

power to free us from sin, even all those that heartily consent to his terms.

3. He is willing to do this for you. Why else did he purchase it at so dear a rate? Why doth he offer it so freely in the promises of the gospel, and in that covenant which was made, stated, and sworn unto? Heb. vi. 17, 18. Why else has he been so kind to all that are now in glory? There is none in heaven by the first covenant; all that are there come thither as justified and sanctified by Jesus Christ, and in the way of his pardoning grace. Surely he will not be strange to them that bemoan themselves. Consider his merciful nature, his appearing in our flesh, that we might have this confidence: Heb. ii. 17, 'Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.' Well, then, Christ is willing if we are willing; there you will find it sticketh. He came to take away sin, but we will not give way to his Spirit; we are neither sensible of our burden, nor earnest for a cure, at least a sound cure. We seek ease and comfort more than the removing of the distemper.

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## SERMON X.

*Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*—1 JOHN iii. 6.

HERE is a double argument against an evil and sinful life, which is drawn from our union and communion with Christ by faith, or our knowledge of him. It is delivered in a copulate axiom, where there is a comparison of contraries. These two contrary parties are set forth in two propositions, the one asserting the property and disposition of the true believer, the other refuting the claim of the pretender. In the one an argument from union with Christ, the other from the knowledge of him.

*1st Proposition*, 'Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not;' where we have the subject and the predicate.

1. The subject, 'Abideth in him;' that is, he who is united to Christ by a true and lively faith, and perseveres in this union, abideth in him. In effect, whosoever is a true christian, for they are often expressed by this character: 1 John ii. 6, 'He that abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' This is the great duty pressed upon us: 1 John ii. 27, 28, 'But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as he hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and may not be ashamed before him at his coming;' and John xv. 4-7, '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, and 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. 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 ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' The phrase implieth intimacy and constancy.

[1.] Intimacy, or the near and close conjunction between Christ and a believer by faith.

[2.] Constancy, or an adherence to him, and dependence upon him on our part; for the union is not like to break on Christ's side; it is we that are pressed to abide in him, and that first because some are in Christ only by visible profession, and Christ will not cast them off if they do not fall off. Secondly, Because the elect must consider the danger of apostasy: 'Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.'

2. The predicate, 'Sinneth not;' that is, according to the sense of our apostle, liveth not in a course of known sin, for otherwise there is no man that sinneth not, 1 Kings viii. 46; and again, Eccles. vii. 20, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.' Therefore the meaning of the apostle is, that for the main he endeavoureth after purity and holiness, and alloweth himself in no sin.

*2d Proposition.* There the order is inverted; for the predicate in the former proposition is the subject here: 'Whosoever sinneth,' that is, in the sense aforesaid, whosoever doth so give himself over to sin as not to endeavour purity and holiness, either deliberately and designedly doeth evil, or doth negligently oppose evil, leaveth the boat to the stream.

Then the predicate, 'Hath not seen him, nor known him;' that is, was never acquainted with Christ.

But yet, because the expressions are emphatical, I shall sift them a little more narrowly.

1. These expressions are used because all that are Christ's are bound to know him, and to be acquainted with him: John x. 11, 'I know my sheep, and am known of mine.' The knowledge is mutual; as he knoweth us, and taketh care of us, so we know him, and take care of his precepts.

2. That where sight and knowledge are effectual, it is a mighty check to sin: 3 John 11, 'He that doeth good is of God; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.' Seeing and knowing are put for a lively faith: John xvii. 3, 'And this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;' John vi. 40, 'He that seeth the Son and believeth on him hath eternal life.' So that the meaning is, he hath not a true and lively faith.

3. The expressions are fitly used to disprove the Gnostics, a sort of knowing people, who falsely did pretend a higher knowledge of Christ without newness of life; yea, though they wallowed in all manner of filthiness; therefore called Borborites; and one of their dogmas or opinions was, that a jewel in the dirt is a jewel still. Therefore their knowledge or science, falsely so called, is often disproved in the writings of this apostle: 1 John ii. 4, 'He that saith, I know him, and

keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.'

4. The case in hand or under debate was about seeing Christ and being like him; but none shall see him hereafter but those that now in some sort see him and know him; for faith is the introduction to the beatifical vision. If we do not see him now, and know him now, we shall neither see him nor know him hereafter; but he that liveth an evil and sinful life hath not seen him, neither known him; and therefore such cannot expect to see him as he is, and be like him.

5. There is plainly in the words a negative gradation, where the greatest is denied first, as is frequent in scripture; as Ps. cxxi. 4, 'Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep;' and Heb. xiii. 5, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' A man may leave the company of another whom he doth not forsake. So here, he hath neither seen Christ nor known him. Sight implieth clearness and certainty; and so the meaning is, that he is so far from seeing Christ, that he hath not known him. The points observable are two—

First, That whosoever is ingrafted into Christ by a true and lively faith, and hath union and communion with him, ought not nor cannot allow himself in any known sin.

Secondly, That no sight and knowledge of Christ is saving and effectual but what checketh sin and prevents living in a course of sin.

For the first point, that whosoever is ingrafted into Christ by a true and lively faith, and hath union and communion with him, ought not nor cannot allow himself in any known sin.

Here I shall examine—(1.) What is union and communion with Christ; (2.) This is to be considered as begun and as continued; (3.) Why this union with Christ is inconsistent with a sinful life.

I. For the first, certainly there is a near and close union between Christ and christians. To be in a thing is more than to be with it, by it, or about it, or to belong to it. Now we do not only belong to Christ, but are in him, John xvii. 26, and 2 Cor. v. 17, 'Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature.' What this union is, is a mystery, and hard to explain. When the apostle had told us that 'we are members of his body,' he addeth, Eph. v. 32, 'But this is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and his church.' The near conjunction between Christ and his people is one of the secrets in religion not slightly to be passed over, nor yet very curiously to be pryed into. The conjunction is real, but the way of it is spiritual and heavenly. Many things in religion are known by their effects rather than their nature. The thing is plain, but the manner hidden; and it is our business to seek after the blessed effects of it rather than accurately to study the nature of it. Yet it is profitable to see how it is brought about. Take it thus, confederation maketh way for union, union for fruition, and fruition for communion, and communion for familiarity between Christ and us or God and us by Christ.

1. Confederation is the foundation of all on our part; for entering into covenant with God is the ground of our union with him, or by Christ with him; for then God is our God, and we are his people, Jer. xxiv. 7. Abraham is called the friend of God with respect to the covenant, James ii. 23; and we have the right of sons by receiving Christ: John

i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God;' or accepting him as their Lord and Saviour. When the self-condemning sinner doth consent to the terms of the gospel, and heartily accept Christ to be to him what God hath appointed him to be and do for poor sinners, he hath full allowance to call God Father, and is possessed of all the privileges which belong to his children.

2. Upon this followeth union with Christ, which, what it is, cometh now to be discussed. This certainly is not a mere relation to Christ. Union indeed giveth us a title to Christ and Christ a title to us: Cant. ii. 16, 'I am my beloved's, and he is mine.' But yet there is somewhat more than a relation; for Christ is not only ours and we his, but he is in us and we in him. God is ours, and we are his, and God is in us, and we in God. It is represented not only by relative unions, but such as are real. Relative, as marriage; where man and wife by the marriage covenant are one flesh, Eph. v. 31, 32. But by the head and members, who make one body, not with respect to a political, but natural body: 1 Cor. xii. 12, 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.' By vine and branches, who make but one tree: John xv. 5, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches.' Again, it is compared to the food and substance that is nourished by it: John vi. 56, 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' As the meat is turned into the eater's substance, so they and Christ become one; and on feeding on Christ by faith, there followeth a mutual inhabitation. We dwell in him by constant dependence, and he abideth in us by constant influence and the quickening virtue of his Spirit. Nay, once more, it is compared with the mystery of the Trinity, and the union that is between the divine persons: John xvii. 21-23, '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. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.' Which, though it cannot be understood to the full, yet at least it is more than a bare relation. The mystical union implieth somewhat more than a bare title. Yea, it is not only a notion of scripture, but a thing effected and wrought in us by the Spirit: 'By one Spirit we are baptized into one body,' 1 Cor. xii. 13. Now the Spirit's works are real. What he doth, doth not infer a bare title and relation only; there is a presence of Christ in our hearts, and a vivifical influence caused by it.

3. Union maketh way for fruition and communion; for we being in Christ, receive all manner of blessings through him and from him: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him ye are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;' that is, we receive all manner of benefits by virtue of our union with him. Certainly this union is not a dry notion; the comfort flowing thence is very real. More especially these benefits may be reduced to two—the favour of God, and the life of God. First, The favour of God; being reconciled to him by Christ, all our sins are pardoned:

Eph. i. 14, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins.' So far that we are exempted from condemnation: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' And our persons are accepted: Eph. i. 6, 'He hath accepted us in the Beloved.' And we are put under the hopes of eternal life: Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you the hope of glory.' Oh, what a mercy is this, that we that could not think of God without horror, nor hear him named without trembling, nor pray to him with any comfort and confidence, have now by Christ pardon and absolution, and free access with assurance of welcome and audience, whenever we stand in need of him; and not only so, but may hopefully expect a child's portion in heaven, 'To be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' Secondly, The life of God, which is begun in regeneration, and continued by the influence of his Spirit dwelling and working in our hearts, till it be perfected in the life of glory: 1 John v. 12, 'He that hath the Son hath life.' Another kind of life than he had before; a living in God and to God, which is the noblest kind of living and being under the sun: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God;' and Christ is called our life, Col. iii. 4. Christ is the root and fountain of it, the living head in whom all the members live, and from whom they receive strength and influence: John xiv. 19, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' We live by virtue of his life.

4. Communion and fruition maketh way for familiarity, for real intercourses of love between Christ and the soul. He dwelleth and walketh with us, and we with him; he directeth, counselleth, and quickeneth us, and we live in a holy subjection and obedience to the motions and inspirations of his grace: Ps. xxvii. 8, 'Thou saidst, Seek ye my face: my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' He speaketh to believers by the excitations of his grace, and the infusion of spiritual comforts; and they to him in holy thoughts, prayers, and addresses unto his majesty. There is a constant interchange of donatives and duties, graces and services, prayers and blessings. More especially this familiarity and converse is either in solemn ordinances and duties of religion, or in a constant course of holiness. First, In solemn duties of religion. Prayer is called an access to God, Eph. iii. 12; a spiritual acquaintance with him, Job xxii. 21. By constant commerce men settle into an acquaintance with one another. Secondly, In a constant course of holiness: 1 John i. 7, 'If we walk in the light as he is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another.' Conformity is the ground of communion. When we love what God loveth, and hate what he hateth, then he is with us, maintaining, directing, supporting us in all our ways; and we are with him, fearing, loving, pleasing, and serving him, and glorifying his name.

II. This union and communion is not only as it is begun, but continued. All union must have some bonds and ties by which it is effected; so this mystical spiritual union. The primary bands are those which begin the union, the secondary bands are those which continue it. The primary bands are the Spirit and faith, the secondary are the constant inhabitation and influence of the same Spirit with faith and other graces.

1. Primary. God maketh his first entry into us by his Spirit, for it is the Spirit which planteth us into the mystical body of Christ: 1 Cor. xii. 13, 'For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.' For by the quickening virtue of this Spirit is faith wrought in us, and then the soul embraceth and receiveth Christ, and the nuptial knot is tied. Christ, as the most worthy, and as having the quickening and life-making power, beginneth with and taketh hold of us, that we may take hold of him: Phil. iii. 12, 'That I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ.' The Spirit is the bond on Christ's part, and faith the principal bond on ours. And if you ask me what act it is? I answer—A broken-hearted and thankful acceptance of Christ, as God offereth him to us; that is the closing act on our part; then Christ and we join hands, when we resolve to cleave to him, and receive him as our Lord and Saviour, John i. 12.

2. For the continuance of this union, or our abiding in him, the Spirit is still necessary: 1 John iv. 13, 'Hereby we know that God dwelleth in us, and we dwell in God, by the Spirit that he hath given us.' So is faith: Eph. iii. 17, 'That he may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Faith is the means whereby Christ dwelleth in us by the Spirit, and it is also the means of our dwelling in him, and our adherence to him, and dependence upon him. We do not use Christ at a pinch, or as a pen to write with, and lay it down when we have done, but as the branches use the vine, and the members the head which they live by, and from which when they are separated, they dry and wither. The heart must be habituated to a constant dependence on Christ. Well, then, the communion between Christ and his members is mutual, they being in him by faith and a steady dependence, and he in them by his Spirit as the root of their spiritual being; but then all other graces concur, and have their use and influence, as chiefly love, which causeth a delightful adhesion to him: Deut. x. 20, 'Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God, and to him shalt thou cleave.' We cleave to him by love, as we live in him by faith. As Jonathan's soul clave to David, or was knit to the soul of David, 1 Sam. xviii. 3, or Jacob's life was said to be bound up with the lad's life, because of his tender love to him, Gen. xlv. 30, so a believer's soul cleaveth to Christ; love cannot endure a separation: Rom. viii. 35, 'What shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?' When we will not suffer ourselves, either by the allurements or terrors of the world, or solicitations of the flesh, or temptations of the devil, to be withdrawn from the profession of his name, or zeal for his truth, or the observance of his precepts, then are we said to abide in him. Well, then, love is necessary, only there is a difference between faith and love. Faith is the primary bond, and love the secondary; for the union is begun by faith, but continued by love. The first thing that tieth the nuptial knot is faith, or choosing and receiving Christ, and that which continueth it is conjugal loyalty and fidelity, or cleaving to Christ by love. Once more, the moral union of hearts is by love, the mystical by faith. Christ must dwell in us as the head and fountain of our life, but by love we embrace him as our friend whom we most dearly love and esteem. Lastly, by faith he dwelleth in us effectively, by his influence maintaining

our life, and supplying us with all things necessary to godliness. By love he dwelleth in us objectively, by such a union as is between the object and the faculty. A star is in the eye that seeth it though it be ten thousands of miles distant; and what you think of is in your minds, and what you desire is in your hearts. A scholar's mind is in his books when he is absent from them, and a wicked man's mind is in his sin when he is not practising it, Col. i. 21; and we usually say, the mind is not where it liveth, but where it loveth. When you fear God, your mind is with him; when you love God, your heart is with him. This is an objective union, but by faith there is a union of concretion and coalition. Christ is the stock, we the graft; we are said to be planted into him, Rom. vi. 5, he being to us the fountain and principle of a spiritual life, or the root of vivifical influence.

III. Why they ought not nor cannot allow themselves in known sins.

1. They ought not, because a great obligation lieth upon them above others. The apostle telleth us: 1 John ii. 6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought to walk as he walked.' Zanchy observeth it is not only *utile*, profitable to walk as he walked, but *debitum*, a necessary and express duty; they ought to walk. Why is it their duty more than others? First, Lest they displease Christ, and forfeit the sense of his love, who hath done so much for them as to reconcile them unto God, and hath taken them into his mystical body that he may give them his Holy Spirit. And after all this, shall we break his laws and grieve his Spirit? This is to abide in Christ against Christ, with Judas to kiss him and betray him. He is best pleased when we obey his laws rather than fondly esteem his name and memory: 1 John v. 3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments;' John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' John xv. 10, 'If you keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love.' His is a love of bounty, ours a love of duty. This is the course that is best pleasing to him, and the ready way to continue the sense of his love to you. Secondly, Lest they dishonour Christ. What! when you are taken into the cabinet of Christ's mystical body, will you yet sin when you are one with God and Christ? 'Let them be one with us,' John xvii. 21. You sin in God; and though you are planted into the good vine, yet bring forth the clusters of Sodom and grapes of Gomorrah. What! sin in Christ? He was holy and you profane, he was humble and you proud, he was meek and you contentious, charitable and you malicious; he did ever please God, and you do nothing but displease him. Christ came to make you saints, and you live like beasts for sensuality, yea, like devils for envy and hatred. Is this the fruit of your being in Christ and living in Christ? You entitle him to your disorders, and pollute his name thereby.

2. They cannot; union with Christ is inconsistent with a life of sin. The apostle saith, 'he sinneth not,' making it not only the duty, but the property of those that abide in Christ. It must needs be so, because otherwise the communion is but pretended. And it is on our parts interrupted and broken off.

[1.] It is but pretended: 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought to

walk as he walked.' Otherwise you do but say it, it is not a reality. I prove it thus: Because where there is union and communion with Christ, there his Spirit is given to us, and they that have the Spirit of Christ will be like him; the Spirit worketh uniformly in head and members. Therefore if the same Spirit and life be in us that was in Christ, there must needs be a suitableness. If the spirit of the living creature be in the wheels, the wheels must move as the living creature moveth. Surely if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are not united to him, Rom. viii. 9. If we have, we shall be such in the world as he was, have the same mind that he had, and walk as he walked. It was an old cheat of the heathens to pretend to secrecy with their gods when they would promote any design they had in hand. Many talk much of communion with God and Christ, but where are the fruits? So that unless we will delude ourselves with a bare notion and empty pretence, we must endeavour to find that it is in sincerity.

[2.] It is on our part interrupted and broken off; we do what in us lieth to provoke Christ to withdraw, for the condition of this communion is holiness: 1 John i. 6, 7, 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then we have fellowship one with another;' John xiv. 23, 'If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' Conformity maketh way for communion, and likeness is the ground of love. Therefore, if we sin, if we walk contrary to God, we do not abide in him; for there is a contradiction, that we should abide in him, and yet break off from him as we do by wilful sin.

*Use 1.* Information; to teach us how to check sin by the remembrance of union and communion with Christ: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.' The apostle is reasoning against fornication, and one main argument is taken from our union with Christ. The bodies of the faithful are a part of his mystical body, and therefore must be used with reverence, and possessed in sanctification and honour; not given to a harlot, but reserved for Christ. He proveth the argument on both parts, that he that is joined to a harlot maketh himself one with a harlot, and he that is joined to Christ becometh one with Christ. 'He that is joined to a harlot is one body;' *i.e.*, that conjunction is carnal and bodily: 'But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;' *i.e.*, this conjunction is holy and spiritual. And does not the argument hold good in other cases? Thus in gluttony and intemperance, they join us to something that is different from Christ, and debase the body which Christ hath made the temple of his Spirit. Nay, though the sin be not so gross, the argument is good still. Do we dwell in Christ, and make Christ's mystical body a shelter and sanctuary for sinners, and this great mystery of union with Christ only a cover for a carnal heart and life? Surely every one that is in Christ hath greater obligations than others, being taken into such a nearness to God; and has greater helps, having received of his fulness, John i. 16. They have grace from him, as the branches have sap from the root.

*Use 2.* Are we true members of Christ's mystical body? 'Whoso-

ever abideth in him sinneth not.' Let us pause on this a little. Do not we sin daily? But unavoidable failings do not forfeit or break off our union and communion with him. What then?

1. There are many sins which are utterly inconsistent with true godliness; and if a child of God should fall into them in some rare, unusual case, he cannot know himself a child of God. Surely to live in them doth clearly decide the matter. As, for instance, consider these scriptures: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God;' Gal. v. 19-21, 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of these things I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God;' Eph. v. 6, 'Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.' These acts are so contrary to grace, that no debate needeth be about them; either they are not consistent with sincerity, or the knowledge of it.

2. They live not in any sin against knowledge and conscience; for indulgently and deliberately to run into any sin cloudeth the knowledge of our sincerity, for that argueth the reign of sin, and that is dangerous, Rom. vi. 14; and therefore we need watchfulness, Eph. v. 15, and much prayer, Ps. cxix. 133.

3. When a child of God falleth through infirmity, he presently rallieth, and recovereth himself again: Jer. viii. 4, 'Shall they fall, and not arise?' Surely to lie in the dirt argueth obstinacy.

4. They do not make a trade or course of sinning and repenting; for relapses against conscience are so grievous to a sincere heart, and repentance, if it be serious, doth so wound sin, that it cannot easily recover life and strength: Ps. li. 6, 'In the hidden part shalt thou make me to know wisdom.'

5. It neither concerneth the duty nor peace of the children of God to omit the due care of their hearts and lives when they come near a state of death, and thereby render their condition questionable, lest they seem to come short, Heb. iv. 1; and Heb. xii. 13, 'Make straight steps to your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.' Anything that would turn us out of the course of our obedience to God should be striven against and watched against till we prevail. It will be a doubt, if not a wound and maim, to our sincerity: therefore, if we be not known by avoiding sin, let us be known by striving against it, and prevailing in some measure.

*Use 3.* Is direction. If he that abideth in Christ sinneth not, then let us abide in Christ, seek after union and communion with him, because there is our security. First, If we abide with Christ, he will abide with us. There is no danger of breaking on his part, therefore we are so often called upon to abide in him, John xvii. Secondly, Apart from him we can do nothing, John xv. 5. Thirdly, In him

you may bring forth fruit, John xv. 8. Fourthly, In abiding in him we have much joy and comfort: John xv. 10, 11, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abode in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and your joy might be full.' The Lord's supper was appointed to represent and seal this union: 1 Cor. x. 16, it is called, 'The cup of blessing,' &c. There we come to eat his flesh and drink his blood, and to be joined to the Lord so as to become one spirit. Since Christ calleth the bread his body and the wine his blood, these outward things are signs to put you in remembrance, and seals to put you in possession of Christ, whose flesh you eat and blood you drink, that you may live by him; not with your mouth, that were to think carnally of heavenly mysteries; as Nicodemus, when told of being born again, thought that a man must enter the second time into his mother's womb; or as the Capernaïtes said, John vi. 59, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' No; the eating and drinking must be answerable to the hungering and thirsting; now that is not carnal, but spiritual. We must solemnly receive Christ into our heart, that he may dwell there. Oh, then, own Christ as your Lord, devote yourselves to him: 2 Chron. xxx. 8, 'Yield yourselves to the Lord.' Heartily, sincerely resolve to be Christ's, and he will be yours.

*2d Point.* That no sight and knowledge of Christ is saving and effectual but what checketh sin and hindereth the life of it.

There is a twofold knowledge—speculative and practical.

1. Knowledge speculative, which is nothing else but a naked map and model of divine truths. The Jew had his form of knowledge in the law, Rom. ii. 20. So the speculative christian has a form of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 5, a scheme and delineation of gospel truths. There are different degrees of this.

[1.] A memorative knowledge, such as children have when the field of memory is planted with the seed of christian doctrine. Children are taught to speak of divine mysteries by rote, such as God, Christ, heaven, hell, sin, righteousness; as the philosopher observed of young men, that they learned the mathematics with all their hearts and minds, but moral things they only said them over, rather rehearsed and said after another, than believed them. Children answer you the words of the catechism, but they heed not what they say, nor understand not whereof they affirm; but it is good that children should learn divine things, and after be further instructed in the nature and certainty of them, Luke i. 5.

[2.] Another degree above this is opinionative knowledge, when they do not only charge their memories, but exercise a kind of conscience and judgment about these things, so as to be orthodox and right in opinion, and to bustle and contend about that way of religion wherein they have been educated, or that which suiteth best with their fancies and interests; yet wisdom entereth not upon the heart, Prov. ii. 10. This maketh men hot disputers, but cold practisers of godliness; they have a religion to talk of, but not to live by; they may know much of religion in the notion, and it may be more accurately than the serious christian. As a vintner's cellar may be better stored with wines than a nobleman's, but he hath them for sale and not for use, so these

may form their notions into better order than the serious godly man. These are useful in the church, as a dead post may support a living tree, or as negroes and slaves dig in the mines to bring up gold to others. But alas! with all their learning they may be thrust into hell: 'They received not the love of the truth, whereby they might be saved.'

[3.] There is a higher degree of speculative knowledge beyond this, and that is, when men have some kind of touch upon their hearts, but it is too slender and insufficient to break their lusts or to stand out against temptations.

*Use.* Well, then, let us seek after this saving knowledge, to see and know Christ as we ought to know and see him, with a renewing, transforming knowledge: Eph. iii. 10, 'And that ye put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.' It is but hearsay knowledge. Think every notion lost that doth not invite your minds to the saving knowledge of Christ, and secure your practice against error and temptations; therefore beg the Spirit; he teacheth us to know things so as to have them impressed upon our hearts: Eph. iv. 21, 22, 'If so be ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.'

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## SERMON XI.

*Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*—1 JOHN iii. 7.

THE apostle had hitherto reasoned against the committing of sin; he now persuadeth them to the contrary, the practice of holiness. As there is a positive part in religion as well as a privative, so a bare abstinence from sin is not enough, but we must also exercise ourselves unto godliness, or walk in newness of life: 'Little children, let no man deceive you,' &c.

In the whole verse observe these things—

1. A caution against error.
2. A description of a righteous man. First, He is described by his own practice; secondly, By his conformity to Christ: 'Even as he is righteous.'

Let me open these branches.

1. The caution against error, 'Little children, let no man deceive you;' this is premised, because such mistakes are suited to the corrupt heart of man: we may be deceived ourselves, or suffer ourselves to be deceived by others.

[1.] That we may not deceive ourselves; frequent warnings are given against this deceit: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 'Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor