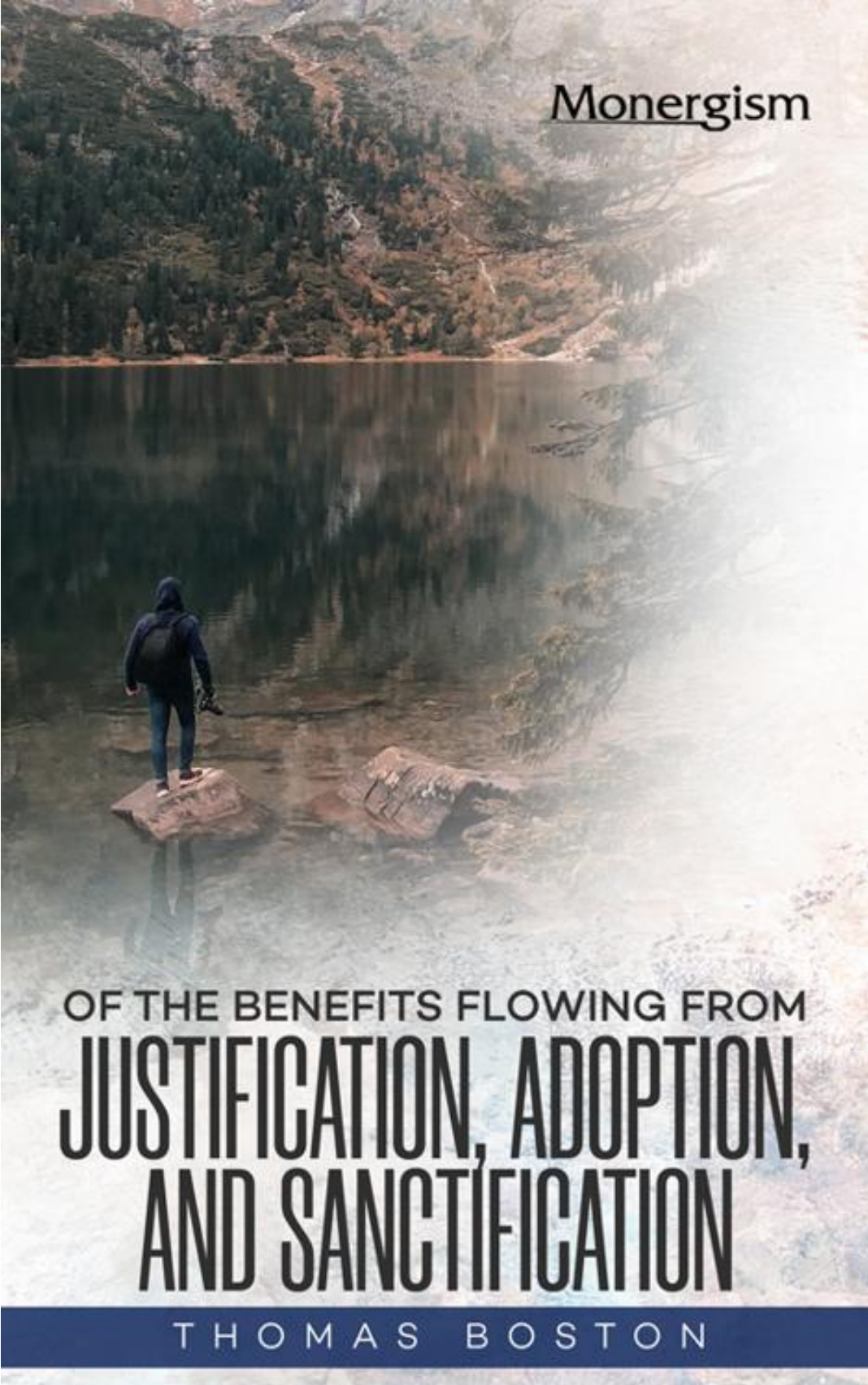


A person wearing a dark hoodie and a backpack stands on a large rock in the middle of a calm lake. The lake's surface is still, reflecting the surrounding landscape. In the background, there are mountains with patches of green forest and brown, rocky terrain. The sky is overcast and grey. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Monergism

OF THE BENEFITS FLOWING FROM
**JUSTIFICATION, ADOPTION,
AND SANCTIFICATION**

THOMAS BOSTON

A person wearing a dark hoodie and a backpack stands on a large rock in the middle of a calm lake. The lake's surface is still, reflecting the surrounding landscape. In the background, there are mountains with patches of green and brown trees. The overall scene is serene and natural.

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THOMAS BOSTON

Of the Benefits Flowing from Justification, Adoption and Sanctification

by Thomas Boston

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OF THE BENEFITS FLOWING FROM

JUSTIFICATION, ADOPTION, AND SANCTIFICATION

ROM. 5:1, 2.—Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

THERE are three sorts of benefits belonging to the justified, adopted, and sanctified. (1.) Some in this life they partake of. (2.) Some at death. (3.) Some at the resurrection. As for those in this life, we are told what they are in that question, 'What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification? Ans. Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.' These are divided into two sorts. (1.) Some that flow from the sense of our justification, &c. (2.) Some from the being of it. Of the former, the Catechism takes notice of three, viz. assurance, peace, joy. All which are held out in the text as benefits coming through justification. Here observe,

1. Justification as a spring of other benefits. It is a leading mercy, it brings many others along with it. In it guilt is removed; and that being removed, a stream of mercies flows from heaven into the soul.

2. The benefits flowing from it.

- (1.) Peace with God, or towards God; i. e. not only reconciliation with God, the cause of the quarrel being taken away; but peace of conscience, peace within, when we look towards God, arising from the sense of our justification and reconciliation. But all this is owing to Christ, who brought us into the state of reconciliation, called this grace wherein we stand.

(2.) Assurance of eternal happiness: Rejoice in hope of the glory of God; i. e. in the glory of God we hope for. They are so sure of that happiness, that they rejoice in the view of it, as if they were actually carried into it. And assurance of God's love, ver. 5.

(3.) Spiritual joy: We rejoice in hope of the glory of God; that is, We glory or joy in the Lord, upon this hope.

The text evidently affords this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'Assurance, spiritual peace, and joy, are benefits flowing from a state of justification.'

I. OF ASSURANCE

In speaking to the first, namely, assurance, I will shew,

I. The kinds of it.

II. That a child of God may have this assurance.

III. The nature of it, and how a saint comes to be assured.

IV. The fruits of it, whereby it may be discerned from presumption.

V. The necessity of it.

VI. Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew the kinds of assurance. They are two.

1. Objective assurance, whereby the special love of God to a saint, and his eternal salvation, are sure in themselves, 2 Tim. 2:19. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.'—This is never wanting, whether the the child of God know it or not. Though they raze foundations of hope at some times, yet God never razes his.

2. Subjective assurance, whereby a child of God is assured that God loves him with a special love, and that he shall certainly partake of eternal glory, Gal. 2:20. 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me,' says Paul. This is not a wavering hope, or conjecture, but an infallible certainty. This is the assurance we treat of.

II. I shall shew that a child of God may have this assurance.

1. A believer may know that he has relative grace, that he is justified and therefore shall never come into condemnation, Rom. 5:1, &c. Though he cannot ascend to heaven, and at first read his name in the book of God's decrees; yet by comparing the book of God and the book of his own soul, he may know that he is called and elected, 2 Pet. 1:10 and therefore shall certainly be saved.

2. He may be assured that he has inherent grace, that he believes as sure as he breathes, 2 Tim. 1:12 that he has love to the Lord unfeigned, and can appeal to Omniscience on the head, John 21:15 as Peter did when he said, 'Thou who knowest all things, knowest that I love thee.' And believing that such are loved of God, and shall certainly persevere, for which he has the testimony of the word, he may be assured that he is the happy man.

3. It is the office of the Spirit of God to assure believers of this. He has given us the word for this end: He is given to lead his people into all truth, particularly to discover the grace of God to them, and in them, 1 Cor. 2:12 to witness with their spirits to their adoption, Rom. 8:16 to be a seal, which is properly to ensure an evidence, Eph. 4:30

and an earnest, a part of the price and pledge, of the whole, 2 Cor. 5:5.

Lastly, Many of the saints have attained it; as Job, chap. 19:25. 'For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,' Psal. 23 ult. 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' 2 Tim. 4:8. 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.' And others too, besides scripture-saints.

III. I shall shew the nature of this assurance, and how a saint comes to be assured. By what is said, ye may perceive that this is a work of the Spirit, in the hearts of the saints, without whose efficacy no man can attain it. We may take it up in these three things.

1. The Spirit shining on his own word, particularly the promises, in the Bible, the child of God firmly believes them, Heb. 6:11, 12. The Lord has testified in his word, that such and such persons, for instance, that love him, Prov. 8:17 are universal in obedience; are poor in spirit, Matt. 5:3 are beloved of him, and shall certainly be saved. The Spirit says in effect, by the light he gives the believer into the divine authority of that word, This is my word. And as such the child of God is firmly persuaded of the certainty of it, as if a voice from the throne of God would make these promises and declarations. This is the ground-work of assurance.

2. The Spirit shining on his own work of grace in the believer's heart, the believer discerns it, 1 Cor. 2:12. The Spirit of God clears up to the man the truth of grace in him; lets him see that he, for instance, loves God, &c. and so says in effect, This is my work. Hence he is enabled to conclude assuredly, that the Lord loves him, he shall not be ashamed, and that the kingdom of God is his. This assurance is stronger or weaker according to the degree of light that shines upon the work of grace in the heart to discover it.

3. Lastly, The Spirit of the Lord sometimes gives a joint testimony with the spirits of the saints, to the truth of that conclusion, Rom. 8:16 that they are the children of God. The testimony of the believer's own spirit is weak in itself, and Satan can find many ways to invalidate it; therefore the Spirit witnesses to them the truth of the conclusion, whereby they are raised to a full persuasion of it.

IV. I shall shew the fruit of this assurance, whereby it may be discerned from presumption.

1. It inflames the soul with love to the Lord. As one flame begets another, so the assurance of God's love to us will add new vigour to our love to the Lord, 1 John 4:19. Luke 7:47. He sits in the warm sunshine, that cannot fail to melt the heart, who sits under evidence of the Lord's love.

2. It is humbling, Gal. 2:20. None so vile in their own eyes as those who are lifted up in the manifestations of the Lord's love to them, Gen. 18:27. 2 Sam. 7:18. 2 Cor. 12:4 and 11 compared. Delusion puffs up, but true assurance humbles.

3. It makes one tender in heart and life, and is a most powerful motive to sanctification, 2 Cor. 7:1. It is followed with great care to please God in all things, and watchfulness against every sin. While the empty traveller walks at random, fearing nothing, because he has nothing to lose, he that has precious things about him looks well to himself, Cant. 3:5. One may be persuaded, that the confidence which makes not one tender in his duty to God and man, is presumption.

4. Establishment in the good ways of the Lord, 2 Pet. 1:10. Faith is the provisor of all other graces, it brings in oil into the lamp; and the more evidence it has, it can do its office the better. A doubting Christian will be a staggering and weak Christian; as the soldier who has little hope of the victory will readily be fainthearted, while he that is assured is strengthened and established.

5. Lastly, It fills a man with contempt of the world, Gal. 6:14. If ye gaze on the shining sun, for a while after ye will scarcely discern the beauty of the earth. And one's solacing himself in contemplation of heaven as his, will sink the value of the world with him.

V. I shall shew the necessity of assurance.

1. It is not necessary to the being of a Christian. One may have true faith, and yet want full assurance, Isa. 50:50:10. One may go to heaven in a mist, not knowing whither he is going. We read of some, Heb. 2:15, 'who through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage.' Our salvation depends on our state, not our knowledge of it.

2. It is necessary to the well-being of a Christian, and therefore we are commanded to seek it, 2 Pet. 1:10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' There are none who can live so comfortably for themselves, as the assured Christian, and none are so useful for God as they. It fits a man either to live or die; while others are unfit to live, because of the weakness of grace in a throng of trials and temptations, and unfit to die for want of evidence of grace.

Hence it follows, that assurance may be lost; and they that sometimes have this light, may fall into darkness. And it is careless walking that puts it out, especially sinning against the light, whereby the Spirit is grieved, and withdraws his light, Eph. 4:29, 30. But if it be lost that way, and darkness come on, it will readily be dreadful darkness; the higher they have been lifted up, the lower readily they are laid, Psal. 51:8.

Inf. 1. Unjustified and unsanctified persons can have no true assurance of the Lord's love to them. They may have a false confidence, a delusive hope of heaven; but no assurance, for that is peculiar to the justified.

Inf. 2. Doubts and fears are no friends to holiness of heart and life. It is little faith that breeds them in the hearts of the people of God, Matth. 14:31. And little faith will always make little holiness.

Inf. 3. Lastly, Christians may thank themselves for the uncomfortable lives they lead. What sovereignty may do, we know not: but surely it is sloth and unbelief that the want of assurance is ordinarily owing to. Stir up yourselves then to seek it. Be frequent in self-examination, cry to the Lord for the witness of his spirit. Believe the word, and be habitually tender in your walk, if ever ye would have assurance, Psal. 5 ult.

II. OF PEACE OF CONSCIENCE

'PEACE of conscience is a benefit flowing from justification'

Here I shall shew,

I. What peace of conscience is.

II. The excellency of it.

III. How it is obtained.

IV. How it is maintained.

V. How it is distinguished from false peace.

VI. Lastly, Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew what peace of conscience is. It is a blessed inward calmness and consolation arising from the purging of the conscience from guilt before the Lord, in which description, observe these two things.

1. The subject of this peace. It is a purged conscience, Heb. 9:14. Peace and purity go together, and make a good conscience, 1 Tim. 1:5. That peace which is joined with impurity, in an unpurged conscience, is but carnal security, peace in a dream, which will end in a fearful surprise. Now, there are two things necessary to the purging of conscience.

(1.) Removal of guilt, in pardon thereof, which brings the sinner into a state of peace with God, Psalm 32:1. Guilt, felt or unfelt, is a band on the soul binding it over to God's wrath; it is a disease in the conscience, which will make it a sick conscience at length. But a pardon takes away guilt, looses the band, removes the deadly force of the disease, and lays a foundation for carrying off the sickness, Isa. 33 ult.

(2.) Removal of the conscience of guilt, in the sense of pardon, Heb. 10:2. Though a malefactor's pardon be passed the seals, and he is secured from death, yet till he know it he cannot have peace. So the pardoned sinner, who knows not his mercy, though he has peace with God, yet wants peace of conscience. Psalm 51:8. So the conscience is purged, when the sting of felt guilt is drawn out of it.

2. The parts of this peace. These are two.

(1.) An inward calm of the soul, and quietness of the mind, wherein it is not disturbed with the fears of God's wrath, nor frightened with the judgments which its sins do in themselves deserve, Prov. 1:33. A troubled conscience is full of fears, of terrible forebodings, and of torments, 1 John 4:18. When peace enters the conscience, the mists clear up, the fears are scattered, and conscience has a serenity and quiet within itself.

(2.) Consolation and comfort of heart, 2 Cor. 1:12; Isa. 57:19. Peace of conscience is not a mere negative, or indisturbance, which sloth and negligence of soul-matters may procure to the unpardoned: but it is

an active cheerfulness of spirit, in the soul's looking up towards God, and reflecting how matters stand betwixt heaven and it, Col. 3:15.

Conceive the whole thus: Sin entering into the soul, casts the conscience into a fever, and guilt makes it rage. The great Physician gives the proper remedy: and so the conscience gets a cool, the sickness is removed, and the man gathers health, strength, and soundness, Job 33:22–26; Heb. 9:14.

II. I shall shew the excellency of it. It is Abraham's bosom on this side of heaven, the lower paradise; it is like the shore to the shipwrecked soul; and life from the dead. I will only say three things of it.

1. It is the wine-press of the grapes of heaven, that squeezeth out into the man's mouth the sap of the covenant, Psal. 119:102, 103. It was a sad tale of the good Asaph's, Psal. 77:3. 'I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.' Peace of conscience makes a man remember God, and be comforted; to suck the sap of promises, and all the declarations of God's love and favour in his word, as the same Asaph did, Psalm 73:24, 25, 26.

2. It is sap and poison to all earthly comforts, Prov. 15:15. A sick man can take no pleasure in the comforts of life, as a healthy man does. An uneasy conscience sucks the sap out of all. But peace there, makes coarse fare, and little of it, very sweet, Prov. 17:1. And whatever a man has, it puts an additional sweetness into it.

3. It is sweet sauce to all afflictions, 2 Cor. 1:12. John 16:23. When there is no peace within, little things make people fretful: even a scratch of a pin is a wound with a sword. But this makes a man easy in the midst of the little annoyances of the world, though they be great in themselves, Col. 3:15. Phil. 4:7. Compare Heb. 10:34. When a man meets with disquietments and vexations abroad, he is helped to bear all, when he is comforted and cheered coming into his own house. But heavy is their case, who come from bitterness abroad, and

are met with bitterness at home. The former is an emblem of peace of conscience, the latter an emblem of the soul in afflictions.

III. I am to shew how this peace of conscience is obtained.

This peace is peculiar to the saints. Others may have false peace, Luke 11:21 but they only have, or can have, true peace, Rom. 5:1.

1. It is obtained for them by Jesus Christ dying and suffering to procure it, Isa. 53:5. Eph. 2:4. There can be none of this peace without reconciliation with God, and there can be no reconciliation without his blood. The convinced sinners could have no more inward peace than devils have, if Christ had not died to procure it; but their wound had been incurable, and stood open and gaping for ever.

2. It is obtained by them, by these two methods.

(1). By a believing application of the blood of Christ, Rom. 15:13. Job 33:23, &c. This is the only medicine that can draw the thorn of guilt out of the conscience, and heal its wounds, 1 John 1:7. Medicines prepared by men may cure bodily distempers, and a vitiated fancy, or disordered imagination, among other things. Confessing, mourning, reforming, watching, &c. may give a palliative cure even to the conscience, scurrying over its sores. But nothing but a believing application of Christ's blood will give true peace of conscience; and do what ye will, if ye do not that, ye will never get true peace, Isa. 7:9.

(2.) By God's speaking peace thereupon to the soul, Isa. 57:19. The soul resting on Christ by faith, brings it into a state of peace with God; but for peace of conscience, more is required, namely, a sense of that peace. And this none but God can give, Psal. 51:8. He speaks peace in the word; but a work of the Spirit on the conscience is necessary to make the application, as appears from 2 Sam. 12:13 compared with Psal. 51 And this is a light struck up in the soul, discovering the soul to be at peace with God, an overpowering light that silences doubts and fears, and creates a blessed calm. This also is obtained in the way of believing, in the reflex act of faith.

IV. I shall shew how this peace is maintained. The apostle tells us it was his exercise to maintain it, Acts 24:16. And if we be not exercised in it, it will soon be lost. Now, it is maintained by,

1. Keeping up a firm and settled purpose of heart to follow the way of duty, and to stand aloof from sin, cost what it will, Acts 11:23. David kept up his peace that way, Psalm 17:3. This is the breast-plate of righteousness, Eph. 6:14 the which if it fall by, one may quickly be wounded to the heart. Unsettledness of heart, one's being at every turn unresolved what to do, cannot miss to leave him in the mire.

2. Living a life of dependence on the Lord, for light of life, direction and through-bearing, Prov. 3:6. Gal. 2:20. And this will keep a man from presumption, and doing any thing with a doubting conscience, which will soon mar one's peace.

3. Watchfulness against sin, snares and temptations, 1 Cor. 10:12. One that would maintain his peace, must be upon his guard, otherwise it will soon be disturbed, in this evil world.

4. A strict, holy, gospel-walk, in all known duties, towards God and towards man, Gal. 6:16. He that will adventure to balk any of them, shall soon lose it.

5. Lastly, Frequent renewing our faith and repentance, for purging away the sins we fall into, 1 Pet. 2:4.

V. I proceed to shew how peace of conscience is distinguished from false peace. A godly man may have a false peace. Cant. 5:2. Such had David before Nathan came to him after his fall. An unregenerate man can have no peace but what is false, Isa. 57 ult.

1. True peace, built on the ground of God's word, is established by the word, however searching; the other is weakened by it. For God's word is a friend to God's peace, but an enemy to delusion, 1 John 3:20, 21. But this is meant of God's word rightly understood, (if we

misunderstand it, it is not his word, but our own mistake); and such mistakes may have the quite contrary effect.

2. True peace cannot be maintained but by a holy tenderness, and constant struggle against sin: but false peace is maintained without it, 1 John 3:3.

Inf. 1. The unconverted sinner, and the untender Christian too, are in a very unfit case for the time of calamity, Isa. 57:20, 21. Matth. 25:5. Only the man that has peace of conscience is prepared, Isa. 33:14, 15.

2. Let all who would have their consciences to be their friends, flee to the blood of Christ, and to lead a holy life.

3. Lastly, Let all those who want it, labour to get it; and they that have it, be exercised to keep it.

III. OF JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST

'Spiritual joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost, is a benefit flowing from justification'

Now, to shew first of all what spiritual joy is: Joy in general is a pleasing passion, arising from the enjoyment, or hope of the enjoyment of a desired object. Spiritual joy is a joy arising from the enjoyment, and hope of the enjoyment of spiritual blessings.

Here I shall shew,

I. The subjects of this joy, who they are that partake of it.

II. The objects of it, or what they joy in.

III. The grounds of it.

IV. The Author of it.

V. The means the Spirit makes use of to convey it into the hearts of the saints.

VI. The difference betwixt it and the hypocrite's joy.

VII. Lastly, Apply.

I. I shall consider the subjects of this joy, who they are that partake of it.

1. It is peculiar to the saints: for they only are blessed with spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and no others can have true spiritual joy, Phil. 3:3. Any may have a sensitive joy, viz. in things grateful to their senses, Acts 14:17. Profane men may have a sinful joy, a joy in sin, Prov. 15:21. Hypocrites may have a delusive joy, which is a carnal joy in spiritual things, Matth. 13:20. But saints only have the true spiritual joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost; for it is peculiar to the subjects of Christ's kingdom, Rom. 14:17.

2. Yet the saints have it not at all times, Psal. 51:8. A child of God may be walking in darkness, going mourning without the sun, having no evidence of his interest in Christ: in such a case he cannot have this joy. It is true, there is a seed of joy, in the most bitter sorrows of a spirit, which will spring up in due time, Psalm 97:11. But it seems it may be the case with some of the saints, never to have that joy till they get it in heaven, though I judge it is very rare, especially under the New Testament dispensation, Heb. 2:15.

II. I shall shew the objects of this joy, what they joy in.

1. The principal object is God in Christ, Phil. 3:3. Rom. 5:11. They look to and remember God in Christ, and joy in him. God out of Christ is a most terrible object, Heb. 12 ult. 'Our God is a consuming fire.' And a sinner can never truly rejoice in an absolute God. But God in Christ, reconciled to the soul, breathing out peace and love to the sinner through a crucified Redeemer, is the chief and fundamental, the comprehensive object of his joy.

2. The less principal, or secondary object, is twofold.

(1.) The precious spiritual privileges they have in hand, which they enjoy for the present in this life, as justification, adoption, sanctification, peace with God, peace of conscience, access to God and communion with him, &c. In these they justly joy, Isa. 61:10. Will a man rejoice in the favour of his prince? Surely then a saint may well rejoice in the favour of his God.

(2.) The precious privileges they have in hope, Rom. 5:2. 'Rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' They have heaven and the eternal weight of glory in view: and this hope makes them sing the triumph before the victory. Yet are they not rash and foolish; for it is a sure hope, and will never make one ashamed. One counts his riches, not only by what he has in hand, but what he has in bills and bonds, and joys in the latter as well as the former.

III. I shall consider the grounds of this joy in these things.
They are twofold.

1. A suitableness of the objects to the heart and mind of the child of God. These objects are the great desire of a believer, 2 Sam. 23:5. So the receiving of them in hand, or in hope, makes him to joy, Psal. 4:6, 7. Without this there can be no joy, Prov. 13:12. 'When the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.' If ye would make a starving man rejoice, you must give him meat; if a condemned man, a pardon. Holiness and communion with God are sapless to the unrenewed man. God himself is not the object of his desire: neither is the holiness of heaven suited to his mind: therefore he cannot rejoice in these. But it is otherwise with the saints; so strangers intermeddle not with their joy.

2. A sense of an interest in these objects, John 20:28. 'My Lord, and my God.' One has more joy in his own cottage, than in another's palace, because he can say, It is my cottage. Hagar could not rejoice in the well of water, till the Lord opened her eyes to see it. Though a

pardon were slipt unawares into a man's pocket, he cannot joy in it till he knows he has it. So a sense of our interest is necessary to spiritual joy.

IV. I shall next consider the Author of this joy. The Holy Spirit of God is the author of it, and therefore it is called 'joy in the Holy Ghost,' Rom. 14:17 i. e. wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, shedding abroad the love of God, in the sense thereof, like a sweet-smelling ointment in the heart of the saint. It is he that administers the reviving cordial to the fainting soul, draws off the saints' sackcloth, and girds him with this gladness.

V. I come now to consider the means which the Spirit makes use of to convey this joy into the hearts of the saints. These are twofold.

1. External means are the word and sacraments. These are the wells of salvation to the people of God, Isa. 12:3.

(1.) The word of God which brings the glad tidings of salvation from heaven to poor sinners; it discovers the enriching treasure to the soul, Psal. 119:162. 'I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.' And no earthly treasure will raise such a joy in one's heart, as a word of promise will do, when the Spirit of the Lord shines on it unto a soul.

(2.) The sacraments, which seal and confirm the word of grace to the soul. This is plain from the exercise of the eunuch, Acts 8:39 who, when he was baptised, went on his way rejoicing; and of thousands who have met with that joy at sealing ordinances, which they never could find in all earthly things; and no wonder, for then is the great seal of heaven set unto the covenant betwixt the Lord and his people.

2. The internal mean is faith, Rom. 15:13. 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' 1 Pet. 1:8.—'Believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Faith receives and applies the glad tidings brought by the word, and confirmed by the

sacraments. The Spirit of the Lord works faith at first and excites and strengthens it: and so the peace which the Lord speaks to his people is firmly believed by the saint, and thus his heart is filled with joy.

VI. I come now to shew the difference betwixt this joy and the joy of the hypocrite. That a hypocrite may have a joy in spiritual things, is evident from Matth. 13:20 and it is confirmed by the case of many deluded souls, who may have their joys, as well as sorrows which are unsound as well as themselves.

1. True spiritual joy riseth in the heart, ordinarily after the word has had a precedent effect on the heart, to rend it for sin, and from it, Psal. 126:5. 'They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.' Matth. 5:4. 'Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.' But delusive joy springs up more quickly, while yet the heart is not rent for sin, at least not from it, Matth. 13:20. Compare Jer. 4:3. Much pains the husbandman is at ere he can expect a crop; but Weeds will grow up without pain or labour for them.

2. True spiritual joy comes by the word, and that rightly understood; but delusive joy comes either without the word, or by misunderstanding of the word. The channel of divine communications is the word of God, Isa. 59:21. That joy which comes by pretended revelation, dreams, or impressions, without the word, and regard to it, is most likely to be the effect of a heated fancy; and people had need to beware of being beguiled with these things. The written word is particularly the channel of spiritual joy, 1 John 1:4. 'These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.' And if an angel from heaven would speak joy to one whom the written word does not give ground of joy to, it would be but a deceit, Isa. 8:20. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'

3. True spiritual joy is lasting; but delusive joy vanishes away, and comes to nothing, as wanting a root, Matth. 13:20, 21. It has a season, and when that is over it is extinguished, John 5:35. 'Ye were

willing for a season to rejoice in his light.' I own a child of God may lose his joy too; but here lies the difference. The ground of the believer's joy, sense of interest, is sometimes removed out of his sight, and so he must needs lose his joy. But though the ground of the hypocrite's joy continue, namely his fancied interest in the favour of God, and privileges of the gospel, yet the joy goes: those things grow stale and sapless with him, which mightily affected him when they were new to him.

4. True spiritual joy humbles the soul, and fills it with high and honourable thoughts of God; but delusion never ceases to puff up, Gen. 28:17. 'How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' Exod. 34:8. 'Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.' 2 Cor. 12:11. Compare Col. 2:18. For all the divine communications tend to empty men of themselves, to make Christ and his free grace all to a man; and holy familiarity with God impresses an awe on one's spirit, in so far as the more one sees of God, the more he must admire and adore him. But nature will always build up nature.

5. Lastly, True spiritual joy is sanctifying, makes one the more tender and holy, the more he has of it. But delusion will never sanctify, Phil. 3:3. Delusion is a cover to and nourisher of inward lusts, which get a peaceable shelter under it: but true spiritual joy makes one forward in the duties of universal obedience, Psal. 119:32. 'I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.' And it makes one tender in moral duties towards God, and towards man.

Inf. 1. Unjustified persons cannot intermeddle with this joy, for it is a benefit that flows from justification. It is a privilege peculiar to the saints; children's bread that is not cast to the dogs. Te may rejoice in the worldly comforts ye have, saying, This clothing, this money is mine; but you cannot say, This God is mine.

2. When created streams are dried up, the joy of the ungodly is quite gone: but it is not so with the godly, Job 6:13. 'Is not my help in me?

and is wisdom driven quite from me?' Hab. 3:17, 18. The great ground of the saints' joy, and the objects of it, are beyond the reach of men, so that they cannot take them from them.

3. Most groundless is the prejudice against religion, that it is a melancholy thing, Prov. 3:17. 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' None have such reason to rejoice as the believer has. If the poor wretched and condemned creature has more ground to rejoice than he that is pardoned and enriched with his prince's favour, then the wicked has as much ground to rejoice as the believer who is justified by grace. O! if the ungodly saw their state, they would never rejoice; and if the godly saw theirs, they would never despond.

4. It is not God's allowance for his children to harden themselves in sorrow, and refuse to be comforted, Phil. 4:4. 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.' As it is uncomfortable to themselves, it is dishonouring to God, and is the fruit of unbelief.

5. O, unconverted sinners, let the joy of religion draw you to it. Come to Christ, in a way of believing on him, that ye may be justified. Close with the way of holiness, in renouncing all known sin, and complying with all known duty, that ye may have this spiritual joy, 2 Cor. 1:12.

6. Lastly, Let the godly strive to attain this spiritual joy, and to maintain it for God's honour, and their own comfort and usefulness.

**OF INCREASE OF GRACE,
AND PERSEVERANCE THEREIN TO THE
END**

PROV. 4:18.—But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day

HITHERTO we have spoken of the benefits flowing from or accompanying the sense of justification. I come now to speak of those that accompany or flow from the being of it, namely, increase of grace, and perseverance. In the text there is an elegant comparison of two things like to one another. Wherein we have,

1. The subjects of comparison, the path of the just, and the shining light.

(1.) The subject compared, the path of the just. The just, in the language of the Old Testament, are those who are justified by faith, Hab. 2:4. 'The just shall live by his faith.' They are a travelling company going towards Canaan; they have a path or way wherein they go, and they make progress in it. The word here used signifies, (1.) The progress itself, or course in the way, as Job 6:18. 'The paths of the way are turned aside.' Isa. 26:8. 'In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee.' (2.) The place or way through which one goes. The thing meant is the gracious and holy life of the just.

(2.) The subject it is compared to, the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. It is compared to light, both because it is comfortable to themselves, and instructing, exciting to others, and honourable. It is not like the light of a meteor, that shines a while, and then disappears quickly, nor that of a candle, which burns and burns down till it wastes itself; but like the light of the sun, and not the evening-sun, that declineth, but the morning-sun, that with increasing brightness and heat advances to the meridian.

2. The points of the comparison. (1.) As that light is a growing light shining more and more; so is the grace of God in a soul, going from one degree to another. (2.) As it does not go out, but grows on to the

perfect day; so grace never dies out, but goes on till it be perfected in glory.

DOCT. 'Increase of grace, and perseverance, are benefits flowing from or accompanying justification.'

I. OF INCREASE OR GROWTH OF GRACE

Here I shall shew,

1. That real grace doth increase or grow.
2. How a Christian grows in grace.
3. The causes of this growth.
4. The difference betwixt true and false growth.
5. Whether true grace grows always.
6. Apply.

FIRST, I am to shew that real grace doth increase or grow. This is evident from three things.

1. Scripture-testimony. Grace is a holy seed that springs and grows, Mark 4:27: however little at first, like a grain of mustard seed, Matth. 13:31, 32; like leaven, ver. 33. God has promised it, Psal. 92:12. Mal. 4:2. 'But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.'

2. God has appointed a certain stature that his children shall grow to, Eph. 4:13. This is the perfection of grace. Hence the Christian is first a little child, then a young man, then a father, 1 John 2:13. They walk, they run, they fly, they mount like eagles, Isa. 40 ult.

3. This is the end of divine influences, Isa. 27:3 and 44:3, 4. It is also the effect of divine ordinances, Eph. 4:11, 12. It is the end of all the pains of the heavenly Husbandman on the plants of his vineyard.

SECONDLY, I shall shew how a Christian grows in grace. He grows four ways.

1. Inward, into Christ, as the branch doth into the stock, Eph. 4:15. Cleaving to him, and knitting with him more firmly, his faith grows stronger, 2 These. 1:9; his love more vigorous, his hope firmer, his dependence closer, &c. This is the spring of all other Christian increase in grace.

2. Outward, in good works, in all the parts of a holy life, piety towards God, and righteousness towards men, Gen. 49:22. The growing Christian advances in the work of his salvation, Phil. 2:12; in the work of his regeneration, Acts 13:36. He goes on in the fruits of a holy life, for God's honour, his own good, and for the good and advantage of his fellow Christians, knowing that he is not born for himself.

3. Upward, in a heavenly disposition, Phil. 3:20. The end of his journey that he is aiming at is the upper world; and as he is coming out of this world, in action so is he coming out of it in affection, Cant. 8:5. He grows more heavenly in his desires, joys, delights, griefs, sorrows, &c.

4. Lastly, Downward in humility, self-denial, self-loathing, resignation to the will of the Lord, &c. The more religion prevails, there are always more of these graces, Job 42:5, 6. Psal. 22:6. 2 Cor. 12:11. For the more grace there is, there is the more knowledge of God and of one's self; which are two boundless depths, the one of glory, the other of sin.

THIRDLY, I shall shew the causes of this growth.

1. Union with Christ. John 15:4. 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me.' He that is not united to Christ can never grow in grace, more than a branch that does not knit with the stock. But where the Lord takes hold of the soul by his Spirit, and the soul takes hold of Christ by faith, there is an union whereby they become members of Christ, and their growth is secured.

2. Communion with Christ, John 6:57. 'He that eateth me, oven he shall live by me.' He is the fountain of the saints life, who gives it them, and more abundantly. He is he head of influences, by which they are made to increase in grace, as the sap from the root and stock makes the branches to grow. And this communion they have with him.

(1.) In ordinances, public, private, and secret, so that they are made to grow by the fatness of his house, Psal. 92:13. 'Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God.' The word edifies them, Isa. 55:10, 11. The sacraments strengthen and confirm them, as they did the eunuch, who went on his way rejoicing, Acts 8:39. Prayer and other holy exercises profit them, to their spiritual increase. But all by the influences of his Spirit in them, Isa. 44:3, 4.

(2.) In providences. Mercies are blessed to them for this end, Isa. 66:11, 12 crosses, John 15:2. 'Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.' And often have the people of God grown most under the weight of afflictions. But this also is by communion with Christ in them, Phil. 1:19. I know that this shall turn to my salvation—through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.'

FOURTHLY, I proceed to shew the difference betwixt true and false growth. As hypocrites may have seeming grace, though not real, so that seeming grace may grow, Mat. 13:5. There is a twofold difference.

1. True Christian growth is universal, Eph. 4:15. False growth is only in some particular things. The true Christian grows in all the parts of spiritual life proportionably; for all the graces of the Spirit are linked together, so that when one grows, they all grow. Such a difference there is betwixt them as betwixt a well thriving child and a rickety one. The former grows proportionably in all the parts, the body, legs, arms, &c. The other grows too, but grows not so; the head grows big, but the body grows not. So the hypocrite may get more knowledge, but no more tenderness, holiness, &c. He is not outwardly, but inwardly cold, as to the life of religion.

2. The hypocrite soon comes to a stand, the Christian goes on to perfection, Luke 8:14. Phil. 3:13, 14. They have their measure; and when they have come to that, they stand like the door on the hinges; but the true Christian is going on, labouring to be holy as God is holy, 1 John 3:3. 'Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.'

FIFTHLY, I am to shew, whether true grace grows always.

1. It does not always grow, nor at every particular season. It has its winters and decays, as well as its spring and growing times, Rev. 2:4. 'I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' Yet,

2. It never decays utterly, 1 John 3:9. 'Whosoever is born of God, his seed remaineth in him.' The flame of it may go out, but there is always a live-coal left, though under the ashes, which the influences of the Spirit will blow up again. It will not always be winter, Hos. 14:7. 'They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.'

3. A Christian may be growing, and yet not be sensible of it. If one judge of his case by present feeling, he may be mistaken, Mark 4:27. If one fix his eyes on the sun, or a tree, he cannot perceive the one moving, or the other growing. But compare the tree with what it was

some years ago, the place where the sun now is, with where it was in the morning; so shall ye know the remarkable difference. And the very same difference may be observed in the growth of a Christian.

Again, the growth is not to be measured only by the top, but by the root too. If a tree be taking with the ground, and spreading its roots there, it is surely growing. And though Christians may want the consolations and flashes of affections they sometimes had; yet if they be growing in tenderness, humility, self-denial, &c. it is true Christian growth.

Inf. 1. This may cause fear and trembling to,

1. Apostates, who instead of growing are gone back to their former courses of profaneness and impiety. Fallen stars were never stars but in appearance, and fearful will be their doom, Heb. 10:38. 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'

2. Those who are at a stand in the way of religion. They have come up to a form of godliness, and they are like the door on the hinges. They are not striving to be forward in mortification.

3. Those who are growing worse instead of growing better. They are like dead trees; summer and winter is alike to them; they are never the better for all the warnings from the Lord's word or providence: but whatever God says by providences or ordinances, they go on their own way, adding one sinful step to another.

Inf. 2. Improve ordinances for spiritual growth. O! it is sad to be sitting under means of grace, but never growing. This is the ready way to provoke the Lord to remove ordinances.

Inf. 3. Let the least spark of true grace be nourished, for it will grow, Isa. 42:3.

Inf. 4. Lastly, Labour to be growing Christians.

OF PERSEVERANCE IN GRACE

'Perseverance in grace is another benefit flowing from, or accompanying justification'

Here I shall shew,

1. What this perseverance is.
2. How it is to be understood.
3. That the saints shall persevere to the end.
4. What are those things which make hypocrites fall away, but over the belly of which saints persevere.
5. The grounds of the perseverance of the saints.
6. The means of perseverance.
7. Lastly, Apply.

FIRST, I shall shew what this perseverance is. To persevere is, to continue and abide in a state into which one is brought. And this perseverance is a firm and constant continuance in the state of grace, even to the end of one's life, Matth. 10:22. Col. 1:23. It is opposed to total apostasy, and utter falling away from grace. It is continuing and holding on, joined to a good beginning.

SECONDLY, I am to shew how this perseverance is to be understood.

1. It is not to be understood of all who profess Christ. Hypocrites may be seeming saints, and may have seeming grace, which may blaze for a while, and afterwards be quite extinguished, totally and finally lost, John 6:66. There are temporary believers, who continue for a while, but having no root, do wither quite away, Matth. 13:21. Mere outside

Christians, and Christians in the letter, may so apostatise, as to lose all, and never recover.

2. It is to be understood of all real saints, those who are endowed with saving grace. Those who, by virtue of regeneration, may call God their Father, as well as the church their mother, shall abide in his family, and never fall out of it, John 8:35. Though the counterfeit of grace may be utterly lost, yet real grace cannot. We own,

(1.) Saints may lose the evidence of grace, so that they cannot discern it in themselves. Thus it may suffer an eclipse, Isa. 50:10. Sometimes a child of God not only believes, loves, &c. but knows he does so: but at other times it may be out of his sight, so as he may apprehend he has none. The jewel may fall by, though it cannot fall away; and the spiritual husband may lock up himself in his chamber from his spouse, though he never quite leaves the house.

(2.) Saints may lose the exercise of grace, Cant. 5:9. Though the holy fire be not quite put out, yet it may cease to flame for a while; though they have spiritual armour lying by them, they may be so benumbed with the prevailing of corruption, that they cannot wield it. Wise virgins may slumber and sleep as well as the foolish.

(3.) They may lose much of the measure of grace they have had. True grace, though it cannot die out, yet is subject to languishing and decays in the strength thereof, Rev. 3:2. They may lose much of their love to God and one another, Rev. 2:4 much of their former tenderness, as David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment, but afterwards was guilty of murder and adultery; much of their liveliness in duties, Rev. 3:2 and so of other graces. But,

(2.) Saints can never lose grace finally, so as never to recover it, 1 Pet. 1:5. John 6:39. No doubt a child of God may stray away from the Lord as well as another? but though a servant may go, and never return to the house, yet a son will be sought out and brought back

again, Psal. 119 ult. John 13:35. 'And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the son abideth ever.' So however far the saints may go wrong, the Lord will recover them.

(2.) Saints never lose grace totally neither; they never lose it altogether, though for ever so short a while, 1 John 3:9. Their lamp may burn dim, but it is never quite put out; they may fall back, fall very low, so as themselves and others may have little hope of their recovery, but they never fall off, never fall away, Psal. 37:24. 'Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.'

Both these hold true of relative grace; that is, there is no falling out of the state of justification, adoption, union with Christ, peace with God, the love of God, &c. and of inherent grace, faith, love, the fear of God, &c.

THIRDLY, I proceed to shew that the saints shall persevere to the end. This is evident from,

1. The Lord's own promises. He has said it, and will he not do it? John 10:28, 29. Psalm 125:1. 'They that trust in the Lord shall he as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.' It is true they have many enemies that watch to do them mischief, but the Lord has promised to guard them, Isa. 27:3. 'I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' They may fall into sin, and provoke the Lord to anger against them; but he has promised, that though he lay his hand on them, he will not lift his love off them, Psal. 89:31–34. Though they may be forsaken, yet it shall neither be total nor final, Isa. 54:7–10.

2. From the saints' confidence of perseverance and eternal life. How confident was Asaph, Psal. 73:24. 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory?' If the saints could fall away from grace, how could they 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God?' Rom. 5:2. How could Paul triumph over 'death, life, angels,

principalities, powers; things present and to come, height, depth,' &c? Rom. 8:38, 39. Confidence in their own management, is not the way of the godly. Prov. 28:26. 'He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.'

3. Lastly, According to the scripture, perseverance is a discriminating mark betwixt the elect and non-elected, Matt. 24:24 as also betwixt real saints and hypocrites, Luke 8:13, 14, 15. 1 John 2:19. From whence we may gather, that the utter apostasy of the elect saints is impossible in respect of the decree of God; that those who get true grace, keep it to the end, while others lose theirs; and that they who utterly apostatise, never were true saints.

FOURTHLY, I shall shew what are those things which make hypocrites fall away, but over the belly of which saints persevere. In the general, there are three things.

1. Satan's temptations, 1 Pet. 5:8. He is a subtle, powerful and malicious enemy, a liar and murderer from the beginning. Whatever hopeful signs are found about any, he sets himself to rob them of them, for their ruin. He seeks to set the hypocrite and the sincere through the wind, and prevails to blow away the one, but not the other. By a miracle of grace, the saints are preserved amidst his fiery darts, Luke 22:32.

2. The world's snares. While professors are in the world, there are snares to catch them, and carry them off the way. (1.) The world's prosperity is a great snare, and makes many apostates, Prov. 1:32 and 30:9. But true grace will hold out against it, Cant. 8:7. (2.) Its adversity. Tribulation and persecution offends the temporary believer, and makes a scattering among Christ's summer-friends, Matth. 13:20, 21. But the true Christian will weather out the storm, Job 17:9. 'The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.' Poverty strips many of their religion, but not a true saint, Rev. 14:4. (3.) The example of the world; the torrent of an ungodly generation strips many of their form

of godliness, Matth. 24:12. 'Because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold.' But the saints shall not be carried away with the stream, Psal. 12:7. 'Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

3. Lastly, The corruptions and lusts of the heart. These betray the hypocrite into apostasy, Jer. 4:3. Compare Luke 8:14. Lusts lulled asleep for a while, but not mortified, rise up and make shipwreck of many souls. But true grace is never quite expelled by the flesh's lustings against it; but by the power of God is preserved, like a spark of fire in the midst of an ocean.

FIFTHLY, I proceed to shew the grounds of the perseverance of the saints.

1. The unchangeable decree of God's election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of the Father to them. Electing love is free love, and also unchangeable, Jer. 31:3. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' And God's purpose of grace and salvation cannot be disappointed, 2 Tim. 2:19. 'The purpose of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.'

2. The merit and intercession of Christ the Son. He redeemed them by paying a full price, which must be lost, if they be lost, 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. And 'he ever liveth to make intercession for them,' Heb. 7:25.

3. The perpetual abiding of the Spirit in and with them, John 14:16 which secures their union with Christ, and the preservation of the seed of grace, 1 John 3:9.

4. Lastly, The nature of the covenant of grace, which is furnished with such pillars as the first covenant had not, namely, the promises of perpetual conservation in the state of grace, Jer. 32:40. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.'

SIXTHLY, I shall shew the means of pre-severance. Let none think that they may live carelessly, having once got grace, because it cannot be lost: for besides, that one's giving himself quite up to such an opinion and course is inconsistent with saving grace, God has joined together the ends and means, and none shall separate them, Acts 27:22. 'And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.'—Compare ver. 31. 'Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.' Now, in the general, these are,

1. God's ordinances and providences. He makes use of both to keep the feet of his saints, John 15:2.
2. The duties of religion, and exercise of the graces, faith, fear, watchfulness, &c. 1 Cor. 10:12. 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

Inf. 1. Would ye have a treasure which ye cannot lose? then get grace. Ye may lose your worldly treasures, comforts, and enjoyments; the world's good things may go.—But grace is durable.

2. Take heed to yourselves and beware of apostasy; for it is not the beginning well, but holding on to the end, that will secure your salvation, Matth. 10:22. 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved.' Beware lest Satan, the world, and your lusts, beguile you, and ye lose all ye have wrought, 2 John 8.

3. As ever ye would persevere, look well to the foundation of your religion; for sincerity will last, but hypocrisy is a disease in the vitals that will end in death. The builders endeavour to lay the foundation fast and securely, and then they are sure the super-structure they raise upon it shall stand firm. Therefore lay the foundation well, and ye may be assured that the building shall weather all storms.

4. Lastly, Let those whose care it is to be found in Christ, and to live to him in all the duties of piety and righteousness, be comforted amidst all their temptations, snares, and corruptions, in that God who has begun the good work, and will perfect it, Phil. 1:6.

OF THE BENEFITS WHICH BELIEVERS RECEIVE AT DEATH

PHIL. 1:21.—To me—to die is gain.

ALL must die; but as men's lives are very different, so their account in death also. To an ungodly man death is a loss, the greatest loss: but to a believer it is gain, the greatest gain.

Paul was now a prisoner in Rome, and his case in itself was doubtful whether it would terminate in life or death, (though he was assured it would not be death at that time, ver. 25.) But having taken a view of both, he does in the text, in his own person, give us, (1.) The sum of a believers life, that is, Christ. As all the lines drawn from the circumference meet in the centre, so the whole of a believer's life in Christ, his honour being the scope of all. (2.) His estimate of a believer's death; he will not be a loser, but a gainer by it: it brings him in many benefits, and so is a gainful exchange.

The doctrine of the text is,

DOCT. 'Death is gain to a believer.'

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. In what respect death is gain to believers.

II. How it comes to be gain to them.

III. Deduce an inference or two.

I. I am to shew in what respects death is gain to believers. It is so in respect of their souls and their bodies.

FIRST, In respect of their souls. It separates their souls from their bodies, but not to their loss, but to their gain.—It is with the souls of believers at death, as with Paul and his company in their voyage, Acts 27. The ship broke in many pieces, but the passengers came all safe to land. So when the eye-strings break, the speech is laid, the last pulse beats, the last breath is drawn, the soul escapes, and gets safe away out of the troublesome sea of this world, into Immanuel's land. Now, there is a twofold gain or benefit which the souls of believers receive at death, namely perfection in holiness, and immediate entering into glory.

First, Perfection in holiness, Heb. 12:23.—'The spirits of just men made perfect.' In regeneration the elect get a new nature, which is a holy nature, 2 Pet. 1:4; but much of the old nature still remains. Then grace is planted in them by the Spirit. It grows up in the gradual advances of sanctification; but at death it is perfected, they are made perfectly holy. This perfection consists in two things.

1. A perfect freedom from sin, Eph. 5:27. The spiritual enemies they see to-day, they shall never see more, when once death has closed their eyes. Many a groan and struggle there is now to be free of sin, but still it hangs about the believer. Sometimes he gets his feet on the neck of his lusts, but they rise up again upon him: therefore he is never in safety to let down his watch, or to lay by the sword of the Spirit. The spiritual bands are never quite off here; but then it will be said, 'Loose him and let him go.' At death the saints shall be free,

(1.) From all commission of sin, Rev. 21:27. In the earthly paradise, sin was found, there Adam broke the whole law; but into the heavenly paradise no sin can enter. Not a vain thought shall ever go

through a believer's heart more; there shall be no more temptation to sin, nor the least inclination to it.

(2.) From the very inbeing of sin. The body of death shall go out with the death of the body, and, then shall the desire be answered, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Sin's reigning power is broken in sanctification: yet it still abides as a troublesome guest; but at death it is plucked up by the roots. It is like the house under the law infected with the leprosy, for the removal of which the stones were carried to an unclean place.

(3.) From a possibility of sinning, Rev. 3:12. 'Him that over-cometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.' The first man in paradise, yea the angels in heaven till they were confirmed, were but as reeds liable to be shaken with the wind of temptations as the doleful event made appear. But by death putting an end to the believer's probationary life, he becomes a pillar in the temple of God, which can never more be moved.

2. In the arrival of their holiness at the highest pitch they are capable of, Eph. 4:13. Now every sincere soul has a perfection of holiness in respect of the parts thereof; they are like little children who have all the parts of a man, but none of them grown to their utmost pitch; but then they will have a perfection of degrees, answering to the holy law in all points, like men who are come to their full growth. Sincerity shall then be turned to legal perfection.

(1.) Their understandings shall be perfectly illuminated, 1 Cor. 13:12. 'For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' There shall then be no more complaints of weakness of knowledge in them who in their life were the weakest of all saints. There shall not be the least remains of darkness there, but a full sunshine shall be in them.

(2.) Their wills shall be perfectly upright, so that they shall will nothing but what is good, and that without the least bias to the other

side, Rev. 21:27. A perfect conformity shall then be betwixt God's will and theirs, without the least possible jarring, 1 John 3:2.

(3.) The executive faculty shall then perfectly answer their will, readily and with all imaginable ease and delight, Matth. 6:10. Now the believer is often in the dark, he knows not what to do. Sometimes when he knows his duty, he has no will to it; there is a great aversion and backwardness that he has to strive with. Oft-times, when he would fain do it, he cannot, Matth. 26:41. 'The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' But then there shall be no more such impotency; he will be able to do whatever he will, and will nothing but what is good.

Secondly, Immediate entering into glory. As Pharaoh's jailor opening the prison-door to the butler, let him out into the court; so death letting the soul out of the body it goes to glory. Christ said to the thief on the cross, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' Luke 23:43. So death is to them the beginning of an immortal life; a strait entry by which they go out into the heavenly paradise; the ship by which they are transported into Immanuel's land. Here consider,

1. The glory they enter into. They pass after death into,

1st, A glorious place, namely, heaven, the seat of the blessed, 2 Cor. 5:1. It is Christ's Father's house, where their room is ready for them, when they have no more place on earth, John 14:2. 'In my Father's house,' says Christ, 'are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you.' The place which has no need of the sun and moon, but the glory of God lightens it, Rev. 21:23. Behold the outside bespangled with sun, moon, and stars; how glorious must it be within!

2dly, A glorious society, namely, the society of other saints gone before them, 'The general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven,' Heb. 12:23 the society of the holy angels, ib. the society of the glorious Mediator, his Father, and Holy

Spirit, even the blessed Trinity, John 17:24. Heb. 12:23, 24. It is a glorious society they are admitted into.

3dly, A glorious state. This is 'the house in the heavens, eternal, not made with hands,' 2 Cor. 5:1. It is a glorious state the soul enters into, a glory God puts on the souls of believers when out of the body. It is what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive; it is what we cannot make language of. —It is a state of rest and perfect blessedness.

2. That they immediately after death pass into it, and do not abide any where else, and sleep until the day of judgment, as some profane men would have it, is clear. For,

(1.) Scripture instances plead this. So to the thief upon the cross it was said, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' Luke 23:43. So of Lazarus it is said, that 'he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom,' Luke 16:22. And if it be a parable, as most likely it is, it is the more full to the purpose. And there is the same reason for all the saints as for one, they being all as ready at death as ever they will be, working-time for preparation being then over, John 9:4.

(2.) There is no middle state; but when the saints put off the body, they put on glory, 2 Cor. 5:1, 2. When they are 'absent from the body,' they are 'present with the Lord,' ver. 8. When they 'depart,' they are 'with Christ,' Phil. 1:23. When they die, they 'enter into peace' and rest, Isa. 57:1 the 'rest remaining for the people of God,' Heb. 4:9.

(3.) Lastly, The contrary doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the blessed state the scriptures ascribe to believers after death, Rev. 14:13. 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.' And it is inconsistent with believers their desire of death, that they may be with Christ in glory, 2 Cor. 5:1, 2. Phil. 1:23. What was to make Paul in that strait? if he could not be with Christ before the general

judgment, he would have chose rather to have lived till then, that he might have been with him in some sort, than to have died.

SECONDLY, In respect of their bodies, death is gain.—They must lie down in a grave; but death,

1. Cannot harm them, nor bring them to any real loss to be lamented. For,

(1.) Their dead bodies are still united to Christ. Though death separate their souls from their bodies, it cannot separate them from Christ, even every part of their body from another, 1 Thess. 4:14. They are members of Christ still, though in a grave, Rom. 8:11. 'Our friend Lazarus is dead,' said Christ.

(2.) They cannot be held there for ever. It is but till the resurrection, Job 19:26. The saints' dust is precious, locked up in the grave as a cabinet, till the Lord have further use for it. They are his precious fruit, that lie mellowing in the grave, and ripening for a glorious resurrection.

2. It is a real gain to them, in respect their graves are the places of their rest; not their prison, but their beds of rest, wherein they are to rest till the morning of the resurrection. The soul is the man, and it enjoys the glory of heaven; mean while the body rests in the grave, where it will enjoy a profound and tranquil repose, till it be united to the soul at the time when the dead in Christ shall rise from their long sleep.

II. I come to shew how death comes to be gain to them. It is a rest.

1. From all the ordinary troubles and afflictions of this life, Rev. 14:13 forecited.

2. From all persecutions and hardships from men for the cause of Christ, Job 8:17. 'There the wicked cease from troubling; and there

the weary be at rest.'

I shall conclude with a few inferences.

Inf. 1. That the saints may be encouraged and stirred up to press after perfection in holiness, since they shall certainly obtain it at length, Phil. 3:13, 14.

2. The wicked shall come to a perfection, so to speak in their wickedness, and immediately pass into hell, Luke 16:22, 23.

3. There is no purgatory nor middle state betwixt heaven and hell.

4. The toils and troubles of the world, that find men in the way of the Lord, should not discourage them, or carry them off their way, since they will all soon have an end.

5. There is no reason to mourn for the death of godly relations, as those who have no hope, 1 Thess. 4:13.

6. Lastly, A dying day is the best day for a believer that is in all his life, Eccl. 7:1. It is their marriage, home-coming, and redemption day.

OF BENEFITS AT THE RESURRECTION

HEB. 11:35.—That they might obtain a better resurrection.

IN this chapter the apostle brings in a cloud of witnesses to the truth and excellency of religion, and the power of faith, shewing the great things faith can do, and also can suffer. In this verse we have an instance of each kind. (1.) Faith got back the dead, in the case of Elijah and the widow of Serapta's dead son, 1 Kings 17:22, 23 and of Elisha and the Shunamite's son, 2 Kings 4:35, 36. Herein the faith of

the prophets, and the faith of the women too, was active, though the former was more strong than the latter. (2.) Faith made constant martyrs, helped them to bear most cruel tortures even to death, refusing deliverance on sinful terms; which seems to respect the martyrs of the Jewish church under Antiochus Epiphanes. What carried them up was the faith of a better resurrection. Hence two things they had the faith of.

1. Of a resurrection, that there would be a resurrection of the body; that they and their enemies, and all mankind, after death, would rise again.

2. Of a resurrection for themselves, better than that deliverance from death which their enemies offered them.—They saw by an eye of faith a glorious resurrection abiding them and all the people of God, attended with so many glorious benefits as might counterbalance their heaviest sufferings.

The text affords this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'Believers shall obtain a resurrection from the dead, attended with such glorious benefits, as the faith of the same may animate them to endure the most cruel sufferings for Christ.'

Here I shall,

I. Touch a little on the doctrine of the resurrection in general.

II. Consider the resurrection of believers, that better and glorious resurrection.

III. Apply.

I. I shall touch a little on the doctrine of the resurrection in general. And I shall shew,

1. That there shall be a resurrection of the dead.

2. Who shall be raised.
3. What shall be raised.
4. The Author of the resurrection.

First, I am to shew, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. This is a fundamental article of the Christian faith, the denying of which is subversive of the foundation of Christianity, 1 Cor. 15:13, 14. 'But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.' It is a point of faith which we owe to revelation, that reason must assent to as highly reasonable when proposed, Acts 26:3. Two things are the causes of men's disbelieving it, ignorance of the scriptures, and the power of God, Matt. 22:29. Accordingly there are two things that will clear it.

1. God is able to raise the dead; the resurrection is within the compass of the almighty arm. Man dying, his soul does not die; and though his body be dissolved, it is not reduced to nothing; if it were, God could make it over again. But the particles which make up the body do remain. And,

- (1.) Omniscience knows what they are, and where they are. If the dust of a thousand generations were jumbled together, Omniscience can separate them. An expert gardener having a hundred different seeds in his hand, can distinguish betwixt seed and seed; and why not an omniscient God betwixt dust and dust?

- (2.) Infinite power can join them altogether which belong to one man's body, and so make it up what it was, and join the soul again to the body raised up, Luke 1:37. He made the world of nothing, and he can reform man's body of pre-existent matter. As the watchmaker takes down the watch, and sets every piece in its proper place, so can God man's body.

2. God has positively told us, that he will do it, John 5:28, 29. 7:39.

Secondly, I proceed to shew, who shall be raised. Here two things are to be observed.

1. Those who shall be alive at the coming of Christ, as they shall not die, so they cannot rise from the dead. They shall undergo a sudden change, whereby the qualities of their bodies shall be altered, so as it shall be to them instead of death and resurrection, 1 Cor. 15:51, 52.

2. All that ever had life and died, men and women, old and young, godly and ungodly, shall rise again, Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:12. If they once had a soul united to their body, though the belly was their grave, they shall partake of this resurrection. The sea and the earth are God's stewards, which shall then be called to give back what they got a-keeping.

Thirdly, I shall shew, what shall be raised. The self-same bodies for substance that died, shall be raised again, though with very different qualities; yet it shall be the very same body that was laid in the grave, and not another. For,

1. The scripture is very plain for this. It is 'this corruptible that puts on incorruption, and this mortal that puts on immortality,' Cor. 15:53. 'Though after my skin (says Job), worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God,' Job 19:26.

2. The equity of the Judge requires it. An equitable judge does not suffer one to fight and another to get the reward; and therefore he will make those bodies which are the temples of grace, the temples of glory. Nay, they are Christ's members, and so cannot perish. Neither can it be that one body sin, and another suffer in hell.

3. The nature of resurrection requires it; for that would not be a rising again, but a new creation. Death is sleep to the godly, the resurrection an awaking, a change of the vile body, Phil. 3:21.

Fourthly, I come now to shew, who is the author of the resurrection. It is the work of God alone, and above the power of any creature

whatsoever. It is one of those works that are common to the Trinity. To the Father, 1 Cor. 6:14. 'God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power;' The Son, John 5:28. 'The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [Christ's] voice.' The Holy Spirit, Rom. 8:11. 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

II. The second general head is, to consider the resurrection of believers, that better and glorious resurrection. And this I shall do, 1. In itself. 2. In its consequents.

FIRST, I shall consider the resurrection of believers in itself, and here I shall shew,

1. Some things that ensure the blessed resurrection of believers.
2. How they shall be raised.
3. In what case they shall rise.
4. The particular qualities of their bodies at the resurrection.

First, I shall take notice of some things that ensure the blessed resurrection of believers.

1. God's covenant with believers, which is with their whole man, comprehending their bodies as well as their souls, which by virtue thereof are temples of the Holy Ghost, Matth. 22:32. 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living.'

2. The end of Christ's death, which was to destroy death, Hos. 13:14. 'O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.' How else would be accomplished his swallowing up death in victory, if death kept those that are his for ever? No; this is the last enemy, 1

Cor. 15:25, 26. And when the resurrection comes, and not till then, will that victory be complete, ver. 54.

3. The resurrection of Christ. He was the first-fruits from death. his people the harvest that must follow, 1 Cor. 15:22, 23. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.' He rose as a public person, and so has got up above death in their name, Eph. 2:6. 'Hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'

4. Their union with Christ, Rom. 8:11 forecited. He has redeemed their bodies as well as their souls, and therefore they expect the redemption of their bodies, Rom. 8:23; and has united them to himself, Eph. 5:30. Now, since the head liveth, the members shall live too; as when the head gets above the waters, the members follow.

Secondly, I am to shew, how believers shall be raised. The wicked shall be raised by the power of Christ as a just Judge. The divine power that shut them up in the grave as in a prison, will bring them out, in order to their receiving the last sentence, to enter into the prison of hell.

But the godly shall be raised by virtue of the Spirit of Christ, that bond of union betwixt Christ and those blessed bodies; so that it shall be to them as a pleasant awakening out of sleep. As an awakening man draws his limbs to him, so will their raised head draw them to him out of their graves, Rom. 8:11.

Thirdly, I shall shew, in what case they shall rise.

2. Happily, as rising to life, eternal life, when others rise to their eternal ruin, Dan. 12:2. That will be the happiest day that ever their eyes saw. The day of their death was better than that of their birth; but they of their resurrection will be the best of all.

2. Joyfully, Isa. 26:19. 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust.' That is the way wherein Christ's bride rises out of her bed for the marriage. Jonah had a joyful outgoing from the whale's belly, Daniel out of the den, and Pharaoh's butler out of the prison: but what are all these to the joys at the resurrection of believers? Their doubts and fears died, and lay down with them, but they shall not rise with them. When the soul comes out of heaven, and the body out of the grave, what a joyful meeting will there be of the blessed couple!

3. Gloriously, being made like unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. 3:21. However mean they were while in the world, or ignominiously treated in life or in death, they shall have a glorious resurrection.

Fourthly, I shall shew, what shall be the particular qualities of the bodies of believers at the resurrection. The bodies of the saints shall be raised.

1. Incorruptible, 1 Cor. 15:42. Now the members of their living bodies, are liable to corruption, when they die all putrefying together; but then they will never more be liable to putrefaction; never more liable to sickness, death, nor the least pain, to wearing or wearying. There will then be no outward violence, no inward cause of uneasiness.

2. Glorious, ver. 43. The most hard favoured saint will outstrip the now greatest beauty. The seat of that beauty will not be the face but the whole body, Matt. 13:43. There shall be no defects nor deformities in those bodies; Isaac shall no more be blind, nor Jacob halt; Leah shall not be tender eyed, nor Mephibosheth lame of his legs.

As the artificer melts down the misshapen vessel, and casts it over again in a new mould; so doth the Lord with the bodies of the saints.

3. Powerful and strong, ib. There will be no more feebleness and weakness. The weak shall be as David, and the house of David, shall be as God. They shall be able to bear out in continual exercise

without wearying, and to bear the weight of glory, for which the flesh and blood of a giant would now be too weak.

4. Lastly, Spiritual, ver. 44. That is, like spirits. (1.) In that they shall need none of the now necessary supplies of nature, meat, drink, &c, Matt. 22:30 full without meat, warm without cloaths, healthful without physic. (2.) Active and nimble like spirits. So they shall meet the Lord in the air, and like so many eagles gather together, where the carcase is.

Inf. 1. Fearful will the doom of persecutors be. (2.) The saints may be encouraged to suffer for Christ. (3.) Faith and holiness is the best way to beauty. (4.) Let this allay the believer's fear of death, Gen. 46:3, 4. (5.) Let this comfort him against sickliness of body; (6.) and under the death of godly relations. (7.) Rise from sin, and glorify God with your bodies and souls.

SECONDLY, We are now to consider that better resurrection in the consequents thereof, or what shall follow thereupon, the which the martyrs in this case had in their view.

Here I shall shew,

1. The consequents thereof before the judgment.
2. At the judgment.
3. After the judgment.

First, I shall shew the consequents of this better resurrection before the judgment. There are two benefits which believers have from Christ betwixt the resurrection and the judgment. We left them raised up out of their graves in glory. Now,

1. They shall be gathered together from all corners of the earth by the ministry of angels, Mat. 24:31. By the glorious gospel having its efficacy on them, they were separated from the world in respect of

their state and manner of life, but still abode among them as to their bodily presence, and some of them at a great distance from the rest: but then they shall not only be visibly distinguished from the reprobate by the shining glory upon them, while the faces of the rest are covered with blackness; but these fair ones shall all be gathered into one glorious company, out from among the wicked, by the ministry of the holy angels, Matth. 13:48, 49.

2. While the wicked are left on the earth, they shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, 1 Thess. 4:17. Those who are found alive, and those who are raised out of their graves, shall ascend in one glorious body; by what means, the Lord himself knows; but he who made Peter walk on the water, can cause them make their way like eagles through the air. And they shall meet the Lord there to welcome him at his second coming, while others shall be filled with dread of the Judge and also to attend him for his honour, as the angels also do.

Who can sufficiently conceive the glory of these benefits, by which their happiness is so far carried on?

Secondly. We shall view the consequents of this resurrection at the judgment.

The throne being erected, and the glorious man, Christ, the Judge of the world, being set down upon it, and the parties sisted before him to be judged, the wicked as well as the godly.

1. The glorious company of believers, being separated from the black howling company of the wicked in that day, shall be set on the right hand of the Judge, while the wicked shall be set on his left hand, Matt. 25:32, 33. They shall then have the most honourable place; and then will there be a mighty turn; many of the right hand-men of the world will get the left hand, and contrariwise.

2. They shall be openly acknowledged by Jesus Christ, their Lord and Judge, Mat. 10:39. Consider,

1st, What it is for Christ to acknowledge them. It is to own them for his own, to acknowledge the relations they stand in to him, Mal. 3:17. 'They shall be mine,' i. e. owned to be so. To the wicked he will say, he 'knows them not:' he will reject all their pretensions to him: but as for believers, he will own and acknowledge them in all the relations wherewith faith invested them; he will acknowledge the fair company for his contracted spouse, his children, his members, even them, and every one of them.

2dly, How he will acknowledge them then. He will do it openly, most publicly and openly. Consider here,

(1.) Our Lord Jesus acknowledges all that are his, even now in this life, not only in his own breast, by looking on them as his; but before his Father, in whose presence he appears making intercession for them as his own, John 17:9, 10. He does it also by the testimony of his Spirit to their sonship, Rom. 8:16; by the seal of his own image set upon them, and by many signal appearances of his providence for them.

(2.) He will then acknowledge them in a quite other and open manner, before many witnesses, so as men and devils shall be obliged to understand, that these are they whom the King on the throne delights to honour. He will do it before his Father, and the angels of heaven, Rev. 3:5 in effect saying to his Father, 'Behold me, and the children thou hast given me.' He will acknowledge them in their own hearing, and the hearing of all the world, Matth 25:34.

(3.) They shall be openly acquitted by the Lord in that day, by the sentence solemnly passed in their favour, whereby also they are adjudged to life, Matth. 25:34. 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Consider here,

1st. What they shall be acquitted from. They shall be acquitted from all the guilt of all their sins, and for ever discharged from all

punishment for them, Acts 3:19. The mouths of all accusers shall be finally stopt, and the white stone shall then be given in a way of eminency.

2dly, Are they not acquitted now? Yes, they are in the first moment of believing acquitted of the guilt of eternal wrath for ever, Rom. 8:1; and on their fresh application to the blood of Christ for their after sins, they likewise are blotted out, 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.' And at death they get their acquittance too, Heb. 9:27. Yet at the general judgment they are acquitted likewise.

3dly, Wherein doth their acquittance now and at that day agree and differ.

(1.) They agree, [1.] In the substance of the acquittance, which is the same now and hereafter, from the guilt of sin, and punishment thereof. [2.] In the ground of it: it proceeds in both upon the merits of Christ, Eph. 1:7 and not on works, which are brought in at the last day as evidences of their faith, not as causes of their justification.

(2.) They differ, [1.] In respect of openness. Now they are acquitted in the world, Rom. 8:1 where yet they have much ado to read it sometimes; in their own consciences, 1 John 3:21 which they themselves only can understand; but then from the throne, in the presence of angels and men. [2.] In respect of assurance and comfort. Of the former a believer may doubt, but not of the latter. [3.] In respect of fulness. In the last day they are acquitted from all effects of sin whatsoever, their bodies being, never to die more: and joined to their souls, never to be separated more; but not so in the former.

4thly, Why shall they be openly acknowledged and acquitted at the last day? He will do it,

(1.) To wipe off, with his own fair hand, all the foul aspersions which the hypocrites and profane did cast upon them in this world, Isa. 66:5. Many a time the Lord's dearest children are made to lie among

the pots, blackened with ill names, reproaches, &c. But then they shall be 'like doves whose wings are covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold.'

(2.) To give them a reward of grace, for their confessing him before the world, cleaving to his truths and ways, in the midst of an adulterous generation, and their not denying him on whatever temptations, Matth. 10:32. 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.' Compare 2 Tim. 2:12, 'If we deny him, he will also deny us.' The prospect of this made the martyrs cleave to him in the face of cruel deaths.

(3.) To seal the end of all their own doubts, jealousies, and fears, 1 Cor. 4:4. Many a time it is a question with the believer, whether he belongs to Christ or not: even when he has in all sincerity embraced the covenant, yet these like so many ghosts haunt him. No doubt by that time they will all be gone, but by this acknowledgement their departure will be sealed.

(4.) For the increase of their joy, and the shame of their enemies, Isa. 66:5.

4. They shall be adjudged to everlasting life, and solemnly invited to enter into possession of the kingdom, Matth. 25:34. 'Come ye,' &c. in which every word has a weight of glory.

5. Lastly, They being themselves absolved, shall be honoured to be Christ's assessors in judging the wicked, 1 Cor. 6:1. 'Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?' They shall judge them by way of communion with Christ their head, this work being a part of the Mediator's honour redounding to all his members: By way of approbation of the Judge's sentence against them, saying Amen to the doom of the wicked, even the godly parent to that of the wicked child, the holy husband to that of the unholy wife, &c. Rev. 19:1, 3. See Rev. 3:21.

Thirdly, We shall consider the consequents of the resurrection after the judgment. Believers shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity. Here I shall shew,

1. Wherein perfect blessedness lies.
2. What shall make believers perfectly blessed.

1. I am to shew wherein perfect blessedness lies. It lies in two things.

1st, Perfect freedom from all evil whatsoever, whether of sin or misery. Thus blessed shall believers be then, perfectly free from sin, Eph. 5:27 and free from suffering any manner of way, Rev. 21:4.

2dly, Full satisfaction to all the desires of the soul, Phil. 4:11. Their desires shall be fully satisfied; they shall have that beyond which they can crave no more. For where there is any want, there can be no perfect blessedness.

2. I am to shew what shall make them thus perfectly blessed. It is the enjoyment of God. They shall have his glorious presence with them, Rev. 21:3. They shall see him as he is, 1 John 3:2 the man Christ with their bodily eyes, and the invisible God with the eyes of their minds, called the beatific vision, the most perfect knowledge of God which the creature is capable of. They shall be knit to him gloriously, Rev. 21:3 just quoted. Love then will be at its height. And they shall enjoy him to their full happiness.

(1.) Immediately; not in the use of means and ordinances, but there they sit down at the fountain-head, Rev. 21:22.

(2.) Fully; God will withhold nothing of himself from them: they shall be stinted to no measure but what their own capacity makes; and in him they shall have what will satisfy all their desires.

3. Lastly, Eternally, 1 Thess. 4:17. 'So shall we ever be with the Lord.'

I conclude this subject with a few inferences.

Inf. 1. Come out now from among the wicked world. A separation there will be betwixt the godly and the wicked. If it be in your favour, it will begin now. Leave them now, if ye would not be left with them after the resurrection.

2. Beware of rash judging those that have any lineaments of Christ's image upon them. Ye may judge and condemn the evil actions of the best of men, if ye be sure from the word that they are evil. But, O my soul! enter not into the secret of those who presumptuously take upon them to judge men's state, hearts, and consciences, upon slips of human infirmity and weakness.

3. Let none be ashamed to own Christ and his truths and ways before the world, remembering that the day cometh in which lie will confess those that confess him, and deny those that deny him.

4. Though the day of judgment be an awful thought, it will be a happy day to believers, as they will then be for ever delivered from all moral and penal evils, and admitted into the greatest felicity in the enjoyment of their God and Redeemer for ever.

5. That there is no true happiness till we come to the enjoyment of God, nor full happiness till we arrive at the full enjoyment of him.

6. Lastly, Miserable is now, and at the resurrection will be, the state of the wicked, where the reverse of all the happiness of the saints will be found, and that in the most dreadful manner. Let us then all seek to be found among those who shall be partakers of the better and glorious resurrection.

MONERGISM BOOKS

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