

SERMON IV.

THE NATURE OF SEEKING A CRUCIFIED CHRIST, AND
THE ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN TO THOSE WHO SEEK
HIM, OPENED UP AND ILLUSTRATED.

MATT. xxviii. 5.—“ And the angel answered and said unto the women,
Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified.”

OUR Lord's question to Mary, weeping at his grave, may be pertinently proposed unto you who design to sit down at his table: “ Whom seekest thou ? ” John xx. 15. Man, woman, whom seekest thou ? If you can sincerely say that you seek a crucified Jesus, our text speaks comfort and encouragement unto you. “ Fear not ye,” says the angel to the women, “ for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified.”

In the words, observe,

1. The person speaking, *viz.* an angel. “ And the angel answered and said,” &c. This manner of speech is according to the Hebrew idiom, where those who begin to speak, are said to answer, though no body was asking them any question ; of which we have a great many examples in scripture, or, as some * would have it, he answered to the thoughts of the women, though they did not ask him any question. The grief and fear that was in their hearts would appear in their countenances, and in their behaviour : for though angels know not the thoughts of our hearts directly and intuitively, yet they may know them by the signs and indications of them.

* Vid. Erasmus in loc.

Luke and John speak of two angels at the sepulchre, though Matthew and Mark mention but one. But both accounts may agree, by supposing one angel to appear at first, and two afterwards. When the women came to the sepulchre, they saw one angel, and when they entered into the cave, they saw two angels more in shining garments, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body had lain.

The angels were not only spectators of that most amazing scene, God made manifest in the flesh; but they ministered unto him. They proclaimed his birth; they ministered to him in the wilderness, when he was tempted of the devil. When he was in his agony, there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him. And they rolled away the stone from the mouth of his grave, and proclaimed his resurrection. They proclaimed his first birth from the womb, and they proclaimed his second birth from the grave: for Christ's resurrection was a birthday to him, in which he was declared to be the Son of God with power. The Father was then presented, as it were, with a new edition of his Son Christ Jesus. Hence, when he raised him from the dead, he said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," Acts xiii. 33.

2. The persons spoken unto, *viz.* The women, Mary Magdalen, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and others. His first birth was by a woman, and the notification of his second birth was to a woman that had once been very infamous. He chose to make his first appearance to Mary Magdalen, out of whom he had cast seven devils, Mark xvi. 19. For the one great design, uniformly and steadily pursued in the whole scheme of the gospel, is to stain the pride of all glory, and to magnify the riches of grace.

The good women seem to have been in a very disconsolate state, both in their way to the sepulchre, (for they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone?) and likewise after they came to it. Mary burst out into tears, and cried, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

3. The speech itself; "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified." Here, (1.) A word of encouragement is given to the grieved and amazed women; "Fear not ye." Observe here, there is not one word of comfort to the poor terrified keepers, who shook and became as dead men at the appearance of the angel. When John fell at Christ's feet as dead, he raised him up and said, "Fear not;" and when the good women were affrighted at the appearance of the angel, the angel said unto them, "Fear not ye:" but when the poor graceless guard of Christ's grave were as dead men, there was none to lift them; nor is there one single word of comfort for them. This, methinks, speaks terror to all Christ's enemies. You are now in prosperity, your veins are full of blood, your bones of marrow, and your hearts of pride and contempt of God: but know sinner, that the day is coming, when the joints of thy loins shall be loosed, and thy knees shall smite one against another, and instead of one word of comfort, thou shalt be cursed and confounded. This Jesus whom thou now despisest, shall laugh at thy calamity, and mock when thy fear cometh.

"Fear not ye;" there seems to be an emphasis in the particle "ye:" it is put in opposition to the graceless watch, that were affrighted and fled. Yes! these poor wretches have cause to fear the dreadful wrath of God, and they have cause to fear the wrath of man too; Jesus' getting out of the grave, is as much as their life is worth. But "fear not ye."

(2.) The ground and reason of the encouragement given them, is the good errand upon which they were come; "I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified." The keepers have reason to fear, for they have an ill conscience, and were here upon a wicked design, *viz.* to keep God's Christ in the grave. But you are seeking him earnestly, and out of love, and you cannot be easy till you find him: this is a good frame, an excellent errand; Be not afraid.

Their fear did not proceed from consciousness of guilt, but from the weakness of human nature, which cannot,

in its present state, bear a communication with spirits. Eliphaz tells us, "that when a spirit passed before his face, fear came upon him, and trembling, which made all his bones to shake, and that the very hair of his flesh stood up," Job iv. 14, 15.

"Ye seek Jesus which was crucified." The angel mentions his crucifixion as a part of the world's infamy and disgrace which had lately befallen him, and he mentions it in a way of glorification and triumph; that is, though he was lifted up on a cross, and then laid down in a grave, with a guard, a stone, and a seal, to hold him there; yet he is no more in the grave, but is risen, as he said: "Come see the place where the Lord lay."

Crucifixion was a Roman punishment, inflicted only upon slaves; and while the empire remained heathen, it was continued; but when the emperors themselves embraced Christianity, and the towering eagles resigned the flags unto the cross, this punishment was forbidden by the supreme authority, out of a pious honour to the death of Christ.

They laid the cross flat upon the ground, and the party was nailed to the four corners of it by the hands and feet, which were racked and stretched violently. Then the cross, with the party nailed to it, was lifted off the earth, and, by a violent effort, which gave a painful concussion to the joints of the crucified person, it was thrust into the earth and fixed there, so that it stood erect, and the party hung upon it.

Moreover, by the common rule of the Roman law, those who were crucified were permitted neither sepulture nor mourning; yea, a guard was usually set about them, lest any should take down the body and bury it; yet it was in the power of the magistrate to concede the liberty of burial. Hence it was that Joseph begged, and Pilate granted unto him the body of Jesus that he might bury it.

Now, though a crucified Christ be to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, yet, unto you who believe, he is the wisdom of God, and the power of

God. Therefore, thou that seekest a crucified Jesus, be not afraid, be not ashamed, be not discouraged, thou shalt certainly find him.

In discoursing further from these words, I shall,

I. Explain the nature of seeking a crucified Jesus. And,

II. Show, that such as seek him have no reason to be afraid, but should be of good courage.

III. Apply the subject.

1st, I am to explain the nature of seeking a crucified Jesus. And here four things may be briefly enquired into.

1. What it is to seek him. 2. Where we should seek him.
3. When we should seek him. 4. How we should seek him.

First, What is it to seek Christ? *Ans.* There is a three-fold seeking of him, which may be noticed.

1. An *initial* seeking of him at conversion, when the sinner's first acquaintance with him is made up. The poor sinner, scorched with the terrible heat of mount Sinai, law-condemned, and self-condemned, yet apprehending the mercy of God in Christ, seeks and flies to Christ, as the hunted beast flies to his den, or the pursued malefactor to the horns of the altar. Formerly he was seeking a rest to his conscience in the barren region of the fiery law, and a rest to his heart in the empty creation, but now he seeks unto Christ for them both; and having found him, he finds them both in him.

2. A *progressive* seeking of him. David exhorts us to see his face continually and evermore, Psal. cv. 4. And we find it given as the character of the saints in Scripture, that they are such as seek the Lord. It is their main business, their continued work and employment. But how is it that they seek him continually? Is he very ill to be found? By no means; "He never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain:" he is of ready and easy access. But as all goodness and all excellencies are concentrated in him, his people are still seeking for their nearer and more familiar acquaintance with him.

The philosophers say, that the search into nature is endless; because new discoveries will always be made. Much

more justly may this be said of Christ. There is no searching him out unto perfection. The seeker of him, for any thing we know, will be surprised with new discoveries of his grace and glory here, and in heaven through eternity.

3. A renewed or occasional seeking of him. Though those who have found Christ can never lose him again, either totally or finally, yet they may want the sensible enjoyment, even as a man may have a thing, and yet not have the use or comfort of it. This makes them, with earnestness and vigour, renew the enquiries after him, and to cry with Job, "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat," Job xxiii. 3.

When new straits, difficulties and temptations occur, these minister occasion for seeking anew unto him. When Paul got the thorn in his flesh, and the messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him, he sought unto the Lord no less than thrice, 2 Cor. xii.; yea, often, as the word here signifies.

Now, in seeking of Christ, there is,

1st, As in all seeking, a sense of want. A man will not seek that which he does not think he stands in need of. It is just so in the seeking of Christ. Though he is exhibited, and offered unto all that hear the gospel, yet none will enquire after him, till they have such a sense of their need of him that they see themselves absolutely ruined and undone without him. Hence, though the gospel offer is not restricted to sensible sinners, yet it is effectual only to such.

But alas! the most part do not feel their need of Christ, and therefore they never seek after him. The covetous worldling loves and adores a god of clay; the sensual epicure makes his belly his god; the self-justified trusts in a righteousness of his own; the wicked and profane live in a state of security, though without God in the world. Thus, every class of sinners have something they put in the room of God and his Christ. But when a day of power comes, the rich man sees himself poor, and miserable, and naked without Christ; the sensual man feels himself pining away and starving, for want of the bread of life; the self-

justified sees all his righteousness is "filthy rags;" the profane wretch becomes a terror to himself, and every one of them cries out, give me Christ or else I die.

2dly, A high valuation and esteem of what we want. The sincere seekers of Christ account all things but loss and dung, when compared with Jesus Christ, as Paul does, Phil. iii. 8. Such a light account does this man make of those things which the world so highly value. Luther called the whole Turkish empire, but a bone thrown among the dogs. When the spouse is asked, "What is your beloved more than another beloved?" She attempts a particular description of his excellencies, and then winds all up in this singular encomium, that he is "altogether lovely," or all desires, as in the Hebrew, Song v. 16. The blind world wonders what the saints see in Christ, to put such an immense value upon him, for to them he is a "stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." But the saints have their eyes opened to see the superlative matchless beauty and excellency of Jesus Christ, so that there is nothing in this earth, no, nor in heaven, that they desire besides him.

3dly, A holy restlessness of soul, and a dissatisfaction with every thing, until we find what we are seeking. "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is," Psal. lxiii. 1. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God," Psal. xlii. 1. Nothing will satisfy dry and parched ground but rain. The hart, they say, is naturally a thirsty creature, but especially when it is chased, it pants, and runs under the painful sensation of thirst, and nothing will satisfy it but the water brooks. So it is with the soul seeking Christ; all the gold of the Indies would not satisfy it without him; nay, what is more, heaven itself would not satisfy without him.

It is very observable, that when the Lord promised to send an angel before the people, to lead them into the promised land, it is said, that when the people heard the evil tidings, "they mourned, and no man put on his ornaments," Exod. xxxiii. 4. Strange! Was it evil tidings to

hear that they were brought into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey? True, but it was heavy to the Lord's people to hear, that the Lord himself would not go up among them; and an angel's presence would not satisfy them without him. Moses protests against it, saying, "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence." He will rather stay with God in the wilderness, than go to Canaan with an angel.

The soul seeking Christ, is like the dove sent out of the ark, which found no rest for the sole of her foot, till she got back. Hypocrites, in seeking him, take up with something else that satisfies them in the meantime, and so they are indifferent, whether they find him or not. But believers can be satisfied in nothing, until they find him whom their soul loveth.

4. A hope of finding what we seek. People may seek Christ under manifold discouragements; but none will seek him in absolute despair. He has given great encouragement to seek him; for he never said to the seed of Jacob, "seek ye my face in vain:" and he says, "ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." These promises are a firm foundation for faith and hope to rest upon, in the soul's seeking a crucified Jesus.

Secondly, Where are we to seek Christ?

1. In the scriptures. Hence he says to the Jews, "Search the scriptures, for they are they which testify of me." Christ is the subject of both the Testaments; he is the running title of the whole Bible; and this, above all things, should commend them unto us. It is said of Augustine, that having read Cicero's works, he commended them for their eloquence, but he passed this sentence upon them, "They are not sweet, because the name of Jesus is not in them;" and this testimony deserves the greater regard, that it comes from one who was, without question, a very great master of the heathen learning.

The saints in all ages have found him in his own word; and therefore it is they prize it so exceedingly, and

rejoice at it, as those who find great spoil. Many times they have been enlightened by it in darkness, comforted by it in afflictions, and strengthened by it in temptations. There they have Christ in types and figures; there they have him in prophecies; there they have him in precious promises; there they have him in his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming to judge the world at the last day. Whosoever then would find Christ, let them search the scriptures; and if the Spirit of God shine upon them, they will be sure to find him.

2. In the preaching of the gospel. The public ordinances of the gospel are wisdom's gates, heaven's trysting places, both for saints and sinners, where Christ is found of them that seek him, and sometimes found of them that seek him not. Hence wisdom says, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors; for whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord," Prov. viii. 34, 35.

No fewer than three thousand souls found Christ at Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, amongst which were some of the murderous crew, who had imbrued their hands in the blood of Jesus; and who, of all persons whatsoever, would have been denied the benefit of that blood, had not grace been sovereign and free. As the serpent was lifted upon a pole in the wilderness, that the stung Israelites might look at him and be healed; so, in the pole of the gospel offer, Jesus Christ is lifted up and exhibited, that all may look upon him and be saved.

3. In the sacraments of the gospel, especially the sacrament of the supper. In this last, he is evidently set forth crucified before our eyes, and we have a representation of the whole scene of his sufferings; we are set down, as it were, at the foot of the cross, and by faith behold the whole tragedy acted over; we see his wounds, and hear his groans.

Christ made himself known to the two disciples going to Emmaus, in the breaking of bread, which, in the opinion of some, was sacramental bread. And in all the ages of the

Christian church, the sacrament of the supper has been considered as a special means of enjoying communion with Jesus Christ; and many of the saints have found it so, to their own most certain and comfortable experience.

4. In prayer. This is another great means of communion with God and Christ, and is called by some, the king among the duties. The prayer of faith is powerful and prevalent with God, of which there have been a great many surprising instances. Moses was such a powerful intercessor, that God speaks as if his hands were holden by him. "Let me alone," says he, "that my wrath may wax hot against this people;" that is, this man is such a powerful pleader for this people, that I can do nothing against them till he holds his tongue.

The Lord says, "I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people," Exod. xxxiii. Ay, but Moses falls a pleading and praying, and the Lord says, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Would ye then have Christ? Go to the throne of grace; pray in the Holy Ghost; for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

5. In Christian fellowship. Christ himself has said it, and blessed be his name who has so often made it good, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20.

This word of grace was, not long after the uttering of it, most gloriously fulfilled to the two disciples going to Emmaus. They were in a most heavy and disconsolate case, for their master had expired upon a cross; and as they thought, was yet lying cold dead in his grave, and their faith and hope seemed to be buried with him. However, they were conferring about him with a sore and heavy heart; "And it came to pass, that while they communed together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them:" and though for a while they did not know him, yet at length he made himself known to them; for, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself."

O what a blessed privilege was it to hear such a commentator on Moses and the prophets, as Jesus Christ was! O what glorious mysteries would be opened up, what hidden things would be unveiled in that precious discourse! And O what a gracious impression did this discourse make upon the spirits of the two disconsolate disciples! Hear how warmly they speak of it, "Did not our hearts burn within us?" I believe the impression remains upon their spirits, now that they are in heaven, and will remain throughout eternity.

I think I have read of the famous Mr. Dod, that when he had met with any two or three Christians, his usual saying was, "Now let us speak something of Christ." And no doubt, in such discourses, Christ often manifested himself unto him.

If Christians, in their fellowship-meetings, would speak more of Christ and his grace, and less of matters of doubtful disputation, and nothing at all in the way of bitterness against those who differ from them, it would be a promising step towards the revival of the primitive spirit of Christianity among us.

Thirdly, when should we seek Christ?

In general, you must seek him while he is to be found, and call upon him while he is near. For there is a time coming, when he will not be found. But more particularly, you must seek him,

1. In the time of youth. The royal preacher exhorts us to remember our Creator in the days of our youth. Both the powers of the mind, and the members of the body are more sprightly and vigorous, and better adapted to the purposes of religion in that stage of life than any other. And surely, nothing can be more absurd and impious, than to spend the cream and flower of our days in the service of sin and the devil, and reserve the refuse, the very dregs of life, for the great affair of seeking God's Christ and the way of salvation through him.

O then, you that are young, be persuaded to abandon your sins and follies, and to seek Jesus who was crucified.

Methinks it is a charming thing, to see a young creature separating himself from a crowd of sinners of the same age, rank and station with himself, nobly rising above the temptations of his youthful years, and devoting himself to God through Christ, and minding the great concerns of eternity?

It is exceedingly pleasing to God; he takes great notice of early piety. "They that seek me early," says he, "shall find me," Prov. viii. 17. And it is observable, how much our Saviour was taken with the young man that came to him, with some concern upon his spirit about eternity; "Jesus beholding him, loved him."

2. In the time of affliction. The Lord says by the prophet Hosea, "I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early," Hos. v. ult. It is observed of Manasseh, that when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem, which was his kingdom, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.

When people are carried aloft on the airy wings of worldly prosperity, it is hard to get good impressions either made or maintained upon their minds. The charms of the world make their spirits light and volatile, and dissipate their better thoughts. But when, in the course of providence, they are cast down from their excellency, and stripped of their gaudy trappings, and their furniture, the mind is more easily inclined to reflection and consideration. And now is a proper season to seek a portion that fades not away. The prodigal never thought of returning to his father's house, until he had spent all his living, and was reduced to an extremity of misery. Then, and not till then, he came to himself, and did seek unto his father, and obtained his favour.

3. Such a time as this is extremely proper for seeking of Christ. You have now both the word and sacrament;

and in them both a crucified Christ is exhibited and set forth to your view. The sacrament is indeed, in its own nature, not a converting, but a confirming ordinance; yet many have got a gracious glance at occasions of this kind, when the word and sacrament are joined together, and have called the place *Peniel*. It is good to be in God's way; he sometimes surprises such with a visit of mercy, as he did Zaccheus, who climbed up to a tree out of mere curiosity to see Christ passing by.

Fourthly, How shall we seek Christ?

1. We must seek him truly and sincerely, and not as the hypocrites, of whom he complains heavily, (Isa. lviii.) Why though they fasted and afflicted their soul? "Ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness," ver. 4. They sought the Lord in the common course of religious duties; but they had their circle of sinning too, a course of abominations from which they never broke off: so their seeking of God was downright hypocrisy.

I am afraid there are many such seekers of Christ in the visible Church; they draw near to him with their lips, but their hearts are far from him, and their ways are grievous and abominable to him.

Many, like the Capernaïtes, seek Christ for the loaves, and not for himself. They seek Christ and love Christ as a Saviour from hell and wrath; but Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory, they know not; Christ, made sanctification, they desire not; Christ saving from sin they cannot endure.

But if you seek Christ, you must seek him sincerely; you must seek a whole Christ, and not any part of him separate from the rest.

2. We must seek him affectionately, and with the whole heart, not in a cold indifferent manner. This way of seeking Christ is well exemplified in David, a man according to God's own heart, and a man in whom the spirit of devotion seems to have been in a very extraordinary measure.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth

my soul after thee, O God. Early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." There is a warmth, sprightliness and vigour in these expressions, worthy to be admired and imitated. Christ says, "Give me thine heart;" and surely it can never be so well bestowed. And remember, whatever else you give him, though you should give him all your substance, yea, though you should give all the members of your body to the fire for him, it would not be accepted without the heart.

3. We must seek him diligently, as Onesiphorus sought Paul at Rome, 1 Tit. i. 18. "He sought me out diligently and found me." Some of the Roman prisoners were suffered to go abroad all the day fettered; but they returned to the prison at night. If Paul had been kept close in the prison, he might have been easily found out, but having liberty in the day-time, he behoved to be diligently sought for.

The woman in the parable, who lost a piece of silver, is supposed to light the candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it. Luke xv. 8.

If then you would find Christ, you must not fold your hands, and recline your head, but you must get up and bestir yourselves with all diligence, in the use of all the means and ordinances in and by which Christ uses to be found of them that seek him.

Mind the diligence of the spouse in seeking Christ, and imitate it. She arose and went about the city, in the streets, and in the broad ways, seeking him whom her soul loved. Go you and do so likewise, and you will certainly find him, Song iii. 3, 4.

4. We must seek him constantly, in opposition to the hypocrite, of whom it is said, "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God? Seek his face continually," says David, "wait on the Lord and keep his way." Do not fret, faint, or weary in seeking him, though you should not for some time succeed, as well as you desire. Great men will be waited on, and are very

cheerfully waited on by their votaries and dependants; and will not you wait upon the great God? Will you not seek his Son until you find him, and until he manifest himself to you, and satisfy your souls with his loving kindness and tender mercy?

II. I now proceed to show that such as seek a crucified Jesus, have no reason to be afraid, but should be of good courage: for,

1. They are in the way of duty, and that is a safe way, in which there can be no real danger, though people may be afraid of it. "He that walketh uprightly," says Solomon, "walketh surely." The way of duty is the way to peace and comfort, the way to heaven and happiness; it is the king's broad way, and all those who walk in it have his protection.

I know that people walking in God's way may meet with heavy discouragements, as Jacob did, when he was returning at God's call to the land of his fathers. And on the other hand, people walking out of God's way may meet with outward encouragements. Peevish Jonah would not go to Nineveh when God bids him, but he will go to Tarshish; and behold he finds a ship as ready as himself to carry him away from God. But if those who are in the way of their duty meet with heavy afflictions, they at the same time have the consolations of God's Spirit, and the testimony of their own spirits to rejoice in: and in the end, they shall find that he has done all things well.

If then thou art seeking Christ, be not afraid, be not discouraged; thou art just doing what Christ would have thee to do, and what he commands thee to do.

2. Because they have the promise of finding him. "I love them that love me: and they that seek me early shall find me. And you shall find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart."

Pluck up your spirits, you that seek a crucified Jesus. Why are you discouraged? Why lie you thus upon your faces? The vision is yet for an appointed time; it will speak and will not tarry. The Lord, whom you seek, shall

suddenly come unto you. He has promised to be found of you ; and he is not a man that he should lie.

There was never man nor woman sought him sincerely, who did not find him according to his promise.

USE I. O believing communicants, see here both your duty and your comfort. 1st, Here is your duty, even to seek Jesus which was crucified. As the Lord said to Elijah in the cave, "What dost thou here, Elijah?" So say I, what doest thou here if thou art not seeking Jesus?

I hope you have already found him ; but are there not many things you want upon this occasion, for which you must seek unto him? Do not you want more grace and holiness, more of the image of God? Do not you want strength against your corruptions, particularly such of them as more easily beset you? Do not you want victory over the world, and over Satan the god of this world, both your inveterate enemies? Yea, surely, you want all this, and much more than all this. Why then, seek Christ, and you shall have all things in him.

2dly, Here is comfort in your duty. Are you seeking Christ? Why then, be not afraid ; he will be found of you. If you be seeking Christ, Christ is seeking you ; and where two folks are seeking one another, they will in all probability meet.

But oh, how shall I know that I have found Christ? *Ans.*

1. If you have found him, you will prize the discovery as a matchless display of glorious free grace. How would the malefactor on the scaffold prize a pardon sent to him? How would the hungry thirsty traveller rejoice to find a covered table in the wilderness?

2. If you have found him, you will love and esteem him above all things, Matt. xiii. 45, 46. Phil. iii. 8.

3. If you have found him, you will endeavour to hold him, like the spouse : and not let him go, Cant. iii. 4.

USE II. Christless, graceless sinners, I invite and entreat you to seek Jesus which was crucified.

1st, Christ is seeking you, and would gladly have you. If you ask what evidence is there for that, I answer, he

came to seek and to save that which was lost ; but you are lost and undone, therefore he comes to seek and to save you.

Has not Christ set up his standard among you by the preaching of the gospel? Has he not commanded us to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name to you? And is not that an evidence of his seeking you? Nay, sinner, that Bible in thy hand is an evidence that Christ seeks you ; for in it, he speaks as really and particularly to thee, as if there were not another besides thee in all the world.

Again, have you no evidence within your breasts that Christ seeks you? Do not you sometimes feel the strivings of the Spirit, the stings and remorses of conscience, which oftentimes put thee to a stand? Wherefore is he at all this pains with you, unless he desires your salvation?

2dly, Seek Christ ; for you will never find a rest to your guilty consciences, or to your wandering hearts, any where else for ever. As nothing can satisfy the panting thirsty hart but the water brooks, so nothing but the blood of Christ can pacify the guilty conscience.