

# SERMON XXIX

## INHERENT QUALIFICATIONS ARE DOUBTFUL EVIDENCES FOR HEAVEN

Tobias Crisp

*"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid {or, made to meet,} on him the iniquity of us all." {Is.53:6}*

The iniquity that was laid upon Christ is the iniquity of us all; that is the last point proposed; and there are two things mainly considerable in it.

1. Whose iniquities they are that the Lord laid upon Christ.

2. How particular persons may come to know whether their iniquities are laid on him. The former were dispatched, the last day; the iniquities that the Lord laid upon Christ, were not the iniquities of the righteous, but of sinners; the iniquities of such, "who like sheep have gone astray, and turned everyone to their own way." This I have showed at large, and abundantly cleared it; there is no sinfulness in which a person stands, that can possibly be a bar to the discharge of him, from such sins, and the charging of Christ with them; but I must not dwell upon things I have already delivered. I come to the second particular; how particular persons may come to know certainly concerning their own estate; whether or not, the grace intended, and held out in this text, concerns them; and whether the Lord means them in special, when he said that "he laid on Christ the iniquities of us all." If any man fall upon the trial of a title, he must produce his evidences, that it may be clear; and these must be of that nature, that they are not dubious and litigious; that may rather administer more and greater controversies, than put an end to the question in hand.

There are many disputes in the world, and the arguments brought to put an end to them; commonly makes them greater than before; and it is certainly true in the present case. When there arise disputes in the hearts of the people, to resolve this question, whether they are discharged of their sins or no; they produce such and such evidences, and try the strength of them with such eagerness, that the question is farther off from being resolved, than before the dispute began. He that will clear his title to the interest he hath in this grant of God, must make use of those evidences that God hath given for that very purpose and they that shall make use of another, will but make a greater controversy in their own spirits, and more doubtfulness than there was before. I know that among tender consciences, there is nothing pursued with so much vehemence of spirit, earnestness and zeal of affection, as to attain to know certainly they have a part and portion in this grace. Oh; think they, if we could but be once satisfied of this, that our iniquities were all done away in Christ, we have what our hearts could desire. Beloved, it is to be considered, in so great a pursuit, and such earnestness of spirit to attain the end, why there is so little satisfaction to the spirits of men; scarce one of a thousand that makes the search, whether they have an interest in this grace, can attain to a final resolution; but, after they have searched, there remains some rub or other, that they are unsatisfied for the time; some mistake certainly there must be, either in the ground, or conclusion, or inference of the dispute; either they lay down arguments that have no strength in them, or if they have, they do not draw right inferences and conclusions from them. In all resolutions concerning a case of conscience; there is always a syllogism, a natural one I mean; for the case still goes thus, he that would be certain that his portion is in this grace, must first take the argument from the word itself; then he must draw his assumption from what he finds in himself, agreeing with the word, and so deduce his conclusion from them both, after this manner; he that is thus and thus, his sins are forgiven him; but I am thus and thus, therefore my sins are forgiven me.

Now, beloved, either we lay down a false foundation, or at least one that cannot be cleared; or else we make a corrupt assumption from thence, so that we cannot gather a certain conclusion. I conceive, therefore, that it might be a welcome business, if it were possible, to draw forth such evidences as are without all exception; but, before this can be done, there must be a taking away of the common mistakes of men; I shall therefore, beloved, endeavour these two things.

First; to show where the mistake lieth, that this question is so rarely resolved; and then show what it is that will resolve it satisfactorily.

When persons are eager upon the satisfaction of their own spirits, concerning their interest in this grace of pardon and discharge from sin; I find that usually in the entrance on this trial, and search, they run immediately to some qualifications in themselves, and fruits of sanctification; which must make up the conclusion for them, or else they will not, they dare not, make their conclusion to their own comfort. I mean briefly and plainly thus; the common way of people is to try themselves by signs and marks, drawn from their sanctification and performances; and as these will make up the conclusion they desire, so they sit down satisfied with their condition; but nothing makes up their conclusion, but premises taken from their sanctification. How litigious and doubtful a course this is, to resolve the spirits of men, I doubt not but I shall make very clear to you, by and by, and therein show how much men are mistaken, and how far wide they are from the conclusion they desire; while no other premises shall serve the turn, but what their own sanctification, qualifications and dispositions can afford.

But to come more closely to the business, give me leave, beloved, to take into consideration, and so to propose to you the weakness of the most remarkable signs, by which people use to try themselves, I shall, pass by those that are of less consequence, and instance in those that are usual, and most pressed upon, as building marks.

It is well known that this is one of the most remarkable signs, by which a person must know his portion in the grace of God through Christ, namely, universal obedience; when any man goes to examine, am I a child of God? Are my sins forgiven, and if they be, then I have universal obedience; and then follows the search, have I it, or no? If the heart saith, I have, then all is well; if it says, no, it is then conceived presumption to conclude a portion in Christ. This is the common way of trial. How weak this mark of universal obedience is to resolve a soul concerning his portion in the grace of God, I shall make clear to you; for certainly it cannot resolve the question as men would have it.

1. There is no person under heaven, believer or unbeliever, that hath universal obedience; and therefore it should be a mark, without which there can be no certainty of interest in Christ, no person under heaven can have assurance of interest in him.

2. I shall make it appear to you, that suppose there be such an universal obedience as men aim at, yet that is not enough to satisfy of interest in Christ.

There is no such thing in the heart and practice of man under heaven, as universal obedience, especially taking it as most do. When men stand upon it, to try themselves by this, what is it? There is one expression that will make it appear, what they mean by it; for you find the way of trial runs thus; one leak, think they, is enough, to sink a ship; one dead fly to putrefy a whole box of ointment; one drop of poison, though in a cup of the sweetest wine, to suffocate the life of him that drinks it. Now mark their inference from hence; in case there be one leak in me, this will sink me forever; one dead fly in me, this will putrefy all good things in me; and if but one drop of poison in me, it will choke me quite. Now, I beseech you, mark, if this be a sign, by which a man can come to know whether he be in Christ; let me see the man that dares say there is not one leak in him; not one dead fly in the precious box of grace that he saith is in his heart; not one drop of poison in his wine of obedience? If there be any of these, where is this universal obedience? The truth indeed is that universal obedience takes in all manner of obedience whatsoever; that which is universal, takes in all particulars; for universality is nothing else but a concurrence of all particulars met together. Either then there must be a complete obedience to the whole law, without failing in one jot or tittle, or else there is not; there cannot be universal obedience.

But some will say, we do not mean, by universal obedience, an exact performance of every tittle of the law, for that we know no man can reach unto; but the mark we try ourselves by, is an universal purpose of heart unto obedience, or the purpose of heart to yield universal obedience; and this a man must try himself by, and must find in himself, or else he cannot make up this conclusion, that he hath a portion in the grace of God by Christ. If he have a full purpose and respect of heart to all God's commandments; if he can find it so, then it is well; but if he cannot, then all is naught.

Let us take universal obedience in this sense, for a full purpose of heart to obey the whole will of God, though there be not ability to perform everything whereunto there is such a purpose. If this be the mark you try yourselves by, then I would fain know whether by full purpose of heart, you understand a constant purpose of heart, or else by fits, and at sometimes. If any say, they try themselves by the purpose of their hearts at such and such times, and confess that there is not a constancy of it; then let me tell you, such purposes of heart that are taken notice of at such and such times, cannot be signs of a man's having interest in Christ. You know the wickedest men in the world have their good moods and resolutions sometimes, and from the heart indeed. Take a man upon his sick bed, and tell him of his former course of life, and of God's grace, and he will say, if God restore him to his health, he will lead a better life than he hath done; and his heart is not feigned in what he saith; he speaks all this from his heart, and really intends it. Now, if a purpose of heart by fits, be a mark and sign of a man's interest in Christ, it may be so to a man that hath no portion in him at all; and so can be no certain mark or evidence to those that desire to try themselves by it.

But if they say this purpose of heart, to yield obedience to all God's commandments, is a constant purpose of heart, and that it is always set toward them; and God can read the inclination of their hearts to him and his service, to be constant, though to perform the same be not present always with them; well, if you mean this, then let me tell you, there is no person under heaven, able to say truly from an unfeigned heart, that he hath a constant purpose and inclination to the whole will of God; and I appeal to the spirits of every one of you, that go this way to work; is there a constant inclination in your spirits to the whole will of God always? "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" {I Sam.15:14} I ask, beloved, whether this stands with such a constant purpose and inclination, to have untoward risings of heart, repining and murmuring thoughts against many truths, of the will of God revealed? Sometimes you are present in the house of the Lord, attending upon the manifestation of his will; it is his will that you should do so and so; is there always an inclination of heart to this particular service? Doth it stand with a constant inclination of heart to it, to be weary of it, to be indisposed to it, and to have contradiction in your spirits against it? Now whose hearts are not privy to a world of this indisposition, crossness, drawing back, and pulling in the shoulders from such and such services as God calls us out unto? Take crosses and afflictions, for example, they are the fruits of the love of God; the Lord hath declared that they shall bring forth the "peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." {Heb.12:11} Are your hearts inclined, and are the constant purposes of your spirits to this pleasure of God? Do you "count it all joy" when ye fall into them; as James directs? {James 1:2} How comes it to pass then that there should be so much reluctance and opposition of spirit to the will of God, if the constant purpose and inclination of the heart were towards it? Now, beloved, mark it well, do but compare this indisposition of the spirit to this will of God, with the disposition of the spirit to it; you shall find by your own experience mostly, there is a real indisposition, rather than a real affection to the thing. How then can this be called a constant inclination of heart to the whole will of God, when, in most things, there is an averseness of spirit to it?

But to take up the business, that it may be without all contradiction; suppose we grant a person hath a constant purpose and inclination of heart to the whole will of God; nay, reaches the very practice of the will of God, according to that purpose of heart. Suppose upon search and trial of universal obedience, you are able to find, not only that your hearts are to all the commandments of God; but that you walk in them all, even blameless. You will say, this is a good mark, a man may rest satisfied with this; that is, conclude thereby that he hath a portion in the grace of God. But give me leave to deal plainly and truly with your spirits. I must tell you, if it be found thus with you, both in

respect of purpose and practice, yet this very sign is not sufficient to clear to you, that there is a portion in Christ, in respect of it. For that cannot be a mark to a person that he hath part in Christ, that is common to wicked, as well as good men. Can any man say, I know I have eyes to see, and hands that have motion in them, and because I am so, I know that I am a child of God? Do not the most wicked men in the world see with their eyes, and move with their hands? If this be a mark, why may not they know themselves to be in Christ, as well as a believer? But you will say, the case is not alike, there is no wicked man that can attain to universal obedience; if they may in purpose of heart, yet certainly not in practice. To understand the truth of this, look in Phil.3:6, where you will find the apostle make a narration of the condition of his life while he was a Pharisee, and a persecutor of the church of God, and the frame of it; after he was called home to Christ. In the description of his condition, he tells us what sect he was of, namely; a Pharisee, men that were the most strict and austere of all others; and among other things, saith he, "concerning zeal, I persecuted the church of God, and touching the righteousness of the law, I was blameless;" that is that which I would have you observe, touching the righteousness of the law, blameless.

Now, I would fain know of any man, what difference there is between that universal obedience to the whole will of God, which they look after, and a blamelessness of life touching the law? He that sins, and fails over and over again, of knowledge, is this man a blameless man in his life? Certainly beloved, the apostle walked exceeding exactly, and he doth not say simply he was blameless as to those among whom he lived; for they, perhaps, might not judge of righteousness according to the law, but according to their own esteem; but, saith he, "touching the righteousness of the law, I was blameless;" that is, a righteousness according to the revealed will of God, in which I was thus blameless. Now if this be a mark or a sign, that a man hath interest in Christ; namely, being righteous in his conversation, then Paul, while a persecutor of the church, had a mark and sign that he was in Christ. But consider, though he clears himself, as a man walking blamelessly before his conversion; yet he was so far from thinking this blamelessness according to the righteousness of the law, to be a sign of his interest in Christ, that he abhors it, is ashamed of it, and accounts it very dung. It is true, while he was in his Pharisaism, he accounted this blamelessness of his according to the law his exceeding gain. Oh; thought he, this will bear me out, it shall certainly be well with me; herein he accounted it gain; but, saith he, those "things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Observe it well, he is so far from making it a mark, or sign of interest in Christ, that he accounts it but loss. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." {vs.8} Though he found a righteousness according to the law in himself, yet he doth not treasure it up as a precious thing to comfort his heart, and as a certain mark to rest upon; but, and in respect of satisfying it, he counts it as dung, and casts it away; and will not be found in it; but only in the righteousness of God by faith.

How can any man imagine that that should be a mark, that Paul, after conversion, esteemed but as dung? Surely, marks and evidences of interest in Christ, must be of better price; marks that will bring comfort, may justly be more precious in the eyes of men after conversion, than dung; therefore, for ought I can see, let a man find ever so exact obedience to all the commandments of God, he cannot assure himself, from thence, that he hath portion in Christ.

But some will say, universal obedience of itself, indeed, is not a sufficient sign; some may go very far in it, and yet come short of Christianity, but there must be added to it sincerity, and singleness of heart; for if I walk according to the commandments of God, and do it in sincerity and singleness of heart, I may sit down by this as a good mark, and be satisfied therewith.

But, I answer, that if sincerity and singleness of heart be made a mark and sign of interest in Christ, at last it will fail a person as well as universal obedience. This is strange, you will say; what, is not sincerity, and singleness of heart, a mark of interest in Christ? I answer, no; whosoever builds upon it may deceive himself; I will make it good thus.

1. He that deals ingenuously with his own spirit, shall find that there is not this sincerity in his heart that he builds upon.

2. If he have this sincerity, it is not enough to give him such a certain conclusion of the goodness of his estate, that it will not fail.

No man under heaven can find that sincerity in his heart that may comfort him. He that will try himself by sincerity and singleness of heart, must understand what it is, or else he will try himself by that which he knows not; and there will be a trying of a hidden thing, by that which is more hidden. You must know then, what sincerity is, before it can speak peace to you upon trial. Now, how will you know what it is? Mark how the apostle makes it clear in Eph.6:5,6, speaking there of servants obeying their masters, he counsels them to obey them, "not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, as unto Christ." Well, from this passage I conclude, singleness of heart is such a disposition of spirit, as that whatsoever we do in word or deed, we do it unto Christ, or we do it for the Lord's sake. So far as we do anything, and our hearts have bye-ends in them, so far there is a defect of sincerity and singleness of heart. "If thine eye be single, {saith our Saviour,} thy whole body is full of light." Singleness of eyes there is opposite to squint-eyes. A squint-eye looks two ways at once; a single eye looks fore-right, and is pitched only upon such an object; it doth not look upon divers things together, distant from each other, much less contrary one to the other. A single heart doth what it doth for the Lord's sake, and to the Lord himself. Now, if this be sincerity, to have the Lord always in our eyes, in what we do, where is that sincerity of heart that may speak peace and comfort to the spirits of men? Beloved, look into your ordinary practice, whether it be so in your exercises of religion, or works of justice and mercy, do you all for and to the Lord? When you live, do you live to the Lord? When you eat and drink, do you all to his glory? Is there not much self mixed in your performances? When you pray, what is the loadstone in your prayers? What is that which makes you pray? Such an exigent puts you on it, preservation from danger, therefore you cry mightily; for you say, if the Lord help not, I perish. Here is praying for a man's self, not to glorify God, or, at least, more praying for one than the other.

Again, if in times of trouble and war, the clouds are great, and ready to break, and therefore we sigh, mourn, fast, and weep, what is the eye upon all this while? Upon self altogether, or for the most part, that we may escape this wrath, that vengeance, and the other affliction; that we may be delivered from that mischief, and this growing evil. Now these are the great things in our eye in what we do; all this while, now, do we this as unto the Lord, or for the Lord at all? It was his complaint against the Jews, when they fasted, and took a great deal of pains, "have ye fasted at all unto me?" No, beloved, they fasted unto themselves; so do you fast at all to the Lord when you fast? And is the Lord altogether the end of your fasting? Is not yourself the main thing you aim at in it? How can this stand with singleness of heart to him, when he is neglected; and a man's self is altogether in his eye in what he doth? Where is that sincerity and singleness of heart, where there is so much self in all that is performed?

But to come more close; suppose this sincerity is to be found, and your hearts, upon search, will tell you, that you have been to the Lord, and for his sake, in what you have done; God and his glory have been the sensible loadstone that have drawn you forth to this and that employment; yet, for all this, such sincerity is no mark or sign by which you ought to conclude your portion and interest in Christ. Look into Rom.10:1-4, for you shall see it is as clear as the day, that this sincerity, or doing things for the Lord's sake, is not a mark by which persons can conclude a portion in Christ; nay, more, it is a qualification, that those that are enemies of Christ, have had, in a great measure, in themselves; and can that be a mark of my being a child of God, and a member of Christ, that may be found in an enemy to him? Mark the words, the apostle, speaking there of his brethren the Jews, saith, that "his heart's desire and prayer to God was that they might be saved;" and withal, he "bears them record that they have a zeal of God." There was a sincerity aiming not at bye-ends, but at the glory of God. And further, mark wherein this was expressed, and about what it was conversant; it was not exercised in a false way, but in obedience to the will of God. "For, {saith he,} they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Observe it well, here is a zeal, that is, an earnestness of spirit, and this zeal

was after God; so, then, it was a zeal wherein they sought God and his glory, not in an indirect way, nor in a corrupt way of their own devising; but in the righteousness according to the law of God himself; for so much is intimated, when it is said, that "Christ is the end of the law;" and yet, for all this, saith the apostle, though they had this zeal of God, according to the will of God, in his law, they "submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God;" so then, there may be a singleness of heart to the Lord, and for his glory, and a walking in obedience to his will revealed in his law, and no portion in Christ, but a withstanding, and not submitting to his righteousness. Men do but puzzle themselves while they go about to satisfy their own spirits, by such marks and signs; that if they will but deal faithfully with themselves, will never resolve the case fully, to give true and grounded rest unto their souls.

One thing more I will commend to you, and that is a mark, the greatest of all, and which seems to have the greatest strength of all others, and that from the testimony of the apostle himself; wherewith many souls are extremely puzzled in examining themselves by, and very much troubled in making up their conclusion. Surely, it is a good mark, {will some say,} that we may know we are God's children, if we love the brethren; for, saith the apostle, {I Jn.3:14,} "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Will you say that a man cannot be resolved that he is a child of God by this mark?

For an answer to this, first, I shall desire you well to mark the scope of the apostle in that place. In the words before the text, he tells the brethren how the world esteemed of them, what account it had of them; "Marvel not, my brethren, though the world hate you;" but, in this verse, he endeavors to comfort them against the dis-esteem it had of them, and how doth he do it? "We know, {saith he,} that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren;" as much as if he had said, whatever the world judgeth of us, our judgment one of another is, that we are God's children; and the ground of it is this, we perceive one from another, that there is a love one to another; so that it seems plain to me, that the apostle here endeavors to satisfy persons how they are made known one to another, that they are the people of God, not how they are to know themselves; this seems rather to be a mark, how my brother may know me, than by which I should know myself; the text doth not say, by this I may know that I am passed from death to life. But, let us take it for granted, that every particular person finding the love of the brethren in himself, by this may know himself to be the child of God. You shall find how exceedingly a soul must be puzzled in this way, before it can clear the case that it belongs to Christ by it. For, if you will try yourself by this you must know what it is to love the brethren. And, secondly, that they are the brethren you love.

You must understand what it is to love the brethren; for you can never know that you love them, till you know what it is to love them; and when you do know it, and examine yourselves by it, and deal faithfully with yourselves, then you will say, Oh, what a labyrinth is this I am in! How shall I get out of it? If you will examine yourselves by this love, let the Spirit of God be your teacher and director. {I Cor.13:1-8} If you will try your hearts by your love to the brethren, bring them to the particulars the apostle mentions there; and I doubt your hearts will be at a stand many times about them. The apostle expresses himself {as the word is rendered by our translators in the English bible} by the word charity, but the word, in the original, is love; and there he at large describes the nature of love to the brethren, by many particulars that set it out effectually. "Charity {or love, saith he} suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." Now consider the sum of these things, love "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Wherever, there is the love of the brethren, there are all these particulars. Come now to these in your examination; bring your hearts to these. Is there no envying at all towards the brethren? No thinking evil of any of them? No seeking myself, or my own good, in my love to them? Is there a bearing all things for their sakes? Is there no being puffed up, or vaunting above them? Is there no thinking better of myself than of them? This is the love of the brethren, as the apostle plainly declares; and, if you examine yourselves by this love, do you not find those great defects, and imperfections, that must be taken away, before you can

resolve the case in hand, by this love to them? So that a soul must attain to a mighty high measure of sanctification and victory over itself, before it can reach to this, to say, "I do love the brethren." Now, to put yourselves {poor, weak things} upon this mark, which is one of the nearest to perfection; except you can make this manifest, you must not dare to take your part in Christ; what is this, but to tie knots to yourselves, whereby you fasten yourselves with fetters of continual doubting?

But, suppose you find all this love in yourselves, you must not only love the brethren, but you must know they are the brethren whom you love; for if you bear this love to mankind as such, this is no evidence of your being in Christ; for the publicans and harlots love one another; therefore you must know they are brethren that you love, or else this is no mark at all, that you have a portion in Christ. The wickedest man hath as good a mark as this; but do you know they are brethren you love? You know the brotherhood consists of being united unto Christ; this is an invisible thing, none can know it but God only. No man can say that such a one is a brother; "as no man knows the things of man, save the spirit of man that is in him;" so no man knows the things of another, especially the spiritual condition of another, but God. {I Cor.2:11}

But, you will say, though I am not certain that he is a brother, yet I love him under the notion of a brother. Well beloved, suppose this then; if this be a sign that a man is a child of God, because he knoweth he loveth such an one, he apprehends to be a brother; then many may have signs and marks they have received Christ, when the truth is, it is no such matter.

Look on the Papists; do not they love the brethren? You will say, no, they are not brethren they love, and therefore their love is nothing. It is true, they are mistaken, they are not brethren; but yet, I say, that is nothing to the purpose, they love them under the notion of brethren, which you conceive to be sufficient; do not they love one another under that notion, and hate us as enemies to God and the gospel? Therefore, though they are mistaken, yet because they love one another as brethren, and under that notion; according to this rule, I say, this may be an argument sufficient, and a sign whereby they may know their interest in Christ.

But, let me tell you, while men love persons, under the notion of brethren, commonly they love them that are not, and hate them that are. Take all sects, they will love their own as brethren, and hate all others as not. For example, there are two sorts of people, one that hold up their heads by the righteousness of the law, and expect salvation according to their obedience to it; with them they are brethren that so adhere to the law, and are enemies to all those that stand for the free grace of God, and the true righteousness of God, which is by faith. Suppose you love those persons as brethren that run after Moses and the law, for their peace and satisfaction of spirit, and despise those that are in the free grace of God, and rest upon the promises of the gospel, though they see themselves full of sin; which of these are brethren? Surely, according to the meaning of the apostle, they have passed from death to life that believe. "He that believeth shall be saved." These are the brethren, do you love these men? Oh; there are many that go by signs and marks that cannot endure them; they go with them under the name of libertines, and not brethren.<sup>1</sup>

Well, to draw to a conclusion, whoever you are, that go by signs and marks, drawn from sanctification, you will be puzzled, if you deal faithfully with your own spirits, though you attain to ever so great a height of it.

And yet all this while, let me not be mistaken; there are censorious spirits, if we do but take off the fruits of sanctification, from those great businesses the Lord never ordained them unto,

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<sup>1</sup> Though there are many useful observations made by the Doctor, on love of the brethren, yet I cannot agree with him in his sense of I John 3:14, for it does not seem to respect the knowledge saints have of other persons, but of themselves; "we know" not that other persons, other saints, but we, ourselves, "have passed from death to life, because we, {ourselves, and not others,} love the brethren;" and which grace being a fruit of the Spirit, and so peculiar to a man that is born again, as that it cannot be in an unregenerate man, who though he may love saints, as men, on natural and civil accounts, can never love them as children of God, and brethren of Christ; and, therefore, must be an evidence of passing from death to life; at least, in some degree, though it may not come up to the revealing and receiving evidences, the spirit and faith, of which, it must be owned, are the principal ones. See my exposition of I John 3:14. And besides, if by it we may know that others have passed from death to life, why not know this of ourselves by it? Gill.

presently they conclude; here is nothing but striking at sanctification, and flinging at obedience towards God; I say, therefore beloved, mistake not; sanctification of men is as much the will of God, as salvation and glory hereafter, for, "this is the will of God, even our sanctification." {I Thes.4:3} I say also, the Lord never calls persons to salvation by Christ, but he also sanctifies them in some measure, they go still together; and I would they were cut off from the Israel of God, that take occasion to the flesh, from the liberty of the grace of God, whereto they are called; but still I say, though the Lord calls men, and sanctifies them, yet he gives them some better evidences, whereby he will satisfy their spirits, to sit down and have more peace and comfort of heart, than all the evidences of sanctification in the world can give unto them.

Some evidences there are, that will determine the question so clearly, that there shall not remain any just scruple; and then I do not deny but that when the Spirit of the Lord, and the faith of a believer, shall speak what they can say, and have fully resolved the question, the fruits of the Spirit in the believer, may come in as handmaids to bear witness to the thing; yet so that the other two give a sufficient resolution to the question. These are the two great witnesses from heaven, that speak home and fully to the question in hand, and give peace and satisfaction to the spirit of man; I mean, that it is the Spirit of Christ, and the faith of a believer only, that immediately call the soul, and testify to it of its interest in Christ, and so give sufficient evidence to it. The next opportunity I will speak, God willing, more fully to these two things.