; and all are not chosen to life eternal, but only those on whom the Lord is pleased, according to the free decree of election to confer the grace of believing; what warrant can the unworthy sinner have to believe, and to own the merits of Christ; for he knoweth nothing of the election or reprobation that are hidden in God's eternal mind? For answer,

1. It is no presumption in me to believe in Christ before I know whether I be chosen to salvation or not; for nothing can hinder me in this case to believe, save only presumption, as the adversaries say. But it is not presumption; because presumption is, when the soul is lifted up, and towered like an high building, as the word is, (Hab. 2:4). And therefore, the lifted up man, (Gnophel), is he that hideth himself in a high castle, as every unbelieving presumptuous soul hath his own castle: the unbeliever hath either one Ophel, or high tower, or other; either the king, friends, riches, or his own wisdom, for his God on which he resteth, beside the God that the Scripture recommendeth to us, as our only rock and soul-confidence. All men on earth live, and do all moral actions, even when they go on in a wicked life, as slaves of hell, to work all uncleanness with greediness, upon some ground of faith, though a most false and counterfeit faith, that they shall prosper by evil doing, and that sin shall make them happy. So, "The wicked man praiseth the wicked man;" (Psalm 10:3); then he must believe that wickedness maketh men praiseworthy; and this belief is but presumptuous confiding, and resting on a tower of his own building. Now, to believe in Christ, though the decree of election be not revealed to me, is no presumption; for I am not obliged, before I believe, to know that I am elected to glory; it being one of God's secrets not revealed in the word, but made manifest to me, after I believe, and am sealed unto the day of redemption. And, therefore, in a humble resting on Christ, though the soul know not his election, which is not revealed in the word, in that condition there can be no pride nor presumption; for he is self-wise and presumptuous, who intrudeth "into those things that he hath not seen," (Colos. 2:18,) knoweth not that which God hath revealed, and so which he ought to know. Now the believer ought not to know that he is elected to glory, he being yet an unbeliever; so his knowledge cannot deviate from a rule which doth not oblige to conformity therewith, as with a rule. The portrait of Cæsar doth not err from the sampler, because it is not like a bull or a horse, because neither a bull nor a horse is the due sampler.

2. To warrant an unworthy humble sinner to believe, there is no need of a positive warrant, or of a voice to say, Thou art elected to glory, therefore believe. The word is near thee in thy mouth; yea, there is a commandment laid upon the humbled sinner: Come, O weary and laden sinner, to Christ, and be eased. Now, when the wind bloweth sweetly and fair upon an humbled sinner who is elected to glory, there goeth the spirit of the gospel along with this commandment: and the word of commandment, and the spirit united in one, acteth and worketh so upon the soul, that the humbled sinner cannot be deluded and led on a rock of

presumption; for this spirit joineth and closeth with his spirit, and he, as one of Christ's sheep, knoweth this to be the voice of Christ. I grant, when the same command of faith cometh to the ears of a reprobate, he may, upon a false ground, believe, or rather presume; he neither being rightly humbled and fitted for Christ; nor can the reprobate know and discern the wind of the Spirit, breathing with the command, and acting upon his spirit, because that wind neither can, nor doth breathe upon any reprobate. And there is no need of any positive warrant, to ascertain a child of God to believe, beside the commandment of faith, enlivened and quickened with the Spirit going along with it; for that command, so quickened, doth put such a real stamp of an evident testimony that he hath claim to Christ, on whom the Spirit and the command doth so act, that he seeketh no more any other evidence to prove his claim to Christ, than the lamb needeth any evidence to prove, that of ten hundred sheep, this only that offereth to it her paps and milk, must be its dam or mother, and none of the rest of the flock.

Objection. But how do I know, that it is the Spirit that goeth along with the commandment of believing? It may be a delusion.

Answer. (1.) Beside that a deluding spirit, for the most part, doth not go every way along with the word, if this spirit keep God's order, to work upon the humbled and self-despairing sinner, who is willing to receive Christ upon his own condition, it is not like to a deluding spirit; for if the word of commandment to believe, and the spirit agree in one, it cannot be a delusion; fancy leadeth no man to faith. (2.) When objects of life work upon life, they cannot deceive, especially all the senses, hearing, seeing, tasting, feeling, smelling. The excellency and sweetness of Christ going along with the word, cannot be delusion: a man may imagine that he seeth and heareth, and yet his senses may be deceived; but that all the senses, especially all the spiritual senses, and that a man imagineth that he liveth a natural life, and is dead, is rare.

3. Faith can stand upon one foot, even on a general word; hence, this is a gospel word in the Prophets, which requireth faith, Turn to the Lord for he is merciful, (Jer. 3:12; Joel 2:13; John 4:2). And because a general promise received with heart-adherence and confidence giveth glory to God; and if it be holden forth to a humbled soul, who is now within the lists and bounds of grace, and, for any thing that the person thus laden with sin knoweth on the contrary, (for the secrets of election and reprobation belong to the Lord) Christ mindeth and intendeth to him salvation, therefore he is to believe.

4. This would be considered, that unbelief breaketh with Christ first, before Christ break with the unbeliever; and the elect of God findeth no more, nor any higher favour in the kind of external means to open the Lamb's book of life, which is sealed and closed with God's own hand, than the commandment of believing. Now, when our Lord maketh offer of the kingdom of sons, to slaves, and casteth his jewel of Christ offered in the gospel, in the lap and bosom of a bastard, whatever be the Lord's secret decree and purpose in so doing, the bastard is to

take God at his word, and to catch the opportunity of God's love in so far; and if he do it not, the gospel offer to the reprobate being a treaty of peace, then the treaty breaketh off first upon his side; for Christ cometh within a mile of mercy, to meet the sinner, and the sinner cometh not the fourth part of a mile, yea, not half a step of love and thankful obedience, to meet Christ; and so, Christ killeth the unbeliever with the sweetness of the preventing courtesy of offered mercy.

5. But if the sinner be wearied and laden, and seeth, though through a cloud only, Christ only must help and save, if not, he is utterly and eternally lost, What is there upon Christ's part to hinder thee to believe, O guilty wretch? Oh, (saith he,) I fear Christ only offereth himself to me, but he mindeth no salvation to me.—Answer. Is not this to raise an evil report and slander on the holy One of Israel? For Christ's offer is really an offer, and in so far, it is real love, though it cannot infer the love of election to glory, yet the total denial of this offer openeth up the black seal of reprobation to heathens without the church. And therefore it is love to thee, if thou be humbled for sin; (2.) And have half an eye to the unsearchable riches of gospel mercy; (3.) And be self-condemned; (4.) And have half a desire of Christ: thou mayest expound love by love, and lay hold on the promise, and be saved. An error of humble love to Christ, is no error.

That which is next, is a word of the essential principle of true faith, and that is a proportionable measure of grace, required in faith. (Phil. 1:29.) Men naturally imagine, that faith is a work of nature; hence (1.) that speech of a multitude of atheists, "I believe all my days, I believe night and day;" but they never believe at all, who think and say, they believe always. The Jews asserted, that they believed Moses always, and so oppose themselves to the man altogether born in sin, (John 9:28,29, compared with verse 34). But Christ told them, they neither believed the Messiah nor Moses, (John 5:35-37.) Nature worketh always alike, and without intermission or freedom. The floods always move, the fountain always casts out streams, the fire always burneth, the lamb always fleeth from the wolf; but the wind of the Spirit doth not always enact the soul to believe. They are not in an ill case, who wrestle with unbelief, and find the heart and take it, in the ways of doubting and terrors, as feeling that believing is a motion up the mount, and somewhat violent. Facile and con-natural acts cannot be supernatural acts of faith. It is no bad sign, to complain of a low ebb sea, and of neither moonlight nor starlight. (2.) It is impossible they can submit to give the glory of believing to God, in whose heart there is a rotten principle destructive of faith, and that is, an ambitious humour of seeking glory from men, (John 5:44). Little faith there is in kings' courts; faith dwelleth not in a high spirit. (3.) Such as take religion by the hand upon false and bastard motives, as the summer of the gospel, and fame, ease, gain, honour, cannot believe. A thorny faith is no faith, (Matt. 13:22). A carnal man's faith must be true to its own principles, and must lie level with externals; so as court, ease, the world, and its sweet adjuncts, are a measuring line to a rotten-rooted faith neither longer nor broader than time, it goeth not one span length within the lists of eternity. (4.) Fancy cannot be faith. Such as have not gospel knowledge of Christ, cannot believe; but must do as the

traveler, who unawares setteth his foot on a serpent in the way, and suddenly starteth backward six steps for one, (John 6:66). So do they that fancy all the gospel to be a carnal or a moral discourse. (5.) Those cannot have faith, in whose heart the gospel lieth above ground, devils and sin having made the heart hard like the summer streets, with daily treading and walking on them. (Matt. 13:19.) A stony faith, or a faith that groweth out of a stone, cannot be a saving faith. There is a heart that is a daily walk, in which the devil (as it were) aireth himself. (6.) If Christ have given the last knock at the door, and all in-passages be closed up, and heart inspirations gone, there can be no more any sort of faith there, (Eph. 4:19; 2 Tim. 4:2). The heart is like a dried-up arm in some; all the oil in the bones is spent. (7.) Loose walking with greediness, argues, that hell hath taken fire on the outworks of the soul. Hell in the hands and tongue, as in the out-wheels, must argue hell and unbelief in the heart and the in-wheels. [1.] Loose believers go to heaven by miracles; I dare go to hell for a man, if such a one go to heaven, who liveth profanely, and saith, he hath a good heart within. [2.] The going in ways of blood, extortion, covetousness, idolatry, belieth the decree of election to glory. Grace leadeth no man to the east, with his face and motion close to the west. [3.] This way of working by contraries is not God's way: God can work by contraries; but he will not have us to work by contraries. There is some heaven of holiness in the court-gate to the heaven of happiness. (8.) Faith overlooketh time, (Heb. 11:10). Abraham looked for another city. Faith in Moses was great with child of heaven; (verse 25,) he had an eye to the recompence of reward. Eternity of glory is the birth of faith. Oh! we look not to the declining of our sun; it is high afternoon of our piece of day; eleven hours are gone, and the twelfth hour is on the wheels, and I see not my own grey-hairs. It is upon the margin and borders of night, and I know not where to lodge. We are like the man swimming through broad waters, and he knoweth not what is before him; he swimmeth through deeper and deeper parts of the river, and at length, a cramp and a stitch cometh on arms and legs, and he sinketh to the bottom, and drowns. We swim through days, weeks, months, years, winters, and are daily deeper in time; till at length death bereave us of strength of legs and arms, and we sink over head and ears in eternity. Oh! who, like the sleepy man, is loosing his clothes, and putting off the garments of darkness, and would gladly sleep with Christ? Men are close-buttoned, and like day-men, when it is dark night. It is fearful to lie down with our day-clothes, (Job 20:11). Sin is a sad winding-sheet. Oh! what believer saith, I would have a suit of clothes for the high court and throne, to be an assay, to see how a suit of glory would become me?—This much for faith.

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