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# REJOICING IN THE LORD

IN ALL CASES AND CONDITIONS



ROBERT ASTY



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# **Rejoicing in the Lord Jesus in all Cases and Conditions.**

**By Robert Asty, late Minister of Jesus Christ in Norwich.**

Wherein is manifested,

1. What the Lord Jesus Christ is to, and doth for Believing Souls; which may be a constant ground of their Joy and Rejoicing.
2. What are the grounds of that Darkness which is upon Believers about their Interest in Christ, hindering this Rejoicing.
3. What Believers should do in the interim, until they can have the evidence of their Interest clear.
4. How Souls may know their Interest in Jesus Christ.

Phil. 4.4 Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.

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# To the Congregational Church of Christ in the City of Norwich.

Dearly Beloved,

It is much to be lamented in any day, if many of the righteous are taken away by death (Isa. 57.1.) as being signal of evil to come; & more, when many Eminent Ministers of the Gospel are so removed, whereby Vision faileth; and most of all, when the Sin of a People, and impending Judgment threaten their being benighted, and no prospect is given of others to fill up the places of those who are transplanted to Eternity.

I know you cannot but have many searching's of heart, for your deep share in this matter of Lamentation; the Lord having (in so short a measure of time) called home to himself from among you, so many faithful Teachers; as that Spiritual man Mr. Armitage, Judicious Mr. Allen, and now this Laborious Mr. Asty, who served you in the Gospel: But it is some matter of refreshment, that they being dead, yet (by their Printed Labors) they still speak to you.

It was the earnest desire of some amongst you, that the ensuing Sermons of Mr. Robert Asty might be Published; they were taken from his mouth by the Pen of a Ready Writer, and not polished by his own hand, yet may be exceedingly useful to all, for the promoting of Faith, Obedience and Comfort.

Indeed, the chief purport of this Treatise is, to raise the Joy of those who are interested in Christ, and that in every state and condition: It directeth unto the right Object of Joy, the Lord, and so to an everlasting ground of Rejoicing.

I shall add a few words of Counsel to you, for whom I have a great respect.

1. Improve the remembrance of those Gospel Truths which you heard from the mouths of your Ministers now at rest: Their Labors were not intended by the Lord only for a present relief to your Souls during their speaking, but for afterward, Rev. 3.3.

Remember how thou hast Received and Heard, and hold fast. Beware of losing or growing indifferent as to the practical owning those Gospel Principles which you have been grounded in; be tenacious there; hold them fast; for Christ addeth, If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a Thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

2. Keep up lively Affections towards God, when your Gospel-Ministers are withdrawn from you. When David was exiled from the Ordinances of God, yet then had he the most earnest panting's of Soul after Enjoyments of God, Psal. 42.1, 2. & 63.1, 2. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee — Beware of cooling's in Affection to the Institutions of Jesus Christ when you want them, and let nothing short of God satisfy when you enjoy them. Beware of leaving your first love, Rev. 2.4, 5.

3. Maintain frequent Spiritual Communion each with other when some Gospel Administrations are wanted. This is prescribed as a means for the prevention of Declining's or Departures from God, Heb. 3.13. Exhort one another daily while it is called today. Daily Converses each with other duly managed, may not only preserve from Spiritual Decays, but quicken Affections, and blow up the spark of your graces into a mighty flame.

4. Wait incessantly in Prayer for the Return of God's Ark to you. The less you have of Preaching, the more should you be in Praying, and others for you, that Gospel-Light may shine among you as in former days; and the Answer will rejoice many, and should grieve none; for, what hurt can it be to any real Christian, that Christ is Preached to others?

I shall only add 2 Cor. 13.11. Finally Brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you. So prayeth he who is

Yours in the Lord Jesus, Sam. Petto.

Octob. 23. 1681.

## **SERMON I.**

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

OF the Stock and Parentage of this Prophet, we have no clear account in Scripture. It may be, implicitly to hint unto us, that we should always look more to the Message than to the Messenger, and that nobleness of birth and greatness among men do not greaten the Word of God. Indeed Epiphanius tells us with some confidence, that this Prophet was of the Tribe of Simeon, and that he lived in the time of the Babylonish Captivity; but there is but little grounds for this conjecture. The time also of this Prophet's Prophesying, is very uncertain. Some Hebrew Writers do expressly tell us, that he lived in the time of the Reign of King Manasseh; and there is some probability for this assertion; but however this is clear, that he comes from the Lord of Hosts; he was his Prophet, and he speaks in his name, in much power and plainness to this people, not fearing the face of man, and spares not to deal closely with that incorrigible Spirit that was among them; who had slighted the Lord's Message that was delivered by his Predecessors before him, and was now near unto destruction: Whether it was in the time of the Reign of Manasseh, or any other King, modern Expositors are very modest in their conjectures and apprehensions, not seeing the thing clearly and

absolutely determined in Scripture; but this is certain, it was at that time when God was about to raise up that bitter, sharp, cruel, fiery, fierce enemy the Chaldeans, to come out against this people; as you may see, chap. 1. v. 6. It was at that time, when God had born so long with their provocations, that the time of his patience was even almost expired. It was at that time when their sins were so multiplied and increased, as that they were near unto ruin; destruction and desolation was at the door. Now this Prophet understanding the mind of God, and seeing upon good grounds that the Decree was past against this people, as one who was faithful unto their interest, among whom, and unto whom he was the Lord's Prophet, & as one that would approve himself faithful unto the Lord; he takes upon him the boldness to expostulate the case with God, why he should suffer such a wicked and vile Nation as the Chaldeans were, to prevail and prosper against his own inheritance, though they were sinful and unworthy; and he cannot rest, neither can he give God any rest, until he hear something further of his mind. The Lord is pleased to condescend to him in the beginning of the second chapter, and to make answer to the anxiousness and earnestness of his Spirit in this great affair at the second verse: And the Lord answered me and said, Write the Vision, and make it plain upon Tables, that he that runs may read it. Verse 3. For the Vision is for an appointed time, at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, and not tarry. In short, the Lord makes this Answer to him, that though he did make use of the Chaldeans as a Rod in his hand to scourge his own People with, yet when he had done his work upon his Israel, he would take his Rod, and throw it into the fire, that he would deal with all the Enemies of his People according to their desert. Desolation might come for a while upon the Lord's People, but they should be raised out of their ruins; but utter desolation and destruction should come upon the Enemies of his People; they should at length be brought down, and suffered to rise no more. In this third Chapter (according to his name, which signifies (Wrestler) he wrestles with God, and is another Jacob that will not let the Lord alone until he bless him.



Habakkuk encompasseth God, and in his prayer wrestling with him, closed in upon him. And he gathers up in this third Chapter the great Experiences that Israel had of God, when he walked with them, and led them by a strong hand in the wilderness; and he urged those old Experiences that this People had of God upon God, at this time; how he had dried up the mighty waters, and rode in Chariots of Salvation through the Sea for them; and how he caused the Sun and the Moon to stand still, until the Enemies of the Lord were cut off & consumed. And he gathers in upon God upon those Experiences, waiting for the same power, and the same wonderful appearances and acting's for their deliverances out of the present and succeeding troubles that were, or should come upon them; as God had appeared for them, and delivered them out of all their troubles of old. And though he tells us, that at the first sounding of the words of God's displeasure, he was filled with shakings, and with trembling, and with quivering; yet within a little time he recovered his Spirit, and in the exercise of Faith upon God, he glories, rejoices and triumphs in God alone in the midst of most sinking, most discouraging Providences: When indeed I heard, says he, verse 16., my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered into my bones. But see what he says in the 17th and 18th verses; Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, &c. yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. He saw shakings coming upon the whole Earth, that did even put the Foundations as it were out of course; he saw God's Besom in his hand ready to sweep away all their comforts; an East-wind was rising, that would blow upon their Spring, and make all their Spring-buds to blow off. Well, says he, let it be so, or as ill as can be supposed to be, or as ill as the creature can be as to its state in this world, yet I have God on my side, and all is well: I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. This verse is a most noble strain of a heavenly Spirit in the high and constraining exercise of Faith upon God in a most dismal day of darkness. The Prophet gets upon the Ruins of the Creature, and rejoiceth in his whole Christ: He gets upon the Ashes of his house that was burnt here, and sings of his Building that cannot be burnt in Heaven: He gets into his withered Vineyard, and into his barren Fields, and there sings, The Lines are

fallen unto me in a pleasant place, I have a goodly Heritage. It seems a very strange speech, that he should in the former part of his Prophecy be speaking of the sad dispensations of the Lord towards them; and cap. 3.17. speak of great failures that were like to come upon them in reference to all their terrene comforts and enjoyments, and yet speak of rejoicing and joying in the Lord! It is a strange speech to talk of joy and rejoicing here, where he had almost nothing in this world left him, or supposed to be left him, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. We say of some men, It is strange how they live, their Trades fail, and their Estates are gone, and yet they bear up: Why, 'tis a mystery how they live, how they have wherewithal to defray their charges; surely they have some secret friends that feed them, and maintain them, that their neighbors know not of. Why, after the same manner we may speak concerning the Lord's People; They have enemies on every side, and they are broken again and again, and yet behold they live, and their Joy none can take from them; although they are numbered to sorrows and distresses every day: Why, my Text tells you the mystery of their living, and of their living in joy, and peace, and comfort in the midst of all their losses, & troubles, and discomfortures. I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. Says the Apostle, 2 Cor. 6.10. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, &c. This verse doth open something of the mystery of the verse that we have chosen to be our present Text; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; and while they seem to be poor, they make many rich; they seem to have nothing, but yet indeed they possess all things; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. [I will rejoice in the Lord.] The word in the Hebrew is a very full word. I will rejoice exceedingly in the Lord: Or, My heart rises like the Sea with surges when 'tis enforced with the wind: Or, My heart is like a boiling Pot when it seetheth: Or, (how shall I express it!) I will rejoice in the Lord; I will magnify myself in God, or make my boast of God in all disasters, and under all discouragements. I will joy in the God of my Salvation. [I will joy] That word also is very full, and it signifies in its grammatical sense, my heart shall leap or skip for joy: My heart shall sally forth in my God, and take heart in the Lord who never fails: I

will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. One of the Ancients speaking upon this Text, saith, Although, saith he, all the Elements should threaten us, and conspire and swear as it were a Confederacy against us, to turn us out of all, yet, Ego exultabo in Deo; I will rejoice in my God, even in the God of my Salvation. And Calvin saith, My joy is not founded upon the Creature, nor upon external enjoyments, therefore let all things be brought into confusion here below; nay, let God himself seem to stand frowning over us, yet says he, will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.

Joy is the sweet motion of the Soul in a full contentment of heart, and complacency of Spirit upon some good set before it. Now here the Prophet sees all discouraging below, he turns his Eyes up to Heaven, and he sees a certainty there, he sees stability there, and therefore he rejoices in the Lord, and Joys in the God of his Salvation, I will rejoice in the Lord. Who is meant by Lord here? I will rejoice in Jehovah the God of my Salvation.

Jehovah is a Title given unto God the Father, setting forth his self-being, and self-sufficiency, and giving existence unto all Creatures, but the Title Jehovah is attributed also unto the Son, and so I understand it here in this Text, I will rejoice in Jehovah, that is in Christ Jesus, who may be called Jehovah; not only as he hath a sufficiency in himself, but as he gives existence, and being unto all the promises of the Covenant of Grace, in whom they are yea, and Amen: and on this account I take it that the Title Jehovah is often given unto Jesus Christ the second Person. I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation, that is, in my Lord my Savior, my dear Jesus, and my Redeemer, and so from the words you may observe this proposition:

Doct. That there is enough in Christ Jesus alone for the Souls full rejoicing and triumph in all cases and conditions. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. Let things go how they will in the world as to my outward Concerns, yet the ground of my

joy, that is never taken from me. Although the Fig-tree do not blossom, although there shall be no fruit in the Vine, although the labor of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no meat, the Flocks shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stall; yet my Joy that abides, the ground of my Joy that cannot be taken from me, 'tis not in the Creature, 'tis not upon Earth, but 'tis in Heaven, 'tis not in Man, 'tis in the Lord, 'tis not in the confluence of these things that are coming and going, and in an uncertain enjoyment, but it is in the Lord who never fails, says David in the 2 Sam. 23.5. Though my House be not so with God; my Family is not as I would have it to be; I cannot rectify all the disorders of my House, and settle things as I would, my house is not with God as I would have it according to my heart's desire; yet God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant of Grace, and this is all my Salvation and all my desire. The word that is translated desire here in the Hebrew signifies also delight, this is all my Salvation, and all my delight as we may read it; here is the Joy of my heart, my delight is here, God's Covenant of Grace stands sure with me, and therein will I rejoice; as if David had said, things go ill with me here below; the Sword is threatened never to depart from my House while I live, that I must be a man of trouble and of war to the end of my days; what breaches may be made upon my Kingdom; and what breeches may be made in my Family, the Lord only knows, yet the Covenant that stands sure, and that is all my delight, my heart centers here, and I will comfort myself in the Lord my God. And if we search into the Psalms, there we shall find that David does frequently under great disasters make his boast of God. Providences were frowning, and he seemed to be driven out of all, yet says he, The Lord God is my refuge, he is the Horn of my Salvation, my Sanctuary, and high Tower, and I will rejoice, and let all the righteous rejoice and be glad in him.

In the handling of this proposition there are these things that we shall propose to consider and unfold to you.

First, What Jesus Christ is. Secondly, What he hath, and Thirdly, What he will do for the believing Soul, that the believer may take

comfort, and rejoice in him at all times, whatsoever his condition is.

First, What Jesus Christ is, that the Prophet doth here so comfort himself in, and rejoice and make his boast of.

First, He is glorious in his Person, a very glorious person he is, not one like him in Heaven nor in Earth; what is said concerning Saul in the 1 Sam. 9.2. we may in allusion apply unto Christ, that he was a choice young man & a goodly, there was not among the Children of Israel a goodlier Person then he, from the shoulders upward he was higher than any of the People. I only allude to it.

Jesus Christ is a most choice excellent one, a very goodly, and a very lovely Person, he is higher both by head and shoulders than any of his Brethren; a Person all glorious, a Person all over lovely and beautiful, in Can. 5.16. His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely, this is my beloved, &c.

But I shall descend into particulars, and show you wherein Jesus Christ is such a sufficient ground of rejoicing, and of comfort to the believing Soul that hath an interest in him in all conditions, and I shall here show you wherein it appeareth, that the glory of Christ's Person is such a ground of rejoicing to us at all times? And that will appear in his Mediatory Constitution, as God-man in one Person; Jesus is a Mediator, a day's Man, an umpire between God and Man, one that hath come between God and Man to make peace for us, and the glory of his Person lies in his mediatory constitution, as he is God-man, so he is a most glorious Person. Now this Title of Mediator is often given him in Scripture, in Heb. 8.6. he is called the Mediator of a better Covenant, & Heb. 9.15. the Mediator of the New Testament, and Heb. 12.24. To Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling. So 1 Tim. 2.5. This was such a one as Job wished for, in Job 9.33. Neither is there any days-man between us that might lay his hand upon us both. Now there are two things that are requisite for the completing and accomplishing of a Mediator.

First, He must be equally related to the Persons between whom he comes.

Secondly, He must be impartial and faithfully indifferent; now both these are found in Jesus Christ.

First, A Mediator, I say must be equally stated between, and related to the Persons, that he comes to reconcile. A Mediator must be a middle Person that must not be related more to one Person than to another, that he comes between, but there must be an equal proximity or nearness in him unto the parties, that he comes to mediate for, or to make peace between. Now Jesus Christ was such a Person in whom there was an equal proximity or nearness to both parties that he had to do with, for he was both God and Man; as he was true Man, he stood in a nearness unto man, and as he was true God, so he stood in a nearness unto the Father that he had to do for; he was by the Divine Nature as near unto the Father, as by the Human Nature he was near unto man; and he was as near unto man by his Human Nature, as he was unto the Father by his Divine Nature, so as he is equally stated between, and related unto the persons that he came to reconcile.

Secondly, A Mediator must be impartial and faithful, indifferent in and about the interest of the parties that he hath to do for. Jesus Christ being made God-man, was not only in a nearness to man, and to the Father, but he was thereby unbiassed, and carried out upon equal terms impartially, to manage the Concerns of the Interest of both Parties; he was both God and man, and was not only as so, in a nearness to both Parties, but he was equally concerned honorably to manage the Interest of both Parties that he came between and had to do for, and was engaged in this nearness that he stood in unto both; he was engaged thereby equally to manage the Concerns of both Parties; being God, he was engaged in point of honor to give satisfaction to his Father; and being Man, he was engaged in point of faithfulness to work out the whole business and concern of our Salvation, and to make peace for Sinners; he was faithfully

indifferent, and equally concerned in the Interest of both Parties, having the Divine Nature and the Human united together in one Person; both Natures do constrain him to have an equal and right aspect into both Interests; if he should look more unto God's side, than unto man's side, the Human Nature would speak; and if he should look more unto man than unto God, the Divine Nature would speak; he had both Natures, and therein was unbiassed, and carried out with an impartial spirit to manage the Concerns of both Interests, and to bring them into one; and it was requisite that Jesus that was to be a Mediator, should be thus constituted; for indeed, had he undertook the work, and had not been thus constituted, it would not probably have been so impartially managed, neither could Jesus Christ have been complete for the work of his Mediation, but under this constitution; for if he had been God only, then he had been too high for the work; for he must make satisfaction; he must suffer and die for Sinners; he must be made sin for Sinners, and be substituted in the room of sinners. Now God absolutely considered, cannot be thus: And if he had been man only, he had been too low for the work; for there could not have been that dignity in his sufferings, as to give a value and worth to all his layings out, and layings down for us: He must therefore be God-man, and as so, he was neither too high, nor too low, but equally stated between both, and so completed for the work; and thus was Jesus Christ constituted; and thus do the Scriptures set him forth to us as Mediator, Joh. 1.14. The Word, that is, the Second Person was made flesh; there is Jesus becoming Immanuel, God with us; and 1 Tim. 3.16. God was manifest in the flesh, &c. and Luk. 1.31, 32. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus. And Rom. 1.3, 4. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, &c. So as you see he was constituted Godman; The Word was made flesh. Now being thus constituted God-man, he had his nearness to God the Father, and his nearness to the Sons of men, for whom he came and appeared in the flesh. You may see his nearness unto the Father, Zech. 13.7. Awake O Sword against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith

the Lord of Hosts. So as Jesus Christ he is, and he was the fellow and the companion of the Lord of Hosts. So Phil. 2.6. Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, &c. Here you see he hath his nearness to the Father, and also his nearness to the Sons of men, for whom he appeared in the Flesh, Heb. 2.14. For as much then as the Children are partakers of flesh & blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, &c. and in Isaiah 9.6. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, &c. and Luke 1.35. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God; he thought it no robbery to be equal with God; there was his nearness to the Father, and he was born of the Virgin, and so clothed with our flesh, and therein he was near a kin unto man, and hence is he called Immanuel, that is, God with us; now as thus constituted, did he undertake the work of his mediation, for thus he suffered, and thus he satisfied, his sufferings hereby came to be satisfactory as he was God, he died as man, and he overcame death, and arose again from the Grave, by the power of his God-Head.

Quest. But you will say this indeed is a great mystery, worthy of all admiration, that the Eternal Son of God should become man, that he should be God and Man, that there should be a union of the two natures in one Person, but what is this to us, as a standing constant ground of rejoicing to us in all saddening, sinking providences whatsoever?

Ans. I answer much every way, and this would be clear to you, should I enter upon, and open to you the glory of his Person as thus constituted. The glorious excellencies of Heaven that are shining in both natures, or upon his Person under its constitution in the union of both natures, and there may be a greater matter of rejoicing to our Souls in the exercise of faith in our contemplating upon his personal glories. It may be a matter of greater rejoicing to our Souls, than ever there was satisfaction to the heart and mind upon any object whatsoever it did behold with a bodily eye; but I shall not go that



way, nor enter upon such a prolix discourse, but shall only give you some particulars wherein there is a standing ground of rejoicing for us in Christ Jesus upon this his personal constitution, as God-man to be a Mediator for us; and here,

First, We have dignity.

Secondly, Tranquility.

Thirdly, Sanctity.

Fourthly, Stability. And

Fifthly, Familiarity given to us, or brought in upon us.

1. Hereby is the nature of man raised unto unspeakable honor and glory, in that Jesus Christ the Second Person hath assumed our nature, and taken it into union with his own divine nature in his Person, & therein does he now reign upon the Throne in Heaven, at the right hand of God, herein is the nature of man most unspeakably advanced and dignified. The nature of man was very low before; Man was made of the earth, of a little red earth, man was before but a contemptible Creature, but now what honor is put upon it, that Jesus Christ hath taken our nature, and united it unto the Divine nature, that nature that was despised before, is now honored, honorable and worthy. It hath glory and dignity from the Lord Jesus put upon it, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15.43, 44. The body of man, or the nature of man it is both born, and it dies in dishonor, ay, but it is raised in glory. The body of Man is a corruptible body, 'tis a dying body. It hath a sentence of death that hangs over it as soon as ever it hath a being; but now though it be sown in dishonor, yet it shall be raised in glory; there is glory that waits upon the body of man, or upon man's whole nature, Phil. 3.21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his own glorious body, &c. So as there is unspeakable honor that is given unto our nature, in that Christ Jesus hath taken it so near unto himself, and advanced it upon the Fathers Throne in Heaven; we are here under the contempt and disgrace of

men, but it matters not (Christians) they cannot take away your glory. The glory of your nature is not laid in the breath of men, but it is founded here in Christ Jesus's assumption of our nature, and uniting it to the divine nature; and if indeed the enemies of the Lord's people could take our nature from Christ Jesus, then they might take away our glory, and our honor; but he hath inseparably and everlastingly united our nature unto his divine nature, therefore our honor is such, as can never be taken away; it is counted a great honor for an Ambassador to be sent forth in the name of some great Prince to personate him in another Country, but my friends what is it for Jesus Christ to assume our nature, and to personate man before his Father in Heaven; this is a greater honor that is put upon us, than if God had made man the Lord of all the Angels in Heaven, therefore let this satisfy you under all the reproaches and contempts that you meet withal here in the world by one and another, though despised, and though contemned here and there by a few, yet your honor in the Lord, that abides.

2. In and upon the appearance of Jesus Christ as Mediator for us, there is a full, firm and lasting peace made between God and us. Jesus Christ he came as a Mediator between two to reconcile both, and make them one, and this he hath done by the blood of his Cross, Col. 1.20. and 21. Jesus hath reconciled God and Man together, he hath taken away the wrath that the law of God had to denounce against man, he hath slain the enmity of our natures, he hath brought these two enemies together, and made them one in his own mediatory hand, so as now you may look unto God, and be at peace with him, you may see Heaven, and all the powers of Heaven reconciled to you, Rom. 5.1. Therefore being justified by saith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and not only so, v. 11. But we also Joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have received the atonement: here is the blessing mentioned in the Text, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation, but how must I consider him? why, consider this Lord as Mediator, making peace through the blood of his Cross, and then Christians you may Joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

because it is by him that you have received the atonement, Jesus Christ hath satisfied and reconciled God to you, he hath appeased God, he hath brought over the heart of God to the sinner, that now he may take comfort and encouragement in him, and go to him as to a Father in Christ Jesus, Eph. 2.13, 14. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace who hath made both one, &c. Is not this a matter of rejoicing for you, that now you may go unto God as your God, you may look up to God, and see him reconciled to you, and see all the properties of his nature looking towards you in a friendly way, that you may see God over-ruling all providences & dispensations for your interest and advantage, you may go and comfort yourselves in your God, you may encourage yourselves in him, you may go and rejoice in the Lord as your God through the blood of the Cross of Jesus your Mediator.

3. Hereby are our corrupt natures sanctified, and made holy unto God; Jesus Christ becoming man, he has consecrated unto the Lord that part of human nature, that he came of, and did belong to, he hath taken off our nature, and he hath offered it up unto the Lord, and so consecrated the whole lump that it was taken out of; this was typed out of old by the first fruits that did consecrate the rest, Levite. 2.1. Or of the Meat-offering; here you see was a part taken and offered up unto the Lord, and the whole was hereby consecrated. Now Jesus Christ he comes of that part of the world that was the Elect, and the chosen of God, he did not come in General of all mankind, though in a general way God hath said, that all Nations are of one blood, yet Jesus Christ did not come so promiscuously, and in the general, but he came of that particular part of man that the Lord had chosen, and set apart for himself, and that is the Elect of the world, and as for Reprobates, he came not of them, he was not of that rank and number, as you may see, John 17.16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world, and v. 19. For their sakes sanctify I myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. For their sakes, that is, for those that were the Chosen of God, and given to Jesus Christ by the Father, as v. 6. I have manifested thy

name unto the men, that thou gavest me out of the world; for their sakes I sanctify myself; he takes our nature and offers it to God, and consecrates it as a part, or the first fruits of the whole, whereby the whole nature of the Elect of God are dedicated to the Lord, and sanctified and made holy, or way is made for the sanctifying of it; I may allude unto that Scripture, in Rom. 11.16. For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy, and if the root be holy, so are the branches; I know this is not the meaning of this Text, I only allude to it; as the Apostle says in that case, so I say in this case, if the first fruits be holy, the lump is also holy, and if Jesus the root be holy, then all the branches are holy, to be under a peculiar and special consecration to the Lord; now here Christian, is a ground of rejoicing for thee, thou art born a child of wrath, and thy nature is a sinful nature, and there is by nature nothing but sin dwelling in thee; ay, but Jesus Christ he hath taken thy nature, he hath worn it, and he hath consecrated thy nature to God, and made way for the sanctifying of it. So as now way is made through Jesus Christ's appearing in our flesh for the consecrating of thee unto God, and making of thee holy, so as thou mayest rejoice, notwithstanding the remains of sin that are in thee, notwithstanding all the impurity and defilements that are to be found in thy heart; thou hast a stained, polluted Soul, thou lookest into thyself, and thou seest thyself so spotted and defiled, that thou art ashamed of thyself; well, but look upon Jesus Christ, and consider how thy nature is sanctified in him, he sits upon the Throne all holy, and thy nature that he did assume is holy; why Christian, there is holiness in the root for thee, there is holiness in Christ thy head for thee, and because he is holy, thou also shalt be holy; because he hath sanctified thy nature, therefore thy nature shall be sanctified, for your sakes, says he, I sanctify myself, that you also may be holy; I am holy, and you also shall be holy, Analogically, that is, in some proportion, in your degree and measure you shall be in a suitableness to my holiness, that you may be made meet for me. Says the Apostle in 1 Thes. 5.23. The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; ay, it shall be so, because Jesus Christ hath sanctified himself, and your nature is sanctified in him, and therefore you shall in due time be made holy, and therefore rejoice; though

defiled and sinful for a season, yet you shall be made holy, and without spot, and blameless. Christ hath made way for this.

Fourthly, hereby way is made for our stability, for an eternity and perpetuity for us in grace and in glory. Jesus Christ he is a Mediator forever; he hath taken our Nature to wear it forever; he will never lay aside our Nature again, no not to eternity; well therefore, we who are consecrated by him, and reconciled to God by the blood of his Cross, have a perpetual standing in his Grace, and shall have an everlasting abiding in that state of Glory unto which we shall be advanced by him, and through him; all Enemies cannot unthrone Christ; Ages cannot remove Christ off from his Throne in Heaven, but there he is, and there he shall ever Rule and Sit. Now because he Sits there, thence is your state in Grace sure: Why if he keep our Nature in conjunction with his own Divine Nature, then he abides always full and powerful in reference unto the Concerns that he is to manage, and the work that he is to do for you, full of strength, and powerful therein, able to make all effectual; he Sits there in Heaven to that end. This makes him so much concerned about the bringing in, and gathering home of those that he did appear for in our flesh, Joh. 10.16. See how Christ doth concern himself for all those for whom he was a Mediator. There are others, says he, that are not of this fold. I have some among the Jews and among the Gentiles; I have some of all Nations, these I must gather home: Christ will not lose any: And those that are brought home, he will maintain in his Grace, because he is an ever-living, and an everlasting Mediator, and a powerful Mediator: Why, under all your temptations (Christians) in your way, that you meet withal to cast away your confidence, and to renounce your hope in the Grace of God: Do you glory and triumph in Christ Jesus that is our standing Mediator in Heaven; comfort yourselves in him; for as long as he abides in our Nature, he will concern himself for us; and as he hath his Eye always upon the Glory of God, so upon the good of sinners; and being a Mediator, he is carried on with unbiassed ends, and aims to act impartially and indifferently between both Parties; therefore whilst Jesus Christ is Mediator, your state in Grace is certain: whilst Jesus Christ hath God's Glory to care

for, your Salvation is sure; for while he concerns himself for the Glory of God he must concern himself for the Salvation of his People. These two Interests are made one by Jesus Christ the Mediator. And then,

Fifthly, In the 5th and last place; Hereby we have familiarity and communion with God. Jesus Christ having as Mediator made peace for us; now behold he lets Believers into a comfortable enjoyment of God. Now we may look towards Heaven, and see God the Father, in the face of Jesus Christ. He therefore that hath seen the Son (saith Christ) hath seen the Father also, Joh. 14.9. What, Do you say, Shew us the Father? What, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? Do you not know that I have reconciled both together, and made way for communion, that you now, in and through me, may converse with the Father as your God and Father. Jesus as our Mediator hath given us boldness with God, and let us into the enjoyment of communion with God, and hath given us blessed familiarity with God that now we shall enjoy him in a Gospel way here, and have certain hopes of enjoying of him in a glorious way in Heaven, ever to be in his presence, and to behold his glory; all this comes in by Jesus Christ the Mediator; and by the way, there is no state and condition into which a Soul may be brought while he is under Grace on this side Heaven, but in that state and condition he may hold fellowship and communion with God. The three Children did so in the fiery Furnace. Daniel did so in the Lion's Den. Jonah did so in the Whale's belly, when he went down into the great deep, yet there he enjoyed communion with God. So as whatsoever your discouragements be here in the flesh, yet glory in this, that having peace with God through the blood of Jesus, you may go to him and say, Father: You may say, My Lord, and my God. You may converse with him in the way of the Gospel that is consecrated for us to hold and enjoy fellowship with him in; and now Christians, what a ground of rejoicing is here! Friends they die. A bosom, acquaintance in the flesh is taken from thee; they die from thee, and their places know them no more; but here is Jesus, he ever abides upon the Throne, clearing the way of communion between God and thee: So that God

is always thy friend, always in reconciliation to thee; always ready to make known himself, and to impart of his Love and Grace to thee. Here is an abiding ground of joy for us in Christ Jesus, if we consider him as he is a glorious Person in his Mediatory Constitution.

## **SERMON II.**

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

The words have been opened unto you, and we have given you this Proposition from them;

Doct. That there is enough in Christ alone for the Soul that is interested in him, to rejoice in, whatsoever his case and condition is.

You need no more than Jesus to make you blessed upon Earth; and there is enough in Jesus to make you blessed forever in Heaven; there is enough in Jesus to make you happy in time, and enough in Jesus to make you happy to eternity.

Now here for the Direction of your Faith in looking up to, and in dealing with Christ in a dark or low condition, we proposed to consider,

First, What Jesus Christ is: And here we told you, that

1. In the first place, He is glorious in his Person. I now proceed.
2. As he is glorious in his Person, so he is gracious in his Nature, full of grace, full of kindness, full of compassion both unto Saints and unto Sinners: He might have appeared glorious in his Person, and not gracious in his Nature. He might have appeared altogether terrible; a glorious Person, and yet surrounded with terrible Majesty;

but Jesus Christ is as gracious in his Nature, as he is glorious in his Person; he is full of compassion unto the Sons of men; there is no harshness, there is no bitterness in Christ Jesus; there is nothing in him (my friends) that will discourage you; if you search him never so narrowly, and if you look him through, there is nothing in him to discourage you, but he is full of love, and full of all encouragement: I do not mean that he is full of love only as he is God absolutely considered. The Apostle says, That God is Love; he speaks it of God the Father; and so as Christ Jesus is God equal with the Father in the Divine Nature, it is applicable to the Second Person; but that is not all, but he is full of grace in his Nature, as he is clothed with our flesh, and his Love it is always an encouraging Love; it is always a heart-casing Love; it is always a Soul-satisfying Love. You cannot find such an Object upon Earth, nor such an Object in Heaven, as Jesus Christ is; that is, so full of compassion, and so full of grace as he is; and the greatness of his Love as a ground of Joy unto the believing Soul in all conditions, is such as

First, Does break through, and conquer all opposing's.

Secondly, It heightens under all our sorrows: And

Thirdly, It abides unmixed in all seasons.

First, His Love is such, and so great, that it breaks through all opposing's and forbidding's. Though there is nothing in Christ to discourage our Love to him, yet I must tell you, that there is enough in us to discourage Christ's Love to us; and indeed there is nothing else in us, but that which may forbid the Love of Jesus Christ dealing with us: Now, whatsoever are the matters of discouragement in us, the Love of Jesus breaks through them all; it sticks at nothing: Let the heart be never so vile, let the sinner in himself be never so loathsome; let his ways be never so contrary; let the principles upon which he acts be never so averse, the Love of Jesus Christ breaks through all. What is the state of a sinner when Christ Jesus comes to visit him? a vile, loathsome, filthy abominable state: You have it set



out in the 16th of Ezekiel, by all manner of strange expressions, that shows the sinner is in a very loathsome state; in the 5th and 6th verses; Thou layest in thy blood, saith he, and none Eye pitied thee. One casts his Eye upon thee, and says, There is a loathsome Object, I will have nothing to do with him; another comes by, and casts his Eye, There is a loathsome Creature, Who would come near such a one? Thou wert cast out, says he, to the loathing of thy person, but says Jesus, I passed by thee, and it was a time of love. And in the 10th of Luke you may see it set out in a Parable of the Samaritan; one passed by a poor Creature that lay in his blood, and would have nothing to do with him; and another passes by, and would have nothing to do with him; but Jesus the good Samaritan he passes by, and he pities him, and binds up his wounds, and heals him. You may see what forbidding's this Love of Christ marches through, Titus 3 3. For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceivers, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice, hateful, and hating one another. Good Lord! one would think, is it possible that such a Soul as this should be brought home, and loved by Jesus Christ, that is in such a state, and have such a heart, and walks in such ways? But, says the Apostle, v. 4. After that the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, &c. And 1 Cor. 6.11. Such were some of you, but ye are washed, &c. Jesus, he loves you notwithstanding this, and continues to love you. Nay (my Friends) this is not all, but his love is such as doth not only march through great opposing's and forbidding's before grace, but high discouragements after grace; Why, what is the walk of the Soul after grace? Is it not very crooked, and very perverse? Doth not he fall short of the Rule? Doth not he offend God in everything he doth? Is there not a great deal of unbelief? Is there not a great deal of pride, a great deal of carnality, and impatience, and passion, in your hearts after grace? Do not you stumble and fall in the Christian walk every day? violate the Covenant of your grace state? break the Commandments of God? and yet notwithstanding all, be continues to love you; in the 80th Psalm. v. 30.31. Supposing, says God there, that my Children, my Redeemed Ones, that I have set my love upon, and

visited with my grace, that they will forsake my Law, and walk out of the way of my Commandments, that I have called them to walk in and charged them to abide in: Now the Love of Jesus Christ keeps up through all; therefore says the Apostle, Neither life, nor death, &c. shall separate us from the love of Christ, Rom. 8.38. The life of a Believer after grace is full of provocation; and it may be, he continues to provoke God as long as he lives: There are provocations and unkindness's in his way to the Lord all his life long, till he come to the end of his days; and yet says the Apostle, Life shall not separate. Now this is a great ground of rejoicing, that thou mayest look unto thy Jesus, and see him always loving of thee: Thy ways are very uneven and inconstant; and thou canst not keep in so good a frame as thou wouldest do, yet still Jesus loves thee: thou art full of wanderings, still Jesus loves thee; why, here's a love that marches through all opposing's.

Secondly, It is a Love that heightens under all our sorrows; I mean as to the communications and dispenses of it, or the actual and saving discoveries of it unto the Believer; it heightens under all our sorrows, that the greater our troubles are, the more he loves; and the more pitiful our state is, the more compassionate he is; he sees a Believer it may be, lying under great distresses of body, or in great Agonies of spirit; why, this draws out his love, he loves thee more, he is the more pitiful, and the more compassionate to thee, as he sees that thy state is a sorrowful state, and thy condition a troubled condition; and indeed the Believer never hath such discoveries and evidences of the love and kindness of God to him, as when he is in a low condition. Jesus Christ, he did come, you know, into a wilderness, to walk with Israel; And let their troubles be never so many, Jesus Christ would not leave them; but the greater their troubles were, the more was his love discovered, and the more did his faithfulness to them appear; and they never had such an eminent and signal appearances of God with them, as when they were in their Wilderness Travels. Jacob a holy man, never had so much of God, nor never had such a sight of God, as when he was in a low condition, Gen. 28.15. Behold I am with thee, and I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and

will bring thee again to this Land, and will not leave thee till I have done what I have spoken to thee of. And Gen. 31.42. Here the good man was in a great strait; he was afraid that he should be cut off; Ay but says he, The Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, he it was that rebuked thee yesternight. He did charge thee that thou shouldest speak no hurt, no evil unto me. And when Israel, Exod. 3. came into a groaning captivity and bondage; when their bondage grew very great and unsufferable, then did the Lord wonderfully discover himself, v. 7. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their Task-masters, and am come down to deliver them, &c. And Psa. 34.16. The Eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his Ears are open to their cry. Here is a supposition of a condition that the Soul is in, or may be brought into, that makes it groan and cry; Well, for your comfort know, that then in a special manner is the Eye of the Lord upon you, and his Ear open to you. And Psal. 56.18. Thou tellest my wanderings, &c. Thou tellest my flights; so some read it. I have never an enemy to pursue me but the Lord takes notice of it, and seeth whither the enemy hunts me and drives me; he takes notice of the fury of the oppressor that comes out against me: Thou tellest my wanderings, and puttest my tears in thy bottle. Every tear in a sorrowful condition Jesus Christ bottles up; he keeps it in remembrance; God's Peoples highest visits of favor and grace; their choicest experiences, and the most comfortable manifestations that they have of God, have been when they have been in a low condition. In prosperity, there God many times lets the Soul walk more at liberty; ay, and he hath less of God in prosperity than in adversity; there he is left to walk by his own light (as I may so say) and he bears up himself more upon his own comforts, he stands then (as it were) more upon his own legs, but in a weak condition, and in an afflicted state, in a time of trouble, then is the Lord present, discovering himself more fully to him; and hence it is that the Saints have had their highest Joys in the prison, and have been made to sing in the flames. They have commended the sharpest distress that ever they were brought into in this world to be such as could never separate Christ and their Souls: the love of your Jesus is so great, that it will

leap into a furnace to keep you company. It is such as it will come into any strait and hazard to support and bear up your spirits; Lo, this is your friend & your comforter, that you have, O believer, to rejoice in: Jesus his heart is always towards you, and the love of his heart it heightens under all your sorrows; let darkness grow upon your state, the light of his love will shine through it, and give you a light that you shall see your way: let your disconsolations be never so many in the creature, the love of Jesus Christ will countervail all, for if the creature be taken away, Jesus Christ will be the more, and in the want of all things he will discover himself so, as shall answer all to your Souls.

3. As his love is such as heightens under all our sorrows, so it abides unmixed in all seasons; as it is a love that cannot be diverted, so it is a love that cannot be adulterated, but it is always a sweet, always a pure love; a heart easing, a soul pacifying, a soul rejoicing love, none can throw any bitterness into the love of Jesus, but it is always a pure, clear, Crystal love, that hath no mixture in it; it is not thus with the love of friends; the sweetest, the best, the firmest friends that ever man had upon earth, there is some mixture in their love: They will sometimes rejoice your hearts, and sometimes they will make your hearts sad: loving friends may sometimes frown, and be churlish and unkind, and you may go to them with your hopes and expectations, and be disappointed; you may soon weary out their love, and they may discover such a mixture, that their hearts seem sometimes to be alienated. But it is not thus with the Lord Jesus, but his love is always a pure, clear, soul satisfying love, there is light in him, and no darkness at all, there is sweetness in him, and there is no bitterness at all. There are (as I said before) things that may encourage you, but there is nothing that will discourage you in Jesus, no not unto eternity: now believer this is thy friend, is not this a brother born for adversity, look amongst all thy friends upon earth, hast thou such a one? look into Heaven, are any of the Angels able to do for thee as Jesus can? Who is there in Heaven or Earth that thy Soul can desire in comparison with Jesus? he is glorious in his person, and he is gracious in his nature.

3. Jesus is the exhibiter, revealer, and unfolder of all the fullness of the blessed and glorious Attributes of God in a salvation way; God is thy God in and through Jesus Christ, and not otherwise, God absolutely in himself dwells in light unaccessable, and is a consuming fire, we cannot make an approach to God as he is absolutely considered, and live; but now in and through Jesus Christ, God he is a God that may be spoken withal, and all his attributes, and the properties of his nature are savingly enjoyable. There is a great deal of the glory of God that was discovered in the works of Creation, there was the glory of his wisdom, and the glory of his power, of his goodness, and of his sovereignty, these were discovered in the works of Creation, but as so exhibited they are not saving, neither do they afford soul-saving relief to us, absolutely considered in that primary exhibition that was made of them in the works of Creation; but now, in and through Jesus Christ, there all the attributes of God they are saving, all the attributes of God they are comfortable and refreshing. Adam when he was out of Christ, could not think of God, but it was a terror to him: therefore as soon as ever he had sinned, fear entered into his Spirit, and he hid himself; why? says the Lord to Adam, what is the matter? O! says he, I was afraid, and I hid myself? Why so? O to consider the greatness of God, and the wisdom of God that was discovered in the Creation, and the power of God that was discovered in the Creation, and the sovereignty and dominion of God that was discovered in the Creation: and to think that he had no interest in this God, that he had provoked and grieved him, this was a terror to him, and says Adam, Lord I was afraid, and I hid myself, ay, and all the attributes of God are enough to strike terror into the Soul that hath no interest in Jesus, considered out of Jesus, and they are not relieving. But now in and through Jesus, all God's attributes they are reconciled to, and engaged for the believer, and he may see that which may comfort him, and that which may satisfy him, 1 Cor. 1.24. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, as if he had said, all the power of God that is saving, it is in and through Christ Jesus, and all the wisdom of God that is saving, is in and through Christ Jesus, therefore in him it is said are hid all the treasures of wisdom and

knowledge, Col. 2.3. Now do but consider the attributes of God apart, and you will find, that they are no way relieving out of Christ, but in Christ they are full of Grace, and they are all exhibited and revealed through him as saving.

1. As to the Justice of God. Why, the justice of God out of Christ, it is terrible, to consider that God is a most exact, severe righteous God, that will give everyone their due, and will mete out a portion to everyone according to his desert. This is most terrible, to consider God out of Christ, & what may we expect, but as Ps. 11.6. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup: This will be the portion of all those that God hath to do withal out of Christ. But now in Christ Jesus this attribute is atoned, and all that wrath, and that justice, and that vengeance had to execute, is poured out upon Christ Jesus; justice dealt with the Lord Jesus in its utmost severity, and received satisfaction in him and from him; so as now says the Apostle in 1 John 1.9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, &c. and so Rom. 3.26. To declare I say at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus: Why, justice hath nothing to say against thee, but it speaks all for thee, because God is a righteous God, therefore he will love thee: and therefore he will bless thee with all blessings, because he hath received full satisfaction from Jesus Christ thy surety.

2. Consider secondly, the power of God out of Christ, and it is enough to fill thy heart with terror, Ezek. 26.14. Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee saith the Lord, &c. Hast thou a strength to grapple with me, or canst thou set thy foot against me? no verily, what are all the nations of the earth? they are less than a crawling worm before the foot of the great God, thou canst not stand before it. But now in Christ Jesus this Attribute is atoned too, and the mighty power of God is engaged to carry on, and to manage a salvation design in thee. Therefore says the Apostle, Eph. 1.19. That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his

power to us-ward who believe according to the working of his mighty power: So as let the power of God be never so great, it is a power engaged for thee to manage and carry on salvation work in thee: whatever be the opposing's that it meet with, either from thy own heart or from others.

Thirdly, If you consider the Attribute of God's Wisdom; It is not relieving out of Christ. That God is so infinitely wise, and so deep, the Soul may think all this is against me, and what is he now doing, but contriving new torments, and new Hells, that are more fierce and exquisite for me? and surely there will be no end of these torments. But now in Christ Jesus the Wisdom of God is employed in such a design of Salvation, that the Angels are said to pry into it; they are astonished at the design that is brought to light by the Wisdom of God.

Fourthly, If you consider the Patience of God out of Christ; it is no way relieving. For, what will it advantage a Soul that God does bear with it a while, when under all, there is wrath treasuring up for him against the day of wrath. Rom. 9.22. What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the Vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; So as the Patience of God is exercised in bearing with a sinner a little while till he greaten his sins: But God will come in upon him notwithstanding all, though he bear a little while. But now in Christ Jesus the Patience of God is reconciled, 2 Pet. 3.9. For the Lord is not slack concerning his Promises, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance. Why, in Christ Jesus God he is patient, and God he glorifies his Patience, that he might be known to be gracious.

Fifthly, The Love and Goodness of God out of Christ is not relieving; for 'tis at an end. The Soul may think, well, his love is at an end, he hath no more love for me; I am his enemy. Man, when he had sinned, must turn out of Paradise; he must pack away and be gone. See my

face no more, says God. But now in Christ Jesus is the Love of God revealed, and the Goodness and Mercy of God revealed.

Sixthly, The Immensity and Benignity of God, out of Christ, is not relieving. What though God may give thee a considerable portion in the world, he may fill thine hands with wealth, and thy house with treasure, and fill thy chest with store. But all this is given in anger and displeasure; there is nothing of love in it; and thy fullness is but fitting thee for the slaughter. There is the Curse of God upon all thy store and plenty; this will not at all avail thee. But now in Christ Jesus the Immensity and Benignity of God is reconciled, and how doth it speak out love and grace! God is an Immense God, and he gives out according to his own Immensity. And what then are the gifts of his Love and Grace! they are such as cannot be weighed; they are such as cannot be measured; there is a height, and depth, and length, and breadth, in all his goodness that cannot be fathomed. And all this he is to the Soul through Christ. And

Seventhly, If you consider his Eternity out of Christ; it is no way relieving. That God is my enemy, says the Soul, and is an everlasting God; he will be my enemy forever; and all that is in God will be engaged against me forever; his Justice, his Wisdom, and his Power, and all his Attributes will be engaged against me forever: But now in Christ Jesus, the Eternity of God is matter of great comfort to thee, because he is an Eternal God, being thy God, he will be thy God forever, thy dwelling place forever, and thy portion forever: he will never depart from thee: he will never leave thee: he will never cease to be what he hath promised to be, because he is an everlasting God; and thus you may run over all the Attributes of God, the glory and the fullness of them is exhibited and unfolded, published and revealed by Christ Jesus unto us; and hence it is that in Scripture ordinarily there is no great mention made of the mercy and kindness of God to sinners, but through and with respect to Christ Jesus, Eph. 1.3. Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And hence is it said, that we with open face behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2. Cor. 3.8. and 2



Cor. 4.6. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and hence is it that Jesus Christ is said to be the brightness of the Fathers glory, and the express image of his Person, Heb. 1.3. So as here is another thing that is an abiding ground of joy and rejoicing for us in Christ Jesus, he is the exhibiter, revealer, and unfolder of the fullness of all the blessed and glorious properties of God's nature in a salvation way: hence when God comes to enter into Covenant with a believer, he doth not enter into Covenant with him absolutely, but in and through Christ Jesus; and hence is it that all the promises of the Covenant that are God's gifts of grace to us, they are yea, and Amen, in Christ Jesus; now do but consider this, & you may see that Christ is one your Souls may take comfort in; consider the glory of his Person as he is Mediator, and consider the graciousness of his nature as he is full of love, and consider how he is the exhibiter and unfolder of the fullness of all the blessed and glorious Attributes of God in a saving way: And whatsoever discouragement Christian thou hast here below, look up to Jesus, and thou mayest see encouragement; have you men that are engaged against you? look up to Jesus, and you may see God in him engaged to be your God, God's power engaged for you, God's mercy, God's name, and God's glory, all engaged for you. Thus as to the first particular, what Jesus Christ is.

2. We shall now proceed to speak something to the second, and that is what this Jesus hath; you have seen what he is, we will now consider what he hath; and there are but two things that I shall glance upon under this head, that may be relieving to us in our looking up to Jesus.

1. He hath an irresistible power.

2. He hath an inexhaustible treasure.

1. Jesus in whom we should rejoice at all times, hath an irresistible power. A power over all flesh, over all Creatures, over good Angels,

and over bad Angels; a power over men, a power over every creature in the whole Creation of God, Col. 2.1. Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principalities and powers, and Mat. 28.18. All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth; Jesus Christ hath an absolute dominion over all Creatures as he is God, and this is a dominion that he received, not by gift from the Father, but he hath it from the right of Creation, as he is with the Father God over all blessed for evermore. But there is a delegated power as I may so say, a power that is committed to Christ Jesus by special grant from the Father as he is Mediator over the whole Creation of God, Eph. 1.21, 22. Far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominions and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church. Now Phil. 2.9, 10, 11. there you may see that he received this power from God, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, &c. and 1 Cor. 15.27. For he hath put all things under his feet, and Psal. 8.6. Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thine hands. Christ hath an universal power as Mediator over the whole Creation of God: Now that which is for thy comfort in it, is, in that this power is employed and improved;

1. For the overcoming of all thine enemies. And,
2. For the over-ruling and filling up of all thy wants.

1. This great and universal power that Christ hath received over all creatures is improved and employed in the overcoming and binding of all enemies that are against thee; Let thine enemies be never so strong, let the powers of men engage against a poor Soul; Jesus Christ hath a power greater than them all, and will bind them at his pleasure, and will take the prey out of the hands of the terrible; let Satan the Prince of darkness put in against a poor creature, he shall never be able to take him, and carry him Captive; for Jesus Christ will secure him, because greater is he that is in you, then he that is in

the world, 1 John 4.4. He is greater than the Prince, the God of the world; now the great power that Jesus Christ hath, is a power for you; Jesus Christ he is invested with this power as he is Mediator. that he might over rule all the enemies of your state, & vanquish them at his pleasure, so as let them for a while tyrannize and vaunt it; yet they shall never be able to carry one poor believer to Hell, nor out of the dominion & power of God's Grace; for all this power that Jesus hath, he is entrusted withal for your security, And

2. For the over-ruling of all your wants in your state. Jesus Christ hath a power, and all power, that he might supply you in all your occasions & necessities; it may be the poor believer is discouraged, he sees but a little meal in the barrel, but a little Oil in the cruise, he sees his stock begins to wast, he thinks he spends upon the principal, and it will soon be all done, and how shall he live then; the water in the pitcher is almost out, and the cake that is baked is almost eaten, and the Soul begins to think now it must die; ay, but Christian, this Jesus hath an all-power to answer all thy wants; let thy necessities be never so many, do but consider who it is that thou hast to deal with, it is he that hath the fullness of the earth in his own possession, Psal. 50.12. If I were hungry, I would not tell it thee for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof, and Psal. 89.11. The Heavens are thine, the Earth also is thine, and as for the world and the fullness thereof thou hast founded it? whose is the world I pray? In whose hand is it? is it not in the hand of your Jesus? Hath not a dominion over all creatures for you? his mediatory power is for you, to be improved for you, and to be employed for you, so as let your necessities be what they will, they cannot be greater than your Jesus hath a supply by him for, and is able to answer. You know the thousands of Israel, were called to live 40 years in a howling wilderness, where there was no plowing nor sowing, and yet behold they were always supplied. They did but cry unto the Lord, when they seemed to be in want, and the Lord gave them bread from Heaven, and flesh from Heaven, and he gave them water out of the Rocks, and the fullness of the earth is still in his hand, Elijah was in a low condition, and did not know what to do, and God commands a Raven to feed him, and God

commanded an Angel to be his Servant. All the Creatures they are in covenant for your good; I have made saith the Lord a Covenant for you with the Beasts of the field, and with the Fowls of heaven, and with all Creatures. And if God does but command the quail to come, and feed the people of Israel, they shall do it; And if God do but command the Ravens to seed the Prophet, he shall not want; says Christ, Mat. 16.9. do ye not yet understand, neither remember the 5 loaves of the 5 thousand, and how many Baskets ye took up? They were in a little strait, and reasoned among themselves: Why, says Christ, have you forgotten how I fed so many thousand with 5 loaves, and 2 fishes? and my arm is not shortened, my power is not lessened. It is an absolute power, an uncontrollable dominion that I have; therefore fear not Soul, do not weep over your empty bottle, do not weep over your lost estate, do not weep over your past comforts, but look up to the, fullness of Jesus; he hath enough for your relief, he can command of the fullness of the earth into your condition, and give it you by what hand he pleaseth. And as he hath an uncontrollable power that can rebuke all your enemies, and make a supply to you in all your wants; So,

2. He hath an inexhaustible treasure; It hath pleased the Father to put his all-fullness of Grace into him, and make him Lord of all that Grace that is to be dispensed to believers in that known place, Col. 1.19. It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. All Grace it comes from Christ, it is placed in him as the Fountain, and he hath the fullness of all Grace for your relief;

1. Unto vital influences: And,

2. Unto actual assistance.

1. He hath a fullness of all Grace unto vital influences; Therefore the second Adam was made a quickening Spirit, as the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 15.45. he hath received life that he might give it unto others; the Son of God is said to raise those that were dead, he is a living spring of Grace that sends vital Grace into our hearts. It is he that doth

implant vital principles of Faith, of love, of patience, and of new obedience, and makes us new creatures to God, and causeth us to live before him; and this may be matter of encouragement to those that are yet dead in trespasses and sins, those that are yet void of Grace, and destitute of spiritual life; why Sirs, Jesus Christ is a living Spring; Jesus Christ is a quickening Spirit, and he gives life to those that are dead, he is furnished with life by the Father to give life to dead Souls; let the dead sinner then hope in Jesus, and let him wait upon Jesus, he that hath commanded those that have been dead to live, can also command thy dead Soul to live, he hath still life-power in him, and life-grace in him. And,

2. He hath all grace for actual assistance; he is the true Olive, that empties of his golden Oil into the hearts of believers; hence Christ says, John 15.5. Without me you can do nothing. I am the Vine, and ye are the branches, or I am the Root, and ye are the Branches. Why, Jesus Christ he is an influential root; he is a root full of sap: and full of nourishment, and full of moisture, that he does convey to believers for their spiritual growth and improvement; by his strength it is that we are able to stand in a day of temptation, by his strength it is that we are able to manage spiritual duties. O alas, a little duty would be too great for us, were it not for the strength of Christ Jesus, and a little of the grace of Christ Jesus, will make a Soul wonderfully strong, that he shall be able to do even to amazement, to bear and to suffer to astonishment. A little of the Grace of Christ, O now patient will it make the Soul under great afflictions, and how will it strengthen a poor weak believer to hold on in the face of all difficulties! he shall be able to hold pace not only with the Footmen, but with the Horsemen, by the grace of Christ are we sweetly, swiftly, and joyfully carried on in the ways of new obedience, hence is it that we are oftentimes commended unto the grace of the Lord Jesus in divers Epistles; I commend you says the Apostle to the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you; and indeed there needs no more, because there is enough for our supply at all times, and therefore when we are poor and weak, and empty, and low in ourselves, we should look up to Jesus, Jesus is always full, we

know not how to go through such a duty, nor how to manage such a condition, we have not grace for it, and we think we shall sink and fail under discouragements; why Christian, if indeed thou hadst no more then what thou hast in thyself, thou mightest fear this, but keep thine Eye upon Jesus, he is full, and filled for the supply of thee, and he will communicate according to thy necessities, we may therefore at all times, and upon all occasions wait upon him.

### **SERMON III.**

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

WE are showing you from this Scripture what a constant ground of joy and rejoicing there is in Jesus Christ for the believing Soul, at all times, and in all conditions; as to what Christ is, and as to what Christ hath, we spake the last day, and shall now proceed unto the third particular proposed to be considered.

3. And that is, what Jesus Christ will do, and is a doing for the believing Soul that may be a ground of comfort and joy to him in all his heart saddening conditions and tribulations in this world.

And first, Jesus Christ appears as an Advocate in Heaven at the right hand of God for all believers, answering and silencing all accusations and charges brought in against them, whereby they are continued in that justified peace state, that in their first coming over to God they were stated in. There are many failings and provocations in a Christians way and walking with God. The remains of sin that yet abide in them, they will be rising up and putting forth into the life and life-acts of a Christian. But Jesus Christ as his Advocate in Heaven ever stands up before God to see the peace of a Christians state kept: Satan that old accuser of the Brethren, he is daily

observing a Christians walking and viewing a Christians steps, to see if he can gather up anything in his life to improve it, and carry it unto God against him, and believe it friends, he would not better your case as he represents it unto God, he would not lessen your fault, but he will greaten it, and make it worse than it is; he is called 1 Pet. 5.8. The adversary of believers. The word that we translate adversary, some read it a Court adversary, one that puts in something against you in the Court of Heaven, but I would rather read the word thus, one that will charge beyond truth, one that will go beyond the bounds of truth in the charges and accusations that he brings in, for the word in the Original does import so much one that acts against all rules of justice in the plea's that he shall put in, or the charges that he shall deliver against a Christians state in the Court of Heaven, Rev. 12.10. he is there called the Accuser of the Brethren, which accused them before God day and night, he is the old Accuser and Traducer of the Saints at the Bar of God's justice. Now Jesus Christ he always stands up at the right hand of God, there to appear as an Advocate on the believers account, suing out on the account of his blood, new pardons for their renewed transgressions, or the continuance of justification and of pardons upon their state, so as nothing may be heard in the Court of Heaven against them; Jesus Christ stands up to see that a Christians peace with God be not violated, and therefore he removes sin as fast as it appears, and he answers the accusation as soon as it is made, and he silenceth the adversary as soon as he comes, Rom. 8.34. Who (says the Apostle) shall condemn? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us: If sin appears, he will remove it, and if Satan step in, he will silence him, he is there upon this account, as an Advocate, or as an Attorney to answer for you, whenever your name is called in Question; and therefore says the Apostle, 1 John 2.1. My little Children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not, and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; as soon as ever an offense is committed, Christ steps up, and he pleads your case, and he urges the value of his blood that was shed for the remission of sins, that your peace with God, into which

you were brought in your first coming over to him, may be maintained; Now Christians do but consider this, and you will find that it is a ground of joy and comfort in your present state. It may be your outward peace is broken in upon; you have enemies that have disturbed you as to your outward comforts, and as to your outward joy and settlement, you have those that have incensed it, may be your intimate friends against you, that now they stand aloof from you, well though it be so, yet your peace with God, that abides, and Jesus Christ as your Advocate continues you in your justified state before God, let the Devil do his utmost, he shall never incense God against a believer, because Jesus Christ is an Advocate always at his right hand, speaking for him, let him tell never such stories of a Christians carriage and conversation unto the Lord, yet he shall never incense God against him. You know that he did his utmost to incense God against Job, he told the Lord fair stories of him, that there was no truth, no sincerity in him, and that he served him but for the comforts of his state, and for the outward advantages that he did enjoy, but Jesus Christ he saw the peace of Job kept, he was his Advocate then so early, and he maintained Job in the love and favor of God, and thus will he do for all believers, he will silence all accusations, and remove all objections, and he will continue you in your peace state with God; the virtue of Christ's death is a continued virtue, it is always influential upon the heart of God for a Christian, the blood of Jesus is said to be a pleading blood, Heb. 12.24. And to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things then the blood of Abel; It is a pleading blood, and it says, Father, Remember the merits of the Sacrifice of my death, remember the satisfaction that thou hast received, and do thou continue to love, and continue to bless, and continue to delight in, and to acknowledge these poor ones, though they fail, and though they provoke thee. The believer it may be is so ashamed of himself upon an overcome, that he hath not one word to say for himself, he can give no reason why a decree of justice should not come out against him, but the blood of Jesus, that is always speaking, and always interceding, whereby we are kept in that justified peace-state with God, that in our first coming over to God



we are stated in; and this may satisfy the Christian under all the disquiets, troubles, turmoil's and unsettlements that he meets withal in this world.

Secondly, Jesus Christ is a powerful Intercessor in Heaven, daily urging the merits of his Death, and improving the Interest that he hath with God for the completing of the work begun in the hearts of Believers, whereby they are growing up to perfection. Jesus Christ is not only an Advocate with the Father, silencing and answering all accusations and charges, and so maintaining of the Believer in his justified Peace-state with God, but as a lively and living Intercessor, he is always urging the merits of his Death, and improving the Interest that he hath with God, for the completing of the good work of his Grace that is begun. Jesus Christ hath not only a Fountain of all Grace for your constant supply, but he acts the part of an Intercessor, and improves the merits of his Death for the managing of the work of Grace that is begun in your Souls. This you have, Heb. 9.24. Jesus Christ is gone into Heaven to appear in the presence of God for us: And he is not there to appear only as an Advocate or an Attorney, but he is there as a mighty Intercessor pleading with God in the strength of the merits of his own Death, improving all his Interest with the Father for you, Rev. 5.6. In the midst of the Elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven Horns, &c. This Lamb is Christ. Now Christ Jesus he is in Heaven, advanced upon a Throne for you: He is in the midst of the Throne near unto his Father; and how doth he sit? or how doth he appear? Why, says he, he appears as a Lamb as it had been slain; that is, Christ he bears the marks of his Death before his Father upon the Throne; he is there to make a fresh commemoration of his sufferings, presenting his bloody death, and his bloody Sacrifice before his Father. As Jesus Christ after he was risen, said unto Thomas, Come, says he, behold my wounds, and see the print of the Nails in my hands, and in my feet. So Jesus Christ says as it were to his Father; Father, behold these wounds! behold how I was pierced! behold how I was wounded for these people! and, as one says, so many wounds, so many cries. Every wound hath a crying mouth that is daily pleading with God for

the Believer. Jesus always stands as a Lamb as it were slain, urging his death, urging his agony, urging the greatness of his sufferings, when justice had him under the lash, when he trode the Wine-press of his Fathers wrath alone, and he is urging the value of his death for the succeeding of the work of grace begun, for the increasing of strength, for the carrying on of your Souls unto perfection, Jesus Christ lives upon the Throne, carrying on this work, and for this great end, he considers the Christians state in all his dangers, and in all his weakness, and under all his wants, and he is improving his death for more grace, and for an increase of spiritual blessings, he knows your dangers by reason of your temptations in the world, and he is praying for you there, and improving his interest with his Father on that account, John 17.15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil; O Father says he, they cannot stand against the temptations of the world, in their trades and concerns in the world, not alone, let thy grace be sufficient, and let thy strength be sufficient to secure them in their dangers, he sees that your grace is yet but small, and will hardly stand against a small encounter, and therefore he prays that it may be increased, as Luke 22.31, 32. I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: as if he had said I know that thy grace will be sorely tried, and will meet with great opposition, but I have prayed that it may not fail, he pleads with the Father for a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit upon the hearts of his people, John 14.16, 17. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth, &c. And when Jesus Christ does pray for the Spirit, he prays that he may come in the royalties of his office into your hearts, bringing in the fruits of grace, of peace, and of joy, and of spiritual comfort. And thus he in Heaven looks after the work that is begun, and upon that account he is called not only the Author but the Finisher of our Faith, Heb. 12.2. The intercessory work of Christ is not only at your first coming over to God, to give you favor with God, & peace with God but it is a continued act over your whole state, till you come in glory, Heb. 7.25. He is able to save to the uttermost, or to carry on salvation work, till he hath completed it; Why? because he ever liveth to make

intercession for us; Jesus Christ by his intercession does deliver out of one straight today, and he will continue in the same work, and if a new straight does appear tomorrow, he will aid through that also, and he will go on so, until he hath settled thy Soul in a complete salvation state. Jesus Christ does daily exhibit, and urge, and present the merits of his death, for the carrying on, and managing of the work that he hath begun. And here take notice by the way, that when we say Jesus Christ continueth to intercede; you must know, that he doth not intercede in a way of free Grace, as we do at the throne of Grace, he doth not intercede in a precarious way, as believers do, but he intercedes in the merit of his own sufferings, his interceding is an authoritative act, he doth not only pray the Father for Grace, and for acceptance for us, but he urges the Father upon the account of the infinite price of his own sufferings that he gave him in, and so does in an authoritative way challenge and demand the blessings of his purchase, or of his death for the believer, he demands of his Father the Grace that he pleads for, and he in his interceding act, does will it into the Souls of his People, I will Father, says he, that those that thou hast given me, be with me, where I am; and God the Father does always hear his Son, he never denies his Son any Petition that he offers to him, John 11.42. And I knew, says he, that thou hearest me always, and Psal. 2.8. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance; says the Father, ask and you shall have; so as Christ's intercession is a prevailing intercession, it is a powerful intercession, it is always a speeding intercession; now Christians, do but consider what a ground of joy and comfort this is for you in your present low condition. It may be thou hast met with many losses in thy outward estate, it may be thou hast met with many breakings there, & emptying's there, that thy outward comforts they are many of them gone, & thou seest others very uncertain; ay, but here is Jesus Christ, he is interceding with the Father for more Grace, for more spiritual blessings, so as though thou art poor in temporals, thou art growing rich in spirituals; though thou hast but a little of the Creature, yet thou hast Grace that is thriving in thy heart, that Christ will see shall be always increasing & growing; be not discouraged therefore though thou hast but a little Grace, & but a little strength;

who knows how much Grace the prayer of Christ may bring into thy heart, Christian; who knows how much strength the prayer of Christ may bring in upon thy weak condition to clothe thee with, be not therefore discouraged, though thou see thy Bottle empty, and thy outward store growing low, seeing Jesus Christ is carrying on the work of Grace in thy Soul, and enriching of thee with the high and sacred blessings of Heaven; verily Sirs, if any of you had a Friend at Court, that did always sit at the right hand of the King, and that had his ear, and a grant of all his Petitions that he made to him, and if you knew that he would be always moving the King on your behalf, and pleading with him for some new favors, and new advantages, and places of trust and dignity, and the like, how would your hearts rise in the remembrance thereof, and you would promise yourselves great things in a little while. Why, Jesus Christ he is your friend in the Court of Heaven, that hath always the Ear of God; and verily it is not a vain notion; he is always interceding with the Father on your behalf, pleading for some new blessings, for some further discoveries of his love, and manifestations of his favor for thy further proficiency in grace, that thou mayest be carried on unto perfection. Jesus Christ is always pleading this with his Father; so as though you be very low as to your outward condition, yet you may rejoice that your spiritual comforts they are always thriving; they are growing comforts; and your strength in grace is always an increasing strength; Christ prays for it, and makes it so by his daily Intercession.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ perfumes all your Spiritual Offerings; and presents them unto God as grateful and acceptable, through whom they always remain as a sweet memorial in his presence, notwithstanding the weakness and imperfection of them as they come from us.

My Brethren, the liquor of our spiritual services hath a tang of the Vessel through which they pass; there is an ill favor in all our duties as they come from us; there is a great deal of sin, a great deal of self, a great deal of corruption that doth mingle with them, and doth defile them, and give them an ill savor. But now Jesus Christ he

always stands between God and us, and receives our Offerings, and refines them, and purifies them, and cleanseth them, and perfumeth them, and so makes them a sweet odor, and then offers them up unto God; and hence comes our Prayers to be prevalent; hence come they to be heard, and to have returns of Grace made unto them. It was Jesus Christ that made Noah 's Sacrifice so sweet and odoriferous, Gen. 8.20, 21. And Noah built an Altar unto the Lord, and he took of every clean Beast, and of every clean Fowl, and offered burnt Offerings on the Altar; and the Lord smelled a sweet savor, &c. Christ Jesus was in his Sacrifice, and that made it pleasant, and sweet, and fragrant before the Lord. This was typed out of Old by the High Priests bearing the iniquities of the holy things of God's People away, Exod. 28.36, 37, 38. He shall bear their iniquities, that is, he shall bear them away; he shall receive the iniquities of their holy things, and shall bear them away, whereby all shall be hallowed; and this shall be, says he, upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord; or that they may be for an acceptableness before the Lord: Why, Jesus Christ is the Gospel of this type; he told his Church of old, that there must be a Priest and an Intercessor for the sins of their holy things; now Jesus Christ is this Priest that takes the iniquity of our holy things away; and so he presents our spiritual offerings unto God refined and purified, that no dross, that no matter of sin may be found in them when they are presented before God, Cant. 3.6. Here the Church of God is spoken of, as coming out of a dry barren wilderness condition; now she comes like pillars of smoke, she comes praying, she comes pleading with God; now her prayers are like pillars of smoke, that is, say some, to set forth the darkness, to set forth the corruption or weakness of them: Our prayers, as they come from us, are more smoke than fire; they are more sin than grace; there is a great deal of corruption upon them that does defile them, and that does besmear them, they go up like pillars of smoke, but they are perfumed with Myrrh and Frankincense, and with all Powders of the Merchant; that is, Jesus Christ he sweetens them, he scents them, and makes them offerings of a sweet smelling savor, as anything is perfumed by sweet Spices, or odoriferous Powders that are mixed with them: Or, Who is this

that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke; that is, say some others, like the smoke of Incense; the Prayers of God's People they do ascend like the smoke of Incense; Jesus Christ he perfumes them with his Incense, and so they go up through Jesus Christ as the smoke of Incense of old went up to Heaven; and this perfumes them, as that which is perfumed by Frankincense and by Myrrh, and by sweet Powders, and the like: It comes all to one reckoning in which sense soever we take it. It sets forth thus much to us, that howsoever spotted, and howsoever defiled, and howsoever tainted our duties are as they come from us. Jesus Christ makes them sweet and savory, and pleasant unto his Father, and presents them as a sweet memorial unto him, Isa. 56.7. Even them will I bring to my holy Mountain, and I will make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt Offerings and Sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine Altar, &c. Why, the Believer comes and brings his poor Petitions, but they are not fit for the great God to read over, to consider, nor to look upon; but Jesus Christ he examines them, and he mends the Petitions, and draws them up fit to be presented to his Father, and delivers them with his own hand, and then they come to be accepted. You are, says God unto his Church of old, a Kingdom of Priests unto me, and a holy Nation, Exod. 19.6. Now this is applied unto the Church in New-Testament days, 1 Pet. 2.5. And in v. 9. Ye are a chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People: Ye are made a holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices. Ay, but will they be accepted? yes, through Jesus Christ, acceptable to God by Christ Jesus. And Rev. 1.6. He hath made us Kings and Priests unto God the Father; that is, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices; but this will not do alone; Jesus Christ he stands to receive every Offering, and it passes through his refining and cleansing hand, and his perfuming Incense, and so it comes unto God, and then 'tis a valuable Sacrifice; then 'tis a pleasant and delightful Sacrifice; he puts it into his golden Censer, and offers it up to his Father, as Rev. 8.3. Here is the great Mystery of the Intercession of Jesus Christ held forth to you, in reference to your spiritual Oblations; he had a golden Censer, and there was given him much Incense; he hath enough for all your prayers; there was given him much Incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of

all Saints; so we read it; but it might also be read, That he should add it unto the prayers of all Saints; so as our prayers are not weighty as they come from us, nor acceptable, but they have the Incense of Christ Jesus added to them, and then they are weighty, and then they are acceptable, and from hence God the Father comes to be delighted in the supplications of his servants. Now by the way Christians, I beseech you, take in this notion into your faith; it is generally received and believed, that we must rest upon the satisfaction of Christ Jesus for the acceptance of our persons; let me tell you, that you must also act Faith upon Jesus Christ as an Intercessor, and rest upon the Merit of his Incense, and of his Mediation for all your speedings in your approaches unto God. As you must act Faith upon the Merits of Christ Jesus for the acceptance of your persons; so you must act Faith upon the Merits of Christ's Death, and of Christ's Life now in Heaven for the acceptance of all your spiritual performances with God. And here, my Brethren, you have another ground of Joy and Comfort in your low estate here: Suppose that you be tossed to and fro by many tempests; suppose that you were sorely broken in upon by breaches of providence; suppose that you have lost many dear friends that you did use to consult withal, and to go to for assistance, why, yet you have Jesus Christ keeping your way clear unto the Father, and he it is that gives you a constant boldness with him; Bring all your Petitions; ask what you will in the Name of Christ Jesus, and it shall be granted to you: Christ stands ready to receive your Petitions, and to mend whatsoever is amiss in them, and to present them in his own dress unto his Father, that they may be accepted; and in and through Christ you have a liberty and boldness with God; Let us come boldly, says the Apostle, unto the Throne of Grace, Heb. 4. ult. And in Heb. 10.19. Having therefore Brethren boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus. Jesus Christ will not throw out a Petition because it was no better worded: Jesus Christ will not throw back a Prayer, because the Spirit was no more composed and ordered in it: Jesus Christ will not throw back a duty, because he sees a little unbelief in it, or something of self in it, or something that is displeasing to his Father in it, but he takes out whatsoever is displeasing, and he adds his own incense to it, and

carries it unto his Father, and delivers it an acceptable offering unto him. And on this ground you may joy and rejoice in the Lord Jesus, whatsoever your condition in this world is.

4. Jesus Christ doth in wisdom direct, and with love and grace influence all the losses, crosses, and afflictions of your Christian state, whereby they are all made to further your spiritual interest, and be subservient unto your great soul advantage.

It is the lot and portion of God's People to be often afflicted, to be sore broken, as in the place of Dragons, and they are many times emptied from Vessel to Vessel, but there is infinite wisdom, (Christian) infinite reconciled wisdom, that doth order all the motions of providence in all the changes of thy condition; Jesus Christ he hath hold of every providence, and he directs it in wisdom, and influences it with love and grace, that so it must do thee good, it cannot be unto thy harm or prejudice, in Eph. 1.22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things unto the Church. Christ's providential Kingdom is subordinate unto his spiritual Kingdom, unto which thou doest belong, and by his grace and wisdom he directs all, and in mercy doth manage all for thy advantage, Psal. 34.15. The Eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry: The Lord Jesus is ever viewing of a Christians state, in his goings out, and in his comings in, in his lyings down, and in his risings up: he is ever viewing a Christians condition, and wisdom doth direct all for the best, it is said therefore, Ezekiel 1.18. and it is an observable Scripture, as for their rings they were so high, that they were dreadful, and their rings were full of Eyes, round about them four. The Prophet is here speaking of the great mystery of providence, sometimes says he, God's providences are very deep; they are very tremendous and dreadful; but be it so: the rings of the wheels of providence they are always full of Eyes, says he, round about them four, they are full of Eyes, [Eyes] note, wisdom, directing, guiding, influencing, and managing. Now says he, the rings of the wheels that move in every state & condition are always full of Eyes, there is not



only an Eye one way, but there is an Eye that looks every way. The wheels of providence they are full of Eyes; there are many Eyes, Jesus Christ does observe, and he looks narrowly, and in his infinite wisdom he doth direct for the best; there are Eyes in the wheels. Things do not casually come upon you, things do not come upon you by chance, but there is the wheel, that is full of Eyes, that doth move (Christian) in all your troubles, and in all your losses, and in all your crosses, and by the Eye of God that is upon your condition, that set the wheel a going, doth he observe and take notice what is best for you, when it is seasonable to make a breach, and then a breach shall be made, when 'tis seasonable to take away a comfort, then a comfort shall be taken away, when 'tis seasonable to let a temptation loose, then a temptation shall come, when 'tis seasonable to put you upon a trial, then the trial shall appear: The rings are full of Eyes. There is wisdom that doth direct the providences of a Christians state, therefore you have it, 1 Pet. 1.6. I pray mark this Scripture: if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; the Eyes of the wheels observe when 'tis needful to come in with a change of providence, when 'tis needful to let loose Satan upon you, when 'tis needful to bring a cross into your condition, when 'tis needful to bring an affliction upon you, to lay a wound upon your bodies, or a weight upon your Spirits, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, so as the temptation don't come till you have need of it: God sees when 'tis time to bind, & when 'tis time to loosen, when 'tis time to enlarge, and when 'tis time to straighten, when 'tis time to give, and when 'tis time to take, and if need be 'tis thus and thus with you; and as the Lord sees for the over-ruling in matters of affliction, so also for the comings in of comfort, therefore says the Apostle, Heb. 4.16. Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in the time of need; when God seeth that you need more strength, and more grace, you shall have it, when God sees that you need more comfort, and more peace, you shall have it, so as wisdom does direct all, and love and grace does influence all the crosses, and all the losses of a Christians state, so as they shall work for his good and advantage; so Heb. 12.5, 6, 7, 8. Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and

scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth: Now see the design of God in all afflictions, the design that love and grace is managing and carrying on, through the influence that it hath upon afflictive dispensations, v. 10.11. For they verily, for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit that we might be partakers of his holiness, &c. He fans you that he might fan away your chaff, he puts you into the furnace to refine you from your dross, and make you more pure Gold, he is carrying on a design of grace and holiness by all the emptying providences that he brings upon your state, and by all the changes that he makes in your condition, Isaiah 27.8.9. In measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away sin. And Ezekiel 20.37. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bonds of the Covenant, they were God's Covenant People already, therefore he means, I will bring you more into the Covenant, I will bring you to walk closer up to the Covenant of my Grace; the Apostle under this consideration tells us, 1 Pet. 1.7. That the trial of your faith being much more precious than that of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. This is from the blessed design that Christ Jesus is managing by all your afflictions, in wisdom directing of them, and in love and grace influencing of them; hence the Apostle James says, James 1.2. My Brethren, says he, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, why, how is it possible for a Christ so to do? Let him but consider that infinite wisdom reconciled, does direct the temptation, and love and grace do influence the temptation, then behold he may count it all joy when he falls into divers temptations, and 2 Cor. 4.17. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory: See how all the losses, crosses, troubles and temptations of a Christians state, are made subservient unto his main and spiritual interest, they help to perfect holiness that is begun, to bring your hearts closer to God, to cause you to walk more watchfully, to live more believingly, & more dependingly, to carry it more humbly before the Lord: Now Christians here is a further

ground of rejoicing for you, whatever are the emptying's of thy state, whatever are the losses and the crosses of thy present condition; why say, that wisdom directs, and love, and grace influenceth all for the best. If I be broken, it is for the best that I should be broken, if I be thus and thus afflicted; why, it is best for me to be thus afflicted. I am thus and thus reproached, I will be contented, and I will be satisfied in the will of God, it is best for me to be thus reproached. I am thus and thus tempted, I am thus and thus unsettled, thus and thus buried; well, God sees it best for me to be thus, this is the best condition, and this is the best providence, this is the best dispensation for me; God sees that it is so, for wisdom that doth direct, and love and grace that doth always influence.

5. Whatever are the failures of your outward condition, Jesus Christ doth always keep the wells of Salvation open for you, which are always full, whither you may come and have your fill.

Creature Springs they often times run low, but promise streams they are always high, Creature Cisterns, they are often empty and dry, but the promises that are the wells of salvation, they are always full. The leaves and the blossoms of your outward condition, they are often blasted by the wind, and withered by the frost, and they drop off, but the promises they always keep their greenness, they always keep their beauty, they always retain their fullness: Christians there is a fullness in the promises, that you can never draw out, if you should spend all your days upon a promise, you can never empty it; the Saints that have gone before, have been spending one age after another upon the promises, and still they are full; and they are full with a running over measure, now whatsoever is thy condition in this world, if thou beest a believer, there is some promise of Grace that doth suit thy condition, whatsoever is thy temptation, or thy trial there is some promise that doth offer relief; whatever is thy necessity, there is some promise that stands ready with mercy and grace. Now Jesus Christ he stands at the head of every promise, and keeps the way clear, and the passage free for every believer, and therefore Christ is called the yea, and the Amen of every promise,

that is, they have their certainty, and their stability in him, and from him, confirmed by him, and are communicated from him, Jesus Christ is the Lord of every promise, and he will see (Christian) that thou shalt not be wronged of thy right, he will not suffer any to come and take away thy blessedness that lies there, now whatsoever thou wantest in thy outward condition, the promises are always full, whither thou mayest go for relief; we read that the Philistines did fill up the wells that Abraham's Servants had digged, Gen. 26.18. these wells of water, they were stopped, enemies could fill them up; but my friends, all the Devils in Hell cannot fill up one well of Salvation, they cannot rob a Christian of one Gospel promise, neither can they obstruct his way to the promise, but Jesus that sits above, and is at the head of the promise, he always keeps the way clear and open; now my friends here is another ground of rejoicing for you in Christ Jesus, you look into your estates, and you see that you are on the losing hand daily, you look upon your outward condition, and you see that you are going down the wind there, you look upon your outward comforts, and you see them fading, and dying, and uncertain, and perishing before your Eyes; ay, but your choicest blessings that lie in the promises, these are in no uncertainty, and though you have not a friend upon earth to go unto, and though you have not a fullness upon earth to go to, yet you have a fullness in the promise (Christian) that you may go to; there is a fullness of mercy, and a fullness of grace in the promise, whither you may go. Those that have taken away your outward comforts, they cannot take away your comfort in the promise, neither can they stop up your Wells of Salvation; says David, Psal. 119.50. This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy Word hath quickened me. The word of Promise that came to my Soul with life, and that was as life from the dead unto me, when I was in a low, and in an afflicted state; when I was sorely tried, and broken in upon; why, consider Christians then, that you have a ground of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, that he is the Yea and the Amen of every Promise, that can never fail; and he secures the Grace of every Promise for you, and the Comfort, and the Light, and the Strength of every Promise for you. You may therefore, though you

are brought low in your outward condition, look up unto Christ Jesus and rejoice.

Sixthly, Jesus Christ he is always a Light unto the Believer in all his darkness, and a Guide unto him in the intricacies of his way unto his Fathers house. We know not which way to go, nor how to direct our own steps; Jesus Christ he is promised as a Light, as a Light unto the world, and that is not all, but he is a Light unto his own People in a special manner, and a Guide unto them in all their ways, Luke 1.79. To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace: Why, the Believer he wants counsel, and he wants direction, and he wants advice from the Lord, how to steer his course; Jesus Christ he stands by him, and he administers it; he opens the way; he reveals the Mysteries of the Kingdom; he instructs the ignorant, and teaches those that are fools the great and deep things of God, and therefore the promise is, that the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err in the way of peace, Isa. 35.8. He will guide them, and direct them, and instruct them by his counsel at all times. And because Believers go in a wildered way, that is very hard to find, and dangerous, and hazardous, Jesus Christ therefore is such a Guide, that takes the charge of them, as a Commander and Leader: So the Promise runs, Isa. 55.4. Behold I have given him for a Witness to the People, a Leader and Commander to the people; so as he takes the charge of the Believer in his wildered way; he guides him, and he directs him in his course, and he will see that he shall be safe aided to his Fathers house. Now Christian, here is a further ground of rejoicing for thee: You meet with many troubles, and discomfortures, and discouragements, and disappointments in your outward condition; but Jesus Christ he will see that you shall not be disappointed of Heaven, but he is an abiding Light to you, and a constant Guide to you; and he will so lead you, that you shall not stumble nor fall, nor perish in your way unto the Kingdom.

Seventhly, Jesus Christ maintains the Union of the Believer with himself, from whence arise unchangeable relations of Grace, both

with the Believer and him, and with the Believer and the Father, which are always pleadable and improvable. My Brethren, Jesus Christ takes Believers into a near and intimate union with himself, and makes them branches of him who is as the stock; he makes them as bone of his bone, and as flesh of his flesh: He takes them into an union that he will never suffer to be broken. It is an indissoluble union; it is an insuperable; it is an inseparable union; therefore says Christ Jesus, Joh. 17. Those that thou hast given me have I kept, and not one of them have I lost. Jesus Christ never lost a member; Jesus Christ never lost a limb; Jesus Christ never lost a true subject; Jesus Christ never lost a sheep out of his fold; so as this near intimate union it is an indissoluble union; now from this union do arise everlasting, unchangeable relations of Grace, that are always pleadable and improvable, from this near and intimate union with the Lord Jesus, doth Christ ever abide your head, filled with strength to animate you, and to influence you; filled with wisdom and knowledge to instruct you, and inform you; filled with understanding to guide you in your way. In this intimate union you are members of his body; he will never suffer you to be cast off; so as you may always (Believer) stand in him, and plead the advantages of a standing in him, and of an implantation and engraftment into him. Jesus Christ in this union is always your Husband, and you are always his Spouse; and the advantages of this relation are always enjoyable, and they are always pleadable; I have betrothed thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment forever, saith the Lord; so as I will never cast thee off; I will never give thee a Bill of Divorce; I will be thy Husband forever, and thou shalt be my Spouse forever: The relation is always pleadable. And in your near and intimate union with himself as you, stand in relations of grace to him, so you stand in relations of grace to the Father: You are the Adopted Children of God; God the Father of Christ is your Father, and he is always your Father, and you are always his Children; nothing can come between; nothing can cause him to cast you out, and disinherit you: having received you into this firm, into this intimate union, you are Heirs; being made one with Christ, you are Joynt-Heirs with Jesus Christ, Heirs of God; once an Heir, and forever an Heir; so as all the blessed things of the purchase

of Christ Jesus, and the whole Inheritance of Christ Jesus is before you; 'tis yours, and for you. And now Christian, what a ground of rejoicing is here for you? What though your outward comforts are coming and going? they are fading and vanishing: It may be you have your hands full of them today, and tomorrow they will be gone, and you shall see them no more forever; yet know, that you have an abiding ground of Joy in Christ Jesus; for he it is that maintains your union with himself; he hath not only united you, but he keeps you in union, and he maintains all the gracious relations of the union, both with him, and also with his Father; so as though you have not a Friend upon Earth, you may go and say, well, I have a Friend in Heaven; I have not a Father upon Earth, ay, but I have a Father in Heaven; I have not a Husband upon Earth, ay, but I have a Husband in Heaven; I have not a faithful Brother upon Earth, ay, but I have a sincere hearted Brother in Heaven; the relations of Grace they hold, and they are always pleadable and improvable. And then

Eighthly, In the eighth and last place, Jesus Christ is making glorious provisions in Heaven, and will in due time glorify all his people with himself forever, says Christ Jesus, It is expedient for you that I go away, 'tis for your good, it was for your good that I came, and it is for your good that I staid so long, and it is for your good that now I go away: For I go to prepare a place for you: In my Fathers House are many mansions, and I go to make these mansions ready for you, I go to Heaven as your fore-runner. Consider Jesus as your fore-runner, that is entered in for you beforehand, making Heaven ready, preparing the Crown and the Kingdom for you; now though you be robbed of your earthly comforts, you cannot be robbed of your Heavenly glory; you may be spoiled of your Treasures here upon Earth, but you cannot be cheated of your Treasures in Heaven? Why, Jesus Christ is there to secure it, and he hath it in possession, he is there as your fore-runner, he is there to make all ready, I will Father, says he, that those that thou hast given me, be with me where I am, and the glory that thou hast given to me, be bestowed upon them, that they may be one, as thou Father and I are one. Now under all your vicissitudes, and changes, and emptying's, and spoiling's in this

world, look up to Christ Jesus, and see Heaven sure in him, and see glory sure in him, and see a Crown, and a Kingdom sure in his hand, take comfort then Christians in all your necessities here below in the Lord Jesus Christ, and with the Prophet do you always glory, and rejoice in him.

Use. All that I shall super-add, shall be only in a sentence or two unto Sinners (for as to Saints how they should come to improve Christ Jesus, and to live by faith upon him in all conditions, I shall show you afterward, if God gives the opportunity;) but here in a word let Sinners consider how miserable their state and condition is? Why Sirs; you have heard that there is an abiding ground of joy in Christ Jesus for the believer, whatsoever his state is; But do you consider that none of this belongs to you, all this comfort belongs to Saints, not to you; you have no part in it, there is an abiding ground of terror, of sorrow, and of bitterness that belongs to you, because you are apart from Christ that hath such a fullness of all joy in him for believers. Take heed therefore how you content yourselves in a Christless state, and how you bless yourselves whilst you are remote from Jesus Christ, and without a part and interest in him; thou art not under the blessing, but under the curse; there is the flaming Sword that hangs over thy head, and there is the hand writing that is over thee upon the wall. Let then the Sinner tremble on the consideration of his perishing condition in which he is, out of Christ, And let it be an inviting word to all of you who have not yet made your close with Jesus, that you inquire after him, that you earnestly pursue after him; for your rest and your peace, your comfort, and your blessedness, it is all in him, and can only be obtained by a closure with him.

## **SERMON IV.**



Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

The Proposition that we are upon from the words is this.

Doct. That there is enough in Christ Jesus alone for the Souls full rejoicing and triumph, whatsoever his condition be in this world.

Before I come to that which I further proposed to consider and speak to, viz. how the believer should be helped to live a life of faith upon Christ Jesus unto his spiritual joy and comfort in all conditions; I shall a little insist upon, and labor to clear to you the Souls interest in this Jesus that hath such abiding grounds of joy at all times in him; says the Prophet here in the text, Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. I shall insist upon the Pronoun [my] and labor to clear the believers standing, that he may know his interest, and that he is indeed united unto Christ Jesus; it is not in Christ at large that a Person can glory in, but it is in Christ under, or in a peculiar Gospel relation unto his Soul; it is not in Christ in general, but in Christ, that his Soul is interested in, that he can rejoice in in all conditions; and this I suppose is an inquiry that all of you will be desirous should be spoken to, viz.

Qu. How the believer may know that he hath an interest in Christ Jesus? That this glorious and blessed Jesus, this full Jesus is his Jesus, his Savior? That he may be able to say with the Prophet here; Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation?

Ans. In speaking unto this inquiry, we shall observe this method.

1. To premise several particulars to you by way of introduction, unto the resolving of the inquiry.
2. We shall show you the grounds, and the occasion of the darkness that is upon the Spirits of believers, generally in and about their interest in Christ.

3. We shall show you what the believer should do in the interim, until he can have the evidence of his interest clear. And then,

4. Give you some discoveries how you may come to know whether you be indeed, and in truth interested, and stated in Christ Jesus.

1. As to the premises.

1. In the first place you may consider, that Christ is enjoyable, and only enjoyable. upon an interest in, and Gospel relation unto him.

There are many that comfort themselves in a general notion of Christ, that he is a Savior, and please themselves well with the thoughts of it, but they will not find this relieving another day. It is only upon interest and relation, that Christ is savingly enjoyed. It is propriety and interest that gives the Soul real ground of glory and rejoicing in Christ in the worst of conditions. And all the saving benefits of Christ they are dispensable, and only dispensable upon a Gospel interest. A Soul can lay no claim to anything that Christ hath; I say he can lay no saving claim unto any of the sacred blessings that Christ hath to dispense out, but upon a Gospel interest in him, neither can the thoughts of Christ be really comforting unto the Soul without respect unto this relation that we are speaking of, Jer. 31.33. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people, and so Zach, 13.9. I will say it is my People, and they shall say the Lord is my God, here you see is a mutual interest and relation, the Lord doth make over himself unto his people. And the Lord's people they are owned in a near and intimate relation with and unto the Lord; now this becomes the ground of the dispensing of all the saving benefits of Christ, and this becomes the solid, and the foundational ground of all the believers hopes and expectations from Christ. I say this interest and relation, it is the ground and visible foundation upon which the Grace of Christ is dispensed, and the saving blessings of Christ are communicated. Do

but see what interest and relation carries with it, Ezek. 16.8. And I entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest mine, and then, says he, washed I thee with water, yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood! from thee, and anointed thee with Oil, &c. And in Ezek. 34.11, 12.13, 14, 15. For thus saith the Lord God, behold I, even I, will both search my Sheep, and seek them out, as a Shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day, that he is amongst the Sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my Sheep, &c. You see here the Lord does manifest a signal care, and it is grounded upon interest, upon relation. They are my Sheep saith the Lord, and therefore I will seek them up, & therefore will I gather them. They are my Sheep, & therefore will I preserve them from Wolves. They are my Sheep, & therefore I will feed them, and lead them into green pastures, & by the still waters, and John 17.9, 10. I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, &c. I pray for them says Christ, and I will see after them, whilst they are in the world, that they shall not be devoured and destroyed there, and what is the ground of the prayer of Christ, and of the care of Christ? Why; they are mine says he: they were thine, Father, says he, and thou hast given them me, and now they are mine, and they are thine still, says he, and therefore Father, look after them also; and then interest and relation, it is the solid ground of our great expectations from the Lord in all our goings to him, and dealings with him; I am thine, says the Psalmist, O save me, and Isa. 63.8, 9. For he said, surely they are my people, Children that will not lie, so he became their Savior; in all their afflictions, he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them, in his love & in his pity he redeemed them, &c. And v. 18. We are thine; thou never bearest rule over them, they were not called by thy name. And Joel 2.17, 18. Let the Priests say, spare thy people O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them; wherefore should they say to the People, where is their God? It is interest you see that they ground their expectations from God upon; it is upon a Gospel interest and relation, that the Grace of Christ's fullness, and the sacred blessings and privileges of all his offices, are given out and dispensed unto Souls; and without

this interest and relation, the thoughts of Christ would not at all be comforting nor relieving, but the Soul might think on Christ Jesus, and be troubled, as you have it, Psal. 77.3. I remembered God, and was troubled, I complained, and my Spirit was overwhelmed. And so a person remembering Christ Jesus, and knowing no interest in him, must needs be troubled to think that there is such a Savior, and he hath no interest in him; to think that there is such a glorious fullness in him, and he hath no right to approach to that fullness, and to expect from the all-sufficiency of Christ Jesus, the thoughts of this must needs trouble a poor Creature. Thus all the blessings of Christ Jesus, and all communicable grace is dispensed upon an interest and relation, so as it is of great weight and importance for every one of you to consider, whether you have an interest in Christ or no, for if you have no interest in him, you can have no solid ground of expectation from him.

2. A believer that hath an interest in Christ, may yet be without the sense of that Interest.

Interest, and evidence of Interest do not always go together; but a Soul that is in Christ may be full of fears and doubts, and questionings of spirit in and about its Interest. Interest is absolutely necessary to Salvation, but the sense of Interest is not so. Sense of Interest is indeed necessary to our consolation in Christ Jesus, but sense of Interest is not absolutely necessary to our safe state in Christ Jesus; but a Soul that stands sure in Christ, may be in the dark in and about his standing. A Soul that is under the everlasting and unchangeable Love of Christ, may yet be in the dark in and about that Love that is glorified, and shall further be glorified upon him, and in him. I have thought sometimes, that many a poor Believer is just as Hagar was when her Bottle was empty, and she sat down weeping, that now she must die. Why, she need not fear famishing, when there was a well of water near her, that she and the Lad might drink their fill: Ay, but she did not know this well of water to be so near her. So the Believer's state is safe and good; ay, but he does not know it. Jesus Christ deals with his People as Joseph did by his

Brethren; he fed them, and nourished them, and comforted them a great while, but would not discover himself to them, that he was Joseph their Brother. A Believer that hath an Interest, may yet want the evidence of that Interest.

Thirdly, Evidence of Interest is attainable, and it is the will of God that Believers should give all diligence to make it clear. It is possible that a Soul may come to see his own standing in Christ Jesus, and know unto his full satisfaction and rejoicing in all conditions, that he is interested in him. Many Scripture-Saints have delivered it to us upon record, that they did attain to an evidence of their Interest. The Spouse in the Cant. did attain an evidence of her Interest, Cant. 2.16. My Beloved is mine, and I am his. Job had a clear sight of his Interest, Job 19.25. I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c. David had his Interest cleared up to him; The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? Psal. 27.1. Paul was assured of his Interest in Christ, 2 Cor. 5.1, 2. For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens: For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven. And it is the mind and will of God that Believers should give all diligence to clear their Interest, 2 Cor. 13.5. Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be Reprobates. And 2 Pet. 1.10. Wherefore the rather Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and your election sure. There is the command, which implies a possibility of attaining it. The possibility of it doth further appear, in that the Father and the Son have both sent forth the Spirit to be a Comforter, to be a Witnesser to those that are in Christ; and his Office it is an Ensuring Office. The Spirit he comes, being sent forth by the Father and the Son, into a poor heart that is full of fears, doubts, questionings and misgivings, and doth settle this Soul in the steadfast belief of his abiding Interest in Christ Jesus, and Christ's everlasting relation unto it. This you may see, Rom. 8.16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the Children of God. And Ephes. 1.13. In whom also after that ye believed ye were

sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. And a considerable part of the Scripture is given forth to this end, to clear up a Believers Interest in, and Relation unto Christ, that he may know his standing in him, 1 John 5.12, 13. There is Life in the Son, says he; and I write unto you, that ye may know that ye have an Interest in the Son, and so have life from him; and this is that which the Lord's People have gloried in, Isa. 63.16. Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not, &c. And this is one end of that grand Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, to seal and ensure Believers. It is not only an Ordinance of Communion, but it is a sealing Ordinance, wherein the Lord Jesus does come and set upon the heart, clearing up the Soul's Interest in himself, and telling of him what he hath done for him, and sealing all that hath past upon his Soul. It is sometimes hereupon made a feast of fat things. It is an Ordinance of Joy. It is not a converting Ordinance, but it is an Ordinance of comfort unto those that are converted, being often owned by the Lord, as a sealing Ordinance, to confirm all that hath formerly past between God and the Soul: So as an evidence of Interest is attainable, and it is the will of God that Believers give all diligence to make it clear.

Fourthly, The Interest and Relation that one Believer is owned in, with Christ, is not different in its nature and properties from what every Believer is owned in; but all that are interested in Christ, are equally interested in him.

If you speak of the Interest and Relation absolutely it is the same. Jesus Christ is not more one believers than he is another's, Jesus Christ hath not given one believer a greater propriety in himself then he hath given another believer: but all are equally interested in, and related unto Christ, all have an equal share in Christ. All have an equal standing in Christ in point of interest and relation. Indeed if you speak of interest and relation, quo ad effectum, as we say, if you speak of it in reference to improvement and effects, there indeed there is a difference between believer and believer. One believer may improve Christ more than another, and one believer may grow up in

Christ more than another: and one believer may in point of application and enjoyment possess more of Christ, more of the Grace of Christ, than another believer doth, but they are all equally interested in, and related unto Christ Jesus: and the interest that one believer hath, is as pleadable, and as improvable as the interest that another believer hath, Jesus Christ is equally a Head and a Husband, and a Brother unto all his People, and they are equally Members of the same body in point of interest, though not in point of growth; says the Apostle, in 1 Cor. 6.17. But he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit. It is spoken in general, let him be an Apostle, let him be an eminent Saint, or let him be a meaner, or more obscure Saint, let him be a strong believer, or let him be a weak believer, if he be joined to the Lord he is one Spirit, alike joined, alike related, and alike interested.

Fifthly, The believers interest in Christ is abiding, and can never be crushed, it can never be broken, it can never be violated, but the evidence of interest, though once obtained, and seem clear, may be obscured and darkened: A Christians joy, that is passing away, it is transient, but as to his interest, that is inviolable, and inseparable; none can disunite Christ, and the believer being once Gospelly joined. So you have it spoken out by the Apostle, Rom. 8.35. and so on, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No says he, they shall not, they cannot do it, and Hosea. 2.19. I will betroth thee unto me forever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercy, &c. I know full well what I do, says the Lord, I will betroth thee in judgment, I know what the Soul is that I take, I take him, so as to keep him, and to maintain him, I will hold him, and never lose him; I will do it in judgment, and it shall be a relation forever; I will betroth thee unto me forever. But now the evidence of the relation that is passable, that may be clouded, after you have had some clear discoveries of it. A Soul that is brought into the light, may be turned into the dark again; thus it was with Job: Job he had a very clear and full sight of his interest at one time, that he glories in Christ Jesus; I

know that my Redeemer liveth; and yet the same Job at another time, Job 6.4. Tells us that the Arrows of the Almighty did set themselves in array against him, the poison whereof, says he, drinketh up my Spirit. It was not the terrors of men, it was not the terrors of his condition, of his poverty, or of his sores, or of his great disgrace, but says he, the terrors of God they are entered into my Soul, and so David, at one time he rejoiceth in Christ Jesus; says then, though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, Psal. 23.4. and another time he cries out, Why art thou cast down O my Soul, why art thou disquieted within me? And in another place, hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? are his mercies clean gone? he mourns after the Lord, and complains as one that was banished from his face; though your interest cannot be shaken Christians, yet the evidence of your interest may be darkened, the love of Christ Jesus to your souls may be so obscured, as you may be left without the feelings of it. And the Soul that is sometimes under comfortable manifestations, and filled with joy, with peace, and with comfort, may at another time be darkened with clouds, with veils, and with curtains, and know not where he is; the seal of the Spirit of the Lord may be so defaced, as that you cannot tell what to make of it; the believer that is built upon the rock, can never be washed off the rock, yet the ways may dash against him upon the rock, he may be sorely dashed upon the rock, though he cannot be washed off; though your interest stands sure, yet the evidence of your interest is not sure, it is a passable evidence.

6. Sense of interest is in a sovereign hand, and is given out to whom the Lord pleaseth, and when the Lord pleaseth: The Lord is pleased Sovereignly to act in the sealing, and ensuring, and comforting of his People; sometimes he will come in upon a believer at his first conversion, and will fill him with joy and gladness that shall abide upon his Soul many years; and sometimes the believer shall wait upon God from ordinance to ordinance, and follow him many years in the dark, and not have a discovery of his love; sometimes the Lord will give a Soul no sight of his interest, nor evidence of his relation, until he come to die; and some believers have walked with the



evidence of God's love in their hearts, almost all their days, and when they have come to die, they have died in the dark. Sense of interest is under a sovereign dispense, both as to the persons to whom it is given out, and as to the time when, and as to the way and manner how.

7. Though the interest that believers have, and are owned in with the Lord, is the same, and is not different as to its nature, and properties, yet the evidence of the interest will admit of degrees in different persons, and also in the same Persons at divers times; those that are taken into relation with Christ Jesus, they are all owned in a near, blessed, intimate relation, as I told you before, so that there is no difference in the relation, neither is the relation an increasing relation, indeed the benefits of the relation, they are increasing; but the relation it's self is not increasing. A believer is not more a Child of God afterward, then he was at first, when the Spirit of adoption came upon him, but the evidence of the interest that admits of degrees; the relation its self is capable of an improvement as to the advantages of it, but that is not all, but the evidence of the relation is sometimes clearer, fuller, and more satisfying then at some other times. It is said, Prov. 4.18. That the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day: A believer hath a little sight of Christ; a glimmering of Christ through the cravis; this may be improved, and it is possible that the Soul may come into a full assurance of its interest in Christ Jesus; ay, and it is possible you may be assured more at one time then at another. Therefore Christian, the little joy that thou hast, may grow to a great deal, and the small apprehensions that thou hast of Christ, may greatly increase in thy Soul; and in this respect the day of small things is not to be despised.

8. It is possible that believers may disingenuously act upon low principles in their earnest pursuits after sealings and ensuring's: I pray mark it, assurance, it is the Flower of Faith, it is the growth, the improvement, the flourishing of Faith, it is the fragrancy, the odor, and the sweetness, nay, the very brightness of faith, the sealings of

the Spirit, they are the high strains (as I may call them) of the Spirit in and upon the hearts of believers. And yet it is possible that the believer may act upon low principles in his eager pursuits of the sealings of the Spirit, that is such a high act: Then does the believer act disingenuously in a pursuit after an evidence of his interest, when he presseth after the sense of his interest, more for peace and comfort, then to improve his interest unto more grace and holiness. Your interest in Christ hath two streams, the one runs with grace, and the other runs with peace and comfort: now then does the Soul disingenuously act, when he presseth more after the stream of peace & comfort, then he doth after the stream of grace and holiness; then is the believer acted upon low, principles, when he advanceth the sense of interest, above the interest, or if you will, thus, when the desires of the sense of interest do over-balance the desires of more grace and holiness upon the interest. Therefore in all your eager pursuits after the sealings of the Spirit, consider the principle (Christians) upon which you act, search whether there be no disingenuous acting's in your spirits, in your eager desires after assurance.

9. Satan will indefatigably endeavor to darken your evidence, and to obscure the sense of interest. Satan's design is to keep Souls as long as he can from a closure with Christ, he will meet the Soul in all ways, if possible, to turn him out of his way; and if he cannot do that, his next design is to obscure your evidence, and to darken your sense of interest, that so he may make you to walk heavily, and in the dark, he will follow you with false reports, and false suggestions, he will hint to you this falsity and the other, if possible, to make you to believe a lie, and to deny what Jesus Christ hath done, and to deny your interest, and standing in him, that it may be is clear upon undeniable grounds and demonstrations; the Devil you know came to Christ with this very temptation to make him to question the truth of his relation to God, though the Devil knew it well enough that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, and the true Son of God; yet he comes and sets upon him with this temptation, if possible, to make him question; If thou beest the Son of God, then do so and so. And he

levels at the Believer in the same manner, and his design is to keep you in the dark, to rob you of all the peace, and comfort, and joy, that you might have upon the sense and evidence of your Interest.

Tenthly, There are many that presume upon a groundless confidence, that they have an interest in Christ, and yet are wholly ignorant of the nature of a Gospel-Interest. There are many that do promise themselves great things in and from Christ Jesus, and yet they are wholly ignorant of him; they have hopes of large blessings that shall come in by Christ, and yet are ignorant of Christ, and the nature of a close with Christ that gives right to him. Doubtless the foolish Virgins had hopes, that as to the bulk of them, were as large and as promising as the hopes of the wise Virgins were; they never at all questioned their admittance when the Bridegroom should come. In Deut. 29.19. And it shall come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of my heart, &c. So when we are discoursing of the terrors of the Law, that do belong to persons uninterested in Christ; there are many that bless themselves in their hearts, and say, These things do not belong to us: And when we are opening the comforts that Believers have in Christ, those that are strangers to Christ will presume and say, All these are mine, Micah 3.11. The Heads thereof judge for reward, and the Priests thereof teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? no evil can come upon us. In the midst of all their wickedness, they would still presume upon an Interest in the Lord and think all should go well with them. My friends, what think you of the Church of Laodicea? they were a people of a very great and high profession; they stood in a Gospel body, and lived under the enjoyment of the great Privileges of a Gospel-state, and they promised themselves that all was well with them; and yet see what the Lord says Rev. 3.17. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked. They had a profession upon them, and they thought there was a great deal in that: They were in a

Church-state, and they thought that would serve their turn: They did enjoy Church-Privileges, and they thought upon it that their condition was good, and that they might well say, Now we are rich, we are Professors in a Church-state, we are under the common and sacred blessings of the Gospel; and who better than we? We are rich, but says the Lord, you say so, but I say otherwise; you say you are rich, but I say you are poor; you say you are full, but I say you are empty; you say you are increased with goods, and have need of nothing, but I say you have nothing and have need of all things. Verily my friends, this is a deceivable Age, an Age wherein many do not only deceive others, but their own Souls, and therefore it concerns you to inquire whether the Lord be your God, or no? and not to satisfy your selves with general notions of the Lord's being your God.

In the Eleventh and last place; An evidence of Interest obtained, maintained, and Gospelly managed, will be of singular advantage to a Christian in his whole Christian course. You do not know (Believers) you that are careless in and about the clearing of your state, you do not know what a change a Gospel sight of your Interest in Christ will make in your hearts; an evidence of your Interest will expel all your fears, and will resolve all your doubts, and will cause a calm in your hearts, whatsoever the present storm is. Why, if that we could look into the hearts of many, or most of us, I believe they would be found very tempestuous; storms they threaten, sore fears are ready to overwhelm, and doubts are even ready to swallow up a Christian; why, an evidence of your Interest will remove all these, (Christian) an evidence of your Interest will make all in Christ Jesus precious to you, and will strangely raise and enhance the price of Christ, and the blessings of Christ in your esteem. The evidence of Interest, O how precious will it make the Blood of Jesus to you! O how precious will it make the Death of Jesus to you! O how precious will it make the Life of Jesus to you! O how precious will it make the Offices of Jesus to you! when you can see that you are concerned in his Blood; that Jesus he is your Surety, your Mediator; that he hath suffered for you, and satisfied for you; that he is your forerunner in

Heaven; this will make all of Christ exceeding precious. An evidence of Interest is that that will carry your Souls cheerfully through all sufferings that do or may befall you in the way of Christ. There are reproaches that Believers meet withal in the way of Christ, and the sense of Interest will help you to bear them all. There are great losses that we are exposed to in bearing our Testimony to the Truths of Jesus; sense of Interest will bear you up under all: Why, we have a building of God that is above. It is said of those in the Hebrews, that they did not regard their outward comforts, knowing that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring substance. Sense of Interest will bear you up under all changes of providences, when the Lord is taking, as well as when he is giving: Why, will the Soul say, there is still enough in Christ; Christ is still full; my Jesus is full; though I am robbed, he is not robbed; though I have little or nothing, Jesus Christ he hath all, and Christ is all, and all his fullness is mine. Sense of Interest will raise your hopes and expectations upon Christ Jesus. My friends, now we look upon Christ, and have low thoughts of him; we look upon Christ, and our expectations are not raised upon Christ: We come to an Ordinance where Christ is discovered and displayed in the riches of his Death, and in the glories of his Life, and our hearts are not raised upon this; why, but because we have not the sense of our Interest: The sense of Interest will raise your expectations, and will comfort you against the thoughts of death. Now Lord, says good old Simeon, lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation, Luk. 2.29.30. And says the Apostle, I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all. The sense of Interest will lay you in against all fears of the approaching Judgment; instead of being afraid of it, it will make you long for it, when the Soul comes to see, and know, and be ascertained that the judge of the Court is his friend, and is in relation to him, and hath loved him so as to lay down his life for him, and hath ever been designing upon him in a way of love and grace; this Soul will not be afraid to appear before him, but will long for the day when he shall come to see his Jesus clothed with glory. So as a clear evidence of interest in Christ obtained, maintained, and gospelly managed, will

be of singular advantage unto a Christian in his whole Christian course.

## SERMON V.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

The Proposition was this,

Doct. That there is enough in Jesus Christ alone for the Souls full rejoicing and triumph, whatsoever his state and condition is in this world.

Now we proposed;

First, To give you several introductory particulars by way of premise.

These we have dispatched. And shall now proceed to consider what are the grounds of a believer's darkness about his interest.

2. It may be said in the second place, if there be such solid and substantial grounds of joy in Christ Jesus for the believing Soul, at all times, and in all conditions; what is the reason then that believers are so often in a dark, dubious, uncomfortable, shattered state, that they are seldom able in any steadfastness of spirit to look up unto Christ Jesus, and glory in him?

Ans. 1. I answer; The darkness of the believer's interest doth oftentimes arise from a looking more unto such things in the examination of himself, as argue the height of an interest, then to such things as do discover the truth of an interest. They do fix upon such things as are discoveries of a grown state in Christ, when as they should fix upon such things as do discover an in-being in Christ; they propose to themselves that corruption must be so and so brought under, and mortifying work must be carried on to such a height, or else they can have no grounds of their interest in Christ; they propose to themselves such a measure of love, as must be flaming to Christ at all

times, or else they think they have no love at all, they think they must have such a measure of faith, as to believe without staggering, or else they have no part in Christ. Now hereby they so ensnare their own Spirits, and increase their darkness. But you should look more at such things, as argue the truth of an interest, then at those things that do argue the growth and improvement of that interest.

Secondly, Darkness of evidence doth oftentimes arise from the believers viewing his wants, and overlooking his present receipts. Jesus Christ hath done a great deal for him, and hath given out a great deal to him, and hath made a wonderful change in him, he cannot deny it if he be put to it; but he overlooks all this, and considers his present wants, his weaknesses, his short comings, his failings, his smallness of strength, his staggering before a temptation, the uncertainty of his Spirit in his walking with God, and he bears the stress of his condition upon his present wants, not considering what Jesus Christ hath already done, nor considering that the work is gradually carried on. Now Christians if you would lay yourselves fair for the Spirits Gospel evidence in your souls, then you must take in the encouragements of your condition, as well as your discouragements, you must not only insist upon your discouragements, but consider also what Jesus Christ hath done, and what a change he hath begun to work, and what have been the moving's of your souls towards him, from divine influences upon your Spirits.

Thirdly, The darkness of evidence, or obscurity of interest do oftentimes arise from the prevailing's of sin in the heart, upon which Christ suspends. Sin that rallies, that gathers head in the Soul, that presses forward, and the Soul gives way to the temptation, and is overcome, and upon it darkness does arise; this was David's case, David was assured; ay, but sin prevailing in his heart, drove him into the dark, that all the joys of the holy Spirit were for a time taken from him, 2 Sam. 12.7, 8, 9. And Nathan said unto David, thou art the man, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee King over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, &c. Wherefore



hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? I have done all this for thee saith the Lord, & thou hast despised my commandment, and done evil in my sight. So the Lord Jesus speaks unto the Soul: I have thus and thus manifested myself to thee. I thought it not too much to take thee into communion with myself; I thought it not too much to dandle thee upon my knee, and to give thee the assurance of all that I have done for thee: But thou hast wickedly departed from me, and broken my Commandments, and it is just with the Lord now to suspend; prevailing's of sin will cause a suspense. You know that Absalom upon his rebellion, was excluded for a while from his Fathers House, he must not see his Fathers face: just thus it is with a Soul, when it hath turned aside into some way of folly, after it hath provoked the Lord, the Lord he hides himself from him, he would not let him see his face, he must not come into his presence to see him, and to rejoice in the light of his countenance as formerly he had done. The prevailing's of sin after Grace do many times cause a suspense.

Fourthly, Darkness of evidence is occasioned from the Souls crediting the reports of Satan, that lead him to deny what Jesus Christ hath done for him and in him, upon undeniable demonstrations of the power of his Grace in his heart: Satan he will be always putting the Soul forward to entertain hard thoughts of God, and will be making false reports in his heart, contrary unto the experiences that his Soul hath had; Now when the Soul will take up a report of Satan, against a clear and visible demonstration of grace upon the heart, and will join with Satan, and say, ay, this is true, there hath nothing past upon my Soul; Christ hath not loved me, Christ hath not taken me nigh unto himself, neither hath he in truth and reality done anything yet for me, upon the Souls thus falling in with, and arguing upon the reports of Satan, does he help to darken his own state, and to cloud his interest; Satan is indefatigably industrious to obscure our interest, and to keep us in the dark. Now he will always stand by you, and be always speaking to you, if he see that his testimony is once received and credited. Therefore beware

how you hearken unto him, who is ever an enemy unto your interest, and unto your sense of interest.

Fifthly, Darkness of evidence doth arise from our frequent neglects of the Spirit both in a way of duty, and also in a way of comfort; The Spirit of the Lord doth attend us, and he is calling of us up to obedience, and spurring of us forward to closer walking with God in obedience to his commands. Now when the Soul doth refuse to comply with the Spirit, and doth not observe his voice, nor obey his commands, but is silent unto his earnest motions in it, upon this is the Soul more and more darkened, for the Spirit does hereupon withdraw, when we refuse his aids and assistances in the duties unto which we are called; he offers us his help to stand by us, and to lead us, and to strengthen us, and we set by his help, and we will venture upon duties in our own strength, not resting upon him for strength and power, and the Spirit is hereby provoked: Or, when we neglect him in a way of comfort; he would clear our condition to us, but we will not believe what reports he makes in our hearts; he would settle us, and we will not be settled; he offers us consolation, and we refuse his consolation, and yet complain of our darkness, Job 15.11. Are the consolations of the Lord small with thee? Why, the consolations of the Lord are small with many Souls; for they refuse them, and they think they do well to refuse the comforts that are offered them, and yet they mourn over their want of comfort; hereby they grieve the Spirit, and they wound the Spirit, and they quench the Spirit, and it is not like then that the Soul should be assured. You have these expressions in Scripture, Ephes. 4.30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of Redemption. And 1 Thes. 5.19. Quench not the Spirit. And Isa. 63.10. But they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit, wherefore he was turned to be their enemy, &c. Why, my friends, this is often our case, we rebel against, and vex the holy Spirit of God, and he becomes our enemy, that is, he ceaseth to comfort us, and he ceaseth to settle us, and he ceaseth to establish us; he ceaseth to fill us with joy and with comfort in and about our Interest.

Sixthly, Darkness of evidence doth oftentimes arise from, and is occasioned by remissness in holy duties, wherein God useth to manifest himself unto us: When we neglect our spiritual watch, and lie under, or act under the weight of spiritual sloth, deadness of heart, carelessness and slighthness of spirit in our waiting's upon God. This was the Spouses case, Cant. 5.3, 4. I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him, Verse 5. I arose to open to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself, Verse 6. Acts of communion were not ceased: The Spouse did not decline Duties and Ordinances, but grew remiss and sluggish, and slightly, and careless in the duties of communion: She had put off her Coat, and she could not put it on. Her Beloved knocked, but she could not open to him presently; she must make him wait a while, Here were some workings of heart, and some genuine affections in the Spouse towards Christ, for she said, My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him: There were some moving's of heart towards Christ; ay but she moved slowly, and was careless in her spiritual frame, and behold she looks, and her Beloved was gone: Here was a suspense, and darkness grew upon her condition. My friends, this is often our case; we let the fire of the Altar of our hearts go out, and our affections they grow dead, and we lose our spiritual fervency; we lose the spiritual savor of communion with God in Ordinances of Communion, and Christ Jesus withdraws. There is a suspense of manifestations of favor and darkness increaseth.

Seventhly, Again, Darkness of evidence doth sometimes arise from unkind and unworthy Jealousies of the love of Christ's heart to us, notwithstanding long strivings with us. The Soul knows not how to believe that Jesus Christ is in earnest with him, when it comes unto his own particular case: then he entertains hard thoughts of Christ: O surely Christ doth not mean me, surely Christ is not in the way of Grace with me, although he cannot deny, being put to it upon a serious examination, but that there is a strange alteration in his Soul; ay, but he is always questioning of the truth of Christ in his way to

him, not but that he believes that Christ is in good earnest in the design, ay, but he doth not know how to believe that Christ Jesus is really engaged in a design of love upon his heart; no, this he questions, he thinks that the proposals that he makes, are not in good earnest, that Jesus Christ doth not mean him: That Jesus Christ doth overlook and pass by his Soul, and it is others that he is seeking after, and others that he is designing upon, and by these unworthy jealousies he does provoke Jesus Christ, and it is just with Christ to leave the Soul a while to its self, that will not be persuaded to have good thoughts of him.

8. Again, Darkness of evidence doth sometimes arise from, and is occasioned by our inconsiderateness of the present state of our own hearts, and inadvertency to what hath past upon us: There is a work wrought in him; ay, but he hath not been so wise as to observe the motions of Christ Jesus in his comings in, and in his dealings with him, he hath not kept an account of the goings of God with him, but hath been very remiss in the observe of the state of his heart, as he hath passed on in the way, following of Christ, and waiting upon him in ordinances, and hence he can make nothing of his condition, he cannot say that the work of Grace is so and so wrought in him, because he hath not been observant to gather up what hath past upon his Spirit.

9. Again, Darkness of evidence doth sometimes arise from an ungodly modesty that dares not believe such good things of its self. There is a kind of ungodly modesty that some Christians do express, wherein they would discover a great deal of unworthiness in themselves, and a great deal of lowliness of Spirit, but in it they do but deny what Jesus Christ hath done, and wrong their own case; O to think that Jesus Christ hath been dealing with them, and hath made powerful applications of his blood unto them; and hath united and reconciled them unto himself; O they cannot tell how to believe this of themselves; an interest in Christ is a great thing, and a heart change is a mighty change: I dare not think, says the Soul, that the Lord hath done this for me, who am so vile, and so unworthy, and

thus the Soul stands & reasons against all the experiences that he hath had of God, and denies the comforts of it.

10. Again, In the last place, Darkness of evidence doth sometimes arise from peremptory conclusions of the issues of our state upon the reports that sense makes upon all inquiries. The reason of our darkness is because we lay the stress of our condition upon sense, and upon what we can seal in ourselves, and not upon a naked venture upon Christ Jesus; not upon a Gospel throw upon Christ Jesus; whatever be the issue, but the Soul goes to its feelings, and makes a judgment of its state upon and from them; when he can find his heart warmed for Christ, when he can find his Spirit under any Gospel enlargement for Christ, when he can find his Graces begin to grow and thrive, and when he can find speedy returns made unto all his seekings after the Lord, then he concludes, now all is well; here is an interest, and behold the fruits of it: But now when the Souls Graces are a little clouded, when he misses of that enlargement that sometimes he hath experienced: And when he comes under some straightness, and when Jesus Christ is a while silent unto his prayers; why, then he concludes against himself; O here is no interest, why, if I were in Christ Jesus, it would be otherwise with me, Christ would answer me, and Christ would enlarge me, and Christ would heighten and brighten my Graces, Christ would not leave me in such an uncomfortable condition, he would fill me, and lift me up, and set me on high; O surely there is nothing of truth and reality that hath passed upon my Soul: Now Christians, while you draw up peremptory conclusions of the issue of your state, upon the reports of sense in your hearts, you will never come to be settled, and established, while you are in this world: conclusions drawn from changeable, mutable principles will never be relieving nor comforting to you. Well, these things briefly may suffice for the second proposal, what might be the grounds of a believer's darkness in and about their interest and evidence.

Thirdly, We shall proceed unto the third particular, and that is this:

Qu. If it be thus, that Believers are often times in the dark in and about their Interest, and have not the evidence of their relation in Christ clear, what should the Believer do in the interim until the Lord shall be pleased to discover and unfold himself to him, and seal and confirm all that he hath done for him, and bestowed upon him?

Ans. There are nine or ten particulars that I shall lay down here in way of Direction.

First, In case of darkness of evidence, muck the root of faith: Or, if you will take it thus, strengthen and double the direct act of faith, when you are not able to put forth a reflex act of Faith. There is a direct, and there is a reflex act of Faith; the direct act of Faith is an act of recumbence; it is an act of reliance upon Jesus Christ; the reflex act of Faith is the Soul's glorying and triumphing in Christ Jesus, that he hath made a close with. Now Christian, if thou hast not the assuring act of Faith, then be sure that you strengthen Faith in its closing act, and in its believing act, wherein it rests on Christ Jesus alone; go oftener unto Christ, and there determine thy Soul, and resolve ever to wait upon him, and to abide at his footstool; the believing act of Faith, or the direct act of Faith, that I may call the first act, and the reflex act of Faith, I may call the second act of Faith. Now Christian, if you be not able to come up to the second act of Faith, then be often repeating the first act of Faith; be often rolling your Souls upon Christ Jesus, and by this means you may come to be assured; for the direct act of Faith hath a tendency in it to carry thee up unto a full assurance in Christ Jesus, and therefore be often redoubling that act, thou doest not know how soon the joy of thy assurance may come in.

Secondly, Upon the darkness of evidence, take notice of, and rejoice in the strengthening's and upholding's of the Spirit, though for the present you are without the sealings and ensuring's of the Spirit. Why, let it not be a small thing unto thee, that though thou art not comforted, and though thy Interest is not cleared, yet thou art kept waiting upon God. Who is it that upholds thee against all thy

discouragements? Couldst thou hold out of thyself? Couldst thou bear up when there seems to be no returns made? nothing but discouragements in thy way? Thou criest again and again, and hast no return, but a seeming repulse; who is it (think you) that upholds you? doubtless it is the Spirit of the Lord: Who was it that upheld the Woman of Canaan, when Christ Jesus did chide her, and seemed to give her a repulse? doubtless whilst he seemed outwardly to discountenance her, he was secretly upholding and drawing her heart nearer to himself, or else she had fainted. Now, if thou hast had a heart to continue waiting upon God, and thy desires and resolutions are still to follow the Lord, take notice of these upholds of the Spirit, and bless God for these, and it may be the Spirit in a little while may go on to assure thee.

Thirdly, Again, Upon the darkness of evidence, and want of assurance, labor to heighten true grace and holiness: Strive to increase & to grow in grace, for that will be more to thy advantage than to bend thy desires wholly for comfort and for assurance. It is a greater mercy for God to give thee a new measure of grace, than to give thee a new degree of comfort. It is a higher privilege. There is more in grace, than there is in comfort; for grace hath a more immediate tendency to God's glory, the other tends more immediately to thy satisfaction and joy. There is more in a little grace, than in a great deal of consolation. Now it may be the Lord seeth that thou art not fit for comfort, nor yet fit for settlement, and for peace, and therefore he holds thee in the dark. Now the heightening of grace will fit thee for the enjoyment of an Evidence. The higher grace is in the heart, the more fair the Soul lies for an evidence; the more grace thou hast, the more fit thou art for the joys and consolations of the Holy Ghost: Therefore strive to heighten grace and holiness upon the want of an evidence.

Fourthly, Keep in thy way waiting upon the Lord, though the Answer is delayed. Thou art seeking to be assured, and thou art waiting for an evidence of thy Interest, and yet it doth not come. Well, hold on Christian, and do not give over until the Answer is given in; He that

believeth maketh not haste: Wait quietly and patiently upon the Lord, pressing after him, that he would remember his Word from Ordinance to Ordinance; but do not give over; know, that whilst the Lord doth suspend the evidence of your Interest, he calls you to abide in a waiting posture, and therefore continue to watch and pray.

Fifthly, Diligently attend all discovering Ordinances, but bound your desires after a sense of Interest in waiting upon the Lord in the ways that he hath consecrated for the dispense. God hath been pleased to appoint many ordinances for us to wait upon him in, wherein he is pleased to make known himself. Sometimes he doth it in one ordinance, and sometimes in another; sometimes he will come in in prayer, and sometimes in meditation, and sometimes he will come in in preaching, and sometimes in that great sealing ordinance of the Gospel, the Lord's Supper. Now attend upon the Lord in all sealing ordinances, but bound your desires, (I pray mark) I say bound your desires in the ways that the Lord hath consecrated for the dispense, do not expect that God should work a miracle to confirm you, don't think that there must be a voice from Heaven to settle you, and satisfy you, don't look for some miraculous expressions or impressions upon you, but bound your desires after the sense of your interest in his own way; and that which makes me mention it, is this: That Satan doth rush many Souls upon this, they cannot believe an ordinary evidence, and a small sign would not serve them, but they must have some immediate appearance from Heaven; an immediate testimony from Heaven, in some miraculous way upon their Spirits, or else they cannot think that their state is good; and the design of Satan here is to drive you into such a way wherein you shall certainly meet with a disappointment, and being under a disappointment, then you may more easily, and more strongly question your state. But we are not to expect revelations, nor miraculous operations, but to wait upon the Lord in his own consecrated ways that he hath appointed for the dispense of pardon, of peace and comfort, and an evidence of our interest.



Sixthly. Again, Look upon and rejoice in the dawning's of the day, when thou canst not see the Sun in its noon day brightness; my meaning is, bless God for a little, let it be never so small that he hath given to thee, and wear it with much thankfulness, though thou hast not a full assurance of thy interest, yet bless God that thou hast a liberty to follow Christ; thou hast not a full sight of thy standing in Christ; ay, but bless God that thou hast a liberty to cry after Christ, thou mayest cry after Christ, though for the present thou canst not rejoice in Christ; well, if the Lord hath given thee a heart for this, thou shouldest magnify his name; let the work be never so small that is in thy Soul, yet if thou beest in the way to Heaven, bless God for this. It is matter of comfort to thee in thy present state (Christian) that though thou hast not yet assurance, yet thou art in the way to be assured, though thou hast not yet a full evidence of thy interest, thou art in the way of following of Christ, & thou dost not know how soon thou mayest have the evidence of thy interest. It is a comfort to a Child to consider, that though he is in some remoteness from his Fathers House, yet he is in his way upon his journey to it: So Christian, though thou hast not all, yet thou art in the way to more, thou art in the way to be assured, and in the way to the full possession of Christ; take notice of this, and bless God for it.

Seventhly, Prefer service for Christ, before assurance in Christ, and esteem duty for and towards Christ, before consolation in Christ. It argues a very low and mercenary spirit to act only for, or towards the Lord upon the feelings of our interest in him, or only for the comforts that do attend a sensible interest in him; no, we must follow Christ wherever he goeth, and prefer service for Christ before comfort in Christ, and resolve to follow Christ, and to serve him, whether he do settle us, and comfort us or no: It is a very filial, genuine Spirit in a Child to say; well, let my Father give me a portion, or deny me a portion, yet I will serve him, though my Father disinherit me, yet I will serve him; so the believer should say, he should prefer a command before a promise, and assistance for duty before incomes in duty. Now it may be Christian, thou hast failed here, therefore advance thy esteem of the command, and advance the honor of duty

and service for Christ, and let these things be uppermost in thy heart, and in time the Lord may more fully appear to thee to settle thee, and to comfort thee whilst thou art serving of him.

8. Again upon the rising of new darkness, have recourse unto the former experiences that thou hast had of peace, joy, and comfort in believing: God it may be doth with-hold a new word, because he would have thee go to the old word, that he hath spoken before, and God may withhold a new sign, because he would have thee go to the old sign that he gave thee for a discovery before; now in present days of darkness often reflect upon what formerly thou hast enjoyed in order to thy hope and confidence, and make use of that. And then,

Ninthly, In the ninth place, Be you kind unto all the Lord's mourners that are companions with you in darkness. I mean, learn to sympathize with those that want the light of God's countenance. The Lord (it may be) in with-holding a sense of interest, doth design to make thee more sensible of another's condition in the dark, that thou mayest know how to sympathize with him in his sorrows and tribulations; ay, and to comfort others with the consolation wherewith the Lord hath comforted thee. Therefore be you kind and affectionate unto those that are companions with you in darkness, and pray with them, and pray over them, and express the affections of your Souls to them in all your remembrance of them; and in a little while the Lord may come in for to lead you forth into the company of those whose hearts are made to rejoice and be glad in the light of his countenance, and in the evidence of their own interest in Christ.

## **SERMON VI.**

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18

From hence we have observed,

Doct. That there is enough in Christ Jesus alone, for the Soul's full rejoicing and triumph, whatsoever his state and condition is in this world.

We told you in nine particulars what the doubtful Soul should do in the interim, until he can clear up his own interest, and standing in Christ Jesus. We shall only superadd one particular more.

Tenthly, If thou beest (Soul) still in the dark in and about thy Interest after narrow and deep searches and enquiries, resign up thyself unto the Lord Jesus, and stand to his allowance, and be willing to work in the dark, whilst the Lord shall keep you in the dark. Be not your own choosers and carvers in this thing, but leave the Lord to choose for you. Indeed, we are not to rest satisfied in our spirits without an evidence of our Interest, because it is attainable, but as to the comfort of our Interest, and the Joy and Peace of our Souls upon the Interest, we should resign up ourselves unto the Lord Jesus, and leave him to make the dispose of our state; and this is the way to come unto a speedy settlement and assurance: But I shall not enlarge here, but proceed unto the fourth thing proposed.

Fourthly, And that is, to give you some Signs and Evidences of your Interest and standing in blessed Jesus. And as we say generally, Causes are best known by their Effects; Trees are best known by their fruit; Life is best known by motion; so interest in Christ is best known by the effects of Interest. And that you might know what Jesus Christ hath done in you, and is doing for you, do but consider

First, In the first place, That there is upon the Soul's Interest in Christ, a Divine Principle of Life infused into the heart by the Lord Jesus, unto whom he is united, which becomes the spring of his spiritual motions towards Christ, and of his profession of Christ.

Interest in Christ is a Life-Interest, and there is a Divine Principle of Life that upon it is infused into the Soul, that becomes the spring of his spiritual motions. This Principle of life is variously set out in Scripture; sometimes it is called the New Creature; If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, 2 Cor. 5.17. A New Creature denoteth life; sometimes it is set out by the word life; He that hath the Son hath life, 1 John 5.12. Sometimes it is called the Divine Nature: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, 2 Pet. 1.4. Now there is life in the Divine Nature, & the Divine Nature infused, becomes a Life-Principle in the heart where it is infused, and is the spring of its spiritual motions. This is set out sometimes by engraftment, as the Syence is engrafted into the Stock; there is a conveyance of life upon the engraftment, and upon the union: Thus the Graft or the Syence doth receive sap & nourishment from the Root, whereby it comes to live. Now, says Jesus Christ in your spiritual union with him, I am the Vine, says he, ye are the branches, John 15.5. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. And Rom. 11.17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild Olive Tree, be grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the Root and fatness of the Olive Tree. Abraham is only instrumentally here spoken of, as God was pleased to own him, and honor him to be the Father of all Believers; but Christ Jesus is principally and effectually the Root, the Stock that Believers are engrafted into; he is the Root that both Abraham and all Believers stand in, and grow upon, and they partake of the sweetness and fatness of that good Olive Tree: Sometimes it is expressed by an incorporation, as the Head and the Members do make up but one Body, and every Member united unto the Body, it doth receive, life spirit, sense, motion and strength from the Head. Now, says the Lord Jesus, Ye are all Members of my Body, 1 Cor. 12.12, 13. We are all Members of the same Body, and so have the same Head, from thence is life, spirit and grace, and nourishment conveyed into every part. Now from hence it is that Jesus Christ is called the Life of Believers, Gal. 2.20. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And Col. 3.4. When Christ who is our Life shall appear,

&c. So as Christ he doth convey and infuse a Principle of Life into the Soul, that is interested in himself, and upon that account he is called a quickening spirit, 1 Cor. 15.45. (The second Adam was made a quickening spirit,) that he might give Life to all those that are united to him, and interested in him. And this spiritual Life that we receive from Jesus Christ, is the Life of our Life, and the very Soul of our Soul in all our motions Godward, and it becomes the spring of our spiritual profession, and of all our moving's towards God. The Soul that is interested in Christ, is not moved by an artificial spring, but he doth act and move from a life, spring, from a living spring, which is the Principle of Divine Life, that in his Interest in Christ he receiveth; and this it is that puts him on; this it is that constrains him; this it is that moves and acts him, in all his bending's and inclining's Godward. They that are interested in Christ, they do desire Christ, and move towards Christ upon a Principle of Life, so as they cannot be satisfied without Christ, 1 Pet. 2.2. As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. The Babe or Infant does cry after the Breast upon a natural Principle of Life; natural Life is the Principle of its crying. So doth the Believer move towards, and make after Christ, from a spiritual Principle of Life; and that Principle of Life that he hath received from Christ, is the Divine Spring of all his Divine Actions, or of his Religious Acting's. The Soul is not moved only upon a Principle to satisfy and silence his Conscience, nor yet to get himself a name to live, to make himself honorable among the people that make a profession of Christ; nor yet upon the account of any secular advantage; but there is a Divine Spring in his Soul of spiritual Life, that he hath received from the Lord Jesus Christ, and this works up his heart to the frame he is in, and causeth him to move towards the Lord, and makes him unsatisfied without Jesus Christ. Now my Friends, bring your Soul-state into an examination by this, What change is there wrought in your hearts? Do not eye your profession so much as your hearts. Consider what work hath past upon your Souls: Are you spiritually renewed? Have you received Life from Christ? Is there such a real spiritual Change wrought in your Souls as doth amount to a New Creature? And have you received of the Divine Nature from Christ?

And is there a living Spring that moves your Souls in all your motions towards Christ? If so, it argues an Interest; but if the Spring of your motion be from without, it is a sign that it is artificial, and not living; and so it argues no Interest in Christ Jesus.

Secondly, Interest in Christ mixeth concerns, and may be discovered by reciprocal acts in a mutual Interest. The Interest that the Soul hath in Christ, is never alone; but the Soul that is interested in Christ Jesus, hath Christ Jesus interested in him; so as the Interest is mutual, and upon a mutual Interest concerns are mixed; so as Christ and the Believer have one concern between them: Christ is interested in the Believer's concerns, and the Believer is interested in Christ's concerns: The Believer concerns himself for Christ, and Christ concerns himself for the Believer. The Believer is interested in all that Christ is, and in all that Christ hath; and Christ is interested in all that the Believer is, and in all that the Believer hath: The Believer hath a room in Christ's heart, and Christ hath a room in the Believer's heart. The believer hath a propriety in Christ, and Christ hath a propriety in the believer; says the Spouse, I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine, the interest is mutual. Jesus is my Jesus, says the believing Soul: Christ is my Christ, he is my Savior, and I have an interest in his love and grace, and I have an interest in his life, in his power, in his strength & fullness; and Christ, he hath an interest in me also, he hath an interest in my love, he hath an interest in my heart, and in my strength, and in all that have and am: and the interest being mutual, mixing concerns, it may be discovered by reciprocal acts, that is, as Christ makes over himself to the Soul, so the Soul makes over himself unto Christ, 1 John 4.19. We love him because he first loved us: he hath set his love upon us; and there will be a reciprocal acting in the Soul towards him, he will also set his love upon Christ; Christ indeed is the first mover, and so the glory must be given unto him, but the interest it is mutual, and the acting is reciprocal. The Lord Jesus Christ he makes over himself to the Soul to be his: The Soul he accepts of Christ when tendered, and that is not all, but he makes a return unto Christ, devoting himself unto him, yielding and resigning himself unto Christ to be his, to walk in

his ways, Ezek. 16.18. there you may see the acting's of Christ towards the Soul, says he, I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness, yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest mine, I sware unto thee; there the Lord did pass over himself to the believer. Now there are reciprocal acting's in the Soul towards him, Deut. 26.17. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his Statutes, &c. and the Lord v. 18. hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people as he hath promised; here are reciprocal acts, now Christian, if thou wouldst make a discovery of thy state, to know whether thou art interested in Christ; Consider what interest Christ hath in thee, what interest he hath in thy heart; what a share he hath in thy affections, and what a place he hath in thy life, is there a kind of sacredness in thy heart for the Lord Jesus Christ in a holy resignation to him. So there is in the Soul that is interested in Christ, Cant. 4.12. A Garden enclosed is my Sister, my Spouse, a Spring shut up, a Fountain sealed: She is under a peculiar dedication to, and reserve for her Lord, whom she hath devoted herself unto, and is as a Garden enclosed, Now Christian, if thy heart lieth in common, and there be no sacredness upon it, and no secret reserve of it, it speaks but sadly for thee; but where there is a dedication unto Christ, and if you can find Christ interested in you, it is an evidence that you are interested in Christ, for we can never move towards Christ, till he first moveth towards us: We can never choose Christ, until Christ hath first chosen us. If that thou canst find thy heart open for Christ, and towards Christ, it is a clear evidence that Christ's heart hath been first opened to thee; all our love to Christ is but the reflection of Christ's love to us: Mary did not call Raboni, till Christ first called Mary. So as if thou findest thy heart under a dedication to Christ, that Christ is thy joy and delight, and hath full rule and liberty in thy heart, that thy heart is opened, or at least opening, and there are outgoings of Soul in thee towards the Lord Jesus Christ; It doth argue that thou hast an interest in him, and that he hath begun to draw thee, that he hath cast the skirt of his Grace over thee, and made thee his.

Thirdly, The Soul that hath an interest in Christ is brought under the ruling power of Christ, so as he chooseth him to be his only Lord. That Soul hath as yet no interest in Christ, that despiseth the government of Christ, that refuseth obedience unto the Scepter and dominion of Jesus Christ; these you know are reckoned among Christ's enemies, that say concerning him, this man shall not reign over us; you have a clear Scripture for this, Isaiah 63.19. We are thine. How did it appear that they were the Lord's? Because it was implicitly and tacitly asserted that the Lord did bear rule over them. And how did it appear that they were none of Christ's, and Christ none of theirs? Because he did never bear rule over them, neither were they called by his name: So then, those that slight and despise the Scepter of Christ Jesus, and refuse allegiance to this glorious King of Heaven, are none of his Subjects, and so have no part nor interest in him: but now that Soul that hath an interest in Christ, is brought under the rule of Christ, and Christ doth exercise and display an over-ruling power in his heart, that brings him unto his foot, and he is enabled to live in a professed subjection to the Scepter, and Kingly power of Christ Jesus; upon this interest the Soul hath in Christ, his Spirit is satisfied in the government of Christ, he is reconciled unto all the commands of Christ, and he delights in the dominion of Christ, and he freely and cheerfully resigns up himself unto the Scepter of Jesus Christ. Lord (says the Soul) here I am, rule over me. Christ never interests a Soul in himself, that he doth not bear the sway in its heart, and command the powers of its Soul, Psal. 110.3. Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power: When Jesus Christ makes a willing people, that is, displays the power of his Grace, and brings home a Soul, and gives it an interest in himself, he subjects the heart unto his Government, he makes the Soul freely willing to be ruled by the laws, and by the Authority of Christ Jesus; no laws seem so desirable unto him as the laws of Jesus; no rule, no Scepter so pleasant as the Scepter of Christ, and all the commands of Christ are chosen by him, as being equal, righteous, holy, pleasant, and good: the Spirit is reconciled to Christ Jesus in the whole of his Gospel Government over the heart of the Christian. My Lord and my God, says Thomas; these always go together; My



God, and also my Lord. And this particular I ground upon, and gather out of my Text, he is become the God of my Salvation; how shall I know that? He is my Lord, says the Prophet, I will rejoice in the Lord; the title Lord notes Dominion and Sovereignty. Now the Soul that is interested in Christ, rejoiceth in the Dominion and Sovereignty of Christ Jesus; I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. The inference that is drawn from this Scripture, for our present purpose is this, that the Soul that is interested in Christ, will rejoice in the dominion of Christ, or doth receive Christ Jesus as a Lord, and as a Lord doth rejoice in, and under him. Indeed there may be much weakness in his obedience; I don't say that he doth exactly, and to a tittle walk up to the rule to fulfill every command of God; No, I know there is a great deal of weakness in the strongest believer upon earth, and through the strength of corruption, and the violence of temptation, he may sometimes be fouled and born down, ay, but when he is so, still his heart is right, and he loves the commands of Christ, that he cannot come up to, and he honors the rule of Christ, and to his utmost makes way for the sway of the Scepter of Christ in his Soul, though he may be born down by temptation; yet his love remains still unto every command of Jesus, Rom. 7.25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord; so then with my mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Says Paul, I am born down, I am overcome, but I don't justify myself herein, but I bless God, says he, that my heart is secured, my love doth not abate, I have not waved a command through my dissatisfaction in it, I have not been disobedient to a command, because I judged it unreasonable, or were dissatisfied in it; No, but my heart, that stands right for those commands that I cannot reach in my life; with my mind I myself serve the law of God. So Romans 1.9. says the Apostle, For God is my witness whom I serve with my Spirit in the Gospel of his Son: so as you see the Spirit that stands clear, and is under a constant and full engagement, though it may be the life doth not discover that evenness that it should; with my Spirit, says he, I serve the Lord. It may be said in the case of the temptation of a believer, as was said concerning the Spouse, I sleep, but my heart awaketh; thus it is with many a poor Soul, he may be

brought into a sleepy condition, and he staggers and stumbles in his way, he finds it so difficult, but says he, while I sleep my heart awaketh, his declensions do not arise from dissatisfaction, but his love is reconciled to the command still, and he honors those precepts that he is not able to come up to. Now Christian, bring your condition to this touchstone, if thou hast a heart that doth slight the government of Christ; and if thou canst not bear the strict rule and dominion of Christ Jesus over thy Soul, if that thou hast thy exceptions, against the Scepter of Christ Jesus being lifted up in thy heart; it is a sign that thou art not yet interested in Christ, thou never didst bear rule over them, they were not called by thy name; I pray remember that that rule that thou despisest, is the only saving rule, and that power that thou refuseth to stoop to, is the only saving power, the only blessed and blessing power. But on the other side, if thou canst find that thy heart is open unto the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is the Lord, as he is invested with all power, as the Father hath given all Authority unto him, if thy heart be open to him, and thou dost love his Laws in their holiness and strictness, and his Government and Rule for its closeness; and if way be made in thy Soul for the Throne of Christ to be set up, it argues thou art interested in Christ; for those that are Christ's doth the Lord bear Rule over.

Fourthly, The Soul's Interest in Christ may be known by the distance that the heart standeth in from the power and interest of his former state that Christ Jesus hath overturned. The Soul before his coming over to Christ was under the Rule of another Lord, and was in subjection to another Interest, to the power and interest of sin, and that bore sway in his heart, and commanded his life; he yielded up himself a servant to sin, and devoted himself unto the service of sin. This the Apostle speaks out, Rom. 6.16, 17. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness; but God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of Doctrine which was delivered to you. And in 19, and 20 verses you have it again. And says

he, When you were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. He doth plainly show, that they were formerly servants to another Interest; they were engaged in the service of sin; they acted sin as in a service; as a servant observes, and respects, and obeys his Master, so doth the natural heart observe, respect and obey sin; and it is his Lord; it hath the commanding power of his Soul; and it is a most pleasant service to the sinner, though he will find it a sad service in the latter end; yet it is a most pleasant and a most delightful service; therefore a sinner's walking in sin, and gratifying the lusts of the flesh, is called his pleasure, the pleasures of sin; he takes pleasure therein: O! it is his meat and drink to satisfy the lusts of his heart, in gratifying this Lord that is over his Soul. Now my Friends, your Interest in Christ may be discovered, by the distance that your hearts stand in from the power and interest of this Lord, that Jesus Christ hath overthrown, that is a constant enemy to your in-being and standing in Christ. And that I may help you to make a right judgment of your state in reference to this particular, I shall open to you in several particulars, what this distance is that the Soul stands in unto the interest of sin, that Jesus Christ hath overthrown in the heart upon his making over himself to the Soul.

First, There is upon the Soul's Interest in Christ this distance unto sin, his former Lord, that he proclaims war against it, and becomes its professed enemy. It may be the life of a Christian is not at present a Conquering life; ay, but it is a Conflicting life, Rom. 7.23. 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. Well, there is opposition for opposition, as sin riseth up against him, so he riseth up against sin: And as sin upon his Interest in Christ declares against him, so he declares against sin, and he watcheth it as one enemy watcheth the motions of another; and he taketh all ways, and useth all endeavors to foil and bring under this enemy.

Secondly, The opposition that is carried on and managed in the heart against sin, it is general. It is not an opposition in one part only, but

it is an opposition that the whole Soul doth engage in, and all the powers of the Soul are concerned in it. It is not only an opposition in the Conscience, but there is an opposition in the Affections as well as in the Conscience; and there is an opposition in the Will, as well as in the Conscience and Affections, and also an opposition in the Judgment; both the Conscience and the Affections, the Will, and the Understanding and Judgment, do all discharge against sin; and all the renewed powers of the Soul enter into a strict combination against the interest of sin. The Conscience that lays loads upon it whenever it appears, and the Affections they declare against it, and the Will that resolves against it, and the Understanding and Judgment do discover it, and witness against it. The opposition that is made it is general.

Thirdly, In this distance that the heart stands in unto sin upon its Interest in Christ, the heart in its most deliberate acting's stands in an irreconcilableness unto it. The opposition that is made is not upon a sudden motion; it is not upon a passion of the Soul that in cool thoughts will be called in again; but the Soul in its most deliberate acting's stands in an irreconcilableness unto it. That the Affections will never be enticed over to sin again, the Love will never be invited over to sin again; indeed he may be overpowered to sin, but he will never be reconciled to sin more; his Love and Affections can never be gained to sin again, but the Affections are so broken, that the distance will ever remain, and the Soul will always stand in, and act upon an irreconcilableness to it.

Fourthly, The distance of the heart unto the interest of sin upon the Soul's Interest in Christ, is universal unto all sin. It is not only alienated and drawn from notorious and gross sins, that make a great noise in the world, or against some particular sins, that his walking in will turn to his disadvantage; but it stands at a distance from all sin, from heart-sins, as well as from life sins, from small sins as well as from great sins; and from such sins as are connatural to us from inclination, complexion, and condition, and employment, and the like, the heart stands at an universal distance from all sin.

Fifthly, The distance of the heart from sin upon its Interest in Christ, is unto sin as it hath a contrary nature in it to the Interest of Christ in him. He doth oppose sin, not upon a particular, but upon a general account; he opposeth sin as sin, as it hath a contrariety in its nature unto the Lord, and the Interest and Dominion of the Lord in his Soul; and so he will oppose sin while sin is sin, and whilst there is any sin remaining in him. The distance that his heart stands in unto sin, is unto it as it hath a contrary nature in it unto Christ's Interest in him, and his Interest in Christ.

Sixthly, The distance of the heart unto the Interest of sin that Christ hath overturned, upon his having an interest in himself, it is such as hates sin in the temptation. It doth not only hate sin when it is committed, and when Conscience lays hold upon him for the commitment of it; but it sets the Soul at a distance from sin in the temptation, whilst it is a great way off; and hence we are commanded to abstain from the appearance of evil; and the Saints they hate the appearance of evil; that which looks like a disputable evil, the gracious heart stands at a distance from it, or that which hath a probability in it of being an occasion of sin to him, that will the gracious heart stand off from; he will oppose sin at a distance, and he hates and watcheth against sin in the temptation, the heart stands at such a distance from it.

Seventhly, The distance of the heart from sin is such, that it chooseth rather to suffer than to sin. Nay, it will choose a great suffering before a little sin. It will say, Lord, anything rather than sin, and no burden will be like the burden of sin to him; no weight like the weight of sin upon his Conscience; and therefore he says, Lord, any condition rather than to be driven upon a temptation whereby I shall sin; anything Lord but sin.

Eighthly, The distance that the heart stands in unto sin upon its Interest in Christ is such, as doth discover a great reluctancy of spirit, and deep searching's of heart upon the invasions of sin, and the Soul's passive captivities by it. Probably he may be foiled and

overcome by sin, and many times against his will he is overcome; ay, but when he is so, he mourns, and he weeps, and that bitterly; he doth not justify the fault; he doth not extenuate the offense; he doth not hide his transgression but his Soul breaks out into mourning by reason of it, and that upon the passive captivities of the Soul by it, when the Soul against his will is overcome; he watches and he strives to keep it under, and yet sin is too hard for him, and whether he will or no sometimes leads him captive, and carries him out of the way; he goes mourning into these captivities, and he groans when he falls into the hands of sin, and when he is at any time taken a prisoner. Thus it was with Paul; Paul had an honest heart, he did labor against sin what he could, and yet says he, I find that when I would do good evil is present with me; and there is a cursed Law in my members, that leads me captive to the Law of sin, whether I will or no; he strove, and conflicted, and watched, and did his utmost, yet says he, I find a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present, and I am taken captive, but he groans under it; O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Rom. 7.24. It was one of the deepest and most sorrowful complaints that ever the Apostle Paul made; and thus we find Scripture Saints upon Record, when at any time they have been overcome and led captive, it hath been a time of great sorrow, darkness, mourning and bitter complaint to them. Now this is another part of the distance that the Soul stands in from sin.

Ninthly, The heart stands (upon his Interest in Christ) at such a distance from sin, that nothing will satisfy the Soul but the returns of death upon it. Sin, that seeks the ruin of grace, and the destruction of the Soul; and the Soul that is interested in Christ stands at such a distance from sin, that he seeks, and designs, and labors to the utmost to hate sin, and to pursue it unto death. It is not the pardon of sin that will satisfy a true Believer. Let me say thus much, that if you be at no greater distance from sin than this; that if the Lord will pardon you, all is well, and you will lay down the Cudgels, it is a sign your heart is not right with Christ. If you have an Interest in Christ, you will be at a greater distance from sin than so, the pardon of sin

will not satisfy you; if sin should be driven into the secret retirement of your Soul, and should there remain among the stuff, yet this will not satisfy you. The Soul that is interested in Christ, is set upon the death of sin as its enemy; and that is the meaning of those Scriptures wherein we are called upon to mortify sin, and to crucify sin, that is, to destroy sin, to be the death of it, Ephes. 5.14. And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts: They are doing of it; sin is dying, and mortifying, and crucifying, and it shall be crucified, and mortified, and slain, and appear to be wholly dead ere long: This is that that the Soul is set upon, the death of this body of death, the utter ruin and destruction of it; it will not be satisfied that sin is a mortifying and dying in it, but the distance of the heart from it is such, that it will not bear the being of it: Though it cannot drive out all these cursed Canaanites, to have the Land at rest, and peace when it will; yet it will maintain the war, and abide the field, and never give over till sin be wholly dead. Now I beseech you Christians, you who are desirous to clear your own state, bring your condition to a trial upon this head, and examine what that distance is, that your heart stands in unto the Interest and Power of your former state which Jesus Christ hath overthrown; examine the distance that your hearts stand in unto sin, in these nine particulars: Is the distance such as that you have proclaimed & engaged in an holy war against it; Or do you only speak slightly of sin before men, and hide it in your hearts? Again consider, Is the Conflict that you professed to be engaged in against sin, general? Or is your opposition against sin only in your Conscience? Verily a natural man will oppose sin thus. A Hypocrite's Conscience may check him for sin; a carnal man's Conscience may sometimes wound him for sin, and speak high against it, but is the opposition from the Affections, from the Will, and from the Judgment, as well as the Conscience? Do all the powers of the Soul engage against it? And do they all combine against sin to bring it under? If so Christians, though sin yet live in you, and sometimes prevail over you to your grief and disadvantage, yet you are of the better side, and have a promising evidence of your Interest in Christ. And again, doth your heart in its most deliberate acting's stand in an irreconcilableness unto sin? It may be the opposition

thou makest against sin, is only in a passion, or only some sudden motion upon a disadvantage that thou meetest with in thy sinful ways; but consider whether your Souls do deliberately stand in an irreconcilableness unto sin; and whether your Affections be so engaged, that they refuse to receive this object, because your Souls loath it. Again, Is this distance universal to all sin? It may be Soul, there are some sins that thou wouldest pick at, and be willing to part with them; but there are some others that you are ready to say of them, O! they are but little ones; Good Lord spare them. Is the distance thy heart stands in to sin, to all sin, to heart-sins as well as to life-sins, to little sins as well as to great sins, to those sins that are most connatural, and that thy heart and thy disposition doth most close with? And then again, Is thy distance to sin as sin, as it hath a contrary nature in it to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to his blessed Interest in thy heart? then the Conflict will be abiding as long as there is sin remaining in thy Soul. Again, How stands thy heart unto sin in the temptation? This verily is a discriminating Character of a Saint. Those whose hearts are not rightly engaged, they may oppose sin, and speak highly against it, when it is committed, and when they have seen the ill consequents and effects of it; but do you oppose sin in the temptation, when it is a great way off? And do you shun and avoid, and flee from the occasions of sin? that which may probably be an introduction unto sin? do you avoid that, and arm yourselves against that? This will be an evidence to you that you are interested in Christ. And again, Do you choose rather to suffer than to sin? Verily this is also a discriminating Character of the reality of your Interest in Christ. Another man may choose to avoid sin, when he receives a prejudice by it, or when he cannot apprehend an advantage to the lusts and desires of his own heart; Ay, but the gracious Soul that is interested in Christ, it stands afar off from sin, so as it says, Lord, any condition rather than sin; any burden rather than the burden of sin; any affliction, any grief, rather than sin. And then, Do you consider what reluctancies are in your spirits against the irruptions of sin, and the passive captivities of the Soul by it? Where the heart is not right, it will have no great reflection upon a passive captivity; upon an active surrender he may, when he hath



sold himself to work wickedness, he may be made ashamed of his folly; Ay, but a Hypocrite, a false heart, will never deeply mourn for a passive captivity, but there he will say, Well, I could not help it, it was not my fault, and so will be excusing of it; as the Woman did; The Serpent beguiled me, I intended no such thing, I was seduced and overcome; a passive Captivity bears no great sway in a false heart, but an upright Soul, he mourns over sin, how passive soever he is in the prevailing's of it, when he cannot prevent sin, he will mourn over the prevailing's of it. It will be his constant grief that he was led Captive, and that when he would do good, evil was present with him, and that he is overcome when he strives to overcome. And again, consider Soul whether there be anything less than the returns of death will satisfy thee in thy pursuits of sin? for the gracious Soul that is interested in Christ will pursue sin unto death, restraining grace will not serve him, pardoning grace would not do, but he will be for the crucifying of the lusts of the flesh, for the mortifying of sin in his Soul, for the utter ruin and extirpation of it. Now Sirs, if you can find those things in you, it doth speak for you, and will help to clear your interest in Christ Jesus.

Fifthly, The Soul that is interested in Christ will prize the least of Christ above the greatest enjoyments out of Christ. A little of Christ will be more to him than a great deal of the Creature; nay a little of Christ will be more to him than all the Creature; a little of Christ's grace, a little of Christ's love, a little of Christ's Spirit, a small income from Christ, the least love token from Christ, the least saving Gospel manifestation and discovery of Christ; O 'tis the sweetest discovery, and the most blessed enjoyment that ever his Soul had: Thus it was with David (if he be the Author of Psal. 73. and Asaph only the Penman;) David at once overlooked his Crown, and his Kingdom, and all his Treasures that he had in the world, and the whole world that was before him, and says he, Lord, whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee, Psal. 73.25. And so the Apostle Paul, says he, I count all things but dross and dung in comparison of Christ Jesus my Lord, Phil. 3.8 Christ was more to him than all other things; and verily Christians, so will it be

with you, if your hearts be right; a little of Christ will be more to you than all the treasures, pleasures, and the glories and enjoyments of this whole world, and you will esteem yourselves more honorable with a little grace in your hearts, than with your Houses full of wealth.

Now to close, do but bring thy heart to this touchstone, and do but consider what it is that thy heart is most set upon, and what it is that will satisfy thee; if this world, and the comforts of it can satisfy thee without Christ, thou hast no part in Christ; nay if thou preferrest other enjoyments before a participation in Christ, thou hast none of Christ; if thou hast a saving interest in Christ, the manifestations of Christ to thy Soul, will be the most blessed manifestations, O the least incomes of Christ will be as life from the dead. The least love token, the least intimation of his love, the least saving effect and operation of his grace upon thy heart, and the increase of communion with him: These things will be the life, and the joy of thy Spirit. If thou canst find it thus with thee, really and in truth, that a little of Christ is prized in thy heart above the greatest enjoyments out of Christ; it is a sign and evidence that thou art interested in Christ. It may be Soul thou hast but a little of Christ in thy heart, very little of Christ but a little of the grace of Christ, and but a little of the Spirit of Christ, and canst do but little for Christ; ay, but the least incomes of Christ, they are the sweetest incomes to thee, and thy enjoyments of Christ are the most satisfying enjoyments, and thy Soul will prefer an opportunity of communion with the Lord Jesus before great advantages otherwise: If it be thus with thee, it is an evident sign that thou art interested in Christ, and thou mayest take comfort in thy present standing in him.

## **SERMON VII.**

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

The Proposition is this,

Doct. That there is enough in Christ Jesus alone, for the Souls full rejoicing and triumph, whatsoever his condition and exigency is in this world.

This we have cleared to you, and are now upon clearing up of the Souls state, that he may know whether he hath interest in this full Jesus: We have already given you five particulars that may be as so many evidences of a Christians interest in Christ, and shall now proceed.

Sixthly, In the sixth place, The Soul that is interested in Christ, is under an over-ruling influence from Christ that secures the habitual inclinations of his Soul for Christ against all contrary invitations and drawings. Particular acts are not a sufficient conclusive ground of our state one way or another: A Soul that hath no interest in Christ, may seem choice and singular in some actions and there may be a seeming lovely desirable sanctity upon him, and a Soul that is really interested in Christ, may by the power of a temptation be drawn into some unbecoming acts; so as particular acts are no sufficient ground of an interest: and if you judge by them, you may easily be deceived, but he that is really united to Christ, is under a divine influence from Christ, that secures the habitual inclinations of his heart for him, that so the bias of his heart is towards Christ, and the full purpose of the Soul in its secret breathings and inclining's are after the Lord Jesus alone. It may be when the temptation comes, he may be almost staggered, but yet his heart stands right for Christ in the main, in whom he is interested, and though temptations may have a great power upon him, yet the bias of his heart will wind through all temptations unto Christ alone; thus it was with Paul; there were contrary drawings in the heart of Paul, and the temptations that he met withal from the remains of indwelling sin were very great, yet his

heart under all stood right, and the habitual inclinations of his heart were for, and towards Christ Jesus, and this was the Characteristical note of his in-being in Christ, Romans 7.15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. You may see it at large, For that which I do, says he, I allow not, for what I would do I do not, but what I hate, that do I: if then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good, &c. The old man it was rising and rebelling in him, and did improve all its strength, and its whole interest in his heart to draw him aside; now, says he, at this time when I was under those shakings, then my heart was in the way of Christ, and I consented unto the law that it was good, that which I did not, was that which I would do. And though I found a law in my Members that was warring against the law of my mind, yet says he, I delight in the law of God after the inward man, there is my delight, the inclinations, the habitual inclinations of my Soul were not changed nor turned, but the secret workings and breathings of my Soul are towards the Lord Jesus Christ. And thus it was with David: David had many temptations, and rubs in his way, that had like to have turned him out of the way, but yet says he, Psal. 119.20. My Soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times, and Psal. 42.1, 2. As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God. My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before him? And says the Prophet, Isaiah 26.9. With my Soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early; the night season was a dark time, and it is probable his Spirit was very much endangered at that time by temptation, dark times are times of temptation, and his Soul at that time was almost overwhelmed in the conflicts of his Spirit, with the divisions of his heart in the night season. Now says he, when it was thus darkness about me, temptation arose upon me, with my Soul, says he, have I desired thee. Then did my heart stand clear for Christ, though I could not discover myself as I would: Now Christians, if you would make a judgment of your own state; do you fix your eye upon your hearts, and consider how they stand, and secretly observe the habitual inclinations of your hearts, do you, as the expression is, Acts 11.23. Cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart? Those that are

interested in Christ, do with purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord. There is not only some good thoughts rise in their hearts now and then, they have not only some scant desires after Christ, or some sudden motions upon their Spirits towards him, but the bent of their heart is towards Christ at all times, the breathings and longings of the heart is after Christ. Now those that are under such an influence from above, as to secure the habitual inclinations of their Souls for Christ against all contrary invitations and drawings; these are such as have indeed an interest in Christ, and this is the influence of the interest on Christ's part upon your Souls?

Seventhly, A Soul that is interested in Christ is so concerned in the concerns of Christ, as dishonors unto, and dishonorable reflections upon the Lord Jesus Christ, bear hard upon his Spirit: My Brethren, the Souls interest in Christ is a oneing interest, an interest that makes you one with Christ, and the Soul will be a sharer and partner with Christ in all his dishonors, in all his griefs, and in all his afflictions, Jesus Christ speaks sometimes of being wounded, and of being grieved, and of being offended. Now the Soul that is really interested in Christ, is offended where Christ is offended. The Soul that is really interested in Christ, will grieve over, & for whatsoever doth grieve Christ, either in himself or others, he will be wounded with that which doth wound Christ, and will mourn over that which is an occasion or matter of mourning unto Christ, and doth bear heavily upon his Spirit, that which doth reflect dishonor upon the name and glory of the Lord Jesus. I remember what was spoken of our Lord Jesus in reference unto his Father, and the concerns that he was oned in, Psal. 69.9. For the zeal of thine House hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me, both these passages are applied unto Christ Jesus in the New Testament, John 2.16, 17. there you may see the first passage applied unto him, And his disciples remembered that it was written, the zeal of thine House hath eaten me up: Jesus Christ you know came into the Temple that was his Fathers House of Worship, and there he saw his Father dishonored, there he saw his Fathers Worship corrupted and adulterated, and defiled, and he saw there great reflections upon

his Fathers glory, and he was even eaten up with it: his holy zeal and passion for his Fathers glory that he was concerned in, did carry him out even beyond himself to make him disregard and neglect himself; The zeal of thine House hath eaten me up. And says he, the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. This you have applied to Christ, Rom. 15.3. For even Christ pleased not himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen on me. Jesus Christ he took up sin, and he bore that sin upon himself, that was a dishonor unto his Father, and that was a wound unto his Father, and that his Father said he was loaden and pressed with, as a Cart is pressed with Sheaves; he took up this dishonor and reproach, and bore it upon himself, he was wounded for our transgressions, he was afflicted and chastened for our sins, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me; Christ he came, and he mourned over sin, and he expressed the sorrow of his heart, for that whereby his Father was dishonored; now the Soul that is really interested in Christ is so oned with Christ, as he hath fellowship with him in his dishonor; and in his reproaches, and in all his sufferings, he is a partner with Christ in his griefs, he is a griever with Christ, and a mourner with Christ, and a complainer with Christ; if there be anything in his heart, or ways, that do offend Christ, he is offended and disturbed with this as soon as he espies it, and he cannot bear it, because it offends the Lord Jesus, that he is oned with: and this is that that makes true Christians walk up and down with such sad hearts; what is the matter? Why, there is something that they have espied in their hearts, that is offensive to Christ, and they cannot bear it, and know not how to get rid of it, and there is something in their walk and conversation that doth reflect upon the honor of the Lord Jesus, and their Souls are wounded with it. And as to the sins of others, that which is a reflection upon the name, upon the honor and glory of Christ lies hard upon their Spirits; says David, Psal. 119.136. Rivers of water run down mine Eyes, because they keep not thy law; and Jeremiah 9.1.2, 3. See how the Prophet complains of that which the Lord doth make a complaint of: They proceed from evil to evil, saith the Lord; and O says he, that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I

might weep for this. Hence the Saints are called Mourners in Zion, and we read of those that mourned in the midst of the Lord's People, they mourned sometimes for their own sins, as dishonoring Christ Jesus. Thus did Peter when he had displeased the Lord, and was sensible of it, he goes out and weeps bitterly. And sometimes they weep for the sins of others, that they see the Lord is so much dishonored, and offended by the lives and conversations of Saints. Now by this make a judgment of yourselves (Christians) and bring your hearts to this touchstone; if that you stand at a distance from the concerns of the honor of Christ Jesus in the world; and you look upon the concerns of his glory as Alien, that you are not concerned in; and the dishonors of Christ you are not touched with them, they make no impression upon your Spirits, truly this speaks very sadly: But now on the other hand, if that you find your Spirits in fellowship with Christ, in all his dishonors, if you find that whatsoever doth disturb, displease, and grieve the Lord, is a weight upon your Spirits, and that because it is a weight upon the heart of Christ Jesus, this is some evidence that you are interested in, and united unto the Lord Jesus.

Eighthly, Again, The Soul that is interested in Christ is restless in all pursuits after Christ, until it can compass something of him: Christ is the center of the heart, and he cannot rest out of Christ, neither can he be long satisfied without him, but is continually pressing after a sight of, and fellowship and communion with the Lord Jesus, his heart being as it were swallowed up with him; lead him unto other things, and they would not satisfy him out of Christ; lead him unto ordinances, this would not do, if Christ be not there; advance him unto all Gospel privileges that give him a name and renown amongst Saints, this would not satisfy him if he hath not Christ Jesus there. Thus it was with the Spouse, she had lost her sight of Christ, and now she had her ordinances still, and her privileges still, yet this would not satisfy her, but she goes from ordinance to ordinance, and from privilege to privilege, to seek after Christ, O saw ye him whom my Soul loveth? And truly I may say of such a heart as is interested in Christ, as Absalom spake in another case, when he was well provided

for, and had royal Princely accommodations; O! says he, what is all this to me if I may not see the King's face? 2 Sam. 14.32. So, whatsoever, be the outward accommodations that a Soul hath that is interested in Christ, still he will be saying, O! what is all this if I have not Christ? he will be restless in his pursuit after Christ, until he can compass something of him. Now Christians, examine your hearts by this; if that you can sit down with something short of Christ; if that you can come to an Ordinance, and have no communion with Christ in the Ordinance, and yet are well satisfied; if that you can take up your rest in the privileges of the Gospel, without the Lord Christ himself, it is a very shroud sign that you are not yet interested in him; but if no Ordinance will please you, where Christ is not, no enjoyment will satisfy you if Christ be away; that your eye is upon Christ in and through all enjoyments, as the only rest and center of your Souls, this is a good sign of Interest.

Ninthly, In the ninth place, The Soul that is interested in Christ, makes his preparations, and his reformations in his heart, which Christ principally respects. He that is united unto Christ, looks chiefly a the heart, which Christ looks chiefly upon, and his great care is to have his heart swept, cleansed, purified, sanctified, fitted and furnished for the Majesty of Christ Jesus: And heart-disturbances, and heart-disorders, are matters of great grief unto him, because he knows that thereby Christ is displeased. Jesus Christ takes up his abode with the Soul that is united to him. Now Christ's residence is in the heart, and the Soul that is united to Christ, will principally look to prepare that Room where Christ's residence is to be; he will be in the use of all means to bring his heart into some Gospel decency for the entertainment of the Lord Jesus; and all that comes from him, it comes from the heart. The profession that he makes of Christ, it is a heart-rooted profession, and the change of his life it springs from the change of his heart, and the holiness and sanctity that he discovers and manifests, is holiness from the heart. Now Christians, examine your own hearts by this particular also; some preparations you make, some reformations you are able to show, but are your preparations only life and conversation



preparations? are they not heart preparations too? Or is your reformation only a life reformation, and not a heart reformation? They that are not interested in Christ, they may prepare and reform; but they will look only to the washing of the outside of the Cup, and the adorning of the outward man, not the inward man; but now if your greatest care be upon your hearts, and your utmost diligence is to have them thoroughly reformed, and to have them under a heavenly dispose for Christ, to make provision there, and to be fitted in the inward man for communion with the Lord Jesus; and in all your reforming's you first begin there, and carry on outwardly as you are able to succeed inwardly; This is an evidence of an Interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Tenthly, Again; The Soul that is interested in Christ, lives not upon himself, nor upon his own actings, but upon Christ unto whom he is joined. The Soul that is brought into union with the Lord Jesus, he makes the Lord Jesus his all, and he leans upon him, and stays upon him, and not upon anything short of him: Jesus is full, and he lives upon the fullness of Jesus; he comes hungry, and empty, and naked, unto Jesus, to be satisfied, and to be clothed; he stays himself upon the merits of Christ, and he confides in the faithfulness of Christ; and he leans upon the power of Christ, and he acts by the strength of Christ; he lives in all his whole Christian course upon Christ. Says the Spouse, Cant. 2.3. As the Apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the Sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. Here Christ was the Spouse's all; she got under his shade, and there she rested; and she fed upon Christ, and lived upon Christ; His fruit was sweet unto my taste. The true Believer cannot stay upon any righteousness but upon Christ's righteousness, in whom he is interested; as you may see, Phil. 3.8, 9. Yea doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, &c. Now Christians, examine your own hearts by this

also; What is it that you live upon? Is it upon Christ? or, Is it upon yourselves? If you can satisfy yourselves with a righteousness short of Christ's, that is, a righteousness of your own, it is a sign you are not yet interested in him; if you do not go wholly out of yourselves, to make loss of all for Christ, it is a sign you are not yet interested in him; if you act by your own strength, and do not look up to Christ for strength, it is a sign you are your own men, that you are not yet in Christ; and if your greatest care be not to please Christ, it is a sign you are not yet in Christ; but those that are in Christ, they live upon Christ, they do not live upon duties, they do not feed upon bare Ordinances, but they feed upon Christ Jesus, and they trust only to his righteousness, and they eye his merits, and consider his faithfulness, and act Faith upon his Offices; they trust in him, and they have reference to Christ at all times.

Eleventhly, Again; The Souls that are interested in Christ, will with boundless desires be always pressing after Christ, and never think they have enough of him: Not only will they be restless in their pursuits after Christ, till they can compass something of him; but there are boundless desires in them after Christ, and after more of Christ; a little of Christ will not satisfy a soul that is interested in him; but though he have a little of Christ, he will still be pressing after more, & think all that he hath received is but little; he must have more of him, more communion with him; and he must be brought into a higher conformity to him; he cannot rest with a little of Christ, his desires will be boundless, that he will always in his participation of Christ be still looking forward, pressing after perfection, and reaching and designing to apprehend as he is apprehended. A Soul that is interested in Christ, hath always a rising, reaching desire in him after Christ. This you may see, Phil. 3.12, 13, 14. Not as though (says he) I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, &c. I press towards the mark for the prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus. What an enlarged heart had this man Paul? he was come to a very high pitch in Christ Jesus, to make loss of all for him, and to glory in him, and in his righteousness; and yet Brethren, says he, I I count not myself to have

apprehended. O! says he, What have I yet of Christ? What have I received yet of the Spirit of Christ? O how unlike am I yet unto Christ! how unsuitable is my heart yet unto Christ! how little of Christ is yet in my heart! Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, I am reaching forward, says he. The Soul that is interested in Christ will have noble, genuine workings of heart suitable to his inbeing in Christ; he will always be desirous of him, and pressing after more of him, never satisfied with anything that he hath; though he will bless God for the least he hath, yet he will not be satisfied with anything that he hath, but will be pressing after more, and his language is always, Give, Give. Now Christians, do you examine your own hearts by this? if you have really an interest in Christ, it will have such an influence upon your Souls, as always to prompt you on to a pressing after more of Christ, to get further into him, and to know more of him, and to be filled with the Spirit of Christ. A little grace, grace enough to carry you to Heaven, will not satisfy you, but your desire will be to be made to abound in all grace; your desire will be to be holy as he is holy, and to be pure as he is pure, in all manner of conversation; and you will never leave craving and desiring whilst there is a corner in your hearts to fill, and whilst there is room for a hungering and thirsting desire to rise in your hearts after the Lord Jesus. Now, if that you can satisfy yourselves with anything of Christ, and sit down with a bare profession of Christ, without anything of Christ in your hearts; if you have not these holy hungering's and thirsting's in your Souls after high measures, and full enjoyments and manifestations of Christ, it doth speak very sadly; but if there be such boundless desires, as we have told you, after Christ, it is some sign of Interest.

Twelfthly; Again; The Soul that is interested in Christ, values himself, persons and things as they are in, or have of Christ in them: He measures all persons and things by their reference to Christ; and he judges that it is Christ Jesus only that makes them to differ; and whatsoever is excellent in any person, or in anything, it is from Christ Jesus, and it hath no more excellency in it than what it hath in and from the Lord Jesus; he doth not value himself by his outward

enjoyments; he doth not value himself by his gifts, and by his natural accomplishments, though they be very great and large; he doth not value himself by his privileges in his Gospel-state, but he counts that he is what he is in Christ Jesus: I am (says he) what I am, by the grace of God; and if he cannot espy the grace of Christ in him, he yet counts that he hath nothing; and if he cannot find some hopes of an Interest in Christ, he counts that he is nothing; he owns and makes reckoning of himself as he stands in, and hath reference to Christ. If Paul would have made a judgment of himself by his gifts, who had greater? If Paul would have judged himself by his privileges, who had higher? but he judgeth these nothing; By the grace of God, says he, I am what I am. And so he reckons of all others; he esteems of persons as they are in Christ; and those that have most of Christ in them, are most excellent; he loves a poor mean Soul in Christ, more than the greatest and richest man in the world out of Christ; if any persons have more of his love, more of his heart than others, it is those that have most of Christ in them. The most sincere Christians, and the most growing Christians, and the most upright Christians, these are the persons that he most loves and values, and delights in; and as to all Ordinances, he values them not but as he meets with Jesus Christ in them; if he finds not Christ in an Ordinance, he counts the Ordinance as no Ordinance: And if a Lord's Day doth pass without some communion with Christ, he counts 'tis no day to his Soul. And the Gospel of Christ Jesus that he prizes so much, it is because it is Christ's Gospel, and the Truths of the Gospel, that are so dear to him, that he can venture all for, it is because they are Christ's Truths. Now Christians, examine your state and condition by this also; what is it that you value yourselves by? Do you value yourselves by your bare professions? Do you value yourselves by your enlargement? Do you value yourselves by your gifts? Do you value yourselves by the name that you have amongst men? Those that are in Christ do not value themselves thus, but by what they apprehend themselves to be in, and to have received from Christ Jesus.

Thirteenthly, Again; The Soul that is interested in Christ, rises and falls in its spirit, according unto the sensible manifestations or

withdrawing's of Christ in his heart; he rejoices as Christ doth appear, and he is saddened as Christ doth withdraw, and his joy is coming and going as Christ is coming and going in his heart; an appearance of Christ makes day in his heart, and the withdrawing's of Christ makes night in his Soul: When there is a Curtain drawn between Christ and him, then he is in the dark, and then his Soul sits in sorrow; then he is covered over with mourning; but upon the return of Christ his Soul leaps within him, and he is filled and satisfied as with marrow and fatness, Isa. 61.10. I will rejoice in the Lord; my Soul shall be joyful in my God. Why so? because Christ doth appear, and puts on something of his own clothing, and giveth out something of himself to me; he comes as a Bridegroom decketh himself with Ornaments, and makes me as his Bride, and decks me with his Jewels. Now this doth cause me to rejoice in the Lord, and makes me joyful in my God. Days of communion, and seasons of manifestation, they are the festival days that his Soul enjoys, and nothing causes so great a damp upon his heart, as when Christ draws off. This was seen in David, he rises and falls in his spirit, as were the manifestations or the withdrawing's of Christ there. Lord, says he, thy loving kindness is better than life; Ay, there was his joy and gladness. And Lord, says he at another time, thou didst but hide thy face, and I was troubled; there was his sorrow for Christ's absence. And, says the Spouse, Cant. 1.2. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. By [kiss] here, is meant some visible manifestation of Christ unto his Soul, some discernible token of his love; Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth [ for thy love (says he) is better than Wine. ] [Wine] you know was to be given to those that were of a heavy heart by Solomon's direction, Proverbs 31.6. and Psal. 104.15. Wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and Oil to make his face to shine. So as Wine, it is to be given to those that are of a heavy heart, it is that which is to make joyful, and to exhilarate the Spirits. Now says David, Lord thy love is better than Wine, there is more in a little communication of Christ Jesus, then in the greatest refreshment, and heart cheering in the world, for this love that is better then Wine, is not love simply considered, but the effects of love in gracious manifestations, as John 14.21, 22. He that hath my Commandments,

and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him; and says Judas, not Iscariot, Lord how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? This love was a love of manifestation; now says he, Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. Let love be manifested, and this manifesting love is better than Wine: O it will make all other things dainties to him, and sweets to be bitter in his Spirit; this is sweet indeed, and an abiding ground of joy and comfort to his Soul upon the evidence of his love, and upon the sight of his face, and communion with him. Now Christians, examine your hearts by this, if that your joy be determined upon something else then upon Christ, and if that the withdrawments of Christ don't cause the greatest sadness unto your Spirits, it is a shroud sign that you have no interest in Christ: But now where Christ Jesus is looked upon as the very joy of your Souls, and you most of all joy in his presence, and you are most of all troubled at his departure, and at the hidings of his face; it is a sign of interest. O it is a sign that that Woman doth entirely love her Husband, that cannot bear that he should be long absent from her, and is most of all pleased in his company; so it is a sign that that Soul is married unto Christ Jesus, that cannot bear the withdrawments of Christ, and that is never so much troubled and tossed, and discomforted and afflicted in his Spirit, as when Jesus Christ stands behind the Curtain, and refuseth to make answer to his Soul; when he is crying after him.

## **SERMON VIII.**

Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

We proposed to give you some notes of evidence, whereby you may come to know that this Jesus is your Jesus, and that you are

interested in him. We have already gone through 13 particulars, and shall now proceed.

Fourteenthly, The Soul that is interested in Christ hath constraining, abiding endearments in his heart unto Jesus Christ, so as no discouragement shall turn him off from Christ, but he will cut the way through all opposition to come to the enjoyment of him.

My Friends if you are really interested in Christ, and have (upon an interest) tasted how gracious the Lord is, difficulties in your way to Christ will be no difficulties so you may enjoy him; the Soul in Christ will be contented to be reproached for Christ, so he may enjoy him, and the reproaches that he meets withal in the way of Christ, will be no great matter to him, so Christ and he may keep together. You may see what was the Spirit of an Old Testament Saint, in Heb. 11.24, 25. By Faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaohs Daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the People of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. v. 26. Esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches then the Treasures of Egypt. Persecutions would not part Christ, and the real sincere Christian, but though he shall be persecuted for Christ, yet if Christ and he can but keep close together, he will think all is well, Rom. 8.35. and so on, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword, &c. Why, says he, we can bear all this for Christ; we can bear tribulation, we can bear distress, we can bear persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword; Lord, anything rather than to lose Christ, says the sincere interested Christian, he Will suffer losses for Christ, rather than to lose Christ. Lord (say the Disciples) We have left all for thy sake; and it is said of the primitive Christians, that they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; let men frown, and let Devils frown still, the heart of the sincere interested Christian will be working Christ-ward, & he will have constraining, abiding endearments in his heart, that will cut through the difficulties of his way, he will be willing to lose anything rather than to lose Christ; this is the frame of a Soul interested in Christ, when he

is under deliberate acting's for Christ. I am sensible that an honest heart by the strength of a temptation may be suddenly surprised as Peter was; ay, but it will be but for a moment, and he will rise again, he would not quit his interest in Christ, he would not sell his part in Christ, when he comes to reflect and consider, Christ and he cannot live asunder: and his interest in Christ will have such an influence upon his Soul, as will cause him to abide in Christ, that whatsoever he meets withal, yet he desires above all to enjoy Christ; and will go through fire, and through water, if that be the way, and the only way that in the circumstances of providence in divine over-rules, Christ is to be enjoyed, Phil. 1.29. I pray mark the connection there, It is given to you to believe, and also to suffer; upon the Souls believing is his interest struck up with Christ, and he is oned with Christ. Now says he, those that believe, that is, those that are interested in Christ, they will also suffer for the sake of Christ, and the same power that helps them to believe, doth also bear them up against the frowns, and against the discouragements that they meet withal in the way of Christ. Well Christians, examine your own state by this particular; how stand your hearts affected and endeared to Christ in a day of suffering, when difficulties look you in the face, reproaches they are like to befall you, losses and breakings in your outward condition are like to come upon you? Can your hearts say whatsoever comes, O let us have Christ, Christ is more than all; and what we shall enjoy in Christ is more then we can lose for him; there is a constraining, abiding endearment in the heart that is really united to Christ that will cut the way through all opposition. It is not thus with one that is not interested in Christ. The young man in the Gospel made a very fair profession of Christ, and comes and pretends to be his most forward Disciple, but says Christ to him, can you live upon me alone? and can you suffer anything for the enjoyment of me? And will you value and prefer a naked interest in me before all your possessions? No, Lord, says he, I have great possessions; What, must I forgo all these in hand to live upon I know not what? and I know not who? and so he takes his leave of Christ. And says the Apostle, Demas hath forsaken me, having embraced this present world: Their comforts, and their enjoyments, and their outward possessions, and their



outward peace will be more to them than all that they ever thought of Christ, that are not really interested in him; but now that Soul that hath made its close with Christ, his heart is so engaged, and he hath tasted so much sweetness in Christ Jesus; as whatever it cost him, Christ and he shall never part; though he be stripped naked for Christ, yet he will have Christ, and though he die for Christ, yet he would not give up his interest in him. Now examine your Souls by the strong endearments of your hearts unto Christ, when there is an oppressing interest that seems to come between you and Christ, do your affections then divide; and do you then deliver up Christ, and quit your part in Christ? By a close examination of your hearts, under this head you may come to some knowledge of your present state as to your interest.

Fifteenthly, Again in the last place, The Soul that is interested in Christ, prefers the glory of Christ's interest before his own private advantage; if you be indeed joined unto the Lord, then the interest of Christ's glory is a swaying interest in your hearts, it is a ruling, captivating interest, that doth bind and engage you to the glory of it, that the Soul will prefer Christ's glory before anything of his own, his life will be under a peculiar dedication to advance and promote the glory of Christ Jesus; and he will be always upon an advancing design, to exalt Christ in his heart, and to exalt Christ in his house, and to exalt Christ where he hath to do, and with whom he hath to do: he will exalt Christ, though it be upon his own name, and upon his own interest, he will deny his own name for Christ, and will believe for the advancing of the glory of the interest of the Lord Jesus, Phil. 1.20, 21. To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. The Apostle he sums up all in this, Christ is my all; if I live, I desire not to live to myself, but to Christ, and if I die, I desire to die to Christ, that Christ's interest, and the glory of his interest may be exalted by me, both while I live, and when I die. Now Christians examine yourselves by this, what sway doth the glory of Christ bear in your hearts? If that you cannot deny yourselves for Christ, if that your own names be more to you than Christ's name, and if that your own honor be more to you than Christ's honor, and your own interest be more to you

then Christ's interest, it is a very ill sign that things are not right in your hearts: but if the interest of Christ be the ruling, swaying interest, that you are all upon the advance of the glory of Christ, whatever become of yourselves, and whatever become of your interest, and whatever you suffer in the way; yet O that Christ might be magnified, and O that Christ might be glorified; Christ's glory is uppermost in your hearts, and is the only interest that you would prefer; it is a sign that you are indeed interested in Christ, otherwise your hearts would never be so much concerned about Christ's interest, and about the glory of his interest.

And a little further to help and direct you; do but consider these few things.

First, In searching your own hearts for an evidence of interest; If you can find these things that we have laid down, in truth, though not in high degrees and measures, you may be comforted. Many Persons they wrong their case, and so darken themselves thereupon, by looking more unto the height of those things. that are notes of evidence, then the truth of them. Now examine yourselves I say by the truth of these things; though you cannot yet find that you have overcome temptation, that you have got into an holy triumph over temptation, yet if that you can find that under all contrary inclinations and drawings, the habitual frame and inclination of your heart is secured for Christ, you may be comforted; though you cannot find that you are able to do much towards the repairing of the glory of Christ in your place, yet if you have a heart that is deeply affected with the dishonor that is done to Christ, because Christ is dishonored thereby, you may be comforted. Though Christians you can find in your searches but very little of Christ in your hearts, yet if your Souls are restlessly carried out after Christ, in all your seeking's of him, that you must compass something of Christ, or you cannot be satisfied; this seeking heart and restless Spirit after Christ is a note of evidence to you; and though you cannot live up to Christ as you would, yet if your preparations and reformations be heart-preparations, and heart-reformations, that the work is begun, and

going on in you, this may be matter of comfort to you; and so you may go on to all the other particulars that I have given you; look more to the truth of them then to the height and degree of them, if you would upon them come to a right understanding of your present state.

Secondly, If upon a search you can find but some of those things that have been given you as evidential of an interest, you may be comforted, though for the present you cannot speak of them all upon a particular experimental sense: The Lord he speaks unto one Soul by one word, and he speaks unto another Soul by another word, and we don't know what particular word the Lord will make use of, nor what particular of all these the Lord hath singled out, and made of use, advantage, and comfort unto any of you, but if the Spirit of the Lord hath singled out any one of them, and given you a hint of interest thereupon, you have cause to rejoice in the Lord; and if the Lord hath given you but the least hint of his love, and the least intimation by any word of Grace, of your interest, let not this be looked upon as a small thing. Take heed of refusing the consolations of the Lord when they are offered to you, remember him of whom it is said, Psal. 77.2. My Soul refused to be comforted.

Thirdly, Know this, that full assurance, and clear evidence of interest is gradually brought into the heart; as the light of Grace comes in gradually, so also does the light of comfort, which is a light unto your Souls to discern Christ, and to take comfort in him, now the Lord it may be at first let in a little light, as it were through the cravis; don't set light by this; thus doth the Lord work, he gives in a little light at one time, that doth as it were put the Soul between hope and fear, and by and by he comes in with a little more light, and then with a little more light, and so gradually he carries on the Soul until he hath led him unto a clear evidence, and given him a full assurance of interest; so as, if you have but yet the day star in your hearts, don't despise it, if you have yet but the beginnings of the light of consolation, don't judge this small: though comparatively to what some do enjoy, it is but small, yet let it not be small in your

apprehensions; but know that the light of interest gradually comes in & increases I may liken the light of interest unto the Prophets Cloud, that was at first but like a man's hand, and it was a great way off, there was some hope of rain upon it, but they did not know what would come of it, but this was the beginning of such a Cloud that brought abundance of rain. So thou hast (Christian) a little light that is glimmering in thy heart, that sets thee it may be between hope and fear; well, let not this be small to thee, for though for the present thou canst not come to a full assurance, yet thou dost not know what this will come to; thou doest not know what a growing light this is, and how much it may increase in thy heart.

Now unto those that have as yet but a little light in their Souls, some small hopes through grace, of an interest, but they dare not positively conclude, nor they dare not absolutely deny; they have not that full assurance that some have, neither are they left wholly in the dark; unto these Souls I would speak something by way of encouragement, and something by way of direction.

First, By way of encouragement to those that have a little hope through grace, and have some small glimmerings of their interest, and some buddings of their evidence, though it is not yet fully blown; let such hearts consider,

First, That if thou hast anything that is a note of evidence, or gives thee hope through grace, anything I mean that is in truth, know, that though it be never so small, yet thy interest in Christ is as great as his is, that dwells in the height of assurance: my friends, your interest in Christ is not the less, because your evidence of interest is very small, but your little evidence that is in truth, or this little word of grace that the Spirit hath spoken, that gives you some hopes about your condition, doth give you as full an interest in Christ, as he hath, that hath the highest measures of assurance in this world. The young Child that can but run to his Father, and cry Father, Father, he hath as full an interest in, and relation to his Father, as the grown Child that in understanding and judgment is able to reflect upon, and

improve the relation; and so it is with thy Soul in thy union with Christ, though thou canst but look up unto the Lord, and cry unto him that he would help thee; though thou canst but just cry Father, though thou art not able to improve thy interest as some others can, yet if upon the least hint of grace from the Spirit thou art able to cry Father, thy interest is as good, and as great as that Souls that is able to rejoice in Christ in full evidence; Christ is yours, and you are Sons, you are heirs as well as others, and you have the same Spirit, and the same Fountain of Grace to go to, under the smallness of the evidence of your interest.

Secondly, You are under the same preservable, maintainable care that those are, that dwell upon the top of assurance: Jesus Christ doth not take the less care of you, because your interest is very dark and cloudy for the present, but his care over you is the same; he is always opening his watchful eye upon you; and he is always doing for you, always defending of you; see what he says, Isaiah 40.11. He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. O alas, they are scarce able to believe that they are Lambs in the flock of Christ, they would hope so, and they dare not wholly deny it, but that Christ hath a part in them, and hold of them, but it is all they can do to say so; but be it so, they are under as much care as any; He will carry them in his arms, he will gently lead those that are with young: Christ Jesus in one single act doth equally respect all those that are interested in him; be their evidence of interest more or less, clearer, or more clouded.

Thirdly, Again; The comprehensions of Christ upon the union are not proportioned unto, but do far exceed our apprehensions of him in the union: Christ doth not say, I will be unto you as you are unto me, and as you do, so will I do, and as you be, so will I be, and according to your apprehensions, so will I be unto you; but he does exceeding abundantly for us above our faith, and above our hope; it may be we can but say unto him, Lord help; and though we are so weak, he will not do the less; but he will prosecute and manage the interest on his

part upon your Souls, though your apprehensions may be very small of him; you have a very full satisfying Scripture for this, Eph. 3.20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we are able to ask or think, according to the power that worketh in him: So that Jesus Christ's acting's towards us, and dealings with us, and comprehending's of us are not proportioned to our apprehensions of him, not according to our faith and hope, and not according to our prayer, but says he, he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think, and that according to the power that worketh in him: So that though you cannot at all times make faith of that power, yet that power is working, and though your apprehensions be very small, yet the comprehensions of Christ are very great; it is in Heaven that we shall know as we are known; we are fully known here, but ourselves know but in part.

Fourthly. The weaknesses discovered upon your interest, and the provocations given, will be covered and forgiven by the Lord Jesus in the strength of the love of his relation to you, or interest in you. The Soul that is in relation, is not able in a clear Gospel way to live up unto his standing in Christ Jesus, but he oftentimes walks very dishonorably unto his interest, and very unbecomingly to his hopes of evidence; well Soul, though it be thus, the Lord Jesus Christ will display such love on his part, as shall cover and forgive all; the Father will not disinherit his Child, because he doth provoke him, and because he doth grieve him by many foolish and unchildlike acts, but the love of the relation, on the Fathers part will forgive the Child. The Husband would not give a bill of divorce to his Wife, because he finds failings in her ways, but the love of the relation doth bind him, and influence him to cover all her weaknesses, and continue his kindness to her; if we have a member that is full of pain, and puts us to a great deal of smart and puts us much out of order, we do not presently call for the cutting off of this member, but we bear with the pain and smart, remembering that it is a member: now thus it is my friends, between the Lord Jesus Christ and you, though there are weaknesses discovered in your ways, yet he will remember that you are interested in him, and though he meet with provocations from you, yet he will

remember that you are his Children, and that you are in relation, and that will engage him to cover and forgive all; though I speak not this to give any a liberty to indulge themselves, and I hope none of you will abuse discoveries of grace so, I am sure an honest heart will not, but for your terror, if your temptation be thereunto, know, that though Jesus Christ will not proceed in the utmost of his displeasure against you to give you a bill of divorce, yet there are rebukes, and there are frowns that are as bitter as death, that the Soul may meet withal from Christ upon his high provocations; though we don't presently cut off a member that is full of pain, yet we may see cause to send for the Surgeon, to make an incision, and so verily will Jesus Christ be forced to do in your hearts, that give yourselves such an allowance, Psal. 89.31, 32, 33. If his Children forsake my laws, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail, &c.

Fifthly, Know that your interest in Christ is not dissolvable as the evidence of your interest is losable. Christian, it may be the Lord hath singled out some word that he hath made use of by his Spirit to give you some hopes in, and about your interest in, and relation unto Christ; I would hope that all hath not been spoken to you in vain, but if the Lord hath given you some hint by his word of your interest, possibly within a little while all this will be lost again, and thou mayest be as much in the dark, as ever thou wert since thou camest into Christ; well, Christ will not disown thee, and Christ will hold thee up, that thou shalt never be left to disown him; still thy interest is sure in Christ Jesus; though light is coming and going in thy Soul, and thy evidence is sometimes coming, and sometimes going, yet know that thy interest is firm and inviolable.

Sixthly, Thy present interest in, and relation unto Christ in a state of Grace, is a certain and infallible pledge of thy future possession of Christ in glory: Christian, thou hast now a little hope through grace; O make much of it, thou dost not know what is in it: There is not only

matter of consolation in it, but it contains a pledge of Heaven, and of thy full possession of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory forever, therefore saith Christ; He that believeth on me hath everlasting life, believing that gives the interest, thereby the Soul is united to Christ; now upon the union he hath everlasting life, he hath the pledge of it, his union is the pledge of it; and he is reserved for eternal life, and he is going on to perfection, to enjoy eternal life. The Lord is in grace and by grace fitting of him for a glorious enjoyment of himself forever; now these things are for thy comfort in thy present condition, whilst the light of evidence is but glimmering in thy heart.

Secondly, Some few things briefly I shall give you by way of direction.

First, Have you the least intimation of the Lord's love to you, and of your standing in his love, be thankful for these small appearances of light in your Souls. I say be thankful Christians; there is a great deal in a little and small word of evidence, or in a small word of hope. Therefore take every hint that the Lord gives, and wear it with thankfulness, bless his name for it, that is the way to have it increased.

Secondly, Joy and triumph in the Lord, upon the present evidence that you have, living up to it. I say live up to the light that you have, in a holy joy and rejoicing in Christ Jesus, get into the Prophets Spirit, and into his frame here in the text; To joy in the Lord, and to rejoice in the God of your Salvation, and learn Christian to live up unto a small measure of assurance, and that is the way to have a greater.

Thirdly, Acknowledge all sense of interest to be given forth in a way of grace; I say acknowledge, that not only the grace of your union, but also the light and comfort of your union is dispensed in a way of free grace; The Lord is pleased to give out all manifestations of interest in Christ in a way of grace, John 14.22. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou manifestest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? He must speak this upon a reflect act, or else he



could not speak with that confidence; Lord, that thou hast manifested thyself to us, and not to others, this is to be acknowledged unto free grace.

Fourthly, Have you a little light of your Interest? do you gather in upon Christ from that little that you have for more? Christians, though you have but a little light for the present, and are weak in assurance for the present, yet there is a full measure of assurance to be given out: There is not only the Soul's comfort from a reflect act, by the light of the Lord upon his own grace that is wrought, but there is the immediate Testimony of the Spirit that is ready to be given out, which is a Witness not argumentative, or in a way of argumentation, but it is a Witness and Evidence that is given in by, and in the immediateness of his own presence in the heart of the Believer, Rom. 8.16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God: He bears witness in some immediate act in the Soul. It is a clear undeniable, soul-satisfying, Divine Testimony, that the Spirit gives in the Soul, that resolves all its doubts, and clears his whole Interest, and settles him in the full enjoyment of the Lord Jesus, and enables him to act upon it. And then

Fifthly and lastly, Have you a little evidence of your Interest for the present? Christian, do you improve this little unto the comforting of your Souls in Christ in all straits, and unto a living upon him in all the necessities of your present condition? Jesus is yours, and you are interested in him; the Lord hath given you some little hope of this; this hope through grace Christians, should be improved by you; upon all occasions you should run out unto the Lord Jesus, and have recourse to him, and venture upon him; you should glory in him, and live upon his fullness, and rely upon his power and faithfulness: Jesus that is so full is your Jesus; and Jesus that is so free is your Jesus; and Jesus that is so faithful is your Jesus; you have some sight of this, and some hope of this through grace; the Lord now expects that you should come and live upon him in all conditions, and comfort your Souls in him in all disconsolations, when you are weak, and when you are tempted, and when you are tried, and when you

meet with discouragements from without, then to retire to the Lord Jesus, and act Faith upon him.

## **SERMON IX.**

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

I Shall now proceed to help and direct those Souls that are able to reflect upon their own Interest and standing in Christ, that they may live upon Christ, and glory in him in all conditions, and under all changes of Providence, that though they have none else, though they have nothing else in this world but the Lord Jesus Christ to live upon, their hearts may be full of joy and comfort. And before I come particularly to speak unto this, I shall premise and propose several considerations that may help to clear the way to what we design to speak to, and to encourage your hearts unto a living upon, and glorying in Christ, when you have nothing else to rejoice in.

First, Consider that all the comforts of an outward condition are held at great uncertainties, and continued at the sovereign pleasure of the great disposer of Heaven. The Lord hath not fixed us unchangeably in the enjoyments and comforts of an outward state, but he reserves a sovereign power in his own hand to remand from us what at a time he was pleased to command down upon us. And all the comforts of an outward condition they are mutable, and we are exposed unto a variety of changes of condition in this world. All our outward comforts they are exposable unto the spoil; and the very foundation of our Joy in this world is avertable: He that hath to his own apprehension a mountain that stands strong, that he thinks can never be moved, is exposed to the sovereign alterations of the great Ruler of Heaven, that he may have his mountain overturned in a moment; and he that is lifted up on high, and seems to himself to be

so upon the advance, that he shall never fall: The Lord can suddenly like unto Job, lay him in the dust. We are full one day, and the Lord may empty us before the next; we are rich today, and we may be poor before tomorrow; we are comforted today on every side, and we may be left naked, destitute and broken before tomorrow: As to our Stocks, they are losable and spendable; and as to all Lands and Inheritances, they are saleable and mortgageable; uncertain riches, they make to themselves wings and flee away; they have the wings of fire, or the wings of Thieves, or the wings of this providence, and the other to flee away with. The Lord he suffers one man to run away with so much of such a man's estate, and suffers another to run away with another part of his estate, that those that were rich are soon made poor; and as to your relations that you at present take comfort in; now they are, and anon they are not, Parents, Children, Friends, Comforters, Counselors, they die away from us, and we see them, and we know them no more forever; and which of you that are here in the Lord's presence, that may not sit down & weep over your broken pitchers, and say, This once I had, and that once I had, but now I have it not; once I was full, but now I am empty; once I was lifted up on high, but now I am brought down very low; once I was a lender, but now I am a borrower; once I had most comfortable relations, none happier than I, in a tender Father, in a loving Yoke-fellow, in a desirable Child, in a faithful Friend; but now it is quite otherwise, they are all like Jonah 's Gourd that grew up and withered on a sudden. This you may see in the verse before the Text; the Fig tree that blossoms not, the fruit of the Vine, and the labor of the Olive they fail, and the Fields yield no meat, the Flocks are cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stall. The Lord you see hath given us but a weak tenure to all these outward enjoyments, and he maintains a Sovereignty over every comfort that he is pleased to bestow upon us, that so we shall hold all that we have in this world at great uncertainties, and must day by day stand to the allowance of the great disposer of Heaven, who will sometimes give, and will sometimes take what he hath given.

Secondly, The Lord Jesus Christ is, and hath whatsoever the Scripture hath said, and much more than we are able to conceive of him, in our largest and utmost apprehensions: He is, and he hath, according unto all Old Testament Prophecies and Predictions in the utmost Exposition that can be made of them, in the largest extent, and he is, and he hath according to the utmost word of the revelation that is made of him in the New Testament; and you are not able to conceive and apprehend what he is, and what he hath in the considering of the Scripture expressions that are made use of to set him forth unto you. You cannot measure Christ by your thoughts and imaginations; but when you have conceived all that you can, Christ is more, and Christ hath more than you are able to apprehend of him. The Scripture tells us, that the Lord Jesus Christ hath a fullness of grace in him; now you are not able to apprehend what this fullness of grace is; it is an infinite fullness, and you are not able to comprehend it in your finite thoughts, how comprehensive soever they are. The Gospel tells you of the outgoings of Christ's heart unto sinners, but you are not able to apprehend, nor to measure what is the love of the heart of Christ to poor sinners; but when you have conceived never so much of his love, there is more still than you are able to grapple. The Scripture tells you of a great power that is in Christ; conceive never so much of his power, what it is that he is able to do for you, in a strait, and how wonderfully he is able to work, there is yet a greater extent in the power of Christ than your apprehensions can reach. The Gospel tells you of an All-fullness, or an Allness that is in the Lord Jesus Christ: Sum up all that you can think of, and all, that the Scripture can help you to conceive of, to add unto this Allness of Christ, and yet behold you are not able to tell what his All is; you may soon tell what your All is, or you may tell what another's All is, what a great man's All is, or what a Prince's All is, or what a Kingdom's All is, but you cannot tell what Christ's All is; but when you have thought and conceived, when you have dived and reached until you are weary, still the grace, the power, the love, the fullness of the Lord Jesus is above your reach, and there is more than ever entered into your hearts to conceive of him. This you have, Isa. 55.8.9. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith

the Lord; for as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. See how the Lord tells us that he is advanced above all our imaginations of him. Now the thoughts of Christ's heart are always towards us, and always proportioned unto the fullness that he hath received: Now, says he, My thoughts are not like to your thoughts; you thought that I could relieve only in such a case, or I could help only in such a strait; you thought I could do thus, and that I could do thus, and do no more; but alas, says Christ, you are mistaken; there is as great a distance between my thoughts and your thoughts, as there is between Heaven and Earth; so as the fullness of Christ Jesus is a most glorious and blessed fullness, enough for all your Soul's relief, and to spare.

Thirdly, Christ's fullness of grace is always subjectively and objectively the same.

First, It is always subjectively the same. Christ's Spring is not a rising and a falling Spring, but the waters of it are always of the same depth; the waters of this Fountain do not admit of an ebb and of a flow, but they are always at one and the same height. Christ hath not a more and a less; his fullness will not admit of an augmentation and a diminution; but notwithstanding all the overflowing's of the fountain, still it is a fountain-fullness; notwithstanding all the streams that have run from it, still it is as full as ever; notwithstanding all the thousands of Souls that Jesus hath relieved, and empty hearts that Jesus hath filled, still he is as full of grace as ever, as full of mercy as ever: There is no less in this fountain as it is subjectively considered, upon all that he hath given and dispensed; but he is as rich in grace, and there is as great a plenty in him, as there was when he first opened his fountain unto sinners, Col. 1.19. For it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell: There it doth always abide, and the same fullness without change, the same fullness without diminution. That fullness that God placed in his Son, there it doth abide in the glory of its utmost height, Heb. 13.8. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This is that that

is said of your Jesus, his fullness was a great fullness at first; why, he is the same today; spend Christians what you will, and draw out of the fountain what you can, it will be as full tomorrow as it is today; Yesterday, today, and the same forever.

Secondly, Christ's fullness is always objectively the same unto all those that do possess it; the Soul that hath an interest in Jesus once, hath an interest in him forever: and the Soul that is once admitted unto the fountain of Christ Jesus, shall never be debarred more; you have not a coming and a going interest, an interest that is today, and may be taken away tomorrow; indeed your outward comforts they are losable comforts, and your outward blessings are spendable, God may give you much today, and you may have nothing of all that much tomorrow; but it is not so here, you are not interested in Christ today, and dis-interested in him tomorrow; but once interested, and forever interested; not gracious now, and graceless by and by, but your interest in the grace of Christ is an everlasting interest; and you have the immutable fullness of the Lord Jesus ever to go unto, whatever your strait is, having once an interest given you in him; the Lord doth not give you a part in himself, and then take away that part, but Christ once yours, is forever yours, and your fountain fullness none shall ever be able to take from you, nor to deprive you of, so as if thou hast once Christ to go unto, thou hast always Christ to go unto; and if thou doest once discern thy interest in Christ upon good and Gospel substantial grounds, thou mayest always glory in the Lord, that thou art once interested in.

Fourthly, All Saints have the same Jesus to live upon, and the same fullness of Jesus in all its dimensions to go unto: The Lord hath not given one believer a greater propriety in himself then he hath given another; neither hath one a fuller way prepared for him of going unto Christ than another hath; the same Jesus that Abraham had to do with, and did live upon, is in common for every Son and Daughter of Abraham; and the same fullness of Jesus that Abraham had, you have in all its dimensions; the Lord did not open a Fountain unto Abraham, and open only a stream unto you, but if you be a Son or

Daughter of Abraham, you have the same great Ocean to go unto in all its fullness that Abraham had, you have the same merits to implead that Abraham had; you have the same blood to be washed in, and to wash in, that any other believer hath; and you have the same great and precious promises to apply that another believer hath; one believer cannot lay a challenge upon this promise, and say it is mine, and not yours; but 'tis yours as well as his, the same Fountain in all its dimensions you have to go unto in all your straits, that another believer hath; and therefore if you have not that strength, if you have nor that grace, if you have not that riches, if you have not that fullness that another believer hath, you must blame yourselves and not Christ, for he offers himself alike unto all, and discovers and holds forth his Fountain alike unto all.

Fifthly, There is a vast disproportion between your creature losses, and your gains and enjoyments in Christ; your losses in the creature they are but shadows, and not substance; there is an emptiness in the fullest outward condition, take it as an outward condition, and there is a bitterness in the sweetest outward enjoyment, and the losses that you can meet withal in this world, they are only such as reach and concern an animal life; but now there is more in a little of Christ Jesus, then there is in a great deal of the Creature, nay in all creature enjoyments, so as whatsoever the loss is that you meet withal in the creature, a little of Christ Jesus will make it up; the least gift of Christ's right hand doth far exceed all the gifts of his left hand, and one draught of the water of the upper springs is more than all the waters in the nether springs, so as though thou meetest with sore losses, and great blows and breakings in the outward man, yet know that a little of Christ will fill up thy Soul, that there will be no want, whatsoever thou hast lost: it may be Christian, that the Creature that thou hast lost, would have been enjoyed to thy disadvantage, if it had still been kept in thy hand; it may be it had been to the loss, to the hurt of the possessor: but now Jesus Christ is always enjoyed to the advantage, and Christ Jesus is such an advantage as will answer all losing disadvantages, so as Christian, be not overmuch dejected at

the passing away of the Creature, when there is still enough in Christ to make up the loss that thou hast sustained.

Sixthly, The joy that is drawn from Christ depend, not upon sensible things, but lives in the Soul when all outward comforts are gone: you may as to the world be an undone man, broken in your outward estate, and yet your joy none can take from you, but now whatsoever you have in the Creature, if you have not Christ with the creature, you have no ground of joy, so as Christ he is always a ground of joy whether the Creature be absent or present, but the Creature is never so without Christ; do but consider the Apostle Paul, he had an interest in Christ, and he glories in his interest when he had nothing else, Rom. 5.3. We have peace with God, says he, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and now says he, we glory in tribulation; we are spoiled in our goods, and we are sore broken, and left sorrowful, and desolate, and forsaken as to outward supports, and supporters, and yet says he in the midst of all we glory in tribulation; or if you will according unto another Scripture; we are says he, but as sorrowful, and but as poor, 2 Cor. 6.10. For indeed we make many rich, we have grace, and abundance of grace in Christ Jesus, and we are in no want: Paul and Silas, Acts 16.26. they were in Prison, and in the Stocks, and yet behold, at midnight they break out in singing praises unto God; their hearts were full of joy when they had nothing of the Creature in their hands; and thus did the Prophet in the text; there comes a famine upon all his outward comforts, that behold he had nothing to live upon, and yet will I rejoice in the Lord; we have all in him, (says he) when we have nothing out of him: Joy that is drawn from Christ shall abide in the Soul, when all visible creature supports shall fail; though his entertainment in the world be very mean, and his outward burdens be very great, and his poverty very pressing upon his outward man, yet the Soul that hath an interest in Christ, will joy, notwithstanding all this.

Seventhly, Again; The Lord Jesus Christ in his Gospel-fullness of grace is under an indispensable obligation to dispense that grace,



that as the great officer of Heaven he hath received the charge of: The fullness of Christ Jesus, it is a common fullness, it is a fullness for all believers, and Jesus Christ doth not live and spend upon the fullness of grace that he hath received; but he discovers it to the Saints that they may have it to live upon; and he lieth under indispensable obligations to dispense it to those that come unto him, and Jesus Christ will not debar any Soul that comes unto him for spiritual relief; he is engaged in faithfulness unto his Father to relieve those that come, and he must deny his office, (which he can never do) should he not do it, for the Father hath entrusted him with grace, that he might dispense it, and he hath given him his fullness that he might communicate of his fullness to those that are in want, Psal. 68.18. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led Captivity Captive, thou hast received gifts for men; Jesus Christ he hath received great gifts from his Father; he hath received grace gifts & office gifts, and he hath received personal gifts, and all these gifts that he hath received, they are for men, and 1 Cor. 3.21. All is yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or things present, or things to come, all is yours; all that Christ hath received from his Father, or is ordained to dispense, he must dispense, and he will dispense, Isaiah 61, 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, &c. says Christ, there is a poor Soul that I must deliver, and there is a wounded heart that I must heal, and there is a bruised reed that I must bind up, and there is one weak in grace that I must strengthen, and why must I do it? Why says he, I am anointed to do this; the Father hath commissioned him to do this, he hath ordained him hereunto, and he must deny his ordination, and refuse the office that he is to act in, should he refuse a poor Soul, and not give liberally to those that come to him, John 6.27. Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat that endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father Sealed; in these expressions are discovered the great blessings of the Gospel that are dispensable by the hands of Christ; now go

unto Christ Jesus, if you be hungry; if you be thirsty go unto Christ Jesus; if you be naked go unto Christ Jesus, if you be empty; why? will he bless such an one as I am? will he look upon such an one as I am? yes, says the Father, go, and you shall speed, my Son shall give these things to you, for I have sealed him; or you may consider these words as spoken by Christ, and as the indispensable obligation that lies upon the Son, from the charge that he hath received, an Office-charge of all that grace that the Father hath designed should be dispensed; do not question therefore the Lord Jesus Christ, but let your applications be frequent to him, he will be faithful unto his Office.

Eighthly, There is an exceeding tenderness in the heart of Christ unto distressed Sinners, according to all the concernments of his Office: There is a very great willingness, and forwardness in the Lord Jesus Christ to be dealing out his grace unto those for whom grace was designed, or to whom grace is to be dispensed; there is an inexpressible desire in the Soul of Christ Jesus to be dealing out the grace that he hath received the charge of; all Office-work is most desirable work to Christ, though never so hard, therefore when he speaks concerning his death, says he, I have a Baptism to be Baptized with, and how am I straightened till it be accomplished. But now we may conceive that there is much more a desire in the heart of Christ to dispense the grace of his death, Psal. 16.3. Thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not unto thee, but to the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight; My delight says Christ, it is with the Saints, to be relieving the Saints, and to be comforting of the Saints, and to be blessing and strengthening of the Saints. The heart of Christ takes great delight in this, my delight is with them says he, as to all my goodness, as to all my kindness, as to all the gifts of grace that I have received, and as to all my fountain fullness, it doth not extend to the Lord, but it is to the Saints, and my delight is with the Saints, on the consideration of the grace that I have to dispense to them, and Heb. 4.25. Jesus Christ he is touched with us, he hath a feeling of our infirmities, not a feeling in a way of passion and suffering, but a feeling in a way of compassion and

tenderness, that is his feeling, as the Mother hath a feeling of the pain and sickness, and weakness of the Child, through the sympathy of her spirit, and the yernings of her bowels over it; so the Lord Jesus Christ stands with yearning bowels over his Children, and he is touched with our infirmities: You have not a weight upon your spirit, but in compassion and tenderness Jesus Christ feels it; and you have not a burden on this respect, or the other, but Jesus Christ feels it; such are the compassions of his spirit towards you in all the concernments of his Office. It may be you are ready to say in a great strait, or under a sore Trial; O that such a friend knew how it is with me! O that my Father were here! or such a Relation were here! that they did but know how it is with me! Why Soul, Jesus Christ he knows, and he feels the weight of thy troubles; & sympathiseth with thee under all thy sorrows. We have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Now this tenderness of spirit, this sympathy of Christ, does influence his hand unto a liberal and free discharge of his Office. So that whatever are your losses in the creature, and however your outward condition is broken, you may go to the Lord Jesus, you see he is such a one as you may take comfort in.

Ninthly, Faith is the great instrumental means that receives from Christ, and that establishes the Soul in Christ. All our blessings they are lodged in the Lord Jesus Christ, and there they meet as in a fountain. Now faith that is the drawing grace, that draws out of this fountain for the Soul's supply. The Father hath placed all in Christ, and faith is the receiving grace, that takes all out of the hand of Jesus Christ that he offers to the Soul; by faith we are united to Christ, and by faith we receive from Christ upon the union: As the Pipe that is laid unto the mouth of the fountain doth receive and convey water into your houses, so doth faith receive from the Lord Jesus Christ, and convey into your Souls. Faith is the great Conduit that Jesus Christ doth send down his grace in into our hearts. Faith, that deals with Christ in all his royalties of grace, and takes life from him, and takes comfort from him, and peace from him, and joy from him, and whatsoever the Soul standeth in need of. Faith is the life-grace, that

feeds your Souls, and that keeps you living and thriving, and that makes you strong in the Lord; we are said therefore to stand by faith, Rom. 11.20. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off; and thou standest by faith. Faith is a confirming grace, it doth build the Soul upon, it doth root the Soul in the Lord Jesus Christ, and doth receive strengthening, confirming, assisting grace from Christ, according to the Soul's necessity: So as Christians, if you would be strong in the Lord, you must get your faith strengthened more and more.

Tenthly, The Lord Christ, in the dispense of mercy hath great respect unto the glory of his office-fullness, and office-faithfulness. The Lord Christ in the communications of grace, hath not only a respect unto your necessity, but also to his own glory; and he will dispense in such a way, and at such a season, and under such circumstances as shall make most for the glory of his office-fullness, and office-faithfulness. The Lord Jesus Christ therefore he comes in such a way, and at such a time, as shall most of all publish his glory unto those to whom he comes, and before whom he comes. When the creature is run into emptiness, and hath spent all, then doth Jesus Christ open his fountain-fullness. In the weakness of the creature does Jesus Christ discover his all-power; and in the uncertainty of the creature, doth Jesus Christ glorify his constancy; in the darkness of an outward condition, doth the Lord Jesus Christ cause his morning Star to arise, and shine from on high, that gives light to our feet, when we know not how to direct our own paths; when we have lost all here below, and all our comforts have failed us, and forsaken us, then doth Jesus Christ appear as a friend that stands up in a time of adversity; that neither troubles, nor crosses, nor trials, nor temptations, shall separate. And he chooses this most dismal state to come in, that he might glorify his office-fullness, and his office-faithfulness; that he might glorify his office-fullness, to let us know it is a never failing fullness, it is a fullness that is always running over; that is not dry when streams are dry, but can fill streams at any time, when they are never so dry and empty, and then he comes that he may glorify his office-faithfulness, to appear as one that never doth forget his people, that can bear all the concerns of his people upon his heart, 2 Cor. 1.9.

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves. So the Lord Jesus Christ he comes and discovers himself when the sentence of death is upon our outward mercies, and upon all our outward supporters, that they are fading, dying, and falling down under us, then doth the Lord Jesus Christ appear as our God; Ye had the sentence of death in yourselves, that ye might trust in the living God. The Lord will so appear, as his appearance shall be unto the glory of his own Name in the Office that he is placed in by the Father: And therefore do but consider what titles Jesus Christ hath put upon himself, that are denominative thereof, Psal. 9.9. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. A poor distressed Soul that hath no whither to go, that is driven off from all his former holds, and that hath all his other Wells of consolation dried up, Jesus will be a refuge to such a one, and that at such a time. And Psal. 10.14. The poor committeth himself to thee, and thou art the helper of the fatherless. And Psal. 68.5. A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widow is God in his holy habitation. Why, says the Soul; Now all is gone, my Father is gone, and my Husband is gone, and my Friends that use to comfort me have left me, and I am now a miserable creature! No, says Christ, this is my time to appear to show myself to be a Father to the Fatherless, and a Judge of the widow. And Isa. 25.4. Thou hast been a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible one is like a storm against the wall. Why Christian, do not fear an outward distress then; do not fear a low condition; do not fear a breaking providence; why, because Jesus Christ doth then take his time to discover his All to you; he will then take his time to discover a Fountain to you that can never be exhausted; he is a refuge to the poor and needy. And these considerations might be prevailing upon your spirits, to gather off your eyes from beholding other objects, and place them upon the Lord Jesus Christ, where there is a sufficient ground of Joy to us, whatever our condition is.

## SERMON X.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation.Habakkuk 3.18.

I Proposed several weighty Considerations, to encourage your spirits to be getting up into this Life of Faith; I have already gone through Ten, and shall now proceed.

11. Consider; That to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ without the least encouragement of sense, is the most noble exercise of Faith, and that which doth most please the Lord. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ when he is breaking of you, and when he is frowning upon you, and when you have nothing else to live upon, this is the most noble exercise of Faith in this life. To believe on the Lord Jesus when your heads are lifted up in the world, and when your Table is spread, and when your Borders are enlarged, is no great difficulty; but now to live by Faith upon Christ when there is no encouragement in the creature, this is the most noble exercise of Faith: What! says Sense, live by Faith upon Christ when he hath impoverished me, and emptied me of all creature-enjoyments? Ay, now is the time to exercise Faith, and this is the most noble exercise of Faith, and that which doth most of all please the Lord Such an exercise of Faith as this, was found in Job: When the Lord had taken away his estate, and taken away his Children, says Job, Job 1.21. Blessed be the Name of the Lord. There was a great exercise of Faith in that word; and such an exercise of Faith was found in David, in the case of Ziklag; he had a little place given him in the enemies Country, where he might live alone, but he had it not long before enemies came and smote the place of his habitation, and take away his relation and his goods, and leave him nothing but ruins, that when he returned, he found nothing but emptiness, a heap of Ashes: What does David do then? he exercises Faith upon Jesus Christ, and encouraged himself in the Lord his God. And this is the exercise of Faith that the Prophet speaks of in our Text, and that which he is driving Believers up to:

When the Figtree shall not blossom, &c. What is here left? here is nothing for sense to live upon; yet, says he, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. Such a noble exercise of Faith was found in the Woman of Canaan, in the midst of all discouragements; she had discouragements from the Disciples of Christ, they were not so kind to her as they might have been; but that was not all, but she met with discouragements from the Lord Jesus Christ himself, unto whom she made her applications; he seems to give her a repulse, and checks her forwardness, and yet she goes over to the Lord Jesus, and in a bold act, ventures upon him alone: Why Christians, whatever are your discouragements from Sense, yet in the face of all rebukes to cast yourself upon the Lord Jesus, and comfort your Souls in his All fullness, is the most noble act of Faith that you can put forth.

12. The great improbabilities of relief and succor after grace, whatever your case is, are not answerable to the improbabilities that your Souls were in before grace, and Christ Jesus helped you then. Christ came thorough them all, and with ease removed them to do your Souls good. Do but consider, you that sit down with your hearts full of discouragement, upon the loss of a creature, or upon the emptying's of providence; do but consider how unlikely and improbable your condition was of help and succor before you did believe on Christ; you were then covered over with the shadow of death; you were then in a hopeless condition; Who had then any hope of you? When you were seen marching in the fury of your spirits against the Lord? Who would have thought that there were hope in the Lord for you? You were at the very brink of Death, and at the very brink of Hell; there was (as it were) but a hairs breadth between you and Hell, and who would have thought that you should have been recovered? And then the Lord Jesus he broke through all the improbabilities of your state to save you, and do you think that he cannot break through all the improbabilities of your present state to comfort you? He came leaping over greater mountains of opposition and discouragement and impossibility (I mean as to other help;) I say, he came leaping over greater mountains of impossibility in his

first dealings with you, than there are for him to come through in his afterdealings with you, Cant. 2.8. The voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills. These mountains, and these hills did lie between Christ and you, that were the improbabilities, (or I may call them the impossibilities of your state as to help and relief in a rational consideration and apprehension. Now Jesus Christ he skipt over this mountain, and the other mountain, that lay in his way, and he came unto your Souls to do you good; and if Jesus Christ hath done this, do you think that he will not do the lesser? When you were without grace, did he bring grace into your Souls? and do you think that he cannot comfort you now when you want comfort? Do you think that he cannot bless you with the annexed blessings of your state, when he hath brought in the great fundamental blessings of your state? Christians, you should reason thus, I was once ready to die, and the Lord Jesus came and saved me; I was in a Soul-undone state, and Jesus Christ hath set me up; and what, hath he set up my Soul, and cannot he set up my Body? Hath he made up the great breach that was upon my spiritual condition? and cannot he make up the breaches that are in my outward condition? Jesus Christ came and plucked me out of the fire when I was burning, and the fire was so hot, that none could take me out but Jesus Christ; he came and snatched me out of the paw of the Lion and the Bear, and none could rescue me but he; and he that came over all these impossibilities to save you, do you think that he cannot make up a breach in the loss of a relation? or make up a distress in your outward condition? the Lord that hath done the greater, can easily do the lesser.

13. Again; To rejoice only in visibles and sensibles, is to go no further than those may go that have no interest in Christ. I pray consider it; To have your spirits born up only by sensible supports, is not to exceed those that are strangers to Jesus Christ, that have not an interest in Jesus Christ as you have: For your spirits to rise and fall only as the creature ebbs and flows, this is to do no more than a carnal man doth; Is this living upon Christ? Is this to make Christ your Joy? and Christ the Peace and the Comfort of your Life? Says



Christ in another case, To love those that love you, and to do good to those that do good to you; if you do no more, Publicans and Sinners do this. The Christian is under peculiar and distinguishing blessings, and it is expected that he should peculiarly and distinguishingly live under the distinguishing blessings of his state, Matth. 6.31, 32. Wherefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewith shall we be clothed? for after all these things do the Gentiles seek. Why, says Christ, to be so thoughtful about our outward condition as others are, is to place ourselves in common with them: Says he, After these things do the Gentiles seek. It is the case of a Gentile to say, when his outward comforts are gone, O now must I die! now there is no further help for me, I must now perish; this is the language of a Gentile, that hath no interest in Jesus Christ. O you that have interest in Jesus Christ! what! will you take up the language of a Gentile? O no! having a God to go to, you must live upon that God that you have given up yourselves to. God doth expect a distinguishing acting under the distinguishing blessings that he hath brought into your condition; therefore know, that to rejoice only in visibles, is to set yourselves in common with those that have no interest in Christ; and is not this to dishonor your interest, and to reflect upon the Lord of your interest, to live in joy when the Creatures are about you, and to sit down discouraged, when Creatures are taken from you?

14. Faith exercised upon the Lord Jesus will have an universal influence upon all other graces in your hearts: Christians do but once exercise faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ under a sinking, discouraging providence, and you will immediately see and find a strange alteration in your hearts, you will find those graces that are weak begin to gather strength, and you will find those graces to arise, and appear, and shine forth, that you could scarce discern; faith exercised upon the Lord Jesus Christ will have a mighty influence upon your love, to raise that when the Soul is got into Christ, and can improve his interest in Christ; O how will his Soul be enlarged, and his heart burn in love to him who is the Lord of his interest, and of his comforts; faith exercised upon the Lord Jesus, will have a mighty

influence upon your hopes, that were even just giving up the Ghost to your apprehensions; faith exercised upon the Lord Jesus will have a mighty influence upon your patience, to strengthen and quicken that, when a frowning providence comes that would roil your Spirits, and put you besides yourselves, and drive you out of a Christian frame; faith will raise up your patience, and learn you to be quiet under the hand of the Lord; faith exercised upon Christ will have an influence upon your joy, it will cause a mighty and wonderful rejoicing in your Souls, that you have such a full Jesus, to live upon; faith exercised upon the Lord Jesus will have an influence upon your zeal, and will wonderfully excite you, and stir you up unto all duties of serving and following the Lord; so as Christians, do but lay these considerations together, and you will see what great encouragement you have to glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, whatsoever your outward condition is, and you will see the way of living by faith upon Christ to be clear, and to be the only way that the Christian should walk in.

Well, having premised these things, we shall now come to give you some particular directions, how you may get up your faith, and your Spirits in the exercise of faith unto a glorying and rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ, whatsoever your saddening outward providences are. And here,

1. If you would come to live upon Christ Jesus alone in the saddest providences of your state, then entertain and keep up low thoughts of the great things of this world: Truly Christians you may think of it what you will, but while you have hearts that are magnifying and adoring of the things of the world, and the enjoyments of the world, and counting these great things, you will never come gospelly to live upon the Lord Jesus, your thoughts must be altered in and about the comforts of this life, and you must possess your hearts with this, that they are the smallest comforts of your state, and the blessings of this life they are the least blessings that the Lord hath given you; you must have very low thoughts of the world, and of the comforts of it; if you would come to live by faith upon Christ Jesus alone, whilst you have vast thoughts of your creature enjoyments, and creature

comforts, and creature conditions, and suppose your comforts to lie here, and your comforts to lie there short of Christ; alas, you will be driven out of all the exercise of faith in an emptying providence. I will give you two instances for this in the eleventh Chapter of the Hebrews; the first is that of Father Abraham, in the 8 and 9 verses. By Faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went; by faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange Country dwelling in Tabernacles with Isaac, &c. Here Abraham was called to leave the possessions of his natural place, the possession that he was born to, and to follow Christ whither he would lead him, and to accept of that condition that Christ would place him in, and to stand to the allowance of God let it be more or less; this Abraham was called to. Now it is said Abraham by Faith did obey this command, and call of God, and went out; why, how did faith help him here? doubtless by showing of him Christ Jesus, for faith in every exercise hath to do with Christ, and therefore his faith carried him up to Christ, and when he was once got up to Christ, then behold how low were these things to him; my Country Lord; says he? what is my Country to thee? I will leave my Country to follow thee; and my Friends are nothing to me, and my possessions are nothing to me, I will leave all to follow thee; what a low esteem had he of these things? And the other instance is that of Moses in verse. 24, 25, 26, 27. By faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaohs Daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect to the recompense of reward. Here are great things that Moses left for the sake of Christ, he left the Court, yea, he probably left the Crown of Egypt, and all the glories thereof; now he did this by faith, the Creature was of a low esteem with him. O alas what is it to be called the Son of Pharaohs Daughter, and what is it to be an heir of an earthly Crown, and to be King of Egypt? I had rather be afflicted, and spoiled, and destitute in my outward condition with Christ, then to enjoy all these things without him; Christians you must get mortified affections to all

enjoyments on this side Christ, if you would come to live upon, and glory in Christ alone.

2. Acquaint yourselves more with the royalties of Christ, and the greatness of his Gospelglory, as he is proposed the object of your saith, if you would come to glory in him alone, and live upon him in an empty condition: One great reason why we can take no more comfort in Christ in an empty condition is, because we are such strangers to the fullness of Christ Jesus; we don't know what is in Christ, we know not what Christ can do, what is in his heart and hand to give forth to you; Christians if you would live more by faith upon Christ, then view Christ in his royalties of Grace. Look into the length of Christ, and into the breadth of Christ, and see what he is the owner and possessor of, what the Father hath entrusted him with; view the extent of his Offices, and consider the largeness of his power, and what he is able to do for you; study and acquaint yourselves with the royalties of Christ, as he is proposed an object for your faith to fix upon; there is no condition but he can comfort you in it, let the condition be never so comfortless in its self, study the fullness of the Lord Jesus.

3. Get by faith upon the all sufficiency of Christ, and there take a prospect of your losses, and of your troubles, and then you will see them to be but small. You go (Christians) and stand below Christ, and there you look upon your troubles and afflictions, and then indeed they seem very great; ay, but get upon the all-sufficiency of Christ, and then view them, get but upon the mount, and look down upon all your losses and crosses, and they will seem little things then. What is this loss that I have sustained, to what I have in the Lord Jesus Christ? what is my poor empty vessel to the great fullness that is in the Ocean of the Lord Jesus? If you did stand upon the all-sufficiency of Christ, and look upon the disasters of your outward condition, they would seem to be but like a little Vessel brought to the great Sea, that is presently filled, and yet there is no lessening of the water in the Ocean, but the Sea is as full as ever.

4. Always keep the invisibles of Christ's Grace, and of Christ's glory in your Eye: It is something a strange thing, but tis the mystery of faith; I say keep invisibles in your eye, faith knows the meaning of it, faith will espy an invisible thing, that which sense can discern nothing of, faith will espy and keep sight of; now this was one way that Moses had to get up into a living upon the Lord Jesus by faith, he kept invisibles in his Eye, he saw him that was invisible, Heb. 11.27. he endured, as seeing him that was invisible; and what is the description that the Apostle gives of faith in a Gospel exercise that we are speaking of, but that which I have told you, the discerning of invisibles? Heb. 11.1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: Faith in its exercise will ransack among the promises, the promises both of grace and glory, and there will espy a great treasure, and show the Soul this, as that which is his, and belongs to him; now Christian view the promises of grace, and the promises of glory that are in the hands of Jesus Christ, and see the invisible graces, and the invisible comforts, and the invisible blessings that are contained in them, and never lose the sight of these invisibles, but keep them always in your eye, and then you will see a glorious Jesus, that your Souls will love to dwell upon, and you would not dwell from him.

5. Never ground your faith & your hope upon your experiences, but upon the promises, which is always attended with a wonderful working power; If that you ground your faith and your hope upon your experiences, if your second trial be greater than your first, your faith will be posed, and you will sit down under discouragement; indeed there is a holy and Christian use that is to be made of your experiences, but you must never ground your faith and hope upon them; for God is always an out-doing God, he will out-do his own act, he will go further in one act then he will do in another; if you ground your faith upon your experiences, when you come into a new straight that you never came into before, your faith will fail; do but consider this in the Israelites, if they had gone no further than their experiences, what a loss had they been in? nay upon this account they were at a great loss, they only considered what God had done for

them, and did not consider what he could do, and what a boundless power was working through the promise for them, and therefore though they were delivered through the Red Sea; yet say they, can God spread a Table in the Wilderness? Moses, what, hast thou brought us into the Wilderness to destroy us? there is no Bread here, there is no Water here, how can we subsist? They never had experience of the wonders of God's power in those particular cases, and therefore their experiences could not carry them through, but they were to exercise faith upon the promise, that had a boundless power working with it, and that would have told them, that God can spread a Table in the Wilderness, and can command a rock to give out water for the Israelites necessity; and that can tell you that there is no straight too great for Jesus to deliver you out of. Faith in the promise will tell you that you never experienced, you never saw to the utmost end of Christ's power yet; you never saw into the midst of his treasures of grace; you have seen but a little way; Faith in the Promise will tell you this; therefore never ground your Faith and Hope upon your Experiences, though they have been large, but upon the Promises, that have always a boundless power working with them.

Sixthly; And then consider, That it is your duty to come and claim the grace of Christ, and put in upon your Interest according to your exigency. I say, if you would live by Faith upon the Lord Jesus, then claim the grace of your Interest according to the exigency of your state. Sirs, are you interested in Jesus? then Jesus is yours, all Jesus is yours, all that he is, is yours for you, and all that he hath is yours, and for you. Now, if you would live by Faith upon him, then come and put in, bring your claim, and say, the power of Jesus Christ is mine, and the grace of Jesus Christ is mine; 'tis for me, 'tis under special promise to me, and 'tis under peculiar engagement to me; it is mine to live upon; I will lean upon the Arm of the Lord's strength, & I will glory in his fullness in my own emptiness. There must be in the exercise of Faith a peculiar claim that the Soul must lay unto Christ, and a peculiar improving, of the fullness of his Interest, according to the emptiness of your state. And thus Christians you may be

supported, whatever you meet withal in this world. Suppose you sustain a loss, why, in a fresh application to Christ you will have it made up in him; and if a great failure and disappointment come in upon you, in a renewed act of Faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ, applying something of his fullness and sweetness, you will have your condition filled; & so as it is emptied in the creature, it will be filled with grace, and with Christ.

## **SERMON XI.**

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

WE are now upon the directing of the Believer that is able in some measure to make out his Interest in this Jesus, to live upon him, and to rejoice in him in all trials. Of the Directions, five or six I have already given you, and shall now proceed.

7. In the seventh place; If you would live by Faith upon Christ, so as to fetch in joy and comfort from him in every condition, then labor to bring your will to your condition, and keep your spirit within the confines of the will of God under all the various disposes of providence. The recoiling's and clashing's of our will with our condition, is a main hindrance unto our rejoicing in, and acting Faith upon the Lord Jesus under a sad providence: And the great reason why some persons are under such great dissatisfaction in their own spirits, that they know not how to bear the troubles of their state, is, because their wills are not brought to their condition; but they go about to bring their condition to their wills; and when anything considerable comes in upon them that doth not suit with their wills, it causeth roils, disquiets, and disturbances of spirit, and discomposure of heart, and such a Soul will never rejoice in Christ in an evil day. Now Christians, if you would get into the Life of Faith,

you must then bring your will to your condition, be what it will; own the disposing hand of God, that makes the change, whatever your change is, and yield obedience to the Lord's will, that hath the overruling power of your state, and keep your spirits within the confines of the will of God; otherwise a cross, or a trial in your outward condition will make a great alteration in the inward frame of your spirit. I will give you a few Instances for the clearing of this. Paul was a man that rejoiced and gloried in Christ Jesus, when he had almost nothing else left him in this world; many times his heart was made sad among the Churches of Christ that he came to make glad; and as to losses, who met with more? says he, I was in perils oft, and in hunger, and in distress, and in nakedness; and yet this man he glories in tribulations; he counted it all joy when he fell into divers tribulations; how came this about, that this man was got thus into a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, when the whole world frowned upon him? He tells us, Phil. 4.11, 12. his will was brought unto his condition. I speak not, says he, in a complaining way, in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content, for I know how to want, and how to abound. Says he, if God empties me, my will is brought to my condition; I am willing to be emptied; if the Lord will make me poor, and take away what I have, I am willing to be made poor; my spirit is brought to my condition: He that can live in the confines of the will of God, will live comfortably and rejoice in the Lord at all times. Another instance for this is Job; Job you know was a man that was sorely tried, I think as much as ever man was upon earth; now Job 's will was brought to his condition; and hence came he to rejoice in the Lord, Job 1.21. Now Job 's wife's spirit was not brought to her condition, she could not tell how to be contented, for she said unto him, Chap. 2.10. Dost thou still retain thy integrity? Curse God and die; but he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh; what, shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and not evil? As if he had said, It was the Lord that filled me, and shall not the Lord empty me? We were satisfied when the Lord was filling of us, and shall we not be satisfied now the Lord is emptying of us? Another instance is that of good old Eli, 1 Sam. 3.18. Samuel told him every whit, and held nothing from him; and he said,



It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good: Why, if the Lord will strip me, says he, I am willing to be stripped; if the Lord will take away my Children, and take away my comforts, and break up my house; It is the Lord, I am contented; if the Lord will do so, let him; my will is brought to my condition; Let him do as seemeth him good. So David, 2 Sam. 15.26. But if he say thus; I have no delight in thee; behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him. And thus it was with our Lord Jesus, the greatest instance of all; Father, says he, not my will, but thy will be done. Let my Father choose for me; I will not bring my will into competition with his: If he will have me to drink off this Cup, I will drink it; if he will have me to lay down my life, I will; if he will have all my glory obscured, it shall be so; if he will have me a man of sorrows, his will be done, and not my will. You do not know Christians, what an alteration of heart, and what an alteration of life this living in the will of God will make.

8. Captivate and throw out all the suggestions of sense and reason upon the rising difficulties of your state. If that reason speak over your hearts in a strait, and sense give the ruling word over your spirits in your condition, it will certainly cause you to repine and murmur, and to sin against God: Sense and reason are great enemies unto our peace and comfort: If sense and reason have liberty to speak, and to be heard in your hearts, they will certainly lay your spirits under a discouragement, and drive you off from the Lord. Thus it was with Israel when they were in the wilderness, as soon as they were come out of Egypt, where they had their Rivers and their Pools, and their Ponds of Water, and where they had their Flesh-pots, and were fed to the full: They came into a howling wilderness, into a dry and barren place, where they had no Wells of Water, where there was no plowing, nor sowing, then they fell a murmuring and chiding of Moses, and said, Wherefore hast thou brought us hither into this place to slay us? for it is not supposed to be rational that we can live here in this wilderness, but if we abide here we must die, Numb. 11.4, 5, 6. And the mixed multitude that were among them fell a lusting, and all the children of Israel wept again, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the flesh that we ate in Egypt

freely, the Cucumbers, and the Melons, &c. And Psal. 78 19. Yea, they spake against God: They said, Can God furnish a Table in the wilderness? And Numb. 20.12. Behold there is no water for the Congregation; and they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and they chod with Moses, saying, would to God we had died when our Brethren died before the Lord? and why have ye brought up the Congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our Cattle should die there? and wherefore have ye made us to come out of Egypt, to bring us unto this evil place? It is no place of sowing seed, or of Fields, or of Vineyards, or of Pomegranates. Here you see sense and reason spake over their condition, and how did it lay their Souls under discouragement? And if you do but review at your leisure, the great murmurings of this people, when they were in the wilderness; it was something or other that sense and reason suggested to them under some providence or other that disquieted their spirits; it was through the suggestion of sense and reason that Zacharias questioned the truth of the Word of God sent to him by the Angel about having a Son, Luk 1.18. And Zacharias said to the Angel, whereby shall I know this, for I am an old man, and my Wife well stricken in years. It was from the instigation of sense and reason that that unbelieving Lord did question that great plenty that the Prophet told him should be the next day, 2 King. 7.1, 2 Thus saith the Lord, Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flower be sold for a shekel, &c. Then a Lord on whose hand the King leaned, answered the man of God, and said, If the Lord should make windows in Heaven, might this thing be? He only argued upon the Prophecy in his own reason, and in his own sense, and this made him so unbelieving, as to reject the Prophecy of the Prophet. This sense and reason made the Disciples themselves to question the intention of the Lord about feeding so great a multitude as there was, with such small provision as they had, Mark 8.1, 2. In those days the multitude being very great, &c. At the 14th verse his Disciples said unto him, From whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? So that if you would get into this life of Faith, keep down sense and reason, and cast out their suggestions, which will not bring you near to, but set you further off from the Lord. Do not say upon a new difficulty, here

is no way to escape, or upon a loss, this or that is gone, and can never be made up to me again, but throw out the reasonings of sense; if the discouraging suggestions of sense be resisted, and set by, Faith will then get up, and speak in the heart.

9. Look through and beyond the discouragements of second Causes, unto the encouragements of the first Cause; that is always absolute and independent, and there fix your eye in a strait. Second Causes they are failable, but so is not the first Cause, that is the efficient of all; and the Lord who is the first Cause, and efficient of all, oftentimes dries up all creature streams, and causes visible human help to fail, that we may see how great the first Cause is. Though the Lord doth ordinarily make use of second Causes, yet the Lord will so walk towards us, to discover to us that he is not tied to means, that he is not tied to second Causes; and he oftentimes causeth visible helps to fail, that our eyes may be upon him, as the first absolute independent Cause of all. I will give you an instance for this, and it is that of Israel; Israel was in the way of the Lord marching towards the Land of Promise; and as soon as ever they were come into the way of the Lord, that they were entered into the wilderness, they were brought to the mouth of the Red Sea. Now all second Causes failed for help; there was not a Ship, nor a Boat to be got to carry the Hosts of Israel over the water; but the first Cause was not at a strait, and therefore says Moses from the Lord, Israel stand still and see the Salvation of God: Now, let not your eyes be upon the second Cause, but upon the first Cause, and you shall see what a deliverance God can make for you; and he carried all the Host of Israel, men women and children through the drowning Sea, and not a man, woman nor child was lost in the passage, and yet there was neither Ship nor Boat to aid them over. And so afterwards when they came at Jordan; the waters were before them, there was no Boat to swift them over the waters, but the Lord he commands Israel to go on, and the waters made a lane for them; they run on heaps on both sides, and Israel hath a path made in the great deep for them. And I will give you an instance now of a good man, a man of great Faith, and that was Moses; Moses in a considerable strait fixes his eye upon the second

Cause, and pored upon the discouragements of that, and was lost in his spirit by not looking beyond unto the first Cause, and the encouragements that the first Cause did administer. It is Numb. 11.19, 20.21. and so on. The people in the preceding verses, they murmured against Moses, because they had no flesh; they were come from their full Tables in Egypt, and they had not now their dainties to live upon, and they did not know now how to be content; why, says God, you shall not eat one day, nor two, but even a whole month. Now see what Moses said, at the 21th verse; The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand footmen, and thou hast said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole month. Shall the Flocks and the Herds be slain for them to suffice them? or, shall all the Fishes of the Sea be gathered together for them to suffice them, &c. Here is the relation. God tells this whole Congregation that they should have Flesh to eat for a month; they should eat their bellies full; they should eat till they could eat no more. Moses had his eye fixed upon second Causes, and not upon the first Cause, and he questions this; Lord, says he, how can this be? So many hundred thousands of us; and what, shall we all have flesh to eat? Now on the other hand, we read of Asa, when a mighty Host came out against him, 2 Chron. 14.11. An Host of a thousand thousand that came out against him; he looked beyond the discouragements of second Causes, unto the encouragements of the first Cause, that is absolute and independent, and see how his spirit held up; And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to save, whether with many, or with those that have no might; help us O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy Name we go against this multitude, &c. He looks unto God the first Cause of all, and he saw there the Power of God was enough to charge this whole Army, and to engage against this great multitude that came out against him. And this was the Prophet's Spirit, and the course that he took here in the Text; all second Causes failed, and frowned, and administered only discouragement; The Fig-tree that blossomed not, there was no fruit in the Vine, the labor of the Olive failed, the Fields yielded no meat, the Flocks were cut off from the fold, and there was no herd in the stall. Here was a failure of all second Causes, now, saith he, I will

look unto the first Cause; I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. Christians, let me tell you, that if you lay the weight of your case upon second Causes, you will never come to rejoice in Christ Jesus in a strait. Remember therefore, that when such a stream is dried up, the fountain is full still, and the fountain can send out more ways than one. The fountain that issued out a stream in such a place, can issue out a stream in another place; as long as the fountain is full, there is no fear of want; and if you would come to live upon the Lord Jesus Christ in a strait, you must keep your eye upon the fountain that is ever full, and overflows.

## **SERMON XII.**

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation. - Habakkuk 3.18.

We are upon the Directions.

10. In the tenth place, if you would live by faith upon Jesus Christ, so as to fetch joy and comfort from him under the saddest providences of your state, then consider the unchangeable love of Jesus Christ that meteth out, and manageth unto blessed ends all the losses, crosses, trials and tribulations of your state.

The hard thoughts that we have of our troubles, and the hard thoughts that we have of the Lord when we are troubled, do drive us off from him, and lay our Spirits under great discouragements; O says the Soul, live upon Jesus Christ, and rejoice in him! How can I do that, when he comes out against me as mine enemy? he writes bitter things against me, he is undoing of me, he is breaking and spoiling of me; and what! can I rejoice in him? The hard thoughts that the Church had of the Lord was that that did so much overwhelm her Spirit, when she came into a low condition, his mercy

is clean gone, and he hath forgotten to be gracious, he will be merciful to me no more, his mercies are shut up, and fail for evermore, and such bitter expressions as these are; and how can we now rejoice in this Lord; and all this while you understand not the Lord, nor the design of the Lord, and by your ignorance you come to wrong your own Spirits in your present condition, by overcharging them with a discouragement that the providence rightly considered as stated by the Lord, administers not; for do but consider, that there is unchangeable love engaged in, and mixed with every adverse providence; the Lord he strikes, and he wounds in a way of love, he breaks in upon this comfort and the other, and makes breaches in your condition, in a way of love and grace; the Lord he takes away a creature comfort from a Christian to make more room in his heart for Christ. The Lord he puts him into the furnace, that he may purify him from his dross; the Lord he purgeth him to make him partaker of his holiness. The Lord he shakes him, and shakes his creature standing, and his relative standing under a creature consideration and condition, that he might take faster hold upon Christ Jesus; he sends out every tribulation upon you, with a charge to do you good, and to use you kindly; as David when he sent out his Army, gave them a charge, deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom: So says Jesus Christ unto every Cross that befalls you, use my Servant kindly for my sake, treat him well; says the Lord, unto a loss, work for the gain of such a Servant of mine; says the Lord, unto such a Cross, do you try, and do you refine, and do you purge, and do you better my Servant; he saith unto such a tribulation; go, and do such Servants of mine good; there is unchangeable love and grace that meteth out, and manageth unto blessed ends all the crosses of your condition, Job 5.17. Behold happy is the man whom God correcteth, therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. We say crossed is the man, and broken is the man, and undone is the man, that is so and so dealt withal; ay; but says God, happy is the man, there is a blessing under the cross, there is love and grace in the trial, that thou dost not consider (Christian) and this will be more advantage to thee then all the disadvantages that the Cross can bring in upon thee, in its self considered, Proverbs 3.12. For whom the

Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth; So as there is love in all the Lord's corrections, and Isaiah 48.10. Behold I have refined thee, but not with Silver, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction; I have put thee into the furnace, says the Lord, there is my love working towards thee, there is my love speaking to thee, there have I been refining, and purging, and purifying of thee, to make thee more excellent gold for my use; this is the design of the Lord, Heb. 12.5, 6. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you, as unto Children; My Son despise not thou the Chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him, for whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth; and Rev. 3.19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; and Rom. 8.35, 36, &c. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? None of these things shall do it, says he. So as if you would come to a rejoicing in the Lord in a trying hour, then consider the unchangeable love of Jesus Christ that doth mete out and manage the Crosses that you are called to bear. It was good for me, says David, that I was afflicted; and again, says he, Psal. 116.10. I believed, therefore have I spoken, I was greatly afflicted; I said in my hast all men are liars, what shall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits? Surely the Prophet had not only the remove of the affliction in his Eye, but also the design of God in the affliction, that he saith, what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take up the cup of Salvation, and bless his name; he hath greatly afflicted me, and sorely distressed me. I will take up the cup of Salvation; and bless his name; here doubtless was an eye upon the design; well then, if you would come to live rejoicingly in the Lord in all conditions; consider his unchangeable love that doth order and dispose the trials that you are exercised with.

11. In the eleventh place; Consider the auxiliary relations that Christ stands in to your Souls, and the grace that is dispensed upon them. You look Christians in an evil day, below the comforts of your state, and that is the reason you are so hurried in your own Spirits; you

pore upon an emptying providence, and don't consider the filling relations that Christ is unchangeably entered into with your Souls: relations of grace that are always comforting, and always relieving, and that have new supplies of grace always springing up in them for your assistance. I will give you a touch of some of them. The Lord Jesus Christ is called the Father of believers, he was promised under that name, in Isa. 9.6. Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father. So Isaiah 8.18. Behold I and the Children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel; behold I and the Children, we are the Lord's Children. And Isaiah 63.16. Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not; O Lord thou art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting; this is spoken of Christ Jesus. Now the relation of a Father, it is a relation of pity; it is a relation of love, it is a relation of tenderness; when the Lord tells us he stands in this relation unto us, he tells us that he will exercise the tenderness, the pity, and the kindness of a Father unto his Child. Now a Father, a tender-hearted Father, he will consider his Child in all conditions, in all his straits, and though it be a rebellious Child, yet still he will consider it, and he will exercise the pity and the tenderness of a Father to it; this you may see in David to Absalom; Absalom was a rebellious Son that proclaimed war against his Father, and would have cut off his Father; and yet see how David's bowels did work towards his rebellious Son when he heard he was dead; O Absalom, my Son, my Son, would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my Son, my Son; these were the workings of his heart towards rebellious Absalom; now if there be so much tenderness in a Father in the flesh towards his Children, much more in Christ to his Children. Says Christ, Luke 11.13. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give his holy Spirit to them that ask him? Why, the Fathers in the flesh cannot out-love Jesus Christ, they have not a larger heart for their Children then Christ hath for his; (again) Jesus Christ he is styled the Husband of Believers; now that is a relation of great care and tenderness; the faithful, wise, able, loving Husband, how will he



defend his Wife, and how will he provide for his Wife, and how will he safeguard his Wife, and how will he pity his Wife, in all her exigencies, she shall be as his own Soul, Eph. 5.28, 29, 30. So ought men to love their Wives, even as their own bodies, he that loveth his Wife, loveth himself, and no man ever yet hated his own flesh; this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. So as all believers they are betrothed and married unto Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ as a loving, able, wise, tender-hearted Husband, will secure, and defend, and provide for those that are married to him, much more than the Husbands in the flesh can do for their Wives.

Again; Jesus Christ he is our Brother, our elder Brother; Now a Brother under the law, was not to see any of his younger Brethren under decay, and in a low condition, but he was to relieve him; if thy Brother be waxen poor, and fall into decay, then thou shalt relieve him, was a Scripture law; now says Christ, I am not ashamed to call them Brethren; and he will be a most loving, tender-hearted, faithful Brother unto all his Brethren, whatsoever their straits and their trials are. Christians, do but propose those aiding, relieving, auxiliary relations of grace, that Christ stands in to your Souls, and exercise faith upon them, propose them I say to your faith, and exercise faith upon them; do you consider in your own imaginations; what if you had such a Father, so wise, so able, so loving, so tender hearted, how should your heart rejoice in him! why Christian, you have all that you can imagine in Christ, as a Father to you! O you would think, if you had such a tender Husband, such a kind hearted Husband, how would you take comfort in him. Christian, thou hast all in Christ Jesus, that thou canst imagine, and much more abundantly, imagine the lovingest, faithfulest Brother, that ever was upon earth, and thou hast more in Christ Jesus, then can be imagined; Christ stands in all these relations to thee, and these relations are obligations unto him; according to the relation will he act and dispense, and according to the obligation of every relation shall the dispense be, so as he is not only a Husband, but you may believe that he will do all for you (being betrothed to him) that the relation of a Husband obligeth him to, and he will do all as a Father for you, that the relation obligeth him to, &

he will do all as a Brother, that the relation binds him to. And know Christians, that you can never out-live the love and the grace of the relations of Christ, neither can you ever burden the love of any of his relations, you can never overcharge his love; there is a natural love arising in the heart of a Father towards his Children, a growing, springing love every day, that notwithstanding many provocations, still the Father keeps his heart upon his Child; so though there are provocations in your way unto your heavenly Father, yet his heart is kept towards you, and his heart is the heart of a Father; and his heart is the heart of a Husband, and his heart is the heart of a Brother, and you can never burden his love, nor out-live his grace, nor over-believe the fullness of these relations of grace that he stands in to your Souls. Now then, if you would come to an exercise of faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ, then consider the auxiliary relations of grace that he stands in to your Souls, and what is dispensable upon those relations, and wait upon him for the fulfilment of all.

12. Again; If you would come to live a life of faith upon Christ Jesus, rejoicing in him under a strait and trial of providence, then take up a promise, and believe it upon the bare faithfulness of God, and never dispute with the difficulty, or apprehended impossibility of it. There are sometimes great mountains of difficulty that lie before the promise, you must not consult with these, Christians, but consult with the promises as they are in the hands of the faithfulness of God, and believe the truth of every promise, because God hath spoken it; how unlikely and improbable soever unto sense and reason the accomplishment of it is, don't say how can this be? how can such a promise be fulfilled? It is not likely it should be fulfilled to me, so unsuitable and so unanswerable; but eye the faithfulness of God that made the promise, and believe it upon God's bare truth, because he hath spoken it, when you have nothing else to encourage you to take it up: Thus it was with Abraham, the Father of believers, Rom. 4.18, 19, 20, 21. Who against hope believed in hope, and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's Womb. There were unlikelihood's of this promise ever being fulfilled, and if

Abraham would have reasoned according to sense, why sense would have suggested to him that this promise was a mere fallacy, a mere romance, that there was no truth, no certainty in it, what! he a hundred years old now, a dead man, almost his nature quite decayed, and Sarah even going into the grave, almost a dead Woman, nature quite decayed in her, and what, shall Sarah conceive, and have a Son? 'tis not likely, nor probable. Nay, says reason, 'tis an impossible thing: now here had been a discouragement to his Spirit, if he had called in sense and reason, and considered and debated the matter therewith, but he takes up the promise, and believes it upon the bare Word of God, upon his bare faithfulness; well says Abraham, I am indeed an old Man, and Sarah my Wife is an old woman, but God hath said I shall have a Child, and I believe it; here is no hope in nature, but I will believe it against hope, against all discouragement to my hope; I will believe God that hath spoken it is able to perform it, surely it shall be so; thus Christians, when difficulties and discouragements encompass the promise, don't dispute with the difficulties that lie in the way, but keep your eye upon the faithfulness of God, and believe the promise upon God's bare word alone.

13. Again; Sute the promise to your present state, whatever it be, and set it at the head of your trial, and then wait for an accomplishment. I say single out a promise suitable to your state, and set it at the head of your trial, at the mouth of your trouble or temptation, and then wait upon the Lord for the accomplishment of the promise. Thou canst (Christian) be brought into no condition, but there is some promise in the new Covenant that doth suit thy trial, whatever it be; there is no burden laid upon thy back, but some promise suits the burden; now you must single out a promise suitable to your present state, and set that at the head of your trial, & keep your eye there, waiting for the accomplishment of the promise, and hereby your hearts will be raised up to glory, & rejoice in the Lord alone. Suppose that you were in some considerable danger, single out some Gospel delivering promise, and set that at the head of your danger. Suppose Christian that thou hast some great burden upon thy Spirit, single

out some Soul reviving promise, and set it at the head of thy burden. Suppose that you have met with some extraordinary loss, single out some comforting, reviving promise, some promise of supplies that Jesus Christ hath made, and set that at the door where your comfort went out; and keep your eye upon the promise of your state, and the promise of your present condition, and wait upon the Lord for its accomplishment, and by this means your hearts will in a little time come to be raised, and you will see a new supply ready to come in upon your empty condition.

14. Again; Propose the communicable Attributes of Christ to your view, as under an unchangeable reconciliation and obligation unto you. My friends, if Christ be yours, then all Christ is yours; when Christ gave you an interest in himself, he made over all himself to you; all the Attributes of his eternal glorious nature, they are engaged to you, they are reconciled to you, and they are under an express Gospel Covenant obligation for you. Now, propose these, and keep them in your view. Consider, the Power of Jesus Christ is under engagement for you. Consider, the Wisdom of Christ Jesus is engaged to you; I speak to every Believer in particular; for Christ makes over himself as fully to one Believer, as if he had but one Believer to make over himself unto. The Faithfulness of Christ Jesus is engaged to you; the Love and the Grace of Christ Jesus is engaged to you. Now Christians, if you would come to rejoice in Christ, then often consider of these; propose these Attributes as under a special unchangeable Covenant-reconciliation and obligation to you; and consider also how much there is in every property of his Nature; do but consider how much there is in the Power of Christ, how much there is in the Love of Christ, how much there is in the Grace of Christ, how much there is in the Wisdom of Christ. Christians, there is a fountain in every Attribute of Christ; there is a fountain of Power in Christ's Attribute of Power; and there is a fountain of Love in Christ's Attribute of Love; and there is a fountain of Grace in Christ's Attribute of Grace, and these fountains they are set open for you, Christians; do but see then, how many fountains you have to go unto; you complain of want and emptiness, that you have nothing; why

here are full fountains to go unto; all these set open at all times for your relief; do but propose these (Christians) to your consideration, and your hearts will soon sally out to rejoice in the Lord.

15. In the last place; If you would come to live by Faith upon the Lord Jesus in all conditions, then reckon that your All is in Christ, and is always sure in Christ, though some outward comforts of your condition are coming and going. Jesus Christ is the possessor of your blessedness; your blessedness is not in your own hand, nor in the hands of a stranger, but in the hands of Christ; and the outward comforts of your condition are not your portion, (Christians) they are not your All, but your All it lies in Christ, and when you have lost an Estate, your All is still sure in the hands of Christ: When you have lost a friend, and lost a relation, your All is still in the hands of Christ untouched; there 'tis, and 'tis always sure in the hand where 'tis lodged. Now, do but reckon that your comforts lie here, and that the Lord is the keeper and possessor of all your hopes, of all your blessings and blessedness's, of all your comforts and consolations, of your whole treasure, and your Souls will come to be drawn out after Christ to a rejoicing in him. Says the Apostle in Col. 3.11. But Christ is All, and in All. He sums up all in a few words; all is in Christ; why then, you that have an interest in Christ, reckon that your All lies there, and then will your Souls be enlarged to look towards him.

And I might add unto this for a close, That you should look up unto the Lord the Father, in the sense of your weakness in Faith, or want of Faith to increase your Faith, or to give you Faith. The Disciples they went unto Christ, Luke 17.5. and said, Lord increase our Faith. So Christians, you should do; 'tis an evil day, a trying day; 'tis by Faith only that you will come to stand; and 'tis Faith that will keep up your spirits: O pray unto the Lord that he would increase your Faith! Pray for the increase of this grace above all, and be earnest with him, that he who hath been the Author, would be the promoter of your Faith. And for your encouragement, Christians, let me tell you, that the more you believe in Christ Jesus, the more,

1. In the first place you will glorify Christ; every act of Faith glorifies Christ Jesus; it doth glorify his Fulness, it glorifies his Alsufficiency, it glorifies his Advancement and Enthronement at the right hand of the Father; it glorifies him in his Gospel-Offices, as he is entrusted with the Fulness of all grace for you. Nay,

2. Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ doth engage Jesus Christ to come in for your help. Every act of Faith doth not only glorify him, but engage him; it will awaken his Power, and cause him to arise and open his hand, and give out more liberally and freely: He says therefore unto his Servants many times, According to your Faith be it unto you. Nay,

3. This living upon Jesus Christ is the only way to make your lives comfortable in this world. What had this Prophet to comfort his heart with, but only this, the Lord Jesus Christ, resting upon him alone? The Fig-tree, that was withered, and his creature-comforts were gone; emptiness and nothingness was before him; well, says he, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. Behold, this it was that made his condition comfortable; why Christians, you will never have comfort in your own spirits under a loss, under a cross, and in a time of temptation, if you have not Faith upon Christ Jesus, and there fix your Souls. Nay, let me add,

4. In the fourth and last place; That hereby you shall have confirmation, and establishment, and settlement, in the greatest shakings of providence that may be brought upon your condition. And therefore O Christians! let me in the winding up of all once more call upon you to live upon, and to glory in Christ Jesus alone: As to all your comforts in this world, you cannot promise yourselves they shall abide with you; God may empty you from vessel to vessel, till he have taken all these away; but now there is enough in a naked Jesus to take comfort in; there is enough in Jesus Christ alone for you to glory in. O come and draw your comforts from Christ, and do not draw them from the creature; do not draw them from secondary helps, but draw them from the fountain; do not sit down at the

streams, but away to the fountain, to the Ocean that is always full. In every strait have your eye upon Jesus; in every cross keep your eye upon Jesus; in every loss keep your eye upon Jesus; under every strait and trial have recourse to Jesus, and acquaint yourselves more with him, that you may be in the Prophets frame here, To rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of your Salvation.

FINISH

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## **MONERGISM BOOKS**

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