

## THE EXCELLENT KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

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*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.—PHILIP. III. 8.*

HERE are the sweet strains of a gospel spirit, letting out itself in expressing a dear love to, a high esteem of Christ, and him alone ; advancing Christ above all, giving him the throne, and making all competitors his footstool.

The occasion of them we may find in the former verses, wherein I cannot let pass some sweet and raised expressions without giving you a taste, glancing at them by the way, that you may understand them, and the coherence of these with them. Some teachers there were amongst them who drove on a pernicious design to corrupt the doctrine of the gospel and dishonour Christ, by joining with him the works and observances of the law, in point of justification and salvation. To prevent the mischief of this unworthy medley, he gives them saving advice, which we may take up in four parcels.

1. To rest joyfully in Christ alone, to embrace him with delight, and rest satisfied in his righteousness, the all-sufficiency of his undertaking and performance for pardon and glory, ver. 1 ; and lest they should nauseate this doctrine as too often repeated and inculcated, he tells them ‘ to write the same things, to him was not grievous,’ because most sweet and delightful, most necessary and profitable ; ‘ to them safe.’ They were in danger to be removed from him that called them unto the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. The repetition of this was necessary to prevent the danger ; it was safe, *i.e.*, saving ; no doctrine saving but that which advances Christ alone, and preserves his glory entire in those points.

2. To beware of false teachers, those that adulterated the gospel, and made a medley of righteousness by works and faith, and bring in their ceremonial or moral observances to share with Christ, as partial grounds at least of their confidence and rejoicing. And he sets on this advice with sharp terms, as being tender of the glory of Christ, bitter and vehement against his co-rivals. He rebukes them *ἀπορώμενος*, cuttingly, sharply, *vide* ver. 2. He calls them ‘ dogs,’ those that did rend and tear the simplicity of gospel doctrine, and divide the glory of man’s salvation betwixt faith and works ; such as did bark out reproaches against the apostles and their

doctrine delivered in its native purity and simplicity. It will be useful to observe here the different temper and carriage of this divine apostle in different cases. When things were indifferent, and less necessary and doubtful, farther from the heart of gospel truth and the great mystery of Christ, then who more mild, who more indulgent? who more complying in things indifferent? He became all things, &c. In things doubtful, of less moment, he calls for meekness, forbearance, peace, love; he breathes nothing else but the mild spirit of his gracious Lord, Rom. xiv. 1. But when opinions were broached that intrenched upon the glory of Christ, and tended to subvert souls, and pervert the gospel, why then the apostle is another man, a Boanerges; he seems to speak fire and thunder, *mera tonitrua*. No terms are bad enough, too bad for such seducers. Though they were cried up and applauded as the only pastors and shepherds, he calls them 'dogs.' They thought themselves the only patrons of good works, he calls them 'evil workers.' They would be thought the only legitimate children, he calls them 'concision;' to shew his dislike of their abusing and idolising circumcision, he gives it a by-name. So Hezekiah calls the brazen serpent (at first set up by God's appointment), when it was abused and idolised, Nehushtan, in contempt of that which was advanced to the dishonour of God, a piece of brass; or concision, cutting off. This advancing of circumcision into Christ's place tended to cut them off from Christ, from the church of Christ. It did not only occasion division amongst the members, but did tend to cut them off from the head; a ruining, destructive evil. Let us be followers of the apostle, as he followed Christ; learn when to be mild, and when to be zealous. (See Luther on Gal.)

8. He opposes to these seducers the examples of the apostles and faithful, to encourage them to cleave to that doctrine which advanced Christ alone, and renounced all things coming in competition with him, ver. 8. As though he had said, Ye shall lose nothing by closing with this doctrine, and following us herein; whatever they pretend, we are the circumcision, we only are truly circumcised in the account of God. You reject not God's institution, he himself has laid it aside; you lose no privilege by it, we have that which these rites intended and held forth. We have it in Christ more perfectly, more excellently. They have the shadow, we have the substance. They have the outward rite, we have the spiritual benefit intended by it; we have it in a transcendent manner, in its growth and height. They, by sticking to the ceremony, keep themselves in nonage; we are heirs, and enjoy the substance of these ceremonies. We are circumcised in heart; Christ has cut off the foreskin of our hearts, the guilt and power of sin.

'Worship God in spirit;' we understand the spiritual sense of all rites, types, ceremonies. Christ is the truth and substance of them; in him we have all. We worship him, accordingly, in spirit and truth, and so by Christ's verdict are the only true worshippers, John iv. 14. We place not worship in carnal observances, as they do. 'Bodily exercise profits nothing;' it is the heart and spirit that God requires, and this we give him. Follow their example. No worship without the spirit.

'And rejoice in Christ;' *καυχώμενοι*, we glory in him. Let them glory in their carnal rites, ceremonial observances, legal righteousness, outward privileges, we will rejoice in Christ alone; nay, glory, exult, triumph in him. Joy in its strength is exultation, which is a kind of vaulting or leaping of the soul, yea, a leaping out of itself to its object. Their souls

leaped for joy at the contemplation of the infinite fulness, all-sufficiency, glorious and transcendent excellency, of Christ. A man boasts when he is full of that which he thinks excellent. They counted it not only their happiness, but their glory, to have Christ, and Christ alone. They, with undauntedness and full contentment, set Christ against all that the false teachers could pretend to, all that could be offered in competition with Christ. He was the only ground of their joy and confidence. In him they exulted, triumphed, gloried, though they parted with all, lost all for him. See here Christians' temper.

'No confidence in flesh;' carnal rites, ceremonies, privileges, performances; of which after. These were not ground of joy, satisfaction, confidence; they relied not upon these for pardon, acceptance; expected not mercy nor salvation for these. Christ only, he alone was the ground of their confidence, rejoicing, exulting.

4. He enforces his advice by his own example. If there were any reason to glory, or be confident in carnal prerogatives, outward performances, he had as much reason to do it as any of them all, ver. 4. He could boast of as many privileges, as much self-righteousness, as they that could most, which he shews in many severals, ver. 5. 1. 'Circumcised;' the seal of the covenant, and thereby he was outwardly in covenant with God; a great honour, and that which entitled him to many privileges. 2. 'Stock of Israel;' of that nation which the Lord set apart for himself when he rejected all the nations of the earth besides. One of the 'Israelites,' to whom, Rom. ix. 4, 5, belonged the adoption, &c. 3. 'Of the tribe:' as he was one of the most honoured people, so one of the most noble tribe, that of Benjamin; born, not of a bondmaid, but the patriarch's beloved Rachel; a tribe honoured with the first of Israel's kings, in reference to whom, it was like, himself was called Saul. He might have gloried in his nobility, born of a tribe, a family, which was not strangers to the blood-royal. 4. 'A Hebrew:' one of that honoured people, and noble tribe, in the most honourable way; not by affinity, but by pure descent both by father and mother. A proselyte's offspring might be a Hebrew, but not a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews,' as he was. 5. 'A Pharisee:' one of the strictest and most honoured sects amongst them; those were counted eminently religious, both negatively and positively, &c. 6. Ver. 6, 'zeal:' as one of the most religious sect, so was he most zealous in that way of religion; not profane, careless, indifferent, but zealous and active, according to his judgment and conscience. 7. 'Righteous:' not eager only in persecuting those whom he counted enemies of righteousness, but righteous himself, in point of outward conformity to the law and institutions of God; so observant thereof, as he was ἀμωμος, in the eye of men, and in his own account, 'blameless,' without spot; his conversation not stained with any gross sins; an exact man in his life and deportment, living answerable to his knowledge and judgment.

All these grounds of confidence the apostle had before he was converted, and if he would have been as vain-glorious as the false teachers, if he would have been injurious to Christ and his soul, might have rested here, and gloried therein as well as they; but far was he from this temper. He adds, ver. 7, those things fore-mentioned which formerly he counted gain; thought to gain pardon, acceptance, salvation by them; now, since he knew Christ, he was of another judgment; now he counts them loss. He saw he had lost his soul, been a lost man for ever, if he had rested on these for salvation, if he had made these the grounds of his confidence;

and therefore Christ being made known to him as the only way to gain pardon, acceptance, life, he renounced his former privileges, his former legal righteousness. He would not lean upon these broken reeds, which might have let his soul fall into hell. He would have no more confidence in the flesh, but in Christ only, by whom he expected to gain that which in vain he expected from these.

Now, because this might seem a wonder and hard to be believed, that the apostle should renounce, cast away that which others counted their gain, treasure, ornament, their glory and confidence, that which they thought highly commended them, and made them acceptable in the sight of God, and glorious in the eyes of men; to procure the easier belief, to express further the height of his resolution herein, and the fixedness of his heart in what he had done, he affirms it again, and that with an asseveration, together with divers heightened expressions, ver. 8, 'Yea, doubtless,' &c. He did not only count them loss, but he had actually renounced them. It was not only his judgment, but his practice. He did not only count them loss, but dung, filth, excrements, when compared with Christ. He did not only thus account, thus renounce these things fore-mentioned, but all things, even those things that he had done and suffered for Christ, since he knew Christ. Not that he repented of what he had done or suffered, nor that he thought these would not be graciously rewarded, but in point of confidence, in point of justification. If he had brought these before God's tribunal to be accepted, pardoned, justified, saved for them, he had been lost, they would have proved the loss of his soul. God would no more accept of these as satisfaction for sin, or meritorious of eternal life, than he would accept of dung. And therefore in these respects he did that which the Lord would have done, he counted them loss and dung. He smelt a savour of death in those things which had been his confidence before for acceptance and life.

And further, he adds the cause of this strange effect, 'The excellency of the knowledge,' &c. It was the discovery of Christ that wrought his heart to this temper. It was his view of a sinner's transcendent advantage by Christ, that made him account all these loss. It was the wonderful excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that made all these things seem as dung. When we are in the dark, we are glad of candle-light, and glow-worms will make a fair show in our eyes; but when the sun is risen and shines in his full strength, then candle-light seems needless or offensive, and the worms that glittered in the dark, make no better show than other vermin. So when men are in the state of nature and darkness, then their church privileges and carnal prerogatives, then their outward performances and self-righteousness, make a fine show in their eyes. They are apt to glory in them, and rely on them, as that by which they may gain the favour of God and eternal life. Ay, but when Christ appears, when the Sun of righteousness arises in the heart and discovers his excellency, his all-sufficiency, then a man's own sparks vanish; then all his formerly beloved and rich esteemed ornaments are cast off; then all he has, and all he has done, privileges and outward services, are loss and dung. None but Christ, none but Christ, for pardon, acceptance, life. This is the excellent effect of this excellent knowledge.

We may explain the other expressions hereafter. Now (that we spend not all the time in exposition), take from the cause this

*Obs.* The knowledge of Christ is an excellent knowledge. There is a transcendent excellency in the knowledge of Christ.

Now to proceed most for edification in handling this truth, we will shew,

1. What knowledge of Christ is that which is so excellent. It is not every knowledge, nor every knowledge of Christ that is so. The devils, the reprobates, have, living under the gospel, some apprehensions of Christ, and so have the elect before conversion, which yet is not this excellent knowledge. That which is transcendent, is such as the apostle was, such for nature, though not for degrees. The Scripture abounds with characters of this knowledge, and it were easy to be large in describing it. But I shall confine myself to such as the apostle's discourse in these verses offers to us; and three we have in the text. That knowledge of Christ which is excellent, is,

(1.) Extensive; apprehends him in all those notions and respects wherein the gospel principally discovers him. Three words in this verse which the apostle uses, do comprise all or most of the rest, 'Christ,' 'Jesus,' 'Lord;' not only as Christ, but as Jesus; not only as Jesus, but as Lord. Apprehend what he is,

1st, In his nature and offices; these are included in the word Christ, *i.e.*, the Messias, him whom the Lord anointed to be Mediator. Know him as God, as man, and what necessity sinners had of such a mediator; and so in his offices, apprehend what he is, as king, as prophet, as priest; what excellent and rich advantages flow from each of these into the state and souls of believers. What was the inducement which brought him under such engagements for sinners? The dimensions of his love. Eph. iii. 18, 19, 'To know what is the height, length,' &c., we can, though we have no measure will fully reach the dimensions.

2d, In the intention and execution of his offices, that in the word Jesus, a Saviour, how he exercises these offices to bring about man's salvation. What saving acts belong to each office, and how to apply yourselves to every one of them for salvation.

3d, In the consequents of his offices, that is, dominion in Christ, subjection in us. We have both in the name Lord, Rom. xiv. 9. Many will take notice of Christ as a Saviour, but not as Lord; but this is to take a view of Christ in an eclipse, to apprehend Christ without his crown. This is not to know Christ in all his discovered excellencies, and so is not the excellent knowledge of Christ.

(2.) Appropriating; so the apostle, 'Christ Jesus my Lord.' The marrow of the gospel, as Luther observes, is in these pronouns, *meum, nostrum*. He bids us read these with great emphasis. *Tolle meum et tolle Deum*, says another, take away propriety, and you take away God, take away Christ. To apprehend him yours upon good grounds, is the excellency of this knowledge. Christ is notionally known by the evil angels; they know he is a Saviour, a King, a Priest; but they apprehend him not with application as their Saviour, their Head, as a Priest and Mediator for them. But this excellent knowledge apprehends him, and propriety in him; *my Lord, my Jesus, my Advocate*, who intercedes for *me*; *my King*, who has writ his laws in my heart; *my Prophet*, who has turned my darkness into light, shining in my dark heart; *my Sacrifice*, who has loved me and washed me, &c.; *my Head*, who quickens and conveys holy quickening influences into me, *ipso ipso*.

(3.) Effectual. Has a powerful efficacy both upon heart and life, both upon judgment, affection, and practice. We see it in the apostle; this excellent knowledge of Christ raised his esteem of him, possessed him with contempt of all things else, kindled his affections, ardent desires after him,

intense delight in him, made him both active and passive for Christ: 'for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.' Where this excellent knowledge is, there Christ is exalted as the chiefest of ten thousand, as the highest excellency, as the richest advantage, as the sweetest enjoyment, as the only matchless beauty, as the most glorious object. Christ outshines all in his judgment, where this excellent knowledge shines. The greatest glory in the world is but as a glow-worm, compared with the sun in its noonday brightness; the choicest excellency seems base when Christ appears; the chiefest gain in the world is loss, when Christ is gained; the richest treasure is dung, when Christ's riches are displayed; the most esteemed accomplishment is vile, when the preciousness of Christ appears; all things put together which natural men, which the most judicious of them, do value and most prize, put in the balance with Christ, are then but vanity, and then apprehended to be lighter than vanity. Whatever the heart was set upon before, it leaves them, it shakes them off, and turns to Christ, and cleaves to him with unspeakable complacency and contentment. Did he before admire riches, or pomp and greatness, or honour and authority, or natural parts, a strong memory, or a good judgment, or a nimble wit, or a reaching head, acquired accomplishments or moral honesty? Ay, but when Christ appears, he has the pre-eminence. He says to the best of these, when they would take his heart and judgment, Friend, sit lower; a worthier than thou must have this place. He that is higher than the heavens must have the highest place in my esteem, the chiefest room in my heart. If you will sit at Christ's feet, and minister to him, then welcome; but the throne is for Christ Jesus my Lord. It has a powerful efficacy upon the affections, to kindle desire, and raise joy in Christ, as the object transcendently desirable and delightful. He covets no gain so much now, but to gain Christ. He sees no righteousness now available, but the righteousness of Christ; he pants and gasps after this righteousness, as that only that can shroud him from revenging justice, and stand betwixt him and that righteous God which is otherwise a consuming fire to sinners. His chiefest desire on earth is to be found in Christ. He cares more indifferently in what state as to the world, in what condition soever the Lord find him, so he be found in Christ; cares not though he be found in prison, found covered with reproaches, found environed with afflictions, found naked as to his own righteousness, privileges, enjoyments, personal excellencies, so he may be found in Christ. This was the apostle's temper, &c. Christ is his glory, and the crown of his rejoicing; he exults, triumphs, glories in Christ, though he lose all for him. Even as a poor beggar discovering a rich mine or some vast treasures, is ready to leap for joy that he has found that which will make him rich for ever; he casts away his former rags, he despises his former poor and wooden furniture, for he has discovered that which will enrich him and make his condition plentiful; so the soul to whom the Lord has made this rich, this excellent discovery of Christ, he has found a mine more precious than gold, and larger than all the face of the earth; he casts off the menstruous rags of his own righteousness; his former accomplishments are now but as a beggar's furniture; his heart is full of joy; he says, Rejoice, O my soul; he says, Rejoice with me, O my friends, for I have found the pearl of great price; I have discovered the unsearchable riches of Christ, that which will make me rich and happy for ever: 'My lines are fallen,' &c.; 'Return to thy rest, O my soul.' So the apostle: 'We are the circumcision, and that rejoice in Christ Jesus.' And it has an influence upon his practice. If he have not, as the apostle,

Eph. iv. 20, 'suffered the loss of all,' he is ready to do it when Christ calls for it. Whatever he cannot enjoy with Christ, he casts from him with indignation, casts to the moles. He renounces the profits of sin, abandons pleasures of sin, lays aside the honour of his own righteousness, parts, forsakes, performances, so far as would obscure the glory of Christ; is ready to lose all, that he may gain Christ, to part with everything, that Christ may be all in all.

(4.) Fiducial. It brings the soul to rest upon Christ and his righteousness alone, for pardon, acceptance, salvation, and to cast away all those rotten props, good nature, well meaning, harmless life, honest carriage, just dealing, church privileges, natural accomplishments, religious performances, upon which he relied, and made the grounds of his confidence before. Who more confident than Paul before he knew Christ? His being numbered amongst the people of God, his strictness in an outward way of religion, his zeal in the way of his conscience, his blameless conversation, were the things for which he thought himself sure of heaven. Here was his confidence; but when Christ was made known, to rest in these he saw was to trust in the arm of flesh, to lean upon a broken reed; and therefore, when the joyful discovery of Christ was made to his soul, he had no more confidence in the flesh, then he would not own his righteousness of the law as a ground of confidence: 'Not having,' &c. The soul that has this excellent discovery of Christ, will make nothing but Christ his confidence; despair in himself, how good soever he be, what good soever he has done, and only rely on Christ his righteousness.

(5.) Useful. He that has it studies to improve Christ, to make use of him for those glorious and blessed purposes for which he knows Christ is given, such as the apostle expresses, ver. 9, 10: to find the blessed advantages of his righteousness for pardon, acceptance, and right to glory, and that upon all occasions of doubting, all contracting of new guilt. 'Power of his resurrection:' lifting him up, not only out of the state of sin, but also above all pressures, incumbrances of life and the world, to seek those things that are above, and enjoy him who is exalted for, &c., and to be raised of him, and brought to him who is the earnest of our resurrection, the first-fruits of the dead. 'Fellowship of his sufferings,' in union and participation. To find by comfortable experience that Christ suffered in his stead, and to receive what he purchased by his blood, merited by his sufferings; and to find a compassionate presence and support from Christ in all sufferings for him, knowing, Heb. viii. 18, 19.\* 'Conformable to his death:' to find the power of Christ's death killing sin, crucifying his heart unto the world and the world unto him, that so he may be crucified with Christ, but so die and suffer as he may reign with him. This is the notion, these the properties of that knowledge of Christ which is excellent.

2. Why is the knowledge of Christ excellent? in what respects? upon what account?

(1.) Because it is that knowledge which the most excellent creatures on earth, yea, the most excellent in heaven, did ardently desire, laboriously seek after, and which obtained, they rejoice and glory in. The most excellent on earth are the saints, Ps. xvi., and amongst them, the most excellent were the patriarchs, the kings, the prophets, the apostles; and all these counted the knowledge of Christ their joy, their chief desire. So Abraham, John viii. 56, he saw but the discoveries of Christ afar off, and he rejoiced; he saw but the dawnings of that day wherein Christ's knowledge should

\* So in the text; evidently a misprint.—Ed.

shine in its strength and glory, and his heart was glad ; a glimpse of this excellent vision, at many hundred years' distance, filled him with joy and gladness. Moses preferred the reproach of Christ before all the treasures of a flourishing kingdom, Heb. xi. 26 ; and if sufferings for Christ were so precious in his esteem, what then was the knowledge of Christ's sufferings for sinners ? This was the great inquiry of the prophets, this was it after which they searched diligently, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. They inquired, they searched, and searched again (it is twice repeated), and searched diligently ; they searched for this as for hidden treasures. Oh how excellent was it in their account ! Nay, both prophets and kings were ambitions of this as their greatest glory, Luke x. 28, 24. Nay, the Lord Jesus himself rejoiced that the Lord would vouchsafe this excellent discovery to the unworthy sons of men, ver. 21, ἡγαλλίασατο, his spirit leaped within him for joy, that this excellent knowledge should be vouchsafed to sinners. Sure there was something transcendent, something exceeding excellent, in that which would occasion the Spirit of Christ to leap for joy within him, when he was in the condition of a man of sorrows. For the apostles, it is most visible in Paul, who was, while in darkness, a deadly enemy to Christ and the knowledge of him ; but the appearance of Christ to him wrought a wonderful alteration. He was afterwards privileged above the rest, rapt up into the third heaven, and saw there visions of glory such as transported him, such as were past expression ; but whatever glory he saw, he saw nothing that more affected his heart than the sight of Christ, than the excellent knowledge of his Lord Jesus. The excellency of this took up his heart, engrossed his affections, 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2. He sought not excellency of speech or wisdom ; his eye was so taken with the splendour of Christ's knowledge, as nothing else seemed excellent to him. Some might expect, if of the like temper with divers in these times, that an apostle coming from the third heaven should have brought with him some new glorious discoveries, some lofty seraphical notions, above the pitch of the other apostles' doctrine. But what brought he ? Why, that which he preached. And what was that ? He tells us in 1 Cor. i. 28 ; and that not with wisdom of words, but in such a way as the wise men of the world counted it foolishness, ver. 17, 18. But was it thus indeed as vain men imagined ? No ; the preaching of Christ was the wisdom, the power of God, ver. 24 ; glorious and excellent, if anything in God be so. A constellation of glorious excellencies appears in discoveries of Christ. Christ crucified, preached in plainness and simplicity, if the Spirit of God be a competent judge, is the most excellent, the most glorious discovery that ever was, that ever will be made to the sons of men on earth. And if this glory be hid, as it seems to be to those who expect something more new, rare, costly, nauseate the plain preaching of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 4. . . .

Nor is this only the joy and desire of the most excellent on earth, but also of the most excellent creatures in heaven. The angels, though they enjoy the blessed vision of God, and are eternally happy in it, yet one sight more they earnestly desire, and that is of Christ the Mediator, as manifested in the gospel, 1 Peter i. 12. They stoop down, they stretch out themselves to pry into the things preached in the gospel, to know the mystery of Christ there manifested ; and this was prefigured by the posture of the cherubims upon the ark, Exod. xxxvii. 9. Now, Christ was typified by the mercy-seat, and the name itself is ascribed to him, Rom. iii. 25 ; whom God has set forth to be ἱλαστήριον, a propitiatory. Now, towards Christ was the face of the cherubims ; they looked earnestly, they



pried into the glorious mystery of God reconciled to man through the blood of Christ; their faces were towards it, their eyes continually on it; so wonderful, so excellent is it in their account, as they think it not below them to learn more of this by the discoveries made to the church, Eph. iii. 10. The Lord makes known the mystery of Christ to the church in the preaching of the gospel, and even the principalities and powers learn more of this mystery by the preaching of the gospel to the church. And how they rejoice in this knowledge, you may see by their deportment at the first appearance of Christ in the world, Luke ii. 18. Sure that must be an excellent knowledge which the cherubims of glory, the principalities and powers in heavenly places, do so earnestly desire, do so greatly rejoice in, when they are less concerned in it than men in many respects.

(2.) In knowing Christ we know the glorious excellencies of God, John xiv. 7. The Father and Christ are so like, as he that knows the one knows the other also, sees the Son, sees the Father. This is so apparent, as Christ seems to wonder that Philip, who had seen him, should speak as though he had not seen the Father, ver. 8, 9. He is known in the knowing of Christ, and seen in the seeing of Christ. Hence he is called 'the image,' Col. i. 15,—that which represents, and in a lively manner holds forth to us, the infinite perfections of God; therefore styled, Heb. i. 3, 'the character,'\*—not a shadow of him, not a dead, superficial representation of him, such as pictures and portraitures are, but a living, express, subsisting, perfect representation. The similitude seems to be borrowed from a signet's impression, which represents all the sculptures and lineaments of the seal. But no similitude can reach this mystery; only this we learn by this expression, that as Christ is perfectly distinct from, so is he a full and perfect resemblance of the Father, of the same nature and essence with him, so that there is no perfection in the Father but the same is substantially in the Son, so that in knowing Christ we apprehend (as weakness will suffer) the excellencies of God; hence the glory of God is said to shine in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6, so that those who know Christ, thereby see the glory of God in the face of Christ. That knowledge, that light which discovers Christ, discovers the glorious excellencies of God, the brightness whereof appears in the face of Christ. Nor is this only true of Christ as he is the Son of God, of the same nature with the Father, but also as he is Mediator. In the great work of redemption, the Lord caused his glory to pass before the sons of men. Never was there such a full, such a clear, discovery of God's glorious perfections, as was made to the world in Christ. In him we may see infinite power, wisdom, justice, mercy, holiness; glorious truth, faithfulness, unchangeableness; the glory of love, of free grace, of goodness; he even caused all his goodness to pass visibly before us in Christ, so that he who knows Christ knows all these glorious excellencies; *ergo*, &c.

(8.) It makes those that have it excellent, 2 Cor. iii.; having preferred the gospel ministry before the legal ministrations, as far more exceeding glorious, he prefers also our state under the gospel before theirs under the law. They knew but little and darkly, the veil was before them; but we may know more, and more clearly, for the veil is taken away in Christ, ver. 16. So that now, as verse 18, in the gospel, as in a glass, we may with unveiled faces behold the glory of Christ; and so behold it, as it will work a glorious change in the beholders. As Moses by conversing with God seemed to be changed into the same image, from the glory of God

\* That is, *χαρακτὴρ*, translated 'express image.'—Ed.

with whom he conversed there passed some glory upon him, which shined in his face; so that, as verse 7, they could not stedfastly behold, &c. Even so by knowing Christ, and beholding the glory of God shining in his face, the soul is as it were changed into the same image, from glory to glory; i. e., from his glory there passes a glory upon the soul, as there did upon his face; but this is done by the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of holiness working in the soul those gracious qualities which are the beginnings of glory here, and the most glorious accomplishment of which created nature is capable, holiness being a conformity to, a resemblance of, the image of Christ, who is the Lord of glory. So that you see there is an excellent transforming virtue in this knowledge, it leaves a glorious tincture upon the soul, it assimilates the soul to Christ, in part here, and perfectly hereafter, 1 John iii. 2. The seeing of Christ will make those that see him like unto him. Set a glass full in the sun, and you will see in it something like the glory of the sun, a bright, shining splendour, dazzling the eye of the beholder. Such a glory appeared with Moses when he had been with God; such a glory (though not visible) shines in every soul that is much with Christ, often viewing him, fixing his eye on him; and if the grossness, the incapacity of the subject did not hinder, they would be and seem more glorious; but hereafter this shall be removed, and then not only the soul but the body shall be like unto Christ, in Christ in glory, Philip. iii. 21. Even as the moon, conceived to be a gross, dark body in itself as the earth is, yet when it is full against the sun (in opposition) we see in it some resemblance of the sun's glory; the lustre of the sun darted on it makes it seem a lightsome, glorious body like itself; even so will the enjoyment, the sight of Christ, glorify those that truly know him. So excellent is this knowledge, as it will make those that have it excel in glory.

There are four steps and degrees by which the Lord raises fallen man, now more vile and base than the beasts that perish, to the height of glory and excellency; and they are all ascribed in Scripture to this knowledge of Christ.

[1.] The removal of that which makes him vile, that which is his greatest debasement and deformity, that which renders him not only contemptible, but odious and loathsome, and that is the pollution, the filth of sin, wherewith the soul fallen from God is besmeared; it covers him as a garment, and it is a garment of filthiness, a covering of excrements, Zech. iii. 3. Man is sunk into the mire and clay, into the puddle of corruption, and there he sticks, no escaping for him by anything in the power of nature; that which works his escape is this knowledge of Christ, 2 Peter ii. 20.

[2.] Partaking of the divine nature; one of the highest expressions in Scripture. Not of the essence and nature of God, but of holiness, the nearest resemblance of God that is to be found in anything created. It is the image of God, Col. iii. 10. The image of God stamped upon the soul of man in his creation, was by the fall broken and shattered, quite defaced. Now how is it renewed? He tells us, 'in knowledge.' Holiness is the image of God, as being a resemblance of him who is 'the Holy One,' &c., and so called the divine nature; and by this knowledge of Christ we come to partake of this: 2 Peter i. 3, 4, 'All things that pertain,' &c., are given, but how? 'Through the knowledge of Christ.' Now what things are these that are thus given? He instances in two most considerable: verse 4, 'exceeding great,' &c., and 'the divine nature.'

[3.] Investing us with the righteousness of Christ; a privilege so high

and glorious, as man or angel could never have expected it, never believed it, if the same mercy that vouchsafed it had not clearly revealed it; an excellency, in comparison of which the apostle counts all other excellencies as dung; in the apprehending of which consists the excellency of this knowledge which he so highly advances, as appears, ver. 9. How we come to be invested with it, the prophet shews, Isa. liii. 11. We are justified by his righteousness; but how justified? By his knowledge. It is this fiducial knowledge that leads a man out of himself, and all confidence in the flesh, to rely only upon Christ, by which he is made partaker of Christ's righteousness.

[4.] Eternal glory. And then man is at the height, he can rise no higher; and hither he is raised by this knowledge of Christ, John xvii. 3. The knowledge of Christ is the light of life, the dawning of approaching glory. When Christ is first known, the day of glory breaks, and the more it increases, it shines more and more unto the perfect day, unto perfect glory.

Oh how excellent is this knowledge, that raises a man to such a height of glory, that invests him with so many excellencies!

8. Christ himself is most excellent, *ergo*, &c. We may conclude of the act by the object; the knowledge of the most excellent object is the most excellent knowledge, such is Christ's.

(1.) There is nothing in him but what is excellent. There is a mixture in all created beings; where there is something excellent, there is also something deficient. Search out the best accomplished creature on earth, and something or other will be found distasteful in it. The heavens, though they seem the most excellent of all things visible, and their excellency seems to be their lucidness and purity, yet in the Lord's sight even they are not pure, Job xv. 15. Nay, the angels, though the most excellent of all invisibles, and their chief excellency be wisdom,—‘wise as an angel,’—yet the Lord charges them with folly, Job iv. 18. Those glorious creatures are conscious of something not fit to be seen by the eye of God; they cover their feet, Isa. vi. 2. Ay, but Christ he is altogether lovely; whatever is in him is excellent, nothing in him deficient, distasteful, imperfect; ‘fairer than the children of men,’ ‘higher than the heavens;’ so far transcends the angels, as they adore him, Heb. i. 6, as infinitely below him; nothing in Christ but what is worthy of all love, all delight, all admiration, everlasting praises of saints and angels.

(2.) All excellencies that are in the creatures are eminently to be found in Christ. Take a survey of heaven and earth, and whatever you see that is truly excellent in any, in all things therein, look up to Christ, and you may see it transcendently in him. Whatever is truly amiable, desirable, delightful, or admirable, whatever takes thy heart, if it be worthy of thy heart, look upon Christ, and there it shines in its full brightness. Every excellency that is scattered here and there in the creatures, are altogether in Christ; all the several lines of perfection and transcendent loveliness do all meet and centre in him.

(3.) All these excellencies are in him in a more excellent manner: perfectly, without any shadow of imperfection; infinitely, without any bounds or limits; unchangeably and eternally, they ebb not, they wane not, they are always there in the full, they alter not, they decay not. He is infinitely all excellencies, without variableness or shadow of changing. The angels kept not their first habitation, the heavens shall wax old as a garment, the glory of man is as the flower of the grass, but Christ is yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever, for ever altogether excellent.

(4.) Not only all that are in the creatures, but innumerable more excellencies than are in all the creatures together, are in Christ alone. Not only the creatures' fulness, but the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him, bodily, *i. e.*, substantially, personally. Besides all that he has communicated to heaven or earth, there are unspeakably more excellencies in him than eye ever saw, or ear heard, or can enter into the heart of man to conceive, Col. ii. 9.

Oh how excellent must that knowledge be, whose object is so transcendently excellent!

*Use I. Reproof*, to those that despise, neglect the knowledge of Christ. If it be excellent in itself, and so in the account of God, so by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, so in the esteem of all that are excellent, then they deserve rebuke who despise it. But is there any Christian who despises the knowledge of Christ? Oh that most that bear that name were not guilty thereof, and worthy of this rebuke! Who they are, you may know by these two characters.

1. Those who are not diligent to get and increase this knowledge. Nothing excellent is attained without diligence, *καλὰ χαλᾷ*,\* knowledge especially. Those that think it not worth their diligence, despise it. If you thought it precious, you would search after it; if it were a treasure in your esteem, you would dig for it; you would carefully, constantly search the Scripture, for that is the mine where this treasure is to be found, that is the field where it is hid,—hid, not that it should not be found, but that it should be sought after. What a sad thing is it, that those who profess themselves Christians, should spend whole days, nay, whole weeks, without looking into, without reading, without searching the Scripture. The Lord has writ to us (as he complains), not only the great things of the law, but the excellent mysteries of Christ, the great things of the gospel, and these count them a vain thing. Do ye not count it a vain thing, when ye are not for looking into it? Say not ye are too busy. What, are ye too busy to know Christ? are ye too busy to be saved? or is there any possibility of being saved without this excellent knowledge of Christ? Say not you want time; alas! it is want of heart, not want of time; want of affection to it, not want of time for it, that keeps men from knowledge. That time which you merely mis-spend in idleness, or needless pastimes, or satisfying your unclean, intemperate, or worldly lusts, would be sufficient to get this knowledge. If ye counted it excellent, ye would redeem time for it. Say not, What needs so much knowledge, so much diligence? Those that think it excellent will never think they can have too much knowledge, or that it cost them too much diligence, Prov. ii. 2-4. No getting knowledge without crying to God for it, seeking diligently after it. Those that have not thus sought it do yet want it, and those that are not diligent to get it despise it.

2. Those that strive not to communicate this knowledge to others, to their relations, brethren, children, family. That which ye count excellent, ye will not withhold from dear relations. You would catechise, instruct your children and servants, you would be often instilling the principles of the knowledge of Christ into them; you would not let any one be ignorant that has relation to you, or abides with you. This was Abraham's commendation, and will be to all generations, Gen. xviii. 19. He would not only make them know the way, but command them to keep it. Those that would be found faithful must follow him; whatever Satan or a corrupt

\* Probably the author wrote *κα καλὰ χαλᾷ*. *ε-ι*, meaning *κα καλὰ χαλᾷ* *ἵστυ*.—ED.

heart may tell thee, none shall come into Abraham's bosom but those that walk in his steps. Those parents that instruct not their children, they are like the cruel ostrich, Job xxxix. 14-17, you bring them forth, but you leave them carelessly, to be a prey to Satan and every vile lust; you let their souls perish, and by this you shew that you are hardened; this is to use them as though they were not yours; this is the most woeful, the most unnatural neglect, not to care what becomes of their souls, to leave them to perish for ever; better they had never been born, than live without the knowledge of Christ. You would think her an unnatural wretch, that having brought a child into the world, would let it starve for want of nourishment. Why, those are more unnatural, more cruel, that bring not their children to the knowledge of Christ. 'My people perish for lack of knowledge,' says the Lord. Your children perish for want of knowledge, and you neglect to help. Oh consider, if they perish, at whose hands must their blood be required? Will it not be a sad thing, that children should appear against their parents at the tribunal of Christ! Oh these are they who gave me life, but they let my soul perish! Woe is me that ever they brought me into this world! through their neglect must I be tormented in that flame for ever! That ignorance in which they suffered me to live has brought me into this outer darkness! You that have the charge of families must give an account of them; not only for their profaneness, which you may restrain, but for that ignorance which you might remove. Oh bring not the guilt of their eternal ruin upon your souls! Oh that the Lord would give you hearts to resolve upon more care of the souls of your family, &c., to instruct them at home in a way of catechising, and to bring them hither to be instructed! And here I shall endeavour it by explaining the principles of the knowledge of Christ, in the most easy and familiar way. Oh that you would concur herein, and let it appear that the knowledge of Christ is excellent in your esteem! This is one of the greatest ornaments, this is one of the best provisions you can make for your children, to bring them to the excellent knowledge of Christ. But ignorance of Christ, in yourselves or them, is a pernicious evil.

(1.) This is to despise Christ, to condemn God, to condemn him in the most full expression of his love. The Lord, in revealing Christ to the world, made out the richest manifestation of his glory that ever he vouchsafed to the children of men; therefore to neglect the knowledge of Christ is to condemn God in the riches of his glory. What greater contempt of Christ than not to take notice of him?

(2.) This is a brutish sin. A man without knowledge is scarce a man; let him be what he will for other accomplishments, how comely, how rich, how noble, how powerful soever, if he want the knowledge of Christ, he is like a beast. It is not I, but the Holy Ghost that so terms him, Ps. xlix. 20. He that is in the world's account a man of honour, is in God's account, without this, little better than a beast. He deserves no more the name of a Christian that wants the knowledge of Christ, than an ape deserves to be called a man; he may have some resemblance of a Christian, as an ape has of a man, but without this he wants the soul, the life of a Christian.

(3.) It is a mother-sin, the root of all destructive evils. The two main cursed branches that spring from the root of bitterness, are unbelief and profaneness. No faith without knowledge, whatever the blind papists imagine, who are concerned to shun the light, lest their apostasy should be discovered. 'Those that know thy name,' &c. Ps. ix. 10.

These are so inseparable, as the Holy Ghost puts the one for the other, Isa. liii. 11. All your confidence without this is but presumption, no justifying faith, for that gives honour to God, and is of a saving virtue and efficacy to the soul ; but confidence without knowledge is dishonourable to God, destructive to the soul. No benefit by Christ's death, no partaking of his righteousness, without faith, and no faith without knowledge. Ignorant persons are apt to say, Christ died for me, and then what needs so much to do ? Ay, but those that will live without the knowledge of Christ shall find that Christ died for none but those that know him ; as for others, he never knew them, so far was he from dying for them.

It is the mother of profaneness. Why does drunkenness, uncleanness, so abound ? Why, some have not the knowledge of Christ, they love darkness rather than light, and therefore their deeds are evil. If the Sun of righteousness did shine in their hearts, these works of darkness would never appear in their lives. Men have not yet learned Christ as the truth is in Jesus, for, Eph. iv. 21, 22, every knowledge will not be effectual to restrain sin. We see that the air is not by the light of the moon preserved from stinks and unwholesomeness ; it is the light of the sun does this. Whatever knowledge you have, if your lives be corrupt, you want the excellent knowledge of Christ. These vermin appear not where Christ shines. The grace of God, manifested in Christ, when it appears effectually unto men, it teaches them to deny ungodliness, &c. Where this ungodliness, this worldliness is, where there is not sobriety, godliness, there Christ has not yet appeared to purpose. You are yet in darkness, if these works of darkness be yet in request ; nor is there any escaping out of these snares of the devil, but by the knowledge of Christ.

(4.) It is most contrary to Christ : he is light, and this is darkness ; he is wisdom, this is folly. What communion has light with darkness ? You have nothing to do with Christ while you know him not, nor will he have any thing to do with you. These are they to whom Christ will say hereafter, Depart from me, I know you not.

Contrary to the design of Christ. His sovereign end is his glory ; therefore did he create the world, and manifest himself to his creatures, that he might be glorified. Now he can no other way be glorified by the creatures but by their acknowledging him to be glorious, and how can they acknowledge him who do not know him ?

Contrary to his interest. He can have no soul-worship without this, no fear, no love, no desire. All these presuppose knowledge ; *non feruntur in incognitum*. If there were none in the world but such as know not Christ, he would have no service in the world. This renders men unserviceable to Christ, to others unfruitful, such as cumber but the ground ; it calls for the axe to the root, it brings forth nothing but briars and thorns.

(5.) It lays you under many dreadful threatenings. It is the occasion of the Lord's controversy with a people, Hosea iv. 1. A dreadful thing to have God contend against you ; the issue of this controversy was the utter ruin of that people, ver. 6. A fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Do ye ? Are ye stronger ? Oh, ye will say, he is merciful ; ignorance is not such a sin, but mercy will pass by it ; he that made us will save us ; he will not damn his creatures for a little ignorance (thus will some be ready to say) : but see how punctually, yet how dreadfully, the Lord answers, as though he intended to meet with this objection, Isa. xxvii. 11. How contrary are God's thoughts to yours herein ; that which

they make their reason why they hope to escape, he alleges as the reason why they shall not escape ; no mercy, no favour, no, not to those that he made and formed : that does not so much engage him for you as ignorance engages him against you. I add no more but that, 2 Thes. i. 7-9, than which I know not if there be any more terrible expressions in all the book of God.

(6.) Ignorance in this land is altogether inexcusable. Invincible ignorance does excuse in part, but all ignorance of those who have the use of reason, and enjoy the gospel, is wilful. If ye know not Christ, since there is light enough vouchsafed to discover him, it is because you will not know him. This is it which will render the condition of many amongst us more intolerable in the day of judgment than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Light is come, and men shut their eyes. If this land had been a place of darkness, where Christ had never appeared in his gospel, if it had been a shadow of death, where the light of life never shined, then the Lord's controversy with us had not been so great, then we might have had some plea to mitigate his indignation ; but when he has made this land a valley of visions, when no nation under heaven has more means of knowledge, and yet gross ignorance continues amongst us, we are laid open to wrath without the least excuse to shroud us from it : ' If I had not come to you,' &c., John xv. 22. Oh, sad condition, that we who have the word in our tongue, the gospel preached in season and out of season, and so many excellent discoveries for the opening and applying it, should make no other use of all this, but to leave us inexcusable ! So will all that know not Christ be ; they will not have a word to plead for their ignorance at the tribunal of Christ, because they might have known him, but that they were unwilling to know him, wilfully neglected it.

*Use II. Exhortation.* 1. To those that want it, Be exhorted to get it ; 2. To those that have some degrees of it, Be exhorted to grow in it : Prov. iv. 5-7, ' It is excellent ;' and this should be a sufficient motive to put you upon endeavours to attain it. Excellency is a powerful attractive to every spirit that is not debased, degenerated, and sunk below itself into the earth ; why here is a transcendent excellency, this knowledge far exceeds all natural, all moral accomplishments whatsoever. The apostle, who was able to judge of things that are excellent, counted his highest privileges, his rarest endowments, dung in comparison of it. And as it is excellent in itself, so will it make you excellent in the esteem of God ; but without it, whatever ye have besides, ye are vile persons. Oh, but how shall we get this excellent knowledge ? What means shall we use to attain it ?

*Ans.* 1. Be convinced of your want of the knowledge of Christ, be sensible of it, be humbled for it, bewail it in the presence of God. He that thinks he knows Christ sufficiently, when indeed he has not attained to this excellent knowledge, his case is desperate, his blindness is next to incurable, Prov. xxvi. 12. Far more hopes of one that knows not, and bewails his want of knowledge, than of him that thinks himself wise enough.

*Ans.* 2. Begin at the foundation, lay a good ground-work in the principles of the knowledge of Christ, otherwise you will but build in the air. This is the apostles' method, the first nourishment they tendered was milk, afterwards strong meat ; he would not carry the Hebrews further till he had fully established them in the principles of the doctrine of Christ, Heb. vi. 1. This is one main reason of the woeful apostasies in our times ; many professors never laid a good foundation, never were well grounded in

these principles of Christ; because they are ordinarily taught in catechisms, and learnt by children, they think this below them, trouble not themselves with them, and so these prime fundamental truths being never fastened and rooted by sound understanding in their judgments, they are easily plucked from them; and the foundation being gone, no wonder if all the rest easily follow. It is an easy matter indeed to say the words of a catechism, and to get some slight apprehension of these truths, but to have a clear and well-grounded knowledge of them is an excellency not below the highest professor on earth, indeed that which many never attain to. This you must endeavour if you would know Christ to purpose.

*Ans. 3.* Let the word of God be familiar to you. What is to be known of Christ is here to be learned, Col. iii. 16. Be much in reading the Scripture, it is Christ's advice to the Jews, John v. 89, *ἀκούετε*, search daily, search diligently, search as for a treasure, as for the pearl of great price, here it is to be found. Those that are strangers to the Scripture will be strangers to Christ. You may as well see without light as know Christ without the knowledge of the Scripture. Follow the Lord's advice to Israel, see how strictly, how punctually he enjoins this, Deut. vi. 6-9.

Be much in hearing the word. Christ is wrapped up in the Scripture, here the covering is unfolded and exposed to open view, here he is set as crucified, &c. It is the Lord's ordinance, instituted for this end, to bring sinners to the knowledge of Christ, to open their eyes that they may see him, to unveil Christ that ye may behold him with open face. Whenever you read or hear, be sure to meditate; you must not think the Lord will work knowledge by a miracle, this is the means by which he makes it effectual, the knowledge of Christ will never be rooted in your souls without meditation.

*Ans. 4.* Make use of those who are already acquainted with Christ, 'Forsake not the assembling,' &c., Heb. x. 25, Pro. xiii. 20 and xv. 7. Turn your vain worldly discourse into inquiries after Christ. When you meet with anything dark, see whether the Lord has discovered it to others; when anything doubtful, seek resolution; let not the fear to bewray your weakness hinder you from propounding the doubts and difficulties you meet with.

*Ans. 5.* Be much in seeking God; beseech him to open your eyes, to remove the veil, to discover Christ more clearly; both advice and promise, James i. 5.

2. To those that have attained some degree of this excellent knowledge: Content not yourselves with present attainments, let this light shine more and more unto the perfect day; follow the apostle's advice, 2 Peter iii. 18, grow in knowledge of the excellency of his person, the fulness of his satisfaction, the worth of his graces, the mystery of his will in the gospel, the sweetness of vision and communion with him, the dimensions of his love, the riches of his righteousness.

For direction:

(1.) Make all your other knowledge subservient to this. Learn the heavenly art of making use of all other knowledge, so as to discover more of Christ, to make him better known. The knowledge of the world; when you discover anything vile, mean, worthless, useless, hence you may infer there is no such thing in Christ; so the world may be a foil to set off Christ, to represent him to your minds as purely, perfectly, transcendently excellent, as the darkness of a dungeon sets off the sun.

When you see anything lovely, desirable, in the world, see Christ in it,



this came from him, all lower excellencies dropped from this fountain; thence you may conclude there is infinitely more of this value in him. What are these sparks, these weak glimmerings, to the Sun of righteousness.

The knowledge of sin; the more you see of its guilt, and pollution, and damnableness, the more you may discover of your necessity of Christ; of the wonders of his love, who would become sin for us, who would bear our sins, &c., who would be wounded, of the value of his blood, of his righteousness, which could expiate and remove such horrid evil, and bring heaven out of such a hell.

Make such use of the knowledge of yourselves, of the creatures, of the Scripture, even those parts thereof that seem more remote from Christ; they all point at him, and will lead you to discover more of them, if you be wise to observe, and careful to follow their direction. I, says the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 2, Paul had much other knowledge, he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; he had improved it by his studies, his travels, his experience, but as he valued it not in comparison, so he cared not for it but in a subserviency to the knowledge of Christ crucified. As the light of grace shall end in that of glory, so the light of nature shall end in that of grace, that light which will discover more of Christ. Other things should serve and be made use of as vantage-ground to help us to a better prospect of Christ. Every advance in other knowledge should be to us as Zaccheus getting up into the tree that he might see Jesus passing by. Other light should serve us as a candle to find the jewel, the pearl of great price, and view it better; it should be as the opening of the window, or the withdrawing of the curtain to let in the sun, to let in more of this excellent knowledge.

(2.) Get nearer him, and keep near him; the nearer to him, the more full, and clear, and satisfying view you may have of him. Oh, live not at a distance from Christ, be not satisfied with such a temper of heart, such a performance of holy duties, such a manner of conversation as theirs who are far off from him! You will have but a dim sight of Christ at so great distance. Take heed of what may estrange you, take heed of neglects, unkindnesses; beware of sin, it is iniquity that separates, Isa. lix. 2; take heed especially of sins against light and love, there is more of offence in these, more of provocation, and so they will occasion greater estrangement, further withdrawals; and the more remote you are from Christ, the more you will be out of sight of him; your sight will not be so clear, nor full, nor refreshing. Beware of sins against light; if you abuse it, if you disobey it, if you follow not the conduct of it, if you turn aside into by-paths when the light shews you the right way, if you stand still, or draw back when it is going before you, if you detain it in unrighteousness, so to use the light you have is the way to be left in darkness. If a friend hold you a torch, and you turn aside or demean yourself as if it were an offence to you, that might move him to knock it out, or leave you without it.

Beware of sinning against love. You may well think Christ will less bear this than other miscarriages. This will provoke him to depart, as the spouse found, Cant. v. 6, and when he removes, the light is gone, and you will be at a loss for the sight of Christ. Christ, like the sun, is seen and discovered by his own light; but such miscarriages will raise clouds, or cause an eclipse, and you may see no more of Christ than of the sun in a dark gloomy winter day; nay, these may raise a dismal storm, wherein you may see neither sun nor stars for many days.

(3.) Fix your minds, the eye of your souls, upon him ; let your souls be to Christ in the like posture as the cherubims were to his type the mercy-seat : 'Towards the mercy-seat was the faces of the cherubims,' Exod. xxxvii. 9. Let the face of your souls be still towards Christ, your eye often on him, as the angels, Mat. xviii. 10 ; that is not only their duty, but their happiness ; and count it yours, for it is so. Such a vision of God does establish them in their blessed and glorious state, such a beholding of Christ will enhappy you with more of this excellent knowledge of him. Let the thoughts of Christ be pleasing to you, let him be your meditation, and let your meditation of him be sweet, Ps. civ. 84 ; that will be the way to have your eye fixed. We stay not in the sight of that which does not please us, a short view will be enough or too much ; but a short view of Christ, a glance by some transient, fleeting thought, will not be enough to get much knowledge, to make any considerable discovery of him. The mind should stay on him, and view him well ; and that it may stay there, it must be pleased with the sight, else it will be on and off, as soon off as on. Let no sight be so taking, so delightful, as a sight of Christ ; then your minds will not be backward to dwell on him, as it dwells on that which it would study, and study thoroughly. Labour so to study Christ, that is the way to know him more fully, more thoroughly.

Study the excellencies of his person, the infinite advantage of his offices. What riches of wisdom and knowledge are held forth to you in his prophetic office, even all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. ii. 8 ; what riches of power and glory are offered you in his kingly office ; what safety and protection in all dangers ; what power and assistance in all services ; what supplies and sufficiency in all wants ; what encouragements and supports in all trials and sufferings ; what victories and triumphs, after all conflicts with the world, with the powers of darkness, with the strength of corruption ; what assurance this regal, this glorious office affords us, that in all these we shall be more than conquerors !

What riches of grace and compassion, of pardon and forgiveness, in his priestly office ; what riches of holiness and glory he has purchased by his suffering, and is prevailing for by his intercession ; what we gain by his sufferings, what we are redeemed from by his death, what we may expect from his appearing for us at the right hand of God, and ever living there to intercede for us !

View Christ all over, as those that would see something of all the dimensions of his love, which appear in all his offices, in the undertaking, in the performance of them : 'The height,' &c. Let your minds stay here, as those that have a mind to know what you can of that which passes knowledge ; study Christ, as those who have the minds and souls of men principally for this end, that they might be employed upon Christ ; you should dig for this as for hidden treasure. The mind is digging while it is studying ; the more you study, the further you dig, and the further you dig, the more you will discover of this infinitely large and precious mine, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

(4.) Seek not the knowledge of Christ merely to know, that may be the end of a vainly curious mind ; but seek to know him, that you may enjoy him more, that you may improve him better, that you may gain more heavenly and spiritual advantage by him, Mat. xiii. 45, 46. A merchant that travels into other countries, his end is not to view the places, and the rarities of them ; that he minds but upon the by ; but his design is to meet with commodities, whereby he may get the advantage to raise an estate.

Such should your design be, a labouring to get more acquaintance with Christ, not merely to see and know more than others,—that may be done for ostentation, or out of curiosity,—but to discover that which may make your souls rich unto God ; that you may discern that in him which may make you willing to sell all to possess and enjoy him, to suffer the loss of all things to gain Christ. Press to get near him, as the woman in the Gospel, that you may find a healing, a sovereign virtue coming from him ; labour to get into the light which discovers him, that you may be under his influences, those healing, quickening, strengthening, comforting influences upon which the strength, life, comfort, and activeness of your souls depends ; that you may derive from him more spiritual life, sense, strength, refreshment, motion, and activeness ; that you may partake more of his riches, taste more of his sweetness ; that you may adore, admire him more, and be more in his praises ; that you may be engaged and enabled to honour him more, and serve him better, to do and suffer more for him ; so to discover him, as to know the power of his resurrection, &c., Philip. iii. 10, so as to be excited and enabled to follow after, ver. 12, 13.

(5.) Content not yourselves with light without heat. Let every spark of knowledge beget some spiritual and heavenly heat, let it kindle you into more zeal for him, more ardent desires after him, more flames of love to him, more fervour of spirit in seeking, in following him. If the light whereby you discover anything of Christ be not accompanied with spiritual heat, it will prove but a fruitless blaze, which will soon go out, and end in smoke, come to nothing or worse. Satisfy yourselves with no knowledge of Christ, but such as makes you in love with him, Cant. i. 8. The apprehensions they had of Christ gave them a taste, a delicious relish of him, such as made them in love with him, sick of love. Let it raise you to such a heat of resolution as it did Peter, Mat. xxvi. 35. Let it excite in you such desires as in David, Ps. lxxiii., raise you to such a value of Christ as the spouse had, Cant. v. 5, 6, 10, 16. If it beget not heat of affection, it will not be like the light of the rising sun, which shines more and more, &c., but like a flash of lightning, which appears and vanishes in a moment, and often does more hurt than good.

(6.) Live up to the knowledge you have ; that is the way to attain more. Let the light that shines in your minds shine in your lives. Imprison not the truth ; so you do when it is in your understandings, but confined there so as the influence of it does not reach your conversations. This will provoke the Lord to leave you in darkness, it was the effect of this crime in the heathen ; this was the cause of that darkness and those delusions amongst the papists, 2 Thes. ii. The pleasure they had in unrighteousness prevailed against the belief and knowledge of Christ and his truths, and rendered it impractical ; so that though they knew his ways, they would not walk therein ; though they knew the will of Christ, they would not do it, therefore he gave them up to be blinded by Satan. If you so abuse the discoveries of Christ, they will be rarely, sparingly vouchsafed ; the Lord will not entrust you with more, but rather take from you what you have. But on the contrary, there is a promise to improve knowledge, John vii. 17. If according to your knowledge ye do more for Christ, ye shall know more of him. If you follow the light, the light will follow you, you will have it in more abundance ; but if you walk not answerable to your knowledge, if you contradict it in the temper of your hearts, or course of your lives, you take the course not to have it augmented, but to have less of it, or none at all. If a friend hold a light to you, and you will not follow it, that will not

move him to add to it, or make it brighter, but rather to put it out. If the light whereby Christ discovers himself to you be not used for those purposes for which it is vouchsafed ; if it do not lead you effectually to a fuller compliance with him, to an exacter conformity to him, to higher degrees of holiness, self-denial, mortification, contempt of the world ; this is the way not to have the light increased, but rather extinguished.

(7.) Let humility keep pace with knowledge, and be of an equal and proportionable growth. If knowledge puff you up, take heed the light be not puffed out. Pride would be the attendant of knowledge, but it never thrives nor comes to good where this is not checked. It is such a weed as sucks away the life and sweetness of knowledge ; it is not only an enemy to it in its own nature and quality, sucking away the moisture that should make it grow, but it provokes the Lord to blast it. He resists the proud, beats down that in which they exalt themselves, but gives grace to the humble, inspires both mind and heart with more grace, gives both more holiness and more knowledge.

(8.) Make use of Christ's prophetic office. As he is a prophet, he is engaged to give the light of the knowledge of himself. He came under the obligation of this office for this end, that he might instruct his people by his word and Spirit, and lead them up to clear and effectual apprehensions of himself. Let this encourage you to labour for it, to seek him for it, to trust him for it. Endeavours succeed through prayer, and prayer prevails through faith.

II. *Doct.* Those that have attained the excellent knowledge of Christ will not think much to lose all things that they may gain Christ.

*Explication.* What by gaining Christ? What by all things? What by losing or suffering the loss of these all things?

First, To gain Christ is to get interest in him, and participation of him.

1. He gains Christ who gets interest in him, right to him, union with him ; he who is joined to Christ, as members to the head, married to Christ in an everlasting covenant ; he that has interest in his person, his offices, his righteousness, his sufferings, his intercession, his administrations, and that which is the spring of all this, his love ; he that is interested in the affection, the love of Christ, the acts and expressions of it,—he has gained Christ.

2. He that partakes of Christ, the benefits of his purchase, all those spiritual and eternal blessings wherewith those that have interest in him are blessed ; he that gets the graces and advantages of his mediatorship, of his offices, righteousness, sufferings, resurrection, &c., so as to have communion with him in all these, and a communication of all that he has procured, and bestows upon all that are his, he has gained Christ. To gain pardon of sin, right to eternal life, reconciliation with God, holiness in its life, power, exercise, increase, perseverance, the exceeding great and precious promises, high and glorious privileges, sweet and honourable relations which the gospel tenders, all things that are good in this life, the presence of Christ in every state, employment, the assistance of Christ in every service, acceptance through Christ of every endeavour, the joys and comforts of the Spirit, the foretastes of heaven, and a full assurance of actual possession ; to partake of Christ in these respects is to gain him. This is that for which he, and all that know Christ with him, are ready to lose all. And if the worth and value of Christ, and these invaluable

advantages by him, be duly weighed, it will seem no wonder that those who know him think not much to suffer the loss of all to gain him.

But what are these 'all things?' The apostle gives us an account of them in this chapter, and elsewhere in his Epistles. By 'all' things we may understand his privileges, his accomplishments, his enjoyments, his righteousness too; much more all and every sin.

1. *His privileges.* He was born of a noble tribe and family, was one of the blessed seed, the seed of Abraham, had that blessedness sealed to him by circumcision, and so was outwardly in covenant with God, and numbered amongst his people. This he once counted a gainful, an advantageous privilege; but after he had attained the knowledge of Christ, he saw that without Christ this would not at all avail him, ver. 7.

2. *His accomplishments.* He was a man of great natural parts, and he had raised, improved them by art and learning: he sat at the feet, *i. e.*, was the scholar of Gamaliel, a great rabbi, a master in Israel. He might have advanced his esteem amongst men by excellency of words and wisdom, but he wholly denied himself, and waived these, when there was danger thereby of obscuring the glory of Christ. He was content to lose the reputation of them, 1 Cor. ii. 1, 4. The like mind is in those who have attained not to make ostentation of their gifts.

3. *His enjoyments.* His credit, ease, plenty, friends, liberty, safety, he was willing to lose all for Christ's sake; he was content to be accounted as the filth and offscouring of the world, 1 Cor. iv. 13. His ease; in labours more abundant, in journeyings often, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings, 2 Cor. xi. 23, 27. The plenty and advantages of a good estate, ver. 27, hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, choosed rather to serve Christ in such necessities, than to enjoy a plentiful estate without him. His friends, these became his enemies for Christ's sake; hence he was in perils by his own countrymen. Instead of favours he received stripes, and that often, ver. 24. His liberty; in prison more frequent, bonds and afflictions, Acts xx. His safety; run the hazard of his life often for Christ, ver. 25, 26. Those that are savingly acquainted with Christ are like-minded; rather lose anything than part with Christ.

4. *His righteousness too.* His exactness in outward observation of the law, his zeal in the way of his conscience and judgment, all his outward performances, how specious or plausible soever, he was willing to lose, to renounce these, in point of confidence. He knew, after he knew Christ, if he had relied upon these for pardon, acceptance, salvation, it had been to the loss of his soul. So in this consideration he suffered the loss of them; he was willing to renounce, to disclaim them as grounds of his confidence.

5. As for his *lusts*, all and every of those sins that he was formerly addicted to, he counts it no loss to part with them; they scarce come into this account. It was a thing without question not only with him, but even the false teachers, that he who would not part with every known sin could not gain Christ, could have no interest in him, no advantage by him.

Thus you see the effect of this excellent knowledge of Christ in the apostle. Whatever was sinful, he utterly rejected it; those things that were indifferent, he had either actually suffered the loss of them for Christ, or it was the purpose and resolution of his soul so to do, whenever the interest of Christ should require it. And the things necessary, he renounced them as to any confidence in them, for those purposes for

which they were not sufficient. They were loss, of no value to him in this respect. But to open this more clearly, which is the

Third thing to be explained, viz., What is meant by losing all these things? To prevent mistakes in a matter of so great concernment, that no tender conscience, who has resigned itself up wholly unto Christ, may be perplexed or troubled at this truth, which, barely proposed, seems a hard saying. That none may misunderstand it, observe, that we may be said to lose all things to gain Christ in five respects.

(1.) In respect of utter rejection. Thus, in reference to sin, every one that will gain Christ must, every one that savingly knows Christ will, readily lose and freely part with every known sin. Till this be utterly rejected, Christ is never gained. There is not one word in Scripture that gives the least hope to any sinner of gaining Christ that will continue in any known sin. You utterly lose Christ, and all the benefits which sinners can expect from Christ, if ye will not part with every lust. No matter how gainful, how advantageous soever it seem, you will, you must lose Christ for it, if you will not lose it for Christ.

(2.) In respect of submissive deprivation. This in reference to outward enjoyments. Every one that knows Christ, as the apostle did, will quietly submit, and be content to be deprived of his ease, credit, honours, estate, safety, friends, liberty, and life too, whenever Christ calls for them, whenever Christ requires this of him. But when does Christ call for these? Why, then he requires us to part with these, when these, or any of these, cannot be enjoyed without sin. When the case is thus, that either Christ must be denied, dishonoured, or otherwise offended, or else you must part with these enjoyments, he that will rather offend Christ than submit to part with them, shews that he does not effectually know Christ: Luke xiv. 26, 27, 'He that hates not,' i.e., 'He that loves not me more than these,' as he explains it Mat. x. 37.

(8.) In respect of disposition and purpose of heart. He that savingly knows Christ, even while he does enjoy outward comforts, does heartily purpose and resolve to quit them whenever he shall be called to it, and in this regard may be said to lose them, because it is in his heart to do it whenever occasion is offered. The enjoyment of outward comforts, and the enjoyment of Christ, are not inconsistent; many times both may be enjoyed together. Christ does not always require every one that has interest in him actually to part with their earthly enjoyments, but he always requires a heart fully resolved to quit them, in case they cannot be enjoyed without the dishonour or displeasure of his Lord. The apostle, in his lowest condition, had always some or other outward enjoyment, at least his life; how, then, is he said to have suffered the loss of all things? Why, because it was the resolution of his soul so to do, whenever the interest of Christ called for it; and thus is every soul resolved that savingly knows Christ.

(4.) In respect of judgment and estimation; this in reference to all. So invaluable is Christ in his account, as all his enjoyments, accomplishments, privileges, performances, seem loss compared with him. They make a fair show in the dark before Christ is known, but when he appears and shines in the heart, these disappear, vanish into nothing. In respect of those ends for which Christ is given, those benefits which are gained by Christ, he makes no more account of these than a man does of that which he is sure he shall lose by. When these come in competition with Christ (as the false teachers set them), they will really prove the soul's loss, and so he

accounts them. If a man should have offered to his choice a heap of dung or an inestimably rich jewel, if one should come and advise him to choose the dung rather than the jewel, Oh no, would he say, you offer me loss, the jewel is more worth than a world of dung. Thus was it with the apostle, all these were dung in his account; Christ was the pearl of great price; to have chosen them before Christ, was to have chosen loss before gain, and made a woeful bargain. Thus it is with each soul that, &c.

(5.) In respect of confidence and affection. He relies not upon his parts, privileges, righteousness, for pardon, acceptance, or salvation. He has no more confidence in these, he makes them no more the grounds of his rejoicing, as attainable hereby, than if he had them not at all, than if he had quite lost them. He knows, if he should rest upon these, expect to get pardon by them, or for them, he should lose by it, it would prove the loss of pardon and salvation to his soul. He has lost them as to any confidence in them, as to any rejoicing therein, as though hereby he might be saved; so the apostle, verse 8. And so every one that knows Christ, he will have no more confidence to gain the favour of God, and life by these, than in that which if he depend on he is sure to lose by.

Thus you see in what respects they think not much to suffer the loss of all.

*Reason 1.* Because they know that they will lose more by any one of these things retained, not quitted, in the foresaid respects, than they can gain by them altogether. They know this is the way to lose Christ, to lose heaven, to lose their souls for ever. Any one known sin allowed and lived in, is enough to lose heaven, Gal. iii. 10, and v. 21. Good reason not to think much to part with sin, &c.

Any privilege not quitted in respect of confidence, when we expect salvation by and for it, cuts off from Christ, Gal. v. 2.

Any enjoyment not parted with, when the honour of Christ calls for it, excludes the enjoyer from any benefit by Christ, Mat. x. 87-89. Nay, your own righteousness, your observance of the law of God, performance of the duties the Lord requires, if it be not quitted as to any confidence of obtaining pardon and life by and for it, makes Christ of none effect to you; you lose Christ by it, Gal. v. 4, if you look upon it as that for which God will pardon you, as that by which ye may be justified, &c. Great reason to suffer the loss of all for gaining Christ, since the retaining of any one would be the loss of Christ.

*Reason 2.* They know that all these things cannot be available to gain any saving benefit, and therefore good reason to quit them, that they may gain Christ, by whom only the benefits that accompany salvation are to be gained. If any of these can be imagined as available to attain saving blessings, it must be either covenant privileges or religious performances; the rest are in an utter incapacity for such a purpose, but both these are renounced as altogether unprofitable for this end, Gal. vi. 15, for righteousness, see Gal. iii. 10, 11. If not justified, then not partakers of any saving benefit for salvation, and all the blessings that accompany salvation do depend upon justification.

*Use I.* By this you may know whether you have attained this excellent knowledge of Christ. Those that know him effectually will count all things but dung in comparison of him, cannot but be willing to suffer the loss of all for him. They have suffered the loss of all that is inconsistent with the enjoyment of Christ, they have renounced their sin, and all confidence in their own righteousness, in any privileges or performances, which

those that are not indeed acquainted with him rest on as a sufficient support for pardon and life. They rely not on anything else for happiness or peace with God, and they are willing to suffer the loss of all, which they may lawfully enjoy otherwise, when it will be inconsistent with the enjoyment of Christ. They will count it no loss to part with their most endeared enjoyments in this world, when the keeping of them would part them and Christ, Mat. xiii. 85. Christ is this pearl of great price, a pearl of inestimable, of incomprehensible, of infinite value. He that has found him, that has effectually discovered him, and apprehends truly of what worth and value he is, he will sell all, part with all, as a man would part with all the farthings he has for an inexhaustible mine of gold; or as a beggar would part with his rags and poor function, that he may have the possession of a crown, and enjoy the riches and glory of a kingdom.

*Use II. Exhortation.* Shew that you know Christ, by being willing to suffer the loss of all for him. Make use of the knowledge of Christ to dispose you to this great but difficult duty, to be ready and resolute to lose all for Christ, whenever he calls you to it. If you know Christ indeed, there is enough to induce you to it, even in those instances which may seem most intolerable and hardest to be digested. Let me shew this in one or two particulars.

1. As to your outward enjoyments and earthly possessions. To tell you, you must be ready to part with these, may seem an hard saying; it is so to those who are well accommodated in the world; it was so to him in the Gospel, who presumed that all the other commands of God he had observed, he fell off at this; when he was tried here, he left Christ, went away sorrowful, Mat. xix. But the apostle Paul had actually done it (as in the text), and so had the rest of the apostles, Mat. xix. 27. And none are or can be the disciples of Christ indeed, none are Christians really, but such as are resolved on it beforehand, and actually do it when they are tried, when the honour and interest of Christ requires it, Luke xiv. 83. And those that know Christ effectually will see no reason to stick at it; for he has assured us, that to suffer the loss of all for him is no loss at all, how great and intolerable soever the loss is in appearance, yet really it is the greatest gain, the richest advantage. We cannot possibly make a richer, a more gainful improvement of what we have in the world, than by losing it all for Christ. How great a paradox soever this seem, Christ has assured us of it, and if we do not believe him, we do not know him, Mat. xix. 29. You think it a good improvement of what you have, if you could gain twenty or fifty in the hundred, but what is this to gain an hundred-fold! You would think it a rich return of an adventure to double it or treble it; what is it then to double it more than forty times over? What merchant is there that would not venture all he has, nay, that would not throw his goods into the sea, upon assurance (as good assurance as he can desire), that for every pound he so loses he shall certainly gain an hundred? Why, Christ himself assures you of no less advantage by any thing you lose for him, and can you desire better assurance? or can you expect greater advantage? If you think not this advantage enough, if you desire more, he assures you of more, in the next world everlasting life; an hundred-fold here in this present time, and besides that, everlasting life hereafter, Mark x. 29, 30. Now eternal life in the kingdom of glory is not only an hundred-fold more, but ten thousand times more, ten millions more, unspeakably, unconceivably more, beyond all computation than all you can lose for Christ. And will you think much to lose a pound upon assurance



to gain many millions? You shall gain no less by suffering the loss of all for Christ, than if by the loss of a farthing you should gain ten millions; the advantage will be greater, vastly greater, beyond all proportion.

Yea, but what assurance is there of this? It is a gainful adventure indeed; beyond all in the world, if it were sufficiently insured. Why, you have the best assurance of it that the whole earth, yea, or heaven itself can give. Christ himself is engaged for it, he who is the mighty God, the faithful and true Witness, who has all power in heaven and earth to make it good; and heaven and earth shall perish, rather than one *iota* of his word shall fail and not be fulfilled. You shall sooner see the heavens fall, and the whole earth sink, than see the least failure as to the performance of his word.

And this being so, certainly if Christ were known, if he were believed, if there were faith concerning this thing, to suffer the loss of all for Christ would be so far from being counted an intolerable loss, that it would be esteemed the richest and most advantageous bargain that we can possibly make for ourselves in this world. It would be so far from being feared and avoided upon unworthy terms, that it would be welcomed and embraced as that which is richly desirable.

2. Our personal righteousness, the best of it, holiness of heart and life, this must be quitted in some respect, and only in some respect. To speak or think of suffering the loss of all absolutely, is intolerable. A personal righteousness is in its own place transcendently excellent, and absolutely necessary; without it we cannot be qualified for glory, we cannot be serviceable on earth, we can never come to heaven; without it we cannot honour Christ here, nor shall ever see his face hereafter, Heb. xii. In these respects we must not think of suffering the loss of it, we must not lose it for a world, we lose heaven and our souls if we suffer it.

But in point of justification we must quit it, *i.e.*, we must not rely on our personal righteousness as a justifying righteousness. To quit it thus far will be no loss, for it is no loss to quit anything so far as it is not useful, how excellent soever it be otherwise. Now our personal righteousness is not useful to justify us before God against the accusation of the law of works; to quit it here, to lose it thus, is to lose nothing but a false conceit, a conceit that it is what it is not, and can do for us what it can never do.

No person on earth ever had in himself a justifying righteousness. It is true if our first parents had continued in their primitive state, without sin, their righteousness would have justified them; but since their fall, sin entering into the world, and spreading over it, no man ever had in himself a justifying righteousness but the man Christ Jesus; no other personal righteousness besides can answer the demands of the law in a full, perfect, spotless conformity to it; none can satisfy for the transgressions of it, none can give a title to eternal life. This I call a justifying righteousness. The best personal righteousness of the most eminent saint on earth is no such thing, it can no more justify him than dung can feed him; how excellent soever it be for other purposes, it is not sufficient, it is not useful, for this, here it leaves us at a loss. On this account the apostle did suffer the loss of his own righteousness; if he was to appear before God, to be justified or condemned, he would be found not having his own righteousness, he durst not rely on that. Elsewhere, 1 Cor. iv. 4, and others, Ps. cxliii. 2, they decline the consideration of their own righteousness in this case, as knowing upon that account they could not be justified, the sinful effects of it would rather expose them to condemnation.

But if we rely not on our own righteousness for justification, what righteousness is there to rely on? We shall be at a loss for a justifying righteousness. So the papists, so the Socinians and their followers, determine. But the apostle was otherwise minded, he knew where to find a righteousness fully sufficient for this purpose: 'Not having his own righteousness;' if he might be found in Christ, even in him who is 'the Lord our righteousness,' in him who is 'made of God wisdom and righteousness,' &c., who is 'the end of the law for righteousness,' 'who was made sin for us, that we,' &c. This is a righteousness far transcending any personal righteousness that sinners are capable of; yea, and that righteousness too which would have justified our first parents if they had not sinned, as being the righteousness of God, the righteousness of faith, an everlasting righteousness. It is a better, a more excellent, righteousness than that in the state of innocency would have been, if it had been perfected in respect of the subject, it being 'the righteousness of God,' so called verse 9, and not of man only. 2. In respect of the facility of obtaining, it is attainable by faith, and so described, ver. 9. Faith interests those in it who can neither personally satisfy for past disobedience, nor perfectly observe the law for the time to come. 3. In respect of its perpetuity, it is everlasting: Dan. ix. 24, 'Righteousness of eternity' (*Heb.*). Adam's righteousness, if it had continued a thousand years, might have been lost by sin; but this righteousness makes an end of sin, and so makes a justified state endless. Those that believe this effectually, need not think much to suffer the loss of all, that they may win Christ and be interested in his righteousness, so they may be found in him, not having, &c.