
CHRIST'S LOVELINESS.

CANT. v. 16. *Yea, he is altogether Lovely.*

IN this book, which is a divine epithalamium, or marriage-song, are all the strains of holy love set forth in the purest allegories and metaphors, such as do represent that dear affection and union between Christ and his church. The text is nothing else but the breathing forth of the spouse's love to Christ, 'He is altogether lovely;' in the verses precedent, she had made her sacred panegyricks, and had been setting Christ forth in his spiritual embroidery.

'He is white and ruddy,' ver. 10. This denotes excellency of complexion; in him is a mixture of the purest colours; he is of unspotted beauty.

'The chiefest among ten thousand.' The Hebrew word signifies the Standard-bearer among ten thousand: the standard is a warlike ensign, and he who did bear the standard in antient times, was the most eminent person in the army; so Christ is the most glorious person of renown, the standard-bearer; according to that, Isa. xi. 10. 'He shall stand for an ensign of the people.'

'His head is as the most fine gold,' ver. 11. Kings have crowns of gold; Christ is described with an head of gold. The Hebrew signifies shining gold, or sparkling, to set forth the infinite resplendency of

Christ's beauty ; it is of that sparkling lustre, that the angels are fain to wear a veil.

‘ His eyes are as the eyes of doves,’ ver. 12. Christ is described with eyes like a flame of fire, Rev. i. 14. So indeed he hath to the wicked ; ‘ He is a consuming fire ;’ but to his children he hath doves’ eyes, which are the emblem of meekness ; he hath eyes dropping tears of love and compassion.

‘ His cheeks are as a bed of spices,’ ver. 13. There is an aromatic perfume comes from him to refresh a fainting soul. Some expositors understand this bed of spices to be meant of the fragrancy of his virtues, which are in scripture compared to sweet ointments.

Thus the spouse goes on decyphering Christ’s beauty ; at last being in an holy rapture of spirit, she winds up all with this epiphonema, or passionate strain of affection ; ‘ his mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely.’

‘ His mouth is most sweet ;’ The Chaldee paraphraseth it, the words of his palate are as sweet as honey ; in the Hebrew, his mouth is sweetnesses. That mouth must needs be sweet which hath the words of eternal life, John vi. 68. That mouth must needs be sweet, a kiss of whose lips can make death sweet to a believer ; well might the spouse say, ‘ Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,’ Cant. i. 2.

‘ Yea, he is altogether lovely ;’ as if the spouse had said, What do I go to set Christ forth in his several parts, his head of gold, his eyes like doves, his hands as gold rings set with beryl, his belly as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires, &c. Alas, what is all this that I have been speaking of Christ ? how barren is my invention, how dull are my expressions ! whatever I have said of him falls infinitely short of his worth ; but this I affirm, ‘ he is altogether lovely.’

The original is, he is all made up of loves and delights, he is all that may excite desire. So Hierom and Ambrose render it; he is composed of sweetness and amiableness, so Gregory Nyssen.

The text you see contains a glorious and magnificent description of Christ; 'He is altogether lovely.' Behold here a spring full of the water of life; and whosoever brings his vessel hither, a heart fit to receive this water, may be refreshed, as the woman of Samaria coming to Jacob's well, for Christ is here. The text is a sacred cabinet which contains in it, first the jewel, Christ, in this word He; secondly, the price of this jewel, altogether lovely.

The truth resulting from this word is this. That Jesus Christ is infinitely and superlatively lovely.

He is the most amazing and delightful object; the very name of Jesus Christ is as a precious ointment poured forth. It is said that the letters of this name were found engraven on Ignatius' heart; Jesus Christ is in every believer's heart, Col. i. 23. Christ in you; and nothing can do better there, for he is altogether lovely.

This whole book of the Canticles is bespangled with the praises of Christ. Homer might praise Achilles, Hierome might commend Nepotian; but who can set forth Christ's praise? all that I can say, will be no more than the dark shadow in the picture; and yet it will be so much as may represent him very lovely. That Christ is thus transcendently lovely, will appear four manner of ways.

1. By Titles, 2. By Types, 3. By Resemblances, 4. By Demonstrations.

1. By Titles, which are so many jewels hung upon his crown; he is called 'The Desire of all nations,' Hag. ii. 7. 'The Prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 7. 'The holy One of God,' Acts ii. 27. 'Elect, Precious,' 1 Pet. ii. 6. These are lovely titles.

2. By types; He was prefigured by such types as were lovely, and these types were either of persons or things.

1. Christ was typified by persons most lovely. I will name but three.

Moses prefigured and typified out Christ in four things:

1. In his natural beauty; he was a goodly child, Exod. ii. 2. Josephus saith, Moses was so fair, that he drew the eyes of all to him, and that those who had seen him were so amazed at his beauty, and did feed on it with such delight, that they were unwilling to look off again. And herein he was a type of Christ, in whom are all sparkling beauties to be found; he is altogether lovely.

2. Moses was a type of Christ in his education; he was bred up a while at court, and, as Josephus saith, Pharaoh's daughter set a crown of gold upon his head; but leaving the court, he went and lived in the land of Midian, Exod. ii. 15. So Christ left the royal court of heaven to come and live in the world.

3. Moses was a type of Christ in his office; he was a prophet; Deut. xxxiv. 10. 'And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses. He acquainted Israel with the mind of God, he gave them the two tables of the law. So Jesus Christ is a prophet, Luke xxiv. 19. He reveals to his people the mysteries of Salvation. He unseals the book of God's decree, and makes known his will, Rev. v. 5. 'He is counted worthy of more glory than Moses.'

4. Moses was a type of Christ in his noble acts; 1. He was a deliverer of the people from the Egyptian furnace; he was a temporal saviour. So Jesus Christ, his name signifies a Saviour, Matt. 21. 'He shall save his people from their sins.

2. Moses was an intercessor for Israel, and turned away the wrath of God from them, Numb. xiv.

So Christ is the saints' advocate, Rom. viii. 34.
'Who also maketh intercession for us.'

2. Christ was typified by David.

1. David was a king; So is Christ adorned with regal power, he is a king to govern his people, Rev. xv. 3. and to conquer his enemies, Psal. cx.

1. 2. David was a man 'after God's own heart.' This did prefigure Christ, in whom 'God was well pleased,' Mat. iii. 17.

3. Christ was typified by Solomon. 1. In his name which signifies peaceable; so Christ is called 'The prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 7. This the angels proclaimed at his incarnation, Luke ii. 14. 'Peace on earth;' all his wars tend to peace; he gives that peace which passeth all understanding. 2. Solomon typified Christ in his government: his was a most flourishing kingdom, 2 Chron. ix. 22. King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches; so Christ's kingdom is very glorious, all his subjects are made kings; he reigns in heaven and earth; and 'of his kingdom is no end.' 3. Solomon typified Christ in his wisdom; he was the oracle of his age, 1 Kings iv. 31. He was wiser than all men. So Christ received the unction from his Father; he had a spirit of wisdom and holiness poured upon him without measure, John iii. 34. Isa. xi. 2. Behold, 'A greater than Solomon is here.' Thus Jesus Christ was prefigured by those persons who were most lovely.

2. Christ was typified by things most lovely. I will instance only in five.

Type 1. Christ was typified by the pillar of cloud and fire, which was Israel's guide and conductor in the wilderness, Ex. xiii. 21. This did typify Christ our pillar of cloud, who 'guides our feet into the way of peace,' Luke i. 79. The cloud was unerring, for God was in it; such is Christ, who is the

way and the truth, John xiv. 6. How lovely is this pillar to behold!

Type 2. By the manna. This pointed at Christ. He is like the manna in three things.

1. The figure of manna was circular, Exod. xvi. 14. 'There lay a small round thing,' &c. The circle is a figure of perfection; this typified out Christ in whom is all perfection.

2. The manna was a meat prepared for Israel in an extraordinary manner, so the Hebrew word (from whence manna seems to be derived) signifies to prepare. Manna was a meat cooked and dressed in heaven; God himself prepared it, and then served it in: thus Jesus Christ was like manna, he was prepared and set apart by his Father to the blessed work of Mediatorship, Heb. x. 5. 'A body hast thou prepared me.'

3. The Jewish Rabbins say, Manna suited itself to every one's palate; whatever he desired, that he found in manna; so Jesus Christ suits himself to every christian's condition; he is full of quickening, strengthening, comforting virtue. What fools are they that prefer the earthly mammon before this heavenly manna!

Type 3. By the mercy seat, which was a sacred emblem or hieroglyphic, representing the mercy of God to his people; there the Lord did give forth his oracles and answers of peace to his people, Ex. xxv. 22. 'There will I meet thee, and I will commune with thee,' &c. This mercy-seat was a type of Christ; in and through whom God is appeased towards us. Therefore he is called a propitiation, Rom. iii. 25. O how lovely is this mercy-seat! we could not speak to God in prayer, nor would he commune with us, were it not for this blessed propitiatory. The Hebrew word for mercy-seat signifies a covering, to shew that in Christ the sins of believers are covered.

Type 4. Christ was prefigured by the brazen serpent, Numb. xxi. 9. The brazen serpent resembled Christ two ways. 1. It was made like a serpent, but it was no real serpent; so Christ was 'in the likeness of sinful flesh,' Rom. viii. 3. but he was not a sinner; he was made sin, but he knew no sin. Christ was as void of sin, as the brazen serpent was of a sting.

2. When the people of Israel were stung by the fiery serpents, ver. 6. then whosoever did look upon the brazen serpent were cured. Thus when sin stings the souls of men (for it is a serpent with five stings; it stings men with guilt, shame, horror of conscience, death, the curse of God;) now Christ, that brazen serpent, being looked upon with a penitent believing eye, cures these deadly stings. Oh how lovely is this brazen serpent! many of the Jews (saith Tostatus) worshipped the serpent of brass; let us in our hearts adore this brazen serpent the Lord Jesus.

Type 5. Christ was typified by Noah's ark, which saved Noah and his family from the flood. Thus when the wrath of God, as a deluge, overflows the wicked, Christ is the ark in which the believer sails above those bloody waves, and is preserved from drowning. And is not the Lord Jesus lovely? all these types did but serve to shadow forth the divine excellencies of Christ, and render him amiable in our eyes.

3. That Christ is thus lovely, appears by those things to which the scripture doth resemble him. He is compared to things most illustrious. There are seven lovely resemblances of Christ in scripture.

1. He is resembled to a Rose, Cant. ii. 1. 'I am the rose or Sharon.' The rose is the queen of flowers: it is most delicious for colour and scent; to shew that fragrant perfume which Christ sends forth. All roses, though beautiful, have their prickles;

only the Rose of Sharon excepted ; so sweet is this rose of paradise, that it makes us become ' a sweet savour to God,' Eph. 1. 6. This rose never loseth its colour nor fragrancy, and is it not very lovely ?

2. Christ is resembled to a Vine, Job. xv. 1. The vine, as Pliny saith, is the noblest of plants ; to this is Christ compared. Oh what lovely clusters grow upon this Vine ! the fruits of justification, sanctification, &c. These bunches of grapes hang upon the Lord Jesus. We are beholden to this Vine, Hos. xiv. 8. ' From me is thy fruit found ;' nay, Christ excels the vine : For, 1. Though there be many things in the vine-tree besides the fruit, useful, the leaves, the gum, the ashes of the vine, yet the wood of the vine is useless, Ezek. xv. 3. ' Will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel on ? now herein Christ is more lovely than the vine-tree ; there is nothing in Christ but is useful. We have need of his human nature ; we have need of his divine nature ; we have need of his offices, influences, privileges ; there is nothing in this vine we can be without. Oh how blessed are the branches of this vine ! The virgin Mary was saved not by bearing the vine, but by being ingrafted into the vine.

3. Christ is resembled to a corner-stone, 1 Pet. ii. 6. and that in two respects. 1. The whole weight of the building lies upon the corner-stone ; so the weight of our salvation lies upon Christ, 1. Cor. iii. 11, 12. 2. The corner-stone doth knit and unite together both parts of the building ; so when God and man were at variance, Christ, as the corner-stone, did unite them together ; yea, and did cement them with his own blood. Oh, how lovely and precious is this stone !

4. He is resembled to a Rock, 1 Cor. x. 3. ' That Rock was Christ.' He is a rock in a threefold sense. 1. He is a rock for offence. The rock breaks the waves ; the church being built upon Christ, all the

adversaries that come against her, are like a ship coming full sail against a rock. 2. A rock for defence; the dove hides in the rock, Cant. ii. 15. 'O my dove in the cliffs of the rock.' Christ's wounds are the cliffs of the rock, where the believing soul, this dove, hides itself. 3. A rock for comfort, and that two ways; 1. The rock is a screen to shade off the heat; so Christ is called, Isa. xxxi. 2. 'A shadow from the heat;' He shades a poor sinner from the scorings of God's wrath. 2. Honey came out of the rock, Deut. xxxii. 13. 'He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.' The honey of the promises, and the oil of gladness come out of this blessed rock.

5. Christ is compared to a 'river in a dry ground,' Isa. xxxii. 2. When by nature we are as a scorched heath, dry and barren, Christ sends forth the sacred influences of his blood and Spirit, making us like the fields of Sharon, full of moisture and fertility; and are not these silver streams lovely?

6. Christ is resembled to a Rich Treasury. Riches are lovely in men's eyes, Ephes. iii. 8. 'The unsearchable riches of Christ;' the angels can never dig to the bottom of this golden mine. Christ hath the true monopoly, because he hath those riches as are no where else to be found. The riches of his merit, the riches of his Spirit. Christ hath a partnership with his Father, John. xvi. 15. 'All that the Father hath are mine:' He is crowned with the riches of the Deity. Alexander regarded not the kingdom of Macedonia, when he heard of the riches of India; a christian will in a manner despise all other riches when he hath Christ's riches, Phil. iii. 8.

7. Christ is resembled to a beautiful Robe, Isa. lxi. 10. 'He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. Hierom interprets it of Christ: His

righteousness is a lovely robe; no robe of gold or ermine, wherewith kings are invested, is so honourable as this: in this robe we shine as angels in God's eyes: the high-priest's glorious vestments, Exod. xxviii. 2. the mitre, the robe, the ephod of gold, and the breast-plate of precious stones, did all but serve to set out the beautiful garment of Christ's righteousness wherewith a believer is adorned. Thus Christ appears lovely in these several resemblances, which can but faintly shadow out his beauty.

4. Christ's loveliness appears by demonstrations; these two in particular.

He is lovely, 1. In himself. 2. In the account of others.

1. He is lovely in himself, and that five manner of ways. 1. He is lovely in his person; and that, 1. As he is man, Psal. xlv. 2. 'Thou art fairer than the children of men.' The Hebrew is emphatical in the form, it denotes excellency of beauty: For tho' it be said 'he hath no comeliness,' Isa. liii. 2. that was in regard of his afflictions, which did so disfigure, and as it were draw a veil over his glory, yet certainly the person of Christ was incomparably fair, as Hierom and Chrysostom observe; and if his body on earth was so beautiful, what is it now in heaven! the apostle calls it 'a glorious body,' Phil. iii. 21. If Christ can make a lily of the field more beautiful than Solomon in all his glory, how fair is he himself? how white is that lily which grows in paradise?

2. Christ's person is lovely as he is God-man. He may not unfitly be compared to Jacob's ladder, which reached from earth to heaven; Christ's human nature, which was the foot of the ladder, stood upon the earth; his divine nature, which was the top of the ladder, reached to heaven. The Arians and Socinians deny his Godhead, as the Valentians

do his manhood. If the Godhead be in him, he must needs be God, but the Godhead shines in him, Col. ii. 9. 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead;' and to confirm us in this truth, let us consult with those scriptures which do clearly assert his Godhead, 1 Cor. viii. 6. 'To us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things; and Phil. ii. 6. who 'being in the form of God,' which is as much, saith Basil, as to exist in the essence of God, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 'God was manifest in the flesh;' and 1 John v. 20. 'We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ, THIS IS THE TRUE GOD.' Besides these testimonies of scripture which do expressly assert the Godhead of Christ, it may be clearly demonstrated by those incommunicable properties belonging to the Deity, which are ascribed to Christ, and are the flowers of his crown.

- As, 1. Omnipotency, Heb. i. 3.
 - 2. Omniscience, Mark ii. 8.
 - 3. Ubiquity, Mat. xxvii. 20.
 - 4. A power of sealing pardons, Matt. ix. 6.
 - 5. The mission of the Holy Ghost, John xvi. 7.
 - 6. Co-equality with God the Father, Phil. ii. 6.
- both in power, John v. 19, 21. and dignity, John v. 23.

Thus we see his Godhead proved; and as he is God-man, he is altogether lovely. He is the very picture of his Father's glory: therefore he is called the express image, and character of his person, Heb. i. 3. The very effigies and print of God's face is seen in Christ; the glory of God's wisdom, holiness, mercy, doth most transparently shine forth in him; thus his person is lovely.

2. Christ is lovely in his disposition—A good nature is able to render deformity itself lovely. Christ is lovely, not only in his complexion, but in his dis-

position; he is of a loving and merciful disposition; and in this sense may be called the delight of mankind. It is reported of Marcus Aurelius the emperor, that he was of a most affable winning temper, given to clemency, and every day he would set one hour apart to hear the causes of the poor. Thus Jesus Christ is of a most sweet disposition, 'He will not always chide,' Psal. ciii. 9. He is inclinable to shew mercy to the penitent, 'He delights in mercy,' Micah vii. 18. He invites sinners to come to him, Mat. xi. 28. He begs of them that they would be saved, 2 Cor. v. 20. He knocks at their hearts by his Spirit, till his head be filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night, Rev. iii. 20. If any poor soul accepts of his offer, and doth arise and go to him, how doth Christ welcome him? Christ makes the feast, Luke xv. 23. and the angels make the music, ver. 7. But if men will not receive the tenders of grace, Christ grieves, Mark iii. 5. He is like a judge that passeth the sentence with tears in his eyes, Luke xix. 42. 'And when he came nigh the city, he wept.' Ah sinners, I come to save you, but you put away salvation from you: I come with healing under my wings, but you bolt out your physician: I would have you but open your hearts to receive me, and I will open heaven to receive you, but you will rather stay with your sins and die, than come to me and live, Psal. lxxxi. 11. 'Israel would none of me.' Well, sinners, I will weep at your funerals: Oh, how lovely is Christ in his disposition! he comes with his suppling oil to pour into sinners wounds: he would fain break their hearts with his mercies: he labours to overcome their *evil* with his *good*.

3. Christ is lovely in his sufferings, when he did make expiation for our sins; but what, lovely in his sufferings? lovely when he was buffeted, spit upon, besmeared with blood? O yes! he was most

lovely upon the cross, because then he shewed most love to us; he bled love at every vein; his drops of blood were love-drops. The more bloody, the more lovely. The more Christ endured for us, the more dear he ought to be to us. Osorius, writing of the sufferings of Christ, saith, that the crown of thorns bored his head with seventy-two wounds; and Tully, when he speaks of the death of the cross, shews his rhetoric best by an aposiopesis, or silence; "What shall I say of this death?" Though a great orator, he wanted words to express it.

Nor did Christ only endure pain in his body, but agony in his soul. He conflicted with the wrath of God; which he could never have done, if he had not been more than a man. We read that the 'altar of wood was overlaid with brass,' that so the fire on the altar might not 'consume the wood,' Exod. xxvii. 1, 2. This altar was a type of Jesus Christ. The human nature of Christ, which was the wood, was covered with the Divine nature, which was like brass, else the fire of God's wrath had consumed it; and all this Christ suffered was in our stead, Is. liii. 5. we eat the sour grape, and his teeth were set on edge: We climbed the tree, we stole the forbidden fruit, and Christ goes up the ladder of the cross, and dies. Oh how lovely ought a bleeding Saviour to be in our eyes? Let us wear this blessed crucifix always in our heart. The cross of Christ, saith Damascen, is the golden key that opens paradise to us. How beautiful is Christ upon the cross! the ruddiness of his blood took away the redness of our guilt. How lovely are those wounds which wounded the red dragon! when this blessed rock was smitten, water came out of it to cleanse us, and blood to cheer us, 1 John v. 6. When Christ was on the cross, saith Bernard, now the vine was cut, and salvation came to us in the blood of the Vine: O how lovely is

this bleeding Vine! Christ's Crucifixion is our Coronation.

4. Christ is lovely in his graces; his graces, as a divine embroidery, did bespangle and set him off in the eyes of the world. Grace was not in Christ as a quality but essence, as light is intrinsical to the sun, and is of the essence of it. Christ did open a box of precious perfume, and because of the savours of his ointments the virgins love him, Cant. i. 2. In Christ there was a constellation of all the graces; how did he shine in wisdom, humility, zeal, heavenly-mindedness; and, which did not a little adorn him, *His Meekness*. How lovely was Christ in his graces!

1. He came into the world meek, Matt. xxi. 5. 'Behold thy king cometh meek.' He came not with a sword or sceptre in his hand, but with an olive branch of peace in his mouth, he preached tidings of peace, Matt. xi. 29. Though he was the Lion of Judah, yet he was the Lamb of God.

2. When he was in the world, he was a pattern of meekness, 1 Pet. ii. 23. 'When he was reviled, he reviled not again.' He left his Father's bosom, that hive of sweetness, to come and live here; and truly, he exchanged his palace for a dunghill; how oft was he called a friend of sinners, nay he was charged to have a devil, but see how mildly he answers, (this dove had no gall) John viii. 49. 'I have not a devil, but I honour my Father.' All his words were steeped in honey.

3. When he was going out of the world, he shewed unparalleled meekness. He prays for his enemies, 'Father forgive them,' Luke xxiii. 34. When the soldiers came to take him by force, one would have thought he should have called for fire from heaven as the man of God did, 2 Kings i. 10. but behold 'Grace was poured into his lips,' Psal. xlv. 2. see what a mild answer he gives, enough to

have made the hardest heart relent, Matt. xxvi. 55. 'Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves to take me?' what wrong, I pray, have I done you? What have I stolen from the world but their sins? what have I robbed them of, but the wrath of God? O the mildness of this Saviour! surely had not the soldiers' hearts been very hard (for in the whole story of Christ's passion I do not read of one soldier converted; there was a thief indeed converted, but no soldier) Christ's meekness would have melted them into tears of repentance; when he was led away to be crucified, 'he went as a lamb to the slaughter; he opened not his mouth,' Isa. liii. 7. He opened his side, but not his mouth in repining; and was not Christ lovely in his meekness? No wonder the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the likeness of a Dove; not a lion or eagle, but a Dove, which is the emblem of meekness.

5. Christ is lovely in his Conversation. What was said of Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 23. they were 'lovely in their lives,' is much more true of Christ. His life, saith Chrysostom, was purer than the sun-beams. All the ethics of Aristotle, all the wisdom of Greece, could never so describe virtue as it was livelily pourtrayed out in Christ's holy example. His life was a fair copy; never did any one write without blotting besides Christ; he is called 'a Lamb without spot,' 1 Pet. i. 19. His lips did never speak a word amiss, Luke iv. 22. 'All bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.' Thus were his lips like lilies, 'dropping pure myrrh,' Cant. v. 13. His foot did never tread a step awry. He who was a way to others, did never go out of the way himself. He was so pure that no temptation could fasten upon him. Tentation to Christ was like the throwing a bur upon a crystal glass,

which will not stick, but glides off. 'The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me,' John xiv. 30. There was no powder for the devil's fire to take. What was Christ's whole life but a pattern of good works? 'He went about doing good,' Acts x. 38. he was either anointing the blind, or healing the sick, or raising the dead; either preaching, or working miracles. Thus he was altogether lovely.

2. Christ is lovely in the account of others. Three ways Christ is lovely,

1. To God his Father. 2. To the saints. 3. To the angels.

1. He is lovely to God his Father. God is infinitely taken with him. Christ is called the Rose of Sharon, and how doth God delight to smell this rose! Isa. xlii. 1. 'My elect in whom my soul delights.' Surely if there be loveliness enough in Christ to delight the heart of God, there may well be enough in him to delight us. Christ is the centre where all the lines of his Father's love do meet.

2. Christ is lovely in the account and esteem of his saints, 2 Thess. i. 10. 'He shall be admired of all them that believe.' He is admired now, and he shall be more admired of them. Well may the saints admire to see Christ sitting in the bright robe of their flesh above the angels in glory. Well may they admire to see their nature united with the Deity. O how lovely and beautiful is this sight! Well may Christ be admired of his saints.

3. Christ is lovely in the esteem of the angels. They adore him, Heb. i. 6. 'And let all the angels of God worship him.' The cherubims which did represent the angels, are painted with their faces looking upwards, to shew, that the angels in heaven all are still looking upward, as admiring, and being ravished with the amazing beauties of Jesus Christ.

Use 1. Information. And it hath three branches.

Branch 1. Behold here, as in a scripture-glass,

the transcendent excellencies of the Lord Jesus, he is altogether lovely, he is a fair prospect set before us. I wonder not that Paul, that seraphic saint, 'desired to know nothing save Jesus Christ,' 1 Cor. ii. 2. What would he know more? he is altogether lovely; no wonder the apostles 'left all and followed him,' Matt. xix. 27. had I the tongue of angels, I could never set forth Christ in all his lively and lovely colours. Besides what hath been said, take a further view of Christ's lovely excellencies in three particulars.

1. He is our Light. Light is a glorious creature, Eccl. xi. 7. 'Truly the light is sweet;' the light pulls off the veil, and draws aside the dark curtains of the night, making every thing appear in its fresh colours. Thus Jesus Christ is lovely; he is called 'that true light,' John i. 9. and the 'bright morning star,' Rev. xxii. 16. when the soul is benighted with ignorance, Christ is the morning-star that enlightens it. He is the 'Sun of Righteousness,' Mal. iv. 2. This Sun of Righteousness is more glorious than that in the firmament, 1. The sun in the firmament rises and sets, but the Sun of Righteousness, when it once riseth upon the soul in conversion, never sets finally upon him; it may pull in its beams when the clouds of our sin come between, but it comes out of the cloud again, (as it did to David) it never sets finally. 2. The sun in the firmament only shines upon us, but the Sun of Righteousness shines within us, Gal. i. 16. but when it pleased God to 'reveal his Son in me.' The sun in the firmament shines only upon our faces; but the Sun of Righteousness shines in our hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6. 'God hath shined in our hearts;' how sweet are these beams! 3. The sun in the firmament shines only in the day time, but the Sun of Righteousness shines in the night; in the night of desertion and affliction this Sun shines, Psal. cxii. 4. 'Unto the up-

right there ariseth light in darkness.' O how lovely is this Sun of Righteousness! by the bright beams of this Sun we see God.

2. Christ is our Food. He is not only lovely to the eye, but to the taste, John vi. 55. 'My flesh is meat indeed.' This is princely fare; it was never prepared for the angels, but for us. It is lovely feeding here; all the rarities of heaven are served in this dish.

'And my blood is drink indeed;' This blood is better than wine. 1. Wine may be taken in excess; Noah took too much of the grape; but it is otherwise with the wine of Christ's blood, there is no fear of excess here. Though a drop be sweet, yet the more we drink, the better; the deeper, the sweeter! 'Drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved,' Cant. v. i. Excess here makes us sober! 2. Wine, though it cheers the heart, yet at some times, if it be taken, it may be hurtful; give wine in a fever, and it is as bad as poison. But this wine of Christ's blood is best in a fever. When the heart burns as hot as hell in the sense of God's wrath, and is as it were, in a spiritual agony and fever: now a drop of Christ's blood doth allay the inflammation, and sweetly refresheth the soul; it is lovely drinking at this fountain.

3. Christ is our Life, Col. iii. 4. 'When Christ who is our life shall appear.' Life is sweet; life makes every thing comfortable. In this the devil said true, 'skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life,' Job ii. 9. A man will cast the plate and jewels overboard to save his life; he will lose a leg or an arm to preserve the vital parts.

Is life lovely, and is not Christ who is our life lovely? He was typified by the 'tree of life in the garden,' Gen. ii. 9. That tree was symbolical, as Austin saith; it was a pledge and sign of life, if man had continued in obedience. It was certainly a love-

ly tree, but it was only a type of Christ, who is called 'the tree of life,' Rev. ii. 7. This tree of life the Lord Jesus, is a better tree than that which grew in paradise; Adam's tree in paradise might preserve life, but it could not prevent death; there was dying for all that; but this tree of life, Jesus Christ, prevents death, John xi. 26. 'Whosoever believeth in me, shall never die; that is, not die the second death, Rev. ii. 14. This blessed tree is an antidote against death. If there were a tree to be found in the world that could preserve men from dying, how far would they go on pilgrimage? what vast sums of money would they give for one leaf of that tree? Such a tree is Christ, he will keep you from dying, and is not this a tree very lovely? In particular, there is a threefold life flows from Jesus Christ. 1. The life of grace, John 1. 16. 'Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.' This life is a bud of eternity; it is a life purchased for us by Christ's death. 2. The life of comfort, which is the cream of life, Joh. xvi. 22. 'Your heart shall rejoice.' This is an holy jubilation of spirit; so sweet and ravishing is this joy, that if David, when he had lost his joy, had lost also his crown, and God had put the question to him, which of these two he would have restored? David would have said, Lord 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,' Psal. li. 12. Rather my comfort, than my crown. It is Hilary term with a christian while these joys last. 3. The life of glory, John xvii. 22. This is the most noble life; this is to live the life of angels, nay, to live the life of God; It is the highest elevation and perfection of the reasonable creature; and may we not cry out with Chrysostom, "What more lovely than Christ," from whom these golden streams of life flow? Oh that all this might make him amiable in our eyes!

What should we admire? what should we rejoice

in but Christ? Christ's beauty, like his coat, is without seam. We read of Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 25. 'in all Israel there was none to be so praised as Absalom for his beauty, from the sole of his foot, even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him.' This may be far more truly applied to Christ. He is the Mirror of beauty, the Map of perfection, the Paradise of delight. He is the crown of the gospel; if the gospel be the field, Christ is the pearl hid in this field; if the gospel be the ring, Christ is the diamond in this ring, He is the glory of heaven, Rev. xxi. 23. 'The Lamb is the light thereof,' Well might Saint Paul account all things dross and dung for Christ, Phil. iii. 8.

Branch 2. If Christ be altogether lovely, it shews us the true reason why men do not embrace Christ; namely, because they are ignorant of his beauty. A blind man doth not admire the colours in a rainbow; when the God of this world hath blinded mens' eyes, they see not any excellency in Christ; therefore they cry out, as here the watchmen did, 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved?' ver. 9. Men admire not the sun, because the cloud of their ignorance comes between. Christ is a treasure, but an hid treasure; he is fairer than the children of men, but to a natural person he is like Moses with a veil upon his face. The men of the world see not the stupendous beauty of Christ. He doth not want worth, but they want eyes. O unhappy man (saith Austin) who knowest all things else but Christ! thy knowledge will but serve to light thee to hell.

Quest. But you will say to me, What, not know Christ? I hope we are better bred than so; hath Christ been preached so long in our streets, and not know him;

Ans. 1. I wish there were not many persons grossly ignorant of Christ, who understand nothing of

his person, offices, privileges: A reverend divine told me, that not long since, he went to visit a neighbour of his parish lying on his death-bed, a man fourscore years of age, one that came frequently to church; and questioning him what sin was, he said he knew not; and what Christ was, he told him he knew not; but saith the minister to him, if thou dost not know Christ, how dost thou think to go to heaven? his answer was this, If I cannot get to heaven, I must stay by the way: O gross ignorance! Balaam's ass spoke better sense to the prophet, Numb. xxii. 28.

That people have been very ignorant of Jesus Christ, appears by this, because they have been so inclinable to error, so greedy to drink in every new opinion as soon as the devil hath set it abroad.

Ans. 2. But my second answer is this; whereas you say, Can we be ignorant of Christ in this broad day-light of the gospel? I say, a man may have excellent notions of Christ, and may be able to make an elegant discourse of him, and yet not know him savingly. Though he be not grossly ignorant of Christ, yet he may be spiritually ignorant. There is a threefold defect in the knowledge of most.

It is a speculation without Conviction, Affection, Operation.

1. It is a speculation without Conviction. Men are not thoroughly convinced of the excellencies of Christ; John xvi. 18. 'And when he (that is the Holy Ghost) comes, he shall convince the world of sin.'

Strange! Was not Christ in the world? had not he made many sermons about sin? It is true, he had, but the Jews were not yet convinced of it, therefore he shall send his Spirit to convince them. 'And of righteousness.'] Why? had not Christ told them that there was no righteousness to be found but in him, that they could graft their hopes of sal-

vation upon no other stock besides? yes, they had heard Christ say so, but they were not yet convinced; therefore the Spirit shall come and convince them. Hence I gather that men may have a speculation of Christ, yet be ignorant of him, that is, not know him convincingly; and that they have not a convincing knowledge, is clear; for were they convinced in their conscience of the lovely excellencies of Christ, would they value a lust or trifle? would they, with Judas, prefer thirty pieces of silver before him?

2. It is a speculation without Affection; men have notions of Christ, but are not warmed with love to Christ. Their knowledge is like the moon, it hath light in it, but no heat. True knowledge of Christ is like fire to the ice, it melts it into water; so this knowledge melts the sinner into tears of love. I do the hypocrite no wrong to tell him he bears no true affection to Jesus Christ. There is a great deal of difference between the knowledge that the prisoner hath of the judge, and the knowledge that the child hath of the parent. The prisoner knows the judge, but hath no affection to his person; his knowledge is joined with fear and hatred; but the child's knowledge of his parent is joined with affection, he loves to be in his presence. The hypocrite knows Christ as the prisoner doth the judge, or as the devils knew him, Mark i. 24. with a knowledge of horror and amazement; whereas true knowledge is filial; the affections are drawn forth in an inflamed manner after him. The apostle hath an elegant expression to set forth the nature of true knowledge; he calls it the 'savour of knowledge,' 2 Cor. ii. 14. as a man tastes a savoury sweetness in his meat. Hypocrites have no taste.

3. It is a speculation without Operation. The knowledge that hypocrites have of Christ, hath no saving influence upon them, it doth not make them

more holy; it is one thing to have a notion of Christ, another thing to fetch virtue from Christ. The knowledge of hypocrites is a dead, barren knowledge: It brings not forth the child of obedience. There is a great deal of difference between a scholar that studies physic for the theory and notion, that he may have the rules of it lying before him, and one that studies physic to practise; hypocrites are not practitioners; they are all head, no feet; they 'walk not in Christ,' Col. ii. 6. Their knowledge is informing, but not transforming; it doth not make them a jot the better, it leaves not a spiritual-tincture of holiness behind. The flux of blood runs still, and such a knowledge is no better than ignorance, 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.' A man may have a knowledge of speculation, and be no better than a devil. And this is the reason why men do not embrace Christ, who is infinitely lovely, because they know not his worth; though they are not grossly ignorant of Christ, yet they are spiritually ignorant. 'To this day the veil is upon their hearts.'

Branch 3. Information. If Jesus Christ be so lovely, it shews us the misery of a man out of Christ.

1. That lives without Christ. 2. That dies without Christ.

1. Behold his misery that lives without Christ. He is very deformed and unlovely; for all loveliness flows from Christ. A sinner in the state of nature, is like an infant tumbling in its blood, Ezek. xvi. 6. 'Thou wert in thy blood,' Lev. xiii. The leper in the law was but the sad emblem of a sinner. 1. The leper was to live alone, as being unworthy to come into the congregation of the holy. 2. The leper did wear three marks to be known by, his garments torn, his head bare, his mouth covered. 3. He was to cry unclean, unclean. This spiritual le-

prosy is upon every Christless sinner. Therefore a man in a state of unregeneracy, is in scripture compared to things most unlovely and unbeautiful. To a dog, Rev. xxii. 15. a swine, 2 Pet. ii. 22. A viper. Mat. iii. 7. a devil, John vi. 70. A sinner's heart is a poisoned spring; it is like a piece of muddy ground which defiles the purest water that runs through it. The heathen had this kind of notion ingrafted into them; for, as authors report, they had their stone pots of water set at the doors of their temple, where they used to wash before they went to sacrifice; a sinner is blind, Rev. iii. 17. and the more blind, because he thinks he sees: He is dead; and although he may be decked with some moral virtues, this is but like strowing flowers upon a dead corpse, Eph. ii. 1. dead things have no beauty in them; a sinner out of Christ is a filthy excrementitious creature; he runs nothing but dregs, he is hell epitomized. There is no part of him sound. The man who had his 'running issue in his flesh, Lev. xv. 2. was but a type of a sinner who hath the plague-sores of sin running upon him, 1 Kings viii. 38. Oh how ghastly and deformed is every Christless soul! God loathes him, Zach. xi. 8. 'My soul loathed them.' So abominable and unsavory is a sinner, that God stands afar off, Psal. cxxxviii. 6. He will not come near the stench of him. The sinner is so deformed and diseased, that when he comes to be converted, the first thing he doth, is to loathe himself, Ezek. xxxvi. 13. 'Ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities.' Thus unlovely is every person out of Christ. If he brags of his goodness, it is because he never yet looked his face in the glass of God's word, that would discover his spots and blemishes.

2. Behold his misery that dies without Christ. Though Jesus Christ be so infinitely beautiful, the sinner shall see none of his beauty. Christ will put a vail upon his face, as Moses did when his face

shined, Exod. xxxiv. 33. Nay, that is not all; though Christ be so lovely in himself, yet to an ungodly sinner he will be terrible to behold. A wicked man shall see nothing in Christ that is lovely. The Sun of Righteousness will be eclipsed to him, his beauty will be changed into fury. The Lamb will be turned to a Lion. Christ's visage will strike the heart of a sinner with horror and amazement. King Ahasuerus was pleasant to queen Esther to behold when he held forth the golden sceptre; but how dreadful was his visage to Haman, when he arose from the banquet of wine in his wrath! His look did carry death in its face: So, though Christ be so lovely in himself, and full of smiling beauty to his saints; yet, to those who reject him, and die in their sins, O how ghastly and affrighting will his looks be! his eyes will be as a flame of fire, Rev. i. 14. Christ is represented with a bow and a crown, Rev. vi. 2. Give me leave to allude. Christ will appear to the saints with a crown, very lovely and glorious to behold, but to the wicked he will appear with his bow, to shoot at them with the arrows of his indignation. We read, Psal. vii. 2. 'Clouds and darkness are round about him.' To believers Christ will shine forth with his rays of majesty and beauty; but to the wicked he will cover himself with a cloud of displeasure; this will be the hell of hell to the damned; they shall be shut out from a sight of Christ's glory, and shall behold only a sight of his wrath. They shall cry to the mountains to cover them from 'the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,' Rev. vi. 16. The human nature of Christ, saith Hierom, will be as terrible to a sinner as the sight of hell fire.

Use 2. Exhortation. Branch 1. If Christ be so infinitely lovely, then let us labour to get a part in Christ, that the cursed deformity of our nature may

be taken away, and the bespangled beauties of holiness may shine in us. It is little comfort for the soul to say, Christ is altogether lovely, unless it can also say, 'My beloved is mine,' Cant. ii. 16. Ignatius cared not what befel him so he had Christ. Clear thy interest. The ground of privilege is union. There are, saith Bernard, many christians who have nothing of Christ in them. Oh labour to be made one with Christ, to have Christ not only in thy Bible but in thy heart; renounce thy own beauty, all thy parts, moralities, duties; these are a rotten bough to hold by, Phil. iii. 9. 'That I may be found in him not having mine own righteousness.' When Augustus Cesar desired the senate of Rome to join some with him in the consulship, the senate answered that they held it a great disparagement to him to join any consul with him; so Jesus Christ takes it as a great disparagement to him to join our duties in equipage with his merits. O sinner, cast away thy beggars rags, that thou mayest put on Christ's lovely robes. I would not take thee off from thy duty, but from confidence in duty. Noah's dove might make use of her wings to fly, but she did not trust to her wings, but to the ark. A man makes use of his feet to go over a bridge, but he trusts to the bridge for safety. Christians while they walk with the feet of obedience, must trust to Christ as the bridge to lead them over the devouring sea of hell; in short, if thou wouldst get an interest in Christ, rely on Christ by faith, and resign up thyself to Christ by service. A believer with one hand receives Christ, and with the other hand gives up himself to Christ. Christ saith to a believer, 'with my body, yea with my blood I thee endow, and a believer saith to Christ, 'with my soul I thee worship.' O christian, part with all for a part in this lovely Saviour.

2. *Branch.* If Christ be thus full of sparkling

beauties, then fall in love with this lovely object, and with the spouse, 'be sick of love to Christ.' Beauty doth draw love. Ministers are paranymphe, friends of the bridegroom. This day I come a wooing for your love. Love him who is so lovely. Let Christ lie as a bundle of myrrh always between your breasts. 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Love, saith Chrysostom, is the diamond that only the queen wears, viz. The gracious soul. Oh that all these surpassing beauties of Christ might kindle a flame of divine love in christians hearts. Christ's is the very extract and quintessence of beauty, he is a whole paradise of delight. He is the flower of Sharon, enriched with orient colours, and perfumed with the sweetest savour; Oh wear this flower not in your bosom, but in your heart, and be always smelling to it; and shew your love to this lovely Saviour.

1. By the degrees of it.—2. By the effects of it.

1. By the degrees of it. Love him above all other things; let him carry away the crown and the glory from the creature. 1. Love him more than thy relations, Mat. x. 37. 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. Nay, our love to relations must be hatred in comparison of our love to Christ, Luke xiv. 26. Great is our love to relations. The creatures void of reason teach natural affection; the young stork feeds the dam, and helps to carry her when she is old and can hardly fly. Children should exceed, and outfly the stork in affection. There is a story in the French Academy of a daughter, who when her father was condemned to die by famine, she made shift to get to him, and gave him suck with her own breasts, which being made known, she obtained his pardon: but Christ must be dearer to us than all; he must weigh heavier than relations in the balance

of our affections ; for ' he is altogether lovely.' If parents lie as a stumbling block in our way to Christ, if they either come in competition with Christ, or stand in opposition against Christ, we must either leap over them, or tread upon them.

2. Love Christ more than thy estate. Gold is but shining dust ; though it may be lovely ; yet it is not altogether lovely. 1. Gold is worse than thyself, it is of an earthly extract. If thou lovest any thing, love something which is better than thyself ; and that only is Christ, who is altogether lovely. 2. Riches ' avail not in the day of wrath,' Prov. xi. 4. Riches are no life-guard to defend us from divine fury ; but how lovely is Christ who can screen off the fire of God's wrath from thee ! Oh then love him more than these perishable things. Christ's gleanings are better than the world's vintage. Be not like Noah's raven, which, when it had found a carrion to feed on, cared not for returning home to the ark. He that loseth all for Christ, shall find all in Christ.

3. Love Christ more than thy life, Rev. xii. 11. ' They loved not their lives to the death.' They carried their sufferings as ensigns of their glory. They had pangs of love stronger than the pangs of death. Did the Curtii die for the Romans, the Cordii for the Athenians, and shall not we be willing to lay down our lives for Christ who is so infinitely lovely ?

2. Shew your love to this lovely Saviour by the effects of love.

1. The first fruit of love is desire of converse. Love is a transporting of the affections ; Lovers desire to be often talking and conversing together before the marriage-day. Christ converseth with the soul by his Spirit, and the soul converseth with him by prayer and meditation. The soul that loves Christ, desires to be much in his presence. He loves

the ordinances, he thinks it is good lying in the way where Christ passeth by. Ordinances are the chariots of salvation. Christ rides into the believers' hearts in these chariots. Ordinances are the feast of fat things. The soul feasts with Christ here, Cant. ii. 4. 'He brought me to the banqueting house,' &c. In the Hebrew it is, he brought me to the house of wine. Word, prayer, sacraments, are to a christian the house of wine. Here, often Christ turns the water of tears into wine. How lovely is this house of wine! The ordinances are the lattice where Christ looks forth and shews his smiling face to his saints. Christ's parents found him in the temple, Luke ii. 46. The soul that loves Christ, desires conference with him in the temple.

2. *Fruit of love.* 2. Where there is love to Christ, there is sympathy. Friends that love do grieve and rejoice together; they have sympathizing spirits. Homer describing Agamemnon's grief, when he was forced to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, brings in all his friends weeping with him, and accompanying him to the sacrifice in mourning. And I remember Aristotle in his Rhetoric spends almost a whole chapter upon this, proving a sympathy among friends. Lovers grieve together: thus, if we love Christ, we shall grieve for those things that grieve him, Psal. cxix. 158. 'I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved.' We shall grieve to see truth bleeding, heretics increasing. We shall grieve to see toleration setting up its mast and topsail; and multitudes sailing in this ship to hell. Toleration is the grave of reformation. It was a charge drawn up against the angel of Pergamos, that he had them there, nestling and brooding, who held the doctrine of Baalam, Rev. ii. 14. By toleration we adopt other men's sins, and make them our own. I pray God this doth not hasten England's funerals. He who loves Christ, will lay these things to heart.

3. Fruit of love. 3. He who loves Christ, will endeavour to preserve his memory. Friends that bear respect will preserve the memory of those persons they love, by keeping their pictures, letters, love-tokens; sometimes by preserving their monuments. Herein Artemisia, queen of Caria, shewed an act of singular love to her husband Mausolus; for he being dead, she caused his body to be reduced to ashes and to be mingled in her drink every day, so making her body a living tomb to hold her dead husband. Thus the soul that loves Christ will be often eating his body and drinking his blood in the sacrament, that he may remember Christ's death till he come. They that live without sacraments, shew plainly that they have no love to Christ, because they do not desire to preserve his memory among them.

4. Fruit of love. 4. He that bears love to Christ, this lovely object, will not entertain any other lovers; 'What have I to do any more with idols?' Hos. xiv. 8. The Hebrew word is with sorrows: indeed sin raiseth a tempest of sorrow in the soul; and he that is espoused to Christ, hath now changed his judgment; those sins he before looked upon as lovers, now he looks upon as sorrows. He that loves Christ, can look a temptation in the face, and turn his back upon it. When Cyrus would have tempted the chaste wife of Tygranes, she took no notice of him, though a king; she had a husband at home. When sin, like Mercury's rod with a snake about it, would wind itself subtilely into the soul, he that loves Christ, dares not give it entertainment; he saith, All the rooms are taken up already for Christ, and a better guest cannot come, for he is altogether lovely.

3. Branch. If Christ be so lovely in himself, then you that profess Christ, labour to render him lovely in the eyes of others. And that two ways.

1. By commending him, and telling others of his beauty, that they may admire him. So the spouse in this chapter labours to pourtray and set him forth in his glory. 'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand. Tell others that Christ is all marrow, all sweetness. He is the richest jewel in the cabinet of heaven: Set up the trophies of his honour, triumph in his praises, that you may tempt others to fall in love with his person. The tongue is the organ of praise; it is pity the organs are so often out of tune, in murmuring and complaining? Oh let these organs be still going, let our tongues sing forth the praises of him who is altogether lovely. Daughters of the blood-royal have the pictures of kings brought to them, and by seeing the pictures, they fall in love with their persons, and are married to them; by our commendations of Christ, we should so paint out Christ to others, and draw his picture, that when they see his picture they may fall in love with him, and the match may be presently struck up.

2. Render Christ lovely in the eyes of others by adorning his gospel, and 'walking worthy of Christ' Col. i. 10. It is an honour to a master to have good servants, and how doth it proclaim Christ to be lovely, and glorious, when they that profess him are eminent for piety! 1 Pet. ii. 9. Christ appears lovely in the holy lives of his people.

Brethren, there are some persons among us whose scandalous impieties, masked over with religion, hath made Christ appear unlovely in the eyes of others; it is enough to make them afraid to have any thing to do with Christ; as if he did abet men in their sin, or at least connive at them. The blood of some will not make reparation for the injury which their sins have done to Christ. I have read of certain images which on the outside were covered with gold and pearl, resembling Jupiter and Nep-

tune, but within nothing but spiders and cobwebs; and have not we many who have been covered with the gold and pearl of profession, resembling the saints of the Most High, but within, as Christ saith, 'full of all uncleanness?' Mat. xxiii. 27. insomuch that we may see the spiders creeping out of them. O that all who profess the name of Christ 'might depart from iniquity,' 2 Tim. ii. 19. that they might set a crown of honour upon the head of Christ, and make him appear lovely in the eyes of others.

Use ull. Consolation. Here is comfort to them who are by faith married to Christ: this is their glorious privilege, Christ's beauty and loveliness shall be put upon them; they shall shine by his beams; this is the apex and crown of honour; the saints shall not only behold Christ's glory, but be transformed into it, 1 John iii. 2. 'We shall be like him' that is, irradiated and enamelled with his glory. Christ is compared to the beautiful lily, Cant. i. 2. His lily-whiteness shall be put upon his saints. A glorified soul shall be a perfect mirror, or crystal, where the beauty of Christ shall be transparent. Moses married a blackamore, but he could not make her fair; but whomsoever Christ marries, he alters their complexion, he makes them altogether lovely. Other beauty causeth pride; but no such worm breeds in heaven. The saints in glory shall admire their own beauty, but not grow proud of it. Other beauty is soon lost. The eye weeps to see its furrowed brows, the cheeks blush at their own paleness; but this is a never fading beauty; age cannot wither it; it retains its glossiness, the white and vermillion mixed together to all eternity. Think of this, O ye saints, who mourn now for your sins, and bewail your spiritual deformities (you are comely, yet black) remember, by virtue of your union with Christ you shall be glorious creatures; then shall your clothing be of wrought gold, then shall you be brought

unto the king in raiment of needle-work, and you shall hear Christ pronounce that blessed word, Cant. iv. 7. 'Thou art all fair my love, and there is no spot in thee.'

THE

UPRIGHT MAN'S CHARACTER.

PSALM xxxvii. 37. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.*

SINCERITY is of universal importance to a christian. It is the sauce which seasons religion and makes it savoury. Sincerity is the jewel that God is most delighted with, Psal. li. 6. 'Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and to speak plain, all our pompous shew of holiness without this soul of sincerity to enliven it, is but folly set forth in its embroidery; it is but going to hell in a more devout manner than others. The consideration of which hath put me upon this subject in this place of solemn worship and concourse; and to quicken your attention, you have God himself calling to you to take notice in these words, 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.'

The Hebrew word for upright hath two significations. 1. It signifies plainness of heart; the upright man is not plaited in folds; he is without collusion or double dealing, 'In his spirit there is no guile,' Psal. xxxii. 2.

The upright man hath no subterfuges, his tongue and his heart go together, as a well-made dial goes with the sun; he is down-right upright.