

THE CITIZEN OF ZION A WORKER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

PSALM XV. 2.

—*And worketh Righteousness.*—

HERE is the second character of an inhabitant of heaven. He is a worker, not one that standeth idle in the market-place; but a doer of good works: he worketh righteousness towards God and man, making it his business to give both to God and man their due. For the words are general, taking in whatsoever is just and righteous, whether owing to God or man.

The doctrine natively arising from the text is as follows, *viz.*

Doct. It is he that worketh righteousness now in this world, that shall dwell in heaven hereafter.

In prosecuting this doctrine, I shall,

I. Unfold this character of one that shall dwell in heaven, *He worketh righteousness.*

II. Confirm the doctrine.

III. Apply.

I. I am to unfold this character of one that shall dwell in heaven, *He worketh righteousness.* I take it up in three parts.

First, He is a believer in Christ, and righteous by faith. This is a necessary and chief branch of this character, according to our Lord's own testimony, John vi. 29, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." He that does not work this work, works no righteousness at all. The imputed righteousness of a Redeemer is the meat abiding unto everlasting life, which our Lord calls us to work, that is, to get to ourselves by faith, ver. 27. *Gr.* To be a worker of righteousness supposes one to be in the first place a believer, one laying hold on and embracing Christ for righteousness, and living by faith in him. This appears,

1. A man must first be righteous, before he can work righteousness of life, 1 John iii. 7, "He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." The tree makes the fruit, not the fruit the tree: and therefore the tree must be good, before the fruit can be good, Matth. vii. 18. A righteous man may make a righteous work, but no work of an unrighteous man can make him righteous. Now we become righteous only by faith through the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, Rom. v. 1.

2. A soul not united to Jesus Christ, cannot work righteousness, John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* All life and strength

spiritual for sinners, is treasured up in Christ, 1 John v. 11, 12. As the pipe laid short of the fountain, must be empty of water; so is the soul of life and strength, which is not united to Christ. And it is by faith that souls are united to him. So, where there is no faith, there is no life; and where there is no life, there is no working of righteousness.

3. While the conscience is not purged of the guilt of eternal death, the works wrought by the man are but dead works, not works of righteousness, Heb. ix. 14. And it is only the blood of Christ applied by faith that can purge the conscience, remove the curse, which, while it lies on a man, will leave him eternally barren.

4. *Lastly*, Faith is the spring of all good works. There the man's working of righteousness begins, 1 Tim. i. 5. 1 John iii. 12. How was it that Abel wrought righteousness? The apostle tells us, Heb. xi. 4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness, that he was righteous." And without it no man can do a work pleasing to God, and therefore no righteous work, ver. 6. Whatever unbelievers do is but a shadow of righteousness. They are not married to Christ, therefore they cannot bring forth fruit to God; they are not begotten again, and made his children; therefore their obedience is but slavish: they are not partakers of his life, therefore their works are but dead.

Wherefore let men work as they will, if they be not true believers in Christ, they are not workers of righteousness; and, consequently, they will not be dwellers in heaven. Ye must then close with Christ in the first place, and by faith receive the gift of imputed righteousness, or ye will never truly bear this character of a citizen of Zion. A man shall as soon force fruit out of a branch broken off from the tree and withered, as work righteousness without believing in, and uniting with Christ. These are two things by which those that hear the gospel are ruined.

(1.) One is, works without faith; and here the legalist settles. Witness the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 12, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." And this he does to his own destruction. He aims at the duties of the law, but neglects the great duty of the gospel. He aims to do good, but never takes the right way, the only way to be good. Hence his religion is no more but a parcel of hypocritical performances, dead works, the man himself being still a stranger to the life of God, because out of Christ.

In opposition to this, the citizen of Zion is a believer, one that

has closed with Christ by faith, and that still lives by faith, Gal. ii. 20, deriving virtue and strength from Jesus, and leaning on his righteousness alone; who was taken, and doth still take Christ for righteousness and sanctification too, Isa. xlv. 24. Agreeable to this first part of the character,

(2.) The other is, faith without works; which is but a dead faith, that will never save the soul. With this carnal gospellers satisfy themselves to their own destruction, James ii. 14, 11, "What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." They pretend to believe in Christ, but are not conscientious in the performance of holy duties. They will take Christ for their Priest to save them from hell, but not for their King to save them from their sins. And so in effect they would make Christ the minister of sin.

In opposition to this, the citizen of Zion, being a true believer, is a worker too, a worker of righteousness. Being married to Christ, he brings forth the fruit of holy obedience; being raised with Christ, he lives to God, and serves in newness of the spirit. This brings me to the

Second part, He worketh righteousness towards God. He is one that labours sincerely to give God his due, being just and righteous in his dealings with his Maker. There is a duty that men owe to God, by the rule of justice: it is just that we perform it, and it is a wrong done to him, to withhold it, because it is his due from us, Matth. xxii. 21. Render unto God the things that are God's. And thus men are said to work righteousness, Isa. lxiv. 5. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness. Acts x. 35, In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." The true Christian that shall be a dweller in heaven, being furnished from heaven by faith for working righteousness, worketh accordingly, sincerely endeavouring to give God his due. And this part of his character shall be branched out in the following particulars.

1. He gives God his heart. God requires it, Prov. xxiii. 26. *My son, give me thine heart.* It is his due, because he made it, and he alone is the fit match for it, and only can satisfy it: and the believer gives it him, saying, as Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." He gives God his heart, to be his temple, his throne, the holy of holies consecrated to him. He lifts his heart and affections off the world, his lusts, yea even his lawful comforts, and gives it back to the proper owner; not daring to alienate it, knowing that to be sacrilegious robbing of God.

2. He gives God himself, as the Macedonians did, of whom it is said, that they *first gave their own selves to the Lord*, 2 Cor. viii. 5. The man does not look on himself as proprietor and master of himself. He is the Lord's by creation, and the Lord's by baptismal dedication, by redemption, by daily conservation: and therefore he makes himself the Lord's also by voluntary resignation, saying, *I am the Lord's*, Isa. xlv. 5. He owns himself debtor to God for his being, and therefore accounts it just that he *be* for him, Hos. iii. 3. and therefore that soul and body be employed for him, 2 Cor. vi. 20.

3. He gives obedience to God, Luke i. 6. Obedience is his due from us. He is the Lord, our Creator and Sovereign Lord; our Redeemer; and therefore we are bound to obey him, Exod. xx. 2. He is our King and Lawgiver, our Father and supreme Master, Mal. i. 6. And the conscience of duty owing to him, on all these and other accounts, moves them that shall dwell in heaven to be obedient to him, as his creatures, subjects, children, and servants. And they gave him illimited obedience, as their absolute Lord, not disputing, but doing his commands, as Abraham did, Gen. xxii.; universal obedience, as knowing that all his precepts are right, Psal. cxix. 128; the obedience of the inner man, resigning their souls to the will of his commands and of his providence: and of the outward man, studying a blameless life, Luke i. 6. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4; a cheerful, son-like obedience, with heart and good-will, Isa. lxiv. 5; and constant obedience, Psal. cxix. 112.

4. He gives God his worship, John ix. 31. He is our God, and therefore it is his due, Matth. iv. 10; and they who will not worship him, would ungod him if they could. But they that shall dwell in heaven, walk in the ordinances of his worship, as well as in his commands of obedience, Luke i. 6. They are universal in his worship, *ibid.*; they dare not keep back a part of his known worship from him. They give him outward worship, in prayer, praise, &c. They worship him in secret, Matth. vi. 6; in their families, if they have a family, being awed by that threatening, "Pour out thy fury upon—the families that call not on thy name;" and in the congregation of his people. And they join inward worship with the outward, which distinguisheth them from the hypocrite, as the other from the profane, John iv. 24. Phil. iii. 3. The inward worship is the worship of the heart, in faith, fear, love, patience, humiliation, &c.

5. He gives God the use of his talents. It is his due, for they are all his, given to men to improve them for him. They that shall dwell in heaven, know that their time is the Lord's, and they must be accountable to him for it; therefore they dare not squander it

away idly, doing nothing, far less wickedly doing mischief, Psal. xc. 12. Their gifts are the Lord's, given them to profit withal, 1 Cor. xii. 7; therefore they dare neither keep them laid up in the napkin of civility, satisfying themselves that they do no ill with them, as the slothful servant did, Luke xix. 20; nor hide them in the earth of carnality, laziness, and worldly-mindedness, so burying them, Matth. xxv. 25; knowing that both the one and the other are rejected of God, as unprofitable servants; that their wealth, honour, credit, authority, opportunities of doing good, are the Lord's; that God has entrusted them therewith for his own service, and they must reckon for the use of them, Luke xvi. 2; and therefore it is their care to honour the Lord with their substance, to improve their honour, &c. for God, 1 Sam. ii. 30. to do good as they have opportunity; that their youth, health, and strength are the Lord's; that these will not last, and therefore they will use them for God, while they have them; knowing that the best is his due.

6. He gives God the praise and thankful acknowledgment of all his comforts and enjoyments, Psal. c. 3. It is his due, for they are all his benefits. Our daily bread we have at his table: he gives us our good things, he gives us the good of them; and nothing can be more comfortable to us than he makes it to be. So while others sacrifice to their own net, and say as Deut. viii. 17. "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; they remember the Lord, for it is he that giveth them power to get wealth," verse 18. This thankfulness runs out into a stream of obedience.

7. He gives God the disposal of his lot, Psal. xlvii. 4. It is his due; hence is that, Matth. xx. 15. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" So they that shall dwell in heaven are self-denied ones; all they have in the world is at his disposal, their health, wealth, liberty, and life itself, Luke xiv. 26.

8. *Lastly*, He gives God the chief part in all his duty to man, out of conscience towards God doing his duty to men: his piety is the fountain of his justice, Eph. vi. 7. This is God's due, because he is the best of beings, therefore to be loved for himself, and all others for his sake. Hence he serves God in all his relations, and dealings with men, doing his duty to them as the will of God: so his love to God is the spring of his duty to men.

These are they that work righteousness; and without doubt, it may be seen, that there are few such in the world.

Thirdly, He works righteousness towards man. He that shall dwell in heaven hereafter, as he believes in Christ, and performs his duty to God in sincerity, so he is conscientious in the practice of his duty to his neighbour; and this completes his character as a

worker of righteousness. Moral honesty is an essential part of true Christianity, without which no man shall see the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. 9. True religion makes a man not only pious towards God but righteous towards his neighbour. This part of the character of a citizen of Zion we may take up in these three generals.

1. He is one that will wrong no man to his knowledge. This is a necessary evidence of sonship to God. Hence believers are represented to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," Phil. ii. 15. Job took the comfort of it as such, chap. xxxi. 7, 8. "If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands: then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out." The best of men must no doubt say in this case as in others, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." But the habitual practice of injustice, and wronging our neighbours, is not, I am sure, the spot of God's children, but a mark of the devil's slaves, 1 Cor. vi. 9. And he that pursues his course that way through the world, will land in hell hereafter.

2. He is one that sincerely studies to do as he would be done to. This a natural conscience dictates, and the revealed will of God confirms, Matth. vii. 12. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And regenerating grace writes it in brighter characters on the renewed heart, Heb. viii. 10. Where the love of God is planted, the love of our neighbour is planted too. If we love God with a supreme love, we will love our neighbour as ourselves, and, consequently, study to do to him as we would have him, agreeable to the rules of the world, do to us, if we were in his circumstances. When Christ enters the heart, the great idol self is knocked down. Selfishness makes men carry towards their neighbour, as if their neighbour were bound in duty to them, but they free. But grace makes the man see that there is one Law-giver over, and one law to him and his neighbour too.

3. He is one that makes conscience of giving every one their due. This also is the dictate of natural conscience, confirmed by the word, Rom. xiii. 7. *Render to all their dues*; and is the native exercise of that righteousness wherein the new man is created, Eph. iv. 24. This is right, that every one have their right of us, for we are members one of another; and if men be not conscientious in this, how do they bear the image of the righteous God, or how can they expect the crown of righteousness? Luke xvi. 11.

I mean not, as if no righteous person could transgress or offend against the rules of justice. No, no; the justice of the saints to-

wards men is but imperfect in this life, as well as their holiness towards God. Even David was the man in the parable that took his neighbour's lamb, and good Asa *oppressed some of the people*, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. And the father of the faithful was justly reprov'd by a Heathen king for the wrong he did him, Gen. xx. 9.

But it is one thing to sin of ignorance and weakness, and another deliberately and of set purpose. It is one thing to be hurried into an act of injustice, by a violent temptation, passion, or fear, as in the aforementioned cases; and another to be habitually unjust, and ready to fall in with every opportunity of that nature. The former is incident to saints, the latter peculiar to sinners: the one repent their folly bitterly, when it is discovered to them, and will be ready to their power to make reparation, and are afraid to fall back into the same iniquitous ways again, watch against them, and the habitual bent of their heart is to do justly: but the other goes on impatiently in his sin, and is ready for the next temptation, and opportunity of dealing unjustly, because the proud, covetous, selfish spirit reigns in him, to his destruction.

So still it remains true, that the citizen of Zion, though he is not legally and perfectly just, is just evangelically, in a gospel-sense. He is a sincere worker of righteousness towards man; he is sincerely righteous in his dealings towards his neighbour. This shall be branched out in several particulars.

1. He is righteous in his particular relations, giving his relatives what is due to them by that relation they stand in to him, Luke i. 6. He is righteous to them,

(1.) In the special duties of the relation. There is a duty the husband owes to the wife, and the wife to the husband; children to parents, and parents to children; servants to masters, and masters to servants, &c. as such. And these duties they owe to them by a natural tie, or a voluntary compact. And the citizen of Zion worketh righteousness, in making conscience of these duties to their relatives, whether they be husbands, wives, &c. 1 Cor. vii. 33, 34. Eph. vi. 1, 5, 6. And the neglect of these will prove one to be none of those that shall dwell in heaven.

(2.) In common duties. The common duties of justice which they owe to every body, they will not deny to their own relations. So husbands wasting their substance to the detriment of their wives and children, are none of the citizens of Zion, 1 Tim. v. 8. Nor wives embezzling, and putting away their husbands' goods, to their loss and without their knowledge, Prov. xiv. 1. and xxxi. 12. Children that embezzle and take away their parents' substance without their consent, Prov. xxviii. 24. Servants wronging their masters,

in taking of their substance to themselves, or giving it away to others without their consent, Tit. ii. 9, 10. It is injustice in all these, as being against the right of their relatives : and all such as tempt or encourage them to such injustice, wrong their own souls, Prov. xxix. 24.

2. He is righteous in his choice of the manner of life he betakes himself to for his through-bearing. This is a piece of justice he owes to mankind, and particularly to the society whereof he is a member, that he be useful in it, and not hurtful. And therefore the citizen of Zion,

(1.) Dare not be an idle man, without employment, if providence has not quite disabled him for any employment. None can with a good conscience lay the burden of their maintenance on others, further than what they cannot really prevent by their own utmost application, 2 Thess. ii. 10. Idle persons by that means are unjust both to them that have, to whom they are without necessity a burden, and they are unjust to those that are poor and really unable to help themselves, Eph. iv. 28.

(2.) He dare not use an unlawful employment, Acts xix. 19. All gain gotten by unlawful means is stolen or robbed in the sight of God, and is injustice to men. And such is the gain of a lawful employment used unlawfully, as selling of drink to men to the abuse of themselves and God's good creature. Ye would do your neighbour less hurt, if ye would steal the money out of his pocket ; for by that means you would hurt him only in his purse, but at this rate you wound his conscience too. And when ye have considered that passage seriously, Hab. ii. 15, " Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink : that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayst look on their nakedness : " ye will see your gain that way is like the gaining of a burning coal into your own bosom.

3. He is righteous in the management of his employment, 1 Cor. vii. 24. " Let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God." He that walks with God at all, will walk with him in his employment, of whatsoever sort it be : following it conscientiously, as under the eye of God. There is a snare in all employments, and a falsehood incident to all trades, by reason of the corruptions of men's heart : but he that shall dwell in heaven, will be aware of it, while he is upon the earth, Heb. xii. 1.

4. He is righteous in his commerce and bargains with men, 1 Thess. iv. 6. " That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter." It is God's command that we do justly in these things, that we do as we would be done to. People's undermining one an-

other in their bargains, raising themselves on their neighbour's ruins, taking their lands over their heads, raising and racking their rents to them, taking advantage in their bargains of their neighbour's necessities, or ignorance, using false weights and measures, adulterating their wares, not keeping condition, but oppressing either in buying or selling, requiring more than due, or keeping back part of the price, need no more to shew the injustice of them, but for men to look in to their own breasts, and ask their own consciences, if that be the way they think it reasonable others should do with them, Lev. xxv. 14, "If thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand; ye shall not oppress one another." Consider what is said, Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16, "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions,—he shall dwell on high."

5. He is righteous in matters of neighbourhood and fellowship. That is an awful word in this affair, Deut. xxvii. 17. "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's land-mark." A good man will be as loath to do wrong in neighbourhood, as to receive wrong; and will find himself in conscience bound, not only to abstain from wilful wronging of them, but to beware of culpable negligence, whereby they may sustain loss, though undesigned. And as he is in partnership with others, he will beware of taking more to himself than falls to his share, or raising gain to himself in a way that causeth his neighbour's loss. For all these are contrary to the love we owe to others as to ourselves.

6. He is righteous in matters of trust, that is, in things committed to his care, and put into his hand. Treachery under trust is among the worst pieces of injustice: and betrayers of their trust in things of this world, cannot expect the things of a better world to be committed to them, Luke xvi. 11. Let such as have other people's business and goods committed to them take heed to this; and act as in the sight of God, and in the sight of those who trust them, and beware of the snare that is ready for them there, as they would not ruin their own souls, Prov. xxviii. 20.

7. He is righteous in the matter of loans. Borrowing and lending is a necessary bond of society among neighbours, and a good man will find himself to be obliged to do justly therein; to see that the thing borrowed by him, sustain no notable loss by his means, or if it do, to repair the loss, and faithfully to restore the thing borrowed, He will pay his just debts if he be able, and will conscientiously see that he run himself into no more than he is in a probable condition to pay, Psal. xxxvii. 21. He will not stave off his neighbour from what is his due unnecessarily, and oblige him to vexatious law-suits

for his own, Prov. iii. 28, 30. Nor will he use extortion in compensation of loans, imposing upon his neighbour beyond law and right, Psal. xv. ult.

8. He is righteous in the matter of lost things found by him, and will conscientiously restore, if the owner can be found, and will not dare fraudulently to conceal it, and much less dispatch it so as the owner cannot have it again. For that fraudulent concealment and retaining such a thing, is no other but a continued theft and wronging our neighbour, Deut. xxii. 1—3. So righteous Jacob determined, Gen. xxx. 33. And to this may be added, that the righteous man will find himself obliged to prevent any loss to his neighbour, which he has an opportunity to prevent, whether his neighbour see it or not.

9. He is righteous in using this world's goods to the honour of God, and the relief of the needy, Psal. cxii. 5, 9. Though men have the right of propriety in their own substance, yet the poor have a right of charity in them, so far as they need, and their neighbours can spare. And the truth is, those to whom God has given substance, they are his stewards, and have their orders from him to steward faithfully as they will be answerable; and the poor and needy are among those who by him are committed to their stewardship. And the weight laid on this piece of righteousness, as an evidence of imputed righteousness, by our Lord himself, Luke xvi. 9, and in Matth. xxv. will always have weight with a good man, to be a worker of righteousness, in point of a charitable disposition.

Lastly, In a word, he is conscientiously righteous in all things that concern his neighbour, Micah vi. 8. He that is a Christian indeed will be a strict observer of truth, faithfulness, and justice, in the matters of this world; dealing with men as under the all-seeing eye of God. And he will never want a quick-sighted witness to his dealings with men, while there is a God in heaven, whether the party he deals with be absent or present, skilful or simple, able to revenge any wrong done to him, or unable.

II. I proceed to confirm this doctrine. To this end consider,

1. God is a righteous God. He is righteous in his nature, and he loves righteousness, Psal. xi. ult. He cannot but do what is right, Gen. xviii. 25. So the king of heaven is a righteous King: what communion can they have with him that are unrighteous?

2. It is the great end of redemption by Christ, that his people may be righteous, and so fitted for heaven. He gave himself to purchase the Spirit of faith and holiness, by which they might work, who had lost all power of working righteousness by the fall, Tit. ii. 14. He delivers them from the bondage of their spiritual enemies, that they may serve him in righteousness, Luke i. 74, 75. Accord-

dingly it is promised to the Redeemer, Isa. lx. 21. *Thy people shall be all righteous.*

3. *Lastly*, Men will be judged and sentence will be passed upon them before the tribunal of God, according to their works, Rev. xx. 12, 13. See Matth. xxv. Works of righteousness will be the evidence of a title to heaven; and unrighteous works the cause of damnation.

I shall shut up this branch of the character of a citizen of Zion, with a word of improvement.

USE I. This may let us see that few in this world are safe for another world. Alas! how many are there, (1.) Who are not righteous towards men? (2.) Who make no conscience of giving God his due, and walking righteously with him? And, (3.) Though they may seem to be something in both these respects, yet are not righteous by faith, nor solicitous to be so?

USE II. Of exhortation. Study then to be workers of righteousness, in all the respects that have been declared, and so evidence yourselves to be citizens of Zion.*

THE CITIZEN OF ZION A SPEAKER OF TRUTH IN HIS HEART.

PSALM XV.

—*And speaketh the truth in his heart.*

HERE is the third character of the citizen of Zion, he is a follower of truth. It hath two parts clearly distinguished in the original. (1.) He speaketh truth; what he expresses in words, he is careful that it be consistent with truth. (2.) He speaketh truth in his heart. There is a speaking in the heart without words, Psal. iv. 1. Eccl. ii. 15. This is done by thoughts and reasonings, and much depends on their being consistent with truth. And both these go together to make up the character of one that shall be an inhabitant of heaven. The first part is but a negative mark: it is the addition of the latter that makes the positive mark.

Two doctrines are deducible from the text, viz.

DOCTR. I. Those that shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter, are such as make conscience of speaking truth while they are in this world.

* As the author has not extended this USE in the MS. he probably, on this occasion, recapitulated what he had delivered more fully, on a former occasion, in the application of his exposition of the eighth commandment. There the reader will find it.