

Ettrick, July, 13, 1707.

CHRIST THE PHYSICIAN OF SOULS.

SERMON XXXIV.

MATTHEW ix. 12,

They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

IN the ninth verse we have an account of Matthew's conversion, upon which he invites Christ to his house, and entertains him. Matthew was a publican, a collector of custom, it seems by Mark's account, chap. ii. at Capernaum custom-house, on the sea side, who gathered custom of passengers over the water, and of those whose employment lay in the sea of Galilee. Christ's going into his house, encouraged others of his fellow officers to converse with Christ, who very readily admitted them, ver. 10. This offended the Pharisees, and they quarrel his disciples for it, ver. 11. Old hypocrites are often great enemies to young converts. But Christ defends his own conduct, by the reason in the text, namely, it is not the fault, but the duty of the physician to be with the sick. As if he had said, I am the physician, they are the sick, therefore it is my duty to be with them. We may take up the text in these two propositions :

1. They that be whole need not a physician; a physician's work is to cure diseases, but they that have no diseases have no need of him, with such he has nothing to do. This refutes the error of the Socinians, who hold that Christ would have come, though man had not sinned. But withal, he doth here tacitly upbraid the Pharisees with their self conceit, looking on themselves as whole and so standing in no need of him.

2. The sick need the physician. He takes it for granted, that because they were sinners, they were spiritually sick; he owns himself to be the spiritual physician, and therefore concludes that they stood in need of him. Where should the physician be, but among the sick, with them only is his employment.

DOCTRINE I. Sin is the sickness of the soul. It is the disease of the soul, that makes the sinner a sick man.

Here I shall *first* confirm the point; *secondly*, shew what it is in sin that sickens the soul; and *thirdly*, consider the properties of this sickness.

I. I am to confirm the point, that sin is the sickness of the soul. The soul may be sick as well as the body, though many feel the one without the other.

1. This is clear from the repeated testimony of the Scriptures. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." We find God by Ezekiel complaining of the spiritual shepherds of Israel, "that they had not strengthened the diseased, nor healed that which was sick, nor bound up that which was broken." We read also of the plague of the heart. The same thing is imported in Christ being a healer, Mal. iv. 2; Hos. xiv. 4, and from its being said, that by his stripes we are healed. Compare Isa. liii. 4, with Matth. viii. 17, and 1 Pet. ii. 24.

2. As bodily diseases affect the body, so does sin affect the soul. This is clear, if we consider these particulars: 1. Sickness brings pain and torment with it to the body, so does sin to the soul. Indeed many do not feel the pain of sin now; but as men under some disorders think themselves well enough, so do they, till once they are awakened to a sense of their danger, Luke xv. 17; Acts ii. 37. Cain's sin was pleasant perhaps, when he was satisfying the lust of revenge, but afterwards the sweet morsel became very bitter. Felix's sin brought a fit of trembling upon him, Acts xxiv. 25. David's sin cost him broken bones. In every temptation there is a hook to pierce the soul, as well as a bait to satisfy its lust. It makes an intolerable wound. "A wounded spirit who can bear." Again, sickness unfits a man for his work; he has neither heart nor hand for it. In like manner, sin takes both inclination and ability from the sinner, for the great work he has to do. According to the degree of sickness, so will it be in this point. The soul under the power of sin, where the violence of the disease is not broken by converting grace, is as Ephraim, "a silly dove without heart," as to any thing that is truly good, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The sinner is altogether without strength. He neither will nor can do. Where the disease is beginning to go away, there is still some remains of these, of heartlessness and weakness.

Farther, Sickness takes away the beauty of the body, Psal. xxxix. 11. Sin also spoils the beauty of the soul. The beauty of the soul consists in its likeness to God; sin makes men like the devil. Grace is the greatest ornament, and sin the greatest deformity of the soul. It makes men vile and filthy in the eyes of the Lord, Psal. xiv. 3, and also in the eyes of good men, Psal. xv. 4; hence the godly are self-loathers, because they see it in themselves. Once more, sickness tends to death. Diseases are death's cords, which

it sends before it, to bind the prisoner. Sin tends to spiritual and eternal death, and will certainly bring it on, if it be not cured, "for the wages of sin is death." There is a connection betwixt sin and death, which none but Jesus can dissolve. "All they who hate me," says he, "love death." The sinner is busy plating cords to bind himself.

II. We are to shew what it is in sin that sickens the soul.

1. The guilt of it, that is, the obligation to punishment. In this respect, sin is the sting of death. Nothing wounds the soul more than felt guilt. It brings a sickness that cannot be removed, till iniquity be forgiven. A guilty conscience is the mother of fears, and a perpetual tormentor. This affected Cain and Judas most dreadfully.

2. The stain of it. Sin brings a blot with it, that defiles the soul. Hence it is called an uncleanness, that makes a sinner unmeet for communion with a holy God. It defiles the whole man, and makes him unto every good work reprobate. This makes it a loathsome disease, and this can only be taken away "by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

3. The reigning power of it. Sin in the unregenerate, keeps its throne in their hearts. It commands, and they obey. They are in this snare of the devil, and are taken captive by him at his will. This keeps the soul in continual disorder.

Lastly, The indwelling power of it, which it hath even in the regenerate. This makes them groan as Paul did, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." We are now,

III. To consider the properties of this sickness.

1. It is a spiritual sickness. They are the most dangerous diseases that effect the vital parts. Sin affects the soul. If a leg or an arm be diseased and cannot be cured, it may be cut off, and the life be saved; but if the heart be sick unless there be a cure, the man dies. The soul is the most precious part, and sin chiefly affects it. Though some sins be committed by the body, yet the guilt and stain of them reach the soul.

2. It is an universal sickness, spreading itself through the whole man. All the faculties of the soul are injured and disordered by it. It darkens the mind, wounds the conscience, pollutes the heart, disorders the affections and weakens the memory for good.

3. It is an infectious sickness. Jude speaks of hating "even the garment spotted by the flesh." He says this in allusion to the uncleanness under the law, got by touching an unclean garment. Evil example does much hurt. Sin is therefore compared to leaven. O!

how cautious will people be of infectious bodily diseases, that they come not near the sick ; but alas ! they are not so, with respect to the more dangerous infection of sin.

4. It is a hereditary sickness. It is natural to us, we are born with it, and therefore cannot be cured by all the art of man. " We were shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mothers conceive us." " Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." Our first father fell, and we in him received such a bruise, as nothing but the divine power of Christ can heal.

5. It is a growing sickness. " Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Some diseases will abate, though no remedy be applied ; but this, the longer it lasts, the stronger it grows. Sin is never satisfied, but the more that is given to it, the more it craves.

Lastly, It is a mortal disease. Sinner, there is death in the pot. " It will bite like a serpent and sting like an adder." Either it or thou must die. " For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." It is true all die not of this disease ; but though it is not mortal in the event to all, yet it is mortal in its nature.

USE 1. Of information. This lets us see,

1. Why, though our time goes on, yet the work of our salvation stands. Souls are sick, and cannot exert themselves to work. The sick man keeps his bed, when others are busy about their work. Alas ! a spirit of reigning sloth has seized on the greatest part of us. The " sluggard hath put his hand into his bosom, and it grieves him to bring it to his mouth again."

2. Why so many have so little desire after the word of the Lord. It is no wonder the sick man want an appetite. It is common to sick persons to loathe their food, to be nice and ready to find fault with it, and always to be desiring changes. Alas ! this is the manner in which many entertain the word of God.

3. They are surely fools, who make a mock of sin. Sickness is no matter of sport. There are two sorts of these fools. Some that make a mock of their own sins. These are the madmen that glory in their chains, which are the badges of their folly. That is matter of mirth to themselves, which makes others pity them. The second sort are those, who make a mock of the sins of others. They not only sin themselves, but have pleasure in them that commit sins. Dreadful folly to rejoice in what grieves the Spirit of the Lord, and wounds the souls of the guilty. This makes men very like the devil.

4. The cruelty of those who tempt others to sin, Hab. ii. 15. The devil has his agents in the world, who are not content to go to ruin

themselves, but exert themselves to ruin others also. "They are of their father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning." O! but it is a dreadful thing to be guilty of the blood of the souls of others. This will make hell the hotter, Luke xvi. 27, 28.

5. To be insensible of sin, is a most pitiful case. What a misery is it to be sleeping the sleep of death, to be pining away in our iniquities, and yet insensible of our danger. It is the case of many, as of the Laodiceans, Rev. iii. 17. The case of such is most desperate, and of all persons they are the farthest from the cure, not having come to the first step of it.

Lastly, No wonder that they go mourning, and with a bowed down back, that are sensible of their sin. Alas! it is much to be regretted, that there are so few in our day that are troubled about sin. But it is also lamentable, that men should be ready to traduce soul-exercise as melancholy. Many have their own consciences seared, and so they think that others should be so too, and think as little of sin as they do.

USE 2. Of exhortation. Is sin the sickness of the soul. Then,

1. Let this disengage your hearts from sin. Hate it; shun all occasions of it, and temptations to it. Shall a man carry fire in his bosom, and not be burned? There is an evil in sin which, if seen, would make it very odious. It is a poisonous cup; if you drink it, your soul is in hazard of eternal death; and all the pleasure you can have in it, is too dear bought, at the rate of eternal pain.

2. Go quickly to the Physician, for the cure of the disease of the soul, which you labour under. Delay no longer.

1. Time is flying, Job ix. 25, 26; and when gone, cannot be recalled. That which was, will be no more. Yesterday has taken its eternal farewell. The candle burnt to snuff, will not light again. No medicine will cure that wound, no argument will persuade it to return; crowns and kingdoms will not buy it back again. Time past is out of your power, the time to come is not in your hand, your only time is the present.

2. Death is approaching, and there can be no returning from it to mend matters, Job xiv. 14. No place for cure there, Eccl. ix. 10. If the infant come into the world dead, all the world cannot put life into it; and if death take us away out of the world, under the power of that sickness, there is no cure for it hereafter.

3. Make frequent application to Christ. We get many wounds and are frequently defiling ourselves, we had need therefore, to be often dipping in the fountain. Such people as can take little food at once, had need to take it frequently. Alas! the few addresses

which we make to the throne of grace, look like as we thought ourselves whole, little needing the Physician.

DOCTRINE II. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the great Physician of souls, ready to cure them of their spiritual diseases.

The brazen serpent was a type of Christ, and he is held forth under the notion of the tree of life. He is the great Physician of souls. Here I shall,

I. Shew in what way Christ cures sin-sick souls.

II. That our Lord cures all those that come to him.

III. That our Lord Jesus Christ is ready to cure sinners of their spiritual maladies. We are then,

I. To show in what way Christ cures sin-sick souls. Three things are to be noticed here, as concurring to the cure of the soul.

1. The blood of Christ. "This purgeth the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." It is by his death that they have life. His sufferings and wounds are the medicine for our souls, "For by his stripes we are healed." The feet were sick, and blood was drawn of the head to heal them. We contracted the debt, and Christ paid it. What physician is like this great Physician, who will buy his patient's life at the rate of the loss of his own.

2. The Spirit of Christ. "He hath the seven Spirits of God." That is, the Spirit in all his influences and operations, and he sends him to heal his people. As the blood of Christ takes away the guilt of sin in justification, so the Spirit of Christ, the purchase of his blood, takes away the stain and power of it in regeneration and sanctification. In these, the Spirit renews and purifies the soul, and thus makes it a new creature.

3. The word of Christ. "He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." So says he to his disciples, "Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you." The waters of the sanctuary are healing waters." Many a time, a word from the Lord in ordinances has been very healing to a sick soul. We proceed,

II. To shew that our Lord cures all those that come to him. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me," says he, "and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." But why does he undertake and perform the cure of their souls?

1. Because he has his Father's commission for that effect. "The Spirit of the Lord God," says he, "is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted." This anointing implies his sufficiency for the work, and his call to it. His Father hath ap-

pointed him the second Adam, to cure the disease contracted by the first Adam's eating the forbidden fruit.

2. Because of his love and pity to men. He is truly the compassionate Samaritan. "He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." How can such loathsome creatures as we are, ever be taken up into Christ's chariot? Why, it is paved with love. Love provided the remedy and applies it also, Eph. ii. 4, 5. Love made Jacob serve seven years, and free love engageth Christ to cure sick souls, Ezek. xvi. 9.

3. Because he hath been at vast expense to prepare the remedy and medicine for their souls, 1 Peter i. 19, and therefore he cannot but apply it. They are injurious to his wisdom, who would have him provide the remedy for them, to whom it will never be applied. It was for this very purpose that he died. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. While he is curing sick souls, he is but pursuing the great end of his death. Either Christ falls short of the end which he proposed to himself in dying, or else he died not for all; for all are not cured and saved by him.

4. For his own glory. "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praises," Ezek. xxxvi. 25—32. The glory of the Mediator is highly exalted by his curing sick souls. It puts the crown on Christ's head, and drowns them for ever in his debt. The glory of God is displayed in the cure of sick souls. Had the sick been left to be swallowed up of death, justice would have been exalted; but now, justice, mercy, grace, and truth, are all glorified in their salvation through Christ. We are,

III. To shew that the Lord Jesus is ready to cure sinners of their spiritual maladies. This appears if we consider,

1. That he invites sick sinners to come to him for cure, Is. lv. 1; Rev. iii. 17, 18. O! what seriousness, what earnestness is in these invitations! He uses even his authority in commanding them to obey. "Look unto me," says he, "and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;" for such is the wickedness of our nature, that we love the disease, and will not submit to a cure, Rom. x. 3. He complains of them that will not give him employment, saying, "ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." He stands at the sick man's bedside, expostulating with him for his refusal of a cure, saying, "wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?" and lamenting over his obstinacy, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace."

2. The great end for which he came into the world, namely, "to seek and to save that which was lost." When his disciples would have him bring fire from heaven to consume his opposers, he told them, "that he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." What is this world but an hospital of sin-sick souls, who have got deadly wounds by the sting of the old serpent? Why might not the hallelujahs of angels have kept him at court, but that the shrieks of dying sinners pierced his heart, and made him take that long journey for their cure.

3. What he has done for cure of souls sick of sin. He gave himself to death, that they might live. He was content to take that load of guilt on him, which sickened their souls. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. His blood was shed for our cure.

4. That he comes on a call to deliver sick souls. "Call upon me in the day of trouble," says he, "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," for it is meat and drink to him to do the Father's will, in saving lost and perishing sinners. If the soul once be willing to part with the disease, and to seek the physician, the cure cannot misgive.

3. Yea, he comes uncalled. "I am sought of them that asked not for me," says he, "I am found of them that sought me not; I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." Should not the sick seek unto the physician, but here the physician seeks out the sick. "Ye have not chosen me," says he, "but I have chosen you." Thus he did with Zaccheus. And truly love begins always on Christ's side, and this fire descends before it ascend.

6. He waits long on sick souls, after many refusals of employment for him. O! when Christ offers himself to us, should he take us at our first word, we would receive no benefit by him, but he waits. "Behold," says he, "I stand at the door and knock."

Lastly, The warm and kind entertainment he gives them that come to him. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Whatever their disease be he will not send them away.

USE 1. Of information. This teaches us, that of all men they are most inexcusable, who, under the gospel, live in their sins. The remedy was not provided for devils, and to many heathens it is not made known; but how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation. If we perish, our blood is on our own heads. Slighting of Christ is wiful self-murder. "Why then will ye die, O house of Israel?"

USE 2. For reproof. It reproves those who slight this great

Physician of souls, who will not come to him to be cured of their spiritual maladies. Now, amongst the slights of this Physician, we reckon,

1. The Papists, who have other physicians besides Christ. What else means their invocation of saints, merit of good works, indulgences, &c.; these are put in the room of Christ and his blood, who by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and which purges from all sin. Here, after all, the device of purgatory is most cunning, for after their patients have tried all the former, yet cannot have true peace, this remains after death, which, if it be not effectual, people cannot come back to prove its falsehood.

2. These that never go out of themselves for a cure. This is natural to one and all of us. We are like the spider, that will needs spin its web out of its own bowels, and it is not little that will make the soul content to be indebted to Christ for a cure. One man rambles a while with the profane, at length he takes up himself. Another gets his conscience alarmed by a sermon, and he resolves forthwith to be a better man. Another has been under strong pangs of conscience, but he is born before the time, his wounds get a law plaster of tears, prayers, and good resolutions, and endeavours to keep the law, and he is whole. But still they live ignorant of Christ, and of the necessity of the application of his blood.

O sirs! these things will not do; you will find them all physicians of no value. These persons may easily feign themselves whole, whose wounds were never very deep, but they will break out again, if they go not to Christ.

3. To those who love the disease, so as they loathe the Physician. Their hearts are so glued to their lusts, that they cannot think of parting with them. Many are of the temper of the Gadarenes. They will say they love Christ; but yet they love their lusts also. How can that be? They dress up to themselves an idol of their own fancy, that will save their souls, and their sins too, instead of Christ, and they fall in love with it, Mal. iii. 1.—3; John vi. 15, 66. This heart love to the disease, makes many prayers to the Physician to be pure compliment; the heart refusing what the tongue seeks.

What do ye in this, but love death; greedily drink the poison, and throw away the antidote?

4. To those who will not accept of the remedies which he prescribes. Health is sweet, but yet many will rather die of their disease, than suffer a member to be cut off. Repentance is too bitter a draught for them; mortification of lusts, a pill which they cannot swallow.

5. Those that see not their need of Christ, who are whole in their own eyes. There is such a generation, that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness. They are sick of the disease of Laodicea. They fancy themselves rich, and that they stand in need of nothing. None are in a more desperate case, than those who are neither cold nor hot. Publicans and sinners will enter into the kingdom of heaven before them. There is more hope of a fool, than of one who is wise in his own conceit. These are so swollen with conceit of themselves, that they say in effect, they reign as kings without Christ.

6. Those that depend upon the mercy of God, without respect to Christ.

Lastly, Those that have no confidence in the Physician. Presumption kills many, despair kills some. There is a sullen and silent despair, which possesses the breasts of many, Jer. ii. 25. They have little or no hope of mending their case, and therefore they endeavour not to think on it, but to take as pleasant a life to themselves as they can, come after what will. There is also a raging despair, as in Judas, the punishment and end of the former, when God wraps the filthy garments of the man's sin in brimstone, and sets them on fire about him. Both these slight Christ, as if their cases were hopeless and beyond his reach.

USE 3. OF EXHORTATION. Come to him for the cure of your spiritual diseases.

MOTIVE 1. Sure you have need of him, absolute need of him. O let necessity drive you to him. The less you see your need, the more need you have of him. Are there no diseased souls here? I will tell you some diseases that I fear are very common among us, but Christ will cure you of them, if you will come to him.

1. The blindness of the eyes of the mind, Eph. iv. 18. We were all born blind, and it is to be feared many of us were never yet cured. Are there not many, who never yet saw sin or holiness in their own colours. Hell is before them, they fear it not, because they see it not. Head and heart of some is all darkness. Many have an enlightened head, and a dark heart; but Christ can make even "those who are darkness, light in the Lord."

2. Spiritual dumbness. There is a dumb devil possesseth many. They have tongue enough for the world, but none for God or their souls. They have not a mouth to open for God and his cause in the world. They are dumb in their families, and in their closets, as to their souls. This is an evidence grace has not touched their hearts, or else their mouths would be opened, Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.

3. The hardness of the heart. The hearts of many are as an

adamant. Mercies will not melt them, judgments will not break them. They are proof against the preaching of law and gospel. It may be said of many, that they have made their faces harder than a rock. But they say the blood of the goat will dissolve the adamant. To such sinners Christ says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

4. The falling evil of backsliding. Many have sometimes flourished fairly in God's vineyard, who are now withered and gone back. They are far from what they were some time ago. Like the sow, they have returned to their wallowing in the mire. To them he says, "Return, ye backsliding, and I will heal your backslidings."

5. The swelling of pride and self-conceit. There is a root of pride in every man's heart by nature, and if the axe of deep humiliation has not been laid at the root of it, no wonder that it grow to a monstrous size. But our Lord can cure it, Acts ix. 6. He can lead the man to the knowledge of the evils of his heart.

Lastly, The decay of grace. Alas! this is too visible at this day, in the lives of many; they do not equal the advantages which they enjoy. But Christ cures this also. "They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon."

MOTIVE 2. Our Lord Jesus has all the properties that recommend a physician.

He is skilful. He can take up your case, though you cannot make language of it. He knows what will suit your disease. Many a time we think that good for us, which he denies; but afterwards, we see it is good to be at his disposal. He is successful. Some diseases are the reproach of medicine, they cannot be cured; but none can baffle him. "Though," says he, "your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool."

He cures freely, Isa. lv. 1, "I will heal your backsliding, and love you freely." Other physicians are enriched by their patients, but he enricheth his, making them heirs of glory.

Lastly, He is the only physician. Either you must die, or come to him. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

USE 4. Of trial. By this we may know whether we have come to Christ or not. Has he been a physician to your soul. If you have

come to him, the cure is begun on thee. The following are marks of a soul, in which Christ has begun the cure :

1. That soul will highly prize the physician. "Unto them that believe, he is precious." As nothing is sweeter than life, so none will be so dear to that soul, as the restorer of its health, and deliverer from death, Psal. lxxiii. 25. None will prize Christ but those that have seen the evil of sin. Some obtain a partial sight of their disease; hence partial affections to Christ, a kind of hankering after him. Christ is sweet, but still some lust is sweeter; but the cured soul gets an overpowering sight of him, Matth. xiii. 45, 46.

2. That soul will loath its disease above all things. "They that love the Lord hate evil." Sin is made bitter to the soul, when it is among the Physician's hands: they groan under it, as the Israelites did in Egypt. Sin is bitter to many, yet never made sufficiently bitter, Prov. xxiii. 35. But God lays still more and more gall and wormwood on the breasts of the man's lusts, when he is curing till it be the most bitter of all things.

3. Hence the soul groans under the remains of corruption, saying, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." It aspires to, and longs after perfect health, Phil. iii. 13, 14. The remains of sin are iron chains, which makes the soul walk heavily. There is not a more dangerous symptom than for persons to rest satisfied with their attainments.

4. That soul begins to long for its spiritual food. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." They desire Christ and his ordinances for the nourishment of their souls, and make use of Christ and his ordinances for that end. Indeed incured souls may delight in the word as it pleases their fancy, or fills their head with knowledge; but the soul that is cured, delights in it, as it fills the soul with purity, and the heart with comfort.

To those in whom Christ has begun the cure, I would say,

1. Be thankful to the Physician, and wonder at his condescension, that ever he should have set his eye on you, and passed by so many, in no worse case than thyself. Let not the remains of your disease, make you overlook the begun cure.

2. Pity and pray for the dying world. Men who in a shipwreck, have got safe ashore, can they stand unconcerned, seeing their fellows falling and sinking in the sea, Tit. iii. 1—6. Employ and improve your acquaintance with the Physician for the cure of others. Pray him to make the waters of the sanctuary healing waters.

3. Beware of relapses, falling back into the distempers of which you have been cured. Relapses are very dangerous, and because the

cure is as yet imperfect, easily fallen into, therefore walk softly, like Hezekiah; Isa. xxxviii. 15.

Lastly, Beware of evil company as you would of a plague-house. It is difficult to touch pitch, and not be defiled. Beware of profane company, and of formal company that have light, but no heat of affection to the advancing of holiness in themselves and others.

DOCTRINE III. Sin has laid mankind under a necessity to have a Saviour, or sinners as sinners, stand in need of Christ. This is a chief point of the doctrine of the gospel, and could we once get the truth of it, deeply impressed on the consciences of sinners, the fort would be almost gained.

Here we shall, *First*, Shew what sort of need this is. *Secondly*, What sort of a Saviour sinners need. *Thirdly*, I shall endeavour to give you a view of sinners' need of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. We are to shew what sort of need this is. This need of a Saviour, is a need in order to salvation. People need many things, yet they may be without them; but if our salvation be lost, all is gone. The sick man may need many things; he may want house, food, and raiment; but the great thing is health. Though all the rest be laid to his hand, yet if his disease cut him off, what avails all these things.

There is a two-fold need. A thing may be necessary, either, 1. For conveniency and better being of the thing; or 2. Absolutely, so as a thing cannot be without it. In the former respect a horse is necessary for a journey; in the last, the eye is necessary for seeing.

Now the sinner's need of a Saviour is absolute. There can be no salvation without a Saviour. A man can no more see God in merey without Christ, than he can see at all without an eye. It would be true that we needed a Saviour, if we could not be saved without him, but with very great difficulty. But our need of Christ as a Saviour draws much deeper, it is an absolute need.

This is plain from Scripture, Acts iv. 12. Without Christ without hope, Ephes. ii. 12. The way of salvation is narrow, miss but one step and the case is without remedy, "for he that believeth not shall be damned." Hence the case of the devils is hopeless, "For verily Jesus took not on him the nature of angels." We proceed,

II. To shew what sort of a Saviour sinners need.

1. Such an one as is a righteous and innocent person, one that needeth none to save himself from sin. Physician heal thyself, is a valid objection against any pretending to be the physician of souls. "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

2. One that is able for the work. If he were not able for it, the

work must misgive in his hand. Now if the work misgive, the sinner is ruined. It is not little that is required here. He must be able to pay an infinite price, for an infinite guilt, to an infinite God. Hence,

3. He must be one that is a middle person betwixt God and man, even God-man in one person. Our Saviour behaved to be man: 1. That he might be capable to suffer death, "for without shedding of blood there is no remission." 2. That the same nature which sinned might suffer, Heb. ii. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 21. He behaved also to be God: 1. To give infinite value to his sufferings. 2. That he might be able to bear up under, and to come out from under that infinite wrath which he had to bear. And he behaved to be God and man in one person, that so what was done or suffered by either of the natures, might be considered as done or suffered by the person, Acts xx. 28.

4. He must be one that has a commission for the work. "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." For it was in the option of an offended God, whether to exact satisfaction from the parties themselves, or to admit a surety.

Lastly, He behaved to be one acquainted with the condition of those whom he was to save. This is self-evident. For how can the remedy be rightly and suitably applied, unless the Physician know well the condition of the patients.

Now, where shall we find this Saviour? If we believe the Church of Rome, we will have more saviours than one, particularly the saints departed, and the angels, to whom they pray, and in whom they place their confidence, whereby they bring themselves under that fearful curse. "Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." The Socinians also do this, by denying the Divinity of Christ. But are any of them able for that work? Are they God? Hos. xiii. 4. Where is their commission? How do the saints departed know our necessities? Eccles. ix. 5, 6. To take notice of all persons and all occurrences in the world, at the same time, is an infinite perfection.

But behold, we find all these in Christ. He was altogether without sin, Heb. vii. 26. He was, and is able to save, Psal. lxxxix. 19; Heb. vii. 25. He was indeed a middle person, God and man in one person, meet to be a day's man. In him Job had his wish, Job ix. 33. Do you ask his commission? See Isa. lxi. 1. Do you doubt his acquaintance with your case? He tells the churches "he knows their works," Rev. ii. 13. He is God, and we "cannot go from his spirit, or flee from his presence."

III. I shall endeavour to give you a view of sinners' need of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here I shall state, illustrate, and confirm, five propositions.

PROPOSITION I. Sinners had an absolute need of Christ's coming into the world. It was a strange cure, but absolutely necessary for a perishing world. There is a threefold coming of Christ into the world:

1. In the morning of time he came, in the promise and representation by the sacrifices. When Adam fell, was cited, examined, condemned, betwixt the sentence and execution of it, Christ came in the promise. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." Sacrifices were offered; for it is most rational to think that the beasts, with whose skins Adam's body was covered, were offered before in sacrifice for his soul; and it is most probable that all this was the same day Adam was created.

O what need was there of this his coming! we see it in the type, the ram caught in the thicket. Had not Christ thus come, men had been born into the world as into the suburbs of hell, and the world had been filled with the desperate roarings of fallen helpless sinners.

2. He came personally in the fulness of time. "For then God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law." He came and tabernacled among us. The Word was made flesh. Man sinning would needs be as God, and to save them, God must become man.

3. He came by his Spirit in the apostles after his ascension; opening the gates of heaven and way of salvation, to the Jews and Gentiles indiscriminately. He "thus came, and preached peace to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh." Of these two I shall speak together, as that one coming of Christ into the world, which was absolutely necessary for the miserable world.

Now to shew you the need there was of Christ's coming thus, let us take a view of the world as it was when he came. It had lasted from the creation till the birth of Christ, three thousand nine hundred and forty-five years; and from the deluge, two thousand two hundred and eighty-nine, according to the best computations. In this time, it had come to a wrinkled face, "the whole head was sick, and heart faint." All was in such disorder, that there was need of a new creation. The world was then divided into Jews and Gentiles, an unequal division, indeed, in respect of number; the former being only those of the Jewish nation, with a few that joined now and then to them from among other nations. No nation under heaven but they were a church, Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. We shall then have a view of the state of the world at that time, and so see

the need there was of Christ's coming; if we view the state of the Gentiles and of the Jews, and the partition wall betwixt the two.

1. Consider the partition wall that was then betwixt Jews and Gentiles, Eph. ii. 14, 15. There was betwixt them, 1. A partition wall of God's making, that is the ceremonial law, so called with an allusion to the wall of Solomon's temple, that was betwixt the court of the people and of the Gentiles, which prevented all manner of passage, sight, and communication betwixt them. This, consisting of so many rites and ceremonies, divided them from all the world besides, and by God's own command, they might not have familiar intercourse with the Gentiles. The Jews had made this wall higher themselves, Acts xi. 8.

There was also a wall of men's own making, and that was the enmity betwixt Jews and Gentiles. There was a deadly hatred betwixt them. The Jews called the Gentiles dogs, and reproached them with their uncircumcision. The Gentiles again mock at their circumcision, their sabbaths, and other institutions.

What need was there here of a reconciler, to make both one, which was the effect of Christ's coming. We find Christ himself forbidding his apostles, "to go into the way of the Gentiles, or to enter into any city of the Samaritans." But afterwards, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, and he gave them a new commission, "to go and teach all nations." Then Isa. xi. 6, 7, began to be fulfilled.

2. Let us look to the Gentiles, and among them see our fathers. that were without this partition; and there we shall see them "at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." They were the visible kingdom of the devil, under the power of darkness, the way of salvation utterly unknown among them. As to the wise men among them, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." They were drowned in superstition. The oracles of the devil were famous, magic and witchcraft prevailed. The idea of God was broken in pieces by them, like a great looking-glass, and in every piece of it they thought they saw a God. Varro reckons above thirty thousand worshipped by the Europeans alone. They were given over to all sort of filthiness, Rom. i. 23—32. They were very cruel, as appears from their human sacrifices, the bloody spectacle of the gladiators, and the like. "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils."

These, and such like, were the works of the devil, which Christ came to destroy. Who can consider a world lying in this miserable posture, and not hear their needs piercing the heavens with cries for a Saviour.

3. Let us look within the partition wall, and behold the nation to whom alone God had manifested himself; and here, if you except a few that were groaning and longing for the consolation of Israel, you will see a miserable face on the whole generation of the Jews. They were most corrupt in their doctrine, bewitched with their own traditions, and even their teachers knew nothing of regeneration, John iii. 10. Their divinity was to build on their birth privilege from Abraham, so that they reckoned all Israel was to have share in the world to come; to rest on the law and their own works, to account the day of expiation, afflictions, and death, expiatory. They were most corrupt in their manners. That generation "was a generation of vipers, a wicked and adulterous generation;" the sink of all iniquity, and common sewer of vengeance, "that upon them might come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zacharias."

And was it not a sick world, and needed the Physician, when in such a case. And here we ought to admire the goodness of God to us, who were amongst the utmost parts of the earth, lying in the same darkness with other pagan nations. Our own historians tell us our forefathers had the same pagan religion with the ancient Gauls, in which human sacrifices made a great part. But now Christ is come, and set up his standard among us.

PROPOSITION II. There was an absolute necessity of the death of Christ, in order to the saving of sinners. This appears,

1. From vindictive justice, which is essential to God. God cannot but hate sin, and so must needs have a propensity to punish it, Psalm v. 5, 6. That God is such an one, is evident from Scripture, Rom. ii. 5; 2 Thes. i. 6; Heb. xii. 29. That God is just, is engraven on the minds of all men. The heathens saw it by nature's light, Rom. i. 32; Acts xxviii. 4. Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, and from that impression which divine justice hath set upon it, dooms the sinner to misery. Sin coming forth of the soul leaves a sting behind it.

2. The law of God requires it, which denounceth death because of sin, Gen. ii. 17; Gal. iii. 10; Rom. vi. 23. Now seeing God cannot lie, this must be fulfilled either in the sinner, or in the cautioner. Man being a rational creature, by the very frame of his soul must be under a law. God that made him, must needs be his governor and judge; and being so, must conduct himself as becomes one of infinite justice. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

3. Unless Christ's sufferings had been necessary for our salvation, and to take away our sins, there can no satisfying account be given

of them. It is in vain to say, it was for confirming his doctrine, and to give an example of all virtues. For his doctrines were confirmed by his miracles, and a perfect example exhibited through his whole life. After which, if there was no other necessity for his shedding his blood, Judas' question would not have been impertinent, "What needeth all this waste?" It is consistent with the goodness and wisdom of God, to make his Son the curse causeless? Would he have taken a compass, and gone round about by his Son's blood, to take away the sins of the elect, if a word could have done it. Surely the apostle tells us, "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." But if a mere nothing might do it, why not the blood of costly sacrifices. But we are expressly told, "that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin," Heb. ix. 22, 23.

Lastly, The love of God in sending Christ, and in giving him to the death, cannot be seen but in this way. The scripture does proclaim the exceeding greatness of that love, in giving Christ to die for sinners, John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8. But if the sinner might have been saved, and God's Son spared also, where is that love? On the contrary, supposing that justice says sin must be punished, either the Son or the sinner must die; in this case, God's parting with his Son, was an unparalleled act of love.

The Socinians themselves acknowledge, that it is unworthy of God not to punish obstinate sinners. Now, upon this I would say, 1. Obstinacy is not punished for itself, because in what is good, obstinacy is constancy and a duty. It is punished, then, only because it is in evil. Sin is punished for itself, but obstinacy for the sin only. If sin then be punished for itself, every sin must be punished. Again, if Christ had not died, all sinners would have been obstinate and impenitent. Repentance would never have been given by an unattuned God, Acts v. 31.

O what a horrible evil is sin! Was not the stain deep that could not be washen out but by the blood of God? Shall we love that which stabbed him to the heart, or live in that for which he died. Can that be light which made him sweat great drops of blood falling down to the ground? or that sweet, which put gall and vinegar in his cup? O let the blood of Christ springing forth from his heart, be cords of love to draw thee from sin, which, while thou indulgest thyself in it, thou not only tramplest on the law, but on the wounds of the Son of God, Heb. x. 28, 29.

PROPOSITION III. The exaltation of Christ was absolutely necessary for sinners' salvation; that is, his resurrection ascension, and sitting down at the Father's right hand. The necessities of perish-

ing sinners cried to him to come out of the grave, and go to heaven
For,

1. The death of Christ had not been effectual, if he had not risen again. "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Had he remained still in the grave, all our hopes had been buried and perished with him. His death had died, and been of no effect. "But now God hath raised him up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." The sins of the elect, Christ's grave-stone, are taken off. God sent his angel as an officer, to open the prison door.

2. No less necessary was his ascending into heaven for the atoning for the sins of the elect. This was typified by the high priest's (after he had killed the sin offering) going into the holiest of all with the blood, and with incense on the golden censer. So Christ presented to the Father his blood, and sits down there as intercessor. Had he not gone before us, we could have had no hopes of entering heaven, Heb. vi. 20. They had need of an advocate at the court of heaven, who have continual business there, which they themselves are not capable to manage.

PROPOSITION IV. Sinners have absolute need of union with Christ. He that came into the world in their nature, must come into their hearts, and dwell there by his Spirit, else they cannot be saved. They must be joined to him and made one with him by faith, else they will perish, whatever else they pretend to. What will it avail you in the sight of God, if Christ be not your Saviour. All perished that were not in the ark.

1. Unless you be in Christ, God cannot be well pleased with you. It is only "in the beloved that you can find acceptance." The Lord looks upon men as in one of two, either in the first or in the second Adam; as in the first, God looks upon us as enemies, but in Christ as friends. Wo to them that appear before God, but not in their elder brothers garments.

2. You cannot be justified, Rom. v. 1. There is a sentence of condemnation on all mankind by nature. There is no taking off of this, without union to Christ. Sin remains unpardoned, the sentence stands in force till the sinner be in Christ; for God is just, his judgment is according to truth. He cannot justify a sinner, but on the account of a perfect righteousness. None have it of their own, and there is no communion with Christ in his righteousness, but by union with him.

3. You cannot be children of God, but the slaves of the devil. The only way of adoption is by receiving Christ, and believing on

his name, John i. 12. How can you, who are born children of the devil, become the children of God, but by a spiritual marriage with his Son. "If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed." And if we be not children, we cannot be heirs of God.

4. You can do nothing that is pleasing and good in his sight. "Without me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." First the tree must be good, then the fruit. Christ is the life of the soul, Gal. ii. 20; and without Christ, all our works are but dead works. Our fruits will be found as the apples of Sodom, fair to look upon, but when touched fall to ashes.

PROPOSITION V. We stand in need of Christ in all his offices. Our necessities call aloud for all the offices with which he is invested.

I. We need him as a prophet, teacher, and interpreter of the Father's mind to us. Can we know a man's mind but by his words? No, surely, for nature has not granted us a window to look into their hearts. No more can we know the mind of God, without the words of Christ, John iii. 13.

1. How could we ever have known the mind of God concerning man's salvation without him. "For no man hath seen God at any time the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." None but he could have brought life and immortality to light. That counsel might, for us, have remained through eternity hid in the breast of the Father. The heathens could look up to the heavens and read much of God's goodness, wisdom, and power, Rom. i. 20; but none could ascend into heaven and enter God's secrets, but he that was in the bosom of the Father, and on his cabinet councils, John iii. 13.

2. How can we get saving illumination without him. "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." By him God made the world laying the foundation of it in light, and by him he hath formed the new world. "For 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." We lost our eyes in Adam; we cannot discern one truth spiritually and savingly, while out of Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 14. O! the vast difference betwixt book learning, and what is learned from the Spirit. I refer it to the experience of the godly, if saving illumination was not as the bringing them to a new world, which they never saw before. This makes unlearned Christians able to suffer for Christ, when others can only dispute for him. You may read the best books with attention: but if Christ be not your teacher by his Spirit, you will never know any thing to purpose.

3. How think you to get through the world without him; to know sin and duty in particular cases, and to go safely through the snares and temptations, with which the world abounds? Moses would not venture on the journey through the wilderness without his presence, "the cloud of glory." And the Father has seen it necessary to give him "a leader to his people, Isa. lv. 4.

4. How can we read the Bible profitably without him? I confess there are but few much concerned about this. The dust of their Bibles will witness against them. Others by their reading get their heads filled with knowledge, and may have the history of it on their finger ends; but alas! still it is but a sealed book to them. Like the eunuch, "they understand not what they read, not having one to guide them." Only Christ can here teach you to profit. He only "can open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of God's law." Whatever others say, exercised souls will say it is true; for they know what it is, sometimes to have the Bible a sealed, at other times an opened book.

5. How will you get your case resolved without him? Few are exercised about their case. "They are at ease from their youth, and settled on their lees." They are like the door on the hinges. Conscience is become stupied. No small thing will awaken it. But they who are exercised about the case of their souls, will see their need of him. Men may speak to an exercised soul, but if Christ speak not, the remedy will not be effectual. "He hath the tongue of the learned, and knows how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." True it is, the watchmen may find the spouse, but it is not by their own act, but by Christ speaking in them, or by them; and whatever difficulty some have to believe the presence of God in ordinances, yet some can from experience "report that God is in you of a truth." Sometimes the soul of the Christian is so exercised, as almost to despair of deliverance: but see how deliverance comes, Job xxxiii. 19—26.

Lastly, How will you understand the dispensations of Providence without him? "His way is in the sea, and his footsteps are not known," who but himself can unfold them. There are many dark passages in a Christian's life; what must they do, but go to Christ with them, Psal. lxxiii; John xiii. Many a time, the child of God is at a stand with providences. They appear to them as the wrong side of things; they cannot see the beauty, harmony, and order of them, till they go to Christ with them, who is able to satisfy them.

II. We need him as a priest, seeing we have sinned against the Lord. We need him in both parts of this office, his satisfaction and intercession.

I. We need his satisfaction, the sacrifice of himself, his blood as the Scripture terms it. This is a fountain in which we must be washed. With this our souls must be sprinkled, else we perish.

1. There is no answering the demands of justice and the law, without this blood. The law requires, and justice demands satisfaction for a broken covenant of works. Their demands run high, namely, that it be infinite, either in respect of value or duration, for an infinite God is offended, and sin is a kind of infinite evil. Now sinner that art out of Christ, how canst thou answer these demands? Suppose thou shouldst begin and suffer from the cradle to the grave, all those will be but useless to this purpose. Sooner may a child fill up the sea with little stones, than thou satisfy the demands of law and justice. No plea will avail here, but that of "Christ's blood, which cleanseth from all sin." He is the city of refuge, the high priest that died for us.

2. There is no peace with God without him and his blood, Rom. v. 10. It is Christ's blood only, that procures our peace, and atones for rebel sinners. That is it which quencheth the fire of God's wrath, that otherwise would burn up the sinner. Prayers and entreaties would not do it, "without shedding of blood, there is no remission."

3. There is no pardon without this blood. Guilt is so deep in the soul, that nothing but Christ's blood will wash it away. Wouldst thou have a pardon, sinner, it must come to thee through Christ, "in whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins." This is the only remedy.

4. There is nothing able to purge us from an evil conscience, but this blood. An evil conscience is a dreadful companion. It is a tormentor. Guilt makes it uneasy, or will do so. Many have other ways to cure their uneasy consciences, but these will only heal the wound superficially, and it will break out again. The Scripture knows of no cure, but the blood of Jesus, "which purgeth the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." What need have we then to come to the blood of sprinkling.

II. We stand in need of Christ to be our intercessor with the Father, to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. If we have not him for our friend at the court of heaven, we need never think to come there.

1. If Christ be not our intercessor with the Father, we can have no peace made or kept up with God; as it is by his intercession that the peace purchased by his blood is first made up, so by the same means it is continued. We are every day offending; how stands the covenant then, why is it not broken? "If any man sin,

we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Because, while we live we sin, therefore Christ liv es to intercede. He is ready to say, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." What shall become of them then, that are still sinning, and have no intercessor? they are treasuring up wrath.

2. We want not an accuser before the Lord. "Satan is the accuser of the brethren; and accuses them before our God, day and night." The devil first tempts, then accuseth. Have we not then need of one to answer these accusations against us, Zech. iii. 1, 2. Without this there is no safety, but in Christ's intercession we may boast against all, Rom. viii. 33, 34.

3. Without him we can have no communion and fellowship with God. It is by his intercession, that we have access to God in duties. "In him we have boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of him." The word signifies a leading by the hand, alluding to the custom in the courts of princes, where none may come to the presence-chamber, but those who are brought in by some favourite or courtier. Many come to duties, to prayers, sermons, &c., but there is no intercourse betwixt God and them. Why? "Nay," God says to them, as Joseph did to his brethren, "except you bring your brother with you, you shall not see my face."

4. Without him, your services and duties cannot be accepted. He must present them, else they will be rejected, Rev. viii. 3. The best sacrifice wants not dung, which must be burnt up by the efficacy of Christ's blood and intercession. No hearing of prayer without his intercession. God will hear no prayers as they come out of the sinner's mouth, but as out of his Son's mouth, as presented by him.

III. We stand in need of him as our King and Lord. Christ has a twofold kingdom: his essential kingdom, and his mediatory kingdom; the former over all, the latter over his people. This kingdom is administered externally and internally; we stand in need of both.

I. We stand in need of Christ to be our King outwardly, to govern us in a visible church state. It has been the cry of our land, we will have no king but Cæsar; the magistrate having been invested with a blasphemous supremacy over all persons in all causes. This cannot be taken off, by saying he is a subordinate, not a co-ordinate head. The pope never pretended to more. But from the Scripture we learn the church is not a monster with two heads. "Christ himself is head over all things to the church." That Christ is the only head and King of his church, hath been the doctrine of the protestants against the papists, to cut off the pope's supremacy; and therefore, in the large confession of the Church of Scotland, it was de-

clared blasphemy to acknowledge another head. This shews the contradictory nature of the test. Now we stand in need of Christ to be our King.

1. Consider the sad and woeful case these are in that are without this visible kingdom of Christ. These are the dark places of the earth, that are the habitations of cruelty, Eph. ii. 12. The visible church of Christ on earth, is the only society in which safety can be found. The Scripture calls it the kingdom of heaven, for here the King of heaven reigns, Psal. ii. 6. Here are the laws of heaven, Heb. xii. 25; here the subjects of heaven dwell; even those who are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith; and here the glory of heaven is begun; for the God of all grace hath called us un'o his eternal glory by Jesus Christ.

2. Consider and view the several parts of this kingly government of Christ as externally administered, and the need of the same will quickly appear. These are, 1. Christ's calling a people out of the world to the profession of his truth, Acts xv. 14. 2. Giving them laws and ordinances, Isa. xxxiii. 22. 3. Officers, Eph. iv. 11, 12. 4. Defending the church from her enemies, Psal. cx.

How needful this calling out of a people from the world to the profession of his truth, and making up a church was, and is, may appear from what has been already said; see that one place, Isa. ix. 2, 3. What society can be well governed without laws? The wicked cannot abide Christ's laws. Psal. ii. 3; but without them all would go to confusion. He has instituted ordinances, the word, sacraments and discipline in his church, all which are of evident necessity to the church of God. These are a burden to many. They can live without the hearing of the word, and without sacraments. These are ties which they like not to come under. They will not subject themselves to discipline, it is a yoke too hard for their fair necks, but so necessary, as that without it, the church would be like "a city that is broken down and without walls." Much contempt is poured out on the office-bearers of Christ's house. Ministers are looked upon by many as a sort of almost useless creatures, hence long desolation of parishes; but see Eph. iv. 11; Prov. xxix. 18. And unless the church were defended, enemies restrained and conquered, the wild boar of the forest would soon eat up that planting of the Lord.

II. We stand in need of Christ to be our King, in respect of the inward administration of his government in and over our souls. His kingdom must be within us, else we will never reach his kingdom of glory. The visible church is this King's house, but the believer's heart is the throne and chair of state. "He dwells in their hearts

by faith." Many are subjects of Christ's visible kingdom, who are really subjects of the devil's invisible kingdom. Many give Christ the hand that never gave him the heart. But our having Christ for our King inwardly, is absolutely necessary to our salvation. If Christ be not your King in this way, then,

1. How can you be his true and loyal subjects? The first act of Christ's kingly office is subduing us to himself. We are born enemies to God, and Christ has his kingdom to raise up out of a company of rebels, Rom. viii. 7. What will bring them in to him? Men cannot. Only a day of power will do it. Then he makes them willing. Where the word of a king is, there is power. He can make them run at a call then, Isa. lv. 5; and xlv. 22. None but King Jesus is able to rob the devil of subjects, and take off the fetters from the sinner's will. He gets no subjects but by stroke of sword. The devil likes his subjects better than to part with them easily, and they like his service better than to be ready to leave it, therefore there must be a drawing power.

2. How can you get true repentance without him? He is exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins. Many think repentance an easy thing, but it is not so. The mere word, good advice, and education, will not produce it. Our hearts and our lusts are more firmly glued together, than to be rent asunder by a wedge of our own timber. If you get no other repentance than what is spun out of your own bowels, that will be swept away as a spider's web.

3. How can we get lusts mortified without him? The least of them is too strong for us, therefore he hath said, he will subdue our iniquities. Our own spirits are sufficient to carry us on in the way of the flesh, but the Spirit of Christ is necessary for true mortification, Rom. viii. 13. How soon will our lusts turn our masters, if we grapple with them in our own strength.

4. How can we be right ruled but by him. If his Spirit rule not in our hearts, there will be nothing but confusion in them. Wo to that man, that gets the reins laid on his own neck, and is left to be his own steersman through the sea of this world. They will never come safe to land, and therefore the Spirit of truth is promised to guide us into all truth. The Father, therefore has appointed Jesus to be the Captain of our Salvation, to lead and guide the people of God to their rest in the heavenly Canaan, Micah ii. 13.

5. How shall we be defended against our spiritual enemies, but by him? We have many enemies, many snares and temptations are in our way. We have a subtle devil, and a multitude of inward lusts. We are not able for the least of them, unless he defend us.

Lastly, Who shall conquer and restrain our enemies but he? None other has Satan in a chain, nor can bruise him under our feet, but he who bruised his head.

FOR APPLICATION. What hath been said, serves, 1. For instruction, and it lets us see,

1. What is our case by sin. We may discern three things in it:

1. We may discern here the heinousness of our guilt. It was dreadful to behold Adam cast out of paradise—hell rained out of heaven upon Sodom—but much more, to see the Son of God necessitated to come out of heaven, out of his Father's bosom, and bear his wrath. It could be no small thing that occasioned all this. Think on this, thou that thinkest little of sin. Behold the Son of God dying on a cross for it.

2. Pollution of our souls by it, and there hatefulness in the sight of the Lord. The sinner can have no access to God without a Mediator. No admission into his presence, but as washed with the blood of Christ. O deep stain! that could not be washed away, but by the blood of God.

3. Our inability to help ourselves. We are fallen into a pit, a gulf of misery. We must perish there, unless helped out. It passeth our power and skill to recover ourselves. How low then has sin laid us.

2. We see with what a God we have to do. Those who are unacquainted with Christ, in whose face his glory shines, cannot properly know God. He is a just and holy God. Fools make a mock of sin, because they think God such an one as themselves. But God will not be mocked. Sinners will find to their cost, that he is both just and holy, and that he will burn them up, in case they get not one to stand between them and him when he is angry.

3. The dangerous case in which they are, that are out of Christ. You may as easily climb up to heaven by a ladder of your own making, as get salvation without him. Pretend to what you will, if you have no just pretences to Christ, you are ruined eternally. Do what you will, suffer what you will, nothing will avail without your being in Christ. If you should leave the world and dwell in a wilderness, dig your grave with your nails, live on grass, weep for your sins till you weep out your eyes—as a thousand cyphers alone still stand for nothing without a figure before them, so all that you can think, do, or suffer without Christ, will be useless.

4. That they are a blessed people that are in Christ, and that they should be ever making use of him, seeing they are ever sinning. As we are still defilling ourselves, still we should be dipping in the fountain.

USE 2. Of exhortation. Be convinced then, sinners, of your need of Christ, and let your necessities drive you to him. Alas! few are sufficiently convinced of their absolute need of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is an error here, that is the cause of many others. Of it there are clear evidences, such as,

1. The sound rest which many get in their sins, sleeping on the mercy of God. There is a generation going on in their sins, and yet have peace and hopes of salvation, and that merely because God is merciful. These see no need of the Lord Jesus. They know not that Jesus is the only conduit, through which mercy flows to sinners. They consider not, that they cannot taste of mercy, unless they be in him. Mercy cannot save if you be out of Christ, for it cannot act in prejudice to justice, and God cannot deny himself.

2. How few have ever got a sight of sin in its own colours. This is evident from their making so light of it. Many live under the gospel, who were never yet under convictions from the Spirit, of their sinfulness and misery by nature. They confess they are sinners, and who denies that; but they were never perplexed about their soul's state, nor ever put to it, to ask what shall we do to be saved? and surely till a man knows his disease to be dangerous, he will never see the need of the Physician. Are there not some, whom their soul's case never sent to their knees.

3. How few are there, that will refuse comfort and rest in anything, till they get an interest in Christ secured. If we saw our absolute need of Christ, it would be so, Acts ii. 37. What pleasure can a condemned man take in any thing, till he get a pardon. The man who sees his danger will say, what can omnipotence give me, while I go Christless. But alas! few keep pace with the church, Lam. iii. 49, 50. They can take up their rest in the world, when they get nothing of Christ.

4. How few are there brought to that, to leave no mean untried, in order to get an interest in Christ, and salvation. It is a matter of life and death, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life. Necessity has no law. Every possible exertion must be made. But alas! most part of men are easily diverted in their pursuit of an interest in Christ, and if they cannot attain their desire with ease, they will let it go. Hence, some professors in their duties, are like the door on the hinges. Still there is one thing they lack.

5. How few are brought to be content to part with all for Christ, and to take him on any terms. Surely a sight of absolute need, would make the soul content to put a blank in Christ's hand, saying, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? What will not a condemned man give for pardon? See you a man priggish much in the

market, you may conclude either that he can want the article, or knows some other quarter whence he may get it. The soul that sees its need, must have him cost what it will.

6. How many can live in peace, weeks, months, and years, without communion with him. Are there not some, who never knew in experience, what communion with Christ is? Some that will not bow a knee to God for it; some content with the bare performance of duties, are never anxious about that, whether they find Christ in them or not. They reign as kings without him. As king Saul, from whom God is departed, they never see the king's face.

Lastly, The little pains people are at, to get Scriptural evidence of their interest in Christ. Many hope they have an interest in him, but were never at pains to examine the foundation of their hopes. If a man were to be let down a steep rock by a rope, would he not try whether it could bear his weight or not.

This may convince many of us, that we do not sufficiently see our need of Christ; and therefore receive the conviction and know, that thou that wast never acquainted with this, art yet out of Christ, and so in a fearful state. And I would exhort you to have so much compassion on your souls, as to retire this night, and, 1. Meditate on what a God thou hast to do with. 2. On thy sinful and miserable state; and 3. Pray the Lord may open your eyes. And to quicken a sense of your need of Christ, and to urge you to close with him, I would ask you these questions:

1. How think you to live without Christ? I am sure your life will be a continued death without him. These bodies of yours, will be but living coffins for dead souls, with the curse of God upon them for a grave-stone. Though may in prosperity, yet how will you do you do in adversity? The clouds are growing black above the heads of the people of the land. I fear days are coming, in which the Lord will plead his controversy; and how dreadful will it be for a deluge of wrath to come upon a man who is not in the ark of safety.

2. How will you die without Christ? You may think light of him now; but when death settles down on these eyelids, and the grim king carries thee over into the ocean of eternity, if Christ keep thee not, where art thou then?

3. How wilt thou appear before God to judgment without him? Will not the face of God, whose Son thou hast slighted, be terrible to thee? To see this Christ, who is now freely offered to you as a Saviour, sitting at the right hand of God, but not to open a mouth for thee there, but against thee as a sligher of him, and a neglecter of his great salvation. How will you then escape? Amen.