

5. Then if you really "believe in the Son of God," you will be animated with a holy hatred of sin and a humble and earnest desire to forsake it in all its shades and forms. All are not equally depraved in heart, nor equally profligate and immoral in their lives. But a prevailing love of sin and forgetfulness of God is a universal and unvarying characteristic of the unrewed mind throughout the world. Have you then been renewed in the spirit of your minds? Has your nature been changed, and a hatred of sin and love of holiness implanted in your hearts? In answer to this question perhaps some of you may say,—Oh we hope so. We are not quite so good as we should be but we are better than some of our neighbors. We are honest and sober and just in our dealings, and free from the gross and scandalous sins with which many are chargeable. And we trust therefore that we are good and pious people. Now all this is very good, so far as it goes. But we must tell you that the character of your neighbors is not a good criterion by which to judge your own. You may be much better than many of your acquaintances, and yet have no interest in Christ. You may be much better than many of them and yet be heirs of everlasting wrath. We do not ask you whether your character is better than that of your neighbors: neither do we ask you whether you are completely holy and free from sin—"for in many things we offend all"—"if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." But we do ask you if you are animated with a holy hatred of sin and a humble and earnest desire to forsake it in all its shades and forms? And if this be the case with you then you may regard this as a most favourable indication of the sincerity of your faith,—for faith and progressing holiness of character must always go together. And though no man can be completely holy and free from sin in this present life, yet all those who look for salvation through the blood of Christ must eagerly desire to purify themselves "even as God is pure" perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

6. But finally if you really "believe on the Son of God," you will be animated with an ardent love to Christ and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and

will strive to act in all things with a single eye to his glory. Love to God and Christ is one of those graces which must always accompany the exercise of saving faith. No man can believe in Christ without being actuated with a principle of love and gratitude to him. And no man can believe in Christ without being actuated with a principle of love to God. And no man can love God without loving his commandments, his ordinances and his people. In short no man can love God without loving everything that God loves and hating everything that he hates. And do you love Christ and entertain a deep and grateful sense of what he has done and suffered for you? Do you love God and desire to enjoy him above all things? Do you love his commandments and delight in obeying them? Do you love his ordinances and wait regular upon them? Do you love his people and do them all the good in your power? If such be your feelings and practice—if such be your character, then you may regard it as a most favourable indication of the sincerity of your faith—that you truly believe in the Son of God."

Such then is the nature of that inward witness which every one who "who believeth on the Son of God" must have in himself in a greater or less degree. Now if you want to prove the sincerity of your faith see that you exhibit in your character all those marks that have been described. Trust not to any one of them by itself, but to all of them taken together. And if, upon an impartial examination, you have reason to believe that you possess each and all of them to some extent, then you may conclude that you are savingly interested in Christ and that if you persevere in well-doing you shall be saved. And let such of you as have no good reason to conclude that you believe in the Saviour, betake yourself to him without delay, and endeavour to make your calling and election sure by cultivating all those graces which enter into the christian character. But let all "believing on the Son of God" rest not satisfied with present attainments, but "forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". "Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to