

THE
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS
OF
TRUE BELIEVERS.

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XI. IN RELATION TO THEIR ENTERING INTO REST IN CHRIST.\*  
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HEBREWS iv. 3.

For we which have believed do enter into rest.

OUR Lord Jesus has been inviting you to come to him by believing, and many have professed to give him the hand. Here is a touchstone whereby ye may try, whether ye have believed indeed or not: *For we which have believed do enter into rest.*

In ver. 1. the apostle had exhorted the Hebrews to take heed and fear lest they missed or fell short of the blessed rest, of which they had the promise left them in the gospel. This he enforceth from this consideration, that they were in the same state with respect to it, as the ancient Israelites to Canaan. On the one hand, as the Israelites had the promise of Canaan, but lost it through their not believing the promise, ver. 2; so we have the gospel, the promise of the spiritual rest; but if we believe not, we will never enter into it, but fall as the body of Israel in the wilderness. On the other hand, as Caleb and Joshua who believed the promise of Canaan, did enter into it; so we believers do enter into the spiritual rest. Thus you see the connection of the text with the two preceding verses.

In the words we have two things to be considered.

1. A sweet experience declared, *We do enter into rest.* It is an experience of a spiritual and heavenly benefit; whereof Caleb and Joshua's experience was the type, Josh. xix. And here consider,

(1.) The benefit experienced; that is, *rest.* Rest is a sweet thing,

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as all weary labourers do know. But of all rest, soul-rest is the sweetest: and such is this. The rest here meant is the rest held forth in the promise of the gospel, ver. 1, 2. And if ye ask where it is found? it is not in heaven only, for the believer enters into it now: but it is in Christ, whether in earth or heaven. This appears from the sinner's entering into it by faith, the nature of the rest, ver. 10. the apostle's opposing believers' partaking of Christ, to unbelievers' losing their part in Canaan, chap. iii. 14. and is agreeable to the promise of the gospel, Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

(2.) The experience of that benefit, *We do enter*. He says not, *We shall enter*, viz. at death; but in the present time, *We do enter*. The believer's rest is not altogether put off to another life. It is not complete indeed, till we come to heaven; but it is begun here, we are entering into it, and do enter. And the very entrance of the rest is sweet.

2. The parties in whose name this experience is declared, *We which have believed*, viz. in Christ. Unbelievers still remain in their restless condition, but faith in Christ lays the soul to rest. Christ is the resting-place of poor sinners: and faith uniting the soul to Christ, the soul enters into rest in him.

The words afford the following doctrine.

Doer. They who have truly believed in Christ, do enter into rest in him.

Here I shall,

I. Shew who they are that have truly believed.

II. Consider the entering of those that have believed into rest in Jesus Christ.

III. Apply the whole.

I. I am to shew who they are that have truly believed. I am not here to enter on the nature of faith at large: only with a view to the gospel-message sent you last day, I am to shew who have believed in two particulars.

First, They who have believed, have believed the grace and good will of Christ to them in particular, held forth in his word of grace to them, viz. a good-will to save them from sin and wrath. Behold the echo of the believing soul to the word of grace, 2 Tim. i. 15. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Christ has been at much pains to shew his good-will to you and every one of you in particular: I ask you, Do ye now believe it? or are ye not as yet convinced of it? There are three sorts of unbelievers in this point.

1. Those who do not believe what the gospel holds out as good-will, to be good-will to them. Such unbelievers are all carnally secure sinners, unwilling to part with their lusts; Jer. ii. 25. "Thou saidst, There is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." If Christ in his gospel should shew a good-will to make them healthy, and wealthy, and well in the world, they could believe that to be good-will to them: or if he could restrict his good-will to the keeping them out of hell, when they die. But all that is said of good-will to them otherwise, they look on as idle tales, Psal. iv. 6. And so they treat as airy notions, what they have no heart for, Prov. xvii. 16. Nay, when they look on it in earnest, they take it for ill-will, to rob them of what they have most delight in, Rom. vii. 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Gal. iv. 16. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

2. Those who do not believe the grace and good-will of Christ to them to be pure grace and good-will. Such unbelievers are all unhumbled souls: they have never got a true sight of their own exceeding sinfulness and utter unworthiness; so it is easy for them to believe Christ's good-will to them, for they never saw any difficulty in that, *How shall I put thee among the children?* But then it is not grace and good-will, but due good-will to them, that they believe: and that is not divine faith, Rom. iv. 4, 5, 16. wrought by the Spirit.

3. Those who do see their own sinfulness, that they cannot see nor believe Christ's grace and good-will to them. Such unbelievers are awakened sinners, on whom the law has its effect, but not the gospel, Isa. liiii. 4. They have a jealousy of Christ reigning in them, that they cannot believe that ever his heart can be towards them. And so however they may believe the truth of the gospel as to others, they believe it not with respect to themselves.

Now all these are unbelievers, who have not entered into rest, but continue restless. They do not believe the gospel, receive not Christ's testimony, John iii. 32. make God a liar, 1 John v. 10, 11. They go no farther in their belief of the gospel than devils, Mark i. 24, 25.

Quest. By what characters may they be known, who have believed in this point?

Ans. 1. They have believed Christ's grace and good-will to them, over the belly of staring guilt, and felt unworthiness, Luke xv. 18. Convinced that the Lord would have been just, and done them no wrong, to have set himself against them for ever; they have yet believed his unhired good-will to them held forth in his word of grace. so their faith stands on the foot of mere grace, pure grace.

2. They have believed his grace and good-will towards the drawing them out of the miry clay of their sinfulness, as well as out from the rolling waves of guilt, the curse, and eternal wrath. For this is the good-will of Christ testified in the gospel, Matth. i. 21. *He shall save his people from their sins*; and faith believes that good-will as held forth in the gospel. So they reckon it good-will to them, that they may be made holy, that the power of sin be broken in them, and believe such a good-will to them in Christ Jesus. They would as fain be sanctified, as one would be freed from his running sores, and believe the great Physician's good-will to their cure, Micah vii. 19. "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

3. The only foundation of their belief of it, is the faithfulness of God in his word of grace, Gal. iii. 2. "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" They see so much of their own vileness, that if men or angels had said it, they could not have believed it: but because they see God himself has said it, they cannot but believe it. The Spirit of God has demonstrated to them Christ's good-will in the word of the gospel, and that that word is God's own word: so they are overcome into a belief of it. So the word of the gospel is the anchor of their souls, which they hold by alone, whatever waves come on them to beat them off from that their belief.

4. *Lastly*, They have betaken themselves to the grace and good-will of Christ in his word of grace, and laid all their weight over upon it. Whatever jealousies of Christ's good-will were hanging about them, proceeding from conscience of guilt, and Satan's subtle insinuations; they have broke through them all, and cast themselves into the arms of free grace, Mark ix. 34. This brings to

The *Second* particular, They who have believed, have believed on Christ as their own Saviour for life and salvation to them, Acts xv. 11. "We believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." Thus believing the Son, and believing on the Son, believing the gospel, and receiving and resting on Christ, are inseparably connected, John iii. 36. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." They who believe the gospel, testifying Christ's grace and good-will to them in particular, cannot but receive and rest on Christ breathing that good-will towards them; as you see was exemplified in Zaccheus, Luke xix. 6. *He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully*. Their reigning jealousy being cured by their faith of the word of his grace, they cannot but throw themselves into the arms of his grace, and embrace him as their all.

This believing lies precisely in trusting on him as our Saviour : the sinner trusting to the report of his good-will to him, trusts on him accordingly for all, Is. xxvi. 4. Psal. ii. *ult.* And so he,

1. Commits himself to him, as one doth quietly commit himself to an able person, whose good-will to him he believes, Psal. x. 14. *The poor committeth himself unto thee, Heb. leaves upon thee.* The sinner sees his case in itself to be desperate, but hearing of the Saviour able to save to the uttermost, and believing his good-will to him, commits and rolls himself on him.

2. He expects salvation from him according to the word of his grace, Acts xv. 11. forecited. For the gospel is a promise held forth to sinners to be believed, a promise of life and salvation, Heb. iv. 1; and faith trusting the promise, expects the accomplishment of it.

And the sinner believing on Christ, betakes himself to him only, wholly, and for ever.

(1.) He renounces utterly all expectations of rest to his conscience from the law, and betakes himself to a crucified Christ for it, Phil. iii. 3. All his doings and sufferings are quitted in point of confidence in them before the Lord; and he lays his weight allenary on the blood and righteousness of Christ. The infinity of the person persuades him of the efficacy of these for acceptance, and the word of promise satisfies him of Christ's good-will to apply them to him.

(2.) He renounces utterly all expectations of rest to his heart from the world, and his lusts, and betakes himself to a full Christ for it, Jer. xvi. 19. The world has appeared vain and empty, it has given the man many disappointments, and he will trust it no more; he says, There is no hope from that quarter. His sinful lusts have appeared deceitful; looking for a rest in them, he has found himself as among lions' dens, and on mountains of leopards. Wherefore he takes Christ for a rest to his restless heart, for all and instead of all: Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

Thus the sinner believing does enter into rest, rests in Christ as his choice, never to make another choice, to take any person or thing in his stead; rests in him as a complete portion, sensible that there is enough in him to make him happy.

II. I shall consider the entering of those that have believed into rest in Jesus Christ. And herein I shall shew,

1. What is supposed in that those who have believed do enter into rest.

2. What is that rest in Christ which they do enter into.

3. What is the import of their entering into that rest in Christ.

4. How the soul is entered into rest in the way of believing.

FIRST, I am to shew what is supposed in that those who have believed do enter into rest.

First, Those who have not believed, are in a state of restlessness. Unbelievers are restless creatures, Is. lvii. 20. Till the soul come to Christ, it can never get true rest: one may take rest as well on the top of a mast, as get it in an ungodly, unregenerate, unconverted state. Those out of Christ have,

1. A restless station, an insecure standing, Deut. xxviii. 65, 66. "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life." It is by faith only that one's feet come to be set on a rock. Sinners out of Christ are like those who are standing on the earth quaking under them, like those who are leaning on a broken reed: for how can they have sure footing, who are lying open to the wrath of God, and are every moment in hazard of dropping into the pit? John iii. *ult.*

2. A restless labouring, Matt. xi. 28. The reigning lusts keep them always busy; for they have many mouths to feed, many task-masters to please, who are under the command of unmortified lusts, Jer. ix. 5. They have hard work to squeeze their satisfaction out of the husks of the empty creation, Hab. ii. 13. And if conscience is awakened, they have hard labour, in the fiery region of the law, to keep pace with it, and work a righteousness in which they may stand before a just God, Rom. x. 3. It is a restless labouring; for they can never reach the end of their work; for reigning lusts will never cease craving, the creature will never satisfy, nor the law justify.

3. A restless wandering. God is the place, the resting place of the soul, Psal. xc. 1. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." Adam and all his posterity in him left this place; so the soul not returned to God by Christ, is in a wandering state, Prov. xxvii. 8. "As a bird that wandereth from her nest;

4. A restless burden-bearing, Matth. xi. 28. There is a load of guilt on them, which they cannot shake off, John vii. 24—of servitude to reigning lusts, which they cannot free themselves of, 2 Tim. iii. 6.—of law-duties bound on them under the pain of the curse, while it has no promise of strength wherewith to perform them, which they can neither bear nor be freed from, Gal. iv. 24,—26.—of curses, which they are continually increasing, Gal. iii. 10.—and of wrath lying on them, John iii. *ult.* and heaped up, Rom. ii. 5.

5. *Lastly*, A restless eternal state abiding them, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. They that take not up their rest in Christ now, will have no rest hereafter: for *their worm will never die, nor their fire be quenched*. As they have no solid rest in this world, they will have no rest at all in the other world.

Secondly, Restless souls may be laid to rest in Jesus Christ, Matt. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The whole race of mankind being put off their rest by Adam's fall, whoso will may return to their rest in Christ, by him returning to God. For the rest that men are seeking, but cannot get in their lusts, in the creature, and in the law, may be found in Christ. In him the soul may sweetly repose itself; being safe from the fear of evil, and having all in him to answer its needs.

Lastly, It is by faith the restless soul is laid to rest in Christ, Rom. xv. 13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." The word was put off, and is kept off its rest, by the disturbance given by the tempter: he goes about, and will let none of them rest, that he can get hindered. God has sent us the gospel, as a song to sing poor sinners to rest in a Saviour, Psal. xxxvii. 7; and it is so efficacious for that end, that all that hear it by faith, are really led to rest in him, though they had been raging like madmen, as Manasseh and Paul.

SECONDLY, I proceed to show what is that rest in Christ, which they who do believe enter into. It is twofold, spiritual and heavenly, initial and complete.

First, They who have believed, do enter into spiritual rest, which is their initial or begun rest. Though they should get little more rest for their bodies, till they rest in the grave; they enter into soul-rest, Matth. xi. 39. they get rest for their souls in Christ. And none that knows what soul-trouble is, but they will value it more than any rest out of heaven. And they can enter into,

1. A rest of the understanding. The mind of man is a restless thing; and though it is always seeking and searching, it can never find where to rest, till the soul come to Christ, and there it comes to the utmost point and so rests. Now, the minds of those that have believed, do enter into,

(1.) A rest of persuasion and assurance of the truth of the gospel, 1 Thess. i. 5, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." There is a root of Atheism and incredulity in the minds of men by nature: the gospel is brought to them, but they cannot believe it, Isa. iii. 1. It is enforced upon them with many clear arguments, ready to cap-

tivate their assent: but still at best they remain fluctuating about it; sometimes they are almost persuaded, and anon the vain mind recoils. Hence they are here and there in their resolutions, course of life, &c. Thus they remain restless in their minds about it, till the Spirit demonstrating it, works faith in them: and then they rest assured of it, as of what they see and feel.

(2.) A rest sufficient to make men happy. The whole blind world is in quest of that, and they are rambling up and down in great confusion seeking it; while they know not where it is. One runs to the profits, others to the pleasures of the world for it; but can never find it in the whole round of creation to which they go for it. But Christ being seen by an eye of faith, the mind is at rest from the weary search: the soul has found the one pearl, and cries out, I have found, I need seek no farther, John i. 45; here is enough for me.

(3.) A rest of the highest estimation, Psal. lxxiii. 25. forecited. Natural men are in a constant hurry this way, they never rest in this point. They will most esteem that to-day, which they will loath and think very little off to-morrow. What we had the highest value for in infancy, we care not for in childhood; in childhood, we despise in youth, &c. In a word, natural men are all their days like children, that value the newest toy most. But when men believe, the highest estimation is fixed on Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 7. *Unto you which believe he is precious*: and though thousands of objects come after him, he preserves his transcendent excellency in the believer's eyes. His mind is at rest there, though the greatest hardships come with him, their highest value for him is not sunk.

2. A rest of the will. The will is a restless faculty of the soul; it goes hither and thither, and can never be brought to rest, till the soul comes to Christ. *Unstable as water*, may be its motto, for what he wills to-day, he will not to-morrow. But the will of those who have believed doth enter into,

(1.) A rest of full liking to and contentedness with Christ, Psal. cx. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*. The unbeliever never saw the object in which he could so rest. However pleased he was with it, it wanted still some one thing or other to him: the creature, in itself; and Christ himself, with respect to their mind. Hence he could never find rest to his will. But they who believe do enter into this rest: they have at length fallen on an object that fully pleaseth them; there is nothing in him which they would have away, and there is nothing out of him that they would have in, Cant. v. ult. *He is altogether lovely*.

(2.) A rest of chief design and purpose, namely, so partake of Christ, and enjoy God in him, which is man's chief end, Psal. lxxiii.

25. Unbelievers are still changing their particular chief designs, they alter their minds in them, and cannot rest : but faith sets the soul to rest in *one thing*, which it will chiefly pursue while breath lasts, Psal. xxvii. 4, and what that is, the apostle tells, 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."

(3.) A rest of final choice, Psal. lxxiii. 25. The soul that is out of Christ is light of conceit, and given to changes : but they that have made their choice, and closed their eyes never to chuse another, acquiescing in the choice of Christ for a portion. Hence they deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, as a woman espoused to a husband can no more admit the addresses of former suitors, Tit. ii. 12, 13.

3. A rest of the conscience. A disturbed conscience is a heavy companion, Prov. xviii. 14. and there is no sound rest for it, but in Christ. The consciences of some are asleep, yea those of some are seared ; but that is no kindly rest for them. They will certainly be awakened sooner or later, and conscience makes some frightful starts in that sleep. The awakened conscience smarts sore as by a deep wound, Acts ii. 37. and that wound's becoming incurable, is the gnawing worm in hell. The first way men go for rest in this case is to the law, making a healing plaister of their duties to apply to their sore : but there is no rest there, the thunder of its curses being redoubled. But the consciences of those who have believed, do enter into,

(1.) A rest of ease, Rom. xv. 13. The soul that was in a storm before, comes to enjoy a calm by believing, just according to the measure of believing. In the awakened fired conscience, guilt ferments, and casts it into a fever ; by believing the soul gets the conscience purged, Heb. ix. 14. and so there is a cool of that fever, chap. x. 2. Faith brings the tossed soul to an anchor in Christ.

(2.) A rest of refreshment, comfort, and establishment : there is not only *peace*, but *joy in believing*, according to the measure thereof, Rom. xv. 13. The same conscience that stung the man before, cheers him now ; that brought the dread of God as an enemy, brings in kindly thoughts of God through Christ, finding kindly rest in the righteousness of a Redeemer apprehended by faith.

Indeed so far as faith is mixed without doubting, the rest will be mixed with unquietness. And if faith were perfect, the rest would be perfect too. But if the hand of faith tremble, taking and holding the grip, so much will be wanting of the ease and comfort of conscience.

4. A rest of heart and affections, Psal. cxvi. 7. This is a rest the soul can never find till it come to Christ: for still the heart of man is craving, at the rate the whole creation cannot answer it, and therefore is kept restless. But the hearts of those who have believed, do enter into,

(1.) A rest of satisfaction, Phil. iv. 18. The soul being by faith set on the breasts of the divine consolations, has enough, Gen. xxxiii. 11. It finds Christ an object commensurable to its boundless desires, nothing to be desired without him, nothing beyond him, Psal, lxxiii. 25. The whole compass of wordly comforts could never match the heart; there was still something wanting which the heart desired. But now it is matched in a satisfying object.

(2.) A rest of settled abode, Psal. xc. 1. so that it goes no more abroad, as it was wont, among the creatures for satisfaction, John iv. 14. Having Christ, it has enough within itself, Prov. xiv. 14. and therefore can rest satisfied even when the streams abroad are dried up, Hab. iii. 17, 18. why? because the fountain is with it. Christ, as the husband of the soul, becomes a covering of its eyes.

(3.) A rest of holy calmness, Matth. xi. 29. While the soul is out of Christ, the heart and affections are like a troubled sea: unmortified lusts and passions fight therein like contrary winds blowing; one passion drives the heart this way, anon another comes and drives it that way, Jam. iv. 1. But the soul believing in Christ, the turbulent rout of unruly lusts is cashiered, and the soul gets a cool of that fever, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you.* Then is fulfilled that promise, Isa. xi. 6. *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fawning together, and a little child shall lead them.*

(4.) A rest of holy security as to the issue of all that concerns them, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know, (says Paul) whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Faith brings the news from heaven, on all events, that we will be well in the end. Luther, when any cloud of troubles appeared to be gathering, used to say, "Come let us sing the 46th psalm." For faith can make a rest in the midst of trouble, building its nest in the promise, John xvi. *ult.* "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

And thus the soul ceaseth from its own works, Heb. iv. 10; and hath a spiritual sabbath begun.

Secondly, Those who have believed, do enter into heavenly rest at

length. This is the rest completed. The grave is made a resting place for their bodies for a while; but the soul rests in Abraham's bosom at death till the resurrection. And then the soul and body together will have an everlasting complete rest there together. All I say of it is in these two things.

1. All the mixture of disquiet and uneasiness that remains in the rest of believers here, shall then be taken away. The soul rest in Christ here is not without some mixture of disquiet, because of the imperfection of faith. There is a remaining darkness in their minds, and rebellion in their will: the rest of their conscience in Christ may be assaulted with doubts and fears; and the rest of their hearts in him interrupted by the sallies of corruption. But according to the gospel, God judgeth of them according to the bent of their soul.

2. The rest begun here shall be screwed up to a height there. Their minds being enlightened with the light of glory, their wills perfected in holiness, their consciences quieted by the decisive sentence from the tribunal, and their hearts satisfied with full enjoyment, will give them a more profound rest in Christ than we can imagine.

THIRDLY, I proceed to shew what is the import of their entering into that rest in Christ. It imports,

1. Sinners before they believe have a toiled, restless, uneasy life of it, Matth. xi. 28. No wonder, for they are God's enemies, the law's criminals, sin's slaves, and Satan's drudges. In vain do men reject religion, because it will not suffer them to be idle: for the servants of sin are as busy as the servants of God can be for their hearts. The watch goes as fast when wrong, as when right: and the Lord does not put more, but other work in people's hands. The soul of man is always doing and active, right and wrong.

2. All that believe are wearied, outwearied people, that find they need rest, and would fain have it, Isa. xxviii. 12. *This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing.* Never a soul will come to Christ, till it be so wearied, that its legs are able to carry it no further, Jer. ii. 24. So being quite tired out, it lies down at his door. They are outwearied of the vain world; it has disappointed them so often, that they say, *There is no hope.* They are outwearied of their deceitful lusts, for they find there is no satisfying of them. They see there is no rest for them there. If ye were never thus wearied, ye have never yet entered into this rest.

3. They see and believe there is a rest in Christ for them. The gospel is a word in season to the weary, Isa. l. 4. there it is they find rest to their souls, Matth. xi. 28. They see Christ as the shadow of a

great rock in the weary land, and conclude, that if they can get there, they will get rest. It is the Spirit of God that discovers Christ as a resting-place for the sinner; for the soul remaining in its natural blindness, is so far from it, that it represents Christ in quite contrary colours.

4. They come to him as a resting-place, by believing on him, Matth. xi. 28; Isa. xi. 10. They throw themselves into the arms of his grace, take hold of his covenant, and receive him for their eternal resting-place, to abide in him for ever, desiring nothing without or beyond him, Psal. lxxiii. 25. as having all in him for their safety and provision, Psal. cxlii. 5. So the weary soul takes up its lodging in Christ, saying, All my wants be on thee.

5. They compose themselves for, and set themselves to rest in him, Psal. cxvi. 7. They seek their rest in him, as a wearied man gone to bed seeks rest there. They give over seeking rest, either to their consciences in the law, or to their hearts in the world, or their wills in their lusts: but what they were seeking before in all these, they seek now in Christ alone, Psal. xlv. 10.

6. They are active to get rest in Christ. Entering speaks activity, and that lies in the exercise of faith. They who have believed, do by believing enter into rest: by the first act of faith the soul is brought into the resting place, by the continued actings of faith the soul enters into rest in him. So faith is called *a resting on the Lord*, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. *in the Lord*, Psal. xxxvii. 7. And as far as the exercise of faith is intermitted, so far the entering into rest in Christ is interrupted.

7. They find a begun rest, but not complete; they are entered into it; though they are not yet come to the perfection of it, yet they are in the way to it. Such is the difference betwixt the rest of faith, and the rest of sight and sense. Hence they are easily disturbed, too easily put off their rest by temptations and trials; whereas in heaven they can be no more disturbed in the least.

8. *Lastly*, The believer all his life long here, is but entering into that rest: *We do enter*. The Israelites were forty years a-entering into Canaan, after they came out of Egypt. And from the moment of the first believing, till the soul comes to glory, it is but entering into rest; entering being but an initial and imperfect action. Hence they that have come to Christ, are still said to be *coming*, 1 Pet. ii. 4. But at length they shall have it full and complete.

FOURTHLY, I come now to shew how the soul is entered into rest in the way of believing, or the influence of faith to bring and lay the soul to rest. This is a mystery to the blind world: no body can truly know the rest of the soul in Christ, but those that have expe-

rienced it; nor the influence of faith that way, but those that have felt it; though they may talk rationally about it, and preach it.

1. Faith discovers Christ as the only object commensurable to the desires of the soul, Psal. lxxiii. 25. Men employ the eyes in their head to discover among the creatures something they may rest in; the eyes of their mind, and these go to what they never saw, and dress up a thousand airy nothings to themselves: but all these leave the man disappointed, so that he must go on to a new search, and so can never rest. But the eye of faith beholds through the glass of the gospel Christ as such an object, a full and complete match for the heart; so that the man sees he needs seek no farther, and so he rests.

2. Faith takes possession of Christ, as such an object offered to the soul; knits with him in a marriage-covenant, by trusting on him for all to itself, John i. 12; Psal. ii. *ult.* So it enters the soul to rest, as a wife in the house of her husband, who has now made her final choice. The man that was seeking goodly pearls, having discovered the one pearl, purchases that, and seeks no more, Matth. xii. 45, 46. A beggar may see an estate, which, if he had it, would be enough for him; but that sight cannot cause him to give over his begging: but if one should make it over to him, and he thereupon takes possession, he will rest, and beg no more.

3. Faith draws the sting of guilt out of the conscience, and so enters the soul to rest, Rom. iii. 24, 25. Lay a man down in the softest bed, the quietest room, a thorn sticking in his finger, he cannot rest till the thorn be pulled out. Guilt is a thorn in the conscience; but faith applying the blood of Christ to the wound, the thorn is drawn out, Heb. ix. 14. It cast him in a spiritual fever, but he is healed, Isa. xxxiii. *ult.*

4. Faith sets the soul in safety, Prov. i. *ult.* If a man have never so many conveniencies for resting, but sees himself still in danger of his life, how can he rest? Job xi. 18. In such danger are all unbelievers, and they can have no rest, but when the dead sleep is in their eye. But as soon as the soul believes, all is safe, Rom. viii. 1. Faith brings the soul under the covert of blood, where not a drop of wrath can pass; and within the bond of the covenant of peace, where the noise of war is heard no more. Pardon and peace give safety for quiet rest.

5. Faith mortifies and breaks the power of reigning lusts, Acts xv. 9. While they abide in their force, there can be no rest, more than in the troubled sea: but faith brings a calm, mortifying those lusts, that fight in and against the soul. Faith knitting the soul to Christ as the head, in whom is lodged the fulness of the Spirit of

holiness, cannot miss of sanctifying influence, Acts xxvi. 18. And the more vigorous and strong faith is, the virtue of the death of Christ for the death of lusts is the more partaken of. Hence it brings the soul to rest, freeing it from the hellish noise that unmortified lusts were wont to make; and from the violent tosses that they gave the soul among them, so that it could not rest.

6. Faith cures the soul of the dog-like appetite, that painful hunger and thirst which the eating of the forbidden fruit left in all mankind. Lay one never so soft, if hunger be gnawing him, and thirst scorching him, he cannot rest. Such is the case of all unbelievers, they are hungering and thirsting for satisfaction from the creature: they eat of the husks, but they are never satisfied; they drink of the puddled waters, but their thirst is not quenched. Hence Christ calls them to him, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness," Isa. lv. 1, 2. And faith taking of the hidden manna, the waters of life, that hunger and thirst is cured, John iv. 14. and the soul rests.

7. Faith contracts the desires of the soul into one point, Psal. 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 enquire into his temple." The unbeliever's heart is divided, nay it is split in a thousand pieces as it were; for many are the cravings of the heart naturally: but the thing necessary for the soul is but one, Luke x. *ult.* *One thing is needful.* He that lies down wanting many things to make him easy, how can he rest when his mind is going out on one want after another? Faith makes the desires to be contracted into this one, that the soul may rest in Christ.

8. Faith sees it hath a fulness in Christ enough to answer all its needs: and hence the language thereof is, *I have all, and abound*, Phil. iv. 18. Pressing wants which one knows not of supply for, breed anxiety, and anxiety disturbs and keeps from rest: but faith discerning a full supply for the man in Christ, lays him to rest. There is *the fulness of a Godhead in him*, and so they are *complete in him*, Col. ii. 9, 10. Though a man have nothing in hand to answer the demands of his creditors, if he has bills and bonds of a friend of his, to whom he can never come wrong, he is easy: so the soul, whatever its wants be, knowing it has enough in Christ, rests satisfied that they shall be all supplied out of his exuberant fulness.

9. *Lastly*, Faith leaves all on Christ, Psal. x. 14. *The poor leaveth himself on thee*, Heb. Hannah was very restless a while, but praying in faith, and leaving her case to the Lord, she was easy, 1 Sam. i. 18. Believers are travelling through the wilderness, but they have a guide whom they can trust, and that makes them easy, Phil. iv. 6, 7. The believer sometimes racks and distresses himself, upon this and the other strait and difficulty; and many unbelieving hows and whys go through his heart; and he is like a man that in a dark and pathless wilderness has lost sight of his guide: but when the eye of faith clears, all these are silenced; and fixing on a promise, he gets a cool of that fever: he trusts on the power, wisdom, and truth of Christ.

I shall now, in the last place, apply this subject in some practical uses.

USE I. Of information. Hence learn,

I. That Jesus Christ is a resting-place for the weary, Matt. xi. 28. By faith the soul comes to him, and there finds a rest. What rest Noah found in the ark, when the deluge was on the earth; the manslayer in the city of refuge, otherwise in hazard of his life; the Israelites in Canaan after their bondage in Egypt; that Jesus Christ will give to believers in him, Isa. xi. 10. *To it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.*

2. True faith is an active and efficacious thing. It lays the restless soul to rest. It is efficacious on the conscience, and heart, and all the faculties of the soul; and therefore cannot but be so on the life too, Gal. v. 6. *Faith worketh by love.* That faith which is idle and inefficacious, making no change on the heart and life, is but dead, and will leave the soul in death, Jam. ii. 17. True faith uniting the soul to Christ the fountain of life, partakes of the Spirit of life in him, and so is a working faith.

3. The way of believing is the way to solid rest. All weary souls should take this way, so should they attain the rest they would fain have. This is the way to the wilderness rest, where the soul rests in Christ amidst all the present tosses of a present life, John xvi. *ult.* and to the heavenly rest, where they shall have a profound peace not to be disturbed any more, Rev. xxi. 25.

4. Those who have believed, may see what course to take at any time when their rest is disturbed. They must renew the actings of faith on Christ. This is a sovereign remedy, (1.) When their inward peace of conscience is marred, through a sense of unpardoned guilt lying on them. The same faith that applying the blood of Christ to the soul, drew the sting out of the conscience before, will do the same again. (2.) When corruption stirring and prevailing in the soul, disturbs its rest. Nothing is more effectual to quench the hellish

fire blown up in the heart, than the exercise of faith, Acts xv. 9. And at no time is the exercise of faith out of season, Psal. lxii. 8. *Trust in him at all times*, particularly at such a time, saying with David, Psal. lxxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* (3.) When one is under a pressure of outward trouble, faith will carry the soul to a hiding-place, Isa. xxxii. 2. and relieving the soul by the comfort of the promise, will make it go easily under the burden.

USE II. Of trial. Hereby ye may try whether ye have truly believed in Christ or not; for they who have believed do enter into rest in him. And by this touch-stone we may sort the hearers of the gospel.

1. Those who have never yet found the object, in which their heart could take up its eternal rest, but are still seeking it among the creatures, are unbelievers. That is an evidence they are in their natural state, still wandering on the mountains of vanity, and Christ has never been discovered savingly to them, John iv. 10.

On the other hand, those who have seen such a transcendent glory and excellency in Christ, as has put an end to their searching out for a satisfying object, and brought them to make a final choice of Christ as fully satisfying, they are true believers. For they are come to a point in the main thing, Psal. lxxiii. 25.; they have found the one pearl, else they had not given over their former vain search.

2. Those whose pretended closing with Christ has never made them cease from their own works, but they are still living the loose, licentious, carnal life they led before, are unbelievers, Heb. iv. 10. They who continue in the devil's drudgery, yielding still their members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, are not entering into this holy rest, but abiding at their restless labour.

But such as having closed with Christ have given over their former work, dying unto sin, and living to God as those that are alive from the dead, are true believers. Their faith is proved true, as being a fountain of sanctification. Their lives are actually purged from the gross pollutions of the world, whereby they differ from the profane; and they are wrestling against the pollutions of the heart whereby they differ from hypocrites, 1 John iii. 3. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4.

3. Those who fall away from Christ in heart or life, have not truly believed, 1 John ii. 19. There are branches in Christ that rest not in him, but are taken away, because they never truly knit with him, John xv. 2. (1.) There is a falling away from Christ in heart: that is, when those who have pretended to yield themselves to the Lord, keep up their profession, and a form of duties, to satisfy their consciences: but in the mean time it is the vain world and their de-

ceitful lusts whence they fetch all their satisfaction to their hearts, like those, Isa. iv. 1. who said, *We will eat our bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.* (2.) In life and conversation, which readily follows the other, so that they return by degrees to their former sinful courses; turning as loose and licentious as ever, if not more so. Of these it is said, that *it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them, &c.* 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.

But those who continue with Christ in heart and life, are true believers, John viii. 31. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Such a continuance argues them to have knit with the flock; the storms blow, but they are founded on the rock, therefore they stand. Their continuance with him shews, they have entered into rest with him.

Case. But alas! my heart continues very restless, and ill to guide; it is unstable as water, I cannot get it to rest in Christ as I would have it. *Ans.* What of that rest is obtained here is an entering into it, a beginning of it, and endeavour after it, rather than a full rest. The Christian is in that case rather like one that is going to sleep, that has his startings now and then, than like one who is sound asleep. Though he cannot rest as he would desire in Christ, yet still he abides within the resting-place, does not turn his back on Christ, and take up his rest in the world and his lusts again; like a sick man who may change many seats, yet still abides within his own house, and goes not abroad leaving it. So the Christian is habitually, and in respect of endeavour, resting in Christ: and the Lord will reckon that a true rest in him, 2 Cor. viii. 12. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Psal. 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." No body while here wants their wandering fits: but happy they who are like the dove sent out of the ark, ever restless till she came back; not like the raven, who finding no carrion to feed on, returned no more.

USE III. Of exhortation. Ye who profess to have believed in Christ, rest in him, and so evidence your faith. For motives, consider,

1. There is no need ye should go to any other quarter for what ye need: *For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell,* Col. 1. 19. There is nothing ye can want, but ye have it in him; *Thou art my refuge,* says David, *and my portion in the land of the liv-*

ing, Psal. cxlii. 5. There is no case ye can be in, but there is a suitable remedy for it in him. He that rests in Christ, having Christ in him, has all within himself.

2. There is no true rest to be found out of Christ, John vi. 67, 68. He is the life, and without him there is nothing but death; he is all in all, and without him there is nothing but emptiness; he is the rest, and without him there is nothing but wandering.

3. It dishonours him highly not to rest in him. It gives out an ill report of him to the world, whereby his name may be blasphemed, as if there were not enough in him to satisfy in all cases. It is such an indignity as it would be to a husband, that his spouse were hanging about the doors of her former suitors.

4. Your not resting in him will evidence your hypocrisy: *Will he delight himself in the Almighty?* says Job of the hypocrite; *Will he always call upon God?* Job xxvii. 10. Ye will be apostates and backsliders, whose latter end will be worse than the beginning; for the unclean spirit returning comes with seven devils worse than himself.

5. *Lastly*, Rest in him now, and ye shall rest with him for ever: but if ye forsake him, he will cast you off, and ye will fall there where there is no rest for the ages of eternity. And it will aggravate your condemnation, that ye might have been well, if ye could but have rested in Christ.