

SERMON XXIV.

Of the Manner and Importance of the SPIRIT'S Indwelling.

1 JOHN iii. 24.

—And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

THE apostle in this chapter is engaged in a very trying discourse; his scope is to discriminate the spirits and states of sincere believers, from merely nominal and pretended Christians; which he attempts not to do by any thing that is external, but by the internal effects and operations of the Spirit of God upon their hearts. His enquiry is not into those things which men profess, or about the duties which they perform, but about the frames and tempers of their hearts, and the principles by which they are acted in religion. According to this test, he puts believers upon the search and study of their own hearts; calls them to reflect upon the effects and operations of the Spirit of God, wrought within their own souls, assuring them, that these gracious effects, and the fruits of the Spirit in their hearts, will be a solid evidence unto them of their union with Jesus Christ, amounting to much more than a general, conjectural ground of hope, under which it is possible there may *subesse falsum*, lurk a dangerous and fatal mistake: But the gracious effects of the Spirit of God within them, are a foundation upon which they may build the certainty and assurance of their union with Christ: *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* In which words we have three things to consider, viz.

1. The thing to be tried, our union with Christ.
2. The trial of it, by the giving of his Spirit to us.
3. The certainty of the trial this way: *Hereby we know,*

First, The thing to be tried; which is indeed the greatest and weightiest matter that can be brought to trial in this world, or in that to come, namely, our union with Christ, expressed here by *his abiding in us*; a phrase clearly expressing the difference betwixt those who, by profession and common estimation, pass for Christians among men, though they have no other union with Christ, but by an *external adhesion* to him in the external duties of religion, and those whose union with Christ is real, vital, and permanent, by the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in their souls. John xv. 5, 6. opens the force and importance of this phrase, “I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him,

“ the same bringeth forth much fruit : If a man abide not in me, he “ is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.” The thing then to be tried is, Whether we stand in Christ as dead branches in a living stock, which are only bound to it by external ligatures or bonds that hold them for a while together ; or whether our souls have a vital union and coalition with Christ, by the participation of the living sap of that blessed root ?

Secondly, The trial of this union, which is by the *giving of the Spirit to us* : The Spirit of Christ is the very bond of union betwixt him and our souls. I mean not that the very person of the Spirit dwelleth in us, imparting his *essential properties* to us ; it were a rude blasphemy so to speak ; but his saving influences are communicated to us in the way of sanctifying operations ; as the sun is said to come into the house, when his beams and comforting influence come there. Nor yet must we think that the graces or influences of the Spirit abide in us in the self-same measure and manner they do in Christ ; “ for God giveth not the Spirit to him by measure ; ” in him all fulness dwells. He is anointed with the Spirit above his fellows ; but there are measures and proportions of grace differently communicated to believers by the same Spirit ; and these communicated graces, and real operations of the Spirit of grace in our hearts, do undoubtedly prove the reality of our union with Christ ; as the communication of the self-same vital juice or sap of the stock, to the branch whereby it lives, and brings forth fruit of the same kind, certainly proves it to be a real part or a member of the same tree.

Thirdly, Which brings us to a third thing ; namely, the certainty of the trial this way, *εν τω γνωσκομεν*, in this, or by *this we know* : We so know that we cannot be deceived. To clear this, let us consider two things in grace, viz.

1. Somewhat *constitutive*,
 2. Somewhat *manifestative*,
- } of its being.

There is something in grace which is essential, and *constitutive* of its being ; and somewhat that flows from grace, and is *manifestative* of such a being : We cannot immediately and intuitively discern the essence of grace, as it is in its simple nature. So God only discerns it, who is the author of it ; but we may discern it *mediately* and *secondarily*, by the effects and operations of it. Could we see the simple essence of grace, or intuitively discern our union with Christ, our knowledge would be *demonstrative, a priori ad posterius*, by seeing effects, as they are lodged in the cause : But we come to know the being of grace, and the reality of our union with Christ, *a posteriori*, by ascending in our knowledge from the effects and operations, to their true cause and being.

And, accordingly, God hath furnished us with a power of self-

intuition and reflection; whereby we are able to turn it upon our own hearts, and make a judgment upon ourselves, and upon our own acts. The soul hath not only power to *project*, but a power also to *reflect* upon its own actions; not only to put forth a *direct act* of faith upon Jesus Christ, but to judge and discern that act also, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed*: And this is the way in which believers attain their certainty and knowledge of their union with Christ: from hence the observation will be,

Doct. *That interest in Christ may be certainly gathered and concluded from the gift of the Spirit to us*: “No man (saith the apostle) hath seen God at any time; if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us: Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit,” 1 John iv. 12, 13. The being of God is invisible, but the operations of his Spirit in believers, are sensible and discernable. The soul’s union with Christ is a supernatural mystery, yet it is discoverable by the effects thereof, which are very perceptible in and by believers.

Two things require explication and confirmation in the doctrinal part of this point.

1. What the giving of the Spirit imports and signifies.
2. How it evidences the soul’s interest in Jesus Christ.

First, As to the import of this phrase, we are to enquire what is meant by the Spirit, and what by the giving of the Spirit.

Now the Spirit is taken in scripture two ways, viz.

Essentially, or personally.

In the first sense it is put for the Godhead, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *Justified in the Spirit*, i. e. By the power of his divine nature, which raised him from the dead. In the second sense it denotes the third person, or subsistence in the glorious and blessed Trinity; and to him this word *Spirit* is attributed, sometimes *properly* in the sense before-mentioned, as denoting his *personality*; at other times *metonymically*, and then it is put for the effects, fruits, graces, and gifts of the Spirit communicated by him unto men, Eph. v. 11. *Be ye filled with the Spirit*. Now the fruits or gifts of the Spirit are either,

1. Common and assisting gifts: Or,
2. Special and sanctifying gifts.

In the last sense and signification, it must be taken in this place; for, as to the common assisting and ministering gifts of the Spirit, they are bestowed promiscuously upon one as well as another; such gifts in an excellent degree and a large measure, are found in the unregenerate, and therefore can never amount to a solid evidence of the soul’s union with Christ: but his special sanctifying gifts, being the proper effect and consequent of that union, must

needs strongly prove and confirm it. In this sense therefore we are to understand *the Spirit* in this place; and by *giving the Spirit to us*, we are to understand more than the *coming of the Spirit upon us*: The Spirit of God is said to come upon men in a transient way, for their present assistance in some particular service, though in themselves they be unsanctified persons: 'Thus *the Spirit of God came upon Balaam*, Num. xxiv. 2. enabling him to prophesy of things to come: And, although those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit be now ceased, yet the Spirit ceaseth not to give his ordinary assistances unto men, both regenerate and unregenerate, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10, 31. compared: But, whatever gifts he gives to others, he is said to *be given, to dwell, and to abide* only in believers, 1 Cor. iii. 6. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" An expression denoting both his special property in them, and gracious familiarity with them. There is a great difference betwixt the *assisting* and the *indwelling* of the Spirit; the one is *transient*, the other *permanent*. That is a good rule the schoolmen give us, *Illu tantum dicuntur inesse, quæ insunt per modum quietis*: those things are only said to be in a man, which were in him by way of rest and permanency, and so the Spirit is in believers: 'Therefore they are said *to live in the Spirit*, Gal. v. 25. to be *led by the Spirit*, ver. 18. to be in the Spirit, and the Spirit to dwell in them, Rom. viii. 9. And so much of the first thing to be opened, viz. What we are to understand by the giving of the Spirit.

Secondly, In the next place we are to enquire and satisfy ourselves, how this giving of the Spirit evidently proves and strongly concludes that soul's interest in Christ unto whom he is given: and this will evidently appear by the consideration of these five particulars.

1. The Spirit of God in believers is the very bond by which they are united unto Christ: If therefore we find in ourselves the bond of union, we may warrantably conclude, that we have union with Jesus Christ: This is evidently held forth in those words of Christ, John xvii. 22, 23. "The glory which thou gavest me, have I given them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." It is the glory of Christ's human nature to be united to the Godhead: "This (said Christ) thou gavest me, and the glory thou gavest me, I have given them," i. e. By me they are united unto thee. And how this is done, he sheweth us more particularly, *I in them*; there is Christ in us, viz. *mystically*: And *thou in me*; there is God in Christ, viz. *hypostatically*: So that in Christ, God and be-

lievers meet in a blessed union: It is Christ's glory to be one with God; it is our glory to be one with Christ, and with God by him: But how is this done? Certainly no other way but by the giving of his Spirit unto us; for so much the phrase, *I in them*, must needs import: Christ is in us by the sanctifying Spirit, which is the bond of our union with him.

Secondly, The scripture every where makes this giving, or indwelling of the Spirit, the great mark and trial of our interest in Christ; concluding from the presence of it in us, *positively*, as in the text; and from the absence of it, *negatively*, as in Rom. viii. 9. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his," Jude, ver. 19. "Sensual, not having the Spirit." This mark therefore agreeing to all believers, and to none but believers, and that always, and at all times, it must needs clearly infer the soul's union with Christ, in whomsoever it is found.

Thirdly, That which is a certain mark of our freedom from the covenant of works, and our title to the privileges of the covenant of grace, must needs also infer our union with Christ, and special interest in him; but the giving or indwelling of the sanctifying Spirit in us, is a certain mark of our freedom from the *first covenant*, under which all Christless persons still stand, and our title to the special privileges of the *second covenant*, in which none but the members are interested; and, consequently, it fully proves our union with the Lord Jesus. This is plain from the *apostle's* reasoning, Gal. iv. 6, 7. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father: Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son: and if a son, then an heir of God, through Christ." The spirit of the first covenant was a servile spirit, a spirit of fear and bondage, and they that were under that covenant were not *sons*, but *servants*; but the spirit of the new covenant is a free, ingenuous spirit, acting in the strength of God, and those that do so, are the children of God; and children inherit the blessed privileges and royal immunities contained in that great charter, the covenant of grace: they are *heirs of God*, and the evidence of this their inheritance, by virtue of the second covenant, and of freedom from the servitude and bondage of the first covenant, is *the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, crying, Abba Father*; So Gal. v. 18. "If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

Fourthly, If the eternal decree of God's electing love be executed, and the virtues and benefits of the death of Christ applied by the Spirit, unto every soul in whom he dwelleth, as a spirit of sanctification; then such a giving of the Spirit unto us must needs be a certain mark and proof of our special interest in Christ; but the decree of God's electing love is executed, and the benefits of the blood

of Christ are applied to every soul in whom he dwelleth, as a spirit of sanctification. This is plain from 1 Pet. i. 2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Where you see both God's election executed, and the blood of Jesus sprinkled or applied unto us by the Spirit, which is given to us as a Spirit of sanctification. There is a blessed order of working observed as proper to each person in the Godhead; the Father electeth, the Son redeemeth, the Spirit sanctifieth. The Spirit is the last efficient in the work of our salvation; what the Father decreed, and the Son purchased, that the Spirit applieth; and so puts the last hand to the complete salvation of believers. And this some divines give as the reason why the sin against the Spirit is unpardonable, because he being the last agent, in order of working, if the heart of a man be filled with enmity against the Spirit, there can be no remedy for such a sin; there is no looking back to the death of Christ, or to the love of God for remedy. This sin against the Spirit is that *obex infernalis*, the deadly stop and bar to the whole work of salvation; Oppositely, where the Spirit is received, obeyed, and dwelleth in the way of sanctification; into that soul the eternal love of God, the inestimable benefits of the blood of Christ run freely, without any interruption; and, consequently, the interest of such a soul in Jesus Christ is beyond all dispute.

Fifthly, The giving of the Spirit to us, or his residing in us, as a sanctifying Spirit, is every where in scripture made the pledge and earnest of eternal salvation, and consequently must abundantly confirm and prove the soul's interest in Christ, Eph. i. 13, 14. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise; which is the earnest of our inheritance," &c. So, 2 Cor. i. 22. "who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." And thus you have the point opened and confirmed. The use of all followeth:

Use. Now the only use I make of this point shall be that which lieth directly, both in the view of the text, and of the design for which it was chosen; namely, by it to try and examine the truth of our interest in, and the validity of our claim to Jesus Christ. In pursuance of which design, I shall first lay down some general rules, and then propose some particular trials.

First, I shall lay down some general rules for the due information of our minds in this point, upon which so much depends.

Rule 1. Though the Spirit of God be given to us, and worketh in us, yet he worketh not as a natural and necessary, but as a free and arbitrary agent: He neither assists, nor sanctifies, as the fire burneth, *ad ultimum sui posse*, as much as he can assist or sanctify, but as

much as he pleaseth : dividing to every man severally as he will," 1 Cor. xii. 11. Bestowing greater measures of gifts and graces upon some than upon others ; and assisting the same person more at one season than another ; and all this variety of operation floweth from his own good pleasure. His grace is his own, he may give it as he pleaseth.

Rule 2. There is a great difference in the manner of the Spirit's working before and after the work of regeneration. Whilst we are unregenerate, he works upon us as upon dead creatures that work not at all with him ; and what motion there is in our souls, is a counter-motion to the Spirit ; but after regeneration it is not so, he then works upon a complying and willing mind ; we work, and he assists, Rom. viii. 26. Our conscience witnesseth, and he beareth witness with it, Rom. viii. 16. It is therefore an error of dangerous consequence to think that sanctified persons are not bound to stir and strive in the way of duty, without a sensible impulse, or preventing motion of the Spirit, Isa. lxiv. 7.

Rule 3. Though the Spirit of God be given to believers, and worketh in them, yet believers themselves may do or omit such things as may obstruct the working, and obscure the very being of the Spirit of God in them. Ita notis tractat, ut a nobis tractatur : He dealeth with us in his evidencing and comforting work, as we deal with him in point of tenderness and obedience to his dictates ; there is a grieving, yea, there is a quenching of the Spirit by the lusts and corruptions of those hearts in which he dwelleth ; and though he will not forsake his habitation, as a Spirit of sanctification, yet he may for a time desert it as a Spirit of consolation, Psal. li. 11.

Rule 4. Those things which discover the indwelling of the Spirit in believers are not so much the matter of their duties, or substance of their actions, as the more secret springs, holy aims, and spiritual manner of their doing or performing of them. It is not so much the matter of a prayer, the neat and orderly expressions in which it is uttered, as the inward sense and spiritual design of the soul ; it is not the choice of elegant words, whereby our conceptions are clothed, or the copiousness of the matter with which we are furnished, for even a poor stammering tongue, and broken language, may have much of the Spirit of God in it. This made Luther say, he saw more excellency in the duty of a plain rustic Christian, than in all the triumphs of Cæsar and Alexander. The beauty and excellency of spiritual duties is an inward hidden thing.

Rule 5. All the motions and operations of the Spirit are always harmonious, and suitable to the written word, Isa. viii. 20. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, "it is because there is no light in them." The scriptures are by the inspiration of the Spirit, therefore this inspiration into the

hearts of believers must either substantially agree with the scriptures, or the inspiration of the Spirit be self-repugnant, and contradictory to itself. It is very observable, that the works of grace wrought by the Spirit in the hearts of believers, are represented to us in scripture, as a transcript, or copy of the written word, Jer. xxxi. 33. "I will write my law in their hearts." Now, as a true copy answers the original, word for word, letter for letter, point for point; so do the works of the Spirit in our souls harmonize with the dictates of the Spirit in the scriptures; whatsoever motion therefore shall be found repugnant thereto, must not be fathered upon the Spirit of God, but laid at the door of its proper parents, the spirit of error and corrupt nature.

Rule 6. Although the works of the Spirit, in all sanctified persons, do substantially agree, both with the written word, and with one another, (as ten thousand copies, penned from one original, must needs agree within themselves;) yet as to the manner of infusion and operation, there are found many circumstantial differences. The Spirit of God doth not hold one and the same method of working upon all hearts: The work of grace is introduced into some souls with more terror and trouble for sin, than it is in others; he wrought upon Paul one way, upon Lydia in another way; he holds some much longer under terrors and troubles than he doth others; inveterate and more profane sinners find stronger troubles for sin, and are held longer under them, than those are, into whose heart grace is more early and insensibly infused by the Spirit's blessing upon religious education; but as these have less trouble than the other at first, so commonly they have less clearness, and more doubts and fears about the work of the Spirit afterwards.

Rule 7. There is a great difference found betwixt the sanctifying and the comforting influences of the Spirit upon believers, in respect of constancy and permanency. His sanctifying influences abide ever in the soul, they never depart; but his comforting influences come and go, and abide not long upon the hearts of believers. Sanctification belongs to the being of a Christian, consolation only to his well-being: The first is fixed and abiding, the latter various and inconstant. Sanctification brings us to heaven hereafter, consolation brings heaven unto us here; our safety lies in the former, our cheerfulness only in the latter. There are times and seasons, in the lives of believers, wherein the Spirit of God doth more signally and eminently seal their spirits, and ravish their hearts with joy unspeakable. But what Bernard speaketh is certainly true in the experience of Christians: " * It is a sweet hour, and it is but

* *Rara hora, brevis mora; sapit quidem suavissime, sed gustatur rarissime.* Bern.

“an hour; a thing of short continuance: the relish of it is exceeding sweet, but it is not often that Christians taste it.” And so much may suffice for the general rules about the inbeing and workings of the Spirit in believers, for the better information of our understandings, and prevention of mistakes in this matter: I shall next, according to promise, lay down the particular marks and trials by which we may discern whether God hath given us his Spirit or no, by which grown Christians, when they are in a due composed frame, may, by the assistance of the Spirit of God, (for which therefore they are bound to pray), discern his indwelling and working in themselves.

Evidence 1. In whomsoever the Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of sanctification, to that man or woman he hath been, more or less, a Spirit of conviction and humiliation. This is the order which the Spirit constantly observes in adult or grown converts, John xvi. 8, 9. “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin because they believe not on me.” This, you see, is the method he observes all the world over; he shall reprove or convince the world of sin. Conviction of sin hath the same respect unto sanctification, as the blossoms of trees have to the fruits that follow them: A blossom is but *fructus imperfectus, et ordinabilis*; an imperfect fruit in itself, and in order to a more perfect and noble fruit. Where there are no blossoms, we can expect no fruit; and where we see no conviction of sin, we can expect no conversion to Christ. Hath then the Spirit of God been a Spirit of conviction to thee? Hath he more particularly convinced thee of sin, because thou hast not believed on him? i. e. hath he shewn thee thy sin and misery, as an unbeliever? Not only terrified and affrighted thy conscience with this or that more notorious act of sin, but fully convinced thee of the state of sin that thou art in by reason of thy unbelief, which, holding thee from Christ, must needs also hold thee under the guilt of all thy other sins. This gives, at least, a strong probability that God hath given thee his Spirit, especially when this conviction remains day and night upon thy soul, so that nothing but Christ can give it rest, and consequently the great enquiry of thy soul is after Christ, and none but Christ.

Evidence 2. As the Spirit of God hath been a convincing, so he is a quickening Spirit, to all those to whom he is given; Rom. viii. 2. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death:” He is the Spirit of life, i. e. the principle of spiritual life in the souls whom he inhabiteth; for, uniting them to Christ, he unites them to the fountain of life; and this spiritual life, in believers, manifests itself as the natural life doth in vital actions and operations. When the Spirit of God

comes into the soul of a man that was dead and senseless under sin, "O (saith he) now I begin to feel the weight and load of sin, "Rom. vii. 24. now I begin to hunger and thirst after Christ "and his ordinances, 1 Pet. ii. 2. now I begin to breathe after "God in spiritual prayer," Acts ix. 11. Spiritual life hath its spiritual senses, and suitable operations. O think upon this you that cannot feel any burden in sin, you that have no hungerings or thirstings after Christ; how can the Spirit of God be in you? I do not deny but there may, at some times, be much deadness and senselessness upon the hearts of Christians, but this is their disease, not their nature; it is but at some times, not always, and when it is so with them, they are burdened with it, and complain of it as their greatest affliction in this world; their spirits are not easy and at rest, in such a condition as yours are; their spirits are as a bone out of joint, an arm dislocated, which cannot move any way without pain.

Evidence 3. Those to whom God giveth his Spirit have a tender sympathy with all the interests and concernments of Christ. This must needs be so, if the same Spirit which is in Christ dwelleth also in thy heart; if thou be a partaker of his Spirit, then what he loves, thou lovest, and what he hateth, thou hatest. This is a very plain case; even in nature itself, we find that the many members of the same natural body being animated by one and the same spirit of life, "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with "it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with "it: Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27. For look, as Christ, the head of that body is touched with a tender sense and feeling of the miseries and troubles of his people, he is persecuted when they are persecuted, Acts ix. 4. so they that have the Spirit of Christ in them, cannot be without a deep and tender sense of the reproach and dishonours that are done to Christ: This is "as it were a sword in their bones," Psal. xlii. 3. If his public worship cease, or the assemblies of his people are scattered; it cannot but go to the hearts of all, in whom the Spirit of Christ is: "They will be sorrowful for the solemn assemblies; the reproach of them will be a burden," Zeph. iii. 18. Those that have the Spirit of Christ do not more earnestly long after any one thing in this world, than the advancement of Christ's interest by conversion and reformation in the kingdoms of the earth, Psal. xlv. 3, 4. Paul could rejoice that Christ was preached, though his own afflictions were increased, Phil. i. 16, 18. and John could rejoice that Christ increased, though he himself decreased; yet therein was his joy fulfilled, John iii. 29. So certainly the concernments of Christ must and will touch that heart which is the habitation of his Spirit. I cannot deny, but even a

good Baruch may be under a temptation to seek great things for himself, and be too much swallowed up in his own concernments, when God is plucking up and breaking down, Jer. xlv. 4, 5. But this is only the influence of a temptation: the true temper and spirit of a believer inclines him to sorrow and mourning, when things are in this sad posture: Ezek. ix. 4. "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof."

O reader, lay thine hand upon thine heart: Is it thus with thee? Dost thou sympathize with the affairs and concernments of Christ in the world? or, carest thou not which way things go with the people of God, and gospel of Christ, so long as thine own affairs prosper, and all things are well with thee?

Evidence 4. Wherever the Spirit of God dwelleth, he doth in some degree, mortify and subdue the evils and corruptions of the soul in which he resides. This Spirit lusteth against the flesh, Gal. v. 7. and believers, "through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body," Rom. viii. 13. This is one special part of his sanctifying work. I do not say he kills and subdues sin in believers, as that it shall never trouble or defile them any more: No; that freedom belongs to the perfect state in heaven, but its dominion is taken away, though its life be prolonged for a season. It lives in believers still, but not upon the provision they willingly make to fulfil the lust of it, Rom. xiii. 27. The design of every true believer, is co-incident with the design of the Spirit, to destroy and mortify corruption: They long after the extirpation of it, and are daily in the use of all sanctified means and instruments, to subdue and destroy it; the workings of their corruption are the afflictions of their souls, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And there is no one thing that sweetens the thoughts of death to believers (except the sight and full enjoyment of God) more than their expected deliverance from sin doth.

Evidence 5. Wherever the spirit of God dwelleth in the way of sanctification, in all such he is the Spirit of prayer and supplication, Rom. viii. 26. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered:" Wherever he is poured out as the Spirit of *grace*, he is also poured out as the Spirit of *supplication*, Zech. xii. 10. His praying and his sanctifying influences are undivided. There is a threefold assistance that the Spirit gives unto sanctified persons in prayer. He helps them before they pray, by setting an edge upon their desires and affections: He helps them in prayer,

by supplying matters of request to them, teaching them what they should ask of God: He assisteth them in the manner of prayer, supplying them with suitable affections, and helping them to be sincere in all their desires to God. It is he that humbles the pride of their hearts, dissolves, and breaks the hardness of their hearts; Out of deadness makes them lively; out of weakness makes them strong. He assisteth the spirits of believers after prayer, helping them to faith and patience, to believe, and wait for the returns and answers of their prayers. O reader, reflect upon thy duties, consider what spirituality, sincerity, humility, broken-heartedness, and melting affections after God, are to be found in thy duties: Is it so with thee? Or dost thou hurry over thy duties as an interruption to thy business and pleasures? Are they an ungrateful task, imposed upon thee by God, and thy own conscience? Are there no hungerings and thirstings after God in thy soul? Or, if there be any pleasure arising to thee out of prayer, is it not from the ostentation of thy gifts? If it be so, reflect sadly upon the carnal state of thy heart; these things do not speak the Spirit of grace and supplication to be given thee.

Evidence 6. Wherever the Spirit of grace inhabits, there is an heavenly, spiritual frame of mind accompanying, and evidencing the indwelling of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 5, 6. "For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit: for to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." By the mind, understand the musings, reasonings, yea, and the cares, fears, delights and pleasures of the soul, which follow the workings and meditations of the mind. As these are, so are we; if these be ordinarily and habitually taken up, and exercised about earthly things, then is the frame and state of the man carnal, and earthly: The workings of every creature follow the being and nature of it. If God, Christ, heaven, and the world to come, engage the thoughts and affections of the soul, and the temper of such a soul is spiritual, and the Spirit of God dwelleth there; this is the life of the regenerate, Phil. iii. 20. "Our conversation is in heaven;" and such a frame of heart is *life and peace*: A serene, placid, and most comfortable life. No pleasures upon earth, no gratifications of the senses, do relish and savour, as spiritual things do. Consider, therefore, which way thy heart ordinarily works, especially in thy solitudes and hours of retirement. These things will be a great evidence for, or against thy soul. David could say, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them: if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with thee," Psal. cxxxix. 17, 18. Yet it must be acknowledged,

for the relief of weaker Christians, that there is a great difference and variety found in this matter, among the people of God: For the strength, steadiness, and constancy of a spiritual mind, result from the depth and improvement of sanctification: The more grace, still the more evenness, spirituality, and constancy there is in the motions of the heart after God. The minds of weak Christians are more easily entangled in earthly vanities, and more frequently diverted by inward corruptions; yet still there is a spiritual *Pondus*, inclination and bent of their hearts towards God; and the vanity and corruption which hinders their communion with him are their greatest grief and burthen under which they groan in this world.

Evidence 7. Those to whom the Spirit of grace is given, are led by the Spirit, Rom. viii. 14. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God:" Sanctified souls give themselves up to the government and conduct of the Spirit; they obey his voice, beg his direction, follow his motions, deny the solicitations of flesh and blood, in obedience to him, Gal. i. 16. And they that do so, they are the sons of God. It is the office of the Spirit to guide us into all truth; and it is our great duty to follow his guidance. Hence it is, that in all enterprises and undertakings, the people of God so earnestly beg direction and counsel from him. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, (saith David) make thy way straight before my face," Psal. v. 8. They dare not, in doubtful cases, lean to their own understandings; yea, in points of duty, and in points of sin, they dare not neglect the one, or commit the other, against the convictions and persuasions of their own consciences; though troubles and sufferings be unavoidable in that path of duty, when they have balanced duties with sufferings, in their most serious thoughts, the conclusion and result will still be, it is better to obey God, than man, the dictates of the Spirit, rather than the counsels of flesh and blood.

But, before I leave this point, I reckon myself a debtor unto weak Christians, and shall endeavour to give satisfaction to some special doubts and fears, with which their minds are ordinarily entangled in this matter; for it is a very plain case, that many souls have the presence and sanctification of the Spirit without the evidence and comfort thereof. Divers things are found in believers, which are so many fountains of fears and doubts to them. And,

Objection 1. First, I greatly doubt the Spirit of God is not in me, (saith a poor Christian) because of the great darkness and ignorance which clouds my soul; for I read, 1 John ii. 27. that he enlighteneth the soul which he inhabiteth. "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,” &c. but alas, my understanding is weak and cloudy, I have need to learn of the meanest of God’s people: This only I know, that I know nothing as I ought to know.

Sol. Two things are to be regarded in spiritual knowledge; viz. the quantity, and the efficacy thereof. Your condition doth not so much depend upon the measures of knowledge; for, haply, you are under many natural disadvantages, and want those helps and means of increasing knowledge, which others plentifully enjoy. It may be you have wanted the helps of education, or have been incumbered by the necessities and cares of the world, which have allowed you but little leisure for the improvement of your minds: But if that which you do know, be turned into practice and obedience, Col. i. 9, 10. If it have influence upon your hearts, and transform your affections into a spiritual frame and temper, 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. If your ignorance humble you, and drive you to God daily for the increase of knowledge, one drop of such knowledge of Christ, and yourselves as this, is more worth than a sea of human, moral, un sanctified, and speculative knowledge. Though you know but little, yet that little, being sanctified, is of great value: Though you know but little, time was when you knew nothing of Jesus Christ, or the state of your own souls. In a word, though you know but little, that little you do know will be still increasing, “like the morning light, which shineth more and more “unto the perfect day,” Prov. iv. 18. If thou knowest so much as brings thee to Christ, thou shalt shortly be where thy knowledge shall be as the light at noon-day.

Object. 2. I sometimes find my heart raised, and my affections melted in duties, but I doubt it is in a natural way, and not from the Spirit of God: could I be assured those motions of my heart were from the Spirit of grace, and not merely a natural thing, it would be a singular comfort and satisfaction to me.

Sol. First, Consider whether this be not the ground of your fear and doubting, because you are fain to take pains in the way of meditation, prayer, and other duties, to bring your hearts to relish and savour the things of God; whereas, it may be, you expect your spiritual enlargements and comforts should flow in upon you spontaneously, and drop from heaven immediately of their own accord, without any pains or industry of yours. Here may be, (and probably is) a great mistake in this matter; for the Spirit of God works in the natural method, wherein affections use to be raised, and makes use of such duties as meditation and prayer, as instruments to do that work by, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. So David was forced to reason with, and chide his own heart, Psal. xlii. 5. Thy

comfort and enlargement may nevertheless be the fruit of the Spirit, because God makes it spring up, and grow upon thy duties.

Secondly, Take this as a sure rule, Whatsoever rises from self, always aims at, and terminates in self. This stream cannot be carried higher than the fountain; if therefore thy aim, and end in striving for affections and enlargements in duty, be only to win applause from men, and appear to be what in reality thou art not, this, indeed, is the fruit of nature, and a very corrupt and hypocritical nature; but if thy heart be melted, or desire to be melted in the sense of the evil of sin, in order to the further mortification of it; and, under the apprehensions of the free grace and mercy of God in the pardon of sin, in order to the engaging of thy soul more firmly to him; if these, or such like, be thy ends and designs, or be promoted and furthered by thine enlargements and spiritual comforts, never reject them as the mere fruits of nature: A carnal root cannot bring forth such fruits as these.

Object. 3. Upon the contrary, spiritual deadness, and indisposedness to duties, and to those especially which are more secret, spiritual, and self-denying than others, is the ground upon which many spiritual souls, who are yet truly gracious, do doubt the indwelling of the Spirit in them. O, saith such a soul, if the Spirit of God be in me, Why is it thus? Could my heart be so dead, so backward and averse to spiritual duties? No; these things would be my meat and my drink, the delights and pleasures of my life.

Sol. First, These things indeed are very sad, and argue thy heart to be out of frame, as the body is, when it cannot relish the most desirable meats or drinks: But the question will be, how thy soul behaves itself in such a condition as this is? whether this be easy or burdensome to be borne by thee? * and if thou complain under it as a burden; then what pains thou takest to ease thyself, and get rid of it?

Secondly, Know also, that there is a great difference betwixt spiritual death, and spiritual deadness; the former is the state of the unregenerate, the latter is the disease and complaint of many thousand regenerate souls: If David had not felt it as well as thee, he would never have cried out nine times in the compass of one Psalm, *Quicken me, quicken me.* Besides,

Thirdly, Though it be *often*, it is not so *always* with thee; there are seasons wherein the Lord breaks in upon thy heart, enlarges thy affections, and sets thy soul at liberty; to which times thou wilt do well to have an eye, in these dark and cloudy days.

Object. 4. But the Spirit of God is the *comforter*, as well as a

* He who inclines to that which is good, and is averse to that which is evil, has a desire of pleasing God, though sometimes, being seduced by evil concupiscence, through infirmity he may commit that which is displeasing to God. *Daven.*

sanctifier: He doth not only enable men to believe, but after they believe, he also seals them, Eph. i. 13. But I walk in darkness, and am a stranger to the sealing and comforting work of the Spirit: How therefore can I imagine the Spirit of God should dwell in me, who go from day to day in the bitterness of my soul, mourning as without the sun?

Sol. There is a twofold sealing, and a two-fold comfort: The Spirit sealeth both *objectively*, in the work of sanctification; and *formally*, in giving clear evidence of that work. Thou mayest be sealed in the first, whilst thou art not yet sealed in the second sense: If so, thy condition is safe, although it be at present uncomfortable. And, as to comfort, that also is of two sorts, viz. *seminal*, or *actual*: in the root, or in the fruit; *Light is sown for the righteous*, Psal. xcvi. 11. though the harvest to reap and gather in that joy and comfort be not yet come. And there are many other ways beside that of joy and comfort, whereby the indwelling of the Spirit may evidence itself in thy soul: If he do not enable thee to rejoice, yet if he enable thee sincerely to mourn for sin; if he do not enlarge thy heart in comfort, yet if he humble and purge thy heart by sorrows: if he deny thee the *assurance of faith*, and yet give thee the *dependence of faith*, thou hast no reason to call in question, or deny the indwelling of the Spirit in thee for that cause.

Object. 5. But the apostle saith, "They that walk in the Spirit, do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh," Gal. v. 16. but I find myself entangled, and frequently overcome by them: Therefore I doubt the Spirit of God is not in me.

Sol. It is possible the ground of your doubting may be your mistake of the true sense and meaning of that scripture: It is not the apostle's meaning in that place, that sin in believers doth not work, tempt, and oftentimes overcome, and captivate them; for then he would contradict himself in Rom. vii. 23. where he thus complains, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." But two things are meant by that expression, "Ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

First, That the principle of grace will give a check to sin in its first motions, and cause it to miscarry in the womb, like an untimely birth, before it come to its full maturity; it shall never be able to gain the full consent of the will, as it doth in the unregenerate.

Secondly, If, notwithstanding all the opposition grace makes to hinder the birth or commission of it, it doth yet prevail, and break forth into act; yet such acts of sin, as they are not committed without *regret*, so they are followed with *shame, sorrow*, and true

repentance: And those very surprisals, and captivities of sin at one time, are made cautions and warnings to prevent it at another time. If it be so with thee, thou dost not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

And now, reader, upon the whole, if upon examination of thy heart by these rules, the Lord shall help thee to discern the saving work of the Spirit upon thy soul, and thereby thine interest in Christ, What a happy man or woman art thou! what pleasure will arise to thy soul from such a discovery! Look upon the frame of thine heart *absolutely* as it is in itself at present, or *comparatively*, with what once it was, and others still are, and thou wilt find enough to transport and melt thy heart within thee: Certainly this is the most glorious piece of workmanship that ever God wrought in the world upon any man, Eph. ii. 10. The Spirit of God is come down from heaven, and hath hallowed thy soul to be a temple for himself to dwell in; as he hath said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," 2 Cor. vii. 16. Moreover, this gift of the Spirit is a sure pledge and earnest of thy future glory: Time was, when there was no such work upon thy soul. And, considering the frame and temper of it, the total aversation, strong opposition, and rooted enmity that was in it; it is the wonder of wonders, that ever such a work as this should be wrought upon such a heart as thine: that ever the Spirit of God, whose nature is pure and perfect holiness, should chuse such an unclean, polluted, abominable heart to frame an habitation for himself there to dwell in; to say of thy soul (now his spiritual *temple*) as he once said of the material temple at Jerusalem, Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. "The Lord hath chosen it, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: Here will I dwell; for I have desired it." O what hath God done for thy soul!

Think, reader, and think again: Are there not many thousands in the world of more ingenuous, sweet, and amiable dispositions than thyself, whom yet the Spirit of God passeth by, and leaveth them as tabernacles for Satan to dwell in? Such a one thou lately wast, and hadst still remained, if God had not wrought for thee, beyond all the expectations and desires of thine own heart. O bless God that you have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that ye might know the things which are freely given unto you of God.