

OF THE BENEFITS FLOWING FROM JUSTIFICATION, ADOPTION,
AND SANCTIFICATION.

ROM. v. 1, 2.—*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

THERE are three sorts of benefits belonging to the justified, adopted, and sanctified. (1.) Some in this life they partake of. (2.) Some at death. (3.) Some at the resurrection. As for those in this life, we are told what they are in that question, ‘What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification? *Ans.* Assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.’ These are divided into two sorts. (1.) Some that flow from the sense of our justification, &c. (2.) Some from the being of it. Of the former, the Catechism takes notice of three, viz. assurance, peace, joy. All which are held out in the text as benefits coming through justification. Here observe,

1. Justification as a spring of other benefits. It is a leading mercy, it brings many others along with it. In it guilt is removed; and that being removed, a stream of mercies flows from heaven into the soul.

2. The benefits flowing from it.

(1.) Peace with God, or towards God; i. e. not only reconciliation with God, the cause of the quarrel being taken away; but peace of conscience, peace within, when we look towards God, arising from the sense of our justification and reconciliation. But all this is owing to Christ, who brought us into the state of reconciliation, called *this grace wherein we stand*.

(2.) Assurance of eternal happiness: *Rejoice in hope of the glory of God*; i. e. in the glory of God we hope for. They are so sure of that happiness, that they rejoice in the view of it, as if they were actually carried into it. And *assurance of God’s love*, ver. 5.

(3.) Spiritual joy: *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God*; that is, We glory or joy in the Lord, upon this hope.

The text evidently affords this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. ‘Assurance, spiritual peace, and joy, are benefits flowing from a state of justification.’

I. OF ASSURANCE.

In speaking to the first, namely, assurance, I will shew,

I. The kinds of it.

II. That a child of God may have this assurance.

III. The nature of it, and how a saint comes to be assured.

IV. The fruits of it, whereby it may be discerned from presumption.

V. The necessity of it.

VI. Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew the kinds of assurance. They are two.

1. Objective assurance, whereby the special love of God to a saint, and his eternal salvation, are sure in themselves, 2 Tim. ii. 19. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.'—This is never wanting, whether the child of God know it or not. Though they raze foundations of hope at some times, yet God never razes his.

2. Subjective assurance, whereby a child of God is assured that God loves him with a special love, and that he shall certainly partake of eternal glory, Gal. ii. 20. 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me,' says Paul. This is not a wavering hope, or conjecture, but an infallible certainty. This is the assurance we treat of.

II. I shall shew that a child of God may have this assurance.

1. A believer may know that he has relative grace, that he is justified and therefore shall never come into condemnation, Rom. v. 1, &c. Though he cannot ascend to heaven, and at first read his name in the book of God's decrees; yet by comparing the book of God and the book of his own soul, he may know that he is called and elected, 2 Pet. i. 10. and therefore shall certainly be saved.

2. He may be assured that he has inherent grace, that he believes as sure as he breathes, 2 Tim. i. 12. that he has love to the Lord unfeigned, and can appeal to Omniscience on the head, John xxi. 15. as Peter did when he said, 'Thou who knowest all things, knowest that I love thee.' And believing that such are loved of God, and shall certainly persevere, for which he has the testimony of the word, he may be assured that he is the happy man.

3. It is the office of the Spirit of God to assure believers of this. He has given us the word for this end: He is given to lead his people into all truth, particularly to discover the grace of God to them, and in them, 1 Cor. ii. 12. to witness with their spirits to their adoption, Rom. viii. 16. to be a seal, which is properly to ensure an evidence, Eph. iv. 30. and an earnest, a part of the price and pledge of the whole, 2 Cor. v. 5.

Lastly, Many of the saints have attained it; as Job, chap. xix. 25. 'For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,' Psal. xxiii. ult. 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.' And others too, besides scripture-saints.

III. I shall shew the nature of this assurance, and how a saint comes to be assured. By what is said, ye may perceive that this is a work of the Spirit, in the hearts of the saints, without whose efficacy no man can attain it. We may take it up in these three things.

1. The Spirit shining on his own word, particularly the promises, in the Bible, the child of God firmly believes them, Heb. vi. 11, 12. The Lord has testified in his word, that such and such persons, for instance, that love him, Prov. viii. 17. are universal in obedience; are poor in spirit, Matt. v. 3. are beloved of him, and shall certainly be saved. The Spirit says in effect, by the light he gives the believer into the divine authority of that word, This is my word. And as such the child of God is firmly persuaded of the certainty of it, as if a voice from the throne of God would make these promises and declarations. This is the ground-work of assurance.

2. The Spirit shining on his own work of grace in the believer's heart, the believer discerns it, 1 Cor. ii. 12. The Spirit of God clears up to the man the truth of grace in him; lets him see that he, for instance, loves God, &c. and so says in effect, This is my work. Hence he is enabled to conclude assuredly, that the Lord loves him, he shall not be ashamed, and that the kingdom of God is his. This assurance is stronger or weaker according to the degree of light that shines upon the work of grace in the heart to discover it.

3. *Lastly*, The Spirit of the Lord sometimes gives a joint testimony with the spirits of the saints, to the truth of that conclusion, Rom. viii. 16. that they are the children of God. The testimony of the believer's own spirit is weak in itself, and Satan can find many ways to invalidate it; therefore the Spirit witnesses to them the truth of the conclusion, whereby they are raised to a full persuasion of it.

IV. I shall shew the fruit of this assurance, whereby it may be discerned from presumption.

1. It inflames the soul with love to the Lord. As one flame begets another, so the assurance of God's love to us will add new

vigour to our love to the Lord, 1 John iv. 19. Luke vii. 47. He sits in the warm sunshine, that cannot fail to melt the heart, who sits under evidence of the Lord's love.

2. It is humbling, Gal. ii. 20. None so vile in their own eyes as those who are lifted up in the manifestations of the Lord's love to them, Gen. xviii. 27. 2 Sam. vii. 18. 2 Cor. xii. 4 and 11 compared. Delusion puffs up, but true assurance humbles.

3. It makes one tender in heart and life, and is a most powerful motive to sanctification, 2 Cor. vii. 1. It is followed with great care to please God in all things, and watchfulness against every sin. While the empty traveller walks at random, fearing nothing, because he has nothing to lose, he that has precious things about him looks well to himself, Cant. iii. 5. One may be persuaded, that the confidence which makes not one tender in his duty to God and man, is presumption.

4. Establishment in the good ways of the Lord, 2 Pet. i. 10. Faith is the provisor of all other graces, it brings in oil into the lamp; and the more evidence it has, it can do its office the better. A doubting Christian will be a staggering and weak Christian; as the soldier who has little hope of the victory will readily be faint-hearted, while he that is assured is strengthened and established.

5. *Lastly*, It fills a man with contempt of the world, Gal. vi. 14. If ye gaze on the shining sun, for a while after ye will scarcely discern the beauty of the earth. And one's solacing himself in contemplation of heaven as his, will sink the value of the world with him.

V. I shall shew the necessity of assurance.

1. It is not necessary to the being of a Christian. One may have true faith, and yet want full assurance, Isa. l. 10. One may go to heaven in a mist, not knowing whither he is going. We read of some, Heb. ii. 15, 'who through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage.' Our salvation depends on our state, not our knowledge of it.

2. It is necessary to the well-being of a Christian, and therefore we are commanded to seek it, 2 Pet. i. 10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' There are none who can live so comfortably for themselves, as the assured Christian, and none are so useful for God as they. It fits a man either to live or die; while others are unfit to live, because of the weakness of grace in a throng of trials and temptations, and unfit to die for want of evidence of grace.

Hence it follows, that assurance may be lost; and they that sometimes have this light, may fall into darkness. And it is care-

less walking that puts it out, especially sinning against the light, whereby the Spirit is grieved, and withdraws his light, Eph. iv. 29, 30. But if it be lost that way, and darkness come on, it will readily be dreadful darkness; the higher they have been lifted up, the lower readily they are laid, Psal. li. 8.

Inf. 1. Unjustified and unsanctified persons can have no true assurance of the Lord's love to them. They may have a false confidence, a delusive hope of heaven; but no assurance, for that is peculiar to the justified.

Inf. 2. Doubts and fears are no friends to holiness of heart and life. It is little faith that breeds them in the hearts of the people of God, Matth. xiv. 31. And little faith will always make little holiness.

Inf. 3. Lastly, Christians may thank themselves for the uncomfortable lives they lead. What sovereignty may do, we know not: but surely it is sloth and unbelief that the want of assurance is ordinarily owing to. Stir up yourselves then to seek it. Be frequent in self-examination, cry to the Lord for the witness of his spirit. Believe the word, and be habitually tender in your walk, if ever ye would have assurance, Psal. v. ult.

II. OF PEACE OF CONSCIENCE.

'PEACE of conscience is a benefit flowing from justification.'

Here I shall shew,

I. What peace of conscience is.

II. The excellency of it.

III. How it is obtained.

IV. How it is maintained.

V. How it is distinguished from false peace.

VI. *Lastly,* Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew what peace of conscience is. It is a blessed inward calmness and consolation arising from the purging of the conscience from guilt before the Lord, in which description, observe these two things.

1. The subject of this peace. It is a purged conscience, Heb. ix. 14. Peace and purity go together, and make a good conscience, 1 Tim. i. 5. That peace which is joined with impurity, in an unpurged conscience, is but carnal security, peace in a dream, which will end in a fearful surprise. Now, there are two things necessary to the purging of conscience.

(1.) Removal of guilt, in pardon thereof, which brings the sinner

into a state of peace with God, Psalm xxxii. 1. Guilt, felt or unfelt, is a band on the soul binding it over to God's wrath; it is a disease in the conscience, which will make it a sick conscience at length. But a pardon takes away guilt, looses the band, removes the deadly force of the disease, and lays a foundation for carrying off the sickness, Isa. xxxiii. ult.

(2.) Removal of the conscience of guilt, in the sense of pardon, Heb. x. 2. Though a malefactor's pardon be passed the seals, and he is secured from death, yet till he know it he cannot have peace. So the pardoned sinner, who knows not his mercy, though he has peace with God, yet wants peace of conscience. Psalm li. 8. So the conscience is purged, when the sting of felt guilt is drawn out of it.

2. The parts of this peace. These are two.

(1.) An inward calm of the soul, and quietness of the mind, where-in it is not disturbed with the fears of God's wrath, nor frightened with the judgments which its sins do in themselves deserve, Prov. i. 33. A troubled conscience is full of fears, of terrible forebodings, and of torments, 1 John iv. 18. When peace enters the conscience, the mists clear up, the fears are scattered, and conscience has a serenity and quiet within itself.

(2.) Consolation and comfort of heart, 2 Cor. i. 12; Isa. lvii. 19. Peace of conscience is not a mere negative, or indisturbance, which sloth and negligence of soul-matters may procure to the unpardoned: but it is an active cheerfulness of spirit, in the soul's looking up towards God, and reflecting how matters stand betwixt heaven and it, Col. iii. 15.

Conceive the whole thus: Sin entering into the soul, casts the conscience into a fever, and guilt makes it rage. The great Physician gives the proper remedy: and so the conscience gets a cool, the sickness is removed, and the man gathers health, strength, and soundness, Job xxxiii. 22—26; Heb. ix. 14.

II. I shall shew the excellency of it. It is Abraham's bosom on this side of heaven, the lower paradise; it is like the shore to the shipwrecked soul; and life from the dead. I will only say three things of it.

1. It is the wine-press of the grapes of heaven, that squeezeth out into the man's mouth the sap of the covenant, Psal. cxix. 102, 103. It was a sad tale of the good Asaph's, Psal. lxxvii. 3. 'I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.' Peace of conscience makes a man remember God, and be comforted; to suck the sap of promises, and all the declarations of God's love and favour in his word, as the same Asaph did, Psalm lxxiii. 24, 25, 26.

2. It is sap and poison to all earthly comforts, Prov. xv. 15. A sick man can take no pleasure in the comforts of life, as a healthy man does. An uneasy conscience sucks the sap out of all. But peace there, makes coarse fare, and little of it, very sweet, Prov. xvii. 1. And whatever a man has, it puts an additional sweetness into it.

3. It is sweet sauce to all afflictions, 2 Cor. i. 12. John xvi. 23. When there is no peace within, little things make people fretful: even a scratch of a pin is a wound with a sword. But this makes a man easy in the midst of the little annoyances of the world, though they be great in themselves, Col. iii. 15. Phil. iv. 7. Compare Heb. x. 34. When a man meets with disquietments and vexations abroad, he is helped to bear all, when he is comforted and cheered coming into his own house. But heavy is their case, who come from bitterness abroad, and are met with bitterness at home. The former is an emblem of peace of conscience, the latter an emblem of the soul in afflictions.

III. I am to shew how this peace of conscience is obtained. This peace is peculiar to the saints. Others may have false peace, Luke xi. 21. but they only have, or can have, true peace, Rom. v. 1.

1. It is obtained for them by Jesus Christ dying and suffering to procure it, Isa. liii. 5. Eph. ii. 4. There can be none of this peace without reconciliation with God, and there can be no reconciliation without his blood. The convinced sinners could have no more inward peace than devils have, if Christ had not died to procure it; but their wound had been incurable, and stood open and gaping for ever.

2. It is obtained by them, by these two methods.

(1). By a believing application of the blood of Christ, Rom. xv. 13. Job xxxiii. 23, &c. This is the only medicine that can draw the thorn of guilt out of the conscience, and heal its wounds, 1 John i. 7. Medicines prepared by men may cure bodily distempers, and a vitiated fancy, or disordered imagination, among other things. Confessing, mourning, reforming, watching, &c. may give a palliative cure even to the conscience, scurfing over its sores. But nothing but a believing application of Christ's blood will give true peace of conscience; and do what ye will, if ye do not that, ye will never get true peace, Isa. vii. 9.

(2.) By God's speaking peace thereupon to the soul, Isa. lvii. 19. The soul resting on Christ by faith, brings it into a state of peace with God; but for peace of conscience, more is required, namely, a sense of that peace. And this none but God can give, Psal. li. 8. He speaks peace in the word; but a work of the Spirit on the con-

science is necessary to make the application, as appears from 2 Sam. xii. 13. compared with Psal. li. And this is a light struck up in the soul, discovering the soul to be at peace with God, an overpowering light that silences doubts and fears, and creates a blessed calm. This also is obtained in the way of believing, in the reflex act of faith.

IV. I shall shew how this peace is maintained. The apostle tells us it was his exercise to maintain it, Acts xxiv. 16. And if we be not exercised in it, it will soon be lost. Now, it is maintained by,

1. Keeping up a firm and settled purpose of heart to follow the way of duty, and to stand aloof from sin, cost what it will, Acts xi. 23. David kept up his peace that way, Psalm xvii. 3. This is the breast-plate of righteousness, Eph. vi. 14. the which if it fall by, one may quickly be wounded to the heart. Unsettledness of heart, one's being at every turn unresolved what to do, cannot miss to leave him in the mire.

2. Living a life of dependence on the Lord, for light of life, direction and through-bearing, Prov. iii. 6. Gal. ii. 20. And this will keep a man from presumption, and doing any thing with a doubting conscience, which will soon mar one's peace.

3. Watchfulness against sin, suares and temptations, 1 Cor. x. 12. One that would maintain his peace, must be upon his guard, otherwise it will soon be disturbed, in this evil world.

4. A strict, holy, gospel-walk, in all known duties, towards God and towards man, Gal. vi. 16. He that will adventure to balk any of them, shall soon lose it.

5. *Lastly*, Frequent renewing our faith and repentance, for purging away the sins we fall into, 1 Pet. ii. 4.

V. I proceed to shew how peace of conscience is distinguished from false peace. A godly man may have a false peace. Cant. v. 2. Such had David before Nathan came to him after his fall. An unregenerate man can have no peace but what is false, Isa. lvii. ult.

1. True peace, built on the ground of God's word, is established by the word, however searching; the other is weakened by it. For God's word is a friend to God's peace, but an enemy to delusion, 1 John iii. 20, 21. But this is meant of God's word rightly understood, (if we misunderstand it, it is not his word, but our own mistake); and such mistakes may have the quite contrary effect.

2. True peace cannot be maintained but by a holy tenderness, and constant struggle against sin: but false peace is maintained without it, 1 John iii. 3.

Inf. 1. The unconverted sinner, and the untender Christian too, are in a very unfit case for the time of calamity, Isa. lvii. 20, 21.

Matth. xxv. 5. Only the man that has peace of conscience is prepared, Isa. xxxiii. 14, 15.

2. Let all who would have their consciences to be their friends, flee to the blood of Christ, and to lead a holy life.

3. *Lastly*, Let all those who want it, labour to get it; and they that have it, be exercised to keep it.

III. OF JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST.

‘Spiritual joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost, is a benefit flowing from justification.’

Now, to shew first of all what spiritual joy is: Joy in general is a pleasing passion, arising from the enjoyment, or hope of the enjoyment of a desired object. Spiritual joy is a joy arising from the enjoyment, and hope of the enjoyment of spiritual blessings.

Here I shall shew,

I. The subjects of this joy, who they are that partake of it.

II. The objects of it, or what they joy in.

III. The grounds of it.

IV. The Author of it.

V. The means the Spirit makes use of to convey it into the hearts of the saints.

VI. The difference betwixt it and the hypocrite’s joy.

VII. *Lastly*, Apply.

I. I shall consider the subjects of this joy, who they are that partake of it.

1. It is peculiar to the saints: for they only are blessed with spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and no others can have true spiritual joy, Phil. iii. 3. Any may have a sensitive joy, viz. in things grateful to their senses, Acts xiv. 17. Profane men may have a sinful joy, a joy in sin, Prov. xv. 21. Hypocrites may have a delusive joy, which is a carnal joy in spiritual things, Matth. xiii. 20. But saints only have the true spiritual joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost; for it is peculiar to the subjects of Christ’s kingdom, Rom. xiv. 17.

2. Yet the saints have it not at all times, Psal. li. 8. A child of God may be walking in darkness, going mourning without the sun, having no evidence of his interest in Christ: in such a case he cannot have this joy. It is true, there is a seed of joy, in the most bitter sorrows of a spirit, which will spring up in due time, Psalm xcvii. 11. But it seems it may be the case with some of the saints, never to have that joy till they get it in heaven, though I judge it is

very rare, especially under the New Testament dispensation, Heb. ii. 15.

II. I shall shew the objects of this joy, what they joy in.

1. The principal object is God in Christ, Phil. iii. 3. Rom. v. 11. They look to and remember God in Christ, and joy in him. God out of Christ is a most terrible object, Heb. xii. ult. 'Our God is a consuming fire.' And a sinner can never truly rejoice in an absolute God. But God in Christ, reconciled to the soul, breathing out peace and love to the sinner through a crucified Redeemer, is the chief and fundamental, the comprehensive object of his joy.

2. The less principal, or secondary object, is twofold.

(1.) The precious spiritual privileges they have in hand, which they enjoy for the present in this life, as justification, adoption, sanctification, peace with God, peace of conscience, access to God and communion with him, &c. In these they justly joy, Isa. lxi. 10. Will a man rejoice in the favour of his prince? Surely then a saint may well rejoice in the favour of his God.

(2.) The precious privileges they have in hope, Rom. v. 2. 'Rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' They have heaven and the eternal weight of glory in view: and this hope makes them sing the triumph before the victory. Yet are they not rash and foolish; for it is a sure hope, and will never make one ashamed. One counts his riches, not only by what he has in hand, but what he has in bills and bonds, and joys in the latter as well as the former.

III. I shall consider the grounds of this joy in these things. They are twofold.

1. A suitableness of the objects to the heart and mind of the child of God. These objects are the great desire of a believer, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. So the receiving of them in hand, or in hope, makes him to joy, Psal. iv. 6, 7. Without this there can be no joy, Prov. xiii. 12. 'When the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.' If ye would make a starving man rejoice, you must give him meat; if a condemned man, a pardon. Holiness and communion with God are sapless to the unrenewed man. God himself is not the object of his desire: neither is the holiness of heaven suited to his mind: therefore he cannot rejoice in these. But it is otherwise with the saints; so strangers intermeddle not with their joy.

2. A sense of an interest in these objects, John xx. 28. 'My Lord, and my God.' One has more joy in his own cottage, than in another's palace, because he can say, It is my cottage. Hagar could not rejoice in the well of water, till the Lord opened her eyes to see it. Though a pardon were slipt unawares into a man's pocket, he cannot joy in it till he knows he has it. So a sense of our interest is necessary to spiritual joy.

IV. I shall next consider the Author of this joy. The Holy Spirit of God is the author of it, and therefore it is called 'joy in the Holy Ghost,' Rom. xiv. 17. i. e. wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, shedding abroad the love of God, in the sense thereof, like a sweet-smelling ointment in the heart of the saint. It is he that administers the reviving cordial to the fainting soul, draws off the saints' sackcloth, and girds him with this gladness.

V. I come now to consider the means which the Spirit makes use of to convey this joy into the hearts of the saints. These are twofold.

1. External means are the word and sacraments. These are the wells of salvation to the people of God, Isa. xii. 3.

(1.) The word of God which brings the glad tidings of salvation from heaven to poor sinners; it discovers the enriching treasure to the soul, Psal. cxix. 162. 'I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.' And no earthly treasure will raise such a joy in one's heart, as a word of promise will do, when the Spirit of the Lord shines on it unto a soul.

(2.) The sacraments, which seal and confirm the word of grace to the soul. This is plain from the exercise of the eunuch, Acts viii. 39. who, when he was baptised, went on his way rejoicing; and of thousands who have met with that joy at sealing ordinances, which they never could find in all earthly things; and no wonder, for then is the great seal of heaven set unto the covenant betwixt the Lord and his people.

2. The internal mean is faith, Rom. xv. 13. 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' 1 Pet. i. 8.—'Believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Faith receives and applies the glad tidings brought by the word, and confirmed by the sacraments. The Spirit of the Lord works faith at first and excites and strengthens it: and so the peace which the Lord speaks to his people is firmly believed by the saint, and thus his heart is filled with joy.

VI. I come now to shew the difference betwixt this joy and the joy of the hypocrite. That a hypocrite may have a joy in spiritual things, is evident from Matth. xiii. 20. and it is confirmed by the case of many deluded souls, who may have their joys, as well as sorrows which are unsonnd as well as themselves.

1. True spiritual joy riseth in the heart, ordinarily after the word has had a precedent effect on the heart, to rend it for sin, and from it, Psal. cxxvi. 5. 'They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.' Matth. v. 4. 'Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.' But delusive joy springs up more quickly, while yet the

heart is not rent for sin, at least not from it, Matth. xiii. 20. Compare Jer. iv. 3. Much pains the husbandman is at ere he can expect a crop; but weeds will grow up without pain or labour for them.

2. True spiritual joy comes by the word, and that rightly understood; but delusive joy comes either without the word, or by misunderstanding of the word. The channel of divine communications is the word of God, Isa. lix. 21. That joy which comes by pretended revelation, dreams, or impressions, without the word, and regard to it, is most likely to be the effect of a heated fancy; and people had need to beware of being beguiled with these things. The written word is particularly the channel of spiritual joy, 1 John i. 4. 'These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.' And if an angel from heaven would speak joy to one whom the written word does not give ground of joy to, it would be but a deceit, Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'

3. True spiritual joy is lasting; but delusive joy vanishes away, and comes to nothing, as wanting a root, Matth. xiii. 20, 21. It has a season, and when that is over it is extinguished, John v. 35. 'Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.' I own a child of God may lose his joy too; but here lies the difference. The ground of the believer's joy, sense of interest, is sometimes removed out of his sight, and so he must needs lose his joy. But though the ground of the hypocrite's joy continue, namely his fancied interest in the favour of God, and privileges of the gospel, yet the joy goes: those things grow stale and sapless with him, which mightily affected him when they were new to him.

4. True spiritual joy humbles the soul, and fills it with high and honourable thoughts of God; but delusion never ceases to puff up, Gen. xxviii. 17. 'How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' Exod. xxxiv. 8. 'Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.' 2 Cor. xii. 11. Compare Col. ii. 18. For all the divine communications tend to empty men of themselves, to make Christ and his free grace all to a man; and holy familiarity with God impresses an awe on one's spirit, in so far as the more one sees of God, the more he must admire and adore him. But nature will always build up nature.

5. *Lastly*, True spiritual joy is sanctifying, makes one the more tender and holy, the more he has of it. But delusion will never sanctify, Phil. iii. 3. Delusion is a cover to and nourisher of inward lusts, which get a peaceable shelter under it: but true spiri-

tual joy makes one forward in the duties of universal obedience, Psal. cxix. 32. 'I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.' And it makes one tender in moral duties towards God, and towards man.

Inf. 1. Unjustified persons cannot intermeddle with this joy, for it is a benefit that flows from justification. It is a privilege peculiar to the saints; children's bread that is not cast to the dogs. Ye may rejoice in the worldly comforts ye have, saying, This clothing, this money is mine; but you cannot say, This God is mine.

2. When created streams are dried up, the joy of the ungodly is quite gone: but it is not so with the godly, Job vi. 13. 'Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?' Hab. iii. 17, 18. The great ground of the saints' joy, and the objects of it, are beyond the reach of men, so that they cannot take them from them.

3. Most groundless is the prejudice against religion, that it is a melancholy thing, Prov. iii. 17. 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' None have such reason to rejoice as the believer has. If the poor wretched and condemned creature has more ground to rejoice than he that is pardoned and enriched with his prince's favour, then the wicked has as much ground to rejoice as the believer who is justified by grace. O! if the ungodly saw their state, they would never rejoice; and if the godly saw theirs, they would never despond.

4. It is not God's allowance for his children to harden themselves in sorrow, and refuse to be comforted, Phil. iv. 4. 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.' As it is uncomfortable to themselves, it is dishonouring to God, and is the fruit of unbelief.

5. O, unconverted sinners, let the joy of religion draw you to it. Come to Christ, in a way of believing on him, that ye may be justified. Close with the way of holiness, in renouncing all known sin, and complying with all known duty, that ye may have this spiritual joy, 2 Cor. i. 12.

6. *Lastly*, Let the godly strive to attain this spiritual joy, and to maintain it for God's honour, and their own comfort and usefulness.