

JOHN DONNE

their *anathema*, we believe, and woe be unto them that do not believe the resurrection of the body; but in going about to express it the lips of an angel would be uncircumcised lips, and the tongue of an archangel would stammer. I offer not therefore at it. But in respect of and with relation to that blessed state according to the doctrine and the practice of our church, we

do pray for the dead; for the militant church upon earth and the triumphant church in heaven and the whole catholic church in heaven and earth; we do pray that God will be pleased to hasten that kingdom, that we with all others departed in the true faith of his holy name may have this perfect consummation, both of body and soul, in his everlasting glory. Amen.

SERMON XXIII, FOLIO OF 1640¹

"For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known."

THESE two terms in our text, *nunc* and *tunc*, now and then, now in a glass, then face to face, now in part, then in perfection, these two secular terms, of which one designs the whole age of this world from the creation to the dissolution thereof, for all that is comprehended in this word *now*, and the other designs the everlastingness of the next world, for that incomprehensibleness is comprehended in the other word *then*—these two words that design two such ages are now met in one day, in this day in which we celebrate all resurrections in the root in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus blest forever. For the first term, *now*, "Now in a glass, now in part," is intended most especially of that very act which we do now at this present, that is, of the ministry of the Gospel, of declaring God in his ordinance, of preaching his word, "Now," in this ministry of his Gospel, "we see in a glass, we know in part"; and then the *then*, the time of seeing face to face and knowing as we are known is intended of that time which we celebrate this day, the day of resurrection, the day of judgment, the day of the actual possession of the next life. So that this day this whole Scripture is fulfilled in your ears; for now, now in this preaching, you have some sight, and then, then when that day comes which in the first root thereof we celebrate this day, you shall have a perfect sight of all; "Now we see through a glass," etc.

That therefore you may the better know him when you come to see him face to face than by having seen him in a glass now, and that your seeing him now in his ordinance may prepare you to see him then in his essence, proceed we thus in the handling of these words. First, that there is nothing brought into com-

¹ Preached at St. Paul's on Easter Day, 1628.

parison, into consideration, nothing put into the balance, but the sight of God, the knowledge of God; it is not called a better sight, nor a better knowledge, but there is no other sight, no other knowledge proposed or mentioned or intimated or imagined but this; all other sight is blindness, all other knowledge is ignorance; and then we shall see how there is a ; twofold sight of God and a twofold knowledge of God proposed to us here; a sight and a knowledge here in this life, and another manner of sight and another manner of knowledge in the life to come; for here we see God *in speculo*, in a glass, that is, by reflection, and here we know God *in aenigmate*, says our text, darkly, so we translate it, that is, by obscure presentations, and therefore it is called a knowledge but in part; but in heaven our sight is face to face, and our knowledge is to know as we are known.

For our sight of God here, our theater, the place where we sit and see him, is the whole world, the whole house and frame of nature, and our medium, our glass, is the book of creatures, and our light, by which we see him, is the light of natural reason. And then for our knowledge of God here, our place, our academy, our university is the church, our medium is the ordinance of God in his church, preaching and sacraments; and our light is the light of faith. Thus we shall find it to be for our sight and for our knowledge of God here. But for our sight of God in heaven, our place, our sphere is heaven itself, our medium is the patefaction, the manifestation, the revelation of God himself, and our light is the light of glory. And then for our knowledge of God there, God himself is all; God himself is the place, we see him in him; God is our medium, we see him by him; God is our light; not a light which is his, but a light which is he; not a light which flows from him, no, nor a light which is in him, but that light which is he himself. "Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord, O Father of lights, that

in thy light we may see light," that now we see this through this thy glass, thy ordinance, and by the good of this hereafter face to face.

The sight is so much the noblest of all the senses as that it is all the senses. As the reasonable soul of man, when it enters, becomes all the soul of man, and he hath no longer a vegetative and a sensitive soul² but all is that one reasonable soul; so, says St. Augustine, and he exemplifies it by several pregnant places of Scripture, *Visus per omnes sensus recurrit*, all the senses are called seeing; as there is *videre et audire*, "St. John turned to see the sound"; and there is *gustate et videte*, "Taste and see how sweet the Lord is"; and so of the rest of the senses, all is sight. Employ then this noblest sense upon the noblest object, see God; see God in everything, and then thou needst not take off thine eye from beauty, from riches, from honor, from anything. St. Paul speaks here of a diverse seeing of God. Of seeing God in a glass, and seeing God face to face; but of not seeing God at all, the apostle speaks not at all.

When Christ took the blind man by the hand, though he had then begun his cure upon him, yet he asked him if he saw aught. Something he was sure he saw; but it was a question whether it were to be called a sight, for he saw men but as trees. The natural man³ sees beauty and riches and honor, but yet it is a question whether he sees them or no, because he sees them but as a snare. But he that sees God in them sees them to be beams and evidences of that beauty, that wealth, that honor, that is in God, that is in God himself. The other blind man that importuned Christ, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me," when Christ asked him, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" had presently that answer, "Lord, that I may receive my sight"; and we may easily think that if Christ had asked him a second question, "What wouldst thou see when thou hast received thy sight?" he would have answered, "Lord, I will see thee"; for when he had his sight and Christ said to him, "Go thy way," he had no way to go from Christ, but, as the text says there, "He followed him." All that he cared for was seeing, all that he cared to see was Christ. Whether he would see a peace or a war may be a statesman's problem; whether he would see plenty or scarcity of some com-

² A reference to the Neoplatonic conception of the three souls in man, the three ascending stages of being, represented in the verbs, *esse, sentire, intelligere*. The vegetative and sensitive souls are fused and made a part of the third, the immortal soul.

³ The man without religion.

modify may be a merchant's problem; whether he would see Rome or Spain grow in greatness may be a Jesuit's problem; but whether I had not rather see God than anything is no problematical matter. All sight is blindness, that was our first; all knowledge is ignorance till we come to God, is our next consideration.

The first act of will is love, says the School;⁴ for till the will love, till it would have something, it is not a will. But then, *amare nisi nota non possumus*; it is impossible to love anything till we know it. First our understanding must present it as *verum*, as a known truth, and then our will embraces it as *bonum*, as good, and worthy to be loved. Therefore the philosopher⁵ concludes easily, as a thing that admits no contradiction, that naturally all men desire to know, that they may love. But then, as the addition of an honest man varies the signification with the profession and calling of the man—for he is an honest man at court that oppresses no man with his power, and at the exchange he is the honest man that keeps his word, and in an army the valiant man is the honest man—so the addition of learning and understanding varies with the man; the divine, the physician, the lawyer are not qualified, not denominated by the same kind of learning. But yet, as it is for honesty, there is no honest man at court or exchange or army if he believe not in God; so there is no knowledge in the physician nor lawyer if he know not God. Neither does any man know God except he know him so as God hath made himself known, that is, in Christ. Therefore, as St. Paul desires to know nothing else, so let no man pretend to know anything but Christ crucified; that is, crucified for him, made his. In the eighth verse of this chapter he says, "Prophecy shall fail, and tongues shall fail, and knowledge shall vanish"; but this knowledge of God in Christ made mine, by being crucified for me, shall dwell with me forever. And so from this general consideration all sight is blindness, all knowledge is ignorance, but of God, we pass to the particular consideration of that twofold sight and knowledge of God expressed in this text, "Now we see through a glass," etc.

First then we consider—before we come to our knowledge of God—our sight of God in this world, and that is, says our apostle, *in speculo*, "We see as in a glass." But how do we see in a glass? Truly, that is not easily determined. The old writers in the optics said that when we see a thing in a glass, we see not the

⁴ The medieval Schoolmen.

⁵ Augustine.

thing itself but a representation only; all the later men say we do see the thing itself but not by direct but by reflected beams. It is a useless labor for the present to reconcile them. This may well consist with both, that as that which we see in a glass assures us that such a thing there is, for we cannot see a dream in a glass, nor a fancy, nor a chimera, so this sight of God, which our apostle says we have in a glass, is enough to assure us that a God there is.

This glass is better than the water; the water gives a crookedness and false dimensions to things that it shows; as we see by an oar when we row a boat, and as the poet describes a wry and distorted face, *qui facim sub aqua, Phoebe, natantis habes*, that he looked like a man that swam under water. But in the glass which the apostle intends we may see God directly, that is, see directly that there is a God. And therefore St. Cyril's addition in this text is a diminution; *videmus quasi infumo*, says he, we see God as in a smoke; we see him better than so; for it is a true sight of God, though it be not a perfect sight, which we have this way. This way our theater, where we sit to see God, is the whole frame of nature; our medium, our glass in which we see him is the creature; and our light by which we see him is natural reason.

Aquinas calls this theater, where we sit and see God, the whole world; and David compasses the world and finds God everywhere and says at last, "Whither shall I fly from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there"; at Babel they thought to build to heaven; but did any man ever pretend to get above heaven? Above the power of the winds, or the impression of other malignant meteors, some high hills are got. But can any man get above the power of God? "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, there thy right hand shall hold me and lead me." If we sail to the waters above the firmament, it is so too. Nay, take a place which God never made, a place which grew out of our sins, that is, hell; yet, "If we make our bed in hell, God is there too." It is a woeful inn to make our bed in, hell; and so much the more woeful as it is more than an inn, an everlasting dwelling. But even there God is; and so much more strangely than in any other place because he is there without any emanation of any beam of comfort from him who is the God of all consolation or any beam of light from him who is the Father of all lights. In a word, whether we be in the eastern parts of the world, from whom the truth of religion is passed, or in the western, to which it is not yet come;

whether we be in the darkness of ignorance, or darkness of the works of darkness, or darkness of oppression of spirit in sadness; the world is the theater that represents God, and everywhere every man may, nay, must see him.

The whole frame of the world is the theater, and every creature the stage, the medium, the glass in which we may see God. "Moses made the laver in the tabernacle of the looking glasses of women." Scarce can you imagine a vainer thing—except you will except the vain lookers-on in that action—than the looking glasses of women; and yet Moses brought the looking glasses of women to a religious use, to show them that came in the spots of dirt which they had taken by the way, that they might wash themselves clean before they passed any farther.

There is not so poor a creature but may be the glass to see God in. The greatest flat glass that can be made cannot represent anything greater than it is. If every gnat that flies were an archangel, all that could but tell me that there is a God; and the poorest worm that creeps tells me that. If I should ask the basilisk,⁶ how earnest thou by those killing eyes? he would tell me, thy God made me so; and if I should ask the slow-worm, how earnest thou to be without eyes? he would tell me, thy God made me so. The cedar is no better a glass to see God in than the hyssop upon the wall; all things that are, are equally removed from being nothing; and whatsoever hath any being is by that very being a glass in which to see God, who is the root and the fountain of all being. The whole frame of nature is the theater, the whole volume of creatures is the glass, and the light of nature, reason, is our light; which is another circumstance.

Of these words, John 1:9, "That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," the slackest sense that they can admit gives light enough to see God by. If we spare St. Chrysostom's sense, that that light is the light of the Gospel and of grace, and that that light considered in itself and without opposition in us does enlighten, that is, would enlighten every man if that man did not wink at that light; if we forbear St. Augustine's sense, that light enlightens every man, that is, every man that is enlightened is enlightened by that light; if we take but St. Cyril's sense, that this light is the light of natural reason, which, without all question, "enlighteneth every man that comes into the world"; yet have we

⁶ The reptile of fable whose eyes were deadly enough to slay.

light enough to see God by that light in the theater of nature and in the glass of creatures. God affords no man the comfort, the false comfort of atheism. He will not allow a pretending atheist the power to flatter himself so far as seriously to think there is no God. He must pull out his own eyes and see no creature before he can say, he sees no God; he must be no man and quench his reasonable soul before he can say to himself, there is no God. The difference between the reason of man and the instinct of the beast is this, that the beast does but know, but the man knows that he knows. The bestial atheist will pretend that he knows there is no God; but he cannot say that he knows that he knows it; for his knowledge will not stand the battery of an argument from another nor a ratiocination from himself. He dares not ask himself, who is it that I pray to in a sudden danger if there be no God? Nay, he dares not ask, who is it that I swear by in a sudden passion if there be no God? Whom do I tremble at and sweat under at midnight and whom do I curse by next morning if there be no God? It is safely said in the School, *media perfecta ad quae ordinantur*, how weak soever those means which are ordained by God seem to be, and be indeed in themselves, yet they are strong enough to those ends and purposes for which God ordained them.

And so for such a sight of God as we take the apostle to intend here, which is to see that there is a God, the frame of nature, the whole world is our theater, the book of creatures is our medium, our glass, and natural reason is light enough. But then for the other degree, the other notification of God, which is the knowing of God, though that also be first to be considered in this world, the means is of a higher nature than served for the sight of God; and yet whilst we are in this world it is but *in cenigmate*, in an obscure riddle, a representation, darkly, and in part, as we translate it.

As the glass which we spoke of before was proposed to the sense, and so we might see God, that is, see that there is a God, this *cenigma* that is spoken of now, this dark similitude and comparison, is proposed to our faith; and so far we know God, that is, believe in God in this life but by enigmas, by dark representations and allusions. Therefore says St. Augustine that Moses saw God, in that conversation which he had with him in the mount, *sevocatus ah omni corporis sensu*, removed from all benefit and assistance of bodily senses—he needed not that glass, the help of the creature; and more than so, *ab omni significativo cenigmate spiritus*,

removed from all allusions or similitudes or representations of God which might bring God to the understanding and so to the belief; Moses knew God by a more immediate working than either sense or understanding or faith. Therefore says that father, *per speculum et cenigma*, by this which the apostle calls a glass and this which he calls *cenigma*, a dark representation, *intelliguntur omnia accommodata ad notificandum deum*, he understands all things by which God hath notified himself to man, by the glass to his reason, by the *cenigma* to his faith. And so for this knowing of God by way of believing in him—as for seeing him our theater was the world, the creature was our glass, and reason was our light—our academy to learn this knowledge is the church, our medium is the ordinance and institution of Christ in his church, and our light is the light of faith in the application of those ordinances in that church.

This place then where we take our degrees in this knowledge of God, our academy, our university for that, is the church; for, though as there may be some few examples given of men that have grown learned who never studied at university; so there may be some examples of men enlightened by God and yet not within that covenant which constitutes the church; yet the ordinary place for degrees is the university, and the ordinary place for illumination in the knowledge of God is the church. Therefore did God, who ever intended to have his kingdom of heaven well peopled, so powerfully, so miraculously enlarge his way to it, the church, that it prospered as a wood which no felling, no stubbing could destroy. We find in the acts of the church five thousand martyrs executed in a day; and we find in the Acts of the Apostles five thousand brought to the church by one sermon; still our christenings were equal to our burials at least.

Therefore when Christ says to the church, "Fear not, little flock," it was not *quia de magno minuitur, sed quia de pusillo crescit*, says Chrysologus, not because it should fall from great to little, but rise from little to great. Such care had Christ of the growth thereof; and then such care of the establishment and power thereof as that the first time that ever he names the church he invests it with an assurance of perpetuity. "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"; therein is denoted the strength and stability of the church in itself and then the power and authority of the church upon others in those often directions, *die ecclesiae*, complain to the church, and consult with the church, and then, *audi ecclesiam*,

harken to the church, be judged by the church, hear not them that hear not the church, and then *ejice de ecclesia*, let them that disobey the church be cast out of the church. In all which we are forbidden private conventicles, private spirits, private opinions. For, as St. Augustine says well—and he cites it from another whom he names not, *quidam dixit*—if a wall stand single, not joined to any other wall, he that makes a door through the wall and passes through that door, *adhuc foris est*, for all this is without still, *nam domus non est*, one wall makes not a house; one opinion makes not catholic doctrine, one man makes not a church; for this knowledge of God the church is our academy; there we must be bred; and there we may be bred all our lives and yet learn nothing. Therefore, as we must be there, so there we must use the means; and the means in the church are the ordinances and institutions of the church.

The most powerful means is the Scripture; but the Scripture in the church. Not that we are discouraged from reading the Scripture at home; God forbid we should think any Christian family to be out of the church. At home the Holy Ghost is with thee in the reading of the Scriptures; but there he is with thee as a remembrancer; "The Holy Ghost shall bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you," says our Savior; here in the church he is with thee as a doctor to teach thee; first learn at church and then meditate at home; receive the seed by hearing the Scriptures interpreted here, and water it by returning to those places at home. When Christ bids you "Search the Scriptures," he means you should go to them who have a warrant to search, a warrant in their calling. To know which are Scriptures, to know what the Holy Ghost says in the Scriptures, apply thyself to the church. Not that the church is a judge above the Scriptures, for the power and the commission which the church hath, it hath from the Scriptures, but the church is a judge above thee, which are the Scriptures and what is the sense of the Holy Ghost in them.

So then thy means are the Scriptures; that is thy evidence. But then this evidence must be sealed to thee in the sacraments and delivered to thee in preaching, and so sealed and delivered to thee in the presence of competent witnesses, the congregation. When St. Paul was carried up *in raptu*, in an ecstasy, into paradise, that which he gained by this powerful way of teaching is not expressed in a *vidit* but an *audivit*; it is not said that he saw but that he heard unspeakable things. The eye is the Devil's door before the ear; for though he

do enter at the ear, by wanton discourse, yet he was at the eye before; we see, before we talk, dangerously. But the ear is the Holy Ghost's first door, he assists us with ritual and ceremonial things which we see in the church; but ceremonies have their right use when their right use hath first been taught by preaching. Therefore to hearing does the apostle apply faith; and as the church is our academy, and our medium the ordinances of the church, so the light by which we see this, that is, know God so as to make him our God, is faith; and that is our other consideration in this part.

Those heretics against whom St. Chrysostom and others of the fathers writ, the *Anoma-i*, were inexcusable in this that they said they were able to know God in this life as well as God knew himself; but in this more especially lay their impiety, that they said that they were able to do all this by the light of nature without faith. By the light of nature in the theater of the world, by the medium of creatures, we see God; but to know God by believing, not only him, but in him, is only in the academy of the church, only through the medium of the ordinances there, and only by the light of faith.

The School does ordinarily design four ways of knowing God; and they make the first of these four ways to be by faith; but then by faith they mean no more but an assent that there is a God; which is but that which in our former considerations we called the seeing of God; and which indeed needs not faith; for the light of nature will serve for that, to see God so. They make their second way contemplation, that is, an union of God in this life;⁷ which is truly the same thing that we mean by faith; for we do not call an assent to the Gospel, faith, but faith is the application of the Gospel to ourselves; not an assenting that Christ died but an assurance that Christ died for all. Their third way of knowing God is by apparition; as when God appeared to the patriarchs and others in fire, in angels, or otherwise. And their fourth way is *per apertam visionem*, by his clear manifestation of himself in heaven.

Their first way, by assenting only, and their third way of apparition, are weak and uncertain ways. The other two, present faith and future vision, are safe ways, but admit this difference, that that of future vision is *gratice consummantis*, such a knowledge of God as when it is once had can never be lost nor diminished;

⁷ The Neoplatonic conception of ecstasy, the mystic experience in which the soul of the contemplator of God was fused with the divine essence.

but knowledge by faith in this world is *gratia; communis*, it is an effect and fruit of that grace which God shed upon the whole communion of saints, that is, upon all those who in this academy, the church, do embrace the medium, that is, the ordinances of the church; and this knowledge of God, by this faith, may be diminished or increased; for it is but *in aznigmate*, says our text, darkly, obscurely; clearly in respect of the natural man, but yet but obscurely in respect of that knowledge of God which we shall have in heaven; for, says the apostle, "As long as we walk by faith, and not by sight, we are absent from the Lord." Faith is a blessed presence, but compared with heavenly vision it is but an absence; though it create and constitute in us a possibility, a probability, a kind of certainty of salvation, yet that faith which the best Christian hath is not so far beyond that sight of God which the natural man hath as that sight of God which I shall have in heaven is above that faith which we have now in the highest exaltation. Therefore there belongs a consideration to that which is added by our apostle here, that the knowledge which I have of God here, even by faith through the ordinances of the church, is but a knowledge in part. "Now I know in part."

That which we call in part the Syriac translates *modicum ex mukis*; though we know by faith, yet, for all that faith, it is but a little of a great deal that we know yet, because though faith be good evidence, yet faith is but "the evidence of things not seen"; and there is better evidence of them when they are seen. For if we consider the object, we cannot believe so much in God nor of our happiness in him as we shall see then. For when it is said that the heart comprehends it not, certainly faith comprehends it not neither. And if we consider the manner, faith itself is but darkness in respect of the vision of God in heaven. For those words of the prophet, "I will search Jerusalem with candles," are spoken of the times of the Christian church and of the best men in the Christian church; yet they shall be searched with candles, some darkness shall be found in them. To the Galatians well instructed and well established the apostle says, "Now, after ye have known God, or rather are known of God"; the best knowledge that we have of God here, even by faith, is rather that he knows us than that we know him. And in this text it is in his own person that the apostle puts the instance, "Now I"—I, an apostle taught by Christ himself—"know but in part." And therefore, as St. Augustine saith, *Sunt quasi cunabula caritatis dei, quibus diligimus proximum*, the love which we bear to our

neighbor is but as the infancy, but as the cradle of that love which we bear to God; so the sight of God which we have *in speculo*, in the glass, that is, in nature, is but *cunabula fidei*, but the infancy, but the cradle of that knowledge which we have in faith; and yet that knowledge which we have in faith is but *cunabula visionis*, the infancy and cradle of that knowledge which we shall have when we come to see God face to face. Faith is infinitely above nature, infinitely above works, even above those works which faith itself produces, as parents are to children and the tree to the fruit. But yet faith is as much below vision and seeing God face to face. And therefore, though we ascribe willingly to faith more than we can express, yet let no man think himself so infallibly safe because he finds that he believes in God as he shall be when he sees God; the faithfullest man in the church must say, *Domine, adauge*, "Lord, increase my faith"; he that is least in the kingdom of heaven shall never be put to that. All the world is but *speculum*, a glass, in which we see God; the church itself and that which the ordinance of the church begets in us, faith itself, is but *cenigina*, a dark representation of God to us till we come to that state, to see God face to face and to know as also we are known.

Now as for the sight of God here our theater was the world, our medium and glass was the creature, and our light was reason, and then for our knowledge of God here our academy was the church, our medium the ordinances of the church, and our light the light of faith; so we consider the same terms, first, for the sight of God, and then for the knowledge of God in the next life. First, the sphere, the place where we shall see him, is heaven; he that asks me what heaven is means not to hear me, but to silence me; he knows I cannot tell him; when I meet him there, I shall be able to tell him, and then he will be as able to tell me; yet then we shall be but able to tell one another this, this that we enjoy is heaven, but the tongues of angels, the tongues of glorified saints, shall not be able to express what that heaven is; for even in heaven our faculties shall be finite. Heaven is not a place that was created; for all place that was created shall be dissolved. God did not plant a paradise for himself and remove to that as he planted a paradise for Adam and removed him to that; but God is still where he was before the world was made. And in that place where there are more suns than there are stars in the firmament, for all the saints are suns, and more light in another sun, the sun of righteousness, the sun of glory, the Son of God, than

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in all them in that illustration, that emanation, that effusion of beams of glory, which began not to shine 6,000 years ago, but 6,000 millions of millions ago, had been 6,000 millions of millions before that, in those eternal, in those uncreated heavens, shall we see God.

This is our sphere and that which we are fain to call our place; and then our medium, our way to see him is *patefactio sui*, God's laying himself open, his manifestation, his revelation, his evisceration, and embowelling of himself to us there. Doth God never afford this patefaction, this manifestation of himself in his essence, to any in this life? We cannot answer yea, nor no, without offending a great part in the School,⁸ so many affirm, so many deny that God hath been seen in his essence in this life. There are those that say that it is *ferè defide*, little less than an article of faith that it hath been done; and Aquinas denies it so absolutely as that his followers interpret him *de absoluta potentia*, that God by his absolute power cannot make a man a mortal man and under the definition of a mortal man capable of seeing his essence; as we may truly say that God cannot make a beast remaining in that nature capable of grace or glory. St. Augustine speaking of discourses that passed between his mother and him not long before her death, says, *Perambulavimus cuncta mortalia et ipsum cœlum*, we talked ourselves above this earth and above all the heavens; *venimus in mentes nostras et transcendimus eas*, we came to the consideration of our own minds and our own souls, and we got above our own souls; that is, to the consideration of that place where our souls should be forever; and we could consider God then; but then we could not see God in his essence. As it may be fairly argued that Christ suffered not the very torments of very hell, because it is essential to the torments of hell to be eternal, they were not torments of hell if they received an end; so it is fairly argued too that neither Adam in his ecstasy in paradise nor Moses in his conversation in the mount nor the other apostles in the transfiguration of Christ nor St. Paul in his rapture to the third heavens saw the essence of God, because he that is admitted to that sight of God can never look off nor lose that sight again. Only in heaven shall God proceed to this patefaction, this manifestation, this revelation of himself; and that by the light of glory.

The light of glory is such a light as that our Schoolmen dare not say confidently that every beam of it is

⁸ The Scholiasts made the experience of ecstasy an article of faith; see preceding note.

not all of it. When some of them say that some souls see some things in God and others, others, because all have not the same measure of the light of glory, the rest cry down that opinion and say that as the essence of God is indivisible and he that sees any of it sees all of it, so is the light of glory communicated entirely to every blessed soul. God made light first, and three days after that light became a sun, a more glorious light. God gave me the light of nature when I quickened in my mother's womb by receiving a reasonable soul; and God gave me the light of faith when I quickened in my second mother's womb, the church, by receiving my baptism; but in my third day, when my mortality shall put on immortality, he shall give me the light of glory by which I shall see himself. To this light of glory the light of honor is but a glow-worm; and majesty itself but a twilight; the cherubims and seraphims are but candles; and the Gospel itself, which the apostle calls the glorious Gospel, but a star of the least magnitude. And if I cannot tell what to call this light by which I shall see it, what shall I call that which I shall see by it, the essence of God himself! And yet there is something else than this sight of God intended in that which remains; I shall not only see God face to face, but I shall know him—which, as you have seen all the way, is above sight—and know him even as also I am known.

In this consideration God alone is all; in all the former there was a place and a means and a light; here, for this perfect knowledge of God, God is all those. "Then," says the apostle, "God shall be all in all." *Hic agit omnia in omnibus*, says St. Jerome; here God does all in all; but here he does all by instruments; even in the infusing of faith he works by the ministry of the Gospel. But there he shall be all in all, do all in all immediately by himself; for Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father. His kingdom is the administration of his church by his ordinances in the church. At the resurrection there shall be an end of that kingdom; no more church; no more working upon men by preaching, but God himself shall be all in all. *Ministri quasi larvæ dei*, says Luther. It may be somewhat too familiarly, too vulgarly said, but usefully; the ministry of the Gospel is but as God's vizard; for by such a liberty the apostle here calls it *cenigma*, a riddle, or, as Luther says too, God's picture; but in the resurrection God shall put off that vizard and turn away that picture and show his own face. Therefore is it said that "in heaven there is no temple, but God himself is the temple"; God is service and music and psalm

and sermon and sacrament and all. *Erit vita de verbo sine verbo*; we shall live upon the word, and hear never a word; live upon him who, being the word, was made flesh, the eternal Son of God. *Hic non est omnia in omnibus, sed pars in singulis*; here God is not all in all; where he is at all in any man that man is well; in *Solomone sapientia*, says that father;⁹ it was well with Solomon because God was wisdom with him and patience in Job and faith in Peter and zeal in Paul; but there was something in all these which God was not. But in heaven he shall be so all in all *ut singuli sanctorum omnes virtutes habeant*, that every soul shall have every perfection in itself; and the perfection of these perfections shall be that their sight shall be face to face and their knowledge as they are known.

Since St. Augustine calls it a debt, a double debt, a debt because she asked it, a debt because he promised it, to give, even a woman, Paulina, satisfaction in that high point and mystery, how we should see God face to face in heaven, it cannot be unfit in this congregation to ask and answer some short questions concerning that. Is it always a declaration of favor when God shows his face? No. "I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood and cut him off." But when there is light joined with it, it is a declaration of favor; this was the blessing that God taught Moses for Aaron to bless the people with, "The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious to thee." And there we shall see him face to face by the light of his countenance, which is the light of glory. What shall we see by seeing him so, face to face? Not to enlarge ourselves into Gregory's wild speculation, *Qui videt videntem omnia omnia videt*, because we shall see him that sees all things we shall see all things in him (for then we should see the thoughts of men), rest we in the testimony of a safer witness, a council, *In speculo divinitatis quicquid eorum intersit iilucescet*; in that glass we shall see whatsoever we can be the better for seeing. First, all things that they believed here they shall see there; and therefore, *discamus in terris quorum scientia nobiscum perseveret in ccelis*, let us meditate upon no other things on earth than we would be glad to think on in heaven; and this consideration would put many frivolous and many fond thoughts out of our mind, if men and women would love another but so as that love might last in heaven.

This then we shall get concerning ourselves by seeing God face to face; but what concerning God? Nothing but the sight of the humanity of Christ, which
9 St. Jerome.

only is visible to the eye. So Theodoret, so some others have thought; but that answers not the *sicut est*; and we know we shall see God—not only the body of Christ—as he is in his essence. Why? Did all that are said to have seen God face to face see his essence? No. In earth God assumed some material things to appear in and is said to have been face to face when he was seen in those assumed forms. But in heaven there is no material thing to be assumed, and if God be seen face to face there, he is seen in his essence. St. Augustine sums it up fully upon those words, *in lumine tuo*, "in thy light we shall see light," *te scilicet in te*, we shall see thee in thee; that is, says he, face to face.

And then what is it to know him as we are known? First, is that it which is intended here that we shall know God so as we are known? It is not expressed in the text so. It is only that we shall know so; not that we shall know God so. But the frame, and context of the place, hath drawn that unanimous exposition from all, that it is meant of our knowledge of God then. A comprehensive knowledge of God it cannot be; to comprehend is to know a thing as well as that thing can be known; and we can never know God so but that he will know himself better. Our knowledge cannot be so dilated, nor God condensed and contracted so as that we can know him that way, comprehensively. It cannot be such a knowledge of God as God hath of himself, nor as God hath of us; for God comprehends us and all this world and all the worlds that he could have made and himself. But it is *nota similitudinis, non cequalitatis*; as God knows me, so I shall know God; but I shall not know God so as God knows me. It is not *quantum* but *sicut*; not as much but as truly; as the fire does as truly shine as the sun shines, though it shine not out so far nor to so many purposes. So then I shall know God so as that there shall be nothing in me to hinder me from knowing God; which cannot be said of the nature of man, though regenerate, upon earth, no, nor of the nature of an angel in heaven left to itself, till both have received a super-illustration from the light of glory.

And so it shall be a knowledge so like his knowledge as it shall produce a love like his love, and we shall love him as he loves us. For as St. Chrysostom and the rest of the fathers whom CECumenius hath compacted interpret it, *Cognoscam practice, id est, accurrendo*, I shall know him, that is, embrace him, adhere to him. *Qualis sine fine festivas!* what a holiday this shall be which no working day shall ever follow! By knowing and loving the unchangeable, the immutable God, *mutabimur in*

immutabilitatem, we shall be changed into an unchangeableness, says that father¹⁰ that never said anything but extraordinarily. He says more, *dei prcesentia si in inferno appareret*, if God could be seen and known in hell, hell in an instant would be heaven.

How many heavens are there in heaven? how is heaven multiplied to every soul in heaven where infinite other happinesses are crowned with this, this sight and this knowledge of God there? And how shall all those heavens be renewed to us every day, *qui non mirabimur hodie*, that shall be as glad to see and to know God millions of ages after every day's seeing and knowing as the first hour of looking upon his face. And as this seeing, and this knowing of God crowns all other joys and glories even in heaven, so this very crown is crowned; there grows from this a higher glory, which is, *participes erimus diviner nature?*, words of which Luther says that both testaments afford none equal to

10 St. Augustine; Donne holds him highest in esteem among all the church fathers, and he quotes him the most frequently of all.

them, that we shall be made partakers of the divine nature; immortal as the Father, righteous as the Son, and full of all comfort as the Holy Ghost.

Let me dismiss you with an easy request of St. Augustine, *Fieri non potest ut seipsum non diligit qui deum diligit*; that man does not love God that loves not himself; do but love yourselves; *immo solus se diligere novit qui deum diligit*, only that man that loves God hath the art to love himself; do but love yourselves; for if he love God, he would live eternally with him, and if he desire that and endeavor it earnestly, he does truly love himself and not otherwise. And he loves himself who, by seeing God in the theater of the world and in the glass of the creature by the light of reason and knowing God in the academy of the church by the ordinances thereof through the light of faith, endeavors to see God in heaven by the manifestation of himself through the light of glory and to know God himself, in himself, and by himself as he is all in all, contemplatively, by knowing as he is known and practically, by loving as he is loved.