

Because Words Matter: Bowels In The Bible

Robert Hawker | Added: Apr 13, 2019 | Category: Theology

I should not have thought it necessary to have offered a single observation on this word, considered in the general acceptance of it, for every one cannot but know its obvious meaning. But it may be proper, notwithstanding, to observe, that as in its literal sense, the bowels mean the entrails, so when used figuratively, it refers to the heart and the affections. Hence, it is said of the patriarch Joseph, that at beholding his brother, "his bowels did yearn upon him" (Genesis 43:30). And the Lord himself is represented as expressing His tenderness for Ephraim under the same similitude; "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore, my bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:20).

But when the word is spoken in reference to the person of Christ in His human nature, here it is not figuratively used, but literally; and the meaning of it is uncommonly blessed and sweet. If the reader will turn to Psalm 40:8, he will find Jesus thus speaking by the Spirit of prophecy, "I delight to do thy will, O my God! yea, thy law is within my heart." The margin of the Bible renders it, within my bowels, meaning, that so perfectly holy and pure was the human nature of Christ, that the law of His Father was incorporated in His very being; an inwrought holiness mixed up and becoming His person and His existence. What a precious blessed view doth it afford of the Lord Jesus!

And what I beg the reader also particularly to remark, this purity, this holiness of the Lord Jesus in our nature, is, to all intents and purposes, that holiness in which JEHOVAH beholds His church in Jesus. This, I believe, is not so generally understood nor considered by the faithful as it ought; but it is what the Scriptures of God, in every part, warrant. Jesus becoming our Surety is expressly said to have been made both sin and a curse for His redeemed, that "they might be made the righteousness God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). And what a blessedness is there contained in this one view of the completeness of the church in Jesus? So that, in the very moment that the child of God feels the workings of corruption within him, and is groaning under a body of sin and death, which he carries about with him, though he sees nothing in himself but sin and imperfection, yea, sometimes, as it appears to him, growing imperfections, yet looking to the Lord Jesus as his Surety, and considering

the Redeemer's holiness, and not anything in himself, as the standard of justification, here he rests his well-founded hope. This was blessedly set forth by the Holy Ghost: (Isaiah 45:24) "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed."

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