

*Exercise and Addition.—Selkirk, before the Presbytery.*

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

SERMON XXV.

EPHESIANS v. 9,

*For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.*

LIGHT, in religion, without heat and warmth, is so unlike heaven, that it will issue in utter darkness, where there is a scorching heat without light. True spiritual light, is like John Baptist, a burning and a shining light. When the Spirit was poured out after the ascension of Christ, for the enlightening of a dark world, Acts ii. 3, "there appeared cloven tongues as of fire." For, as upon the confounding of tongues at Babel, darkness came upon the world, the holy language being left but with a few, and corruption of manners came in like a flood upon that darkness; so when the remedy for this was given in Zion, there appeared cloven tongues, an emblem of the gift of tongues, by which light was to be restored to the dark world. And these tongues were of fire, because of the dross and corruption of the world, to be burnt up by them; light and purity returning together. Thus the saving influences of the Spirit are together enlightening and sanctifying: "Walk as children of the light; for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." That these words are parenthetical, appears from that, the words of the 10th verse are so constructed with the 8th, that they make one sentence with it; our text being interposed, as in the midst of a running sentence. Walk as children of light. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. For the fruit of the Spirit, &c.

The scope of the text is to shew that there is a necessary connection betwixt a gracious state and a holy life; which are so joined by the appointment of God, and the nature of the things, that they cannot be put asunder. It is true, many do so yoke together a splendid profession and an unholy life, as if they had found out the secret of conjoining light and darkness, Christ and Belial, hid from all saints. But our text confounds that mystery of iniquity, shewing that whoever are light in respect of their state, will be so also in respect of their conversation. "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." For clearing the sense of these words, let us consider,

I. The connection.

II. The words themselves.

III. Raise, and illustrate the doctrines contained in the text.

According then to this customary method, in discourses of this kind, I am,

I. To consider the connection of the text with the preceding words, in the particle *for*. Some think the particle  $\gamma\alpha\rho$ , to be put for  $\delta\epsilon$ , as if it were merely a note of transition, as it is sometimes used, as in Luke xii. 58; and read, "Now the fruit of the Spirit," &c.; but to this I do not accede. It is a rule of interpreting Scripture, worthy to be written in letters of gold, namely, that we are never, without necessity, to depart from the proper and literal signification of words. And although an eager sticking to the literal signification of words, where a real necessity of taking them improperly and figuratively is sufficiently intimated by the Scripture itself, has been of fatal consequence in divinity, yet I nothing doubt, but men's taking to themselves a liberty of receding from the proper signification of words, without necessity, has, in several cases, cast a veil over the true sense of Scripture, and brought in upon the text what may be the true sense of, instead of bringing forth out of it, what must be so.

Now there is no necessity here for taking this particle merely for a note of transition. *For*, is to be taken casually. Though the apostle doth not here teach distinctly and directly, *how, but, wherefore*, we are to walk as children of the light; yet, by the by, he may, and really doth teach how we shall walk so, namely, by bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit, which is the reason alleged for taking it transitively.

We take it then casually, as our own and other translators for the most part do, and this is its most frequent signification; and so the words are a reason for something going before. He had shewn both the condition and the duty of the Ephesians, and inferred the latter from the former, and in the text gives the reason of the consequence. May not we walk as others, might they say, though we be light in the Lord? No, says the apostle, you cannot; for if you be light in the Lord, you shall certainly shine, and give light in your conversation. For the fruit of the Spirit, abiding and acting on all the children of light, is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.

But here, vain men, who, to exalt free will, trample on free grace, may cavil and say, If there be such a necessary connection betwixt being light in the Lord, and walking as children of the light, in all goodness, &c., then to what purpose are exhortations to the duty of

walking so? May not one as well say to the sun in the firmament, Thou art the sun, walk thou as the sun giving light? ANSWER. The same God who has appointed the end, has appointed the means also, and they are joined together, not to be separated by men. Exhortations are means ordained of God for advancing holiness in heart and life, in these brought into the state of grace. As there is a necessary connection betwixt a foundation of Zion which the Lord has laid, and the putting of the copestone on it; so the means of building up are by that very thing secured. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus." It is true, it would be vain to speak to the sun at the rate aforesaid. But God did speak so to it, Gen. i. 14, 15; and it is by virtue of that efficacious word that the sun shines to this day, and is not extinguished. And as his Spirit makes the saints light in the Lord, so it is by virtue of his efficacious word that they walk as children of the light, in all goodness, &c.

But, ere we leave this, we shall remark, that before the apostle comes directly to shew how they must walk as children of the light, as he doth in the 10th and 11th verses, he here urges the necessity of it. For if the conscience be not first convinced of the necessity of a duty, one will but little regard how it is to be done. The good of souls is the supreme law of preaching, and all method is so to be managed as may be most subservient to it. Let us now go on,

II. To consider the words themselves, which are a proposition, in which we shall notice,

1. The subject.
2. What is said of it.

1. The subject which the apostle here treats of is, the fruit of the Spirit. And here we must take notice,

1. Of the reading in some Greek copies, *του φωτος*, instead of *του πνευματος*; "for the fruit of the light is," instead of "the fruit of the Spirit." But to confirm the common reading to be genuine, it may be observed, that the fruit of the Spirit is an expression used elsewhere in the New Testament, namely, Gal. v. 22; to this may be added Rom. viii. 23; but the fruit of the light, nowhere, as I remember. Observe also, that the word *φωτος*, being in the last part of the preceding verse, might, by the inadvertency of the transcriber, more naturally be repeated in the text instead of *πνευματος*, than this last could be inserted instead of *φωτος*. Lastly, the common reading is the more forcible, full, and decisive, and therefore to be retained. For the fruit of the Spirit comprehends the fruit, but not contrariwise; and the fruit of the Spirit here answers the word "in the Lord," light in the Lord, in the preceding verse.

2. We must next inquire what is meant by the Spirit here? Some, by the Spirit, here understand the new creature, or the light of grace wrought by the Spirit of God in the heart. Others understand the Holy Ghost himself. This last seems to me to be the genuine sense of this word in this place, and that because it is most literal and proper one of the two; since the new nature, or the light of grace, cannot be so called, but as the effect gets the name of the cause; and there is no necessity for receding from the more proper signification in this text.

But to prove the word Spirit to be taken here for the light of grace, not the Holy Ghost himself, besides the different reading already considered, two things are alleged; one is, that here there is no mention of the Holy Ghost before, but of light. ANSWER. There is a virtual, though not express mention of him in the phrase, "light in the Lord," since the Spirit is the bond of our union with Christ; and that is more than sufficient ground for mentioning him here. Another thing more weighty is, that the phrase, the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 20, must be so understood, being opposed there to the works of the flesh, ver. 19. Now as fruit answereth to works, say they, so Spirit does to flesh, and therefore must be understood of the new nature. ANSWER. I judge that several learned commentators, who understand by the fruit of the Spirit there, the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God, are in the right; so that the phrase in both texts signifies the same thing. And the variation of the phrases there does not obscurely intimate this, namely, the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit; not the work or works of the spirit, that is of the new nature; which the immediate opposition betwixt the old and new nature would have required. For these works of the flesh, like wild oats, grow of their own accord, from out of the cursed ground of our corrupt nature, without toil or pains about them, to bring them forth. But these of the new nature do not so; they must be produced by the continued influences of the Holy Spirit, even in the trees already planted in the house of God.

I will not conceal, that what we read in the same 5th chapter of the Galatians, of the Spirit lusting against the flesh, as well as the flesh against the Spirit, in the same combat, seems to clash with our exposition. But I cannot help thinking, that even it also is meant of the Holy Spirit himself, in so far as he stirs in the saints holy desires and lustings; making the new nature to act and lust, in opposition to the old corrupt nature: even as he is said to intercede, pray, and groan with groanings which cannot be uttered; in so far as he stirs up, and produces these in the saints, Rom. viii. 26. It

seems to be reasonable to judge the Spirit that lusteth (in that sense) against the flesh, ver. 17, is the same Spirit by which the saints are led, ver. 18. But the Spirit by which they are led is the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 14.

3. What is meant by the fruit of the Spirit? From what is said, it plainly follows, that the fruit of the Spirit is not the fruit of the Spirit as the subject of it, but the fruit of the Spirit as an agent, who by his powerful influences produces the same in the trees of righteousness, or the branches of his own engrafting into the true vine. In a word, it is the product of the Holy Spirit in the children of light, which is pleasant and savoury before the Lord, therefore called fruit, according to that, "My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold." What that fruit in particular is, is declared in the other part of the text.

*Lastly*, It is to be considered, how the apostle's speaking here of the fruit of the Spirit, its being in all goodness, &c., concludes what was to be proved. The matter lies here. The reasoning is founded on that fundamental maxim of practical Christianity, that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Light, abides, acts, and produceth fruit in all the children of light, in all those who are light in the Lord. For Jesus Christ is by the Father constituted the head of all saving influences; and it is by the communion of his Spirit that we receive of his influences to make us fruitful. The Spirit uniting the soul to Christ, the fountain of light and life, it immediately partakes of the light of life, as a candle is lighted by a burning lamp touching it; but the candle, separated from the lamp, would continue to burn, as having in itself that which feeds the flame. But the creature is empty in itself, and therefore must be fed continually from Jesus Christ, by the communion of his Spirit maintaining the bond of union betwixt Christ and the soul, and taking of Christ and giving to it. So that if it were possible that the Spirit should once totally depart from the child of light, and the union be broken, that moment he would return to his former darkness. Now the fruit of the Spirit, thus abiding and acting in the children of light, is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth; therefore it necessarily follows, that they that are light in the Lord, will walk as children of light. We are now,

2. To consider what is said of this fruit of the Spirit. "It is in all goodness," &c. There is an ellipsis here of the copulating. Our translators supply the word, *is*. Some versions supply the word, *consists*. Whatever be supplied, that seems to be the sense, namely, that the fruit of the Spirit consists in all goodness, &c. Thus we read, Col. i. 10, of being fruitful in every good work. Now, here

we are to shew, I. What are the particulars in which the fruit of the Spirit, in a child of light, consists. These are goodness, righteousness, and truth. Now, forasmuch as all Christian virtues are the fruit of the Spirit, they are by the consent of interpreters all summed up in these three. And as every thing bringeth forth after its kind, so these are agreeable to the nature of the Holy Spirit, who is a good and righteous Spirit, and the Spirit of truth; and so they are also to the light, as our Lord shews, John iii. 20; "He that doeth evil hateth the light," and ver. 21, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light."

1. Goodness. There is a twofold notion in it: 1. Of loveliness; hence the phrase, good in one's eyes. So the subject of goodness, whether person or thing, is good in itself; commendable, lovely, desirable. Thus goodness comprehends holiness; purity in opposition to all uncleanness and filthiness; meekness, patience, &c., in opposition to wrath, bitterness, &c., which the apostle had before condemned; and also faith, without which none please God. 2. It has also the notion of communication; all good being communicative of itself, as philosophers observe. Thus a good person or thing is good to others, that is, beneficent or profitable. "Hence," says Paul, "let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth; but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. Thus it comprehends bounty, mercy; in a word, a disposition to do good to others in their souls and bodies: and so it is opposed to covetousness, revenge, malice, &c., before condemned. Hence we cannot, with some, take goodness as relating only to one's self. For though, indeed, the goodness of a child of light cannot extend to God in this last sense, yet it may and must to one's neighbour, Psal. xvi. 2, 3.

2. Righteousness in the extent of its signification, speaks a conformity to the law in all the parts thereof. But being here contradistinguished to goodness, it cannot be taken in that large sense, but in a more restrained one; namely, as it denotes that whereby we are inclined to give every one his due. This is justice in all our dealings with men, of whatever sort. Thus the Jews distinguished righteous men from good men. The righteous man, according to them, says what is mine is mine, what is thine is thine own. But the good man says, what is mine is thine, and what is thine is thine own; to which the apostle seems to have an eye, Rom. v. 6, 7. Now this fruit of the Spirit, righteousness or justice, is opposed to that covetousness before condemned.

Truth has a respect to God, ourselves, and our neighbour. There is a truth of the heart, in uprightness and sincerity. A truth of

things, words, and actions. Hence are these words of our Lord, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." That is true things, agreeable to the rule, and having the reality of Christian actions, and not a shew and semblance of them only. A truth of thought and judgment, whereby one judgeth aright of things; and a truth of speech, whether testifying, teaching, or promising; all this comes under the name of truth, which is opposed here to dissimulation and lies, with respect to God and man; and to error, delusion, and vain hopes, whereby a person himself is deluded and deceived. It is particularly set against that deceit spoken of, ver. 6th, which could find no place but under the covert of darkness.

2. Let us attend to the extent of the fruit of the Spirit, with respect to these particulars. "It is in *all* goodness," &c. I make no question but this note of universality belongs to all the three; the phrase itself natively importing it. The fruit of the Spirit is not only in some goodness, righteousness, and truth—though many deceive themselves with parcels and shreds of these things—but it is in *all* goodness in one's self and to his neighbour; in *all* righteousness towards man; in *all* truth with respect to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. And these things are interwoven one with another, in the fruit of the Spirit. The goodness is true, and justles out no sort of righteousness or justice, communicative nor distributive, remunerative nor punitive. The righteousness is true and good; from right principles, motives, and ends. So is the truth, as it is here distinguished, proceeding from a good principle. Meanwhile, this extent of the fruit of the Spirit is to be understood not in a legal, but an evangelical sense; of a perfection of parts, not of degrees.

*Lastly*, Let us shew how these are the fruit of the Holy Ghost, in the children of light. They are so in three respects. 1. He implants them in the soul, giving it a good, righteous, and true inclination and propensity, agreeable to the holy law, according to that, "I will," saith the Lord, "put my law into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." 2. He preserves these graces when implanted, 1 Peter i. 5, without which they would die out. And, 3. He excites, quickens, and brings them forth to action, in the heart and life of the children of light, Song iv. 16.

The sum of the whole matter is this. Those who are light in the Lord, must needs walk as children of light; because the Spirit of God, abiding in them, does produce fruit in them, consisting in all righteousness, goodness, and truth, in their hearts and lives, with respect to God, themselves, and their neighbours.

DOCTRINE I. The Spirit of Christ abiding in the children of light, produces agreeable fruit in their hearts and lives.

DOCTRINE II. Goodness, righteousness, and truth, are the fruits of the children of light, produced in them by the Spirit of Christ.

DOCTRINE III. True Christian fruitfulness is universal. A word to each of these.

DOCTRINE I. The Spirit of Christ abiding in the children of light, produces agreeable fruit in their hearts and lives; even fruit suitable to his own nature, and their gracious state. For confirmation of this consider,

1. The Spirit is an active bond of union betwixt Christ and the children of light, these that are in him. By this Spirit, an empty creature is united to a full Christ; and by the same made partaker of his fulness, to their bringing forth fruit in him. "The Spirit shall glorify me," saith Christ, "for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Hence we read "of the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." It is by the soul's feeding on Christ that it lives, and whosoever feed on him, shall live by him, a life of holiness, as well as comfort. "He that eateth me," saith Jesus, "even he shall live by me." Meanwhile, our Lord tells us, that this life is by the participation of his Spirit. It is the Spirit that quickeneth.

2. Consider the end for which the Spirit is given to these that are his. It is in a special manner for their sanctification, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; so that all who are chosen of God to everlasting life, are sanctified by the Spirit. "For they are chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." It is his work to conform them more and more unto the image of Christ, and he effects it accordingly. "For they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." And the same Spirit being in them which is in Jesus Christ, cannot fail to make them like him in their bearing the fruits of holiness; even as in Ezekiel's vision, when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up also, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

3. The several designations given to the Holy Spirit evince this. He is called the Holy Spirit, not only because he is holy himself; but chiefly, because he makes them holy in whom he dwells. He is the Spirit of grace; for he implants it, preserves it, excites, strengthens it, and at length perfects it. He is the Spirit of life who mortifies the old man, and quickens the new. He is the water that purges away the filth of sin, and makes the soul fruitful. He



is even a fountain of living water springing up in the soul. He is the fire that burns up corruption, and inflames the heart with the love of God. And, to add no more, he is the wind from heaven, making the spices in Christ's garden to flow out.

USE. 1. Of information. This lets us see, that in vain are the pretences to the Spirit and a gracious state, in those who bring not forth the fruits of holiness in their hearts and lives. The trees of righteousness bring forth holy fruits. "If God be our Father, where is our honour of him; if our Master, where is our fear of him." If the Spirit of Christ be in us, where are our love, joy, peace, for these are the fruit of the Spirit.

2. Those who are so far from the fruits of holiness, that their profane lives are filled with the fruits of wickedness, have not the Spirit, but are in darkness, Gal. v. 19. To what purpose do men pretend faith in Christ, while they go on in a course of sin, and will not part with their lusts. They that are Christ's, have Christ's Spirit; and that Spirit will give quite a new turn to their hearts and lives.

USE 2. Of exhortation. Unholy sinners, as ever you would be holy, labour to get Christ's Spirit in you, to dwell in you, and act in you.

MOTIVE 1. Without the Spirit you are undone for ever; for without the Spirit, without Christ; for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Without Christ, without God, and without hope. The dead corpse may be kept a while; but when there is no hope of the return of life to it, it is buried in a grave. So, without the Spirit, you may be through the patience of God spared a while; but the end will be, to be cast into the pit, and buried out of God's sight.

MOTIVE 2. If you get the Spirit, you are made up for ever. When the Spirit comes, life comes that shall never fail, John iv. 14. He will unite you to Christ, quicken, enlighten, and sanctify you. He will give you grace, actuate and increase it, and change you from glory to glory.

DIRECTION. Pray earnestly for the Spirit. Your heavenly Father shall give the holy Spirit to them that ask him. Look and wait for the Spirit in all ordinances. "Blessed are they that sow beside all waters." They that would have the wind blow on them, go out into the open air; though they cannot raise it, they go where it blows. Give up yourselves to the Spirit; say, "Turn me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." Lay down yourselves at his feet, to be enlightened, quickened, and sanctified. Cherish the least spark; it may increase into a flame.

2. Children of light, as you would abound in the fruits of holiness, take heed how you entertain the Spirit. Resist him not, but fall in with him in his operation. Quench not the Spirit. Beware of casting water on the holy fire, by sinning against light, or by indulging in sensuality. Withdraw not fuel from it, by neglecting the motions of the Spirit. Smother it not, by not giving vent to the motions and operations of the Spirit within you.

DOCTRINE II. Goodness, righteousness, and truth, are fruits of the Spirit in the children of light, produced in them by the Holy Spirit of Christ. For the confirmation of this, I shall only briefly observe,

1. That God is good, righteous, and true; and they are partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4; and so, as children, they resemble God their Father.

2. That God has been in a special and gracious manner, good, righteous, and true to them. As to the point of righteousness, that Scripture may be noted, "He is just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," namely, for the merits of Christ. And it is the nature of God's dispensations of saving grace, to impress the same dispositions on the happy subjects of them. They are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

3. That the holy law is a law of goodness, righteousness, and truth. This law is written on their hearts, Heb. viii. 10.

*Lastly,* That wickedness, unrighteousness, and lies, are the works of the devil, and the works of the flesh; to which the fruits produced by the Spirit in the new man are directly contrary.

USE 1. This writes death on the foreheads of three sorts of persons:

1. Wicked, ungodly, and ungracious men, who are far from goodness, remaining in the evil state and disposition in which they were born; in whose mind, will, and affections, the evil of sin yet reigns; and are neither graciously good in nor to themselves, nor others. That is an evidence that the good Spirit of God has never yet entered into that heart to dwell there. Alas! will some say, I see much evil, all evil in my heart, but goodness is far from me. ANSWER. It is a piece of gracious goodness for one to see the evil of his own heart; but yet there is a pearl of goodness in the saints, amidst a dunghill of evil. God owns it for goodness though it be so, and it is folly in thee to deny it.

2. Unrighteous men, who are unjust in their dealings with men, who are given to fraud, cheating, and tricking, if they can gain thereby; and can go over the belly of conscience and common justice, to advance their worldly interest. This is an evidence that the

world is your God and portion; that there is no fear of God before your eyes; that you are children of darkness and not of light. Let me tell you, where you win a penny by it, you lose a talent; the gain is the price of blood, of thy soul.

3. Those who make no conscience of truth. Children in whom there is no truth, are not children of light. Such are hypocrites and dissemblers with God, who pretend fair, but whose heart is not upright with the Lord; who, under the cloak of a profession of religion, indulge themselves in sin, in some living reigning lust or other. Ah! whom do you mock. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Such, like the false mother, divide the child; by a holy profession, and an unholy practice. So shall their doom be to be cut asunder, and have their portion with hypocrites. Such are liars, who make no conscience of speaking truth; especially such as lie in defence of an unholy life, which is a most common sin; there being everywhere agents of the devil, who have abundance of vain words to bestow in defence of these things. These are of their father the devil, and with him they must lodge for evermore, Rev. xxi. 8.

USE 2. Of exhortation. Let us,

1. Study goodness. To be good, pleasing, and acceptable in the sight of God, and of men also, so far as we may in God's way; namely, by meekness, gentleness, readiness to do good; and for this cause, let us hate sin as the greatest evil. Let us all endeavour to be beneficial to mankind, as we have access; to embrace all occasions offered for the advancing of the temporal, but especially the spiritual good of others. Let no man say, Am I my brother's keeper? Nor of the ruin of others, What is that to us? And let us abridge ourselves of our liberty, even in lawful things, to that very end, that we destroy not those for whom Christ died.

2. Be strictly just in all our dealings with men. Moral honesty is not the whole of religion, but it is such a necessary part of it, as the want of it will declare a man a stranger to real godliness, profess what he will, Psal. xv. 1—3.

*Lastly*, Let us study truth and cleave to it. Truth and sincerity of heart before the Lord; the doctrine of truth, and truth in all our words.

DOCTRINE III. True Christian fruitfulness is universal. On this I have not time to enlarge.

USE. By this we may try our state, and whether our fruit be the fruit of the Holy Spirit in us or not. True fruit is universal, Col. i. 10; Psal. cxix. 6. There is a perfection of parts in the fruit of the Spirit in believers, though not of degrees. They do sincerely

aim at all, and endeavour all the parts of goodness and holiness, though in none of them they attain to legal perfection. Hypocrites are ever partial in their fruits, pretended to be fruits, and never aim at universal obedience of heart and life. Amen.

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*Eyemouth, July 12, 1706.—Monday after the Sacrament.*

CHRIST THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER.

SERMON XXVI.

PHILIPPIANS i. 21,

*For me to live is Christ.*

IN a day of converting grace, in Christ's marriage-day, there is a glorious transmigration of souls betwixt Christ and believers. Christ loves the believer, and the believer loves Christ. The believer has Christ's heart, Song iv. 9, "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse." Some render it, "Thou hast knit my heart to thine;" as if they had no more two hearts, but one. The Septuagint renders it, *unhearts me*. And Christ has the believer's heart. "Whom have I in the heaven but thee; and there is none in all the earth that I desire besides thee." The believer desires nothing beside him, nothing like him, nothing after him. As the lady at Cyrus' feast, who said she saw none but her husband. Christ lives in the believer, Gal. v. 20. Christ is his life, Col. iii. 4. Alas! that there should be so many Christless Christians, who never have discovered the beauty of this plant of renown. Paul was none of these, as appears in these words, wherein we are to consider,

1. The sum of Paul's practice: "To me to live is Christ." Some render it, "for Christ is gain to me in life and in death;" as if the sense were, whether I live or die, Christ is always my gain. But this is a force upon the text which, in the original, runs word for word, as in our translation. The words bear another sense. The phrase, indeed, is something unusual; but love burning in the heart to Christ, is not easily satisfied with expression. When Hezekiah is wondering at the Lord's love, he says, "thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption:" or, thou hast loved my soul from the pit. When David was intent on prayer, he tells us, but, "I prayer," Psal. cix. 4. When on peace, "I peace," Psal. cxx. 7. Now Christ is all to the believer, "To me to live is Christ."