

SERMON V.

ON THE SECOND SABBATH FOR THE COMMUNION.

PHILIPPIANS III. 7, 8.

“ 7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

“ 8. 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.”

HERE, we have Paul’s coss,* and quitting of all other things that he may get Christ, and a fruitful communion with him ; for he saw no other way to get Christ, but to quit all other things for him, and to get more of Christ : still to quit all things more—to be more out of himself and the world, and to be a greater stranger unto these things his nature was very prone unto, that he may get Christ. Therefore here he shews himself contented to quit all things worldly which might yield him pleasure or contentment, that he might get Christ ; and by so doing, sets down a rule for all men to follow his example, as may be seen out of the 15th verse of the same chapter, where he says, “ Let as many as will be perfect, be thus minded.” If any would have Christ, they must be loosed from all other things, and be content to want them : if they will not, let them wytet† themselves, if they want Christ.

In general, I observe here, that it is no wonder the world know not Christ, and care not for him : no wonder they come to preachings and communions, and

* Exchange, bargain.

† Blame.

go away worse than they came : no wonder they profess Christ, and get no comfort from him : and say many prayers, and yet not be heard, because men are wedded in their affections to other things than Christ. Men are so fallen in love with other idols and lusts, that they care not for Christ. The inn or house of their heart has gotten so many other guests to lodge, that there is no room for Christ, except he will take a stable to lodge in. This world is still in a controversy with Christ : he is set to draw them from that they cannot enjoy with him, and they still to keep ; he to twine* them and their lusts, and they to keep their lusts and him with them ; he to twine them and the world that they may get heaven, but they to retain the world, and yet to look for heaven ; he to draw them from all false confidence, and they to stick by it ; he to separate them from all things, that they may get himself, they to make a mixed medley of other things and him.

As for you who profess ye are this day come to seek Christ, I tell you, except ye quit all other things for him, ye shall not get him : ye must either thrust his foes to the door of your heart, or look not that he will come in. These strange lords that have ruled over you, their service must be renounced, else ye quit yourselves of Christ, for ye cannot possess both. God has said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me :" if then ye will have other gods, ye shall not get him ; therefore either must ye quit your whoredom, drunkenness, worldliness, and every thing that he abhors, or ye shall not get him. Be not deceived ; God will not be mocked ; for such things comes the wrath of God upon them. But the devil has so deceived the

* Separate, part.

men of this world, that they are become his bond-slaves, ready to all sorts of sin ; and they being deceived, trow to deceive God. Also they think, God is like themselves, because he keeps silence. But he will come and set all their sins in order. Consider this, ye who forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and none be able to deliver you out of his hand.

Let us come to the apostle's purpose here. When he was a Pharisee, he was an adversar to Christ, and would have been ready to dip his hands in Christ's blood ; yea, he did it indeed, for he was with them that martyred Stephen. Yet, at the same time, he looked for heaven, and had many reasons to persuade himself that he should get heaven, and thought it needful for him to go on in the way he was walking, that he might get heaven. But now, being drawn in to the knowledge of Christ, his mind is changed, and he says, what things were gain to him before, now he counts them loss for Christ.

Here he is about to guard the Philippians against false teachers, who urged justification by the law, and bids them beware of them ; and tells them, albeit these false teachers would glory in this, that they are the only true kirk, have the law of Moses clearly expounded with them ; that they are of the seed of Abraham, the only true worshippers of God, and boast of their manifold privileges,—yet says he, whatever these men have to glory in, he has more. For he was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, partaker of the Jewish sacraments ; and for strait keeping of the law, he was a Pharisee. And for zeal in religion, he was as forward as any ; for he persecuted the kirk that followed not his course, and for

that righteousness which is in the law, he walked so blamelessly, that none could find offence in him. All these things, he says, he found to be gain to him, when he was a Pharisee ; but now when he is come to Christ, he counts them all for loss and hindrances, and therefore will quit them all for Christ, (ver. 7). And not only is he content once to say, that all these things which some time he counted gain to be loss now, but over again he says, " Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." As if he said, I rue nothing my loss ; for I am not only content to quit all these privileges, but all other things for Christ : yea, I see nothing that is not to be quit for Christ ; whether they be things pleasant and profitable for soul and body, I count them all but loss, when I think upon the excellent knowledge of Christ. When I look to the righteousness that is in him, I quit all righteousness but his : when I look to the honour, riches, pleasures, which are in him, I quit all honour, riches, pleasures, for that which is in him, and count it loss and hinder to stick to any thing but him. Yea, for Him I have suffered the loss of all things ; for I was a man in estimation with the best : when my forwardness for religion was seen, letters of commission would have been given me, to take men's lives, and enough to follow me. For learning, I profited beyond my equals ; I was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel : for my religion, I was of the strictest sort ; and for my conversation, it was blameless. For my blood and descent, I was come of an ancient tribe ; friends, lovers, followers, and possessions I had enough. But I have suffered loss of all these for Christ ; and when I have

quit them, I yet count nothing of them, yea, I count I have tint* nothing ; for I count them all but dung, that I may win Christ (verse 8), and may be found in him, when God makes inquisition for souls ; that I may be found out of myself, and in Christ, possessed and kept by him ; having nothing but that which is borrowed from him ; not having my own righteousness which is by the law, but the righteousness which is by faith in him, the righteousness which is by faith in God, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection. There is more experimental knowledge of him, more power from his resurrection, to rise to newness of life and the fellowship of his sufferings, that may cause me yet endure more loss, pain, trouble, and that I may bear all that can be laid on me, as I should, being conformable to his death, that am a poor, dead, lost man to the world. I care not what I be, if I be in him dying ; for if I die with him, I shall live with him ; and if I suffer with him, I shall reign with him : if I get a share of his sufferings, I shall get a share of his glory, (verse 10).

“ But what things were gain to me”—We see, when Paul was a Pharisee, he had an aim to be at heaven, and was making bargain for it, using means to win to it, and had a stock-purse to gather gain whereby he might get heaven. And here he shews, what were the things whereby he thought to have gained heaven :

1. That he was circumcised.
2. That he was of the stock of Abraham.
3. Of the tribe of Benjamin ; therefore he thought he should not be shut out of heaven.
4. That he had removed all known sins.
5. That he had tane on the strictest form of religion ; and beside the keeping of the law, he had received

* Lost.

the traditions of the fathers. 6. That he was so zealous, that he persecuted all that were contrary minded. Of these, and the like things, was Paul's gain, whereby he looked to have gotten heaven.

1. It lets us see, that a man who is only natural, may look to get heaven : he may bargain for it, use means that he thinks may bring him to it, and he may set himself in the way that leads to it, and have hopes and persuasions to get it. How far then are they behind some natural men, who never set themselves in the way to life eternal, and never aimed at it as a main matter ; but are lying among atheists, beastly belly-gods, seeking their own sensuality, and fulfilling of carnal delights for their main happiness ? These are not yet come to the length of natural men, who are without God in the world, let be to come as far on as a Pharisee. Many never lay their account to seek heaven, but say within themselves, Bide, till I grow old ; bide, till I get such a business by hand ; bide, till I grow rich. They may as well say, Bide till I can serve the devil no longer. To these folks I say, it will be late ere they win to heaven, for they are not yet pressing for heaven. They have their houses, and standing of their estate to care for ; their back to clothe, their bellies to feed, their name and credit to uphold, their pleasures to follow, their companions to be merry with : as for heaven or hell, a soul-righteousness or life eternal, they know not but by common report, yea, they care not, nor count for none of these. Yet we see Paul, ere he kenned Christ, was reckoning what things were gain to him, that he might get to heaven.

2. "Were gain"—We see Paul being a Pharisee, as he looked for heaven, so had he gain whereby he

thought to get heaven. So every natural man that has heard tell of heaven, and hopes to get it, has some apparent reasons, some carnal confidences that satisfy him, and which he reckons for gain, and makes them whereby he thinks to get heaven. We told you what was Paul's gain; but let us see what is the natural man's gain in this world, that he has gathered, to get heaven. One thinks God has given him great worldly means, more than twenty of his neighbours, therefore he cannot miss heaven: another, because he is just and true in all his bargains, and gives to every man his due; another, because he keeps the kirk well, haunts communion, loves the true religion, and would fight for it if needs were. And yet, never one of them has had a wrung heart with grief for sin; never saw hell open, and themselves worthy to be cast into it; never were pricked in heart for the wrongs done to Christ, albeit, possibly, for some gross fault against the light of their natural conscience, they have had some grief that soon evanished, yet never lasting sorrow for sin. They think, because they are men of honest rank, and good account with men, and countenance the true religion, that such as they cannot miss heaven; or if they be put out, few will win in. Others have not gathered so much gain as these to get heaven, but they have sundry good qualities good in many things: but they have some faults: either they must leave to be drunken whiles, or to play the harlot at a time, or have a little spice of pride, or love to the world. In a word, they are good men with one fault, and if God be strict to hold men out of heaven that have faults, he will let none in; therefore such good fellows as they, may not be holden out. Others are rude ignorants, and their reasons wherefore they must

be in heaven are such as these:—Has God (say they) ordained any Christian souls not to get heaven? Are not they of the true religion? come they not to the kirk and the communion? and they have a good mind to God. This their stock-purse is not worth a farthing, yet they look for heaven. I cannot reckon out all the deceits of men's hearts; but let every man speir at his own heart wherefore he looks to be in heaven, and it shall be found, that the natural man has aye some feckless, frivolous reason or other wherefore he looks for heaven.

3. “Loss”—Paul says, that the things which before he counted gain, now he counts them loss; to let us see, that to be born in the kirk, to be of the true religion, to keep the kirk, to say our prayers morning and evening, to live blamelessly, to deal equitably with men, are so far from doing us good to get heaven, that they are loss, and hindrances from Christ, and impediments to keep from heaven; yea, the very cut-throats of men's souls, and that lead men blindlings to destruction. For the man who leans on these, never truly repents of sin; never troubles himself to mortify his own evil nature; is not earnest for reconciliation with God; never arrests himself before God's tribunal, nor mourns before him in secret for sin; but soothes himself in his estate, as if all were well, and thinks, when he compares himself with other men, if he be barred out of heaven, many a one has cause to be dismayed. But here, we see all these things they count gain, are losses and hindrances, main deceits, that hinder men to be humbled before God, and being leaned to, prove rotten reeds, that break, and stab the man that leans on them.

4. “Were gain, now loss.”—When counted Paul

those things to be loss, that some time were gain ? Not till a change was wrought, and he made to know that Christ would not be mocked with such things, and that they were not furtherancers to Christ. When he saw that a man might be a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the true religion, free of open vice, zealous of good things, and yet be secluded from Christ, then his feathers fell, and his gain is turned into loss, and that which should have brought him into heaven, is a bar to hold him out of it. We see, that these things which a man counts his gain to get heaven, will not be seen to be loss, till God open his eyes to see the vanity of deceit ; then he sees that which was gain, is now loss. Till God arrest a man before his tribunal, put him on the pannel, and shew him his sin, and make him cast off all his confidences, he will never quit them. Therefore pray for open eyes, that ye may see the frivolousness and fecklessness of these things that make you look for heaven ; for if ye see right, these things which before seemed furtherances, will now become bars to hold you out of heaven. Your righteousness will be seen to be vileness, and every thing ye leaned to will be casten off, that ye may get the garment of Christ's righteousness to cover you ; for till all these things be renounced, Christ will not be gotten as a garment to cover.

Verse 8. " Yea, doubtless, I counted all things loss."—He repeats the same thing again, and says, not only counts he these things loss, but all things to be loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. As if he said, I have now gotten more than I had when I was a Pharisee ; and not only do I quit these which I had being a Pharisee, but all things, since I came to Christ, that I may win Christ.

When I was a Pharisee, I quitted all known sin (albeit then I knew not sin well, and so could not well quit it), yet now, when I know sin better, I quit it more for Christ. When I was a Pharisee, I was blameless concerning the law : I quit that ; and now, when I know the spiritual meaning of the law (as then I did not) I quit that also. When I was a Pharisee, I drew none to Christ ; but now, I draw in many a thousand souls to Christ (if any work be of worth with God, then, specially, the winning of souls). But albeit I have made a fair conquest of souls, having carried the gospel triumphantly athort* many nations, yet I quit that as loss to me : it shall be no gain to me ; I shall never bid God take me into heaven for that cause. In a word, I quit all that I have done, said, or suffered ; all the righteousness that ever I had, have, or am aiming at, all shall be loss to me, that I may get Christ and his righteousness ; all shall be hindrances to me, they shall not be relied on, they shall never come in among the matter of my gain ; but all of them, if they were a thousand times more, shall be counted loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ ; so that I will now come in among the poorest and unworthiest to Christ ; with them who have never won one soul to Christ, but are in question about the estate of their own soul ; with such poor, needy lost things, who have nothing in themselves to bring before Christ ; and will take me to the knowledge and righteousness of Christ alone. I will take him for my portion and matter of confidence ; I will come into him as an unprofitable servant, and will lean on himself, his goodness, truth, and mercy, which are given to them who

* Across, athwart.

have nothing of their own ; for first and last, then and now, I count all things but loss for him.

That he counts all things loss, we see, that there are more things than one or two which men grip instead of Christ, for which they lose Christ, and are deprived of him. But Paul counted all things loss. 1. The pleasures of sin, he counted them loss for Christ. 2. His lawful liberties, houses, lands, were loss. 3. The more fine things, his learning, and understanding of all sciences, which served to make a complete natural man. 4. His righteousness by the law, and righteousness since he came to Christ ; all his good deeds and words before and after he came to Christ, he quits all.

Seeing there are so many things to hold a man from Christ, try how far ye are from Christ, and how near ye are to come unto him. Try if ye have quit your lusts for Christ : if ye have not, then ye are not come so far as the apostle when he was a Pharisee, for even then, he was blameless. But ye count your sinful lusts your gain. Ye who count a day spent among your companions, in the service of your lusts and pleasures, a won day, ye know not Christ yet, for your beastly sensuality is your god. Ye who think that to take a good drink with good fellows, or to take a harlot in secret is your gain, ye, with Esau, have sold your birthright for a mess of pottage. Ye who are given to revenge, and will have amends of him that has wronged you, and count it your contentment to plot his overthrow ; to be above him and about, and count it your gain to horse his heels, ye neither know Christ, nor have tane hold of him ; yea, even humanity and civility, and the moral lives of Pagans, would abhor those things which thou keepest, and countest

the matter of thy glory. But thy glory is thy shame, and thou shewest plainly that the goodness, meekness, and majesty of Christ, have never shined upon thee. Therefore must thou quit such things, or quit thee of Christ, (I speak to thee who comest to the communion, and frequentest all the exercises of God's worship); quit, I say, thy filthiness, drunkenness, pride, worldliness, deceit, revenge, and unjust dealing.

OBJECTION. But how shall I get my living won in this evil world, if I use straight and just courses? *Answer.* If thou wilt not quit these, and every known sin, quit thee of Christ. And yet, when thou hast quit these, thou hast not come to the Pharisee's garters, for the Pharisees not only were free and blameless of scandalous sins, but also did many things that thou never minted; for they fasted two days in the week, and gave their meat these days to the poor. And yet, Christ says, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Some may answer me and say, they have indeed quit all such sinful lusts, pleasures, delights; but they must have leave to plod and plea about the getting of worldly commodities; they must have leave to spend their morning and evening meditations, how to get this, and yon, and a third business compassed; he for his house, another for his farms and ploughs. He may not neglect his affairs, nor cease to be careful for his household. He has his estate to guide, albeit his soul should be lost; he has the standing of his house to care for, come of his soul what may: in a word, all he does are the points of his lawful calling. But I answer, Has God given a house to care for, a living to guide, and a high place to uphold, first, that he

may shut thee in hell next? Or has he given thee a calling, that it should have the first room, and God the next room? Should not these be means to further thee to serve God, and not hindrances? Therefore, take heed what ye are doing, for here is the very hose-net wherein Satan catches the civilians of the world; and yet they are counted godly honest folks, while as they are nothing but rotten worldlings, who never truly repented sin, nor stood in awe of God: for if they could colour their matters by the law, or some pretence of reason, and so make all fish that comes in their net, it is well,—they must have leave to devour and scrape, to hunger and thirst for things in the world more than for heaven, and yet be ranked for sound Christians! But attest the conscience of such persons, if ever they had such grief of heart for their sins, as when the things of this world went wrong; or such joy of heart in Christ's favour, in the remission of sins, in the hope of heaven, as they had joy when things of the world go right. Therefore, let such persons either quit themselves of such worldly clogs as hold them from Christ, or quit him.

OBJECTION. Shall I quit those things that God has given me, my lands, houses, and liberties? *Answer.* Quit not thy calling, thy lands, houses, and lawful liberties, in action, but quit them in thy affection and estimation, because thou hast better things to spend thy care, fear, grief, and travail upon. Labour for the bread that perishes not. Lay up treasures in heaven, where the thief cannot break through, nor the canker consume. Hold only a moderate care and diligence about the things of this world, doing all thy worldly business without carking care, anxiety, or solicitude; leaving all on God's providence, not caring

what be the success, whether things go right or wrong, whether thou get profit or loss. If this thou would do, every thing should be a step to advance thee nearer heaven ; for if thy affairs succeed, thou would take it from God, and bless him for it ; if they succeed not, thou would be contented to let things of the world go, because they are only thy moveables, and thy heritage is kept to the fore in heaven. Quit, I say, the love of the world, for if the love of the world be in you, the love of God is not in you. Quit the love of friendship, credit, estimation, for if thou wilt busk* up thyself in any of these, or let thy heart and thy hand, thy time and thy travail, be more on these than Christ, thou hast set up an idol in Christ's room. But either quit thee of these, or quit thee of Christ.

A third sort are those who lean to their knowledge and learning, which they will not quit as Paul did ; their knowledge puffs them up. Let the poor ignorants (say they) who can neither read nor write, go to hell ; but for them, they may not be barred from the communion, nor yet out of heaven, because they can read. And if they can answer some questions of the catechism, and prattle some grounds of religion, or have some insight in the cases of conscience, they must pass for current money, and be brought in without a stop to heaven. And if they be scholars, learned men, or preachers, what should hold them out of heaven, who teach others the way to it ? But Christ says, that many shall say to him at the great day, " We have preached and prophesied in thy name," to whom he will say, " Depart from me ye workers of iniquity ; I know you not." Therefore I say to thee who hast confidence in thy knowledge,

* Dress.

learning, preaching, and winning in of souls to Christ, thou shalt not get Christ, except thou quit' that, and all other things for him.

A fourth sort lean to their righteousness, alms, and works; tears for sin, prayers; the worth of their faith, love, and such like graces. These also must be quit, if they would have Christ. The apostle names not the rest of the things he had done, to leave which, he has quit as things unworthy to be spoken of;—his sinful pleasures, friends, familiars, human learning which he got at the feet of Gamaliel, for he knows that the wisdom of this world comes to nought. But the thing which he specially quits, is his own righteousness, for he says, he counts all things loss that he may win Christ, and may be found in him, not having his own righteousness,—which is the hardest point of all. As for those who lean to their alms-deeds, keeping of the kirk, coming to communions, saying of their morning and evening prayers, reading of the chapter, I say to them, as holy have gone to hell. As for those who because of the gnawing of their conscience for sin, have shed some tears, and so, count themselves true penitents, I say, Pagans have had some torments and furies of conscience which have forced them to shed tears, and yet have not quit their sins. As for those who are ready to further each other in good, minister a word of comfort to the weary, and speak to the edification of others, and preach the gospel, I say, they who have done more than all these, will get from Christ, “Depart, I know you not.” Therefore all confidence in these must be quit.

As for those who lean to their own righteousness, and have not quit it, let me here speak unto the godly,

who having searched well, will find they have not quit this ; for albeit they have renounced all known sin, are begun to lead a blameless life, and are taking daily pains to do God's will, yet will they say, I cannot go to Christ : and why ? say they, Because I am so unworthy. Then I say, thou hast not quit thy own righteousness ; for if thy own unworthiness, or want of righteousness, hinders thee to go to Christ, then if thou had it, it would be the matter of thy contentment, encouragement, and confidence, to make thee draw in to him ; and so, that thou hast not quit it.

And here is the reason why many a beloved soul lies in the dead-throws—because they miss something in themselves, which if they had, they would go to Christ. To such I say, If thou go to Christ with thy own righteousness, he will not have thee ; for he will have none but lost things, for he came to seek and save that which was lost. But thou art pingling with him, to have the idol of thy own righteousness set up ; thou to possess it, and he to have it down ; thou to come in as a holy man before him, he to have thee coming as a tint thing, to seek life. I say, as long as thou dost thus contest, the spirit of holiness and consolation will not come in ; but so soon as thou quittest thine own righteousness, then comes the consolation. As long as thou lookest but to the righteousness of the law, the spirit of Jesus leaves thee, till thou acknowledge Christ for the Saviour of the lost, the justifier of the ungodly, the gracer of the unworthy, and the healer of the sick. Hence it is that Christ leaves sin in his own to humble them ; for if they had righteousness of their own, they would misken him and his righteousness. And because they will not quit their own righteousness, he gives

them an assay of themselves : and when after a proof of their own naughtiness, they will not yet submit to him, then he sends crosses, sicknesses, troubles of all sorts, that they may be forced to despair in themselves, and resolve to come in to Christ's hospital, diseased and loathesome things, there to lie, till they be cured of all their sinful maladies. Therefore ye who are Christ's beloved saints, learn in time to discern this cut-throat of your souls. Know that albeit ye have quit many things for Christ, yet ye have not quit your own righteousness ; ye are yet seeking to come to Christ, busked with something of your own : and because ye will be in with a harlot's busking, he puts you aback ; for he calls things that are not, as if they were ; he quickens the dead, he saves the lost.

Seeing there are so many things that take up a man's heart, mind, estimation and affections, which are due to Christ, and all things must be quit, therefore quit in time your riches, honour, pleasures, the love and estimation of the world ; quit your plodding in a lawful calling ; quit your care of the world, lest ye counting more of it than ye should, ye lose the pearl of price, and gripping an unworthy thing, ye shed with God. For Christ says, He that loves father or mother, wife, children, brethren and sisters better than me, is not worthy of me. Let all be counted loss for Christ : put them out of your affection and estimation which otherwise are lawful; but especially quit your own righteousness or self-perfection, the clothing and busking of yourselves with that which is not your own. Quit all for Him, else thou art not worthy of him.

" All things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." —This lets us see, that the sound

knowledge of Christ being rightly seen in the super-excellency of it, is only able to put all other to the door, and by the sight of it, all other things must be dispossessed ; else the quitting of other things is not right, as things must be quit and renounced in the favours of Christ, and for Christ, as here Paul doth. For there are many who will quit their pleasures, because they cannot follow them ; many will quit their honour, because they cannot get it maintained ; riches, because it flies from them and they cannot get a grip of it ; and righteousness, because they cannot get it. But this is not the right quitting of these, albeit I grant, the Lord's laying of thorns in their way that they cannot win after their lovers, may be a mean to make them quit them as they should ; yet it is a quitting of necessity, and not voluntar. But if any be come to this, to say that they would not want a sweet blink of Christ's favourable face, which they will get at a morning prayer, for a year's pleasure by sin ; I will not meddle with things lawful, but in sobriety, lest I mar communication with my Lord, and quit him ; I will not stick to my own righteousness, because a super-excellent righteousness is in Christ to be gotten ;—if so be thou quit all for the excellent knowledge of Christ, thou renouncest all for him, and in his favour.

“Doubtless I count them loss”—or yet loss, or still I count them loss : whereby he shews, that still he stands to his choice, and still puts all these things under ; he has quit them all for Christ, and rues nothing his coss.* It lets us see, that a man who has quit all things for Christ, may not rue again, or change his coss, or turn back again, but must stand in the same mind as when he first made the coss, and pro-

* Bargain.

fessed his embracing of Christ. He may not be like the dog, that has casten his meat because of the pain of his stomach, and when he is eased, thinks it over-good cheer to want, and so turns back to it. Even so doth the lecherous person or the drunkard. When the terror of hell strikes on the soul of him, he quits his filthiness, and resolves never to meddle with it again ; but when he is eased of that fear and terror, he goes back again. That man renews his choice ; for after he seemed to embrace Christ, and quit his lusts, he rues, and goes back to his lusts. But if thou hast once quit all things for Christ, and hast said it, say it over again, and stand to thy choice.

“ I count them but loss.”—Thou who quittest any thing for Christ, must account them loss ; they must be still in thy account and estimation as hindrances to keep out Christ, or hold from Christ, for so they will be indeed. When they oversway a man’s affection and estimation, they will draw a man farther after them than Christ allows.

“ My Lord.”—The sweetness of the felt band betwixt Christ and his soul, makes him stand to his cross, and with joy to rest on Christ : so shall it do with every one that has truly laid hold on him.

“ For whom I suffer the loss.”—Paul was already put to a proof of that which he says, when for the gospel’s cause he was turned out of his country, friendship, estimation, and commodities of this life ; in hunger, nakedness, perils by sea and land, and perils by his countrymen ; deserted by his companions, scholars, and kinsmen ; shot out to preach among the Gentiles. And yet, he reckoned himself no loser by the means. It lets us see, that besides the quitting of all things earthly for Christ in estimation and af-

fection, God will call forth some of his children, to give a real proof in action of the quitting of all things, when they cannot get them and Christ both kept.

Quit sinful things both in action, and estimation, and affection, for no man can serve God and Mammon. Quit thy lawful liberties and commodities worldly in affection and estimation, and yet keep the possession of them, as long as they hinder thee not to possess Christ ; for albeit he bids a man quit his houses, lands, and friends, to follow, yet he bids no man be such a fool as to cast away his goods at every occasion ; but only he craves, that man should quit them in estimation and affection, and yet still be studying to do righteousness with your neighbour. Cut only away the affection and confidence in good things. Quit your lawful liberties, goods, country, friendship, by actual resignation as well as affection, when God calls for it ; for when ye were baptized, ye took in hand to quit all and follow Christ. It is true, Christ takes not this proof of every one, but of some. Therefore it is said, “ To you it is given, not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for his sake,” (Philipp. i. 29). Christ will only honour some to be sufferers for him, as Paul, who suffered the loss of all things for Christ.

“ And do count them but dung”—After he has quit all things for Christ, and suffered the loss of them in affection, he counts them but dung ; that is, he counts them but feckless, and himself to have lost little. We see, after a man has quit any thing for Christ, he must keep the same estimation of the thing he quit, that he had before he quit it ; he must still count it dung, else he may be wooed, and fall in love with it again, and so be snared. When he has once

quit them, he must still keep the same estimation of them, that he had when he first professed renunciation of them.

This land has not yet been put to this trial for Christ, but only some few persons. A wind of law blew loud, and many, ere the blast of it came near them, rowed to the lee-shore. "For," said they, "what need we peril our lands, goods, estimation, for so petty matters?" But I say, in this they have proven light, (albeit possibly they may get strength to stand out in a greater matter). What shall these men do when trial comes? Whether will they keep the truth they have received, or receive mixture of Antichristian doctrine; else have their lands forfeited, and their bodies prisoned? Trials may come, whether men will be Papists in effect, or quit things dear to them; therefore we have need to sit, and lay our account what the building of Christianity will cost, lest we leave the work with shame, for fault of expenses. Therefore Paul would have us to count all things to be but dung, that are to be lost for Christ. Crave, therefore, that nothing we have, may be a hindrance to confess the name of Christ.

But mark how Paul won to this, and in what order. First, he counted them but loss; then he quit them; and having quit them, he counted them yet still to be loss and dung. It lets us see, when we renounce any thing of this world for Christ; houses, land, life; we must first quit them in estimation and affection, and then, we will easily quit them in action: count them still dung in our estimation and affection, else we will not quit them in action; for as the estimation puts price on them, so will we labour to enjoy them. Having quit any thing for Christ, count it

still dung ; write upon thy lands, the name of dung ; write upon thy houses, the name of dung ; write upon thy life, the name of dung ; for if this be not written upon them, thou wilt not quit them for Christ ; and having counted them loss and dung, let it stand so, never to be sought back again.

Put Paul's gain in the one balance, and his loss in the other balance, and ye shall see, he has reason to count and call all things he has lost but dung ; for his gain is the excellent knowledge of Christ his Lord, his loss is only lawful liberties, country, friends, possessions. It lets us see, that the vantage in gaining Christ is far beyond the loss ; that the loss is dear of the reckoning, yea, the loss is none at all. For what loses any man for Christ ? Is it friends worldly ? he shall have friends in heaven. Is it houses ? he shall have a mansion in heaven. Is it lands ? he has a heavenly inheritance. In a word, all his loss is of things temporal, and his gain is of things spiritual and eternal, and Christ himself to make all his loss. To quit all things for Christ, look to the excellency of Christ, then all thou quittest will be but dung.

"And be found in Him."—Here is the thing he would be in grips with, instead of all his losses; a more fruitful communion with Christ ;—he would be found in Christ. This imports, that in the day of God's judging, there will be an inquisition made for every man, and every man will be sought till he be found. The Lord will search and find out men, whether they be lying in the devil's kitchen, or in the swine-trough of nature, or in Christ. His eyelids try the children of men. The apostle, when this inquisition is made, has no will to be found out of Christ.

When God makes inquisition for blood, adultery,

deceivers, profane, ignorant, misbelievers, see that thou be not found among them, for God will search Jerusalem with candles. There shall not be a man frozen in his dregs, but he shall be found out, by a more narrow search than the Spanish Inquisition : man, woman, bairn shall be found out ; as death laid them down, judgment shall find them again that day. Paul is providing a covering, a resting-place, and a righteousness to cover him ; labour, therefore, in quitting other things, to find a residence where ye would that God should find you. There is no safe place but Christ ; and if thy sins and unworthiness chase thee, flee to Christ, to the holes of the rock ; and if thou flee to him, sensible of thy blindness, laying out thy blind eyes; hard heart, lame limbs, he will heal thee, and hold the door open till thou come in. Quit all things this day, and come to him, and be received; whether thou be in sense of guiltiness, or in the sense of wants, come to him, and still come, till the day of inquisition.

“Found in Him.”—He that gets communication with Christ, will be found in him, and will remain in him. There are as many of him, and about him, who will be cast out ; but they who are found in him, stay in him till the inquisition be made.

What is the mark of those that shall be found in him ? —“ Not having mine own righteousness, which is by the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” So then, the mark of the man that will be found in Christ, is this,—he must be stripped of his own righteousness, and all confidence in it, and possessed and fastened in that righteousness which is of God’s gift in Christ imputed to him. This is the humble peni-

tent fled to Christ, who will never be cast out ; who comes to him challenging, accusing, condemning, boasting himself ; crying, "Woe is me, that I have grieved God, tane my own will, prized the world so highly, counted so little of my own soul ; Lord forgive me !" This person will be welcome, and not cast out, for he is fled to Christ, to get his borrowed righteousness, never to be taken back again, but to remain his for ever. Take the whole mark, and not the half of it ; for many will say, I may soon quit all my righteousness, for it is feckless (and much ado ere this be done), yet will not take Christ's. But I speir, What makes thee stand aback from Christ ? Seeing thou art naked, why goest thou not to the wardrobe, to get a garment ? If thou be blind, why goest thou not to get eye-salve ? If poor, why goest thou not to get gold to enrich thee ? Thus, because thou hast the one half of the mark, and not the other, thou hast no righteousness of thy own, and yet thou wilt not take Christ's.

OBJECTION.—What know I if He will take me ?
Answer—Will He not take those whom he calls ? Came He not to justify the ungodly ; to seek and save the lost ? Has He not an office to cure the blind ? Is He not a king, to make beggars rich ? Why beliest thou Him in the face ?—thou shouldest believe, because he has said it. Either take heaven gratis, or else thou shalt not get it. If thou must have something of thy own 'ere thou come to Him, thou shalt not get him : except thou come in even vile, even filthy, and foolish, he will not have thee. Therefore come in so, and take this righteousness. If thou art pleased with the bargain, thus it shall stand.
In this stands that poisonable error of the Papists ;

—they will not quit their own righteousness, and take his; and consider not, that they need wholly the merits of Christ. But here the opposing of the two, lets us see clearly, that no man can lean to both these sorts of righteousness ; but if we take us to the one, we must quit the other : if any will lean to his own righteousness, he will be found in himself, and without Christ and his righteousness. But we may not stay now to cangle* with the Papists.

Verse 10. “That I may know him.”—That is, that I may experimentally win in upon Christ, to know him. Ye will say, Knew not Paul Christ? Was he not ravished up to the third heavens, and saw things unutterable ? I answer, He knew him, but he would know him better. Albeit he had his conversation in heaven, yet he would so experimentally know Him in his nature, will, office, fashions, that that light of knowledge might be transfused into his soul ; that he might draw life and power from Christ ; that he might feel the power of his resurrection ;—that is, such a communion with Him in his resurrection, as may raise him to newness of life, and make him have more peace and joy in him, and lift him out of himself to heaven, where he should dwell ; and fellowship of his sufferings, that as Christ suffered, so he may be content to be a crucified man, ready to take the cross on his back, and follow after Christ, renouncing the world, contented to be scourged back and side, and to suffer many things, whereby he might be like Christ. As He was spitted on, buffeted, scourged, so he desires patiently to endure all, and so may get that patience, peace, joy, which flow from his suffering, being made conformable to his death,

* Quarrel, debate.

that is, mortified in his lusts, will, mind, and affections, conformed to his death in dying to sin.

1. That he quits all things that he may know Christ, we see, the quitting of other things in our estimation and affection, and flying to Christ, is not that we should be idle, but that we may know Christ better ; to draw virtue from him, that we may live a better life. Not that we should come to Christ, to make him a convenience to bear our sins, or to get leave to do what we will ; but to come to him to work and to walk with him, to suffer and die with him, and to be as he was in the world.

2. That he would know Christ better. We see that the more a man knows Christ, he is more desirous to know him further. So lovely and enamouring is the knowledge of Christ, that there will not be so much of it gotten in this world, but still there will be a longing for more : yea, in heaven, when a man enjoys it fully, he will still drink in more of it, without satiety or wearying. While he desires to know the power of Christ's resurrection, he tells us, that from Christ in every part of redeeming of us, there comes a power to work answerable effects in us ; as here, from his resurrection, power must be gotten to work the expiation of sin, freedom from the guilt of sin, victory over death, and the means of life. If the fruits of Christ's resurrection be newness of life, then all the lustre a man has of a holy and blameless life before he come to Christ, is but of the old man ; it is but a Pagan's lustre. Albeit a man would fast six meals in the week, give all his goods to the poor, whip himself for his faults—all is nought, seeing it flows not from the spirit of Christ. Whoever would have a new life, must draw it from Christ

risen. Thy new gentle nature must be from the meek spirit of Christ, so that he who before would patiently have borne wrong, must lay down his old patience, and get patience from Christ; and he who had old courage, must lay it down, and get new courage to fight for religion, else he will prove, like Peter, to take himself aback when he should stand —new humility, liberality, patience, love from Christ, “for behold,” says he, “I will make all things new.”

3. Ye will say, How will these things be gotten? I answer, By the power of his resurrection: that is, our faith must so grip him, that we may draw this power out of him: being naked and empty of all in ourselves, take him for supply of all, embracing the slain Son of God, saying, “Now let thy servant depart in peace.” And He being thus gripped by faith, we may never hunger and thirst for worldly pleasures we followed before, nor for the world, but he must be our portion; nor honour, but that which is of Christ,

4. While he subjoins fellowship in his sufferings and conformity with his death, he lets us see, that the way to be partakers of the power of Christ’s resurrection, is first to take part with him in his sufferings—such exercises or troubles as God is pleased to call us unto—that we may be conform to Christ; and to behave ourselves under these sufferings as he did, in our measure. Know then, that before thou be a new man from the power of Christ’s resurrection, that many a black bat* will thy flesh get: thou wilt be disgraced and slandered by thy neighbours, and suffer twenty wrongs. But there are many who seem to follow Christ at the back, who have no will of sufferings, but say, with Naaman, “God be merciful to me

* Stroke.

when I go to the house of Rimmon ;”—for their credit, their houses, their lands, their pleasures may not be meddled with. To whom I say, if thou wilt follow Christ, thou must be content instead of favour to be fuddled,* instead of honour to be disgraced. If not, He shall pour shame upon thee; because thou preferred thy credit to him, therefore thou art given to the idol of credit, and will not quit it, for Christ's shame to be upon thee. Think not that Christ made himself shame for thee, that thou should not go to that same gate : thou must endure the cross of Christ. “ Ye seek honour one of another,” says Christ ; “ how can ye believe ?” Seeing ye stand to your own reputation and honour, how shall ye get me honoured ? So say I to thee : except thou canst forgive quarrels without amends, thy profession is not worth a pin. Therefore if thou be not content to take fellowship with Christ's sufferings, look not for fellowship in his resurrection : if thou wilt not be partaker of his sufferings, a straw shall bar thee out of heaven. But thou that would be partaker of his resurrection, dip thyself in his sufferings by faith, so as thou may have fellowship with him in the spirit of that power and patience which bore him through.

5. But how shall disgrace and loss of goods be borne ? *Answer*—By being conformable to his death : That is—labour more to die to sin, study to mortify thy inward corruptions, and that will be a mean to make thee bear outward troubles the better. If thou be pingling with sin within thee, thou can care little for any disgrace or loss of goods thou can suffer for Christ. We see, whosoever will endure fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, that is, bear outward

* Ruffled, thrown into disorder by rude handling.

troubles, he must study to a conformity in Christ's death, that is, study to slay sin within him ; for he that is not labouring to slay sin within, will never slay sin without. The drunkard's vow that he shall not drink wine for a year, will not slay his sin of drunkenness ; for that is only a covenant made with his sin, that it shall go away for such a space : his sin is only put in the prison a while, to be well fed there, and when the time of his vow is expired, his sin comes forth with greater strength, and flies upon him, and slays him. But if thou wouldest mortify sin rightly, lay it down before thy dead and crucified Lord, and see how he was scourged back and side, crucified, and pierced with a spear, for thy sin that thou takest pleasure in ; then think with thyself, Shall I drink, whore, deceive, which has brought on such pain and torment on my sweet Lord ? Bring all thy sins to slain Christ ; the love of the world, honour, ease, credit, thy own righteousness, and lay them down in dead Jesus, who was dead, and is alive for the slaughter of thy iniquity. Will ye then from this day forward be slain servants to sin, and sworn servants to Christ ; friends to him, and foes to your sinful lusts, drunkenness, falset,* pride, worldliness, ease to the flesh, your own righteousness which may draw you from Christ, and be ready to quit all things for Christ ? Then come to his table, and be accepted, and what ye want shall be made up. Quit, I say, thy pleasures, lands, houses, and come, and get better honours, pleasures, friendship, an inheritance and happiness that shall never be tane from you. Only let Jesus be your Lord, and ye be his servants, and get all ye would have.

* Falsehood.