

THE  
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS  
OF  
REAL CHRISTIANS.

Being the substance of several Sermons.

PHILIP. iii. 3,

*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

THE apostle here gives a reason why he had called those false teachers, against whom he cautions the Philippians, the concision; viz. because he and all true believers, and not they, had the best claim to circumcision. In the words there are two things.

I. A position: "We are the circumcision."

II. The proof of it; taken from the description of the true circumcision, which agrees to believers, and them only.

In the position we have,

1. The party to whom the honourable controverted character belongs: We. Which includes, (1.) The apostle himself, who was circumcised in the flesh, ver. 5. (2.) The Philippian Church, to whom he speaks; who being of the Gentiles, were not circumcised in the flesh; which was the great quarrel the false apostles had with them. Yet this character doth not comprehend all of the church of Philippi; but the saints among them, to whom the following description agreed, and therefore all believers; that is, all that "worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

2. That character itself; "the circumcision, *i. e.* the circumcised people, Rom. xv. 8. Now, they were not the circumcised in the flesh; therefore it is meant of their circumcision in the spirit. See the distinction, Rom. ii. 29, "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." They had the thing signified by circumcision; while others that boasted of

circumcision, had only the bare outward sign. And as the thing is far better than the sign of it, so they deserved the name best.

Before we proceed farther, we may deduce a few doctrinal observations from this first part of the verse.

DOCTRINE 1. The sacraments of the Old and New Testament are in substance the same. The baptized Philippians, who were baptized with the Holy Ghost, as well as with water, are said to be circumcised. And so the apostle attributes our baptism and the Lord's supper after a sort to the church of the Jews; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 3, 4, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: (For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ)." As the covenant was always the same in substance, so the seals of it were the same too. I note this, to guard against the Popish error, in making the sacraments of the Old Testament only shadow forth that grace which the sacraments of the New do confer, according to them; and that they were not the same in efficacy.

DOCTRINE 2. The reality of that which seducers do pretend unto, will more readily be found in those that conscientiously oppose them. These men run down the apostle, and other believers, in the point of circumcision; giving out themselves only for the circumcised ones. But the apostle proves they had a better claim to it, than those that made all the noise about it. Thus the works of holiness are to be found more with those that press justification by faith, than with others who would be looked on as the great patrons of good works.

USE. Be not then deceived with fair speeches, but examine matters to the bottom; for often do those that have the highest pretences to right on their side, go farthest from it. And think it no uncouth thing, to find those who have deserted the principles of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland in their separation, give out themselves for the only adherents thereto.\*

DOCTRINE 3. The sign in religion without the thing signified, is little worth. They are but the concision, and deserve no other

\* The author means here the people called Old Dissenters, the followers of Mr. M'Millan; who are also the people immediately levelled against in his printed sermon on schism.

name, that have only circumcision in the flesh. We are the circumcision that have the thing signified thereby.

To confirm this, consider,

1. All it can do is but to give a name before men, which they lose before God: Rom. ii. 28, 29, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." Christians we will be called amongst men, upon our receiving the sign of it; but we will be but as the children of the Ethiopian before the Lord, if we have no more. It may give us an honourable title in the world, but it is but an empty title before God.

2. The sign is but a mere external thing, on which nothing of weight for salvation can hang: it is too little to make any saving difference betwixt them that have it, and others that want it. And therefore when the Lord comes to judgment, he throws down all together, Jer. ix. 25, 26; for he looks not to the outward appearance, to lay any weight upon it, but to the heart.

3. The sign in religion without the thing signified, is but an inefficacious thing; as a body without a spirit. The sacraments have each two parts, the sign, and the thing signified, sacramentally united. He then that hath got the sign only, hath only the half, and the meanest half too. Sacraments are seals of the covenant; but where there is no covenant, there can be no seal: and what avails a seal at a blank? They apply Christ to believers; but where there is no receiving, how can they apply?

4. As men may in Christ's livery abide in the devil's service, so they may and will go with it into the place prepared for the devil and his angels, if they have not the thing signified. Thus our Lord, Luke xiii. 26, 27, tells us, that some shall say to him at the last day, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets;" but that he shall say unto such, "I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." Some are circumcised, and yet are dogs, ver. 2. Of this chapter, whose place is without. As to this privilege, avail it may to men's greater condemnation, but no further.

FOR APPLICATION: Is the sacramental sign little worth without the thing signified thereby? then I would have you take a back-look of your baptism and communicating. For to change the word into that which the gospel gives, we may say, We, and only we, are the baptized, the communicants, that "worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." For there are two great truths which plainly follow from this,

1. Baptism with water without being baptized by the Holy Ghost is little worth. It is the dreadful sin of the generation, that they never reflect seriously on their baptism. Hence are two great evils. (1.) They are children of Belial, they go without a yoke. They live as if they had never sworn allegiance to the King of heaven, but were entirely their own, and none Lord over them. (2.) They will be children of Belial, they will go without a yoke. They will not renew their baptismal vows in the sacrament of the supper, nor prepare themselves thereto. They will come under any covenant or engagement to men to advance their worldly interest; but they will not come under engagements to the Lord. They are obliged to their parents' care in their infancy, that got them baptized; but if they had been yet unbaptized, and would act like themselves, they would refuse and slight baptism, as well as the other sacrament. But let me lay home to the consciences of baptized persons, a few queries touching their baptism.

1st, In the general. It is true, ye are washed with water; but are ye baptized indeed? Ye have got the sign, but have ye got the thing signified? Baptized ye were with water, but were ye ever to this day baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire; *i. e.* the Holy Ghost working like fire? Alas! that universal coldness in the things of God in our affections, says, that as to most men, the fire of God's Spirit never came on them yet.

2dly, But more particularly, I would ask you,

(1.) Hast thou ever yet seen thy natural pollution, that universal defilement of thy whole man, how that Adam left thee lying in thy blood, and a child of wrath? Eph. ii. 3. Hast thou ever yet seen the filth of sin so deep in thy nature and life, that no tears, prayers, &c. of thine, but only the blood and Spirit of Christ, could wash thee? In baptism there is a profession of all this. If thou hast not seen this, what avails thy baptism? why wast thou washed at all with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?

(2.) Wast thou ever yet made partaker of the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; that is, the thing signified by baptism, Tit. iii. 5. 6? Alas! what avails the washing of the body with water while the blood of Christ has never been sprinkled on the conscience, nor the water of the Spirit of Christ poured on the filthy soul, John iii. 5? Alas! I fear many may in this matter make that confession of their faith, Acts xix. 2. "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." and therefore I would say, ver. 3. "Unto what then were ye baptized? They know nothing about regeneration, nor the Spirit's work upon the soul.

(3.) Were ye ever cut off from the old stock of Adam, and ingrafted into Christ? 1 Cor. xii. 13. Ye will then be knit to Christ by the Spirit and faith; ye will be branches of him, bringing forth the fruits of holiness by him; living in and on him, living by faith. Ah! baptized in the name of Christ, and yet not in Christ, but without Christ, and without God in the world, makes sad work.

(4.) Are lusts living and reigning; or are they dying, and your souls living a new life? Rom. vi. 4, 5. The water was cast on you indeed, as the earth on a dead corpse; but what avails that if ye never yet died to sin? Ye have got free of the water cast on you at baptism, as he that rises out of the grave gets free of the earth; but what avails it if ye be dead in sin still, and alienated from the life of God? Ah! what are most of us but walking ghosts?

2. Communicating in the Lord's supper without the thing signified, is little worth. To be partakers of the bread of the Lord, without being partakers of the bread which is the Lord, will go but a small length.

1st, Have ye indeed eaten Christ's flesh and drank his blood by faith? Had ye an appetite after Christ, and have ye relished the sweetness of Christ, and the sweetness of every part of Christ, as one does of the bread which he eats; and have your souls knit with him, and received life, sap, and strength from him for your nourishment? Ah! what avails bread and wine without this?

2dly, Do you live by him? John vi. 57. Is Christ the staff and comfort of your souls? Have ye set on to live the life of new obedience? It is from him ye draw influences for actuating grace, and for your growth? Do ye "worship God in Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh?" then, and not otherwise, are ye the circumcision.

DOCTRINE 4. ult. "Believers in Christ are the true circumcision." They have that in the spirit, which the Jews by this ordinance had in the letter. To illustrate this, consider,

1. Circumcision was a token of God's covenant, Gen. xvii. 11. which see, ver. 7, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" This is the privilege of every believer; he is in covenant with God, God is his God. O what a privilege is this, to be confederate with heaven, yea, to have God himself to be ours, heirs of God; so that God is the heritage! "This honour have all the saints."

2. Circumcision distinguished the Jews from others, as God's people from those that were not his, Gen. xvii. 14. So are believers

God's Israel, his peculiar people, his jewels, his garden; while the rest of the world are but as his out-field. They have the special presence of God with them, his peculiar love, care protection, &c.; and with Israel, are not numbered by him among the nations.

3. Circumcision was the cutting off of a part of the flesh; signifying that which believers have as their privilege as well as duty, "the putting off of the body of sins, Col. ii. 11. Thus believers have put off the old man with his deeds. This is begun in regeneration, and carried on in gradual sanctification; their lusts are cut off, and cast from them in some measure. Their hearts are circumcised to love the Lord, so as they have new affections; their ears to hear his voice, which could not reach them before; and their lips to speak holily, and for God.

4. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance; witness Zipporah, who "took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son, and said, Surely a bloody husband thou art to me; A bloody husband thou art because of the circumcision." So it is through the blood of Christ, the blood of the everlasting covenant, that the elect become God's people. They come to all their privileges by the way of blood: so that they may write on the covenant, and all their privileges, from the greatest seat in heaven, to the meanest drop of water on earth, The price of blood.

4. Hence it was a painful ordinance. So is the believer's mortification of his lusts, Gal. v. 24. They are naturally addicted to the ways of the flesh as well as others; but they are helped with grace to cut off right hands, and pluck out right eyes, however unpleasant that work is to corrupt nature.

6. It was the flesh of the foreskin that was cut off, teaching them how sin is propagated by ordinary generation; and in true believers, the axe of mortification is laid not only to the branches, but to the root of the tree; the true circumcision reaching a stroke not only to particular lusts, but to the sin of our nature, Gal. v. 24.

7. It was in a secret part of the body. So true circumcision is that of the heart in believers, Rom. ii. 29. They are not outside Christians only but the hidden man of the heart is for God: and the King's daughter is all-glorious within.

8. It sealed the covenant of promises, particularly that of the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. and of Canaan's land. So are they heirs of the heavenly Canaan, and that righteousness is theirs.

9. *Lastly*, It was an engagement to duty on them; so is the grace of God on believers a singular engagement to duty.

INFERENCE 1. Then be among believers who will now, they shall for ever be cut off from among them that are not such as they. Woe to the hypocritical professor who is not thus honoured.

2. Then are all believers Abraham's spiritual seed, and heirs according to the promise. They are the Israel of God, having all those privileges in spirit and truth, that the Israel according to the flesh had in the latter; which may help them comfortably to read and apply those glorious things spoke of Israel in the Old Testament. Hence believers are called a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," 1 Pet. ii. 9.

3. Then let the saints keep at a distance from the profane world, Acts x. 28, and xi. 3. They whom God has distinguished from others, should not mix themselves, with Ephraim, among the people. Even a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

4. *Lastly*, Then distinguish yourselves from others by your holy life. Let it appear that ye are circumcised in heart, lip, and life; that sin has got a root-stroke, and the lusts thereof cut off. And so I come to the,

II. *Second* thing, the proof of the position, contained in a description of the true circumcision; that is, of the true people of God, real saints. There are many disputes in the world concerning this; but the apostle lays down a rule for deciding the controversy. He gives three distinguishing characters of God's people. 1. If ye consider their worship, they worship God in spirit; 2. their joy, that is in Christ. 3. their confidence, they have none in the flesh." Whosoever can make good his claim to these, is a true Christian.

I. The *first* character of a saint is, he is one that "worships God in the spirit." In which there are three things. 1. He is a worshipper, and so is distinguished from Atheists. 2. The object of his worship is the true God; and so is distinguished from idolaters, that worship any other than the true God. 3. The manner of it; in the spirit; and so is distinguished from hypocrites.

DOCTRINE. Those, and only those, are God's people, true saints, real Christians, who worship God in the spirit.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What it is to worship God in the spirit.

II. That this worshipping of God in spirit, is a distinguishing mark of a true Christian.

III. *Lastly*, Apply.

I. I shall shew "what it is to worship God in the spirit." It is, in a word, to give spiritual worship to God, to worship him, and be spiritual in the worship. Now, this hath a respect to two things.

*First*, It hath a respect to the whole of our service and obedience to God in our whole conversation. God, as our great Master, hath given us a law; in keeping that law, and obeying it in our

whole conversation, lies our service to God. The parts of it are two; holiness, comprehending our duty to God; righteousness, comprehending that to our neighbour. We have both these in one Scripture, viz. Luke i. 74, 75, "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." It is the same words as in our text, which might be, and is by some rendered, "that serve God in Spirit," viz. not only in the acts of immediate worship, but in the whole of their course. And truly the Christian life is as it were one continued act of worship, where all their actions, natural, civil, and religious, meet in God: and is therefore called "a serving of God day and night, Acts xxvi. 7; Rev. vii. 15, in allusion to the priests and Levites that were always about the temple, Psalm cxxxiv. 1; and no wonder, for they are priests unto God. Second table duties are turned by them into first: James i. 27, "Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Heb. xiii. 16; But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Now, the Christian is spiritual in these things, Rom. i. 9. We must preach in the spirit, as well as pray in the spirit, Eph. v. 21; and vi. 6.

*Secondly*, It hath respect to those duties of religion which are parts of worship properly so called, as prayer, praise, &c. A true Christian will make conscience of these; he will worship God, and that in the spirit. If he pray, he will pray in the spirit, praise, and hear in the spirit. Now, the worshipping of God in spirit lies in these two.

1. The true Christian worshipping God, worships him with his heart, soul, and spirit, and not with his body only. Hence the apostle says, Rom. i. 9, that he "served God with his spirit in the gospel of his Son." The Jews in our Saviour's days had religion extremely sunk among them: it was turned into mere bodily exercise, for the most part: therefore Christ tells them, John iv. 24, that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." Now, this implies these things.

1st, The true Christian is an internal worshipper of God. There is an external worship called for in the second commandment, such as hearing, praying with the voice, &c. There is also an internal worship called for by the first commandment. In outward worship the body acts its part, in the inward the soul only acts. This lies in the soul's fearing, loving, trusting, depending on God, &c. which are the vital parts of practical godliness. The true Christian's soul is



the temple of God ; and in the Christian's heart, and there only, is God thus worshipped. They make din enough in the outer court with worship to God, who never worship God there ; while self, the creature, and lusts as the abomination of desolation, stand in the holy place of the heart.

*2dly*, The true Christian joins inward to outward worship, and so body and spirit go on jointly. Hence the apostle exhorts, as 1 Cor. vi. 20, to "glorify God in the body, and in the spirit, which are God's." And as the body without the soul, so outward without inward worship is but a loathsome, lifeless lump, Matth. xv. 7, 8. It is not praying, but praying in the spirit, that is the distinguishing character of a Christian. Then do men worship God in spirit, when their hearts go with their bodies before the Lord, when the soul is humbled before the Lord while the knees are bowed in his presence, when with the lifting up of the hands the affections are lifted towards the Lord. O what avails the bowing of the knees, while the heart remains stont against the Lord ; the moving of the lips, while no moving of agreeable affections : hearing of the word with the ear, while the soul is like a deaf adder ; petitions of good things, without sincere desires of them from the heart ; confessions of sin, without shame, and grief, and hatred of it ; thanksgivings, without a due sense of mercies ? It is but lip-labour.

*3dly*, The true Christian aims at, and in some measure attains the spirituality of worship. The spirit of the Christian, in worshipping God, is employed in that part whereof it alone is capable ; not only to do the thing, but to do it in a right manner, which is the spirituality of worship. As we worship God with our bodies, not only using them in his service, but composing them to an allowable outward gesture ; so we worship God in our spirits, while they are not only employed in conversing with God, and giving material obedience to his commandments, but also acting in those things in the manner prescribed by himself. Now, there are four things here principally that belong to the worshipping God in spirit, without which the very motions of our spirit, though good in themselves, in worship, would be but carnal. So the apostle calls his old obeying of the law flesh, Philip. iii. 6. compared with ver. 4.

(1.) The true Christian discerns the commandment, and acts in worshipping God from a sense of it. For "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin," Rom. xiv. 23. He believes so and so, because God has said it ; and does so and so, because God has bid it, Psal. cxix. 115 ; John v. 30. The will of God, to a Christian, will not only be the rule, but the reason of his worship ; hence the hardest piece of it is not neglected ; as we find in the case of Abraham's offering Isaac, Gen. xxii.

(2.) The true Christian worships the Lord out of love to him : Heb. vi. 10, "God is not unrighteous," says the apostle, "to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name," &c. Hence the whole of our service to God comes under the name of love in the sum of the commandments. If the domineering principle in our worship be either self-love, or slavish fear of God, it is not worshipping God in spirit, 2 Tim. i. 7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

(3.) The true Christian worships God with good-will. Hence in Eph. vi. 7, servants are exhorted "with good will to do service, as to the Lord, and not to men." And says the church, Is. lxiv. 5, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness." If the heart be away from the work, and it be done grudgingly, doubtless it is spiritless worship, unacceptable to God.

(4.) The true Christian worships God for his honour and glory, as his chief end. God has proposed it as such, 1 Cor. x. 31, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God :"; and the Christian aims at it accordingly, as Paul did, Philip. i. 21, "For to me to live is Christ, says he, "and to die is gain." If self get highest here, it is selfish, not spiritual worship, Hos. xii. 1; Zech. vii. 6.

2. The true Christian worships God by assistance from and influence of the Holy Spirit of God. Compare Eph. vi. 18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit;" with Jude ver. 20, "But ye, beloved, praying in the Holy Ghost," &c. And this assistance is given two ways.

1st, The Spirit gives habitual grace to make the man capable of spiritual worship: 1 Tim. i. 5, "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned;" John iii. 6, "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." The carnal heart which the regenerating Spirit has never changed, is not capable of this worship, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

2dly, He gives actual grace, influences to stir up grace: Rom. viii. 26, "For the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." He blows on the soul, and makes the spices send forth their pleasant smell. It is through him they mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. viii. 13; and by him, *i. e.* by influences from him, they serve the Lord, Eph. ii. 18; for they live out of themselves, by the Spirit of Christ.

II. I shall shew that this worshipping of God in spirit is a distinguishing mark of a true Christian.

1. All true Christians capable of worshipping God (for the apostle speaks not of infants, idiots, &c.) have it. It is not the attainment of the first three only; the highest and lowest in Christ's school, the strongest and weakest of Christ's family, have it, though in different degrees. For,

*1st*, All of them are spiritual, because born of the Spirit; and every thing that brings forth, brings forth its like, John iii. 6. As soon as they are born, ere ever they be grown, they are spirit fitted for spiritual actions. And seeing every thing acts according to its nature, the new nature will make people serve the Lord "in newness of the spirit, not in the oldness of the letter," Rom. vii. 6.

*2dly*, All of them have the Spirit of God dwelling in them so that "they are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, Rom. viii. 9. Now, the Spirit is given to help our infirmities, and to help us to worship God in the right manner. And he will never leave his people altogether carnal.

*3dly*, That worship which is merely outward, and not in the spirit, is but the carcase of duties, unacceptable to God; and they that never perform more than this, are but mere hypocrites. Hence, says our Lord to the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth. xv. 7, 8, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me."

*4thly*, External worship is properly but the means of worship; all outward ordinances, as prayer, hearing, &c. do tend to the promoting of love, trust, &c.; and the enjoyment of God can never be found but in worshipping him in spirit. So that unless we will say a man may be a true Christian, and never enjoy God in any duty it is plain all Christians must worship God in the Spirit.

2. That none but true Christians have this privilege is plain from this, that none other are spiritual; they are in the flesh, and cannot please God; they are sensual, (Gr. souilly, natural, rational), not having the Spirit, Jude, ver. 19. What they do, is at best but the product of their own spirits; which may carry the length of moral seriousness, but no further. None but true Christians can ever attain the spirituality of worship.

#### THE APPLICATION.

INFERENCE 1. Then there are many in the church that are none of God's people. This casts,

1. All those that do not worship God. There is a generation that call not upon God at all, who never bow a knee to him in secret or in their families. Such are practical atheists. Is there a

God, and will not ye worship him? Remember that God will not acknowledge you that acknowledge not him.

2. Those that halve their worship. As, (1.) Those who will worship God in public, but in their families and closets not at all. (2.) Those who perform outward duties, but never internal worship: it is the least half ye do.

3. Those whose religion is confined to their solemn approaches to God, but have nothing of it in their ordinary conversation; whereas the Christian's life is as it were one continued act of worship; he is "in the fear of the Lord all the day long," Prov. xxiii. 17.

4. Those who worship not God in spirit. And,

(1.) Those whose worship is mere bodily exercise, Matth. xv. 7, 8; who may shew a great deal of devotion in their outward carriage, but have nothing of soul-devotion with it.

(2.) Those whose worship is only the exercise of their own spirits by themselves, not by the Spirit of the Lord, and are strangers to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, John xv. 5. Without this our worship is but carnal.

INFERENCE 2. Then all that worship God in spirit, may thence comfortably conclude, that they are real Christians, true saints. Spiritual worshippers are spiritual Christians, the true Israel of God, "whose praise is not of men, but of God;" and shall be gathered among the spirits of just men made perfect, when carnal worshippers shall be led forth with the workers of iniquity. Now, for ridding of marches here, I shall offer some marks or characters to distinguish those that worship God in spirit from others.

1. The spiritual worshipper's soul goes along with his body in the worship of God; his heart is in some measure brought up to the duty. Hence he can say, with the Psalmist, Psalm cxix. 58, "I entreated thy favour with my whole heart." His tongue and other members of the body employed in worship, are faithful interpreters of his mind: Lam. iii. 41, "Let us lift up our heart with our hands (Heb. to our hands) unto God in the heavens." 1 Tim. ii. 8, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." Psal. xxi. 2. "Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of of his lips." The affections of the mind answer the actions of the body. 1 Cor. xiv. 14, My spirit prayeth, but my understanding" which I have of the thing I pray for in an unknown tongue "is unfruitful" (to others that know not that tongue). A man's spirit prayeth, (1.) when he knows what he wants and seeks; (2.) when he has affections answerable to his petitions, Rom. viii. 26.

But ah! what shall we say of that worship which is but lip-la-

bour, where the heart joins not with the body? His body prays, but his spirit does not; his ears hear, but his heart is stopped; his mouth eats and drinks bread and wine in the Lord's supper, but his soul feeds not on Christ. Nay, this is not spiritual, but carnal worship. There are three ways how the soul joins not in the worship.

*1st*, Sometimes the man's spirit leaves him in duty quite, unless it be just as far as to keep him from speaking nonsense; and oft-times it leaves him so far, that indeed he speaks he knows not what before the Lord. The body is there, but the heart is gone, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. The man is active enough about business till he comes to his knees, and then he expires as it were; the heart leaves him at the foot of the mount of God, and he never finds it till he comes down again from the mount of duties.

*2dly*, Sometimes the heart is intent on the carcase of the worship, but neglects the life and soul of it. See the picture of this case drawn, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. "Though I speak with tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." The man has burning lips, but a naughty heart, "like a potsherd covered with silver dross," Prov. xxvi. 23. A garb of devotion appears on him outwardly: there is not an irreverent look in hearing, and yet never a word received with faith and love; there is never a wrong word in the prayer, and never one right affection, or true concern about the thing. This takes especially in duties before others, where the eyes and ears of men are on them; which the false heart is more concerned to please, than the heart-searching God. And hence are men oft-times very lively to appearance in public, and yet as dead and flat in secret as ever; for then the wild-fire goes out, when men want the breath of applause to blow it up.

*3dly*, Sometimes the heart is so far from joining in the worship, that there are particulars which it enters its dissent against. "Lord, make me holy; kill this lust, let me never turn to it again," says the man. If the man truly consider what he says, the heart starts back from this petition, being glued to that lust; and he would think that he had but a sorry off-come, if God should take him at his word, Jer. xiii. ult: and the heart would say, as Peter in another case, "Thou shalt never wash my feet:" and with the Israelites, Jer. ii. 25, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go."

But are your hearts in good earnest in your worship? Do you labour to bring your heart to duty, and to fix it on the life and soul, and not merely on the outward carcase of duty? Are your souls reconciled to the promises, which are the rule of prayers, par-

ticularly to those of universal sanctification, so that you have no petitions against which the heart dissents; your spirit goes along with your body in worship, and so ye are worshippers in spirit? To clear further this mark, I shall here speak to two questions.

QUESTION 1. "May not the heart of a hypocrite, in worshipping God, be intent upon the thing he is about, and have earnest affections to obtain it? I answer, he may. Felix's mind was not only fixed on Paul's words, Acts xxiv. 25, but on the things preached by him, otherwise he had not trembled so as he did. The stony ground hearers wanted not affection to the word; nor the foolish virgins in their prayer, Matth. xxv. 11, "Lord, Lord, open to us:" no doubt they were in earnest in it. But all this amounts to no more than moral seriousness, upon that principle, Job ii. 4, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life;" which is far different from spiritual sincerity. Principles of self-love may tie a man's heart to those things which his heart is persuaded are necessary to his safety. And so all those affections of hypocrites to spiritual things, are yet but carnal affections, proceeding on a comparative, not an absolute judgment; that is to say, the man would rather part with his sin than go to hell for it; but otherwise he would be as loathe to part with his lust as with a limb: in which case, though the man hold out his leg to the surgeon to be cut off, his heart is far from going along with the action; as the Lord afflicts his people not willingly, Lamb. iii. 33. (Heb.) not from his heart. But the gracious soul goes along with it on an absolute judgment, as the prisoner holds out his legs to one that would take off the fetters, with which the heart goes along.

QUESTION 2. May not a sincere soul, in worship, fall into those things whereby we have said the soul joins not with the body in worship? ANSWER. 1. In the general, Every godly soul doth not at all times worship God in Spirit. Hence says the spouse, Cant. iii. 1, "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not." Sometimes their spirits are taken napping, and their worship would be a very sorry evidence of their state. The flesh gets above the spirit, and then they will be very dead and formal. But that is not their way, but their wandering off their way, which they have been on, and certainly will come again to. 2. More particularly, I would say, (1.) Though their hearts may be apt to wander, yet when they are any thing awake, they will struggle with them to bring them up to the duty. And though they cannot hinder (impertinent thoughts) the birds to fly about their heads, yet they will endeavour that they do not nestle in their hair, by entertaining them. (2.) So far as these prevail,

or a greater intensesness on the carcase than life of duties, so far will the spiritual worshipper be dissatisfied with himself, and with the duty, and reckon it lost duty with respect to the ends of worship; which must needs humble him, and make him groan as under a burden which he longs to be rid of. (3.) In so far as there is flesh in him, there will be likewise a dissent from the petitions of the Spirit, Gal. v. 17, and its actings in worship; but in so far as there is Spirit in him, there will also be an answer to that dissent of the flesh, and a protestation of adherence to the petition, and that according to the law of grace it may be granted, notwithstanding the dissent of the flesh, Gal. v. 17. "The Spirit [lusteth] against the flesh." All these things we have, Rom. vii. 21—24.

2. The spiritual worshipper aims at the enjoyment of God himself in duties. Hence we have the declaration of the Psalmist, Psalm xxvii. 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." And again, Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." He comes to the galleries of ordinances, public, private, and secret, because the King is held there; goes through the streets and broad ways of duties to find his soul's beloved. Thus as God in Christ is the object, so he is the end of their worship. I will offer four things to clear this.

1st, The spiritual worshipper has a spiritual aim in worshipping of God. It is a heavenly trade he is driving by divine ordinances, a trade with another world, to be enriched with the product thereof. This was the practice of the apostle, as we learn from Phil. iii. 20, "Our conversation (says he) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." He is carried above the little carnal designs that many narrow souls have in their religion, as that of a name, Matth. vi. 2, or some other carnal interest, as those who followed Christ for the loaves, and many others who make religion lacquey it at the foot of interest.

2dly, The spiritual worshipper aims at something in duties above self, even the enjoyment of God. O! it is sad to think how many duties to God are performed, so as they run all as Jordan into the dead sea (of self) in the end. Most men seek themselves, their peace, their security from wrath by duties, rather than God. They seek God, not for himself, but for themselves. But when the heart is spiritualized, it is unselfed; God himself becomes man's chief end,

the centre of the soul, to which it natively tends by virtue of the new nature, which is a grace called godliness, 2 Pet. i. 6.

*3dly*, The spiritual worshipper aims at himself, as well as his benefits, in his worship. They come to seek him in his worship, not only as a master, who must get work, and so will give wages; but as a husband who gives himself to his spouse, who gives herself to him. It is in the duties of his worship that the soul comes to be united more and more to God in this world; and they are appointed for that end, and used for it by saints.

*4thly*, The spiritual worshipper aims at the being partaker of the divine nature in his worship. For as the iron is laid in the fire that it may be all fired; so the spiritual worshipper lays himself before the Lord, that he may be transformed into his image. And this is most properly the enjoyment of God; while the soul being knit to him by faith, his Spirit acts in the soul thus to change it, 2 Cor. iii. 18. See how God is enjoyed in heaven, 1 John iii. 2 “We know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” And this is a most distinguishing character of a spiritual worshipper; for seeing the carnal mind, though never so much refined, is enmity against God, and all the attributes of God are not any thing distinct from him, the heart of the most refined hypocrite can no more be reconciled to his perfections, than light to darkness. Wherefore the soul seeking to enjoy God in his communicable perfections to be holy, as he is holy, seeks the enjoyment of God himself, and is a spiritual worshipper. Thus ye see the nature of this mark. And hence two things may be fairly inferred.

(1.) That spiritual worshippers look on external duties only as means to communion with God, and therefore will not rest in the work done. They are but the way to communion with God, and therefore are valuable only as means. They that look for no more of duties, but to get them done and by hand, and value their duties while they have no enjoyment of God in them, are carnal worshippers, that take up with the grave-clothes, while the Lord is not there. Have over by this sermon, prayer, &c. will the saint say; for he is not as he who is to sail for pleasure, and therefore seeks not to go over but as a passenger.

(2.) That spiritual worshippers will not be satisfied with duties unless they enjoy God in them; as was the case with the spouse, Cant. iii. 2, 3, 4, “I will arise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city, found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my



soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me." What avail the galleries, while the King is not seen walking in them? And if this be so, few worship God in spirit, seeing so many can tarry without grief of heart at Jerusalem, come to sermons, go to prayers, &c and never see the King's face.

3. Spiritual worshippers act in their worship from a higher principle than their own spirits, even the Spirit of the Lord. Spiritual worship is a supernatural action, which carnal men are incapable of; and therefore there must be a supernatural principle of it. The most refined hypocrite doth but exercise a gift in worshipping the Lord, and is destitute of the sanctifying Spirit's influences; their own spirits at best do but exert their natural powers in the best duties by them performed. Jude ver. 19, carnal men are called sensual, (Gr.) soul-men, or men of soul, whose own souls are their highest principles; and so it is explained in the next clause, they have not the Spirit, which is necessary to spiritualize a soul. And so, ver. 20, in opposition to these they are bid pray in the Holy Ghost. And the performing of spiritual worship thus, says,

1st, The spiritual worshipper looks not and lippens not to his stock within him for the performance of duties, but comes to duty under a sense of wants and weakness. Hence says the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 5, "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God." He dare not adventure on the Lord's work in his own strength; whereas the conceit hypocrite lippens to and works the duty out of the stock within him; for he is never poor in spirit, Matth. v. 3.

2dly, He looks to the Lord for the influences of his Spirit, crying and spreading out his sails for a gale from above; as did the spouse, Cant. iv. ult., "Awake O north-wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." He stretcheth out the withered hand to Christ. "Here is the word, Lord, send the Spirit to "make it effectual," &c. And this is the exercise of faith absolutely necessary to spiritual worship; for its work is to fetch the fire of the Spirit from Christ our altar, to set to the incense we offer. It is that which travels for ability for duty betwixt Christ's fulness and the creature's emptiness, setting down the blind and lame at Christ's door.

The worshipping of God thus by the Spirit is so necessary, that no worship is pleasing to God but what is thus performed. For Christ will not put in his censer of intercession, but what is the product of his own Spirit. Hence says the Apostle, Eph. ii. 18, "Through Christ we have both an access by one spirit unto the Father." And

it is the inwrought prayer (as that word, James v. 16, may be read ; or a prayer with such vehemency, as one possessed by a spirit doth express himself) that availeth. And a groan thus delivered, is better than a prayer from our own spirits, merely adorned with all the flowers of oratory.

Here a grave question comes to be handled, viz. How we may distinguish betwixt exercising a gift in duty, and acting from the influences of the Spirit? Enlargement will not do it; for nature has its own enlargements, and there may be a straitening in a gift and enlargement in it too, as well as in grace, Zech. xi. ult. Thus God both enlarged and straitened Saul in his gift of wisdom, conduct, and courage. Delight in the duty will not do it either, Ezek. xxxiii. 32. Other folk's gifts may greatly delight us in the exercise of them; and an easy and neat exercise of a man's own gift, may be very pleasant melody in the man's own carnal ears. But,

1. All the influences of the Spirit are humbling; and always the more of them, the more humble and vile they make the man in his own eyes. This may be seen in the angels, who though they are without sin, yet being under the most abundant influences of the Spirit, do cast vile man a copy of humility, Isa. vi. 2, 3, "Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Behold it in the man Christ, to whom the Spirit was given without measure, who was most exemplary in humility, Matth. xi. 29, "Learn of me," says he, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." And it may be observed of all the saints of God, that the more of the influence of the Spirit they had, they were always the more humble; as we may see from the instances of Abraham, Job, and Isaiah. Paul, after he was rapt up to the third heavens, was in his own eyes nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 11. And the reason is plain, for the influences of the Spirit do always carry up the soul to whence they came; as the waters of the deluge, the more they increased, they carried the ark still nearer heaven: and the nearer we come to the light of God's countenance, our wants, weakness, and nothingness, must still appear the more.

On the other hand, the exercise of a gift merely, leaves always the soul in the same unhumbled state it found it. For it is impossible that nature should work the soul into a gracious disposition; and nature's force is too weak to beat down the natural pride of the heart. Nay, nature will build up nature; and the better the gift is exercised, it will swell the heart the more: hence publicans and

harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before Pharisees: Isa. lviii. 3, "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?" And thus many swell with the little gift they get, till they burst all bonds.

2. The Spirit's influences in duty fill the soul with a reverential fear of God in duty, Heb. xii. 28. which is excellent ballast to a light and frothy heart; and always the more of it, the more reverence of God, Gen. xxviii. 17. The reason is, because the Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, Gal. iv. 6; and so will work a child-like disposition in the soul towards God, as towards a father, and a heavenly father: so that the greatest familiarity with God will not work out, but work forward this reverence, Psalm xlv. 9, "Upon thy right hand did stand," in token of reverence, "the queen in gold of Ophir."

But the mere exercise of a gift in duty can never impress this holy reverence of God on the soul; witness that lightness and frothiness of heart which men, that way, bring with them from duty, Prov. vii. 14, 15. For gifts exercised without the Spirit, raise a cloud in the soul; are light in the inside, dark in the outside; whereby the more they see of themselves, the less they see of God; and so their deluded spirits seem the more to be near an equal level with him. To clear this further, I shall propose and resolve some questions: As,

QUESTION 1. May not a hypocrite have in duty a great fear of God on his spirit? ANSWER. A slavish fear of God as almighty and a judge, which casteth out love, a man may have, as Felix had in hearing Paul: but this filial reverential fear of God intermixed with love he cannot have, seeing he has not the Spirit of adoption; whose work it is to knit the saint's hearts to God as a Friend and Father, and to draw them after him with such child-like affections, as makes them delight in his commands and providences. Hence says the apostle, 2 Tim. i. 7, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind;" (Gr.) a healing of mind, viz. from that slavish fear.

QUESTION 2. But can saints have no such slavish fear of God? ANSWER. As all the graces of the Spirit are imperfect and mixed in the saints, so is their fear of God not without a mixture of that slavishness. Hence saith Jesus unto his disciples, Matth. viii. 26, "Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith? It is the same word as 2 Tim. i. 7. It is true, God never again gives them the spirit of bondage; but they may, through unbelief, take up a spirit of bondage again. But seeing they can never again lose the Spirit of adoption, neither

can they lose that grace of filial reverential fear altogether : so that there is still as much difference betwixt them and hypocrites, as betwixt the malefactor fearing the judge, and a son's fearing his father; who appears enraged against him, and about to put him out of his house; which yet will not kill natural affection.

QUESTION 3. But how can the saints fear God as a Father, when they are not assured they are his children? ANSWER. The Spirit's operations depend not on our sense and knowledge of them. This was the wise observation of Solomon, Eccl. xi. 5, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." But as the Spirit sanctifies the saints whether they know it or not, so he works that filial fear of God in them, whether they know it or not. God's children are like those infants, who though they know not their father, yet by their features do father themselves.

3. The influences of the Spirit are always sanctifying, as well as assisting to duty: Zech xii. 10, "I will pour," saith the Lord, "upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications." They are, as the Baptist was, a burning and shining light. When the Spirit was poured out, according to that prophecy, Joel ii. 28; Acts ii. 3, there appeared cloven tongues, as of fire. Behold the nature of the Spirit's influences. (1.) They give a man a new tongue to speak of and to God. It is a dumb devil, and not the Spirit, that makes men tongue-tied in prayers to and praises of God. (2.) They are sanctifying, burning up corruption in their heart and life, as tongues of fire. For as when at Babel languages were confounded, and so the holy tongue in which people were taught remained but with a few, then the world lost the knowledge of God, and grew most corrupt in their lives; so when God was about to remedy this with the gift of tongues, these appeared as of fire, because of the dross of the world that was to be burnt up therewith. Thus the Spirit's influences in duty still tend to make the man more holy in heart and life, set him more at odds with sin, and steel his spirit with new vigour to pursue holiness. Hence we have that speech of the psalmist, Psal. vi. 8, 9, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplications; the Lord will receive my prayer."

But the exercise of a gift leaves the man still as unholy as before, as much in love with lusts as before; as we learn from the case of those of whom Christ says, Matth. vii. 22, 23, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy

name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Truth is prisoner in their heads.

And so much for the marks of spiritual worshippers. I come now to

INFERENCE 3. Learn from this not to think of gifts for duty above what is meet. The matter of gifts for duty is abused by two sorts of persons, the proud hypocrite, and the weak Christian. From this doctrine I have a word to both.

1. To the proud hypocrite. And,

1st. Are those, and only those, God's people, true saints, real Christians, who worship God in the spirit? then ye pitifully miss the mark, when ye are more careful to get the gift than the grace of duty; more concerned to order your tongues than your hearts in prayer. Gifts come from God indeed; but there is less of God in them than grace, and that makes them more desirable than grace to a corrupt heart.

2dly, Be not proud of the gifts for duty that ye have. If ye have a gift of prayer, judgment, or memory, or utterance, &c., think not much of it. Truly we have no such reason; and if we had no more of the hellish gift of discerning our own attainments and excellencies, than of other gifts from the Lord, we would not be so conceity. It is light from an ill air that gives a man such a view of his gifts as to be puffed up with them, 1 Tim. iii. 6. It is such a light as appears before a man's eyes when he has got such a stroke on the head as blinds him. But consider,

(1.) They are God's gifts indeed; but they are but left hand ones, a crown that he can set on your head with one hand, and within a little take from you with the other, as he did Saul's. They are of that sort that are common to Christ's sheep and the devil's goats. Grace is of another nature, a right hand gift, with which God gives his heart, and is without repentance.

(2.) They can help you to the outside of duty; but, alas! they can reach no farther; and what for serves the carcase of duty? Ye may worship God with a gift; but that is not worshipping in spirit, and so cannot set you among the children. The weak Christian that would think shame to speak before you now, shall be brought in, when the door of heaven shall be cast in your face for ever, if ye have no more.

(3.) Your gifts may be useful to others; but, alas! they are useless to you as to any spiritual profit. Hence says the apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3, "Though I speak with the tongues of men, and

of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. All is yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come," O believers; even hypocrites' gifts are yours; they are given them, not for their own sake, but the sake of others. The carpenters that built the ark, the profit of their gift came to Noah, not to them, for they perished in the deluge. So was the case with the raven that fed Elijah. Your gifts may be means to save others, while ye perish yourselves.

(4.) You may go to hell for all your gifts, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2; Matth. vii. 22, 23, forecited. Light without heat serves only to show the way to the place where there is heat without light, *i. e.* to outer darkness, where the fire is never quenched. Gifts without grace are like a ship without balast, that will easily perish. And when such a man is sinking into hell, his gifts will be like a bag of gold on a drowning man, precious in itself, but will only help to sink him the deeper. The devil has greater gifts than the best gifted in the world; and some have thought it was his pride of his endowments that ruined him; however, it is certain he is ruined notwithstanding his gifts.

2. Some weak Christians are ready to be discouraged because they want those gifts for duty that they see others have, and from thence may be ready to conclude they have neither the gift nor grace of duty. To such I say,

1st, Your conclusion is rash; grace may be where there is but a very small measure of gifts: 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." It was the plain man Jacob (Gen. xxv. 27.) who was the prevailer with God; and the Spirit helps our infirmities with groanings which cannot be uttered," not with flourishes of rhetoric.

2dly, It is not the gift of duty, but the grace of it, that is acceptable with God. Grace with little gifts will go far, even to the throne

of God: Rom. vii. 26, 27, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." As a father loves the lisping speeches of his child better than the empty well-worded compliments of another, so doth the Lord the duties of his own people. The glory of the second house was to be greater than the first; there was more gold in the first, but more grace, even Christ in the second. So if Christ be in thy soul, there will be much grace, however little of gifts. If a beggar come to you, ye do not wait till he show his parts, but till he show his needs; and if he show you his sores, though he speak very ill, it is enough, he is a needy beggar, he must be served.

3dly, Great gifts had need of a great measure of grace to be ballast to them. And it is God's goodness to some, that they have no great gifts, they have so little grace to guide them with. God does with them as a wiser father with his son that has but a little stock; he sets him down in a little farm, lest too much in hand should master him. It may be observed, that the men, the saints of greatest parts, have usually got the sharpest exercises to be ballast to their gifts, lest their heads turning over heavy for their hearts, should truss them up, 2 Cor. xii. 7. And ye see how it did in Solomon's case, the wisest of men; his gifts mastered his grace, and made him a fool to a degree. And how it broke his bones, see in his penitentials, Eccl. *per totum*. Take for instance Heman, a man of vast parts, 1 Kings iv. 31, compare his Psalm. lxxxviii. Job as an oracle for wit among his neighbours, Job xxix. 8, 9, 10—21—25. Paul the only scholar among the apostles, see Acts ix. and 2 Cor. xii. Let the Christian be thankful for what he has.

4thly, Thou hast the thing that is better, that is, grace; a little gold is better than a lump of lead. Dost thou come with thy heart to God in duty? aimest thou at the enjoyment of himself in duty? goest thou out of thyself to the Lord for ability for duty? then though thy gifts are very small, thou worshippest in spirit. Good meat never tastes the worse that it is served up in a wooden dish; it is as good as in a golden platter, though the last makes the greatest dash in the eyes of spectators. If thy affections to God in duty be fervent, though your words be not very fine, they will never be cast in heaven for this.

I discharge them that are possessed with the dumb devil, to meddle with this I have been saying. They will not bow a knee to

God, because, forsooth, they cannot pray. They will not open a mouth for God, because they have not the gift that others have; they will not speak of spiritual things, and care as little to hear them spoken of. They are grossly ignorant of the principles of religion; but they are at as little pains to get knowledge, and will not. But now, say they, we have not the gift, but God knows our hearts. But I tell you that are such, ye have neither the gift nor the grace of duty. It is true, God's children may be stammerers in speaking to or of him, but none of them are dumb like you. Their want of gifts is not such as to make them neglect the very matter of external duty as ye do. And what they have not, they desire to have, and endeavour to win at, that they may glorify God with it.

INFERENCE 4. Learn from this not to think much of the bare performance of duties. We have need to have our thoughts of our duties corrected. And this doctrine affords,

1. A confounding lesson to formal hypocrites anent their duties; and that is, that all the duties they have been working at all their days, are naught in the sight of God, because they were never spiritual worshippers. Perhaps ye will be counting ye have served God so many years; ye pray twice, thrice, or oftener in a day, heard so many sermons, received so many communions, &c. and be ready to value yourselves on this. But dreadfully will the count come down when God looks on it; it will turn to nothing at all in point of duty. Nay, ye will find them all set down in another count, the count of your works of iniquity, where they will make so many black items. O how will the man's heart fail him to hear what justice has to lay to his charge! *Imprimis*, unbelief, not believing in the Son of God; *item*, God's name taken in vain in so many pretended prayers; *item*, so many sermons heard without faith, love, and practice; *item*, so often bread and wine eaten at God's table, while there was no feeding on a crucified Christ, &c. Matth. vii. 22, 23, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Whence observe, the wonderful works they did for Christ, which themselves and others wondered at, are in Christ's account works of iniquity. We make a tripartite division of people in the visible church. (1.) Some that serve God sincerely. (2.) Some that serve him hypocritically. (3.) Some that serve him not at all. God makes but two sorts, casting the two last into one, Mal. iii. 18, "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and



him that serveth him not. Compare ver. 17, "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Whence learn (1.) The righteous only serve God; as for others, whatever be the difference among them, they agree in that, both profane folk and hypocrites, that they serve not God. (2.) A man who is not a child of God, can perform no service to God in his account; slaves' service is no service, Hos. vii. 14. The Lord's people are the children that serve him as a Father.

2. This doctrine affords a humbling lesson to the godly anent their duties. Many of your duties are naught in the sight of God. If only spiritual worshippers be real saints, ye act not as saints in any duties but those that are done in the spirit. And truly if this be so, it will do two things.

*1st*, It will bring your great number of duties down to very few, so that all ye have done for God may be soon told. Since ye were acquainted with Christ, ye durst never perhaps rise up nor lie down without praying; but when these things come before the Lord, it will be found there has been found many a day and week ye have prayed none at all; many a sabbath in the kirk when ye have not heard the sermon; many a sweet portion of Scripture ye never read to this day, though ye have gone over and over it again.

*2dly*, It will make many a long duty of yours very short. Let that be taken off the duty that was not done in the spirit, and off it must go, many a long prayer and sermon will be brought to a very few sentences that ye have heard or prayed; and many a sentence broken off in the midst where the heart left the man. I trow the skin and the dung of your sacrifices that must be burnt without the camp, will be more bulk than all the flesh of them that has come on God's altar.

3. It affords a necessary lesson to both, namely, Ye need Christ, ye cannot be without him. O how does the profane world need Christ! But, O Sirs, ye need him as really when ye are going to your prayers, as the man that is going in the devil's fetters to his cups and his drunken companions needs him; ye need him as really when ye are going to the sermon on the Lord's day, as he who profanely casts contempt on God's ordinance, by loitering at home on the Lord's day. Ye need him when ye are mourning over your sins, as well as others when they are revelling, and going the broad gate with tabret and pipe.

*1st*, Ye need himself. Sinners, ye need himself, to be united to him, to be one spirit with him. Hence says he, John xv. 6, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ;

and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." If he would give you never so many gifts, if ye get not himself ye are nothing, "ye can do nothing," ver. 5. There is nothing can make up his room. An eternal barrenness will lie on your souls; the heavens will be as brass above you, and the earth as iron beneath you, if ye get not himself. And the axe of God's judgments will hew you down with your wild grapes, as well as others that have no shew of fruit, if ye get not himself. If ye grow on your own root, though ye should water it every day with your tears, yea tears of your blood, if ye get not Christ, your root shall be as rottenness, and your blossom shall go up as dust. Root and fruit shall be destroyed for ever from the presence of the Lord.

Saints, ye need himself, to be more and more closely united to him, to be growing up into him, Eph. iv. 15. According to your faith so will it be unto you, not only in point of privilege, but in point of duty, in point of holiness. Ye have come to Christ, but ye must be always coming to him, 1 Pet. ii. 4. Mind to whom that was said, John xv. 4, 5, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." Ye need him for "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. And it is he that God has made "our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Ye need him for all.

2dly, Ye need his blood. Sinners, ye need it; ye need it to make your persons accepted, to consecrate you for servants to the Lord, Heb. ix. 19. to be priests unto God: and without the sprinkling of that blood on you, God will no more regard your services, than a sacrifice by one who was never consecrated a priest; for all spiritual worshippers are made priests, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Ye need it to take away the guilt of your dead works of duties, which, till it be removed from your conscience, utterly unfits you to serve the living God; as they which were defiled with the touch of a dead body might not come into the tabernacle; to which the apostle alludes, Heb. ix. 14.

Saints, ye need his blood. It is true, ye are washed in that blood already, but new defilements require new washings, John xiii. 10. There is an allusion there to the priests under the law, who were to bathe their whole bodies in the morning, but notwithstanding at every new service through the day they were to wash their hands and feet ere they approached the altar. Now, ye are washed in

respect of your state, that continues ; but ye must still be washing for the iniquities of your heels, that at every turn are compassing you about. Therefore the sea of glass stands always betwixt the saints and the throne, Rev. iv. 6.

*3dly*, Ye need his Spirit. Sinners, ye need him ; there is no worshipping in spirit without the Spirit. They are but lifeless carcases of duty that are performed without the Spirit. That which died of itself was utterly unfit for a sacrifice ; and such are your best performances without the Spirit. Now, it is from him the Spirit comes, Rev. iii. 1.

Saints also need the Spirit ; for it is not enough to spiritual worship that the Spirit dwells in us, but that the Spirit influence us to and in duty. The Spirit must help our infirmities, stirring up the fire within us, putting grace in exercise, otherwise our performance will be but mere bodily exercise.

INFERENCE 5. *Lastly*, To shut up this, be exhorted and warned to take heed how ye worship God ; in what manner ye perform every duty ; labouring to be spiritual in all. And there are two things ye would in this mainly endeavour to study.

1. To get the heart brought up to every duty. Pray, confess, thank, petition, hear, &c., from the heart : Col. iii. 23, " Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily ;" (Gr.) " work it from your soul." Gold is fetched out of the bowels of the earth, and pearls out of the bottom of the sea ; and spiritual worship comes from the inner man, " the hidden man of the heart ;" while external duties, like common stones, are found lying every where on the surface of the earth. We should be fervent, seething hot, as the word imports, while serving the Lord, Rom. xii. 11.

2. To go out of yourselves for ability to duty. This was Joshua's intent when he told the people that had engaged to duty, Josh. xxiv. 19, " Ye cannot serve the Lord ; for he is an holy God : he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins." When we go to duties we should do as Elijah did, lay the sacrifice on the altar, and then look to the Lord for fire from heaven to consume it, 1 Kings xviii. 33, 37, 38. The Spirit of the Lord is that fire from heaven which burns our sacrifices of duties, and makes the smoke of them ascend towards heaven for a sweet-smelling savour. And as no sacrifice was accepted but what was burnt by that fire from heaven, hence Psalm xx. 3, " Accept [Heb. Reduce to ashes] thy burnt sacrifice ;" so no duty is accepted but what is by the influence of the Spirit. When, then, we go to duty, sit down on your knees, &c., here is the sacrifice ; but where is the fire ? If it be struck out of our own spirits merely, it will make an offensive

smoke; but an acceptable flame, if from heaven we fetch it by the greedy looks of faith. Consider,

1st, God is a Spirit, and therefore must be worshipped in spirit, John iv. 24. How unsuitable is mere bodily exercise in religion to the nature of God! Were we to serve dead idols, a dead formal worship might serve. But the living God must have lively service, or it cannot be accepted: Rev. iii. 19, "Be zealous therefore and repent."

2dly, God takes special notice how duties are done. Take heed how ye hear, and so how ye pray, &c. God will have his service well done, as well as done, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9: yea, he reckons it the main thing in duty; so necessary, that the want of it alters the very nature of duty, and turns it to sin, Hos. vii. 14; 1 Cor. xi. 20.

3dly, Your duties are the touchstone of your faith, of your interest in Christ, &c.; ye have much need to take heed to them. Spiritual worship is the mark of a child of God; so that by your worship ye will prove either that ye are real saints, or that ye are but hypocrites.

And so much for the first character of a saint, namely, that he is one that worships God in the spirit.

II. We come now to the *second* character of a real saint he is one that "rejoiceth in Christ Jesus." In the *first* character a saint is represented as a great worker in good works and service to God, going with his heart into the heart, marrow, and soul of duties; and therein going beyond hypocrites, that never go farther in than the outward court with their duties, their duties being like themselves, "having not the Spirit;" while the sincere person works in duties, as if he minded to win heaven by them. It would then be expected that those duties should be the joy, confidence, comfort, and life of his soul. Sure, they that have much less reason, make that use of their duties; but the saints do not so. Though they do more, they trust less in what they do than others. Nay they overlook them as to any confidence in them before the Lord; and though they "worship in spirit," they "rejoice in Christ Jesus." Though they bring their hearts to duty, yet that is not the thing that keeps up their hearts before the Lord, but Christ. In him they rejoice, or, as the original hath it, "they glory:" which is more than simply to rejoice. It imports a glorying or boasting with a strutting out of the neck, and casting up of the head in a boasting way, Psal. xlv. 8. It is the soul's acquiescing with joy in Christ as its only hope against all that might harm it, not being ashamed to profess it.

DOCTRINE. That is the real Christian, who though he worship God in spirit, yet rejoiceth in Christ Jesus.

In handling this doctrine, I shall shew what it is to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and in what sense the true Christian rejoices in him. And ye would notice this as a mark of a true saint.

But there is an objection meets us here in the threshold, that must be removed. It is this: If Joy in Christ be a mark of a gracious state, what shall come of poor doubting trembling Christians, who go mourning without the sun, that stand most in need of marks that they may rejoice in Christ; while others that can rejoice in Christ, do already see their interest? ANSWER. The mark in the text is given by the infallible Spirit, and therefore doubtless is consistent with what he elsewhere teacheth in his word, and must be so understood as not to exclude the mournful worshipper in spirit. But to clear the point, I offer these two things.

1. There is a radical or habitual joy in Christ; which is a disposition of soul inclining and bending the soul towards Christ as the spring and object of its joy before the Lord: for as when God made Adam, Eccl. vii. 29, with a frame of soul inclining to the will of God, this disposition did denominate him righteous before he had done one righteous act; so when in the new creation, the Lord puts this disposition in the soul, it may denominate him a rejoicer in Christ, even before he actually rejoice in him. Then there is an actual joy or rejoicing in Christ, wherein the soul acting from that disposition solaceth itself, in the Lord in greater or lesser measure. Upon this I say,

*1st*, Every believer, even in his darkest hours, has this radical and habitual joy in Christ: Psalm xcvii. 11, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." As there is a worm of sorrow at the root of every gourd under which the wicked doth rejoice, Prov. xiv. 13; so there is a seed of joy even in the saints' mournings, that will get above the clods in due time. There are always some pieces of heaven in their hottest hells. There are everlasting arms underneath, which for the time are only keeping the soul from sinking: but we may say of them, as Naomi of Boaz, when he had given Ruth six measures of Barley to help them to live a while, "The man," says she, Ruth iii. ult." "will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day," till you be mistress of all he has. So these will not rest till they have lifted up the soul to a fulness of joy in the Lord.

*2dly*, Though a believer does not always rejoice actually before the Lord, more than he does always act faith, which sometimes is not

in exercise even in the best; yet when he does rejoice before the Lord he rejoices in Christ: Gal. vi. 14, "God forbid," says the Apostle "that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." If the believer's feast day come but seldom about, yet when it comes, he keeps it in the white raiment of Christ's righteousness, the only garment fit for a day of joy. And he will not lay off his blacks or mournings till Christ send him other garments, Isa. lxi 1—3; Lam. iii. 39.

2. There is actual joy; which is twofold. (1.) There is a sensible joy, Luke i. 47, "My spirit," says Mary, "hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; leapt for joy," as the word signifies. And this God's people sometimes get in Christ so as their very souls are made to leap within them, while the wonder at his love and rejoice, and rejoice and wonder. And so much are we addicted to sense while in this body, that we will scarcely allow any thing but this to be called joy. But that is a mistake: for, (2.) There is a rational joy; which is the satisfaction the reasonable soul has in that which it loves and desires. We see this in the man Christ, who being a man of sorrows, had little of that sensible joy while in the world. It is remarked of him that he had one hour, or part of an hour of it, Luke x. 21, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit;" clearly teaching it was not his ordinary. Notwithstanding Christ had an abiding joy, John xv. 11, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full," to wit a solid satisfaction in the welfare of his disciples. The original words in these places clear this difference; the former being the same with that, Luke i. 47, the other importing nothing of exultation, but a joy in things prospering with a person.

Now, although the believer may but seldom have this sensible joy in Christ; and I know not but the spirit of heaviness may so sit down on some, that they may never taste of this sensible joy till they be in heaven, Heb. ii. 15; yet every believer habitually and ordinarily, as they are in the exercise, of other graces have this rational joy in Christ: for if the kingdom of God be righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17, wherever it comes, these must be there too. And this I take to be the joy aimed at in the text, as appears by its being opposed to hypocrites' confidence in the flesh; which speaks forth rather a rational complacency they have in the flesh, than any sensible joy.

The soul's union with Christ is often held forth in the Scripture under the notion of a marriage; and we read of a twofold joy in this. (1.) The joy wherewith the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, Is. lxii. 5. (2.) The joy wherewith a husband, in the continu-

ance of his married state, rejoiceth over his wife, Prov. v. 18. The former is an emblem of that sensible joy which believers sometimes have in Christ, and particularly at the time of their first receiving Christ, while they are yet but young converts, and are fed with lumps of sense, Hos. ii. 14. An instance of it we have in the eunuch, whom it is said, that "he went on his way rejoicing," Acts viii. 39. But although that sensible joy do not last, more than the fondness of a new married couple; yet there is an habitual rational joy, which remains, as other graces, with the people of God, whereof the latter is a good resemblance. For as they that have made a good choice, though they may remit of their fondness, yet continue to have a solid rational joy in one another, which though it be not so violent as the other, yet is more strong and fixed: so it is here. This is that which is here given as a mark of a true saint.

And in regard hypocrites may have a great sensible joy, Matth. xiii. 20, whatever sensible joy any pretend to must be examined by this, for this is the root on which all true sensible joy doth grow; and these joyful flashes of hypocrites will be found to spring from another root.

Now, the nature of this rejoicing in Christ lies in these four things.

1. A holy complacency in Christ.
2. A rolling of the soul over on Christ for all.
3. A rest of the heart in him as a fit match for the soul.
4. A confession of him unto salvation.

*First*, There is in this rejoicing in Christ, a holy complacency in him. The believer has got a view and trial of Christ, and he is well pleased with him. There is a mutual joy of the parties in the spiritual marriage. Where the soul is "Beulah, married to the Lord," it is also "Hephzi-bah, the Lord has a complacency in it," Is. lxii. 4. And so have they in him, Mal. iii. 1, "The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple: even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." All the Jews professed this as God's people, and the godly among them really had it. Though they are eagle-eyed ones in spiritual things, in comparison of the blind world; yet they spy no fault in the mystery of Christ, but are well pleased with, and acquiesce in the grand device of salvation through Christ crucified. The Father made choice of him, carved out every piece of his work to him, in the matter of the redemption of sinners; and he is well pleased with his choice, Is. xlii. 1; Matth. iii. 17; 2 Chron. vii. 16: and it is unanimously approved in every point by the multitude of them who are "called, and faithful, and chosen;" who all with one voice cry, "Grace, grace to it;" grace,

grace to the choice ; grace, grace to the contrivance, and every part of it. Sirs, since men lost the way to happiness, but not the desire of it, they have chosen new gods and guides, some one, some another ; and “ every man will walk in the name of his god.” God the Father has made a choice for them of a Captain of salvation ; the gospel is the pleading of the excellency of this choice, and puts the trying vote to the world, Approve, or, Not ? The plurality has always voted, Not approve ; but believers have with their souls approved the choice, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. And if ye be amongst the approvers, take his own word for it, ye are his, Matth. xi. 6, “ Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

Now, we cannot rejoice in nor be well pleased with any thing unless we see a suitableness in it to us. When a man has made his choice, if afterwards he find it unsuitable to him, this kills his joy in it : he sees he was mistaken ; for when he made the choice, it was upon its supposed suitableness. Accordingly the believer rejoicing in Christ, surely beholds his absolute suitableness unto that for which he has made choice of him. And there is a threefold suitableness of Christ here to be noticed.

*First*, There is a suitableness of Christ, and the mystery of Christ, to the divine perfections or attributes concerned in the salvation of sinners, that is sweetly discerned by every believer, more or less clearly, and acquiesced in heartily. Hence says the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24, “ We preach Christ crucified—unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” There is no man that knows what God is, and what salvation is, that has got that matter of eternal salvation laid close home to his heart, but will know well on what he will venture his soul before such a holy God. They will see that the holiness, justice, &c. of God are such fixed rocks, as they will never expect they shall be removed for them ; and therefore will absolutely despare of salvation in any way inconsistent with the honour and perfections of God. Hence then it plainly follows, that the soul which indeed rejoiceth in Christ, hath seen this suitableness of Christ to the divine perfections. Blessed are ye then, O believers ; for ye see and acquiesce in this way of salvation, as suitable in that respect. And that this character may have the more weight with all the saints, and the naughtiness of others may be discovered, consider,

1. As there is a special illumination that believers get, and to which the most refined hypocrite is a stranger, as appears from John iv. 10 ; Psalm ix. 10. Christ’s differencing the sincere and hypocrite as wise and foolish ; so there is an illumination in the knowledge of the mystery of Christ its suitableness to the divine perfec-



tions, that is peculiar to his saints, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; 2 Cor. iv. 6. And therefore the whole of the work of grace comes under the name of the revealing of Christ in a soul, Gal. i. 16. And what is the ruin of many that get convictions and reform, but the want of this saving discovery of Christ? So that all their religion ends in a legal Christless turn given to their lives.

2. How few are there who ever dig so deep in the sin of their hearts and lives, as once to put it to the question, whether their salvation be consistent with the honour of God, or not? Unto some men God, Christ, and sin, are veiled all their days; they never get a true view of any of them; and so whatever they do in religion, is just a leap at random, even as it falls, which is the import of that word, "walking contrary unto the Lord," Lev. xxvi. 23: and their believing (to call it so) is but a venturing of their souls on they know not what. And as for many others that have had some exercise about their soul's state on their spirits, they were never brought so low, but they thought ever if they could mourn for sin enough, reform, and believe in Christ, without any eye to his atoning blood, shed to retrieve the honour of God impaired by sin, all would be well. They were never so low as to see salvation so far above them as the honour of God has set it, never to be brought down but upon a just satisfaction to the honour of God for what they have done against it; and that a satisfaction utterly beyond the reach of their sufferings, reforming, repenting, believing, &c. To which were they brought, they would rejoice in Christ Jesus as suited to that work, the repairing the honour of the divine perfections, which stand betwixt salvation and them, 1 John i. 7, "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." But how can they rejoice in a salve for a sore under which they never smarted? Rom. v. 11.

3. Consider, all men as they are sons of the first Adam, are sons of pride, who see no glory but in the way of the first covenant; which is, that God should have his honour from them whom he saves. And because man, by the breaking of that covenant, lost his eyes, which are never under it restored, therefore they have but low thoughts of the honour of God. And hence we find Adam staying in Paradise, like a shameless adulteress in the house of her husband, till God drove him out, Gen. iii. 24. with such a sonnet as that, Jer. xi. 15, "What hath my beloved to do in mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many?" And while they have such low thoughts of it, it is no wonder they think little may serve to repair it. And the pride of the heart being unsubdued, they can see as little glory in Christ crucified repairing it, as a proud bankrupt would see in his being declared unable to pay his

debt, and one paying it for him, while he thinks he might have paid it himself, or it was not so much but might have been forgiven.

*Secondly*, There is a suitableness of Christ to the case of the soul, which the believer sees, and so is well pleased with, and acquiesceth in Christ as thus suited to his case. Unless the believer saw this, he could never rejoice in him. If ye would lodge a starving man in a palace, clothe him in the most costly attire, and fill his pockets with gold, behold he is at the point of death for lack of meat, and what good can these do to him, how can he rejoice in these, they are not meat, and so not suitable to his case? Now, the child of God has seen his case, and Christ's suitableness to it every way, and so approves of and acquiesceth in him as such, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Every soul feels a want of something; and since Adam broke, and turned himself and all his posterity beggars, they are going up and down among the creatures seeking supply for their wants, and salve for their sores. Now, whatever they can purchase among them, though it promises fair afar off, yet when they come near and apply it, still they find it unsuitable; it will not do: "The bed is shorter" than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower, than that he can wrap himself in it." And this makes the heart secretly sigh, while it is attacked with a new dissatisfaction on every new disappointment; though they are so besotted, as that when they are "wearied in the greatness of their way; yet say they not, There is no hope," Is. lvii. 10. but go out again to beg at those doors where they have got a thousand naysays before. Now, while the elect soul is thus wandering among the rest, the Lord opens its eyes, as he did Hagar's to see the well, Gen. xxi. and Christ is discovered to the soul: and the surprised soul cries, John i. 45, "I have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write." Now, says the soul, this is my rest, and here I will stay. Hence is that parable, Matth. xiii. 45, 46, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

An excellent emblem of this ye have in that, Mark v. 25—24. concerning the woman which had an issue of blood twelve years. Where notice, (1.) She never tries Christ till she had tried others one after another, and found all physicians of no value. (2.) When she hears of Christ, she believes, and by faith concludes, there was a physician now suited to her case. (3.) There was a great multi-

tude about Christ that stood as much in need of him as she: but she saw his suitableness to her case, while they saw not how suitable he was to theirs; therefore she only gets the touch of faith. (4.) She thrusts forward, leaves all her other physicians, and takes him for, and instead of all, as fully and only suited to her case.

Now, among all those things in which the saints see Christ's suitableness, I shall only instance in these two.

1. They see a glorious suitableness to their case in the person of Christ, as he is God-man, Is. ix. 6: that the Mediator as such a person is a contrivance to them of infinite wisdom, answering at once the honour of God, and the sinner's necessities; in which the child of God heartily acquiesceth. The man sees himself by nature in a sad case, which the whole creation cannot help. There is a breach betwixt God and the sinner; what man, what angel, can be daysman, able to lay hands upon both? Why, here is one so high that he is "the Father's fellow" Zech. xiii. 7; yet so low as that he is "bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh." He is nearly related to both. O suitable person! The sinner is separate from God, that is hell begun on earth; how shall the sinner be reunited to God? Will the sinner attempt immediately to unite with God? God's justice and holiness staves him off; they will not, cannot cleave together, as iron is not mixed with clay. Can angels unite them? Nay, they needed another themselves to be a bond of continuance, though not of beginning or making their own union with God. But behold in the person of Christ how it may be done. Man's nature is united already to the divine nature in the person of Christ. Behold our new relation to God, which the angels themselves cannot boast of. Here is an union for a foundation of the mystical union which the soul is seeking. Here is a suitable meeting-place betwixt God and sinners, where they may unite again with the safety of the divine honour; "The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily; God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and in the flesh of Christ, the sinner may meet God with safety of his life: and so both unite in him. The sinner has fallen, like Lucifer, as a star from heaven; how can he get up again? behold Christ as the ladder reaching betwixt heaven and earth, set as low as the sinner could wish in his human nature, and reaching as high as he can desire in his divine nature. O glorious person suited to the sinner's case!

2. The saints see a glorious suitableness to their case in the offices of Christ, and such a suitableness as makes them acquiesce in him.

1st, He is a Prophet, the interpreter of the Father's mind, who

was in the Father's bosom from eternity, and is privy to all his counsels; and so sent of the Father to be "the light of the world." O then he is just such an one as the soul wants, Luke ii. 32, "A light to lighten the Gentiles." The soul looks within itself, and sees itself a mass of darkness and confusion, at every turn ready to mistake the way; and walking through a wilderness full of pits of destruction, cannot but despair of ever falling on the right way, keeping it, or coming safe to the end of their journey, if they get not a guide. Now, the soul sees Christ as "the sun of righteousness, the wisdom of God, and the power of God; and so acquiesceth in him, Psalm v. 8; Is. xlii. 16; knowing, that as there is a fulness of darkness in them, there is a fulness of light in him; to whom they may go with all their doubts, and fears, and perplexities, and get all their ravelled cases redd, and learn from him the case they cannot give a name to themselves, Judg. v. 10, 11.

*2dly*, He is a Priest, who has made the atonement by the sacrifice of himself, and is gone now within the vail to present to the Father his own blood, and thereupon to intercede for sinners, and ever liveth for that end, Heb. vii. 26. Hence says the apostle, Rom. viii. 34, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." O how suitable is this in the saint's eyes to a sinner's case? When sin and guilt is laid home to a man's conscience, there will be many questions in the heart. O, says the soul, "wherewithal shall I come before the Lord?" How shall I get the demands of this law that has me by the throat satisfied, while they run so high above all I can do or suffer? What is able to quench this fire of wrath that has gone out against me for my sins? How will a pardon be obtained? or conscience purged of guilt? But Christ being discovered to the soul in the glory of his priestly office, easeth the distressed soul. For in him he sees all the demands of justice and the law answered to the full; an everlasting righteousness brought in, in which a sinner may stand before the Lord; atoning, peace-making blood, that is able to quench the fire of God's wrath, wash out the deepest dyed guilt, to cancel all the items that stand in justice's debt-book against them, so as they shall never more be chargeable on them, and to purge the conscience from dead works. And thus the soul acquiesceth in him as the only refuge.

And then for his intercession the soul beholds a glorious suitability to its case therein; which makes them rejoice and glory in him, Rom. viii. 34, above-cited. They have much business in the court of heaven, and they cannot manage it. O how sweet to have a friend at court, through whose intercession the purchase of his

blood comes to be first applied to the soul, John xvii. 20, 21, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word : that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ; that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." They are offending every day ; O but in him they have a constant resident at the court of heaven to take up emergent differences, so that it cannot come to a total rupture betwixt God and them, Heb. ix. 24, "For Christ is entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us." But how shall guilty creatures have access to the King's presence ? Why, through him, Eph. iii. 12 ; for he is the Father's favourite, the great Secretary of heaven, who leads by the hand (as that word signifies) the suppliants into the presence-chamber. They dare not present their petitions in their own name ; then he takes them and presents them, and the Father hears them out of his mouth ; and so they cannot but come speed, when he offers them with the incense of his intercession upon the merits of his blood, Rev. viii. 3—5.

3dly, He is a King, and that one "against whom there is no rising up." He is "the King of glory. But who is this King of glory ? Even the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," Psal. xxiv. 8. Surely I am, looking to the white side of this displayed glory, every soul that has a spark of grace will say, then he is just whom I want, whom my soul desires. O suitable King of glory ! The soul sees it must fight, and will fight ; but O weak, weak in battle is it. It is not man enough for the corrupt nature, the ill heart, no not to turn away the face of one of the least of that hellish master's captains ; unable to grapple with and overcome the least lust in its own strength, more than a child can grapple with a giant. Satan is too hard for them ; the world too sore, especially having friends within them ready to side with these enemies. O what a glorious figure must this King of glory make in their eyes in this case ? What rejoicing of heart must the appearance of the Captain of the Lord's host bring to them ? Isa. xxxiii. 22, "The Lord is our King, he will save us." In him will the saints acquiesce, and look no where else for help, but be content to go at his back against all the powers of hell, to rencounter Goliath, though they have but stones of the brook for the attack, and adventure on the walls of the cursed Jericho, though they can do nothing but walk about them, and give the shout ; for, says the soul, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

O Sirs, have ye ever seen this suitableness of Christ to your case ? and do your soul's acquiesce in him as such, as only and fully suit-

able to it? (for that is the sense of the text.) Is *he* and only *he*, in your eyes, the party fit for you in your case? ye are they then that rejoice in Christ Jesus. But, ah! it is to be feared that Christ is a veiled beauty to many of us, and that there are not a few in whose eyes there are other things as suitable and more for them, than that Christ in whom the saints see this heart-attracting glory: Cant. v. 9, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?" Consider for evidences of this.

1. There is a generation whose hopes of pardon and salvation are built on the foundation of the mercy of an absolute unatoned God. They see no need of the Lord Jesus; they know him not as the only mean of conveyance of saving mercy to sinners. Do these rejoice in Christ? No, they cannot, nor never will, till their hearts be wounded with an arrow they have not yet felt. Know ye, that the earth shall sooner be forsaken, and the rocks shall sooner be removed for you, than ye shall ever taste of mercy to salvation but through Christ. If ye be out of Christ, mercy cannot save you, seeing it cannot act in prejudice of justice, and God cannot deny himself: Acts iv. 12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." If thou rejoice in Christ, and hast seen his suitableness, the sight of an absolute God will be a terror to thee, and thou wilt desire to know no God but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. i. 3; nor wilt thou dare to look to God, but through the vail of the flesh of Christ, Heb. x. 19, 20. Thou wilt expect no pardon, but what comes streaming through the blood of the Mediator, though thou had a flood of tears to fetch it in; nor no embraces from the Lord, but with arms dyed red in that precious atoning blood; nor a smile of his face, but through his wounds. It is the character of Christ's church and people, 1 Thess. i. 1. they are "in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ;" whereby is not only signified their union with both, 1 John i. 3. but they are distinguished from the now rejected synagogue, 1 Thess. ii. 16, which worship the Father, but kill his Son, ver. 15; and therefore please not God, *ib.*: for "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him, John v. 23.

2. There is a generation, who, like Moab, have been at ease from their youth. They confess they are sinners, and who denies that? but they have hitherto stood out proof against convictions of their sin and misery; and that question, "What shall I do to be saved?" never came so close home to them, as these, "What shall I eat?"

or, "Wherewithall shall I be clothed?" And consequently they never saw Christ so suitable to their case, as earthly supplies; for the joy in the remedy cannot rise higher than the apprehension of the evil of the disease. And amongst those who have had their convictions, there are not a few with whom that axe never went to the root of the tree, but the trouble they have had has risen only from their actual sins; but the sin of their nature, that root fixed in the earth with bands of iron and brass, has still lain out of their sight: and therefore vows, resolutions, watchings against and mourning over these have still appeared more suitable to their case, than the sanctifying spirit of Christ, who alone can change our nature. But if thou art a rejoicer in Christ, thou hast got the best view of his glorious suitableness to thy case out of the depths of the corruption of thy nature: Rom. vii. 24, 25, "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." See how the Lord raised Elisha's credit amongst the people of Jericho, that they might own him for the prophet of the Lord; it was by healing of their waters, 2 Kings ii. 19—22. As for the waters that were in their vessels within their houses, they might several ways correct the unwholesomeness of it themselves; and if nothing would do, they could have cast it to the door: and if Elisha had gone through all their houses and healed their waters they had fetched in their vessels, it would have been a shortlived kindness to them; for when that had been spent, they would have been just where they were before: but Elisha goes to the spring, casts in the salt there, and miraculously heals it; and this sets him on high in their esteem. The application is easy, to Christ's healing of our corrupt natures.

3. There is a generation who are easily diverted from the pursuit of an interest in Christ. If they can get it with ease, well and good it is; but if not, they will let it go: Prov. xxi. 25, "The desire of the slothful killeth him: for his hands refuse to labour." Hence when conscience is awakened with some, they will cry for an interest in Christ; they will follow religion with some vigour for a while, but not finding that sweetness in religion that they expected, their tired souls fall even asleep again in the lap of their lusts. As when the Lord brought his people out of Egypt, there was a mixed multitude, that were not Israelites, who went out with them, Exod. xii. 38: they would stay no longer in Egypt, but away with that happy people to the happy land flowing with milk and honey. But when they came to the wilderness, and found not what they expected, they fell a lusting, Num. xi. 4. and downwards; the heat of their hearts after Canaan was cooled, and many a rueful look

they gave back to Egypt again. And the very fish, leeks, and onions of Egypt, that they had eaten there, were sweeter to them than all the milk and honey of Canaan, which they thought they were never like to taste; as appears from the complaints of the Israelites, which they learned from that Egyptian rabble, ver. 5, 6. Such cannot rejoice in Christ; he is not to them either only or fully suitable. But if thou art one that rejoiceth in Christ, thou hast, like Caleb and Joshua, another spirit, even to follow the Lord fully, Num. xiv. 24. Such will leave no mean un essayed in order to get an interest in Christ. It is a matter of the greatest weight, and necessity has no law. Hunger will break through stone walls, Mark vii. 24. If they must die, they will die at Christ's door, knowing with the lepers, 2 Kings vii. 4. that if they go back to the city whence they came, the famine is in that city, and they will die there; and therefore they will put on Ruth's generous resolution, Ruth i. 15, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;" being as she stedfastly minded, or, as the word is strengthening herself, to wit, against all the discouragements and temptations she had to go back.

4. There is a generation that was never brought to be content to part with all for Christ, and to have him on any terms. There is still some idol that is dearer to them than to part with at any rate. Such a one was that young man, Mark x. 21, 22, "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, one thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." He loved eternal life well, and therefore went away sorrowful; but he loved the world better, and therefore he went away. These cannot rejoice in Christ as only and fully suited to their case. If ye saw a man priggling in a market, and resolved not to have the commodity at the rate proposed, ye would conclude, that that man either can want it, or he knows how to get his want supplied another way. In that John vi. 66. we find some going away from Christ: hereupon Christ puts the question to the twelve, ver. 67, "Will ye also go away?" Mark Peter's answer, ver. 68, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." As if he had said, Lord, it seems those that have gone away think they can fend without thee: but as for us, how can we go away? for if we abide not with thee, we know of no other door to go to, where our wants can be supplied; and



therefore go who will, we must abide. Now, when a man is brought to this, he must needs put a blank in Christ's hand, as Paul, Acts ix. 6, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He will be ready to part with all with heart and good will. If he rejoice in Christ as the "treasure hid in the field," for joy thereof he will sell all, that the field and treasure may be his, Matth. xiii. 44. From all which it appears, that there are but few who have got this view of Christ as suitable to their case. But happy are they who have got it. "The election hath obtained it, but the rest were blinded."

*Thirdly*, Christ is suited to the saints' mind. And if it were not so, they could not rejoice in him. Christ is very suitable to the case of every unbeliever, Rev. iii. 18. but, alas? he is not suited to their minds; and therefore they cannot rejoice in him, more than a child in the cutting off of a leg or arm, which yet may be very suitable to its case. Give a natural man his idols, the drunkard his cups, the unclean person his queans, the proud and ambitious man honour, the covetous man his clay-god the world, these are suitable to his mind; but as unsuitable to his case, as a sword for a mad-man's hand, or poison for a sick man. But Christ is not only suited to the believer's case, but to his mind; for he is by grace made partaker of the divine nature. Christ is that stone, which though disallowed of men, is yet chosen of God, and precious, 1 Pet. ii. 4, "Unto you therefore who believe he is (also) precious." There is not a child of God but Christ answers the desires of their souls in breadth and length, Psal. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." There is none beside him, none like him, none after him to the believer. I have read a story of the king of Armenia's son, whose wife being taken captive by Cyrus, was asked by the conqueror what ransom he would give for her. Truly, says he, I would redeem her even with my own life. She being set free, and they all come home in peace, some commended Cyrus for one thing, some for another, all admiring him. The king's son asks his wife, what she thought of him. Truly, says she, I did not so much as look on him. Whom looked you on then? says he. On him, replied she, who said he would redeem me with his own life. Thus Christ becomes a covering of the eyes unto those who behold his glory by faith. He is just the person their soul desireth: if they had their choice to make a thousand times, it would still be none but Christ. For to them he is altogether lovely, or, wholly desires, Cant. v. ult: he is most desirable; every thing in or about him is desirable to them. I shall only point at three things wherein Christ is suited to the minds of the saints, and to none others.

1. They are pleased at the heart, that he, even he, should build the temple of the Lord, and that he should bear the glory, as is appointed of God, Zeel. vi. 12, 13. The great design of the gospel is, to exalt free grace in Christ; and grace runs through every vein of this contrivance: and as nature is contrary to it, so grace casts the soul into the same mould, Matth. xi. 5, "The poor have the gospel preached to them; the poor are gospelled" (if our language would bear it.) The gospel comes to their ears, and goes down to their hearts, and changes them into the same image; and they are delivered into that form of doctrine, (as the margin hath it), Rom. vi. 17; even as melted metal cast into moulds comes out with the impression figure on it. Alluding to that which David said to Solomon, 1 Chron. xxii. 8, 9. I may say the saints think it not meet that the first Adam should build the temple of the Lord, because he has "shed blood abundantly," at once murdered himself and all his posterity, and has had great wars with heaven; but their souls go along with that, that the temple he built by that son of his, Luke iii. 23—38; the man Christ, typified by Solomon, who was the only man of rest among all the sons of Adam, since their father put them out of rest in God; and who can "give peace and quietness to Israel." See how the psalmist sings to this glorious building, Psal. lxxxix. 1, 2, "Mercy shall be built, said I." There is no merit of men in this building; it is a building of pure mercy; and the building shall go on still, by laying one mercy above another, and that for ever. It is pleasing to the heart of the saints, to be proclaimed dyvors to raise the glory of the Redeemer's love, to be drowned in the debt of free grace, and to have the advantage of an eternity to acknowledge it in, Psal, lxxxix. 1, 3, to throw down their righteousness and their unrighteousness together, to be stepping stones to his glory, and that on which he may mount his throne; to be nothing, and worse than nothing, that Christ may be all. This suits not the minds of natural men. He is "the stone which the builders disallowed:" they were so far from allowing him to be the chief corner-stone, that they laid him by as a stone unfit to have so much as the least place in it. And Peter says, (1 epist. ii. 7, 8,) he is "a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence to the disobedient," or them that believe not; and all natural men are such. Yea, and Christ himself pronounces them blessed, who having him in their offer, are not offended in him, do not see something in him that they cannot away with, Matth. xi. 6, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." And therefore, let men deceive themselves as they will, and contradict this as they please, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." None but the saints of God are thus

pleased with him, as will further appear by what I shall offer next.

2. They are pleased at the heart with his laws. They rejoice in him as a Lawgiver, as well as a Saviour: Is. xxxiii. 22, "The Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us." All the saints, and they only, would vote the government to be laid on his shoulders, on whom the Father has laid their help. Christ makes such a reasonable proposal to sinners, as Jephthah did to the Gileadites, Judg. xi. 9, "If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me; shall I be your head?" and all whose hearts the Lord has touched, will heartily acquiesce therein, to wit, that Christ being their head to save them, he be also their head to rule them. Christ's yoke is welcome to them in every part of it, so far as they know it to be his; his law is suitable to their minds, because their minds and hearts, by the power of grace, are suited to the law, Psalm cxix. 128, "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way:" for the law is "written in their hearts," Heb. viii. 10; there are gracious inclinations wrought in their souls towards the several parts of that purity and holiness which is required by the law. For as the law is a sort of transcript of the nature of God, (wherein God shews what a one he is, and what is pleasing to him), so they are made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. But because this partaking of the divine nature is but imperfect in this present state of the saints, and there is in them an unregenerate part as well as a regenerate, therefore the sin that dwelleth in them, will have its reluctancy against the sweet yoke of Christ: but it is only a partial reluctancy, not total; seeing there is a principle of grace within them likewise, that approves and embraces the law as holy, and the commandment as holy, just and good," Rom. vii. 12. But this is far from the wicked, even the most refined hypocrite, who always finds in the yoke of Christ, "some stone of stumbling, and rock of offence;" some part of holiness, not only that they cannot attain, but that their hearts are never reconciled with; otherwise the Psalmist had laid an unsure ground of comfort to himself in that, Psalm cxix. 6, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Both the godly and ungodly man will readily be found to have some sin which the heart cleaveth to by others, or cleaveth to them more than other sins: which is like Eli's, 1 Sam. iii. 13, "the iniquity which he knoweth." Let the trial be made herein, and it will be found, that the lust, and not the law, is suited to the minds of most men; and that they would bestow the blood of their bodies in the matter to blot out that lust crossing command out of the law, rather than find the

efficacy of Christ's blood killing and utterly carrying off that law crossing lust; desiring rather to have the law brought down to them in the point, than themselves brought up to the law. And it will be found contrariwise, in those that rejoice in Christ, to whose minds he is suited, and to whom his laws that directly fly in the face of those lusts that do so easily encompass them, are as chains of gold about their necks, which they love, and approve, and embrace; whereas they are to others as iron fetters; Rom. vii. 12, 22, 23, 24, and viii. 7.

3. Their hearts are well pleased with that fulness of the Spirit of sanctification that dwells in him to be communicated; and that the Father has appointed him to be the head of influences, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us—sanctification:—that, according as it is written, He that glorifieth, let him glory in the Lord." And thus they will be found to rejoice more in the grace of God without them in Christ, than the very grace of God within them: as he whose own the well is, rejoiceth more in the spring, than all his vessels full of it; though a stranger will rejoice more in the fulness of the vessel given him, than the fulness of the fountain which is not his. "Thy spirit is good, (says the Psalmist), lead me into the land of uprightness," Psalm cxliii. 10. O but the Spirit is good in the saints' eyes, and it is good that the fulness of the Spirit is lodged in him. To whom sin is hateful, and the spirit of the world an unwelcome guest, the Spirit of holiness must needs be precious: where the power and stain of sin are loathsome, as well as the guilt heavy, the water that came out of Christ's side, will be suited to their minds, as well as the blood. Where the love of God dwells, the Spirit will be precious, as that whereby they are "changed into the same image from glory to glory." And as the Father hath appointed him head of influences, as the great channel of conveyance of spiritual influences, so do they acquiesce in that, by chusing him as such to them, Hos. i. ult. "Then shall the children of Judah, and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land." But seeing in others the spirit of the world reigns, the Spirit of holiness is not suited to their minds: for "what agreement hath light with darkness?" or what pleasure can an owl take in the sun, that hates the light? or they whose hearts are glued to sin, take in that which is destructive thereto? Yea, and that seeming holiness which some natural men attain to, is but the product of nature, assisted with external revelation, and the common operations of the Spirit, while they remain estranged from the life of God through Jesus Christ, who is the life of the saints.

It is not among nature's inclination to go out of itself for sanctification; but nature's way here is for a man to go in to himself for it. The way of gospel sanctification, as well as of justification, is a stumbling-block in the way of unbelievers, 1 Cor. i. 23, 30. See how they stumbled at it, John vi. 57, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Compared with ver. 63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." But mark vers. 60, 66, "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying, who can hear it? From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." That soul whose choice is the humble dependent life on Christ as the head of influences, going out of itself for sanctification to Christ in the way of believing, is a happy soul. See how the text joins these together, "worshipping God in spirit, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus," as the altar of burning-offering where the fire continually burns, which they may fetch to set to the incense of their duties. And so much for the first thing in this rejoicing, which is the main thing. I shall be more brief in the rest, which do of course follow on this holy complacency of the soul in Christ, and the mystery of Christ.

*Secondly*, Then there is in this rejoicing in Christ, "a rolling of the soul over on him for all. Rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." The child of God beholding him suited to the divine perfections, to his case, and to his mind, goeth out to him, and embraceth him accordingly, laying the whole stress of his soul upon him, taking him joyfully for his case. This is intimated to us in the parable of the "treasure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field, Matth. xiii. 44. The gospel is that field, and Christ is the treasure. Observe, (1.) To whomsoever the gospel comes, they may have Christ if they will: he offers himself in it. For the treasure is in the field, and the field and treasure are to be sold. (2.) Few see the glory and excellency of Christ held forth in the gospel, and therefore he and his gospel too are slighted. Many go over the field, but find no treasure in it, behold not the riches of the glory of the mystery of Christ, and hidden wisdom of God, therein; and therefore says, what is that field more than another, "that beloved more than another beloved?" (3.) Whosoever the glory of Christ is discovered to a soul, that soul is pleased with him, beholds him as an upmaking portion; so as the man concludes, that if he had him, he would have enough in him. For he has joy thereof on the discovery, and is willing to part

with all for it. (4.) That soul will not rest till the happy bargain be made, and Christ be his, Ruth iii. ult. (5.) That soul quits the gripe of all other to live on Christ, to take him for and instead of all; he lays his all upon the treasure: if it hold good, he has all; if it should fail, he has nothing. From that time that treasure is all his stock, all that he has to lippen to. Happy that soul that thus rejoiceth in Christ. That is the wise man, who digs till he comes to the rock, and then with joy builds on it. The soul finds it has a heavy weight of wants, weakness, and miseries, which it is neither able to bear nor throw off; but finding that Christ is every way suitable to such a one's case, and hearing such a comfortable voice of Christ in the gospel, as the old man in Gibeah gave to the Levite, while he sat in the street of the city, and no man offered to take him into his house, "Let all thy wants lie upon me," Judg. xix. 18, 20. the soul heartily complies with the offer, and casts all its burdens on Christ for time and eternity, Psal. lv. 22; and especially these two.

1. Their weight of guilt.

2. Their weight of duties.

*First*, Their weight of guilt is laid over upon him "through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25. Guilt is a heavy load, able to sink the soul into the lowest hell; but the soul comes as the offerer under the law, and lays its hand on the head of the sacrifice, thereby casting over this weight on a crucified Christ. They come with their polluted souls to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks mercy, and speaks away wrath from the guilty creature, Heb. xii. 24. Christ is the city of refuge; and thither they go, and throw themselves into it, as the only place suitable for them to dwell in, Heb. vi. 18. All without this city of refuge is under the dominion of the law; there death reigns; there justice is doing, and ready to do more execution; there floods run sweeping away the refuges of lies; there the heavens are black, the windows of heaven opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, and a broken law without intermission raining curses on the guilty heads. Wherefore the soul at first makes haste to escape, as Lot was bidden do to get out of Sodom; and throwing itself into Christ as the city of refuge, the only place where no wrath can fall on the guilty, carefully abides there, and dare not set out its head without the gates for ever, Psal. xci. 1, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," Verse 2, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge." I have said, I do say it, and will ever say it, that "he is my refuge," to whom I will betake myself, and under whose protection I may be safe, as the chickens under the wings of

the hen, as the word the Holy Ghost here useth is explained, Ruth ii. 12, "The Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." And thus Christ himself holds out that safe covert of his righteousness and grace, which he offers to sinners in the gospel, Matth. xxiii. 37, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!" They are weak, and in hazard of being made a pray; but under the wings of his grace they may find safety, tender affection, and cherishing for their dejected souls, Psal. xci. 4; and therefore come they to "trust under his wings." His blood is the only propitiation to which they lippen their souls, his righteousness their only cover, his satisfaction their only plea, or ground on which they will plead mercy, his payment of the debt their only plea for their discharge; for they have had the sentence of death in themselves carried and thrust home into their souls by the law, that they might trust in him who raiseth the dead, while others keep up their confidence in the flesh. Such the Lord pronounceth blessed, Matth. v. 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

*Secondly*, Their weight of duties is laid over on him.

1. For performance. Christ lays his yoke upon the believer, and he receives it, and lays himself and it over on himself again as the fountain of strength: Matth. xi. 29, "Take my yoke upon you," says Christ, "and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." And says the Psalmist, Psal. cvi. 9, 10, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken." Hence it becomes a sweet and easy yoke, which before was a burden unsupportable. How can that be? Why, duties are indeed a dead weight while laid on purely by the hand of the law, and borne merely by virtue of the poor remains of that strength which the first Adam left us; which in effect is but mere weakness, and cannot make us bear it more than a child can bear a mountain, John xv. 5, "Without me ye can do nothing." But as for the yoke of Christ, it is laid on with a promise of strength, and with it is laid into the heart a principle of rolling over the soul and it on Christ again: Gal. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ," says the apostle: "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And so he bears the heavy end of his own yoke, and bears them and their burden too. Thus the believer has (to speak with reverence) a kind of derived omnipotency, Phil. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his

good pleasure, chap. ii. 13. He works the will for the work, and the work for us when he has wrought the will for it. A vast weight may be on a little stone in a building, without its sinking, when it, and all that is on it, lies upon a rock. And hence the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews is spent in shewing the mighty things the saints have done and suffered by faith. For in a believer there is a most suitable match, sufficiency joined with insufficiency, 2 Cor. iii. 5. strength with weakness, all fulness with wants and poverty; even the mighty God with worm Jacob. And thus the believer goes out of himself for performance of duties, while the hypocrite goes in to himself. For it is a plain truth, that the way and manner of working follows the manner of being and living, and every man will act as he lives. Now, the believer lives by Christ, John vi. 57. and therefore must act by him; and with the same care will endeavour to hold off lippening to his own strength, as to his own righteousness, Psalm lxxi. 16; and to take Christ for sanctification, as well as for righteousness, God having made him both to his people. Natural men are without Christ, *i. e.* separate from him, John xv. 5; and so are as trees by themselves, having their own root in the ground: and hence for the fruit of duty all the natural powers of their souls are called together as in a solemn day, Josh. xxiv. 18, 19: but because their root is rottenness, their blossom goes up as dust; and their fruits are like the apples of Sodom, which are very pleasant to the eye, but being cut up, are found nothing but a heap of loathsome matter; and no wonder, seeing they grow by the dead sea of self. But the godly are branches whose fruit depends on influence from Christ, as the true vine into which they are ingrafted: hence the bent of the believer's soul lies that way, not to trust his natural powers, gifts, nay, nor inherent graces either; seeing these depend on Christ, as light on the sun, and are but rays, not the fountain of light, and therefore must still be fed from the fountain; but to go out of himself, in the way of believing, Phil. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And therefore, while others like common boatmen serve themselves with their oars, seeing they never go out of the barren region of self; they will depend on Christ for the blowings of his Spirit, having a mind for Immanuel's land.

2. For acceptance of their duties, Heb. xi. 4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." God in Christ is the alone object of the saints' worship. The saints' labour in duties which is accepted, is a labour of love, Heb. vi. 10. Our love to God is but the reflex of God's love to us, 1 John iv. 19. God's special love to us darts its beams unto us no other way but



through the veil of the flesh of Christ; and it must be through the same veil that our love returns to him, and itself and its fruits accepted, Eph. i. 6. Duties rightly done and acceptably, are the returns of influences from heaven; which are communicated through Christ, who lies at the fountain-head, as the great mean of communion betwixt God and the saints: and as influences come from God by him, so the duty is directed to God through him. As God will not accept, so the saints acting as saints dare not offer for acceptance, prayer, or praise, but through him, Eph. i. 3; nor any good work, though it were a sacrifice of their own blood, but as dipt, yea, "washed in the blood of the Lamb," Rev. vii. 14. They will not expect any of their sacrifices to be accepted, but such as are laid on the altar Christ, which sanctifies the gift. Here the stress is laid for acceptance by the saints; to which the view they have of God's holiness, the naughtiness of their own and their best duties, their complacency in God's method of grace, and contrivance of salvation through Christ, and that gospel-turn that grace has given their hearts, do determine them; while the natural man is a stranger and blind to all these, and so rushes forward to the throne with his duties, not honouring the Son, and thereby dishonouring the Father; for worshipping in the name of Christ, is no less than faith in his blood.

*Thirdly,* In this rejoicing in Christ there is a rest of the heart in him as a fit match for the soul. For as in marriage there is, in the first place, a view of such a person as a fit match, whereupon follows the choice and acceptance; and in case the person chosen answer the expectation, (and none can ever have too high thoughts of Christ), there ariseth from thence a rest of the heart in such a person, which is the solid joy of that lot, Ruth iii. 1; Prov. xxxi. 11: so when the soul is pleased with Christ as every way suitable, it rolls itself over on him, and rests in him as a fit match. Our first father Adam did us two ill turns. He led us off the path of life, not knowing how to get on it again; and so left us with a conscience full of guilt. He led us away from the living God, not knowing how to get to him again; and so left us with a heart full of unsatisfied desires. Hence the sons of Adam quickly find themselves like the "horse leech having two daughters, crying, Give, give; a restless conscience, and a restless heart; to each of which they must needs say, Shall I not seek for thee, that it may be well with thee? And so the soul sets to work; and the first way it goes, is, through dry places, seeking rest, as the devil when he goes out of a man. And,

1. For the conscience; the natural man goes through the dry and

barren region of the law, seeking rest to it, "going about to establish his own righteousness," Rom. ix. 3. The sun is gone down on them, and therefore they light their candles, and compass themselves about with their own sparks. And in what measure that restlessness has seized their consciences, so far do they go the round of law obedience to still it. The consciences of some are easily lulled asleep; a few coldrife wishes will do it with some; some shreds of morality serve to wrap others in, in which they can lie at peace; others can get no rest till they go the round of all the external duties of religion; nay, so restless are the consciences of some, that it will cost them to do many things, with Herod, to remove many beloved lusts that keep the conscience unquiet, to water the couch with tears, and lull it asleep with mournful songs of prayers and confessions, to bind it down with vows, resolutions, and engagements of reformation, and after all carefully to watch against those things that disturbed it before. And yet for all this, because it is not sprinkled with blood, it can get no solid rest; it gets but an unsound nap, out of which it will have a fearful awakening. It is still but "as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast, Prov. xxiii. 34. Now, Christ finds his elect in this same case, seeking rest to their consciences in the law: and whatever rest they may sometimes find it, he doth at length set fire to their nest, and draw the pillow from under their head, till he make them effectually despair of ever finding rest there to their consciences, whose wounds bleed still, and spurn all remedy from their best and most serious duties; and then discovers to them, and by his Spirit draws them, so as they come to the blood of sprinkling, the only conscience purging remedy: And here the soul finds rest to the conscience: Heb. ix. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Chap. xii. 24, "Ye are come—to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." 1 John i. 7, "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The conscience rests in him; of which before in the second head. But that which I aim at here, is,

2. The rest of the heart; which the natural man and the Christian both seek: but the soul out of Christ never finds it; only they that are in Christ find it, and find it in him. For clearing of which, consider,

1st, Our hearts naturally are full of desires of happiness, which crave satisfaction. Even when desire fails, Eccles. xii. these are still fresh and vigorous; and a man shall as soon cease to be a man,

as cease to desire to be a happy man. The heart of man is an empty craving thing, of a large capacity. And wants are interwoven with our nature, and desires of the supply of these wants, that man seems to be little else but a compound of wants and desires, which are enlarged as the ocean. Heap together unto Christless hearts all perfections that are to be found in all the men of the earth, increase the heap to them with all that is to be found in other creatures, all would be overwhelmed with a vast infinite mass of wants, as a fling of gold under a mountain; and their desires after all remain wide as the sea, seeing the soul, by its natural make and constitution, is capable of an infinite good. Ye shall as soon tell the motes that appear restlessly flying through a new-swept house, where the beams of the sun are let in, number the stars, and tell to the least grain of sand by the sea-shore as ye shall come to the last desire of a man's heart, if you keep off an infinite good. Behold, with what a wide mouth the heart of man appears: satisfied it must be, or it can have no rest; but where will it find an answerable fulness? Peace and rest they would have; but, alas! the way of peace they have not known, Rom. iii. 17; there is none that seeketh after God, ver. 11, though their throat is an open sepulchre, ver. 13, standing always open, crying, Give, give, and never saying it is enough, Prov. xxx. 16. Hence,

*2dly*, The natural man goeth through the dry places of the creation, seeking rest, but findeth none (Jer. ii. 3,) to his restless heart. They are bewildered travellers, that have lost their way; they wander in the wilderness of created things, but find no city to dwell in; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainteth in them: for Solomon hits their miserable case, and plainly shews how the matter is with them, Eccl. x. 15, "The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city." The man goes about extracting the sweet of every created thing he can reach for satisfaction, squeezeth the sap out of them; but they will not, cannot answer his expectation. They are in quest of satisfaction; but are in that case of the Sodomites at Lot's house when struck with blindness, where all were for the door, but one gripes one part of the wall for it, another gripes another part, never one of them could find it. Some fix on the profits of the world, and drink greedily at these broken cisterns: their hungry hearts fly at them as a ravenous bird at the prey, Prov. xxiii. 5. And the cream and strength of their affections are spent on these; and yet at length they find they are but spending their labour for which is not bread, Is. lv. 2. Some hang at the breasts of the world's pleasures, lawful or unlawful; and often press so hard for satisfaction in these, that

they wring out blood instead of milk; and as men hammering a flinty rock for water, bring forth fire flashing on their faces. The man is like the hungry beast, which if it abide within the hedge rives up all the red earth; neither doth that satisfy, but they break over the hedge too, if so be the forbidden fruit can afford that rest, which that which is allowed cannot. Some pursue the lust of the eye, but that is never satisfied with seeing; some the lust of the flesh, and the more it is gratified, the more it craves; and some, the pride of life, and that can never be satisfied, Hab. ii. 5; Is. v. 14. Some soar a little above the common gang of mankind; and they seem to espy in knowledge what is not to be found in other things, and their souls fly out in an eager pursuit after satisfaction in that, which indeed bids fairest for it among all created things: but what comes it to at length? The soul finds the way to it sore travel, Eccl. i. 13; and after they have travelled far and sore for it, their hearts are stung with these questions, Job xxviii. 12, "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Vers. 20, 21, Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air." And what scraps of it is gathered here and there, are far from giving the promised rest to the heart: Eccl. i. ult. "For much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." Thus men labour in the very fire, and weary themselves for vanity. The world is like the air in a summer-day full of insects; and natural men are like a company of foolish children, one running to catch one, another to catch another; and when all is done, none of them can fill the hand. And O how humbling is it to think, that after the restless heart is disappointed in real enjoyments, it goes about to satisfy and feed itself with mere fancies; so that the imagination is let loose, and, like quicksilver, rolls and runs hither and thither, skips like a bird from bush to bush, forms to itself a thousand airy nothings, traverses the world, and turns the man into a thousand fine shapes, giving the man a multitude of possessions, if not possessions of the hand, yet possessions of the heart; as that word properly signifies, Job xvii. 11; as if the foolish heart, when it had tried all other means in vain, would strive to dream itself full and happy? But when that "wandering of the desire," or "walking of the soul," is stopped," Eccl. vi. 9, "he awaketh, and behold, his soul is faint." But will the tired soul sit down and rest after all? No, no, Isa. lvii. 10; but goes back again to the same door where it has got a hundred refusals. O, thinks the man, if I had such a thing, I would be well. May be he gets it; but he finds for as big as it was afar off, it will not fill his hand, when he gripes it; but it must be

filled, else no rest : hence new labour to bring forth new disappointments without end.

3dly, Christ finds the elect soul in the day of converting grace, thus wandering, and seeking rest among the rest of the blinded world, brings it to despair of ever finding it there, discovers himself to it as the fountain of satisfaction, as he opened Hagar's eyes to see the well when she had laid by the child for death. And then the man hears a voice in the innermost part of his soul, from Christ, by his Spirit, Psalm lxxxi. 10, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." I can do and will do for you what all the creatures cannot; "I will fill you." Many a time you have opened your mouth wide enough to your idols, so wide, that it has been no small pain to get it closed again, and yet still empty; but now "open it to me, I will fill it." Lay the mouth of your soul on the breasts of my consolations, and they shall flow abundantly." The word for believing comes from a root that signifies *to nurse*; as if faith were nothing else but the laying of the soul on the breasts of Christ's consolations, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead, that they may suck, and be satisfied, Isa. lxvi. 11. And truly the soul is like the hungry infant, that gapes, weeps, cries, sucks every thing that comes near its mouth; yet cannot tell what it would have, but is still restless, till the mother set it to the breast: and then it rests: and so doth the believing soul in Christ. The heaven-born soul is seeking a match for itself, but cannot find it among all the creatures; none of them are commensurable to the desires of the soul; there is always something wanting to satisfaction in every thing the soul meets with, till it come to Christ; and there the soul finds at length a match for it in its enlarged desires, and so takes up its everlasting rest in him; and, after many years' restlessness and watching, falls asleep in the bosom of God in Christ, in whom they have all, and abound; for coming to him, they come to the utmost of their desires. Ye may take up the rest of the heart in Christ in these two particulars.

1. The desires of the soul centering and meeting in Christ. "Unite my heart," says the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. The heart naturally is as it were in a thousand pieces, each of them following some one or another vanity; and the desires of the heart, like a flock of hungry ravening fowls, are scattered on the face of the earth, crying and catching what they can get, till a crucified Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead, is discovered by an eye of faith; and then where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together, 1 Cor. ii. 2; and then as the scattered rays of the sun are contracted in the burning-glass, and fix on one thing, so

the desires of the soul are brought to meet in one point, even in him, Psal. xxvii. 4; Luke x. 41, 42. The heart is never right till it come to this; for while the natural man's heart is in its blind ramble in quest of happiness, and his desires are sent out to bring it in from all quarters, no wonder some of them stumble upon Christ, as those John vi. 34, who said unto Christ, "Lord, evermore give us this bread:" seeing they have a double heart, a heart, and a heart, why may not Christ get one, while the world and lusts keep another? But that is not the rest of the heart in Christ, the desires of the heart not meeting in him, but parted between him and others. As Jacob found his marriage with Leah and Rachel both, not a rest, but a rack to his heart; so shall the divided heart ever be found a restless heart.

But alas! may some say, I find indeed desires in my heart going out after Christ; but as true it is, there are many desires in it going another way, yea, a contrary way. Can such a heart be said to rejoice and rest in Christ? For answer to this, consider, that as faith is not perfected in this life, so neither is the believer's rejoicing and resting on Christ. The flesh hath its desires as well as the spirit, which surely go another way than to Christ: Gal. v. 17, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." And therefore though they that believe do enter into rest, and they that come to Christ do even find rest in him here, yet there remains a rest to the people of God, which they shall get in heaven. But to clear this case, consider,

1st, In what channel runs the main stream of thy desires? Though a river may on each side have its small strands that run very irregularly, yet we account the main stream and channel, that wherein the several brooks that make it up, do meet. And thus in the child of God, though there may be many irregular desires, yet the main stream of desire in them goes Christ-ward and God-ward. The Psalmist wanted not desires of the flesh; yet, says he, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple," Psalm xxvii. 4, because it was the main thing. In the natural man it is quite contrary; his main desires are after the world and his lusts, the bent of his soul lies that way, the strength of his affections are spent on these, so that there is nothing left for Christ but a few languishing desires, that bear no more proportion to his desires after other things, than a little side-stream to the main stream of the water. Thus the Psalmist distinguishes himself from natural men, Psalm iv.

6, 7, "There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." But remember I am now speaking of desires after Christ as a rest to the heart, not a rest to the conscience; for seeing "skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life," the terrors of a restless conscience may make the chief stream of desire go after Christ for rest to the conscience, as the foolish virgins when they saw their lamps were gone out, and the bridegroom coming, left all their other trafficking wherein they had spent their former time, and went to buy oil, Matth. xxv. And this leads me to a

2d Thing. Consider whether or not thine absolute desires do center and meet in Christ. If ye were left this day to your free choice, never to be called to an account for it whatever way ye made it, either Christ or lusts, on whom would your desires meet, where would they center? Is there so much native beauty, and glory, and fulness for heart satisfaction seen by you in Christ, as would draw your desires after him; ye are the virgins whose heart Christ has, Cant. i. 3. Let the natural man's desires after Christ be never so strong, I may well say, they do not so much desire him because they would have him, as because they cannot want him: they do in this what they would not, and therefore it is not they that do it, but conscience that dwelleth in them. And on the contrary, the saints have their desires after lusts; but so complying with them, do what they would not; and therefore it is not they, but sin that dwelleth in them.

3dly, Consider what are those desires in thy heart that swallow up all other, as the sea in which all the rivers do meet? If thou can say, it is the desires after Christ in thy heart, thou art one that rejoiceth and resteth in Christ, and a real saint: Psal. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." In the heart of a saint there are other sheaves besides Christ's sheaf, but all others must bow to his. Do thy desires after Christ rebound on thy desires after other things, towards the weakening and wearing them off? though ye see ye come but little speed, it is a good sign: Rom. vii. 22, "For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." Compared with ver. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" The godly soul may have many woeful desires, but the heart would be content to deny itself of all of them, if it could be rid of them, for Christ. But on the contrary, the natural man's desire after other things than Christ, swallows up all other, like

Pharaoh's lean kine, eating up the fat ones, and yet still lean. His desires of Christ must yield to his desires of lusts; seeing the hungry heart craves satisfaction, and they never yet found as much sweetness to the heart in Christ, as they have found in other things; and therefore would judge it but a sorry bargain to sell all for the one pearl; and their souls are never content to part with all for Christ, as was the case with the young man, Mark x. 21, 22.

2. The desires of the heart "abiding on him for satisfaction." The soul, after long wandering amongst the creatures for satisfaction, at length seeing through them, beholds that all is vain and unsatisfactory; and beholding the fulness of Christ by faith, lays hold on him, and rests in him as an object adequate to the desires of the heart, as one that is match for the boundless desires of the soul, and in whom it may be filled: Psal. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." And thus the soul is brought at length to an utmost of its desires; there they terminate as on an object completely satisfactory. This is their rest, and here they will stay. Here is the treasure hid, and here will they halt and dig for it. This is the city which they find to rest in; there will they abide; and there and nowhere else, will they seek a place wherein to dwell. This rest of the heart in Christ, is sometimes in some of God's children screwed up far higher, when they are filled as with marrow and with fat, in the sensible enjoyment of him; yea and have as much as they can hold in this frail state; when they are filled with joy in believing, even joy unspeakable and full of glory; beholding the unsearchable boundless riches of Christ, and assuredly know that all is theirs, then they can say with Paul, Phil. iv. 18, "I have all, and abound." But this is too high to be a mark of a saint, and would leave most part of them at most times out of the roll of saints. But he whose desires abide on Christ for satisfaction, has taken up his rest in him; for he can say with David, "This is all my desire, although he make it not to grow," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The heart could be content with Christ alone, but nothing can content it without him. And this does so far dry up the devouring deeps of carnal desires, wherewith the soul was before plagued, whose gaping mouths it was the man's constant work to seek to satisfy, that the soul never goes abroad for satisfaction among the creatures in such manner as it was wont. Christ becomes to the soul a covering of the eyes, as Abraham was to Sarah; and a draught of the water of life quenches that scorching thirst they had before after creature-sweetness, John iv. 14. They give over the trade of begging at the creature's door, and the door of their lusts, seeing their hearts are



persuaded there is bread enough in their Father's house, and to spare, Luke xv. 17. When the soul comes to Christ, it takes up its rest in him, saying, upon the discovery of him, as one was wont to say when rising from prayer, "Be closed now, O mine eyes, be closed; for henceforth shall ye never see a more lovely object." Hence,

*1st*, The gracious soul can be content with Christ alone, Psalm lxxiii. 25. forecited. This is plainly the attainment of all that attain to Christ. Every man that finds the treasure hid in the field, and the one pearl of great price, sells all he hath with joy to purchase them; which he could not do, if he could not be contented with the treasure and pearl alone. And by the want of this disposition of soul Christ discovered the hypocrisy of that young man spoken of Mark x. 21. For certainly that heart is divided that can have no contentment in Christ, unless it turn aside by the flocks of his companions also: it loves him not as a suitable match for the soul, seeing the heart cannot rest in him. Wherefore the gracious soul sees that satisfaction in Christ, that it can live on him without its former lusts, Prov. iii. 8; Hos. xiv. 8; yea and though all the things in the world be gone from him, while his God is not gone, his rest and rejoicing will be to the fore, Hab. iii. 17, 18; John xvi. 22.

*2dly*. Nothing can fill Christ's room with them, have what they will; the want of him squeezes the sap out of all other enjoyments to them, Psalm xxx. 7. As if a thousand cyphers were set together without a figure, the total will still be naught; so unto the gracious soul all without Christ is naught, because he is the rest of their hearts. Hence says the apostle, Phil. iii. 8, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." The worldly man's indefinite wish says, he is too easily pleased; it is any good, Psalm iv. 6; it is any one he seeks it of: but the godly man's wish is very particular, "the light of thy countenance;" it is the Lord he seeks it of; the favour of God in Christ, or nothing. As the raven sent out of the ark missed not the ark while there was carrion enough without it, to feed on; so give natural men whereon to feed their lusts, and something to appease their conscience, they will reign as kings without Christ. These are their good things, Luke xvi. 25. But the heart of the child of God will say, Lord, what wilt thou give me, if I go without thyself the chief good?

QUESTION. But doth the heart of a saint always thus rest in Christ? ANSWER. There is no doubt but sometimes one that has

taken up his heart's rest in Christ, may fall off his rest, that he may have his soul to bespeak to return to his rest again. Saints may sometimes take up their rest under some created shadow, but they will not dwell there. "Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd," chap. iv. 9. But even in this case there will be found a twofold difference betwixt them and natural men.

1. The saints never get such kindly rest as the natural man in these things. The reason is plain; the natural man is in his own element in that case; the saint is not. The natural man is as one who is at home in his own bed, the other is as one abroad, 2 Sam. xii. 4. This is clear from the case of the spouse, Cant. v. 2. She is asleep, but it is very unkindly rest she gets. We may notice here three things that make it so. (1.) There is a thorn of self-condemnation in the conscience: I sleep; I am out of order, this is not the case I should be in. The soul is accused of ingratitude to Christ. Christ is at the door, he knocks, and has stood over-long. "Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" says conscience. "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?" says the Lord, Jer. ii. 31. And the man is speechless, like Jonah; of whom it may be observed, Jonah iv. 10, 11, that he answered not again; and like Job, chap. xl. 5. (2.) There is a wound of self-dissatisfaction in the heart, "My heart waketh." There is a secret discontent with this condition, because the enjoyment of Christ is not in it. The little grace that is left frowns on corruption, though it is not able to master it. Such persons would be glad of Christ's return, though their souls are fettered that they cannot go after him, till he put in his hand by the hole of the lock. (3.) There is a faint moving of the affections after him: "It is the voice of my beloved." He is the beloved still. Though the soul has written the bill of divorce, in fond affection to another, yet she would not sign it for ten thousand worlds. Though she is not able to rise to let him in, yet she cannot think of his going quite away. It is another sort of rest the natural man has in these things; where there is but one principle, to wit, that of corruption: so that whatever disquiet conscience may give him at a time, yet it is but a carnal defiled conscience, Tit. i. 15, and cannot disturb the heart's rest in lusts; as Balaam's conscience left still his heart in love with the wages of unrighteousness, 2 Pet. ii. 15, though his conscience stood in the way of winning them. And though the heart of the natural man cannot be free of disquiet, seeing it is impossible to find satisfaction in the creatures; yet it is not because Christ is not in that case of his for the rest of his heart, but because the creature cannot answer the hungry appetite of his heart; yet though one cannot, he hopes an-

other may, Isa. lvii. 10; and so all that it amounts to, is, the sluggard turning him on his bed. Which brings me to a

2. Thing, namely, the Lord does always at length hunt the saint out of his starting-holes, till his soul return to its rest. Hence says he, Hos. ii. 6, 7, "Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now." As the needle in the compass touched with a good loadstone, rests not till it turn towards the north; so the man who is partaker of the divine nature, and is born from above, will get no kindly rest with his affections on the earth; disturbed they will be till they be set on things above. The saint for his heart's rest goes back to God from the creatures, Jer. iii. 22, 23; the natural man for his goes from one creature to another; and when one stream runs dry, goes to another, being conjured as it were within the circle of created things. For why, the curse of the serpent is on such persons; and though they may change their particular place, their holes of the earth, yet dust is their meat, and on their belly must they go. They want the seraphim's wings which grace gives the saints, and so never mount heavenward. We do not read of one among all the saints more like a bird that wandereth from his nest than Solomon. His father had warned him, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, to "serve the Lord with a perfect heart," that is, according to the import of the word, a peaceable, quiet, entire heart, resting in God, not falling in pieces, and gadding after idols; "and with a willing mind," a mind taking delight in God, without which the heart cannot lie at peace in him. But when Solomon grew old, his heart though it was sincere, yet it was not perfect with the Lord, 1 Kings xi. 4. He fell off his rest in God, and went after idols, verse 5. And many a door he went to, while he travelled through the book of creation, as his book of Ecclesiastes tells us; but he was repulsed at them all, and at length brought back again to God, with that report, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." For though a son may vague a while, yet seeing his father has a house, he will grow wise at length, and return to it: Psal. xc. 1, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations;" though sometimes they are not at home, but lodge elsewhere. But the common beggar must needs be still going from house to house, and so spend the time of his life, because he has no certain dwelling-place.

*Lastly,* In this rejoicing in Christ there is a confession of him unto salvation, Rom. x. 10, "With the heart man believeth unto righte-

ousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This the word which the apostle useth in the text, and properly signifies to glory in a thing, doth plainly intimate. And as the image of God that was impressed on man's soul in his creation did shine through his body, as the candle through the lantern; so that complacency, confidence, and rest of the heart in Christ, of which before, that in themselves are hidden things, will nevertheless shine forth in the saint's outward conversation. There is such a dexterity that some hypocrites have in aping God's children in their conversation, that it will be very difficult to know what to say in this point; which I profess I would rather hear of than speak of. But being convinced the text intimates a difference, I dare not quite pass it; hoping the Lord that has laid it in the way, will give something that may be useful; though I would not have people to lay the main stress of their evidence of their state here, but to use it as an adminicle or help to let them in to the view of what lies more inwardly. I shall consider this holy glorying in Christ, and confession of him, with respect to men's ordinary conversation, and with respect to their conversion in suffering times; and I think the text looks to both.

*First*, With respect to the gracious soul's ordinary conversation.

1. This inward rejoicing in Christ wears off that air of pride and self-conceit, that is seen about many professors vainly puffed up with their fleshly mind. They will not only have humbleness of mind, but they will be clothed with humility as an upper garment, 1 Pet. v. 5. Whatever may be attributed to the natural temper of any, it is hard to think a saint will in his ordinary conversation shew such an air of vanity about him, as still to make him loathsome to tender and discerning Christians.

2. Grace will circumcise the self-commending lips. Boasters are in the black roll with those that have but a form of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 2. They that rejoice in Christ, feel such a weight of corruption in the heart, that it will be an embargo on their tongue, to keep them from a course of proclaiming their own goodness, as most men, but not all men, not faithful men, do, Prov. xx. 6. But it is sad to think of the strain of many professors' discourse, of their condition, abilities, attainments, &c.; where is not wanting still a fat sacrifice to self, notwithstanding acknowledgements of God's goodness in bestowing these on them; like the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, who "stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

3. Gracious souls will readily discover in their serious converse,

a native tendency in the strain of their discourse towards the corruption of nature, and the riches and freedom, necessity and power of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. There is something charming in these things to them that rejoice in Christ. Nearest the heart, we say, nearest the mouth. Grief and love are two passions that mightly fix the mind on their objects. And the one is their greatest burden, the other their greatest support. And how can it be otherwise, seeing the great design of the gospel, into the mould of which they are cast, is to exalt Christ and free grace, and that upon the ruins of nature; to make Christ all, and the creature nothing? Rom. iv. 16. But there is a generation to whom these things in preaching are tasteless as the white of an egg. And in conversation they are knocked in the head with them; and are so far from entertaining others with these matters, that they cannot entertain them from others, unless it be by some general expressions, that it may be known they are not ignorant of these things, which they look upon as common things, and treat them as unclean. I think I observe in Paul's epistles a more than ordinary elevation of his spirit when he comes on these points. It is quite contrary in many professors, whose tongues are ready interpreters of the mind in matters of controversy, this and the other duty, opinion, enlargement, attainment, &c.; but when these come, they stumble and falter, because the heart runs not that way.

4. They will readily be found, as occasion offers, to be no strangers to heart-exercise about their state, whether they be in Christ or not, and will discover something of their experience that way; or if they do not, such converse as hits these things they will be ready to make welcome, and will not snuff at them, and weary of them, as if they were out of their element; for they "rejoice in Christ Jesus;" their life is in the "light of his countenance," but it does not always shine to them. And therefore the question of the heart will be, Cant. iii. 3, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" But there are many who have no changes, and therefore they fear not God; and therefore, like Gallio, they care for none of these things; they are rich, and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing that way. They have had a reel among their affections some time; and now they think they believe, and keep up the practice of religious duties, and there is an end of it. But for that part of religion that lies about the vitals of it, that is not their study, yea, and the hearing of it grates upon their ears.

5. Rejoicing in Christ Jesus will make men tender of other Christians, in judging of them. Hence is that exhortation, Gal. vi. 1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual

restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The man that finds his own sore running on him, which leaves him no glorying but in Christ, will be fair to handle the sores of his brethren with a spirit of meekness, and be ready to bless God, that it was not he who was so left off the Lord. But that disposition of many, which makes them conclude people's hypocrisy from particular slips in their way, appears most opposite to this, and to be the product of self-confidence. And as they thus trample on those that are fallen below them, it will be found they very little honour or value those that are above them in spiritual tenderness and experience of religion, as if all were to be cut off that are beyond their measure: for the truth is they are heart enemies to the power of godliness; and where it shines most, especially outshining them, their carnal hearts rise most against it; and in such a case will readily pitch on their sores, and slightly say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" 1 Sam. x. 11. It is but one in a place (very few) that will say, And who is their Father? acknowledging heartily the free grace of God, that gives to every one as he will, whose eye is not evil, because the Lord's is good; but love the Lord's image wherever they see it.

6. Such as rejoice in Christ will be found to have a peculiar converse with the word, and a peculiar relish of it on their spirits, according to the promise, Isa. lix. 21, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." The Bible being the discovery of the heart of Christ towards sinners, the word on which he causeth them to hope, the magazine of their comfort, the sword of the Spirit only fit to repulse their doubts and fears, it is not to be doubted, but they will shew a peculiar respect to it as such. And it will be their book above all others; their book for heart holiness, and not for bare head knowledge; their book by which they desire to walk, and not only whereof they may talk. And those places which go most near to discover the naughtiness of man's nature, and the remedy thereof in Christ, will be most prized, and the name of Christ crucified in it, the ointment that perfumes all.

7. *Lastly.* They will be found to have a peculiar respect to the place where his honour dwells, to the ordinances. If men rejoice in Christ Jesus in their hearts it is not to be supposed but that in their conversation there will shine a peculiar respect to the galleries wherein Christ walks, the place where he records his name, and

usually feeds his people. Hence says the Psalmist, Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." And because they have business there for eternity for communion with God, and participation of his holiness, there will be something in their conversation there shewing them more kindly guests than others. It is an open confession of Christ, to worship him in the assemblies of his saints. I know not how they satisfy themselves that they rejoice in Christ Jesus, that rejoice not when it is said to them, "Let us go up to the house of the Lord; how they satisfy themselves that have an interest in the treasure, while they so little value the opening of the field to discover the treasure. The slighting of the ordinances, I suppose, will be found not to be at least the ordinary spot of God's people, according to the Scriptures. And as for such of you as do not ordinarily attend the public ordinances, (as there are not a few amongst us), be your impediment what it will, if it be not to your souls as the drawing of the hungry babe off the breast, your affliction, and not your choice, ye may be accounted slights of the treasure and the field both; as men may punctually attend all ordinances, and yet be far from rejoicing in the Lord of ordinances, and from any such joy shining out in their conversation about them. It is not every one that gathers the manna there, though it falls at the tent-doors of all alike. But that still remains a truth in the worst of times, that "God's words do good to him that walketh uprightly," Mic. ii. 7. And it fares with gospel hearers as it did with Jonathan's servant, 1 Sam. xx. 38, 39, "And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

*Secondly*, With respect to the gracious soul's conversation in a suffering time, the man's glorifying in Christ with respect to the cross; our Lord has a weighty word, Mark viii. 38, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." In opposition to this, we must glory in Christ even at such a time, if we would evidence ourselves true Christians.

1. The saints will keep on Christ's side, though it may be lowest; as better with the cross, than the world's side with the crown. There is never a soul engageth with Christ aright, but is reconciled to the cross of Christ; and in the day of its closing with him, lays

down its all at his feet, taking them up again at his command, to hold them as his, and to use them for him, ay and till he call for them, Luke xiv. 26 : and so is content to run all hazards with him, and will not be boasted away from him ; “ For love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave,” Cant. viii. 6. In a time of prosperity Christ gets such a backing as Gideon with his thirty two thousand men, Judg. vii : but whenever the storm arises, there goes off a large multitude ; and when they are particularly brought down to the waters of suffering, there goes off another party, till few do remain. But they to whom the kingdom is appointed, will continue with him in the trial. But it seems self is such a salamander as can live in the fire, 1 Cor. xiii. 3 ; and that though men, by denying Christ to shift the cross, may prove themselves naught, yet even suffering for Christ will not prove one to be a saint ; 2 Cor. xi. 13, “ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.” Compared with ver. 23, “ Are they ministers of Christ ? (I speak as a fool), I am more ; in labour more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.” Consider then,

2. The saints will carry in this matter meekly and humbly, however boldly, as knowing the snare, and their own weakness to resist ; and not from a Roman courage, or natural stiffness and briskness of spirit, which being from proud self, will never make the man act humbly or suffer so. Hence is that exhortation, 1 Pet. iii. 15, “ Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” They will glory in Christ, not only as he for whom, but also as he by whom they suffer. Often has it been observed, that the humble, self-distrusting man, whose soul has trembled within him for fear of dishonouring the Lord, by his fainting in time of trial, has been the sound-hearted sufferer ; while the brisk, fearless professor has made a sad account of himself, when it came to the point of suffering in earnest : Is. xl. 29, 30, 31, “ The Lord giveth power to the faint : and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail. But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength : they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.”

3. *Lastly*, Though the saints will glory in the cross of Christ before the world, yet they will glory more in himself even before them, but before God no glorifying but in Christ. But it will readily be found, that if men do suffer for Christ that have no interest in him, they will glory more in his cross than himself ; I mean,



the cross they bear for his cause, not the sufferings of Christ, called "the cross of Christ," Gal. vi. 14. It appears, that those seducers that disturbed the churches, gloried much in their sufferings for Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 23: but in our text, the apostle, to difference himself and other believers from them, says, "We are the circumcision, that—rejoice in Christ Jesus." Thus far of the second character of a gracious soul, which I may sum up in the words of the apostle, Rom. x. 9, 10, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." I shall straightway proceed to the

III. *Third and Last* character of a real saint. "And have no confidence in the flesh." This is an inference from the second character, and natively follows thereupon; for if our rejoicing be in Christ, it will not be in another. The fixing of the soul on him, is the removing of it from, and the rejecting of all other confidences. And therefore I shall endeavour briefly to dispatch it. I shall not trouble you with the various acceptation of this word flesh in the Scripture. It is taken here for any created thing whatsoever, without Christ, that is to say, which is not in Christ, on which men confide in whole or in part, to commend them to God, whether they be external things or internal. Thus the saints "have no confidence in the flesh; or they confide not, or have not confidence in the flesh, as others read it. The expressions are much the same; only it must be considered, that this character is given them, not in the eye of the law, but in the eye of the gospel, as may afterwards appear. "He who placeth his confidence for salvation," (they are the words of a judicious commentator on the place), "either in whole or in part, in any thing whatsoever, which is not Christ, or in Christ, certainly confides not in Christ, nor glories in him; and therefore is none of the circumcision, nor born of the Spirit." That this is the true sense of the words, appears from the opposition, in the text, betwixt rejoicing in Christ and confidence in the flesh; as also from the Apostle's own explication, vers. 4—8; where he shews what he meant by the flesh, not only external but internal things, drawing off his confidences from all things without Christ, and centering the same on Christ alone. This is the character of a believer, but not as the former two, a positive mark of a saint; it is only a negative mark. The man that is not thus qualified is no saint: yet a man's being thus qualified, will not of itself prove him a saint; as is clear from the case of Judas, and all despairing persons, who have confidence in nothing, and so no confidence in the flesh. And so it is to be taken in conjunction with the former.

DOCTRINE. He is the real Christian, who rejoicing in Christ Jesus hath no confidence in any thing, that is not Christ, nor in Christ, in the matter of salvation.

There are two things which men's confidence in the matter of salvation doth respect; God's favour to them, and their duty to God. All know they cannot be happy without the favour of God, and that there is no attaining to salvation but in the way of duty, though most men cut their duty very short, and many bring it down to believing and repenting at the hour of death, they make it so scrimp. Accordingly we say, 1. The real Christian hath no confidence but in Christ in the point of justification, the pardon of his sin, and acceptance into favour with God. 2. He hath no confidence but in Christ for sanctification, and with respect to his duty. And both these the text, I think, aims at; and the matter of sanctification is not to be excluded, seeing the Christian worships God in spirit, and rejoices in Christ Jesus. These two points I shall endeavour to clear.

I. The true Christian hath no confidence in any thing that is not Christ, nor in Christ, in point of justification. He dare not, he will not place his confidence, in whole or in part, in any other thing, to commend him to God and his favour. Christ is the only sence he lippens to for his defence against wrath; only his blood is the saint's life, his righteousness his only covering. Hence says the Apostle, Phil. iii. 7, 8, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." The saint's best things are of no value with him in this matter; he accounts all his righteousness as filthy rags, Is. lxi. 6. He renounces all pleas before the Lord, but the plea of Christ's satisfaction; turns his back on all other refuges, and runs to the horns of the altar, and holds there. He owns guilt, acknowledges himself a just object of vengeance, but throws himself into the arms of a Mediator, and looks not for a smile from the throne but through the Redeemer's wounds, nor a pardon but what is written in the characters of Christ's blood without mixture. Happy is the man that so doth; Christ himself says it, Matth. v. 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." He is of the circumcision; for he rejoiceth in Christ, having had his confidence cut off from those things in which many place their confidence, to the ruin of their souls. It is not to be expected we can reckon up the false confidences that the heart out of Christ hath. Many a starting-hole will the soul

have, till it be driven out of them all to Christ. The ignorant, the profane, the formalist, the natural man awakened, have their several confidences, whereby they hope to do well enough without Christ, or at least not to be obliged to him for all. I shall hint at some of these, whereby ye may judge of the rest accordingly. I have already shown, that the saints have no confidence in the mercy of God out of Christ; and yet that is the strong confidence of many. But there are two things, besides, on which many build their confidence, to wit, external things, and internal things; some things without them, and some things within them.

*First*, The saints have no confidence in external things, and will be loathe to lay their weight, in whole or in part, upon them; whether they be man's externals, or God's externals.

1. The saints have no confidence in man's externals. I call those things so, which God never made duty, but men make them so. These are not only vain confidences, but vain worship and service, that is loathsome to God, Matth. xv. 9. Men are apt to cut the law short enough, as it is found in the word; but men's nature has a wonderful itching after making additions of their own to it. Hence a cloud of superstition has darkened some churches, and the simplicity of gospel worship is despised; men's inventions are brought in upon, yea, and instead of divine institutions: and when God has taken off the yoke of ceremonies instituted by himself, which the church was not able to bear, Acts xv. 10, men have devised out of their own hearts a yoke of ceremonies in the worship of God, to tempt God, and bind it on the neck of the churches. But though they shall be bound on with the tie of antiquity, as Matth. v. 21. there is no prescription against the law of God, Matth. xv. 2, 3; with the tie of church-authority, as Matth. xxiii. 4, the church can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth, 2 Cor. xiii. 8; or with the tie of civil authority, as Hos. v. 11; seeing it cannot be set home on the conscience with, Thus saith the Lord, it is to be rejected, and by no means complied with, be the hazard what it will. For it is from Satan, and not from God: 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Deut. iv. 2, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Hence also flows a crowd of opinions and practices in the matters of God not found in

the word, but contrary to it, which men zealously stick to as certain duties. Men greedily drink up these, and will be far more forward in them than commanded duties, because nature is always fond of its own brats. If men once take in these things, very readily will they have confidence in them, and highly value themselves upon them, Judg. xvii. 12, 13; as is plain from the case of the Pharisees, and of others who herein tread in their steps: for it may be observed, that in every society, according as these things do rise, the very doctrine of free grace falls proportionably, and men will be found more zealous for a trifling ceremony, an unwarrantable opinion or practice, than for the vitals of Christianity. As all gospel truths and institutions have a tendency towards the life of faith, and centre in Jesus Christ, Eph. iv. 20, 21; so it will be found, that all unscriptural institutions, opinions, and practices, under whatever pretences of holiness they be advanced, have a tendency to weaken the life of faith, to carry men off from Christ and are subservient to self, to high and towering imaginations against Christ, Matth. xv. 4, 5, 6; Col. ii. 18, 19, 21. There is no error in the head, but has some corruption in the heart, to which it is allied, and will strive to advance. But do others as they will, the saints will rejoice in Christ, and not make men's externals their confidence, Phil. iii. 5, 7. And no wonder; for,

2. The saints have no confidence even in God's externals; by which I understand those external things that are laid before us by God himself, which nevertheless have a mighty stress laid upon them by carnal men. And,

1st, They have no confidence in their external condition in the world. Whatever it be by the providence of God, they will not look on it as a thing that may commend them to God. Strange is the deceit of a carnal heart. If a man be poor and mean in the world, he thinks that is sufficient to secure him against eternal poverty; and concludes thence, that God will have him to suffer all his misery here, as if it could not consist with the justice of God, to make him miserable here and hereafter too. If he be rich and honourable, that swells him with conceit of himself, and his riches are his strong tower. As he is set before others in the world, he looks to come before others in another world on the same score. Let the word say to him what it will, he keeps his confidence, saying, Hos. xii. 8, "Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me, that were sin." And if a man meet with some signal favourable providences as to his outward condition, he looks on himself as the darling of heaven. But the saints will not place their confidence there: "For the king-

dom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. They cannot so much as be evidences, far less confidences. Hence says the Preacher, Eccl. ix. 1, 2, "For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before them. All things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked," &c. Ye may be poor and miserable here, and miserable through eternity, Job xv. 23, 24. Ye may fare deliciously every day, with the rich man, and yet in hell lift up your eyes, Luke xvi. And though like Saul seeking asses, ye found a kingdom, ye may be rejected of God as he was.

*2dly*, The saints have no confidence in their external privileges. The false apostles boasted much of their being Abraham's seed, of their circumcision, and the like. But, says the apostle, "We have no confidence in the flesh." He renounces all confidence in these things, vers. 5, 7; 2 Cor. v. 16, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh," says he: "yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." We reckon no more on our being the children of Abraham, nay nor the brethren of Christ himself by nation. But where will the confidence of many be if these be removed, that they are church members, partakers of all church privileges, and in society with Christ's party in the world? But rased it is in the saints, and rased it must be in others now, or it will be done, when there will be no occasion of getting another foundation of confidence laid: Luke xiii. 26, 27, "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." And when the children of the kingdom are shut out, their case of all men will be most sad.

*3dly*, The saints have no confidence in their external attainments; as was the case with the apostle, Phil. iii. 6, 7, who, "concerning zeal, persecuted the church; touching the righteousness, which is in the law, (was) blameless. But what things were gain to (him,) those (he) counted loss for Christ." Great confidence have some in their negative holiness, Luke xviii. 11; they can hold up their face to heaven, and say, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers," &c. They have lived honestly all their days, never wronged their neighbours; they are not profane, they are neither drunkards, swearers, Sabbath breakers, unclean persons, &c., and have observed the commands of God better than many. And indeed they have been going to hell

without letting the world hear the sound of their feet. Or perhaps, though they have been profane, yet that was but the folly of youth ; but now they have taken up themselves, they are not what they were ; and therefore doubt not of God's favour. Sirs, this is not the spot of God's people ; they will as soon venture to sea in a bottomless boat, as venture their souls on this, that know ought of God or of his law. There are in hell this day, who have had all that to say that ye trust in ; and if ye renounce it not, and get Christ in you the hope of glory, ye shall never see heaven : Matth. v. 20, " For except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

*4thly*, The saints have no confidence in their external duties ; they have renounced their confidence, in whole and in part, in what they do or have done, Phil. iii. 6, 7, above-cited. Ver. 8. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." By doing they never think to see heaven. There are two sorts of men opposite to the Christian in this.

(1.) There is a rude, ignorant generation, who do little at all in the way of external duties, and yet they say, they serve God as well as they can ; or though they have no strength in themselves, they do as well as God will give them grace ; yea, some will say, they do as well as God will give them leave. I speak what I know to be true. And here is their cursed confidence. All this is the filthy vomit of a proud and rebellious heart against God, by which they very plainly lay the blame on God that they do not better, like fallen Adam, Gen. iii. 12. But dare such say before a heart searching God, that they have done all they could have done ? Could ye not have holden in rash words that ye have spoken ? could ye not have done something for eternity that ye did not ? &c. But suppose, O man, thou hadst done all thou couldst, God's law is the rule of thy duty, and not thy strength ; and if thou get not in to Christ, God's curse lies, and shall lie on thee through eternity, because thou " continnest not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. The devils have no strength to do good, nor will God give them grace : and yet their damnation is just : so will thine be. Thou hast grace in thine offer, which he is not obliged to give thee ; but thou art a despiser and rejecter of grace, John v. 40, " Ye will not come to me," says Christ, " that ye might have life." Read your doom, Matth. xxv. 24, 25, " Then he which had received the one talent, came and said,

Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed : and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth : lo, there thou hast that is thine." Verse 30, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

(2.) There is another sort who do indeed go the round of external duties ; they attend public ordinances, worship God in secret and in their families ; and as men can quarrel nothing in their outward duties towards God, so they neglect not their external duties of righteousness and mercy toward others. They have the outward form of godliness. And these are but few ; would God there were more of whom that could be said. But, alas ! in the mean time they rest on these external things, Luke xviii. 12 ; Isa. lviii. 3. They put them in Christ's room. But these things are so unfit to be confidences, that they cannot be evidences ; for there is nothing in all the form of godliness beyond the reach of a hypocrite ; and as they are mere external duties, they are an abomination to the Lord, Isa. i. 11, &c. ; Mark x. 20, 21. And will ye make them your confidence ? Thy doing so demonstrates, that thou knowest neither the law of God, which cannot be satisfied but with inward, as well as outward obedience, nor the gospel of Christ, which overturns all these confidences before the Lord. Believe it, "The Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them," Jer. ii. 37. Sure the saints dare have no confidence in them, nor will they venture before the Lord in these filthy rags, Is. lxiv. 6.

*Lastly*, The saints have no confidence in their external sufferings, though for Christ and his cause. Paul was a great sufferer, 2 Cor. xi. 23. to the end ; but yet he "suffered the loss of all things for Christ," Phil. iii. 8 ; and so suffered the loss of his sufferings in point of confidence, among the rest. There is a party, Rev. vii. 14 15, whose garments had been rolled in their own blood for the cause of Christ ; but durst they appear before the Lord in them ? No ; they "washed them in the blood of the Lamb ;" and "therefore are they before the throne ;" otherwise they had gone from the scaffold for Christ, into the pit of hell from the presence of the Lord. And far less will they have confidence in their other sufferings, of what sort soever they be. Few can suffer for Christ ; but there are yet fewer, who can both suffer, and not have confidence in their sufferings. O it is hard to lay out goods and gear, liberty and life, on the cause of Christ, and after all to think Christ is nothing at all in our debt : and that he may very justly bring others that have had at far cheaper religion, as far in as ourselves. The unhumiliated sufferer may read his heart in that murmuring complaint of the

labourers, Matth. xx. 12, "These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." But if men's confidence be not cut off from their sufferings, sad and dreadful will the doom be at length, ver. 14, "Take that thine is," said the good man of the house, "and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee." Verse 16, So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many are called, but few chosen." If they be lippedened to in whole or in part, what is given to them is robbed from the sufferings of Christ; and so will they prove a broken reed, that will not only fail, but pierce the hand and heart through with eternal sorrows. There is also a rude ignorant generation, who think if they suffer what is laid on them by common providence, all will be well with them in the world to come, for they snffer their misery here: and particularly women dying in child-birth are accounted happy on this very account, by a generation ignorant of God; for they say, these pains are, of all pains here-away, likest the pains of hell. O brutish ignorance! O the perverseness of a hellish heart, to take the curse for a confidence in the matter of obtaining the blessing! The apostle indeed, 1 Tim. ii. 15, gives a comfort to godly women in the pains of child-birth, that they shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith; but says not, they shall be saved by it, or that they shall be saved whether they believe or not. Let men or women's hell be as hot as it will in the world, if they renounce not all confidence in their sufferings, and betake themselves to the sufferings of Christ alternally, they shall assuredly, when they die, go out of one hell into another.

*Secondly,* The saints have no confidence for the favour of God, in internals, in any thing within them. I have no exception to make here but one; and that is, Christ in you, the hope of glory, Col. i. 27. There are precious things in the saints, that make them all glorious within; but nothing but Christ that can be confidences for God's favour; though some of them may indeed be evidences.

1. The saints have no confidence in their internal dispositions. The dispositions of their hearts are none of their confidences before the Lord; for "he that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool," Prov. xxviii. 26. Many have a deal of confidence in those good hearts they have towards God, as they speak. They see not the naughtiness of their hearts, and the enmity against God that lurks there. Satan has them so blinded with self-love, that they cannot believe an ill tale of their hearts. This is not the spot of God's people. There is little goodness of heart in the world; but the best heart is always worst looked upon, Matth. xxvi. 22, 25; 1 Tim. i. 15; and no



wonder, for they believe God's testimony of it, Jer. xvii. 9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" Again, men wish they were better, and hope they may be better, and find a disposition in their spirits to do much and suffer much for Christ, and a great aversion to many ill things they see in the world. And indeed people may draw evidences of their state from the dispositions of their hearts; but they had need to examine them well, seeing all these may be in hypocrites, Prov. xiii. 4; Hos. vi. 4; 2 Kings x. 16; Luke xviii. 11. But at best they can be no confidences, seeing there is always such a mixture of evil dispositions with them, as might ruin men.

2. The saints have no confidence in their internal exercises upon their spirits. Hypocrites may have their exercises about their soul's matters. They may be troubled about their soul's state, as we see in Simon, Acts viii. and Felix, Acts xxiv. They may have great inward struggles betwixt corruption and an enlightened conscience, upon a temptation laid in their way; as in the case of Herod, about beheading John; and of Pilate, about the condemning Christ; yea so as the temptation may be resisted in the end, as in Balaam's case. What restlessness of spirit, self-indignation, was in Judas's case? What strong resolutions did terrors on Saul and Pharaoh produce in them? The saints have more kindly exercises. But one difference amongst many betwixt the two, is, that the exercises of the godly issue still in driving them further out of themselves, Matth. v. 3, and consequently out of any confidence in their exercises; while the other are either by theirs driven out of all hope, as Judas, or driven more into themselves, as those, Rom. x. 3, who "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

3. The saints have no confidence in their internal attainments. Hypocrites may have vast attainments, great gifts, enlargements in the exercise of these gifts by a common operation of the Spirit. They may attain to raptures of joy in holy duties, yea, and taste of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come. Read these scriptures, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3; Matth. xiii. 20, 21; Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. But although these cannot be evidences, they make them confidences, and ruin themselves thereby, Matth. vii. 22, 23. So many build their confidence on the like of these things; and whereas they should lead them to Christ, they are carried the farther from Christ by them. But miserable comforters will they find them all at length. The saints have far higher attainments than these. The least measure of saving knowledge, communion with God in

Christ, the least groan from a heart touched with gospel-grace, Rom. viii. 26, is better than all those bulky attainments of the hypocrite. Yet because they are not Christ, nor in Christ, but in themselves, though from Christ, they will not, they dare not make them their confidences for the Lord's favour. They know God to be holy, themselves impure vessels, into which nothing can be poured, be it never so good, but it will be tinctured with impurity. And, therefore, Paul, who was caught up into the third heavens, yet abhors to glory in any thing but the sufferings of Christ, Gal. vi. 14; Phil. iii. 8.

4. *Lastly*, The saints have no confidence in their graces, their inherent graces. Grace is precious, and makes the soul in some measure like God. Happy is the man that has it. Every believer has the image of God on him, grace for grace that is in Christ, as the wax has on it the print of the seal. But this I confidently say, it is the grace of God in Christ, not the grace of God in the saints, that they confide in before the Lord. However precious inherent grace is, it is not Christ; it is but a created quality in a sinner. Let it be screwed to its highest pitch that it comes to in any saint on earth, it cannot answer the demands of the law, being mixed with corruption; and being lippeden unto that way, would prove but an arm of flesh. It is gold indeed, but not such as will abide the fiery trial of the law's furnace: it is white raiment indeed; but it is not pure, but stained white, which is no fit garment for a criminal to stand in for favour at the court of heaven: and therefore Christ offers sinners tried gold, unstained white raiment, of his own sufferings and righteousness, Rev. i. ii. 18. And so the saints renounce all without them and within them for it. Hence, says the apostle, Phil. iii. 8, 9, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom have I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

I shall instance in these two, which are in effigy most abused by carnal men, and set up against Christ.

1st, The grace of repentance. There is an ignorant generation, ask them, how they think to be saved? they will tell you, they repent of their sins day and night. This they will say whom their soul's hazard never kept from an hour's sleep all their days. The matter is, they rue many things they do; and no wonder, for they cannot be fond of destruction. And thus they know not what sin is, nor what repentance is indeed. O what needed Christ to have come, and groaned and died on a cross, under the weight of wrath,

if people may be saved this way? Lippen to this as ye will, ye will repent in hell that ever ye should have made it either evidence or confidence. But there are some who spin a more fine thread of soul deception of themselves, as the word is, Gal. vi. 3. They have in very deed legal qualms of conscience, and their guilt cuts them to the heart; and they go to God, and confess their sin, are resolved to forsake, and never do the like again; and so build their confidence here, especially if they get tears for it; and they think they can give Scripture for this confidence of theirs, as Prov. xxviii. 13, "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy;" and Matth. v. 4, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Sirs, hypocrites may do all this; Judas repented as bitterly as ever ye did, Pharaoh and Saul confessed and had their resolutions to forsake, and Esau his tears. But what law or what gospel allows you to make this your confidence? Will your confession, prayers, tears, forsaking of sin, (which yet indeed ye do not from the heart), answer the demands of the law? Will these shield you from the strokes of justice? Remember it is "shedding of blood," not pouring out of water, much less pouring out of words, that can purchase remission. Many times where water goes out, wind enters in, and makes the tears so abominable as they cannot come into the Lord's bottle. Cursed be those tears that blind the soul so as it cannot see the absolute necessity of the blood of Christ, that are not brought to the fountain of Christ's blood, and washed there, lest they make the soul abominable in the sight of a holy God. If you think the gospel gives you ground, sure it is not the gospel of Christ does it; for Christ's gospel establishes the law, which ye do thus overturn, Rom. iii. 31; and x. 4. The truth is, in this way ye reject both the true law and gospel, and treat with God in the way of a bastard covenant of works of your own making, which God will never agree to; nor does he agree to it by those promises made to them that confess, and them that mourn. Consider, they must either be promises of the covenant of works, or of the covenant of grace. Promises of the covenant of works they are not; for that is express, Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." If they be promises of the covenant of grace, how come ye to plead them without first laying hold by faith on him in whom they are all yea and amen? Now, this ye cannot do, according to the text, unless ye have no confidence in any thing that is not Christ, or in Christ. Do ye think that the Spirit of God makes there a promise of mercy from an unatoned God, or directs to a confession not put in the hand of the "Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous?" 1 John ii. 1. No; "God heareth not sinners, but he

heareth him always; and those petitions that are presented by him, he grants them to sinners for his sake. And that promise, Matth. v. 4, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted," is it to all mourners, think ye? is it to Esau's tears, and Judas's groans? It is to gospel mourners: and therefore that men might have no ground to mistake these blessings, our Lord fixeth that point first, and sets it in the front of the blessings, to be carried through all the rest, ver. 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." And such are all true penitents; and therefore will never make their repenting and mourning their confidence before the Lord. They are dissatisfied with all they do, because they can do nothing as they ought, Is. lxiv. 6; and, upon a review of their repentance, they see such defects in it, as needs a cover of blood; their tears clear their eyes to see the necessity of the Mediator's blood the better: therefore says David, in his bitter repentings, Psalm li. 7, "Purge me with hyssop;" that is with the blood of the everlasting covenant, the blood of the Redeemer, typified by the blood of the sacrifices sprinkled with hyssop on the people, Heb. ix. 19, 20, and by the blood of a bird sprinkled with hyssop on the leper, when he was to be cleansed, and restored to society, Luke xiv. 6, 7. Wash me, to wit, as a fuller washeth cloth to make it pure white. It seems he thought his own plunging himself in his tears could not whiten the stained soul. Nay, the true penitent is free grace's debtor for all, and will acknowledge it is free grace that he is not shut out from the presence of God and his merey, after he hath bathed himself in his tears, Psal. li. 11, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Here he acknowledgeth, he might justly get Cain and Saul's measure. "Cast me not away from thy presence," as thou didst Cain the first murderer; "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me," as thou took thy Spirit from Saul the first king of Israel upon his disobedience, 1 Sam. xvi. 14. Compare 2 Sam. vii. 15.

*2dly*, The grace of faith. There is an ignorant generation that say they believe in God or in Christ; but their faith cannot be called knowledge, as Isa. liii. 11, for they are full of darkness in their minds, they know not what faith is, nor how they came by it; their faith grew up with them, (for they think they believed all their days,) and it will die with them. They have a strong confidence of mercy; which is but gross presumption, seeing it neither purifies heart nor life, Acts xv. 9; 1 John iii. 3; and therefore "shall be rooted out of (their) tabernacle, and it shall bring (them) to the king of terrors," Job xvii. 14. And there are others who came not so easily by the faith they have; yet it is not faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5, but they make it their confidence. There are many things that men call faith, among ignorant and knowing folk

too, who are yet in the state of nature. The revelation of the absolute necessity of faith to salvation is so clear, that hardly can a person be a hearer of the gospel, and not know it; and every man naturally has a principle of self-preservation: hence upon the hearing of this, and especially upon awakenings of conscience, nature will make some efforts for believing. But faith being produced only by the "working of God's mighty power," Eph. i. 19, and not by the power of nature, the result of all nature's efforts this way, is but some misshapen brat instead of faith. Hence we read of Simon's believing, Acts viii. 13; and many believing in his name, whom yet Christ knew to be naught, John ii. 23, 24, 25; and some "staying themselves upon the God of Israel, but not in truth and righteousness," Is. xlviii. 1, 2. I am not here to enter on the several sorts of feigned faith; but with relation to our purpose, there is one thing to be noticed concerning them all, and that is, they never carry a man out of himself to Jesus Christ for all, as true faith doth. That misshapen faith is not the soul's going out of itself to Christ to live in and by him: but is the soul's going of itself and with self to Christ, as a servant to a master. For nature cannot act but in the way of the first covenant: and to a natural man, in his practical judgment, the gospel-way of salvation differs not in kind from the way of Adam's covenant, but only in the measure and degree of obedience; for to them it is still, "Do this, and live; Do this," not do perfect obedience indeed, they know they cannot reach that; but repent, believe, reform, "Do this." Now, the natural man accordingly does this; and so the work of faith (for I must call it so) is to him the fulfilling of the condition of this new covenant, and turns his confidence before the Lord for his favour, as Adam's perfect obedience to the law would have been his confidence. This was the confidence of Israel when they had "cast off the thing that was good," Hos. viii. 2, "Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee;" and of the foolish virgins, Matth. xxv. 11, "Lord, Lord, (they plead a covenant interest in him, Matth. vii. 21,) open to us, us virgins." Thus may ye see how their faith is their folly, as being put in the room of Christ; and so they have but rags for righteousness. But the saints have a faith of the operation of God; yet do they not rest in it, but by it rest and confide on Jesus Christ. It carries the saint out of himself, even his gracious self, Phil. iii. 8. True faith is not a burden-bearer, but an onlayer of burdens, Psalm lv. 22. It is not a leaning stock, but an act of leaning, Cant. viii. 5. It purifies indeed, Acts xv. 9, but no other way but as it lays open the soul to Christ, that a stream of blood may run through it. The hyssop and scarlet wool were no doubt a blithe sight to the people, and particularly to the poor lepers under the law:

but had the dry hyssop and wool been shaken never so oft over them, what would they have availed? but they are dipt in the blood, and the people sprinkled with that blood from off the hyssop and scarlet wool. And when the blood fell, the people were ceremonially purged, and the leper cleansed. And so is it in the case of believing. Thus ye see the saints have no confidence in point of justification, or for obtaining God's favour, in any thing that is not Christ, or in Christ.

The saints have no confidence in point of sanctification, or with respect to duty, in any thing that is not Christ, nor in Christ. As they have taken him alone for justification, so they take him alone for sanctification; for he is made unto us sanctification," as well as righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. The Father has constituted him the head of influences for duty; and from that head it is that all the body having nourishment ministered, increaseth with the increase of God," Col. ii. 19. And this is that life of faith for sanctification that the saints live: John vi. 57. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." There are here also many things men make their confidences, which I cannot particularly name; but, in the general there are seven things I shall touch at, which are but arms of flesh when lippened to, in the matter of sanctification.

1. The saints have no confidence in their stock of natural and acquired abilities, gifts or parts, in the point of sanctification, or performance of duties. Hence says the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 5. "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." This is the stock which is the confidence of many in their religious duties; and upon it they can venture on duty undaunted, their work being rather to be filled with the thoughts of their own strength, and what their abilities may reach, than to be emptied of themselves; to muster up their forces, than to be looking to the Lord for strength from above, and overlooking themselves. Thus a gift of knowledge, utterance, a good natural temper or disposition, and such like, are by natural men put in Christ's room; and on these they confide for performing of duties, and bearing out against temptations. And upon this foundation have stately buildings of morality been reared up, and very glorious form of godliness, which beholders have blessed, while God, that seeth the heart, has cursed them: Jer. xvii. 5. "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." But this is not the way of the saints: Psal. xlv. 5, 6. "Through thee will we

push down our enemies," says the Psalmist; "through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me." Is. xl. 29, 30. Natural men are represented as youths full of natural vigour, strength and activity, who will do their work by themselves, and wait not upon the Lord. But the godly are distinguished from them as men who see their strength failed, and not to be lippened to; and hence look without themselves for it, and roll their way on the Lord, is finding their own shoulders unable for the burden.

2. The saints have no confidence in the means of sanctification, as the word, sacraments, prayer, afflictions, and the like; knowing that "it is the spirit that quickeneth," John vi. 63. and that they are only means through which influences are conveyed from Christ to the souls of his people. None look with such an affectionate eye on the ordinances as they, but none look so far above them either, Psal. xxvii. 4.; for the natural man either tramples on them, or idolizeth them, being satisfied with the chair of state though empty. Many are ruined with their confidence in this way: they rest in the work done, as if that would heal their sores; they place that confidence, in means and instruments, which they should place in Christ himself: and hence they go from one mean to another, and still are "like the heath in the wilderness, that seeth not when good cometh, and that inhabiteth the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited, Jer. xvii. 6. There is a voice they hear within them stirring them up to holiness of life; but upon the hearing of it, they do as young Samuel, who, when the Lord called him, went to Eli: so they go to this and the other mean of sanctification, but never look beyond them to the fountain of sanctification in the Mediator, or as the woman labouring under the issue of blood, spent all her means on the physicians ere she came to Christ.

3. The saints have no confidence in their purposes and resolutions for holiness. Hence says the Psalmist, Psal. cxvi. 9, 10. "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken." He had resolved, but his confidence was in the Lord, in whom he had believed. Compare what the Apostle says, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. O how venturous is nature, being once fleshed with vigorous purposes and resolves! but when the temptation comes they fall down like the walls of Joricho, at the sounding of ram's horns, Prov. vii. 21, 22; Matth. viii. 19, 20. Their bent bow in which they trusted quickly misgives; the fire-edge soon wears off the spirit that is not staid on the Lord. How many purposes and strong resolutions come to nought, because in taking them up men

look not to the Lord as the fountain of strength, but to themselves; and when they are made, there is more weight laid on them than they can bear? Hence the root being rottenness, the blossom flies up as dust; as was the case with the young man void of understanding, who when a whore "with her much fair speech caused him to yield, and with the flattering of her lips forced him, went after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, Prov. vii. 21, 22.

4. The saints have no confidence in their vows and engagements to holiness, or any particular duty; knowing that these are too weak bands for a masterful ill heart, which nothing but the power of the Spirit of Christ can hedge in. Every saint is devoted to the Lord with his own deliberate consent, having given away himself wholly to Christ, to be disposed of as he will, 2 Cor. viii. 5; and will look on his soul and body as consecrated things, and no more his own but the Lord's, to do and suffer for him, according to his will. But while the saints take on these solemn bands, and come under these awful and sacred engagements to duty, their confidence is not in the bands, but in him to whom they are bound, and to whom they bind themselves as to the fountain of strength: Isa. xlv. 23, 24, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." But, alas! the vows of many are in effect a vowing themselves away from Christ. Nature awakened is very fruitful in vows. Sometimes the man will bind a yoke on himself that the word never bound on him, and insnare himself with a vow to abstain from such and such a thing altogether, when his conscience gets up on him for his running to some monstrous excess in it. Or if it be a duty he was wofully slighted, he will come under a vow not only to set about it, but so often, and at such and such times particularly, which is not yet determined by the word. And when he has been carried off into courses absolutely condemned by the word and in which his natural conscience will give him no rest, there shall be a violent sally of the soul against them, ending in a solemn promise and vow to the Lord, never to do any more, without any eye to the corruption of nature, which might make him weary of his words before the Lord, or to the Lord Jesus Christ, without whom we can do nothing, and from whom all our strength must come. And thus the poor blinded soul thinks it is fenced, and in this mud-wall of vows is its confidence. But what is the end of it? The man is even like one that has a brook running through his ground, which often spoils it with its outbreakings, and he builds a wall to stop it; but is not so wise as to fill up the spring, or turn the stream



another way, where it could not do such harm: and so within a little time the water gathers, and forcibly breaks down the call, running out with more violence than ever. And so the vows go like Samson's green withs, when he heard the Philistines were upon him.

5. The saints have no confidence in their own endeavours after holiness. Hence says the Psalmist, Psalm cxxvii. 1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh but in vain." It is the property of a saint, to work as diligently as if he had none to help, but to overlook his work as if he had not put hand to it at all: 1 Cor. xv. 10, I laboured more abundantly than they all," says the Apostle: "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." O, there is much to be done for the advancing of holiness; but none have so much confidence in what is done for that end, as those that do least that way. A man may do very much to win over some lusts, and to attain to such a sort of life as his conscience tells him is necessary for him if he would see heaven, and yet be naught, as working from himself, resting in himself. Herod did many things. It is a difficult thing indeed, for a man to be pursuing a good life, and to win over troublesome lusts, and in pursuit thereof to pray often, and vigorously too, yea, to fast and pray for the casting out of some devils, to struggle against them, watch against them, and to keep at a distance from the occasions of temptation, and such like: but it is far more difficult to be denied to all these when they are done, and to have no confidence in them, but for all to trust in him that raiseth the dead. Men under the law's tutory may do the former; for, skin, for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life; but grace is necessary to the latter, as that which can only carry a man out of himself to Christ.

6. The saints have no confidence in the good frame and disposition of their hearts; that is to say, in actual grace. A good frame is a most desirable thing, and makes a great facility in the way of God while it lasts. It is a precious ointment that refreshes the traveller; but it is no good staff to lean on, it will not bear the weight of one duty: it is a lamp that will quickly go out, if it be not fed with fresh oil from the fountain of grace, the Lord Jesus. Remarkable is that petition of David for the people when they were in an excellent frame, 1 Chron. xxix. 17, 18, "As for me," says he, "in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee." He saw it was not to be made a confidence, and therefore lays the weight of all, and even of preserving that frame, upon the Lord

himself. But many, though their frame is no actual grace, but the product of some common operations on their spirits, make them their confidence, and in the strength thereof go out to their duties: but assuredly they shall not see when good cometh, who thus put their frame in the room of Christ; and often-times for that cause, in the just judgment of God, it fails them, ere they win through with the duty, that they may see it is not Christ, but a broken reed.

7. *Lastly*, The saints have no confidence in habitual grace. Paul had a great stock of it, but he durst not venture to live on it, Gal. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ," says he: "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." As I said in the point of justification, so in the point of sanctification, it is not the grace of God within them which they confide in, but the grace without them, in Jesus Christ. The grace within the saints is a well whose springs are oft stopped, and whose streams are oft very dry; but the grace without them, in Christ, is an ever-flowing fountain, to which they can never come wrong. Where were the life and fruit of the branch, if it were left to the sap within itself, which would quickly evaporate and the branch wither? but it is the sap in the stock that keeps the branch living; and so it is the grace in Christ that keeps the believer living, John vi. 57. But, alas! there are not a few who have neither repentance, love, faith, nor other graces in truth, but the shadows of them, who yet make what they have, their confidence in point of sanctification; who, when they would make the fashion of believing, mourning, &c. look in to themselves for it, but look not up to Christ; whereas the pathway of the saints, is to mount up with wings as eagles, and then fall down on the prey. Thus ye see the saints have no confidence in the flesh, either in point of justification or sanctification; no confidence in any thing without them or within them, that is not Christ or in Christ. And whatever it is I have named, or that I have not named, which men make their confidence before the Lord either of these ways, to set it in the room of Christ, or to set it beside him, so far as it is made a confidence, be it devoted to a curse, and as such for ever exterminated and rooted out: Jer. xvii. 5, 6, "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited."

QUESTION. Is it so that every saint is altogether free of those false confidences, and no ways tainted in that sort? ANSWER. I

told you when entering on this clause, that this is not understood of the saints as if they were pure from it in the eye of the law, but in the eye of the gospel. There is a great and weighty truth supposed as the foundation of this description of the true Christian, and that is, That corrupt nature is quite opposite to Christ, and to the contrivance of salvation by him. It may be I may afterwards touch on it.\* The way of the covenant of works is natural to men. Now, seeing that the best are but in part renewed, it is evident that there are in the greatest saints remains of a legal temper, and that nature now and then has in them its flings against the gospel-way, and towards cursed self, both in the point of obtaining God's favour, as in the case of Peter, Matth. xix. 27. who said unto Jesus, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" and in the point of duty, as in the case of James and John the sons of Zebedee, Matth. xx. 22, who, after Jesus, had put the question to them, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They said unto him, "We are able." But,

1. Every saint in his closing with Christ has been carried freely out of himself to Christ, though self has not yet been carried fully out of him: Psal. cx. 3, "Thy people shall be willing [willingnesses] in the day of thy power." They shall pour out their hearts to him like water that comes freely away, though the vessel is not presently dry, but something of the water still cleaves to it for a time. Where the soul comes to Christ, there is a digging deep in that soul, that looses the confidence in the flesh at the root; so that the saint's heart is loosed from it, and, devoting it to a curse, lays itself naked and bare at Christ's feet, without any thing to condemn it to him, but for all ventures into the arms of free grace. But the hypocrite never comes freely out of himself to Christ: his closing with Christ is but a forced put at best; as Adonijah ran to the horns of the altar when in hazard of his life, who, it is like, cared very little for it otherwise; as the Israelites, Psal. lxxviii. 34—36, 37. Nor does the hypocrite ever come to the market of free grace without money in his hand; the proud heart has still something in itself whereupon to challenge welcome.

2. Every saint habitually walks in the way of renouncing all confidence in the flesh; the habitual bent and set of their souls lies out of themselves to Christ, though, through the prevailing of corruption, they want not often the risings of self in them. And God reckons of his people according to what they habitually are, and not according to what starting aside their corruption does occasion. So they are

\* See Human nature in its fourfold state, state 2. head 1. concerning the corruption of the will.

said to "live by him," John vi. 57; though they are sometimes set down at another table, where, by their feeding on wind, some false flesh grows on them, which grace makes afterward to fall; as in Peter's case, Matth. xxvi. 33, compared with ver. 75: and they return with that in their mouths, Jer. iii. 22, 23, "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." But the hypocrite's habitual confidence is in the flesh, seeing they were never spiritually circumcised, nor their hearts truly cut off from it.

3. The saints have their struggles against this selfish disposition, as against other members of the old man. Self-denial is the lesson Christ puts first in the hands of his people, and it serves them to be learning it all their days. The saints have a double work with their hearts about duties; first, to get them up to them; *Secondly*, to hold them down in them, that they get not up in point of confidence in them. Many see not this disposition in their hearts, and therefore it is not their work to mortify it: but though the tares may be sown and grow while men sleep, they are not plucked up but when men are awake, and their hand at work. If there were hurtful weeds growing in a garden, and the gardener knew nothing of plucking them up, it would be a shrewd sign they were there still.

*Lastly*, When the godly do their duties best, they are farthest from confidence in the flesh: with others it is not so. Nature builds always up nature; but the more grace and nearness to God, the more vile is the saint in his own eyes, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. And it is confirmed by the experience of the saints, that when they have had greatest help in duties, they have afterwards been watched, and so treated by providence, that in that case they have got such ballast, as has made them more than ever see the necessity of the blood and Spirit of Christ; as in the apostles case, 2 Cor. xii. 7.

USE. I exhort you from this to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and to have no confidence in the flesh. What is already said, may serve for evidences to convince of this cursed confidence. And therefore I shall insist no further upon it at present.

Thus I have gone through these characters of a person in the state of grace; and have insisted the longer on them, that I might discover to you your state before the Lord. Let me now in a few words sum up the evidence of the text. A saint is one that works as if he were to win heaven by his working. He worships and serves God, and that in spirit, his heart is at the work; yet overlooks all his works before the Lord, as if he had done nothing at all. He "rejoiceth in Christ Jesus, and hath no confidence in the flesh." Christ is his life, duty is his work; but he dies in point of confi-

dence to his duties, that he may live to Christ. He is neither a workless believer, nor a faithless worker, but a working believer.

And now, Sirs, to conclude, I beseech you in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye will consider what I have said, and impartially try your state by it. It was with fear and trembling I entered upon, and went through these words, because of the exceeding weightiness of the matter, as determining the state of souls before the Lord; and therefore I did not choose to heap up many particulars, but to speak largely to a few, that the evidences might be plain, useful, searching, and safe. For I reckon, that as giving of marks of true saints is one of the most difficult parts of preaching, so marks overly proposed, and not followed out, are to the most part of hearers either useless or hurtful. I hope they have been confirming to some; I wish they might reach their design in others, yet strangers to Christ. Let it be acknowledged to the praise of the good hand of God, that falling to be delivered in the winter, (in which I have something to remark for myself with thankfulness), the season has been so very good, that ye have not been hindered, by the badness of the weather, from attending, as usually in that time of the year; though, alas for it! summer and winter are much alike, in that respect, to several careless perishing souls among you. Sirs, according to the state of your souls now, so will it be with you through eternity. Examine yourselves therefore now, whether Christ be in you or not; whether ye be yet in the black state of nature, uncircumcised spiritually; or whether ye be in the state of grace, and of the true circumcision. Ye have heard the characters, let conscience make the application; and judge yourselves, that ye be not judged and condemned with the world. See now on what ground ye stand; for as ye stand in the world, so shall ye stand before the tribunal of God. Deceive not yourselves: Religion is a mystery to most of the hearers of the gospel; and as some have no shadow of it, many embrace the shadow of it instead of the substance, and please themselves with those things that will not abide trial by the word here, and will vanish as a dream when they are sifted before the tribunal of Christ. If your state be found right upon an impartial trial, it will be an unspeakable comfort: if it be found wrong, it is not the trial that makes it so, it only discovers it to be what it is; and there is yet time to get wrongs righted, and to lay a new foundation, which may last for the eternal welfare of your souls. Consider what I have said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.