

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."

I endeavour to live Christ, to think Christ, to speak Christ. As all the lines drawn from the circumference to the centre meet in one point; so all my preaching, all my suffering, yea, all my life, has a tendency to Christ, to please him, and to glorify him. Christ was the great scope of his life. To the unrenewed man, to live is himself. He acts from, for, and to himself. Christ gets self's room in the believer. He acts from him, to him, and for him.

2. In the verse there is the sum of his hopes: "To die is gain." Death, that is the great enemy of mankind, shall be gainful to me. If I lose a temporal life, I will find an eternal. I will make a good exchange of trouble, for eternal rest; of a miserable world, for heaven; and then shall I fully enjoy this Christ for whom I live; and shall also glorify him in death, whom I glorify by life.

3. The connection of a holy life, and a happy death. To live is Christ, before to die be gain. These God has joined, and no man can put asunder; though if wishes would do, they would be often disjoined; as many are of Balaam's mind, in desiring to die the death of the righteous. They must glorify him here, who shall be glorified by him hereafter.

4. The dependence of these words on the preceding. They are a reason of what he said before, ver. 20. He had said, that he hoped, (being now prisoner at Rome), to magnify Christ in his body; this he might do either by his life or by his death. In life he would preach Christ, by death he would confirm his preaching. He was not solicitous which of the two ways Christ should glorify himself in him, so that he were glorified by him; and the reason was, because his heart was bent on glorifying Christ in life; so if he lived, he would live in his element, and if he died it should be gain both to himself and others, and he should glorify Christ that way also.

DOCTRINE. Christ is the sum and scope of the believer's life. We shall shew,

I. What is supposed in this.

II. What is imported in it.

III. Why is it so with the believer. We are then to shew,

I. What is supposed in this. It supposes that the believer has seen Christ in his beauty. "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty." There is an interesting question, John xiv. 22, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" There is an illumination in the knowledge of Christ, given in the day of Christ's power, to the elect; that the world, even the most refined hypocrites, attain not unto; that determines them to make Christ their all. The illumination of the Arminians, that

leaves the will in suspense, is often the attainment of castaways. But the elect get one of another sort, John iv. 10. They who are thus brought to know his name, will put their trust in him. Hypocrites see him, as it were, but in his ordinary clothes, hence they see no beauty in him, that they should desire him; and hence such unmannerly treatment of him at his table, for had they known him, they would not have thus crucified the Lord of glory. The believer sees him in his royal robes, clothed with glory, and altogether lovely. There are two things which every believer has seen in Christ, but no hypocrite has seen them:

1. His transcendent excellency, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. They have seen that in him that has darkened all created excellency. As when the sun ariseth, the stars hide their heads, the candles are blown out. The sun serves instead of candles, moon, and stars. If others see this, why do they prefer a lust to Christ; why is not to them to live Christ.

2. His fulness, his all-sufficieny, John i. 16; Luke xv. 17. An ass's head gave a great price at Samaria, in time of famine; and so the doings of the world appear bulky, when the fulness of the Mediator is not discovered. The treasure may be concealed, hid under the beggar's feet, hence he goes from door to door; but if it were seen, he would leave off his old trade and live upon his own. With Peter, he would say to Christ, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life;" and from him he would receive that water, which would be in him a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life.

II. We are to shew what is imported in it.

1. It imports that the believer's life is bound up in Christ's. "Ye are dead," says Paul, "and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." This he himself tells us, "Because I live, ye shall live also." What was David's encouragement against all distress? it was, "the Lord liveth;" and of his joy, and that made him that he could lay down his body with confidence in a grave? it was, "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." The believer's hopes are all in Christ, and should he die, they and their all would die with him. The apostle, in the text, lets us know his judgment, that life is not worth the having, without Christ. What is life but a vapour? Our days are few and evil; desirable not for their own sake, but for Christ's sake.

2. Christ is the object of the believer's life: (suffer me to term it so). As the tradesman is taken up about his employment, so is

the believer about Christ: "For I determine," says he, "not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." The actions of his life do habitually centre in him, though in themselves they be divers. I shall instance in some particulars:

1. Christ is the believer's study, Philip. iii. 8, 10. He is the main thing which they desire to know. The mysteries of nature only, are prized by some; but the mystery of Christ is chiefly prized by believers. Here all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are; not only subjectively, but objectively. O what a round-about way do men ordinarily take to gain knowledge! Paul took the shortest way, when he determined to hold by Christ crucified; for that is the body of divinity taught to the scholars of the Spirit of God. "He shines in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus." Look to him in his natures and offices; in what he did, and what he suffered, from his conception, to his sitting at God's right hand, and you will see a complete system. Would you know what God is; what man is by nature, and what by grace—all may be learned there.

Now, concerning this study of the believer, I would remark, that sometimes his book falls by-hand. They lose their sight of Christ, the face of Jesus is veiled to them. Like Job, they cannot perceive him on either side. This makes their faces gather blackness, and makes them go about with Job's cry in their month, "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come, even to his seat." For why, if he be gone, what have we more? for comfort, life, God, and guide, are gone.

Again, when the believer would know the nature of God, and what he is to him, he reads all through the vail of the flesh of Christ, for it is in him only that God is well pleased, Heb. x. 19, 20. God out of Christ is a terrible sight, to those who know what sin is, as the believer does. He looks to his mercies through Christ, and that makes the least of them appear very great. He takes a cup of cold water as sent to him by the sea of Christ's blood, and sees Christ in every mercy. But finally, whatever he sees in Christ, there is always something beyond what he has attained, Eph. iii. 18, 19. There are new jewels still to come out of this treasure. The desire is kindled to know more of him; like Moses, shew me thy glory.

2. Christ is the believer's choice, Psal. lxxiii. 25. The believer's choice is far different from the world, Psal. iv. 6, 7. He chooses Christ above all. He sees him as the best among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. These eagle-eyed ones can see defects in all created enjoyments, but none in Christ. There are two defects

which they see in all others. 1. Uncertainty. They see honour but like a windy bubble, that children blow up, presently gone. Riches to be the name of nothing; like a flock of fowls that light upon a man's ground, that presently take wing. 2. Insufficiency. They are no way commensurable to the desires of an immortal soul. "I have seen," says he, "an end of all perfection." Now he sees Christ to be a certain and a sufficient good.

He also chooses Christ instead of all, and takes him for all. The godly man knows he is all-sufficient. This is a wise choice. It is but a choosing of the fountain instead of the streams. Whatever perfections are in the creature scattered up and down, he has them centered in him.

Christ has the believer's affections. Christ is his treasure, and therefore his heart is upon him. The affections that were sometimes scattered and misplaced, are now gathered together; and as all the rivers run into the sea, so they all run to Christ. His love is set on that lovely one, and he will neither be driven, nor bribed from it. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." Their desires are toward him, Isa. xxvi. 8.

His hope is in him. His joy is in Jesus, Phil. iii. 3. His delight is in him; and if any person or thing has any of his love, it is for Christ's sake. This is the habitual bent of the soul. His sorrow is for offending him. He mourns most bitterly for having pierced him. His hatred is against sin, as the abominable thing that Christ hates. His fear is also lest he provoke him.

Even the believer's body is devoted to Christ. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Their members are instruments of righteousness. The tongue is the instrument of his glory, and they respect their bodies for that very cause, that they are Christ's. Hence, if he call them to suffer for his sake, their bodies and lives are at his service.

3. Christ is the end of the believer's life. He lives to Christ, Rom. xiv. 8. He endeavours to please him. Men-pleasers, and those who please Christ, divide the whole world. "If I yet pleased men," says Paul, "I should not be the servant of Christ." The true Christian has renounced his own will, and taken Christ's will for his. He hath learned to submit to his perceptive and providential will, that in all things he may please him to whom he owes himself. He endeavours to glorify Christ. His life is a burden to him, if he conceive he can do nothing for Christ. He is ready to think that day a lost day, in which Christ's glory has not been advanced by him in some measure. It is his work, and therefore he lives to pull down Satan's kingdom, and to advance the kingdom of Christ. The honour of his Lord is dear to him, and therefore he would be con-

tent, with the Psalmist, "to make his name to be remembered in all generations." Hence, he is one that will speak for Christ, and will not be ashamed of him before men. If his glory be impaired by others, he will strive to repair it, testifying against sin. He is one that will commend Christ, and sound forth his praises to engage others to fall in love with him. His life will also be such, as may bring glory to Christ. He will labour to write after the blessed copy which Christ has set before him. If he be called to suffer for Christ, he will not refuse it, to glorify his Lord. We proceed,

III. To shew why it is so with the believer :

1. Because Christ lives in him, Gal. ii. 20. The same Spirit that dwells in Christ, dwells in the believer; and as the same soul actuates both the head and the members, the oil poured on the head of our high priest runs down to the skirts of his garments.

They are, by the Spirit of Christ, made partakers of the divine nature; united to Jesus Christ, and how can the members but live to the holy head?

2. They had their life by the death of Christ, he bought them with the price of his own blood; no wonder, then, that to them to live be Christ. As Eve was made of a rib taken out of Adam, and thus was his own, so they are Christ's. They are his by right of redemption, why then should he not have their all? He gets nothing from them, but what was bought at a dear rate. It was for this end he died, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." If one should buy a thief from the gallows, would he not be obliged, in gratitude, to be wholly his, to whom he owes his life. Christ bought us from death, and that by his own death. How can the believer reflect on the price paid, but he must say to him, to live is Christ? O! says the believer, if the foot sinned, and God drew blood of the head; I contracted the debt, and my husband paid it, and shall I not be for him. There are five things that weigh much with the believer here :

1. The vastness of the price which Christ paid for his life, namely, his own precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 19. This price was the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. Had a world been crumbled to nothing, had all the angels been loaded with the wrath of God, and died each of them ten thousand deaths for our life; what had all this been to God dying. Believers live to him, because they see his glory as the only begotten of the Father, hence they stand and wonder, Isa. lxiii. 1, 2. They wonder at the Son of God suffering death to purchase their life; they are placed here as the iron in the fire, till it be all fire.

2. That Christ lived for them, and died for them. What brought

him out of the Father's bosom, but his love to them? Why could not the hallelujahs of angels keep him at court, but because the cries of the perishing elect pierced his heart? Therefore he came down. Father, said he, they shall not perish; if they owe any thing, lay it to my account, take payment of me; I will take their place. They cannot live, unless the law be satisfied by obedience, and justice satisfied for the sin committed. I will do both. So he came, and lived a life of perfect obedience for them, and died a death satisfactory for their sins.

3. The continuance of his sufferings, which was from his birth to his death, from the cradle to the grave. It was not a part of Christ's life that was for them, but it was the whole; and how can they but give him the whole of theirs.

4. Any thing they have to give to Christ, any thing they have with which to entertain him, or with which to do any thing for him, they owe it all to him. That they have a soul out of hell, they owe it to Christ, and shall it not be his temple? That they have a heart not filled with horror and eternal despair, they owe it to him; and shall he not have it? That they have a tongue that is not burning in hell, they owe it to him, and shall not they act for him?—feet that are not standing in fire and brimstone, and shall they not run his errands?—eyes not blinded with the smoke of the pit; and in a word, a body that is out of hell; and shall not all be his and for him?

5. The proportion that was betwixt the seat of sin in them, and the seat of suffering in Christ. They sinned in their bodies, and Christ suffered in his body. His head was pierced with the thorny crown, his eyes were denied the light of the sun, his tongue was made to cleave to the roof of his mouth, he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; his fair face was defiled with spittle; his heart was melted like wax, in the midst of his bowels; his side was pierced with a spear; his hands and feet nailed to the cross; his strength dried like a potsherd; and wherefore all this, but that the body and all its members had been instruments of sin in men? And because their souls were the chief seat of all, therefore Christ's soul was the chief seat of wrath, sorrowful even unto death. Their souls had forsaken God, therefore he is forsaken of God. Pride and all mischief dwelt in their souls; therefore he put him to shame, and laid him low indeed. Is it any wonder, then, that they live not as they lived before? any wonder that to them to live is Christ?

USE. Then shew yourselves true Christians, by making Christ the sum and scope of your life, and that you may do so, I recommend these few things to you:

1. Abhor all doctrines that tend to the lessening of the glory of Christ. He made the gospel covenant for himself, and wo to them that turn it against him. But most, if not all the heretics stumble upon this stone, so that we may say, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in him." The cursed Socinians lessen his glory, making him but a nominal and official god. The Papists, many ways—by their masses, indulgences, invocations, and merit of good works. The Arminians make his grace lacquey it, at the foot of free will. Others put our faith and obedience in the room of Christ's righteousness. God's great design in the gospel is to exalt Christ; and the devil's great design is to depress him, and to raise up men for that purpose, to object against his nature, his offices, and the like. Some will not allow him, by his Spirit, to be the interpreter of his Father's will, but set up their own corrupt reason in the chair. Some rob him of the glory of his priestly office, and some will have no king but Cæsar. These things shew that they are Christ's enemies.

2. Appear for him and his cause. Remember that whosoever shall be ashamed of him, to act for him and speak for him, of them he will also be ashamed. Be always then on his side, labour to propagate his kingdom. Recommend him to others, that they may fall in love with him. Recommend him to your neighbours, and especially, like Abraham, to your families, Gen. xviii. 19. Reprove and discountenance the dishonour done to him.

3. Beware of him, obey his voice, and provoke him not, Exod. xxiii. 21. Close with all the duties he lays upon you, and have respect to all his commandments. They that baulk any of them, he is not the sum and scope of their lives. Christ's word is a band strong enough to a gracious soul.

4. Be not satisfied with duties, unless you find Christ in them; unless "you behold the beauty of the Lord." Mary came to the sepulchre, but finding no Christ there, she wept; because she apprehended they had taken away her Lord, and she knew not where they had laid him. Duties are but empty husks without Christ. He is the marrow and life of all duties. They are but handmaids to lead you to Christ. Sit not down to make love to them, but go forward till you find him whom your soul loveth.

5. Perform religious duties, and love them for Christ's sake. It is but heathen morality to be virtuous for virtue's sake. No wonder that was their highest motive, for their gods generally were as bad as themselves, and therefore they pitched upon the dead idol of virtue, that had no relation to God. But be you godly for God's sake, holy for Christ's sake. To be holy for holiness' sake, without respect to Christ, is to make an idol of a created quality.

6. Engage in no duty, but in his strength. Flee on borrowed wings. The fire that was put to the incense, on the altar of incense, was brought from the altar of burnt-offering; teaching us, that from Christ the influences of grace must come into our souls freely.

7. Draw motives and helps for duty, from Christ's sufferings, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Zech. xii. 10. The law may break and bruise, and so may be useful in its own place to lead us to Christ; but surely it is the gospel alone that kindly melts the soul. The Christian's labour is a labour of love; because where the labour is right, love predominates.

*Lastly*, Lay the weight of the acceptance of all your duties, and all the good you do, only upon Jesus Christ. God is only pleased in him. Venture not to look on God, but through the veil of his flesh. Alas! many, if they attain to any good frame in duties, they are apt to lay the weight upon it, and say, now I know God will bless me. As if a beggar would assure himself of his alms, because he hath a tongue to cry, and a hand open to receive them. But remember a good frame is not Christ, and cursed "be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Calves offered on the altar of Bethel were rejected, when turtle doves offered on the altar at Jerusalem were accepted. Amen.

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*Ettrick, June 1, 1707.*

BELIEVERS SEEKING A CONTINUING CITY.

SERMON XXVII.

HEBREWS xiii. 14,

*For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

HEAVEN ever moves, yet is that the place of our rest; earth ever rests, yet is that the place of our travel, where we rest not. Time runs with a rapid course, and carries all men swiftly down the stream. It admits of no delay, and whether we sleep or wake, we are carried forward, to be sent forth within a little into the vast ocean of eternity, and to land us either in heaven or hell. Whether