

OF UNION WITH CHRIST.

1 CORINTHIANS xii. 13.—*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

THE apostle in the preceding verse having asserted, that Christ mystical, *i. e.* Christ and believers, are one, making but one mystical body, in the words of the text does at once explain and confirm the same from the two sacraments of the New Testament, baptism, and the Lord's supper.

1. From the sacrament of baptism, where he shews us the blessed union made. And here consider,

1st. The parties united : on the one hand, *we all* ; viz. who believe in Christ, as distinguished from unbelievers. On the other hand, Jesus Christ, whom he had just before mentioned, and who is here understood as implied in the one body, whereof he is the head, or principal part.

2dly, The uniting or joining of the parties, which is expressed by being *baptized into one body*, the sacramental sign being put for the thing signified : as if he had said, we are united into one body with Christ, which is signified and sealed by our baptism.

3dly, The efficient cause of the union, or the party uniting us to Christ, *one Spirit*, the one Spirit of Christ. It is by him we are baptized, and are joined to Christ. He casts the indissoluble knot ; as Christ brings us to the Father, the Holy Spirit brings us to Christ, by faith which he works in us, and makes the marriage-tie between the King of saints and the daughter of Zion. This Spirit must needs be the infinite Spirit of God, since it is but one Spirit that knits all, not only as the author, but the bond of the union.

4thly, The result of this union, *one body*. Hence it comes to pass, that Christ and all believers are one mystical body ; they are all joined to Christ and among themselves, as the head and members.

5thly, The character of the parties whom the Spirit unites to Christ. He confines not himself to any one party of sinners in the world, but takes them indifferently out of all sorts, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be bond or free men. He goes to unbelieving Jews that had rejected Christ for some time, and to unbelieving Gentiles that had not heard of him. And he unites them to Christ by working faith in them ; for he deals with them that have reason, not as with stocks, knitting them without any action of their own, but as rational creatures, apprehending them, and working faith in them, whereby they apprehend Christ.

2. From the sacrament of the Lord's supper, where he shews us the blessed fruit of this union, *and have been all made to drink into one Spirit*. Here consider,

1st. The common benefit, the purchase of Christ's redemption; *one Spirit*, the leading comprehensive purchase of Christ's death. This is that Spirit poured out on Christ without measure, to be communicated for life, and supplies of life, to all that come to him.

2dly, The participation of that benefit, which is expressed by being *made to drink into one Spirit*, the sacramental sign for the thing signified: As if he had said, We all partake of Christ's Spirit more and more to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, which is as necessary to us as drink to strengthen our bodies, which is signified and sealed by the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

3dly, The parties made partakers thereof, *we all*, who are united to Christ. As life goes before eating or drinking, so the union with Christ goes before communion in and partaking of the benefits of his redemption; and the former is the cause of the latter.

Hence we may see, That 'the Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.'

The great subject to be handled here, is the union betwixt Christ and believers. And here let us consider,

I. How Christ's redemption is applied to a sinner.

II. Shew that there is a real union betwixt Christ and believers.

III. What is that union.

IV. What are the bonds of it.

V. Who is the author and efficient cause of it.

VI. The properties of it.

VII. Apply.

1. Let us consider how Christ's redemption is applied to a sinner. It is done by way of uniting the sinner to Christ, as a plaister is applied to a sore, by laying the one upon the other. A sinner is interested in, and put in possession of Christ's redemption through union with him, 1 Cor. i. 30. 'Of him are ye in Christ Jesus.' Men must not think to stand afar from Christ, and partake of the benefits of his death, upon their praying to him for it, as the beggar on his crying gets of the rich man's money thrown to him; which I observe is the soul ruining notion many have of this matter. But he must unite with Christ, and so partake of the redemption purchased by Christ, as the poor widow drowned in debt, by marrying the rich man, is interested in his substance. It is with Christ himself that all saving benefits are given, Rom. viii. 32; and without him none such are received. Believe it, Sirs, that as Adam's sin could never

have hurt you, unless ye had been in him, so Christ's redemption shall never savingly profit you, unless ye be in him, Eph. i. 7. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood.' I shall next shew,

II. That there is a real union betwixt Christ and believers. Some, to advance their legal scheme of doctrine, acknowledge no other union but a relative one betwixt Christ and believers, such as may be betwixt persons and things wholly separated. But that there is a real, true, and proper union betwixt Christ and believers, is evident if ye consider,

1. The several equivalent terms by which this union is expressed in scripture. Christ is said to be in believers, Col. i. 27. Rom. viii. 10. and they in him, 1 Cor. i. 30. He is said to dwell in them, and they in him, John vi. 56. They are said to abide in one another, John xv. 4. Believers have put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. They are so joined, or agglutinated, as to be one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. To expound these of a mere relative union, such as is betwixt a king and his subjects, a master and his servants, is but to wrest scripture, and these phrases applied to such relatives would be extremely harsh, though they never so much agreed in judgment and affection.

2. The several real and proper unions which it is resembled to. It is resembled unto that betwixt the vine and the branches, John xv. 5. the head and the body, Eph. i. 22, 23. meat eaten and the eater, John vi. 56. yea, to that betwixt the Father and Christ, John xvii. 21. These are real proper unions, and so is this.

3. *Lastly*, If this union be not a true and real one, but a mere relative one, the sacrament of the supper is but a bare sign, and not a seal, exhibiting and applying Christ to believers. For without this real union, the feeding on Christ's body and blood truly and really in the sacrament cannot be; which yet is the doctrine of the scriptures, and of our Larger Catechisms, proved from the words of institution, 'Take, eat, this is my body.' For if there be a true and real feeding, there must be a true and real union, as there is betwixt the food and our bodies into which it is incorporated.

III. I proceed to shew what is that union that takes place betwixt Christ and believers. There are three mysterious unions in our religion. (1.) The substantial union of the three persons in one Godhead. (2.) The personal union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ. (3.) The mystical union betwixt Christ and believers, which is that wherein Christ and believers, are so joined, that they are one Spirit, and one mystical body, 1 Cor. vi. 17. and xii. 13.

In this union the whole man is united to a whole Christ. The believing soul is united to him, Eph. iii. 17. His body also is

united to him, 1 Cor. vi. 19. 1 Thess. iv. 14. They are united to him in his divine nature, Col. i. 27. and in his human nature, Eph. v. 30. and so through the Mediator unto God, 2. Cor. vi. 16.

IV. I go on to shew what are the bonds of this union, whereby Christ and believers become one. All corporal union is made by contact; but Christ is in heaven, and we on earth, and so we can have no such union with him; and if we had, what would it profit? John vi. 63. But this union is spiritual, 1 Cor. vi. 17. and so are the bonds of it. And they are two.

1. The Spirit on Christ's part, whereby he apprehendeth, taketh and keepeth hold of us, 1 John iii. ult. The same infinite Spirit that dwells in Christ, he communicates to his elect in their effectual calling, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. So that one Spirit living and acting in both, in Christ as the head, and in believers as the members, they truly become one by that means. And the distance betwixt Christ and believers, as great as is betwixt heaven and earth, cannot hinder the joining of our souls and bodies to his, since the Spirit is an infinite Spirit, everywhere present. And seeing the same Spirit is in both, they are thereby made really one, notwithstanding the distance; even as if there were a man standing on the earth whose head should reach the stars; yet since one soul animates his head and feet, notwithstanding the distance betwixt them, (as well as those of the lowest dwarf), they do still make but one body. And as in the case of a tree-leg fixed to the body, and touching upon it, it is not for all that a part of the body, because it is not animated by the soul; so, on the other hand, where one spirit is in two, there is a real union, although these two do not touch one another, as in the case of Ezekiel's wheels, Ezek. i. 21. All which shews that there is nothing contrary to reason in this union.

2. Faith on the believer's part, Eph. iii. 17. 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Thereby the believer apprehends, takes, and keeps hold of Christ. It is by that we receive Christ, John i. 12. come unto him, John vi. 35. and feed on him, ver. 56. This faith is that true one, whereby a sinner heartily receives and rests on Christ for all his salvation. And no distance can hinder it to ascend unto the Mediator.

Now, since Christ cannot be seen with our eyes, nor touched with our hands, while he is in heaven and we are on earth, and that he is not known to us but by his word of the gospel, what other way can we unite with him, but believing on this unseen Christ? So that faith is the only mean on our part. And its fitness for this work appears, if ye consider,

(1.) That faith is a self-emptying and creature-emptying grace,

throwing off and putting away all those things that might keep the soul at a distance from Christ, Phil. iii. 8. And,

(2.) It is as much fitted to receive an unseen Christ and salvation, which appears to us only in the word, as the hand to receive what can be received into it. For in the word Christ offers himself and all his salvation to us, which we cannot lay hold of by any bodily action whatsoever; but faith crediting the testimony, consenting to, and resting on the offered Christ, with his salvation, does actually get the same, as sure as there is truth in the word of the gospel.

V. The next head is to shew who is the author and efficient cause of this union. The party that makes this blessed union is the Holy Spirit of Christ, and none other, as the text tells us. As our Lord Jesus Christ took his own human nature into personal union with him, in the womb of the virgin Mary, by the agency of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her, Luke i. 35. so he takes sinners into mystical union with him, by the agency of this same Spirit. We may take it up thus :

1. The Spirit of Christ comes in the word, and enters into the heart of the elect sinner dead in sin. The word is the great vehicle of divine appointment, wherein the Spirit is given, Gal. iii. 2. And in that he comes and makes room for himself, and takes it up, 1 Thess. i. 5. John vi. 63. And the Spirit is a Spirit of life, a Spirit of faith, and one with Christ, as he is one of the three persons in the one Godhead. So that when he is come into the soul, it is quickened, changed, regenerated, and really united to Christ passively, in so far as the Spirit is Christ's Spirit.

2. That quickening Spirit now entered into the elect soul works faith in it; and thus only true faith is wrought, not from our natural powers, Eph. ii. 8. Col. ii. 12. Hereby the soul lays hold on Christ, and actually unites with him. Being quickened and actuated by the Spirit, it acts in believing.

The whole may be illustrated by the case of Lazarus rising from the dead. With the voice of Christ, 'Lazarus come forth,' his soul re-entered into his body, so he was alive again; and being alive and quickened, he moved and came forth unto Christ. So the dead soul, being quickened by the Spirit coming into it, moves and comes into Christ. And thus ye may see,

That there is a twofold receiving of Christ. (1.) A passive receiving of him, wherein Christ comes in by his Spirit into the dead soul, quickening it, and joins himself unto that soul. Here the soul does nothing, but is inhabited by Christ, through the Spirit, which disposeth the sinner to believe. And this is the case of gracious

infants, who are truly united to Christ, though because of their infancy they cannot act faith. (2.) An active receiving of him, when the soul having faith wrought in it by the Spirit actually believes, and receives Christ, putting forth the hand of the soul to embrace him, and so actively joins itself unto the Lord.

VI. I proceed to show the properties of this union. I have anticipated some of these, under other heads already, and shown you that it is,

1. A true, real, and proper union, not a mere relative one.

2. A spiritual union, 1 Cor. vi. 17. 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.' Though it is an union of bodies as well as of spirits, yet the union is not corporal, for the bodies do not touch one another; but spiritual, being joined by spiritual bands. I add, that it is,

3. A mysterious union. The apostle calls it a 'great mystery,' Eph. v. 32; 'a glorious mystery,' Col. i. 27.—And therefore, by the by, it is not a mere relative union, but a true and real one; for a relative union betwixt Christ and believers, is no mystery, but a plain truth easily acknowledged by all, and perceived. But there is need of a true, lively, humble faith to believe this, which is so far above the reach of our natural capacities, and which natural reason is so ready to object against; but faith will believe it over all these impediments.

4. A most close and intimate union. They are joined as those things that are glued together, 1 Cor. vi. 17. The believer has Christ in him, and he is in Christ; and they are united as the meat with the body, which is incorporated into it, John vi. 56. See Eph. v. 30.

5. An indissoluble union. Once in Christ, ever in him, John x. 28, 29. What man will lose a member of his body, if he can help it? Who then can imagine that Christ will lose a member of his? The apostle bids a defiance to all things for separating the saints from the love of Christ, and consequently from union with him, that is the ground of the love of complacency, Rom. viii. 35, &c. This union abides uninterrupted by death: for sleeping saints sleep in Christ, while in the grave, 1 Thess. iv. 14.

6. *Lastly*, It is the leading, comprehensive, fundamental privilege of believers, 1 Cor. iii. 23. 'Ye are Christ's.' All their other privileges are derived from and grafted upon this, their justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. All these grow on this root; and where that is wanting, none of these can be. All acceptable obedience comes from the soul's union with Christ, John xv. 4. Hence faith is the principal grace, as uniting us to Christ.

I proceed now to the application of this subject. I shall press out the juice of this pomegranate unto you in uses of information, trial, and exhortation.

USE I. Of information. It informs us,

1. Concerning the saints in general, that they are highly dignified beyond all the rest of the world. They are all members of Christ, of the blood royal of heaven, even those of them that some would disdain to rub shoulders with, Eph. v. 30. And thus we have these lessons.

(1.) Wo to those that maltreat, oppress, or persecute any of the saints; for what they do against them, they do against Christ, as doing it to the members of Christ's body, Acts ix. 4. And he will resent it, and plead the cause as his own cause, accurately and exactly, so as to make men accountable for omissions of duty to them, far more for commissions of evil against them, Matth. xxv. 42—45. So that the Saints have good reason to lay aside all thoughts of revenge; for their Redeemer is mighty.

(2.) They are the best bestowed good turns that are done to the godly for Christ's sake. For as they are done to them, they are done to Christ, since they are one with him. And our Lord will take it so, and graciously reward it, Mat. xv. 35—40. Therefore the apostle gives that exhortation, Gal. vi. 10. 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' Have ye any love to Christ? love is communicative; ye cannot reach the Head, but the members ye have always with you. Say not then ye want occasion to testify your love to him. It is the best seed ye can sow and will bring the most plentiful harvest.

(3.) Believers are members one of another, Eph. iv. 25.—There is a true and real sibness betwixt all the godly, as there is betwixt the legs and arms of one body, or one leg and another. For since they are all united to Christ, it necessarily follows that they are all united among themselves, 1 Cor. xii. 12. And therefore they are called 'one bread,' having an union and communion among themselves, sealed by the sacrament. O! if this great truth were believed, what love, what sympathy, what care for one another's temporal and spiritual welfare would there be among the godly! There would not be such strangeness, alienation of affections, nor such a Cain like unconcernedness about one another among them.

(4.) It is a thankless office to rend and divide the church of Christ, to tear Christ's seamless coat. Many make no bones of separating from, but place religion in, casting off, communion with those, who, their consciences must acknowledge, do yet remain

united to Christ. They say, they can have no communion with them without sin. I grant, that if one leg go into a mire and be defiled, the other ought not to follow, nor one saint communicate with another in sin; ay, but no man in his wits would cut off either of the legs in that case. But the body of Christ is not so tenderly handled, though we owe more tenderness to it than to our natural bodies. Nay, but let men abhor communion with such as much as they will, they shall either have the most close and intimate communion with them, or they shall have none with Christ, forasmuch as there are not two Christ's to head the separate bodies; and if they be both united to one Christ, they have the most intimate union and communion one with another.

2. It informs us concerning some great and weighty principles of our holy religion, clearly deducible from this grand point.

(1.) The saints shall persevere in grace, and can never totally nor finally fall away from it. For there is an indissoluble union betwixt Christ and them. This secures the believer's life, that it can never be lost, Col. iii. 3. The Spirit, the bond of this union, never leaves his habitation, John xiv. 16. and iv. 14. This keeps a seed always in him for God, 1 John iii. 9. And Christ will lose none of his members, John xvii. 12. It is true, if the firmness of this union depended entirely on the hold the sinner has of Christ by faith, it might he broke; but it depends on the hold that Christ has of the sinner by his Spirit, as the nurse has of the babe in her arms.

(2.) Faith in Christ is the great comprehensive gospel-duty. Many have mean thoughts of faith, in comparison of other duties. But the scripture gives it the preference, John vi. 29. 1 John iii. 23. When we bid you believe, we bid you get all privileges, and do all duties; for believing is the way to both, in so far as it unites the soul to Christ, which is the fundamental privilege of the saints. If ye believe, ye do all in effect, as he who takes hold of the first link of a chain, has hold of all the links. If ye believe not, ye do nothing; for without faith, ye are without Christ, and without Christ ye can do nothing, John xv. 5. compare Heb. xi. 6.

(3.) There is a solid rational ground for the doctrine of our justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. Let profane men deride it as a putative or imaginary righteousness and justification, to make way for their own works; and let the corrupters of the Protestant doctrine set up faith, repentance, and new obedience, as our evangelical righteousness, upon which we are justified, as the fulfilling of the gospel-law; we need no other righteousness for justification but Christ's. For a believer is by faith united to Christ. Having this union with him, we have a communion with him in his

righteousness, which is ours, since we are one with him, and being ours, must be imputed to us, or reckoned ours on the most solid ground. Christ is the believer's Surety by his own voluntary act, the debtor's consent by faith, the Judge's approbation in the word. What then is more rational than that this righteousness be imputed to the believer, and he thereupon justified?

(4.) The way to obtain true repentance and sanctification, is to believe. For these are the benefits of Christ's redemption, Acts v. 31. Matth. i. 21. and these are applied by the Spirit working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. How can one think to repent truly, or to be holy, when he is not united to Christ, John xv. 5. or to be united without faith? As soon shall the falling dew pierce through the rock, as one shall be able to do any of these out of Christ, whom the Father has constituted the head of influences, and on whom all our fruitfulness depends.

(5.) *Lastly*, The bodies of believers shall have a glorious resurrection, Rom. viii. 11. There is an union betwixt Christ and the bodies of believers, which death does not break off, 1 Thess. iv. 14. and therefore they shall not always lie in the dust; nor will Christ lose any of his members. The Lord says to a dying saint as to Jacob, Gen. xlv. 3, 4. 'I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt [the grave]—I will go down with thee into Egypt [the grave]; and I will also surely bring thee up again.'

3. This doctrine informs us concerning the happiness of the saints. To be united with Christ is the foundation of all happiness, and the richest privileges.

(1.) Christ is theirs, Cant. ii. 16. 'My Beloved is mine,' says the spouse. They have an interest in his person. He is their Lord, their Elder Brother, their Husband, yea, their Head. Whatsoever he is, or is in him, they may reckon upon it as theirs, for to make them happy. The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him, and so God is their God and their Father, John xx. 17. His mercy is theirs to pity them, his power to protect them, his all-seeing eye to direct them, &c. Thus they have a fountain to go to that never runs dry, a treasure that is never exhausted, a table that will never be drawn, &c.

(2.) What Christ has is theirs, and he is the heir of all things, so all is theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. He has all that has him to whom all things belong. Union infers a communion betwixt Christ and believers. His active and passive obedience is theirs for their justification, as if they had done it themselves. His Spirit, word, and providences, are theirs for their sanctification. His power in hea-

ven is theirs for their glorification. In a word, his broad covenant, with all the precious promises in it, is theirs to make them happy here and hereafter, 2 Pet. i. 4.

(3.) They are perfectly safe from the wrath of God, Rom. viii. 1. 'There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' Their sins are still very displeasing in the sight of God, and deserve condemnation as well as those of others. But being in Christ, they are beyond the reach of the curse of the law; they are got into the city of refuge, where the avenger of blood cannot attack them. They are under the mild government of the covenant of grace, which threatens fatherly anger and temporal chastisements in case of transgression, but no more, Psal. lxxxix. 30.—33.

(4.) The Lord takes pleasure in and accepts their persons, graces and duties, though attended with manifold imperfections. Their persons are accepted, though a body of death hangs about them, Eph. i. 6. Their graces, though there is much dross in them, yet because the image of Christ is on them, they are accepted, Cant. v. 1. Their duties, though far from the perfection which the law requires, are accepted, Cant. ii. 14. Their will is accepted for the deed, and their grief for the want of will, for the will itself, 2 Cor. viii. 12.

(5.) All their wants lie upon Christ, Col. ii. 10. As the union gives them a communion with him in what is his, so he has a communion with them in what is theirs; so that Christ is to answer for all their debt, poverty, and wants, as he that marries the widow in debt, Psal. lv. 22. So they look and may look to him for all, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

USE II. Ye may try by this, whether the Spirit has applied to you the redemption purchased by Christ. If so be, then ye are united to Christ. If men only apply that redemption to themselves, it will be found presumption, and not faith, and no union with Christ; and the plaister thus applied will not stick. But where the right application is made, there the sinner is united to Jesus Christ. Ye may try whether ye be united to Christ or not by these marks. The general *Mark* is, If ye be disjoined from what ye were formerly knit to, and carried to Christ for all. It is with the soul united to Christ as with an ingrafted branch, which is broken from off the tree it naturally grew on, and is joined to another, from which it draws all the sap. If ye be united to Christ, ye are disjoined and broken off from the natural stock, and ingrafted into Christ. Ye may take up this in these three things.

1. Ye have given up with the law as a covenant of works, and betaken yourselves wholly to the grace of Christ in the second co-

venant. That is to be 'dead to the law, *and* married to Christ,' Rom. vii. 4. Ye are broken off from all your natural confidences before the Lord, founded on anything whatsoever that is not Christ or in Christ, and lay your whole confidence before the Lord on him. So that he is your all in point of confidence before the throne, Phil. iii. 8. This is a sure evidence, Phil. iii. 3; Matth. v. 3. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit;' where it is observable, that this leads the van, and is to be carried through all the rest of the duties and graces following. This is the very nature of faith as it unites to Christ.

2. Your hearts are separated and disjoined from sin, and labouring to take up their everlasting rest in Christ, as the centre of your desires, Psalm cxix. 128. and lxxiii. 25. Men's desires naturally go out after the world and their lusts, and if they have any desires after Christ, it is but a desire of him together with their lusts. But grace turns the heart against these, and kindles desires of Christ, instead of lusts, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. This is a sure evidence, Matth. v. 6. It is true, while here the saints are not separated from sin in action, Psal. lxxv. 3. But in affection they are, Rom. vii. 24. and in that respect Christ has the crown, and lusts the cross, Gal. v. 24. And thus God judges of them, 2 Cor. viii. 12. 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.'

3. Ye are carried out of yourselves into Jesus Christ, Matth. xvi. 24. To a natural man his sweet self is his all; but grace turns self off the throne, and sets up Christ in its stead. While the man is separated from Christ, he has separate interests from him: but when united to Christ, these are all swallowed up in Christ's interest, as the rivers, when they go into the sea, have no more their separate channels. Ye know the difference betwixt a married and an unmarried woman. The unmarried woman lives upon her own, and pleases herself; the married lives on her husband's, and pleases him. Such is the difference betwixt one separated from, and one united to Christ, Psal. xlv. 10.

(1.) The soul in a state of separation from Christ lives on its own, acts from itself as the highest principle, stands on its own legs, as it were, and takes its own weight to bear (Prov. xxviii. 26.) in point of sanctification. It is like that nominal marriage, Isa. iv. 1. 'And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.' And therefore such a one is called 'sensual, having not the spirit,' Jude, ver. 19. one that has no higher principle than his own soul.

The soul united to Christ lives on his, or by him, John vi. 57. Being sensible of its utter impotency for good, it flees to him, his Spirit and grace, and relies on him for strength, Jer. xxxi. 18. This is the life of faith. The one, like Goliath, goes forth in confidence of his strength, sword, and spear; the other, like the stripling David, goes forth in the name of the Lord. This is a sure evidence, Phil. iii. 3; Cant. viii. 5.

(2.) The man in a state of separation lives for himself, as his chief end, in point of sanctification too, Hos. x. 1. In what good he does, his great end is to serve and please himself, not to serve and please the Lord. And it can be no otherwise with the natural man; for as the mouth of a river can be no higher than its spring, so he that acts from himself can never but act for self. And thus God regards not their service.

But the man united to Christ lives to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 7, 8, Phil. i. 21. The gracious soul, like the married woman, cares how to please her husband, would fain be holy, and endeavours to be so, that she may be like him. The soul united to Christ is not barren of good works, John xv. 5; but brings them forth to him, Rom. vii. 4; the great end of their duties being not to content themselves, but to walk before him in all well-pleasing. This also is a sure evidence, Phil. i. 21. 'To me to live is Christ.'

USE ult. Of exhortation. O be exhorted,

1. To be deeply concerned for union with Christ. O, sinner, take no rest till thou be in him. Seek to unite with him, and live no longer in a state of separation from him. To press this, consider,

Mot. 1. Thou may be doing, but thou canst do nothing to purpose, while not united to Christ, John xv. 5. None of thy duties will be accepted of God, however great they be in thy own eyes, or those of others, Eph. i. 6. An ox offered on the altar of Bethel would have been rejected, when two young doves were accepted on the altar of Jerusalem. They want the inworking of Christ's Spirit, James v. 16. the incense of Christ's intercession, and therefore cannot be accepted of the Father.

Mot. 2. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, the redemption purchased by Christ, till thou be united with him, Eph. ii. 12. It is not thine till it be applied to thee; and it is not applied but in the way of union with him. The ark, doubtless, could have saved more than it did; but what availed it to many that there was an ark, since they were not in it? Though there be a remedy that would cure thee, what does it avail thee, while it is not applied to thee?

Mot. 3. Miserable and dangerous beyond expression is thy state

while thou art not united to Christ, Eph. ii. 12. Poor soul, thou art sitting in the region and shadow of death, in the suburbs of hell. The wrath of God is hovering over thy head, though thou perceivest it not, John iii. ult. 'He that believeth not,—the wrath of God abideth on him.' Thou art secure but far from safety. The deluge of wrath is at hand, but thou hast no ark. The avenger of blood is at thy heels, and thou art not got into the city of refuge; the destroying angel is coming through, and thy door-posts are not sprinkled with blood yet; and fire and brimstone are ready to be rained down upon thee, but thou hast no Zoar to flee to.

Mot. ult. Christ offers to unite with you, Rev. iii. 20. even with the worst and vilest of you all. He sends out his ambassadors to gain your consent to this union, and win your hearts. Behold the former of all things making suit to his own clay, Matth. xxii. 4. 'All things are ready; come unto the marriage.' Will ye slight and despise this union, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life?

2. Labour to get the Spirit, who casts the inviolable knot. If ye have not the Spirit of Christ, ye can be none of his.

3. *Lastly*, Believe. Christ and all his redemption are in your offer. Believe his word, embrace him in it, let your whole soul say amen to the blessed bargain. Consent to the gospel-offer, saying, Henceforth then he is mine, and I am his. Christ does not apprehend a soul by his Spirit, as a man takes a tree in his arms, but as one friend takes another, who mutually clasp one another. Do not delay this work; do not say, Ye dare not do it, since without it ye cannot be united to Christ.