

SERMON XXIII.

BY THE REV. HENRY WILKINSON, SEN., D.D.,

SOMETIME CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND MARGARET PROFESSOR OF
DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

WHAT IS IT TO DO ALL WE DO IN THE NAME OF CHRIST? AND
HOW MAY WE DO SO?

*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord
Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.—Colossians iii. 17.*

THERE have been, and still are, many great and famous names in the world into which men have been baptized, according to which they have been called, and also walked in the world: *Όνοματα ανθρωπων* ["Names of men"]. (Rev. xi. 13.) "Men of great name," or "men of renown." (Gen. vi. 4.) What a renowned name had the beast in the earth, that "the world wondered after the beast, and worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?" (Rev. xiii. 3, 4.) Pharaoh was a great name amongst the kings of Egypt, who were so called from their famous predecessors: so the kings of the Amalekites were called Agag, and of Tyre Hiram, and of Lycia Antiochus, of Pontus Mithridates, of the emperors of Rome Cæsars. And in the church, professors have affected to be called by the name of some eminent persons. (1 Cor. iii. 4, 5.) Some cried-up Paul, others Peter; and this was a growing evil in the church. (1 Cor. i. 12—14.) They ambitiously affected to be denominated from some eminent persons among them; as the Lutherans and Calvinists, and many others at this day, have been called and denominated from some great persons that have been famous in their generation.

But here is a name in my text [that] is above all names in heaven and earth; and all Christians are called by this name, and call on this name. (Jer. xiv. 9; Amos ix. 12.) This name you must trust in, and boast in, beyond and above all names whatsoever. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: and in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." (Isai. xlv. 24, 25.) See what a name is given to Christ, Isai. ix. 6, and bow to it: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor;" and consider every letter of his name, and adore it. The apostle, according to his usual manner, in this epistle having spoken of the doctrine of the gospel, and how they received it, and the influence it had on them; (Col. i. 12, 13;) and concerning Christ, in whom they had redemption; (verses 14—19;) and of the excellency of his person, and of the riches of the glory of his grace, revealed in it; (verse 27;) then, chap. ii., he stirs them up to live such lives as becometh the gospel, and to beware of seducers. (Verses 16—19.) Then, chap. iii., he puts them in mind of several duties, throughout the chapter. He

lays-down some general exhortations, with reference to the gospel, and their living suitably to it, from verses 1 to 17. Then he proceeds to particular duties in our place and relations; (verses 18—25;) and in this verse 17, having laid down something, he gathers up all into one sum,—how to carry themselves in the whole course of their lives in their thoughts, words, and works.

DOCTRINE.

We may observe from the general scope, *that the doctrine of the gospel carrieth the highest and strictest obligations upon all such to whom it is revealed to duty and service in their places and relations to God and man.*

In the words we have, 1. *A rule laid down.* 2. *The things that are under the rule.*—Words, works, and thoughts, and secret motions of the heart; which works also are well known to God, and so they come under rule. 3. Here is *the universality of the rule* in its extent and full compass. It fetcheth-in all words and works without exception, and all persons: for this “you” takes-in all persons, of what rank or degree soever. 4. Here is *the manner how they must be done*, so as to answer the mind of God in the name of Christ. 5. Here is *a further rule*, or rather a part of the general rule,—that we should give thanks, &c. (1.) Here is *the duty itself.*—Thanksgiving. (2.) *The object of it.*—God, &c. (3.) *How it must be managed.*—By Christ, or through Christ.

OBSERVATION I. All our actions, thoughts, words, and works, must be done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

OBSERV. II. All praises and thanksgivings, as they are only due to God, so they must be performed by us to him by Jesus Christ, that they may be accepted of him.

All thanks are due to God the Father, who is the Father of Christ, and in him our God and Father; and therefore this work is to be done only in, by, and through Jesus Christ: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eph. v. 20.) All glory [is to] be given by the church to Christ: (Heb. xiii. 21:) and Rom. xvi. 27 [informs us] how this great duty is to be performed: “To God, through Christ Jesus.”

OBSERV. III. Praises and thanksgivings are the great duty of our lives; for if we do all things in the name of Jesus Christ, then whatever we do in his name is special matter of thanksgiving. “In every thing give thanks:” if we think a good thought, or do a good work, it is of God; and therefore be thankful; and it is a sacrifice to be tendered to God every day. (Heb. xiii. 15.)

As to the first doctrine, consider,

I. What it is to “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” Christ.

II. Why we must do all in that name.

III. How shall we come to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

IV. Some uses.

I. *What is it to do all in the name of Christ?*

1. *It is to go to him as a Mediator, or to go to God by him.*—For we

must upon all occasions go to God in a way of prayer by Christ, if we will be accepted. God's Spirit tells us, that he is a God hearing prayer; therefore unto him "shall all flesh come" and appear; (Psalm lxx. 2;) not come to God in prayer, but by Christ as Mediator. Beza sets it out, *Invocato Christi nomine*, ["Having called upon the name of Christ,"] we must go to God; *quod autem addit, δι' αὐτοῦ, diligenter notandum est, ut sciamus Deum frustra coli nisi Christus Mediator interveniat*: "We must go to God 'by him:' we must take special notice of that word; for we do in vain make our addresses to God, but by the intercession of our Mediator." All our supplications are to be put in the name of Christ, as he bids us, John xv. 3, 16; and he tells them, Whatsoever they shall ask the Father in his name, &c. "At that day," that is, after his ascension and giving the Spirit, "ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you," &c. (John xvi. 23, 26.) He speaks this by way of encouragement unto them,—that they should go in his name, and then they should certainly speed. He gives as loving friends sometimes do, when they certainly intend to do some special good for a friend; they say, "I will not tell you what I will do for you;" intimating thereby, they will do what they can for them.

2. *It is to do all by his authority, power, and command.*—Matt. xviii. 18—20, Christ tells them, that whatever they did "bind or loose on earth" in his "name," that is, by his authority and command, should "be bound in heaven:" for when two or three are gathered together in his "name," that is, by virtue of his command, he would be in the midst of them. All power and authority is given of the Father to Christ; and "therefore go in the name of the Father," &c. (Matt. xxviii. 18—20.) Laws and proclamations which go forth in the name of the king,—they go forth in his authority. All our actions come under His command; He "is our King and our Lawgiver." (Isai. xxxiii. 22.) Though "other lords beside" Christ "have had dominion over us; but by him only will we make mention of his name." (Isai. xxvi. 13.) By virtue of his command and authority, "we will make mention of thy name;" we will admire and praise thee. He is a Sovereign Lord who commands and doth impose laws on the consciences of men. His laws reach the inward as well as the outward man; else all that we do cannot be done in his name, and by virtue of some authority from him, who is "King of kings and Lord of lords," (Rev. xix. 16,) and "the only Potentate." (1 Tim. vi. 15.)

3. *It is to do all in his strength and power.*—This is to do all in his name. Thus, Annas and Caiaphas, &c., asked Peter and John, "by what power, or by what name," they had done this. (Acts iv. 6, 7.) Peter told them that in the name of Jesus Christ did that man stand whole before them. (Verse 10.) Thus did they come in the power of Christ. To go about a work in the name of Christ, is to go about it and do it in his strength and power. David went against Goliath "in the name of the Lord of hosts." (1 Sam. xvii. 45.) So David said, that "in the name of the Lord he would destroy them," that is, in the strength and power of the Lord. (Psalm cxviii. 10, 11.) Paul "can do all things through Christ who strengthens" him. (Phil. iv. 13.) His grace was sufficient for him. (2 Cor. xii. 9.) No man in the strength of his own parts

or gifts can do any thing so as to be accepted. "Without me ye can do nothing:" (John xv. 5 :) he doth not say, that "you may do something," or that "you can do but little," but, "You can do nothing without me." He "worketh all our works for us," (Isai. xxvi. 12,) even the will and the deed. (Phil. ii. 13.) Paul "laboured more abundantly than they all;" but he presently corrected himself: "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10.)

4. *For his glory.* 1 Cor. x. 31.—So that as he is the Author, so he is the End of all we do. (Rom. xi. 36.) All people must "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." (John v. 23.) Christ is the Alpha and Omega of all. (Rev. i. 8.) All glory and honour is due to Christ, as is due to the Father. Rev. iv. 9—11, they "give glory to him that sits on the throne;" and, Rev. v. 12, 13, there is all honour given "unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." They who do all for the glory of God, do all their actions to the honour of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; so that when God doeth any thing for us, he doeth it for his name's sake; and therefore, when David begged of God, that for his name's sake he would lead him, (Psalm xxxi. 3,) he means, for his glory. We should have an eye at the glory of Christ.

5. To do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, is *to live a life of faith for a supply of all things for life and godliness.*—As the apostle speaks, 2 Peter i. 2, 3. He tells us, we have "all things;" that is, we that have "like precious faith," spoken of in verse 1, and that live in the exercise of it upon Christ, as Paul did. (Gal. ii. 20.) This faith in Christ's name, being exercised in a way of prayer, is the way to obtain whatever we ask. (John xvi. 23.) Every believer doth live a life of faith, (Heb. xi. 33,) in all conditions, and at all times, in the whole course of his life; so that what Peter said of the healing of the cripple, may in a sort be said of a believer in the course of his life: "By faith in Christ's name he does all."

6. To do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, it is *to walk in the religion of the Lord Jesus.*—According to his rule, for doctrine, worship, and practice of life. The people of God do say, "We will walk in the name of the Lord our God." (Micah iv. 5.) The Heathens did own and honour the names of their gods, especially in the religion, worship, and institutions of their gods; and so the people of God, that walk in the name of the Lord Jesus, keep close to the religion of Christ. He "that nameth the name of Christ must depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) It is on this account that the servants of Christ are hated and persecuted,—for his religion which they professed. (Matt. x. 22; Luke xxi. 17.) So, Rev. ii. 3, they are said for his name's sake to have laboured, &c.; verse 13, to hold fast his name; and, Rev. iii. 8, not to deny his name. All people join in communion with their God and one another, that trust in the name of their God. The primitive Christians did walk and "continue in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship;" (Acts ii. 42, 43;) and they about the throne, at the sea of ordinances appointed by Christ, (Rev. xv. 2,) worshipping of him in a way of visible communion with all such as are joined to "the God of Abraham." (Psalm xlvi. 9.) All that walk in the name of Christ walk in all the ways and ordinances of Christ: "In all his ways," (Deut. viii. 6; xi. 22,) and in no other.

Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 : "Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

7. It is to follow his example.—The examples of persons who have had great names in the world, have prevailed much for doing and suffering. All such as are professedly the disciples of Christ, his name is upon them in a special manner, and therefore they should follow his example. Matt. xvi. 24 : "And follow me." We must walk as Christ walked. (1 John ii. 6.) We must follow his example ; for his life was exemplary. (1 Peter ii. 21—23.) He presseth his own example for meekness and lowliness, Matt. xi. 29 ; and, John xiii. 15 : "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." It was an example of the greatest condescension in the eleven offices of love. In Eph. v. 25, husbands have Christ propounded as an example of love to their wives. Persons of eminency and dignity have great names, and carry many followers ; and many walk according to their example, and upon that account are called by their names ; for examples prevail more than precepts.

II. The second thing proposed was, *the reasons why we must do all in the name of Christ.*

1. *Because all we have, are, or can do, is of Christ.* (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.)—All grace and strength to us is from him ; (1 Cor. i. 30 ;) so that he is a believer's "all, and in all." (Col. iii. 11.) All that God gives to us is through him, and by him only. (Eph. i. 3, &c.) Adoption is by him ; (verse 5 ;) the seal of the Spirit, and the earnest of our inheritance, are by him. (Verses 13, 14.) "We are created unto good works in" him. (Eph. ii. 10.) Reconciliation and peace are by him : (2 Cor. v. 18 ;) all our actual supplies are by him. (Phil. iv. 19.) His "grace is exceeding abundant in" him : (1 Tim. i. 14, 15 ;) for he is a super-excellent person, and hath the pre-eminence above all things, a name above every name ; in him all things subsist ; in him all fulness dwells ; as the apostle shows, Col. i. 16—19 ; and therefore it pleaseth the Father that we should receive all "grace for grace" through him.

2. *Because the Father hath exalted Christ, and given him a name above every name.*—That he who was so much despised and rejected, and whose name was a reproach and scorn to all ; (Isai. liii. 2—4 ;) that name, so much abased, the Father hath appointed that it shall be exalted "above every name," (Phil. ii. 8—10,) and all other names shall vanish and be as nothing before this name, there being no other name in heaven or in earth by which we shall be saved. (Acts iv. 12.) Therefore all must "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." (John v. 23.) Upon this account all people shall be beholden to him for all the good that ever they do, or have, or are.

3. *Because we cannot be accepted, either as to our persons or performances, but by him.*—"Accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. i. 6.) In Him alone He is well pleased ; (Matt. iii. 17 ;) so that all that goes to God from us is by his hand, it must be presented by his hand, and perfumed with his incense. (Rev. viii. 3, 4.) Abel's sacrifice found acceptance by faith in the Messiah, when he presented it to God. (Heb. xi. 4.) We have our Lord Christ, Rev. v. 6, "in the midst of the throne," to negotiate between "Him that sits upon the throne," and the saints that are

about the throne ; so that nothing comes from heaven to us in a way of blessing, but what comes through his hand ; and nothing goes from us to heaven in a way of duty, so as to be accepted, but only by his hand. (John xvi. 23.) So that his name is the only prevailing name with God, he having satisfied the justice of God, pacified the wrath of God, and removed the curse of God from us ; so that all sacrifices whatever that find the way to heaven, and find acceptance there, must of necessity be in his name. (Heb. xiii. 15 ; v. 1.)

4. *Because all that comes from God to us must be by his hand.*—He is the Jacob's ladder spoken of, Gen. xxviii. 12. God acts toward us as a God in a covenant of grace and peace with us only in Christ ; (Heb. xiii. 20, 21 ; 1 Peter v. 10 ;) and therefore the apostolical benedictions and prayers for "grace, mercy, and peace," are "from God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. i. 7 ; 1 Cor. i. 3, 4 ; 2 Cor. i. 2 ; Eph. i. 2, 3.) 1 Peter i. 2, 3, he calls them "elect," &c., by "God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and blood of Jesus." Verse 3, we are said to be "blessed" by "the Father, and begotten," &c., "through Christ ;" and therefore, since God doth act as a God of all grace and peace, we must do all in his name, by which the Father is propitiated toward us, he being "made sin for us," (2 Cor. v. 21,) and "a curse." (Gal. iii. 13.)

QUESTION. But here comes in a question : "How they can be said to do any thing in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that are not one with him ? though yet they pretend to do all in his name, but are not owned by him." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.)

ANSWER. I answer, 1. It is one thing to pretend to do a thing in the name of Christ, another thing to do it indeed ; that is, by true faith in his name, by which they are made one with him.

2. There was in that age a faith of miracles, which though it were an extraordinary gift, and common both to believers and reprobates, they might be said to do those great things in Christ's name ; that is, by a power derived from him, though they were not in Christ, neither did own him as their Saviour, nor were owned by him.

3. What is done properly in his name in the sense of the text must take into its compass all the foregoing particulars mentioned ; else it will not be accepted : * it must be done in the name of Christ as Mediator. Many things may be done in the name of Christ, even mountains may be removed, (1 Cor. xiii. 2,) and yet not be done by faith in his name, as has been said.

III. The third thing propounded was, *How we may come to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus.* And this may be instead of a USE OF DIRECTION to us.

1. We must be supposed to be in Christ before we can do any thing in Christ's name.—According to that in John xv. 4, 5, where he tells us, that, except we abide in him, (that supposeth that they are in him first,) we can do nothing ; for, verse 5, he compares our being in him to that of a branch in the vine, which cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide

* *Bonum non nisi ex integrâ causâ, malum ex quolibet defectu.* "A truly good action is never performed except from a pure and perfect cause ; a bad one, always from some defect." —EDIT.

in the vine. Luther, inquiring into the reason why so many ordinary things done by the saints are set down in scripture with a mark of honour upon them, and yet the moral virtues and famous deeds of the great philosophers and others are passed by, answers, that the reason is, because their persons are not in Christ, and therefore their actions are not accepted; and saith, *Si vel Cicero vel Socrates sanguinem sudasset, tamen propterea non placeret Deo*: "If Socrates or Cicero had sweat drops of blood, their actions had not pleased God." (*Comment. in Gen. xxix.*)

2. Supposing we are one with Christ, we must *exercise faith upon him*, and have constant recourse to him, in all that ever we do, *for the supplies of his grace and Spirit*.—By faith resigning all to him, casting all our burdens and cares upon him, committing ourselves and all our affairs to him, and fetching-in all our strength from him. (1 Peter ii. 20; v. 7.) Christ tells us, Whatever we ask the Father in his name shall be given to us; (John xv. 16; xvi. 23, 26;) for whatever we "ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive." (Matt. xxi. 22; James v. 15.) So that if we would be enabled to do all in the name of Christ, we must exercise faith in his name in prayer to God for all things; for he is in office in heaven for this purpose: "For he ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. vii. 25.) The hand of faith put forth in prayer, though but in ejaculatory prayer, draws virtue from heaven: as we read, when He was on earth, those that did but touch him drew virtue from him. (Luke vi. 19; viii. 46.)

3. *Living [in] close and secret communion with the Lord Jesus in the use of all his ordinances*.—By and through which he communicates himself in the fulness and freeness of life, light, love, and grace to our souls; for they be the golden pipes spoken of, Zech. iv. 12, by which the golden oil is conveyed to our souls; for his name is an "ointment poured forth" in days of holy communion. (Canticles i. 3.) By this means we come to have further acquaintance with him and peace from him, to see his power and glory, and our souls to "be satisfied as with marrow and fatness;" (Psalm lxiii. 5;) and to be changed into his image, (2 Cor. iii. 18,) and to be refreshed with fuller tastes of his love, which is better than wine.

4. *Exercise your thoughts much upon him, and be much taken-up with him in the course of your lives*.—But in a special manner upon singular occasions. The Psalmist saith, "I am continually with thee;" (Psalm lxiii. 23;) that was, in his heart and thoughts. Let your thoughts be taken-up much in the consideration how to manage your affairs so as may be according to the mind of Christ, by strength derived from him, and for his honour, that we may be accepted in our works.

OBJECTION. Perhaps you will object, that "it is impossible we should in every business of our lives have actual thoughts of Christ and his glory, or go actually to him for assistance and guidance in every particular business."

I ANSWER, 1. There may and must be an habitual, gracious, holy frame of heart in us, wrought by the Spirit, by which we may be strongly inclined to the Lord Christ, and his word as our rule, and his glory as our end; so that we do, in the full purpose of our hearts, resolve to trust

in him, and commit ourselves to him, and rest upon him for help, assistance, guidance, acceptance, and success in all things. What David prayed for, for himself and people, when they were in a good frame of heart, is the desire and endeavour of every believer; namely, that the Lord would "keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of their heart, and prepare their heart unto him." (1 Chron. xxix. 18.) This is the habitual preparation of the heart for God; this frame of heart is the new creature in us.

2. When we have especial and particular work to do for Christ, then there ought to be an actual preparation of our hearts for him, and stirring up the grace that is in us, an actual making-out after him, and laying hold on him for strength and grace from him "in time of need." (Heb. iv. 16.) This is especially to be done upon more solemn and momentous occasions; *then* we must in an especial manner think upon that word that was spoken to Israel: "Prepare to meet thy God." (Amos iv. 12.) We read, Exod. xl. 30, 31, there was a laver before the altar, in which they were to wash before they went into the congregation for service. We cannot sanctify God in an ordinance, except we prepare for him; which is all one with sanctifying of God. (Lev. x. 3.) Samuel, when he came to sacrifice to the Lord, said to the elders of Bethlehem, "Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." (1 Sam. xvi. 5.)

3. The more frequent actual thoughts we have of Christ and his word, and our eye upon the rule, and his glory as our end, it is the better ever. Therefore we should often call upon ourselves as Deborah did: "Awake, Deborah, awake," &c. (Judges v. 12.) There must be an actual excitation of ourselves, and exercising of our graces, when we have some special duty to perform. It is said of Samson, that he went out and shook himself, "as at other times." (Judges xvi. 20.) It seems to have been his manner, when he went about any great work. We should stir-up our hearts, and send-up frequent ejaculatory prayers, though we cannot engage in a solemn way of duty to God; and much work is done that way. Moses sent up an ejaculation upon a great exigent, which reached heaven; yet there was not a word spoken by him: yet saith God, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" (Exod. xiv. 15.) We should often cast the eye of faith up toward God, (Isai. xlv. 22,) as they looked up to the brasen serpent, and were healed. The people of God looked to the temple, when they could not come near to it; and the temple was a type of Christ. (1 Kings viii. 29, 30, 35; Jonah ii. 4.)

This which hath been laid down by way of direction, I would press by way of EXHORTATION:—In a word, to have frequent recourse to the Lord Jesus Christ, since he doth so frequently press us to this very thing. The oftener we visit him, the more enlarged we are in our desires toward him; the more we receive from him, and the better welcome we are to him, and the Father for his sake. He bids us open our mouths wide, and he will fill them; and takes it very ill at our hands, when we are straitened in our hearts toward him. (Psalm lxxxi. 13—16.) We cannot go to God as a Father in Christ, in Christ's name, but we must needs speed; (Heb. iv. 16;) and we cannot speed but by him, and upon his account; for, 1. We have *admittance and access to the Father* only by Christ. (Eph. iii. 12.) 2. We have *assistance* only through

him. (John xv. 5 ; Phil. iv. 13.) 3. In regard of *acceptance*, which is only in and through him. (Eph. i. 3, 6.) 4. In regard of *recompence* ; (Rev. xxii. 12 ;) our reward is only by him. (Matt. v. 11, 12.) That is a great reward for Christ's sake, "eternal life ;" the greatest reward is by Christ. (Rom. vi. 23.)

IV. The fourth thing propounded was some uses ; that since we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, hence may be inferred,

First. That all our actions, as they must be done in his strength and for his glory, (1 Cor. x. 31,) so by his authority and according to his rule and word.—It is not in our power, nor at our liberty, to act as we please, according to our own fancy, or for our own ends : "None of us liveth to himself ;" (Rom. xiv. 7, 8 ;) as if he should say, "We are none of our own : therefore, living and dying, we are the Lord's ; and so in neither at our own disposing." He had spoken before of their eating or forbearing to eat, how they ought to eat, or not to eat, according to the will of God : it must be to the Lord's glory ; especially considering that He who requires we should do all in his strength and name and for his glory, hath such a title to us, to lay laws upon us, as none else hath. (1 Cor. vi. 20.) So that all our actions must come under some rules general, if not particular, 1. Of piety to God. 2. Of charity to men. 3. Of sobriety to ourselves. And all this the gospel teacheth us : "The grace of God that hath appeared to all men teacheth us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." (Titus ii. 11, 12.) There is the rule of the new creature, by which a saint doth walk in his general and particular calling "in all holy conversation and godliness." (Gal. vi. 16 ; 2 Peter iii. 11.) They are a proud generation that say as they in Psalm xii. 4 : "Our lips are our own, who is lord over us ?" We will not be bounded by any laws, nor walk by any rule, nor be controlled by any whatever." But we have not so learned Christ ; we have our bounds and limits set us, not only in sacred but civil things. Therefore bishop Davenant, upon Col. iii. 17, speaks fully to our purpose : *Fallitur vulgus, cum iudicat licere sibi uti victu, vestitu, sermone, aut quocunque adiaphorâ, suo arbitrio : nam hæc omnia ad regulam adhibenda sunt ; alioquin, licet ipsâ re nullum sit vitium, erit tamen in utente* : "The vulgar sort are much mistaken, who judge it lawful for them to use their liberty wholly in eating, drinking, clothing, speaking, or any other indifferent things, according to their own wills and pleasure : for all these things are to be brought under rule ; otherwise, what is lawful in itself, may be unlawful to him that useth it.

*INFERENCE II. That they are very bold and saucy wretches, who presume to entitle Christ to their impious and wicked courses :—In nomine Domini incipit omne malum.** How many do justify themselves in their superstitious practices by the word of God ! How many be like Satan, who, when he tempted Christ, produced scripture to enforce his temptations. (Matt. iv. 2—10.) So, too many cite scripture for their false worship, and for their false doctrines and wicked lives ; "but wisdom is justified of her children." (Matt. xi. 19.) It was a profanation of God's

* "Every kind of wickedness is commenced with a profane invocation, in the name of the Lord."—EDIT.

name, when the Israelites proclaimed a feast to the Lord, which was to their idols. (Exod. xxxii. 5.) We find the false apostles pretend as much to the name of Christ as the apostle Paul did, and to preach in his name, though they preached false doctrine; (2 Cor. xi. 13;) and anti-Christ himself pretends to be like the lamb, when he speaks like a dragon. (Rev. xiii. 11.)

INFER. III. Hence we infer, *that we cannot expect God's blessing upon any thing which is not done in the name of Christ.*—What we undertake, and not in the fear of the dreadful name of the Lord Jehovah, not for his honour and according to his word, we cannot expect his blessing: none can expect God's guidance, assistance, or success in that which cannot be warranted by the word of Christ, all blessings being wholly and only in his name. (Eph. i. 3.) We have all things in Christ in a way of blessing. (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.) Whilst we are with him, he will be with us; (2 Chron. xv. 2;) while we are with him in a way of duty, he will be with us in a way of blessing.

INFER. IV. Hence it follows, *that it is not in the power of any person, by natural or acquired parts, to do any thing according to the rule of Christ, or for his glory, which is not done in his strength.*—And therefore Paul, who could “do all things through Christ which strengthened him,” (Phil. iv. 13,) could not so much as think a good thought without him. (2 Cor. iii. 5.) And this our Lord Christ puts-out of question, where he tells us, “Without me ye can do nothing.” (John xv. 5.) It is not in the name of the most excellent parts or gifts or grace whatever, that we can do any thing acceptable or well-pleasing to God.

INFER. V. *Whatever excellency there is in any action or worthy achievement, so as to commend it to God, it is from Christ, through faith in his name.*—Though the action may be a common action in itself, or perhaps some base, servile, low employment, yet being done in the name of Christ, with faith in him, with care and conscience to please him, such an action far surpasseth the great and noble exploit of Alexander the Great, of Pompey, or Cæsar, or of any of the renowned heroes in the world, who, in the name of parts or gifts or any acquired excellences, have done great things in the world. There may be a great difference betwixt persons and their employments, as betwixt a prince and a peasant in their places; and yet a poor peasant doing some common work in an ordinary way, it may be, a piece of drudgery, yet his work being done by faith in Christ's name, it doth as much surpass the person and actions of a prince in a worth and excellency, who doth not manage his public and weighty affairs of state in the name of Christ, as the prince doth surpass him in place. *They have great advantage above all others, who go about their common employments in the name of Christ and for the honour of Christ,*—above all others who act in their own name; as it was with David and Goliath. (1 Sam. xvii. 45.) The lowest actions, done by faith, have a very great honour put upon them by the Spirit of God above all others. The harlot Rahab, receiving the spies by faith, is put among the worthies upon that account. (Heb. xi. 31.) Civil and natural actions, done in the name of Christ, are raised to a very great height, to have the name of “religious” put upon them: thus doth faith in Christ's name turn brass and copper into gold.

Luther saith, that if he might have his option, he would rather choose the lowest and basest employment of a poor rustic or maid-servant, doing their work in faith, before all the victories and triumphs of Alexander the Great or Julius Cæsar. "Why?" Because *hic est Deus, illic est diabolus : hæc est differentia essentialis : hoc non omnes possunt cernere, neque Erasmus quidem vidit* ; that is, "Because with a poor saint God is, and the devil with *them* : and this is an essential difference betwixt them ; every one does not see it ; Erasmus himself did not perceive it." By this name the most contemptible persons in the world are come to be renowned in the church. (Heb. xi. 2, 38, 39.) Those that lived by faith on that name, had a great and good report in heaven ; and though they were despised by the world, yet "the world was not worthy of" them. God never speaks such a word of all the men of great name in the world, as he does of the poorest saint on earth,—that "the world is not worthy of" them. Sure I am that many of those great men of the world were not worthy to live in the world : the world was weary of them, and the worse for them.

INFER. VI. *If all we do well in the world, is to be done in Christ's name and through his strength, it is very fit that we should give him the glory of all.*—Since all we can do is of him, and from him, all must be "to him." (Rom. xi. 36.) We find in Rev. v. 8—14, that the saints and angels fell down and gave glory to God and to the Lamb. The Lord is very jealous of his honour, when men take the glory that is due to him to themselves, and sacrifice to their own acts ; and as God is jealous of his honour, and will endure to have no co-partners with him, (Isai. xlii. 8,) so the servants of Christ are also jealous of themselves, lest, when they have done worthily, they should rob him of his honour ; and therefore the apostle Paul, when he had said, "I laboured more abundantly than they all," seems presently to correct himself : "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10.)

INFER. VII. Hence it will follow, *that whatever service or worship is done in any [other] name to God, than that of Christ, it is rejected ; or what is done in his name, but not according to his mind, is abhorred of God.*—Though he may do that which is commanded by God, which for substance may be the same that a believer doeth ; yet being not done in the name of Christ, God abhors it. Though they did sacrifice such things as God commanded, yet being not done in the name of the Lord, for his glory, and according to his word, it is rejected of God. (Isai. lviii. 1—3 ; lxvi. 3.) Their incense, which was appointed for expiation, was an abomination to God. (Isai. i. 10—14.) So that all the worship of the Jewish synagogue was abhorred of God, because the name of Christ is abhorred by them ; and all the services of Papists, who are of the synagogue of Satan, which are tendered in the name of saints or angels, or of their own merit or righteousness, are rejected with greatest detestation ; all the service of the whole nations of Turks, what are done in the name of Mahomet and their Alcoran, are an abomination to God.

INFER. VIII. Hence learn, *that there is no honouring of God but in the name of his Son.* (John v. 23.)—There can be no true praise given to God in any work by any person, but in and through Christ. "We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works ;" (Eph. ii. 10 ;) so as they

must be a new-created people through Christ, which are a people to his praise. (Psalm cii. 18.) The lowest, meanest work, done by faith in Christ, as it brings great honour to God, so it is greatly honoured by God. A cup of cold water, given upon the account of Christ, has a great reward from him. Salvian speaks to this point very notably: *Non perdidit mercedem suam.* (Matt. x. 42.) *Etiam eam rem in futuro habituram præmium esse dicit, quæ in præsentis pretium non dabit; tantum honoris cultori suo tribuit, ut aliquid esset per fidem, quod hic omnino nihil esset per servilitatem.* “ ‘He shall not lose his reward,’ says he: in the world to come, he shall have a great reward, which perhaps in the present life he may miss of; so great an honour is God pleased to put upon an action done in faith, however mean and inconsiderable, and which by reason of its vileness in the eyes of men is nothing.” A visit of a poor member of Christ, sick or in prison, or an alms given to feed or clothe them, what an honour is put upon these at the last day! (Matt. xxv. 34—36.) But what shall we think of Cyrus and Darius and others, who did so great things for the church of God? (Isai. xlv. 1—4;) and of the king of Tyrus, who, upon account of the protection that the people of God had from him, is called “the anointed cherub that covereth?” (Ezek. xxviii. 14, 16.) To this I answer, that as for Cyrus, though God made great use of him, yet the Lord says expressly of him, that he knew him not; and therefore, as for all those actions they did for the church of God, though God did gain honour by them, yet they did not honour God, nor were they accepted of him, because they were not in Christ.

USE OF EXHORTATION. *To study the name of the Lord Jesus.*—For by how much the more we know of his name, by so much the more we shall trust in him. (Psalm ix. 10.) It is the “name which is above every name.” (Phil. ii. 9.) His name is as sweet, precious “ointment poured forth:” (Canticles i. 3;) the richest treasures of grace are laid up in that name of Christ. (John i. 16.) Study it, that you “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of it; that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.” (Eph. iii. 18, 19.) There is a surpassing excellency, as in that name, so in the knowledge of it; (Phil. iii. 8;) for by this knowledge we come to the fairest and clearest discoveries of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; the Lord shines into the hearts of such students, and communicates a glorious light unto them. We come by this knowledge, as to see into the treasuries of grace in him, so to possess and enjoy them; and this knowledge carries eternal life with it. (John xvii. 3.)

The next USE IS OF REPROOF.

1. *Too many, of great parts, learning, and worth, yet have ambitiously affected a great name in the church and in the world, to gain followers and make a party, and to be cried up as teaching men.*—This was it which Christ saw was a very prevailing evil among the scribes and Pharisees, and utterly decried it, saying, “Be not ye called Rabbi, Rabbi;” (Matt. xxiii. 8—10;) that is, “Do not affect to be so called, or through pride and ambition delight in these titles.” Augustine was a person of great piety and parts, and he abhorred this spiritual pre-eminency, which

he took notice of in many in his time, who took-up their religion and faith upon trust, and upon the credit of some men of great name in the church. *Non ad hominis nomen ambulo*, said he, *Christi nomen teneo: perirem si essem de parte Pauli; quomodo non perirem si essem ex parte Donati? Recedant omnia humana nomina*: "I walk not according to the names and titles of men: I keep to the name of Christ: I should perish if I took up under the name of Paul, much more under the name of Donatus. Away with all human names!" And the same Augustine, in *Soliloquio*, speaking of Christ, saith, *Vocasti me nomine tuo, signasti me sanguine tuo, unxisti me oleo tuo, de quo unctus fuisti, ut a te Christo dicerer Christianus*: "Thou hast signed me with thy blood, thou hast called me by thy name, I have been anointed with thee, and from Christ I am a Christian." And Luther (tom. ii. *Witten.*) saith, *Primum oro, nomen meum taceatur, et nemo Lutheranus, sed Christianus, appelletur. Quid est Lutherus? Atqui doctrina non est mea, nec pro quopiam sum crucifixus. Unde mihi putido vermium sacco accideret, ut filii Christi a meo vilissimo nomine denominentur? Absit, amici: delemus schismatica nomina, et denominemur a Christo, cujus doctrinam habemus*: "I desire first, that my name may be concealed, and that none should be called 'a Lutheran,' but 'a Christian.' What is Luther? My doctrine is not mine, but Christ's; I was not crucified for any. How comes it to pass that I, who am but a filthy, stinking bag of worms,—that any of the sons of Christ should be denominated from my name? Away with these schismatical names! let us be denominated from Christ, from whom alone we have our doctrine."

This very thing of affectation of a name and fame in the church hath been very pernicious. The greatest heresies have been owned propagated, and maintained upon this account; as — (lib. i. cap. 20) tells us, the Simonians from Simon Magus; and Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue, saith, some have been called Marcionites, others Valentinians, others Basilidians;—some by one name, some by another, from their first founders. But Lactantius tells us, (*De verâ Sapientiâ*, lib. iv.) when once men come under such denominations, *Christiani esse desierunt, qui, Christi nomine amisso, humana et externa vocabula induerunt*: "they cease to be Christians, when they come under human names and titles in matters of religion." And therefore Paul would have none follow him further than he followed Christ. (1 Cor. xi. 1.) He rejects the honours which some would have put upon him with an indignation. Some affected to be called by his and other great names in the church; some said they were of Paul, &c.; but when he comes to speak as to himself, he speaks with an abhorrence that any should set up his name with Christ's: "What! 'was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized into the name of Paul?' (1 Cor. i. 12, 13.) God forbid that any should be guilty of so great a sin, as to come under that denomination!"

2. *Others are to be blamed, even the generality of professors, that, having taken the name of Christ upon them, and are called by his name, are a reproach to this high and holy name.*—Who are so far from doing all things in the name of Christ, as they do nothing in his name, but do live against that name; they do not "depart from iniquity," as every Christian upon that account ought to do. (2 Tim. ii. 19.) How many

say they are Christians, but are not! Rev. iii. 9, he calls it blasphemy in them that said they were Jews, that is, Christians, but were not: they pretended indeed to be true Christians, but held such doctrines, and lived in such lewd, sinful practices, as were opposite to Christ. Such persons profane the sacred name of Christ, who live in such a way as [to] cast a blot and imputation upon him. Christians, as such, should be so far from the practice even of such sins as many have very light thoughts of, that they must not so much as name them: "fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness," must not so much as be named by them. (Eph. v. 3, 4.) The Lord Christ and his gospel suffer more by Christians that bear his name, than by others that despise him: they open the mouths of the enemy to blaspheme the holy name of Christ, and the religion of Christ: "they blaspheme that worthy name by which they are called." (James ii. 7.) He had spoken before (verses 1, 2) of some professors who had the faith of the Lord Jesus with respect of persons, and (verse 6) proud rich ones that did oppress others; such men by their wicked practices did blaspheme the name of Christ, by such practices they did cast a blot and scandal upon the religion which they did profess, and by that means caused others to blaspheme the name of Christ.

To the like purpose Paul speaks concerning the Jews, who were high pretenders to the law, yet lived in the continual breach of it. Through them "the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles." (Rom. ii. 24.) So, 2 Peter ii. 1, 2, he had spoken of some, who by their doctrines denied the Lord Christ "that bought them; by reason of whom the way of truth was evil spoken of." By the false doctrines and flagitious lives of professors, the name and religion of Christ is rent and torn in pieces, and brought into contempt among the worst of men; and therefore we find, that when professors are pressed to walk as becometh the gospel, one great argument is taken from the great reproach that else will follow. 1 Tim. vi. 1, he presseth servants to account their masters worthy of double "honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." The like argument we have upon wives, that "they be discreet," &c., "obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed;" (Titus ii. 4, 5;) that the way of religion, in which they profess to serve God, be not made vile and contemptible in the eyes of such as have little regard to any religion at all. Averroes was most taken with "the Christians' sect," as he called it; but when he saw the Christians do what he thought was a great offence against the God whom they served or worshipped, he said, *Moriatur anima mea cum philosophis*, "Let me die among the philosophers," and not among the Christians. It is reported of one Hathway, an Indian, as blind as he was, [that he was] so possessed with prejudice against the Christian religion by the cruelty of the Spaniards, that he refused to be baptized, because of their vile carriage, and said he would not go to the same heaven with them.

Of all persons, Christians have cause to walk most wisely and uprightly, in reference to that honourable name which they bear, lest otherwise they expose it to contempt. Let us do as the primitive saints did, of whom it is said, they "walked in the fear of the Lord; and the churches had rest." (Acts ix. 31.) They were in the midst of persecuting, bloody enemies, who seeing them walk in the fear of the Lord, and

according to the rules of the Christian religion, which did strike such an awe into them of the majesty of their religion, which did shine forth in their holy, heavenly conversation, as brought their enemies under so great convictions, as they durst not at that present attempt them, or hinder their peace. A saint sanctifies the name of the Lord in the course of his life, while he walks in the fear of the Lord. (Isai. viii. 13.) This was a great argument which prevailed with Nehemiah; and he propounded it to the people: "To walk in the fear of the Lord, because of the reproach of the enemy." (Neh. v. 9.) It is not the Jew who denieth the name of Christ, or the Turk who defieth it, or the Pagan dragon who persecuteth the name of Christ, (Rev. xii. 2—4,) that casts so foul a blot and reproach upon the name of Christ, as he who takes upon him the name of Christ, and under a form of godliness lives in the practice of those foul abominations spoken of, 2 Tim. iii. 1—5; from which "turn away."

SERMON XXIV.

BY THE REV. THOMAS COLE, A.M.,

SOMETIME STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND PRINCIPAL OF ST. MARY'S HALL,
OXFORD.

HOW WE MAY STEER AN EVEN COURSE BETWEEN PRESUMPTION
AND DESPAIR.

As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.—Luke iii. 4, 5.

THIS chapter begins with the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ: in which you have,

1. *The time of his ministry*, when it began, set down and ascertained by some particular and very memorable remarks upon it, from the names of those who were then in authority, chief governors and rulers both in church and state, whose several offices and commands bore the same date with John's preaching. (Verses 1, 2.) The reason of this I shall not now trouble you with.

2. *His call unto this office*.—Verse 2: "The word of God came unto John."

3. *The subject-matter of his preaching*.—Namely, "The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Verse 3.)

4. *The occasion that prompted him to this subject, and made him fix his thoughts upon it*.—Which was an ancient prophecy out of Isaiah, chap. xl. 3; the Holy Ghost bringing this into his mind, telling him it was now to be fulfilled by his preaching, and therefore no doubt directed