

Christ in Glory



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“And they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons” Isa. 22:24.

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” 2 Tim. 2:20, 21.

They are called “vessels” because the Lord forms them for Himself, to show forth His praise; sometimes vessels of honour and glory, because He draws a greater revenue of honour and glory to Himself from them than from all the world beside. In a word, they are called “vessels” because the milk, the wine, the honey, and the oil of Divine grace is bestowed and laid up in them; and out of the fullness of Christ they are daily receiving grace for grace. And as the vessels of a house are its *ornament*, so are fruitful believers the ornament of the Church, and of the great Owner thereof, for He calls them His crown and diadem.

We are here told that these vessels are *of different sizes*: some are vessels of “cups,” and others are vessels of “flagons;” plainly intimating that in God’s family there are saints of different stature—there are babes, young men, and fathers; “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph. 4:7). Some are like the smoking flax, others like a flaming lamp; some are like the bruised reed, others like the tall cedar in Lebanon. And if you ask me *why* God will have it so, that the vessels of the house shall be of different sizes, I answer,

1. For the manifestation of His own sovereignty. He is the Lord of the house, and He will do all His pleasure; and it is the good will and pleasure of God to give more of His grace to one, and to another less; and who may say unto Him, “What doeth Thou?” He is no man’s debtor, but may do with His own what He pleases.

2. Because this is for the beauty and ornament of the house. It serves not a little to adorn a house that there are different vessels in it: some more and some less, for different services. The least vessel, like the least member in the natural body has its proper usefulness in the body, so that the one cannot say to the other, “I have no need of thee.”

3. God will have it so, that there may be room for the edifying exercises of the fellowship of saints. If every saint had the same degree of faith, love, knowledge, and other graces, the one could not be edified by the other; but it is otherwise ordered, that the strong may be useful to the weak in strengthening, and that those who have more knowledge and experience than others may communicate of their gifts, to the benefit and edifying of others, until they all come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

I come now to show that *all* the vessels of different sizes, from vessels of “cups” to vessels of “flagons,” *do hang upon the great Manager*, Jesus Christ, as upon a nail fastened in a sure place. This is what is commonly called the mystical union between Christ and the Church, and is in Scripture set forth to us by a variety of metaphors, sometimes by the union that is between the branches of a tree and the root of it; for as all the branches hang upon the root, and receive their sap and nourishment, growth and fruit from it, so does every believer, whether of a higher or lower stature, receive life, grace, and growth from Christ. “I am like a green fir tree. *From Me* is thy fruit found” (Hosea 14:8). “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Sometimes this union is represented by the union betwixt the building and the foundation upon which it stands. As the whole building and every stone of it hangs and rests on the foundation and receive their support and stability from it, so doth the whole house of God, and every spiritual, living stone thereof, hang upon Christ by faith of His Spirit’s operation: “To whom coming, as unto a living Stone, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:4, 5). Sometimes this union is represented to us by the union betwixt the head and the members of the natural body

(Eph. 4:15, 16; Col. 2:19); from which you will perceive that the whole body, and every particular member, greater or lesser, hangs upon Christ as by “joints and bands.” But here arises the main question to our present purpose: What *are* these “bands” by which all believers, from the least to the greatest, hang upon Christ? Answer: these “bands” are principally two—the Holy Spirit and faith of the Spirit’s operation.

First, I say the Spirit is one, and the principal band whereby believers do hang upon Christ: “he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17). By the Holy Spirit the union is made up between Christ and His members: “In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22). Yes, the Spirit Himself is the band: “We know that He (Christ) abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us” (1 John 3:24). The Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus, by the means of the Word, in a day of regeneration, enters into the soul and quickens it; and in the very quickening by the Spirit, it becomes a member of Christ, and so forever after hangs upon Him as a Nail in a sure place.

Second. Another band by which they all hang upon the Nail is faith by the Spirit’s operation—not mere historical, temporary, partial, or legal faith, but a living, working, receiving, justifying, and sanctifying faith, which applies and appropriates Christ by the means of the Word of grace and promise; such a faith as eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Christ; and so lives in and upon Him; according as it is written, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God” (Gal. 2:20). In a word, faith hangs all its everlasting concerns upon the Nail fastened in a sure place, and there it stays and rests all its cares and concerns; and in this way the soul is kept in perfect peace, knowing that the Nail, being well fastened, will not yield or give way. And thus it is that *all the glory*, the whole offspring and issue, and the vessels of the house, greater and lesser, hang upon our blessed Eliakim.

The next inquiry is, *Why is Christ* constituted sole Manager of His Father’s house? Why doth He hang all the vessels *upon Him*, as

upon a nail fastened in a sure place? I Answer, the management of the house, and of all its concerns, is committed unto Christ because it was the good pleasure of God that it should be so. But although sovereignty is enough to satisfy us upon this head, yet there are some ways of infinite Wisdom to be observed in this constitution of things in the Church, which is the house of the living God; as (1) He only had ability for bearing such a weight: "I have laid help," saith the Lord, "upon One that is mighty." (2) Because Christ voluntarily undertook it in the council of peace, saying, "Lo, I come! I delight to do Thy will, O My God" (Psa. 40:7, 8), whereupon Jehovah the Father said and determined, "He shall build the temple and bear all the glory" (Zech. 6:13). (3) Hereby a new revenue of glory is brought in to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, even "glory to God in the highest," higher glory than what comes in by creation and providence. (4) Because hereby His saints are brought to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. (5) Because this was for the safety and comfort of the children of God. All their everlasting concerns hang upon Him, that they may warble out that song through eternity: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:12, 13).

Again. 1. See hence why it is that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, to show Himself strong on behalf of His people in this world; why He rides in the heavens for their help; and makes all things work together for their good. There is good reason for it. They are the offspring and issue of His family; they are the gold and silver vessels of His house; and you know, if a man have power and ability, he will not suffer his offspring to be hurt, or his house to be plundered of his valuable furniture, which he has bought at a dear rate. Hence it is that the Lord watches His house day and night, lest any hurt it. All His saints are in the hand of Christ, and He defies Hell and earth to pluck them out of His hands.

2. See what trust and credit our glorious Kinsman-Redeemer has

with His Father. Why, you see how that He puts the whole family under His hand; He hangs the whole glory upon Him: “He hath made Him to be *Head over* all things to the Church, which is His body;” “All Power in heaven and earth is given unto Me,” says Christ; “The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” And seeing He has such trust and credit with His Father, what an indignity is done to the Father, and the Son also, when a sinner, through unbelief, declares Him to be unworthy of any credit, and says, practically, that the Nail that God has fastened is loose, weak, or insufficient, and therefore he will not venture the weight of his salvation upon it, but will choose rather to hang upon some nails of his own fastening, such as the nail of an empty profession, the nail of God’s general mercy, the nail of legal duties, and obedience, which are all but rusty, weak, broken nails, that will give way and ruin all that depend upon them.

3. See hence one great ground and reason of the perseverance of the saints, and why they cannot fall totally or finally away from a state of grace: because they hang upon the Nail fastened in a sure place. Being the great Manager of His Father’s house and family *He* has them in custody, and is to give an account of every vessel of the house unto His Father; and He will make *a good account* of every one of them, and say to His Father, that entrusted them with Him, “Of all Thou hast given Me, I have lost none. Here am I, and the children which Thou hast given me.” If a believer can fall totally or finally away, it is because the Nail may break or be loosed, or because the bands by which they hang upon the Nail may be broken or cut. But none of these can fall out. The Nail, as you heard in the first part of this discourse, is so fixed that Heaven and earth will sooner be dissolved than that it should yield or give way in the least; and as for the bands by which they hang upon the Nail, they are so firm, strong, and well-fastened, that the soul, when it has a view of its security in the light of the Lord, is able to exclaim with Paul, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution” etc. (Rom. 8:35).

4. See the great difference between the state of a believer now, under a covenant of grace, and the state of Adam, under a covenant of works. Adam, the first covenant-head and representative, though

an innocent, yet was but a fallible creature; and being left to the freedom of his own will, that nail gave way, and he and all his posterity fell into a horrible pit of sin and misery, from which the whole creation could not recover them. But the case of the believer is not so, he hangs on a Nail in a sure place; he stands on the foundation God has laid in Zion, against which the gates of Hell shall never prevail. Many a pull and pluck has the devil and the world given at the vessels that hang upon this Nail; and yet by all their power and policy they never were able to carry off a cup, much less a flagon, that did hang upon the Nail fastened in a sure place. To this purpose are those words of Christ, none shall “pluck them out of My hand” (John 10:28).

5. See hence that the saints have no cause of boasting or glorying in themselves, but only in Christ; for *He* is the Nail, upon whom all the glory and all the offspring and issue do hang. Where is boasting? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Now the law of faith is to lay the whole weight of our salvation upon Christ; to receive Him and rest upon Him alone for eternal life, and to receive out of His fullness grace for grace. And, therefore, “he that glorieth, let him glory *in the Lord*,” saying, “The Lord is my strength and song, He also is become my salvation.” When the believer finds pride of gifts or grace begin to stir in his heart, he should at once check it by putting these, or the like questions to himself: “What hast thou, O man, that thou hast not *received*? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast as though thou hadst not received it? Let none of the branches that grow upon the true Vine boast, as though they had their stand, strength or righteousness *in themselves*. “If thou boast, (remember) thou bearest not the root, but the Root (bearest) thee” (Rom. 11:18). All hang upon the Nail.

6. See hence a good reason for that solemn work and duty of covenanting, by “stretching out her hands unto God” as it is said of Ethiopia (Psa. 68:31). This duty is warranted by Scripture example, and Scripture prophecy concerning the days of the New Testament. As God the Father by solemn oath has constituted His own Son the great Manager of His house, hanging all the offspring and issue upon Him; so it is highly reasonable that all the offspring and issue

of the family should confess His deed by solemn oath and covenant, before the whole world, because this is for His declarative glory, upon whom all the glory hangs. It is requisite that we not only believe with the heart unto righteousness, but confess Him with the mouth unto salvation (Rom. 10:10). And this is in a peculiar manner necessary in a day like this, when the prophets are become such fools, and the spiritual men so mad, as to derogate from the glory of the great Manager of His Father's house His prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices, by tolerating the erroneous, foisting in moral virtue in the room of His everlasting righteousness.

I say, what more just and reasonable in such a case, than that all who love our Lord Jesus Christ and regard His honour and glory, should, in the most solemn manner imaginable, declare their adherence to Him in the presence of angels and men, saying with Joshua "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." There are a generation of men in our day, who set up only for a private, selfish kind of religion. If they believe with the heart, they think they have done enough; if they enjoy raptures of love to Christ, they are easy what come of Jerusalem, what come of the Ark of God. Let error in doctrine, corruption in worship, tyranny in government prevail as much as they will, it is all a small matter—these are not the essentials: all is well with them if they have what they call "the Spirit." But what sort of a spirit is that which follows, cleaves to abjured prelacy, a corrupt backsliding ministry, and judges that deny the obligation of solemn covenants? Surely such a spirit must be the spirit of the old serpent transforming himself into an angel of light. A deceived heart and a subtle devil have turned them aside from the truth.

The second use of the doctrine (of assurance) may be by way of *trial and examination*. Is it so, that believers are the offspring and issue of the house of God? then it concerns every one to try himself, whether he be of that blessed progeny. We read (Heb. 12) of bastards in the visible church, who cannot be reckoned among this number. They are indeed called the children of the kingdom; but they are such as do not inherit the kingdom of God, because they will be cast into utter darkness. And, therefore, it concerns us to see whether or not we be the lawfully-begotten children of Zion,

the true offspring and issue of God's household and family. I remember, in the doctrinal part, I told you why they are called the offspring and issue; and now I would offer two or three remarks whereby they may be known.

1. All the offspring and issue of God's family have passed through the strait gate of the new birth; for, says Christ, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). But, say you, How may I *know* if I be a partaker of the new birth? I answer, the new birth brings a new state or standing with it. You have quitted your standing upon the law-bottom or works and all foundations of sand, and taken up your only stand upon the foundation laid in Zion, which is Christ Jesus. The new birth brings a new heart along with it: "A new heart also will I give you" (Ezek. 36:26). The new birth brings with it new principles of action: a principle of life, of faith and love; new motives and ends. Self-love constrains the sinner, but the love of Christ, and the glory of God constrains the new convert to duty. The new birth makes a man to love the new covenant, even a covenant of rich grace and promise, saying, "This is all my salvation." The new birth produces new laws in a man. He was formerly under the law of sin and death; but now he delights in the Law of the Lord after the inner man. The new birth brings a new language with it. The man gets a new tongue: formerly he spoke the language of Ashod, but now the language of Canaan. The new birth produces new views, both of things temporal and eternal. So, then, try yourselves by these, whether you be among the true offspring and issue of the house of God: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

2. All the offspring and issue of the house have seen their Father's countenance; and they are always glad at the sight of it. Like David, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased" (Psa. 4:7).

3. All the offspring of God's family, each one of them, resembles

the children of the King, because they bear a likeness unto their Father and His firstborn Son. By beholding His glory they are changed into the same image. They hate themselves because of their dissimilitude through remaining sin and indwelling corruption, feeling with Paul, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom 7:24).

4. All the offspring of God’s family have faith in Christ, hence they are called believers, because they believe in and believe on His name; “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John 1:12). The very name of Christ is so sweet to them that it is like “ointment poured forth;” and when the Holy Spirit works faith in them, if they had all the souls that ever sprang from Adam dwelling in their bodies, they could commit the keeping of them all to Him.

5. All the offspring of the house are acquainted with the Shepherd’s voice, the voice of His Word, and the voice of His rod: “My sheep hear My voice” (John 10:27). When they hear His promising voice, they are “filled with joy and peace in believing;” when they hear His commanding voice, they are ready to say “I will run the way of Thy commandments; only give grace to obey, and command what Thou wilt;” when they hear His threatening voice, they tremble at His Word; when they hear His correcting voice in worldly trials and crosses, they are ready to say with David, “I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it” (Psa. 39:9).

6. All the offspring and issue of the family love to lisp out their Father’s name, crying, “Abba, Father.” It is true, through the prevalency of unbelief and a sense of guilt and filth, they blush when they speak to Him as a Father; but yet, now and then, as faith gets up its head, they will be ready to cry as the church, “Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O LORD, art our Father, our Redeemer” (Isa. 63:16).

7. If you be the true offspring of this family, your Father’s presence will be your delight, and His absence, hiding, and frowns will be an intolerable affliction. Christ the firstborn of the family

never complained so much of all His other troubles as when His Father forsook Him: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Psa. 22:1). Just so it is with the genuine offspring, as you see in David, Asaph, Heman, and others.

8. You will dearly love all that bear their Father’s image, and the image of Him who is the express image of the Father; and the more resemblance they have unto Him, you will love them the better: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14). You will esteem them as David did, the “excellent of the earth,” with whom will be all your delight. Lastly, all the offspring, and issue of God’s house have a zeal for the standing of their Father’s house: they love the habitation of it, and the place where His honour dwells; and therefore will have something of the spirit of the Firstborn, of whom it is said, “The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up” (Psa. 69:9). Is it possible that a true child of a family may be unconcerned when he sees robberies committed in his house, or the house of his Father turned into a den of thieves? or will a true-born child herd and associate himself with such without opposing them and witnessing against them? A true child of the family will be ready to say of such, as Jacob did of Simeon and Levi, “Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret” (Gen 49:5, 6). Thus I have given you some marks which have a relation to the first character to believers in the text.

I come next to pursue a trial with an eye toward the second character or designation of vessels of different sizes—”vessels of cups and vessels of flagons,” all hanging upon the “Nail fastened in a sure place.” In the professing church there are vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath, vessels of honour fitted for the Master’s use, and vessels of dishonour fitted to destruction. Now here some may readily put the question, “How may I know if I be a vessel of mercy and honour?” For clearing the way of answering this question, you will consider that all the children of men sprang from Adam by natural generation. The elect of God, as well as others, are, in the eye of the law, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, through the pollution and guilt of original and actual sin: and until God comes in a day of power, and digs the vessel of mercy from under the filth

and rubbish of the fall of Adam, no man can make a difference betwixt the vessels of mercy and of wrath, because this is among the secret things that belong unto the Lord. But if the question be, “How may a person know he be yet a vessel of mercy *fitted by regeneration and sanctifying grace* for the Master’s use? Hath God yet formed me for Himself? Hath He taken me out of nature’s quarry, out of the miry clay, and washed, and justified, and sanctified me in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God?”—Now I say, if *this* be the question, I will give you a few marks of the vessels of mercy and honour.

1. Every vessel of mercy in the house of our God (whether they be vessels of “cups” or vessels of “flagons”) has seen himself to be a vessel of wrath by nature, condemned already, full of the vermin of sin and corruption, treasuring up to himself wrath against the day of wrath. Hence, all God’s Israel are ready to take up that melancholy song “A Syrian ready to perish was I; at that time I was afar off, an alien to the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenants of promise, without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world.” Hence,

2. All the vessels of mercy are taken up in admiring the rich and free mercy of God in taking up the like of them from among the pots: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration” (Titus 3:5). O, says Paul, I was a “blasphemer, and injurious: but I obtained mercy” (1 Tim. 1:13). “He brought me up,” says David, “out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God” (Psa. 40:2, 3).

3. All God’s vessels of mercy have undergone the hammer of the law, in a greater or less measure: “Is not My Word like a hammer,” saith the Lord, “that breaketh the rock in pieces?” (Jer. 23:29). The law is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. So much hammering by the law is necessary, and no more, as serves to beat the heart and hands of a sinner off from the broken nail of the law, in point of righteousness: “I, through the law,” say Paul, “am dead to the law” (Gal. 2:19). So much of this hammer is needful to beat down

the vain and towering imaginations of our own goodness, holiness, wisdom, and righteousness. The Dagon of self, and all the shapes and forms of it, must be broken down forever. The vessel of mercy shall never more say “God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men,” or with Laodicea, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing.”

4. All the vessels of mercy are made heartily content to change their holding. All mankind have their holding on the first or second Adam; they are either hanging by the broken nail of the Covenant of Works, or by the Gospel nail of the Covenant of Grace; they are either seeking life and righteousness by the works of the law, or by the grace of the Gospel. Now, in a day of conversion, the sinner having his hands knocked off from his first holding, he, by the hand of faith, which is God’s gift, receives Christ, and takes hold of that covenant whereof He is Head, saying, “In Him will I be justified, and in Him will I glory; for in Him have I righteousness and strength. He is to me the end of the law for righteousness: for He was made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

5. All the vessels of mercy are melted in the fire of Gospel grace and love, and made pliable to the will of God; the heart of stone is melted into a heart of flesh (Ezek. 36:26); the iron sinew of the obstinate will, through the heat of Divine love, is made to give way, and yield unto the Divine will (Psa. 110:3). The language of every vessel of mercy is, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” The adamant heart is dissolved into evangelical repentance, so that the man now looks on Him whom he had pierced, and mourns (Zech. 12:10).

6. All the vessels of the house are washed, and will be frequently washing themselves, in the fountain of a Redeemer’s blood, from sin and uncleanness (Zech. 13:1). The vessels of the house, through remaining corruption, temptation, and frequent falls into the puddle of actual sin, gather dust, and become dim and unfit for the use and service of the great Father and Manager of the house; and, therefore, He will have them sprinkled with clean water; He will have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their

bodies washed with pure water: “If I wash thee not,” says Christ to Peter, “thou hast no part with Me” (John 13:8). And this washing is what they themselves long for, especially when defiled with any fall. Hence they cry with David, “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (Psa. 51:2); and again, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psa. 51:7).

7. All the vessels of the house, from the least to the greatest, have the name of the Father of the house, and of the Manager of the house, engraven upon them. It has been, and still is, the custom of great men to have their names and arms graven on their gold and silver vessels. So it is in the house of our God. All the vessels of mercy have *His* name and motto engraven upon them: “Lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Rev. 14:1). They have the name of Christ, the great Manager, written on them, particularly that name “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23:6); and in this name of His do they rejoice continually, for in His righteousness are they exalted. And then, as we are told (Rev. 3:12), the name of the new Jerusalem, which cometh down from above, out of Heaven, is engraven on them; for they prefer Jerusalem to their chiefest joy. In a word, God’s name, His glory, honour, and authority, His truth, His worship, His cause and interest, the Word of God, the testimony of Jesus, the prerogatives of His crown and kingdom—every true believer hath these as it were, engraven on his heart, and will study to maintain them before the world.

8. If you be the vessels of mercy and honour, the Master of the house will now and then be making use of you by pouring the wine, the oil, the water, or milk of His grace and Spirit into you: “And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16). Every vessel of the house is anointed with the fresh oil of the Holy Spirit: “we have an unction from the Holy One;” and they that lack this anointing of the Spirit, in one degree or another, the Manager of the house will not own him as His: “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom. 8:9). They will be found among the foolish virgins, whose vessels had no oil when the midnight cry

was heard, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him” (Matt. 25:6). But I say all the vessels of mercy have a greater or smaller measure of the anointing of the Spirit: and every anointing of the Spirit enlargeth the vessel to hold more, insomuch that through the frequent communications of the Spirit, a “cup” vessel at first becomes a large vessel or a “flagon” one, until it be ready to be transplanted from the lower to the upper story of the house, where every vessel shall be filled brimful of God.

Objection 1: Some exercised soul may be ready to say, “O how happy would I be, if I knew that I were but the least vessel in the house of God, hanging on the ‘Nail fastened in a sure place!’ but, alas! I am such a poor, worthless, useless creature, that I am afraid I am none of them.”

Answer: It is the nature of all the vessels of mercy in the house of God, yea, of the great flagons, to *esteem themselves worthless* and among the least, yea, less than the least of all the vessels of the house. Says the Apostle Paul, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints” (Eph. 3:8). And the lower they sink in their own eyes, the higher do they rise in the esteem of the great Lord of the house, and the more of His grace and favour do they receive; for He giveth grace to the humble.

Objection 2: Another may say, “I am so broken and tossed with worldly trials, that I am ready to think I am none of the offspring or vessels of His house.”

Answer: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous,” and “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Christ Himself suffered before He entered into His glory, and so have all the cloud of witnesses (Heb. 11); and, therefore, it is a false conclusion to think you do not belong to the Lord because of multiplied roots of affliction; for “if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Heb. 12:8) for “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth” (Heb 12:6). God’s gold and silver vessels go frequently into the furnace; and there is a need be for it, to purge away their dross; and, therefore, they learn to say with Job, “when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

Objection 3. “I am such a vile, polluted creature, that I cannot

think I am one of His offspring by regeneration, but rather a vessel of wrath.”

Answer: God will not cast away His gold and silver vessels because of the dross and alloy of sin and corruption that is about them. A man will take up a vessel of his house, though it be lying on a dunghill. So David, Solomon, Peter and many other of the saints, fell in to the mire of sin; and yet the Lord took them from the dunghill, and made them like the wings of a dove; and, therefore, seeing God will not cast off forever, do not you cast yourself off.

Objection 4. “I am so harassed with Satan and his fiery darts, that I am afraid I am not one of God’s children. I am tempted to evils and abomination that I am afraid to name to any in the world.”

Answer: Christ Himself was tempted in all things as we are, that He might be a merciful High Priest to sympathize with those that are tempted. Consider again, for thy encouragement, that usually the devil gives the sorest pulls and pushes at the gold and silver vessels of God’s family; and if you did not belong to God, Satan would not pursue so much. When Israel came out of Egypt, then Pharaoh and his hosts pursued most vigorously. “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

Objection 5. “I am not one of the offspring or vessels; for God is hiding, and carrying Himself to me as an enemy, that the very remembrance of Him is a terror to me.”

Answer: This is no unprecedented case among God’s children. David, when he remembered God, was “troubled;” Asaph cries, “Is His mercy clean gone?” (Psa. 77:8). Heman also, “While I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted” (Psa. 88:15); yea, Christ, the firstborn and beloved Son, is under such an agony of soul that He cries out, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matt. 26:38). It is hard to tell how far fatherly chastisement may be carried; but this is an uncontroverted truth, that the foundation of God standeth sure; and God will never disinherit any of the offspring and issue, or cast away any of the vessels which hang by a faith of His operation upon the “Nail fastened in a sure place.” This truth will yield comfort, though the present aspect of providence gives just ground to fear some shaking judgment is not far off, on account of the abounding sin of all ranks, a condemned Gospel, and the blood of those whose

souls are crying from under the altar. But whatever calamities may be coming, though the world should be unhinged, and nothing be heard or seen but the confused noise of warriors and garments rolled in blood, “yet verily it shall be well with the righteous.” Here is comfort in case of rents, and divisions, and manifold disorders in the visible church, as there is at this day; men beating their fellow servants, and putting them out of the house for their faithfulness to the Master of the house, and preferring the man with the gold ring to the man who is rich in faith and an heir of the kingdom. These, or the like evils, take place in the visible church, and have a melancholy aspect. But here is comfort; the Lord is looking on. He permits and overrules all these confusions and disorders for His own holy and wise ends, for the trial of faith and patience, and to show His own skill in bringing order out of confusion. And when He hath performed His whole work in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, He will reign among His ancients gloriously. Here is comfort to the Lord’s remnant, when there are few or none of the rulers or nobles of the land to own the cause of Christ, or to put their hand to the rebuilding of the walls or gates of Jerusalem, lying in rubbish, as in the days of former reformation in this land. The great Zerubbabel can carry on His work either with them or without them; for it is “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 4:6). The Man whose name is “The Branch” shall come out of His place; He shall build the Temple, and bear all the glory forever and ever, Amen.



“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” 2 Timothy 2:20, 21.

