

SERMON XII

THE GREAT GIVER AND HIS FREE GIFTS

Tobias Crisp

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." {I Cor.2:12}

After a wonted tender-hearted salutation and congratulation to this church of Corinth, from chapter 1, verse 1 to verse 10, the Apostle Paul falls upon a seasonable exhortation to unanimity and concord of spirit among them, relating at large the occasion of this exhortation to them, to wit, the notice he had received of a dangerous strife and contention fallen out among them, in respect of their partiality to persons; this he continues to the 17th or 18th verses of that chapter; and from thence, to the closure of the chapter, he declares both the scope of his ministry in general, and the diversity of success this ministry of his found, both among Jews and Gentiles.

Now, in the beginning of this chapter, the Apostle returns back to this church of Corinth in special; and, whereas, the strife was, "one was of Paul, and another was of Apollos, and another of Cephas," he acquits himself from anything that might; in respect to himself, tend to, or occasion such strife and quarrel; therefore, in verse 1, he wholly disclaims all of man which might tend to exalt man among them where he declares that he "came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom," declaring unto them the testimony of God. Paul's ministry was exercised in a low plain-dealing way, without either human rhetoric or wisdom of man. This he amplifies in verse 4; for his part, he used no manner of enticing words to inveigle or beguile them.

Secondly, he goes on to declare to them the main subject of his ministry, which he drove at, and which he commends both to ministers and people, as the great thing they were to mind concerning divinity; a rule and pattern well worth imitation of all, verse 2, "for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." He did not care that the people should know anything else in the world, so that he might impart Jesus Christ, and him crucified unto them.

Thirdly, he declares to them the reason why he came with such plainness and simplicity, without dress, in the exercise of his ministry, in verse 5, namely, "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God;" as if he should say, they that are wrought upon by human rhetoric, and fineness of language and are taken with respect of any fluency of words, these men's faith is built upon human wisdom. They that are taken with the simplicity of the Gospel, as it is in Jesus, simply preached, their faith is built upon the rock itself.

Now, lest the Apostle's ministry of the Gospel might grow into contempt because he waived that which was human in it; therefore, in the latter end of verse 4, he vindicates the power and life of his ministry, even while it was so plain, and without man's wisdom. Though Paul came not in excellency of speech and man's wisdom, yet he came in "the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power." So, though he condescends to the weakness of this church, being but babes in Christ, as he speaks of them; yet he would have them know, though he did, by exercising his ministry in so low and plain a style for their sakes; nevertheless, when he deals with those that are perfect, that is, higher grown, he can rise in a higher flight, and deal in more grown and deeper mysteries than he did with them. And, in verses 7 & 8, he illustrates what depths there were in those mysteries that he preached to those that were capable of seeing them; and that is quoted out of Isaiah 64:4, "but as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Now, whereas some might be ready to object, as the false prophets did to Micaiah, "Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?" {I Kg.22:24} If wisdom and prudence could not dive into those mysteries Paul spake of, how could he come by them? He was of no more learning than they; they were as much insighted in the Law as he; if they could not, how could he?

He answers in the words following, though "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Let me tell you, there are secrets of God that all the learning in the world shall never attain unto; only the teaching of the Spirit of God acquaints people with them; therefore, it is a branch of the new covenant of God to those in it that "they shall be all taught of God;" and they shall no more need to say to their neighbour, "know the Lord, for they shall all know the Lord;" that is, by his own teaching, for "they shall all be taught of God." It is true, in the ministry of the Gospel, this knowledge comes usually to the people; but it is not the wisdom of man that either doth or can impart the secrets of God to this people; and these are the mysteries; the Apostle saith that he preaches unto those that are more grown and perfect; there is strong meat for those that are old, as well as milk for babes.

Now the Apostle proceeds on, namely, to show how it comes to pass that the Spirit of God, and only the Spirit of God, should impart and communicate these mysteries, when the wisdom of the world cannot possibly bolt them out; saith he, "God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God." But some may say, the knowledge of these mysteries may come some other way; to take off that, in the following words, verse 11, he shows expressly, that the mystery of the Gospel can come no other way but by the Spirit of God only, as he will use instruments to himself; I say, the original of discovering the mysteries of the Gospel is not demonstration by way of argument or discourse, but the demonstration is by the Spirit of God. And the Apostle illustrates it by way of comparison, that the Spirit only is the original of the discovery of the mysteries of God; "as no man knows the things of a man, save the spirit that is in man;" so no man knows "the things of God, save the Spirit of God;" his meaning in this place is this, you have a thought in your hearts, and if you give no hint of it by external expressions, no man can conceive what you are thinking, till you shall some way evidence yourselves; now, as it is impossible for any man to dive into such a thought, so it is as impossible for all the creatures in the world to dive into the mysteries of God; but the Spirit that is of God only reveals them.

Now, in the words of my text, the Apostle begins to draw to a conclusion of this discourse, and to sum it up to a head; for, having given this description in general, concerning the Spirit's revealing things that could not otherwise be seen or known, he concludes that it was his, and the case of others; "now we have not received, &c."

Beloved, let me tell you, by the way, it is a matter of great consequence and establishment to know the scope and intention of the Holy Ghost in the several portions of Scripture, especially building places that contain life, peace, and joy; and, therefore, I have the more insisted upon the opening of the text; for if you take a portion of Scripture and cut it off from the dependence, you may miss the intention of the Spirit therein; for the words may sound to another sense than the drift is, except the coherence be seen and observed; this, I say, that in reading and preaching, there must be great regard had to what the Holy Ghost principally aims at in Scripture. Thus much in a way of interjection.

In the text there are three things considerable. First, what the Apostle aims at here, or the subject matter he is upon, namely, the manifestation of the things freely given of God; or to impart to us this, that there are things freely given of God to men. Secondly, he speaks of them as they may be known; "that we may know," &c. Thirdly, he shows how the knowledge of these things that are freely given of God is attained; and that he sets out, first, negatively, not by the spirit of the world; secondly, affirmatively, by the Spirit that is of God.

The proposition is this, that the things freely given us of God come to be known not by the spirit of the world, but by the Spirit which is of God being received. I am confident, none here will stumble at the proposition, being so naturally raised from the words of the text; I will not therefore

spend time about that. There are these particulars in it worth consideration; and that you may suck and be satisfied at the breasts of consolation, consider; first, what these things are the Apostle speaks of, that are freely given of God. Secondly, what it is for these things to be given. Thirdly, what it is for them to be given freely. Fourthly, what it is to know these things that are thus freely given. Fifthly, how they are made known to us by the Spirit which is of God.

First, what these things are that are freely given us of God, for the illustration of which know first, that it is most certainly true indeed, all things whatsoever are the free gift of God to men; "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;" {Mt.5:45;} and it is the gift of God that he doth it. I will only touch one thing by the way, and be brief in it; know this, if Adam and his posterity, had stood in their innocency, had continued in the royal Law, and never offended, that very life that was annexed unto obedience, I say, that very life had been a free gift; and, therefore, if you speak of merit properly, as requiring a reward proportionally, and having equal power to the work, there could not be merit in a state of innocency; but that very life, had it come from the performance of perfect obedience, had been a gift of God. I will give you one illustration that will satisfy you fully in it; look upon all the creatures, as for instance, upon the sun, that rejoiceth as a giant to run his race; it had its law, as we had, set before it, a kind of duty the very creature performs to the Creator; if God should be bound to reward according to proportion, and so by way of merit, man's obedience with life, why not the obedience of the sun in the firmament as well as man; the sun is a creature, as man is; as a creature, man hath the same dependence upon the Creator as the sun hath; what hinders but that the sun in the firmament should merit as well as man; seeing it performs as complete obedience in its way as man could do? Beloved, carry this for a principle everlastingly along with you, all that ever the creature partakes of, it hath from God; and so God oweth nothing to it, for that he partakes of, save that he oweth by free grant; had not God freely without motive put himself upon this, that man should have life upon his obedience, he could challenge life no more than any other creature could.

But I will not follow this, these things, in general, not being the things the Apostle principally aims at here; for though it be true, all things in general are the free gifts of God, yet here he speaks of things in a restrained way, of some special things peculiar to the beloved of the Lord; such as the Psalmist speaks of in Psalm 25:14, "the secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant;" or such things as Christ speaks of in Matthew 11:25, 26, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." The things freely given of God are the things the wise of the world cannot reach; they are hid from them; they are revealed and communicated unto babes. What are those things, you will say? I can give you but a touch; for if I dive into the depth of the things, there will be no end, I should never come to the bottom.

First of all, God gives himself, and this is such a gift as is mystery the world doth not reach, for they know not what it is; it is the greatest gift that ever God could give his people to give over himself; it contains in it the most inestimable and invaluable treasure that is in heaven or earth; for God to pass over himself in such a way of propriety, as that he hath no more command over himself, than the creature can have power over him, for that which is good for him; this, I say, is the strangest thing ever was; and yet God gives himself to his people, that is, he gives man as true a propriety in himself, as he himself hath in himself. You know, the Lord, speaking of giving himself, expresses it thus, "and I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the LORD." {Hos.2:19} "Thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name." {Is.54:5} Mark what the drift of it is, a husband marrying a wife, by God's own appointment, gives himself up to the wife; see how the Apostle expresses it, "the wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife;" {I Cor.7:4;} as much as to say, God being married to a person, he hath not that power over himself, as to deny himself, or the use of himself, to those to whom he hath given himself; the believer hath

power with God, so far as God can be useful unto the person to whom he gives himself. There is as much propriety in a believer to God, as there is in a wife to her husband; this giving of himself by a deed of gift is frequently mentioned unto you in scripture, but especially in the covenant of grace; wherever this covenant is repeated, this is the burden of the song, as I may say; this is the great business, "I will be their God, {saith he,} and they shall be my people." Here is the passing of himself over to them; and this is, I say, one of the hidden things and mysteries that are freely given, God passeth over himself freely to us.

Secondly, God gives his son Christ, as well as he gives himself; that is a second deed of gift, giving of his Son to men; this is frequently repeated; "to us a child is born," saith the prophet, {Isa.9:6;} "to us a Son is given," so Isaiah 42:6, as the same prophet tells us what the Lord speaks of Christ; I will "give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." Here is a giving of Christ, you see; we are the gift of the Father to Christ, so he is the gift of the Father to us. Now in the giving of Christ there is to be considered, first, the gift of his person; secondly, the gift of all the fruits that redound from the participating of his person. First, God gives the person of Christ to men; as much as to say, God gives him to stand in the room of men, and men stand in his room. So that in the giving of Christ, God is pleased, as it were, to make a change, Christ represents our persons to the Father; we represent the person of Christ to him; all the loveliness the person of Christ hath, that is put upon us; and we are lovely with the Father, even as the Son himself. {Jn.17:23}¹ On the other part, all that hatefulnes and loathsomeness in our nature is put upon Christ; he stands, as it were, the abhorred of the Father for the time, even the forsaken of the Father, as he represented our persons, bare our blame, sustained our wrath, and drank the dregs of our cup.² Here is the gift of the person; that which is Christ's is ours; that which is ours is his. There is an admirable expression, in II Cor.5:21; "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It is plainly manifested, that which we were, Christ became "sin for us;" then that which Christ was, we became, that is, "the righteousness of God;" for we are made the righteousness of God in him.

Secondly, with Christ there is the gift of the fruit of him; she that hath an husband, hath all that is his. I have read an ancient deed of gift, made by one of the first kings of England, giving all from the heavens to the center of the earth; so that if there be minerals in the bowels of the earth, they are comprehended in the gift; so it is with Christ; God, in his Son, and with him, giveth all that he hath and is. All the mines in the bowels of Christ are ours; "all things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's;" so that, whatever is Christ's, by the gift of him, becomes the person's to whom he is given. Consider what you can imagine Christ hath as a fruit growing from him as he is Christ, with him that fruit is given to man, namely, to his own people; as free justification from all sin; free reconciliation, with the Father; free adoption to all the glory and liberty of the sons of God; firm peace

¹ {Note: This change of persons is condemned as an error by D. W. in his Gospel Truth, &c. pgs. 37, 38, but is a most glorious truth of the Gospel; and without which, it would be no Gospel, no glad tidings. It is fully expressed in II Cor.5:21, as well as in other places, and is the ground of our redemption by Christ, of his satisfaction for us, and the atonement of our sins, and the justification of our persons, and indeed of our whole salvation; so that we have reason to break out in the same exclamation as Justin Martyr did upon it, in his Epistle to Diognetus, pg. 500, "O sweet change! A work unsearchable! Benefits unexpected! That the transgression of many should be hid by one righteous person, and the righteousness of one justify many transgressors." Gill.}

² {Note: That is, while he bore the sins of his people, sustained the wrath of God, and was made a curse for them; nor should this seem harsh to any, especially as the Doctor has qualified it; for he does not say he stands the abhorred, but, as it were, the abhorred of the Father; though, had he said he was abhorred for a time, it is no more than the scripture says; "thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed;" {Ps.89:38;} or with thy Messiah; which words are understood of Christ, by several interpreters, ancient and modern; Christ indeed, as the Son of God was always the object of his Father's love; and so he was in his state of humiliation, and even under his sufferings and death; {Jn.10:17;} as the celebrated Witsius observes, "Christ was represented not only under the emblem of a lamb, a foolish beast, and prone to go astray; but of a goat, lascivious, wanton, and of an ill smell; yea, of a cursed serpent, and on that account execrable and cursed of God; not for the taking of our sins upon him, which was an holy action, and most grateful to God; but for the sins which he took upon him, and for the persons of the sinners which he sustained." Gill.}

and agreement, without any more quarrelling between God and his people; a free use of all things in a sanctified way. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." {Rom.8:32}

Finally, {we cannot run upon these particulars at large,} the third thing given of God, is the Spirit of God. He will give his Spirit to them that ask him. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" {Lk.11:18} There is a deed of gift of the Spirit. "I will send you another Comforter," saith Christ, "and he shall lead you into all truth." And as the Spirit of God is the gift of God, so the knowledge of those free gifts that are only known by the Spirit itself is the gift of God. With this Spirit, wisdom and understanding are given, and the knowledge of the mystery of the Gospel; that you shall not only have these things {spoken of before} given you, but the knowledge of them all; for the sound knowledge of them is as much the gift of God as the things themselves; this is by the Spirit of God. Comfort is given by him; you shall never have rest in your spirits, but as he rocks you asleep, and gives you rest. In brief, as all things are given in Christ by his own purchase, so all things are given in him by the Spirit, by way of application and possession in particular.³

Let us, therefore, now consider {for I must now redeem the time} what it is for these {I might have mentioned other particulars that are given} to be given of God. A deed of gift is opposed to two things; first, to sale; secondly, to loan. These things therefore are communicated by God. First, not by sale or bargain; for he doth not play the merchant; here are my wares, give me the price, and take the commodity. I beseech you take heed of such principles as these are; the covenant of Christ, as some may imagine, runs upon this strain, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people;" that is, I will tell you upon what terms I will be yours; come, bring this price, deliver up yourselves to me, and then I will be yours; give me the price and take it; God is no such huckster; he drives no such bargains in giving himself, and in giving Christ, and his Spirit; he makes no sale at all, for sale and deed of gift are opposite. If I buy such a thing of a man, he doth not give it me. Beloved, you must not think to bring a price to God for those things you would have of him; take heed of such conceits, that your assurance, peace, and comfort must cost you dear before you have them; for God will take no cost or price at your hands. Observe that admirable expression in Isaiah 55:1-3, for by this you shall plainly perceive that God is no huckster, he doth not keep shop, he doth not show you wares, and ask a price of you before you have them. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, {that is, that have a mind,} come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Why money and price? There is a difference between money and price, namely, as there is a difference between money and monies-worth; your poor men, their days labour is monies-worth, and their days labour is a price; therefore, there is equality between the labour and the wages, as there is equivalence between the money and the thing bought. Now the meaning of the Holy Ghost here is that God doth not look for money, nor price, nor labour; he doth not look that men should earn their gifts before they have them; he looks not for the penny, nor for the penny's-worth; therefore, be not deceived, though in respect of Christ, God made a sale, and made him pay according to the bargain; in which regard, the Apostle saith that "we are bought with a price;" yet, in respect of us, I say, there is no sale at all. Let me tell you, there are far more Simon Magus like persons in the world than men are aware of. In Acts 8 the great sin of Simon Magus was that he thought the gift of the Holy Ghost might be bought with money; the Apostle in that chapter thunders out an execration upon him, for offering to think or speak this, and therefore he tells

³ {Note: Our English divines, for I don't remember to have met with it among others, especially of the last age, and many in this, have used the word purchase, concerning the blessings of grace and glory, and other things. They indeed, come to us through the blood of the covenant, that so we may enjoy them consistent with the holiness and righteousness of God; but, strictly and properly speaking, nothing was purchased by Christ but his church; nor is any other in scripture ever said to be so; the only passage that looks like it, {Eph.1:14,} respects the people of God, the portion and possession of Christ, purchased and redeemed by him; the reason of which is, the people of God, though given to Christ, were captives in other hands, and therefore must be redeemed or brought out; whereas, the blessings of grace and glory never were. It would be better, I think, if the word was disused. Gill.}

him plainly, "I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," and that he had no part nor portion in the matter. How near they follow to the heels and steps of Simon Magus that will bring their price in their hands to God, to partake of the gift of the Holy Ghost, I leave it to the wise to judge. Therefore, you that would have your part and portion in this matter, of the gift of God, know that it must cost you nothing; this derogateth not from your obedience; there is employment enough for you, and there are ends sufficient for it, though this obedience be not the price you are to bring, from whence you are to expect the gifts of God; God requires your obedience to glorify him; to be the manifestation of your thankfulness; for the good of your brethren; for the manifesting and accomplishing his gifts in the use of ordinances but that these should be a price is a gross mistake. Do not dream that your conscionable walking before God here is the thing that must commend you to him hereafter; nothing but Jesus Christ sent out of the love and bowels of the Father can possibly commend you to God. Do not think this, or that, you do, is that price from whence you are to expect the things of God, but know that these are given of him. I shall run over some heads very briefly, for I see I am much prevented.

Secondly, therefore besides sale, God's gifts are not a loan neither; this is a great consideration. The things that we have of God, as they are a gift, so they are not a loan; what we receive of him, are not lent. There is a difference between lending and giving; he that lends money, looks that it should be paid again; he that gives it, gives it forever without ever looking for it again. The things of God, as they are given, so he doth not look for them again. You know, it is a ridiculous thing to give a thing, and take it again. We count this children's play; but how many of God's children, in temptation, look upon the things that God hath given them, and yet suspect he will take them again? What is lent, men may challenge again; but, when a man gives a thing, it is injustice for him to challenge it anymore; there is the difference between lending and giving. If God gives things to men, and takes them again, he relinquisheth and frustrateth his own act; for if he takes them away, they were not given. A deed of gift and title of land by deed of gift are as firm as a title by purchase; what God hath given, he cannot call in again. I speak this to the consolation of trembling spirits; they look upon God bestowing himself, Christ, and his Spirit, and they receive what God hath given; yet their spirits tremble, and they are afraid he will take these away again from them; they commit such and such sins; therefore, surely, say they; I shall lose that I have. Remember the nature of a gift, and remember this too, that whatever God hath given, he calls it not in again. Suppose a father should deliver up and give all his lands and goods to his son, and make a real deed of gift in Law, passing it over to him, as firm as Law can make; and this son, peradventure, commits some fault afterwards; can the Father call in this deed of gift, in respect of the fault committed? Thou art a son of God, and a darling of his; it may be thou hast committed many sins; for "in many things we sin all;" doth God call in his deed? Is not this deed of gift enrolled in the word of grace, and upon record? This very enrolling is sufficient security to thee; thou canst not be dispossessed of it.

There are many that think that such preaching gives way to licentiousness; I answered it fully the last time I was among you. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." {Rom.12:1} The consideration of the unchangeableness of the grace of God and his love; there is no other means in the world to keep men from sin, but this stands firm forever. As things are the gift of God, so they are unchangeable to them, to whom they are given; and the Lord give you wisdom, understanding, and his Spirit, to hold fast a truth of such infinite concern to the joy and peace of your spirits; and till you receive such unchangeable principles, whereupon the stability of your peace is founded, you will be like waves of the sea tossed to and fro with every wind of temptation; you will have every little thing raise suspicions and jealousies in your spirits. But, beloved, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it; or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" {Num.23:19} Shall God assent to a thing, and how much more shall not he make good that word that he assents to? Certainly, when men give a thing, they will not take it away, seeing the thing is given; I say, the things of God are given, and he

cannot take them away; the gates of hell shall not prevail against you. There are many things of useful consideration, if time would give me leave to open them to you.

Thirdly, the things of God are not only given, but they are freely given. I must not touch upon the heads; there are these five things considerable in a free gift; I will but name them.

First, a free gift is, when a thing is given without compulsion; a man doth not properly give his purse upon the highway, when thieves force him to it; things freely given are not compulsory, but voluntary.

Secondly, things may be given, but grudgingly; they may be given with a heart reluctant against it; as many men give to the poor, to serve the necessity of the times; but it goes to their hearts to part with it; here is a gift, but it is not a free gift, because the heart is not enlarged, here is not a ready heart; but God doth not give grudgingly, he loves a cheerful giver, and doth so himself, for the Lord waits that he may be gracious. "Therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you." {Isa.30:18}

Thirdly, a gift is free, and free indeed, when a thing is given only out of the motion in, and from a man's own spirit, without any external incentive and provocation to put him upon such a gift. It is commendable, I confess, for a man to be persuaded by others to do good, but the glory of free gifts stands in the freeness of a man's own spirit without provocation. Know thus much in general, all the things we receive from God, there is no incentive, no provocation, no motive, as the original, to stir or provoke him to give them. Let me tell you this, Christ himself is not the original motive of the gift of God; he is the instrument, or, as the scripture saith, the Mediator of our partaking of the gifts of God; the love of God in himself is the first fountain of all the gifts of God to us; nay, the very fountain of Christ himself, to compass the fruition and enjoyment of gifts, that the love of God himself had first framed, composed, and ordained for us; much less then, can any creature in the world have prevalency with God to stir up affections in him, as if he needed to be stirred up to do the good he doth; that which he doth, cometh from the motion of his own thoughts rising in himself, not being raised up by anything without himself.

Fourthly, a gift is free, when it is bountiful; such a man is free house-keeper; that is, he keeps a bountiful house; so the gifts of God are free in respect of his bounty; God doth not sow sparingly, but liberally; he giveth us freely to enjoy all things. There is plenteous redemption with him. "Let Israel hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption." {Ps.130:7} There is abundance of satisfaction. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." {Ps.36:8} Here is a free God; here is freeness indeed, in that he is a bountiful God, in all that he bestows upon the sons of men; he fills the cup to the brim, pressed down, heaped up, and running over; in this manner is the bounty of God expressed. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." {Heb.7:25} "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." {Eph.3:20,21}

Fifthly and lastly, a free gift is a gift that is unconditional. God doth not propose conditions beforehand, but gives his gifts without respect to any condition. Beloved, do not mistake; our faith and obedience are not the condition of God's gifts. That in the song of Zachariah is observable, "that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." {Lk.1:74,75} Observe, this service "without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives," is not the condition of deliverance, that we might partake of it; but here is first deliverance, and then service is the fruit of it; not deliverance the fruit of service; God delivers, and then we serve; and the tenor of the Gospel in this, is contrary to the tenor of the Law; the tenor of the Law runs thus, first do, then live; the Gospel saith, first live, then do. "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." {Ez.16:6} "Then {vs.9} washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil, &c." Thus, when you consider, the frame of the Gospel runs, that

there is nothing comes to men, but as a free gift of God, even Christ himself is so given; do not think that God gives Christ upon condition.

Fourthly, what it is for men to know this gift of God; there is a two-fold knowledge. In general, there is a knowledge of the thing; and secondly, a knowledge of propriety in the thing; so there is a two-fold knowledge of these things given; and the knowledge of the thing itself given is two-fold; first, it is intellectual; and secondly, practical. The intellectual knowledge is the natural understanding of the thing in a proper sense; practical knowledge is a sensible knowledge. You may distinguish them thus, as the knowledge man has of the sweetness of sugar in his understanding, and the knowledge of the sweetness of it in the taste. There is a great deal of difference between these two; for the things of God that are given, may be known intellectually in a common way, not only by the elect, but reprobate; but the people of God only know them practically, that is, they receive by degrees the sweetness of them, and God gives the taste of them more and more to them.

Secondly, there is beside the knowledge of the thing, the knowledge of propriety, which is this, when men know the things of God, and know them as their own. It is one thing for a person to know such a woman is wise, beautiful, and rich; and it is another thing to know this wise, beautiful, and rich woman is my wife; that I have a propriety in all she is, and hath; and so, likewise, it is one thing for a woman to know that a man is a man of parts, of wealth, and honour; to know him that he is so, is one thing, and to know him that is thus wise, rich, and honorable, to be her husband, is another thing; so it is likewise in the knowledge of spiritual things; it is one thing to know God and spiritual things, another thing to know him by way of propriety, to know that he gives himself to me as mine; and so, likewise, of all the rest of the particulars that are given; as Christ and the Spirit; now all this comes not by the spirit of the world, but by the Spirit that is of God. This I should have showed more at large; but of this hereafter; because I fear I have already trespassed upon your patience.