

WORTH OF THE SOUL,

IN SIX SERMONS.

SERMON I.

MATTHEW xvi. 16.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

THIS great and serious word comes in here as an argument against apostasy from the truths and ways of Christ. The terms of discipleship are laid down, v. 24. and lower we cannot bring them. *Self-denial* and *patient suffering* are the conditions of our being owned by Christ as his disciples; and these lessons will never be learned if we consult with flesh and blood; let us therefore consult with our Lord Jesus Christ, and hear his awakening declaration, that whoever forsake and deny Christ will certainly be losers by it. The two great temptations to apostasy are, fear of suffering, and hope of advantage.

1. He that denies Christ for fear of suffering will certainly be a loser. This he shows, v. 25. *Whosoever will save his life shall lose it.* He that by sin saves it in this world, will lose it in another. There cannot be a fairer pretence for apostasy, than saving the life by it, so very powerful is the law of self-preservation, but that will prove in the end the greatest self-destruction. There is a life to be lost besides that of the body.—Nay,

2. He that denies Christ for hope of worldly profit, will certainly be a loser at last. This is plainly declared in the text. The apostate thinks he has gain in his apostasy; but he has deceived himself; yet were his imaginary gain far more than it really is, it would be but a miserable compensation for his final loss. Christ speaks of the soul as immortal, and intimates the possibility of its loss, by which he intends the destruction of its happiness after the death of the body; now this is a loss which cannot be balanced by the gain of the whole world; drawing

back is to the perdition of the soul, Heb. x. 39. It has been recommended by some as a very likely means to make a man serious, that he should spend one quarter of an hour every day in serious thoughts of this Scripture. It is a Scripture well known. O that it might be well studied and improved.

There are Six Doctrines from this text.

1. That every man has a soul of his own.
2. It is possible this soul may be lost.
3. If the soul be lost it is of the sinner's own losing.
4. One soul is more worth than all the world.
5. The winning of the world is oft the losing of the soul.
6. The loss of the soul is so great a loss that the gain of all the world will not make it up.

For the 1st Doctrine, That every man has a soul of his own—his own soul. (1.) I need not prove this to you, you will all own it, for this is a truth discovered by the very light of nature, though the atheists deny it, and make all the actions of the soul to be nothing else but the products of matter and motion. The same fools that say there is no God, say there is no soul. If man has not a rational immortal soul, farewell all religion—our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain, 1 Cor. xv. 14. It is well for us daily to recollect the vast difference which exists between man and the brutes which perish. Man has a soul: this distinguishes him from all the inferior creatures, and gives him his dignity above them. And it becomes him ever to be upon his guard against every thing which might shake his faith in this fundamental truth; and as he has a soul, let him use it, which will be the best demonstration to others that he is indeed raised above the rest of God's creation.—My aim is, (2.) To explain the true doctrine as to the soul of man. We deal with souls, and about soul affairs, and therefore it concerns us duly to state that which is the great subject of our preaching.

I shall show, I. What the soul of man is. The brute creatures have a sensitive soul, we read of the spirit of a beast, Eccl. iii. 21. endowed with the powers of sensation and imagination, and much of the power and wisdom of God is seen in them. But the soul of man is something above that, something distinct from the body. That faculty by which we correct the errors of imagination, and by which we reflect upon ourselves and carry on profound speculations about invisible things, must needs be a power above that of sense: and that is the rational soul. Not to trouble you with the curiosity of a definition, we shall consider the soul of man,

1. In its nature. We do not see it, any more than we see God, though he be not far from every one of us, Acts xvii. 27. We cannot find out to perfection either God or our own souls; yet something we know:

(1.) The soul is a vital principle; not matter, as the body, but a being that may and can subsist of itself, and be the subject of accidents. Man is said to be a living soul, Gen. ii. 7. 1 Cor. xv. 45. It is called the *light of men*, John i. 4. The soul is one of those things that *are*; it is not one of the appurtenances of the man, as the clothes are to the body, but it is a substance, to which other things are appendant.

(2.) It is a spiritual and immaterial principle. It is not matter, nor doth it depend upon matter, either in its being or operation. It is called a *spirit*. The manner of its working is immaterial and independent upon the body. Bodily powers have bodily organs, as the power of seeing has the eye; but the soul has no such organs by which it understands and reasons. The outward senses do but convey the object, and do not at all contribute to the immediate acts of the soul. The soul is capable of receiving the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. and being a spirit, by it we are related to the world of spirits.

(3.) Consider the soul. It is immortal, because immaterial. In its faculties, which are two, Principally,

(1.) Understanding. This we properly call *reason*, by which we are made wiser than the fowls of heaven, Job xxxv. 11. The spirit of man is understanding, Job xxxii. 8. There is a receptive operation of the understanding, by which it takes in what is offered and discovered to it, and an active operation of it, by which it discourses with itself, and thereby makes discoveries and communicates them to others. The soul is capable of knowing God, of which the brute creatures are incapable. This is God's gift, Job xxxviii. 36. We read of the eyes of the understanding, Eph. i. 18. and the understanding being darkened, Eph. iv. 18. Memory also is connected with the understanding.

(2.) Will; that faculty of the soul by which it chooses or refuses, according to the dictates of the understanding. The object of the will is good, at

least apprehended to be so. To will, is to choose of good and refuse the evil, Isa. vii. 16. The understanding having deliberated, the will resolves. Corrupt will is enslaved by the sensual lusts; but otherwise the will in itself is free. The affections of the soul are branches of the will, in which the soul is carried out towards objects as they appear; in desire towards an absent good, delight in a present good, hope of a probable good, and love in all. Also hatred of that which is evil; aversion to it, fear of it, and sorrow for it. These are the feet of the soul; these are to the man as the wind to the ship. Thus is the soul constituted: understanding relates to objects as they are; will relates to them as they are to us. The soul of man has a faculty of reflection and a power of anticipation. It can *call to mind*, Isa. xlvi. 8. and can by rational deductions look forward and foresee what is to come. The spirit of a man is the *candle of the Lord*, Prov. xx. 27. The will has the dominion in the soul under God, and is certainly something much greater than sensitive appetite. View the soul,

3. In its relation to God.

(1.) It is the gift of God, Eccl. xii. 7. God who gave it—he breathed it, Gen. ii. 7. Job xxxiii. 4. It is a ray of light from him who is the Fountain of light. He is the Father of spirits, Heb. xii. 9. It is the soul that he has made, Isa. lvii. 16. He *formeth the spirit of man within him*, Zech. xii. 1. and a curious piece of workmanship it is. There was a consultation, as it were, when man was to be made, Gen. i. 26. *Let us make man*. We are not the authors of our own being; our fathers are the fathers of our flesh only, but our souls are created by God himself. Thus man differs from the irrational creatures, and is advanced above them.

(2.) It bears the image of God, Gen. v. 1. *In the likeness of God*. The nature of the soul is some resemblance of the divine nature, though a faint one. Where the moral rectitude is lost, yet there is something of resemblance in the nature; and therefore it is a reason why man must not be killed, Gen. ix. 6. and cursed, Jam. iii. 9. God is light and life; and so is the soul. There the image of God in man appears most. This puts a great honour upon the soul. How lamentable it is that the image of God should be defaced by sin! This is the great disgrace of man, and the source of all his unhappiness. O be in earnest in seeking that sanctification in which the image of God is restored, Col. iii. 10.

(3.) It is made for God; made not only for his glory, and to show forth his praise, but more immediately for his use and service. It is that being only in this lower world that actively praises God, the rest only objectively, Ps. ciii. 1. *Bless the Lord. O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name*. The soul was made to be the habitation of God, the temple of Christ, who dwells in the heart.

It was to be God's part in man. The heart is God's peculiar, which he demands, and in which he sets up his throne, Prov. xxiii. 26. It had its noble powers and faculties for this end, that it might serve and enjoy God, Isa. xliii. 7—21. It is therefore accountable to him. The soul is also to be regarded,

4. In its relation to the body.

(1.) It is now united to the body, and directs the body. The soul of man was made and intended for the body, to be the principle of its life. The soul's union with the body is the result of an infusion; still God breathes the breath of life. The soul thus united to the body, ordinarily performs its operations by the ministry of the body. Paul once knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body, 2 Cor. xii. 3. The soul governs the motions of the body, and is set over the rest of the works of God's hands; and in its present actings has some dependence upon the temperament and state of the body. Bodily diseases weaken the habits and disturb the operations of the mind.

(2.) It will shortly be separated from the body, and will then act in a state of separation. It lives now in the body, but it will live when the body is dead, Eccl. xii. 7. When the tabernacle shall be dissolved, the inhabitants shall live in another region. The soul will not die with the body. We read of the soul's being in paradise when the body is dead, Luke xxii. 43.—of the soul's being with Christ when it is departed from the body, Phil. i. 23.—of the souls of them that are slain crying with a loud voice, Rev. vi. 10. The very heathen had some notion of the immortality of the soul, and of its departure to happiness or misery, according to what was done in the body. When we speak of the soul as distinct from the body now, it will much help us to think of the separation of the soul and body. The soul will live and act when the body is in the grave, though how and in what way we cannot easily conceive. The soul of the wicked will be required, Luke xii. 20. the soul of the godly resigned, Acts vii. 59. The soul does not sleep as the body sleeps.

Show, II. Why it is called *our own soul*—his *own soul*.

1. It is but *one* soul—it is *soul* in the singular number—not souls, as of many, but one—the soul is called the *only one*, Ps. xxii. 20. margin. Being but one, the greater is the shame if we neglect it, and the greater is the loss if we lose it. If we lose an eye or a hand, nature has provided another which may in part make up the loss; but nothing is appointed to make up the loss of a soul, for we have but one God to serve, and one soul to save—one God in the great world, one soul in the little world. Being our only one, it should be our *darling*, like the poor man's ewe-lamb. Make not that thy drudge which should be thy darling.

2. It is *his own*. How his own? not in respect of

absolute propriety and dominion. It is not our own to do what we will with it, and to dispose of it as we please; not as they said, our tongues are *our own*, Ps. xii. 4. So God challenges a right to them, and can make good his claim. We are *not our own*, 1 Cor. vi. 19. being not our own creators, we are not our own proprietors. God has said, *All souls are mine*, Ezek. xvi. 4. He made us, and his we are, to be commanded and disposed of by him. He is the God of the spirits of all flesh, Numb. xvi. 22. But it is *our own* soul,

(1.) As it is near and dear to ourselves. So it is more our own than any thing we have. Houses and lands are but appurtenances; our souls are our demesne; the concernments of them are more our concern than any thing else. Other things have but slender relation to us, but our souls and our God are our own—so our own, that, unless by our own default, as no creature gave them, so no creature can take them away. In them our concern lies most, Deut. xiii. 6. *Thy friend which is as thy own soul*—nothing can be nearer than that, thy soul is thyself.

(2.) As it is distinguished from the souls of others. They talk of the soul of the world; but every man has a soul of his own, distinguished from all others. Job supposes his friends' souls in his soul's stead, Job xvi. 4. but it was but a supposition. We must partake of the joys and sorrows of others' souls by sympathy, as members one of another; but our souls are our own; so that the salvation of another man's soul will not be the salvation of mine. We must bear one another's burthens, and yet every man prove his own work: see Gal. vi. 2, 4, 5.

(3.) As we are intrusted with it, and have it committed to our care, by him whose all souls are. It is our talent which we are to trade with, our vineyard which we are to keep, Cant. i. 6. Let this be your care. The charge we have received concerning these souls of ours, is to see to it,

[1.] That they be *employed* in the service of God in this world. We have our souls given us to be used in serving God. We have a power of knowing, that we may know God, and a power of loving, that we may love God. We were intrusted with these noble faculties, that we might glorify our Creator, serving him *with our spirits*, Rom. i. 9. We have our souls in vain, if we put God off with bodily exercise, which profits little, 1 Tim. iv. 8. We have souls to be engaged in approaching to God, Jer. xxx. 21. This cannot be if they be enslaved to the flesh, and polluted with fleshly lusts. How can a soul plunged in the things of sense, be fit to serve and have communion with the holy God. God will be worshipped in the spirit, John iv. 23. for he is a Spirit. Therefore God put some of his image upon us, that we might reflect glory to him; that we might glorify God with our spirits, 1 Cor. vi. 20. The body is good for nothing without the soul.

[2.] That they be *prepared* for the enjoyment of God in the other world. This charge is committed to every one of us, to get our souls in a readiness for the appearance of Christ, and for a future state. None shall partake of the blessedness of heaven but those that are first made ready for it. See that your souls be refined from that which is inconsistent with this blessedness, and previously disposed and inclined to that in which it consists. This is sanctification, making ready a people prepared for the Lord, Luke i. 17. and no little is required to prepare a soul for eternal glory. The people of God are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. This is, and ought to be, the chief and continual care of every man in this life.

Use 1. If every man has a soul of his own, then every man has reason to be thankful to his Creator. Let us bless God for our rational souls, that we were endued with those noble powers which distinguish them. A soul is a jewel of value, for which we ought to give thanks to the Father of spirits. If all his works do praise him, much more should we. We were in God's hand as the clay in the hand of the potter, to be made vessels of honour or dishonour as pleased him, Jer. xviii. 6. Rom. ix. 20. And has he made us vessels of honour, how much are we indebted! Let us bless God, that we are made capable of blessing him. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, Ps. cxxxix. 14. *this my soul knoweth—knoweth by experience.* When man had made himself in respect of corruption like the beasts that perish, how justly might God have made him so in his constitution, Ps. xlix. 20. Let us praise God for an understanding, and beg of him that gave us the faculty, to give us grace in that faculty, that it may ever be employed in his service, and be blessed with the rich enjoyment of himself.

2. Then every man has reason to be thankful for his Redeemer, who is the best friend to souls that ever was, and has abundantly commended his love to souls. Well may the soul and spirit rejoice in him as the God of our salvation, Luke i. 46, 47. Through him the salvation of the soul is wrought out, and spiritual blessings for spiritual beings purchased, Eph. i. 3. To have a soul, had been but to have a capacity of being eternally miserable, if Christ had not interposed. He delivers the soul from the pit of destruction, Job xxxiii. 28. Every man that has a soul is concerned in that great salvation which he has wrought out.

3. There is good reason why we should honour all men. It is the law of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 17. *Esteem* all men, because every man has a soul, is thus far favoured of God, thus far equal with us. This is one thing wherein rich and poor meet together, Prov. xxii. 2. their hearts are fashioned alike, Ps. xxxiii. 15. Let none be treated with scorn, as unworthy to

be set with the dogs of our flock, that has an immortal soul, as valuable in itself, and as precious in the sight of God, as our own. If he has not wealth he has a soul; therefore, let us not trample upon any, nor curse any, Jam. iii. 9. They do very ill that are more tender of a dog, or a horse, than of a man, or a woman, or a child, that has an immortal soul. Those that are poor and despised, may comfort themselves with this, that they have souls.

4. There is good reason why we should seek the spiritual welfare of all men. He that has a soul has a soul to save, and if every man has so, then we should pray for all men, 1 Tim. ii. 1. for all men have souls that are capable of serving and enjoying God. Think, here is a poor neighbour that has a soul of his own; can I do nothing for the welfare of that soul; nothing to *save a soul from death*, Jam. v. 20. nothing to win a soul, Prov. xi. 30. How should this quicken ministers to travail in birth again, and quicken all, in their places, to lay out themselves for the good of souls to the utmost. Say not, Why should we concern ourselves, whether they come to Christ's ordinances, or be taken notice of or not? Have they not souls? Christ preached to publicans; they had souls as well as Pharisees. Poor and maimed, and halt, had souls, and thus it is now. All souls were precious to Christ, and so they must to us, or we have not his Spirit.

5. It concerns every man to be busy. If every man has a soul of his own, he has enough to do to look after it. He has a talent to trade with—if but that one, it is enough to fill him with care. He has a vineyard to dress and to keep, which will find him with constant employment, or else it will soon become like the field of the slothful, Prov. xxiv. 30, &c. He that has a soul of his own, has somewhat to do to keep it, Prov. iv. 23. Deut. iv. 9.—to keep out spiritual wickedness, and to keep up spiritual duties. He that has a soul of his own, had need look about him, for he has a jewel of value in his hand, which he is in danger of losing,—is in the midst of enemies. He has much to set in order, and he has no time to be idle.

6. It concerns every man to prove his own work. Gal. vi. 4. If every man has a soul of his own, a separate interest of his own to mind, then it is ill to venture his soul, and the interests of it, in the same way that others venture theirs. If we have souls of our own, we must not follow the multitude to do evil, Exod. xxiii. 2. Do not say, Others venture upon sin, others neglect duty, and have not so much concern about religion, and therefore why should I be concerned? but remember, thou hast a soul of thy own, and shalt give account of thyself. Rom. xiv. 12. If others hazard their souls, it does not follow that I may hazard mine. I must follow God's directions, rather than the evil examples of men.

7. It is the unspeakable folly of most men, that they live as if they thought they had no souls, or knew not what the nature of their souls is. The world is full of such fools, who profess to know that they have precious and immortal souls, but in works deny it. They are guilty of this folly,

(1.) Who are careful to avoid that which is hurtful to the body, but take no care to avoid that which is prejudicial to the soul. Those live as if they had no souls, who are doing that every day without regret, that defiles the soul, Tit. i. 14. and wrongs the soul, Prov. viii. 36. and hazards the eternal happiness of the soul. Dost thou think thou hast a soul, and yet art so unconcerned at spiritual miseries?

(2.) Those who are labouring for the meat that perishes, and take no pains for that which is meat for the soul; that are busy laying up treasure for their bodies, but make no provision for the soul. Dost thou think thou hast a soul; and makest so light of Christ, and art careless in praying and hearing; seekest corn and wine, and any good, more than the favour of God, which is the life of the soul?

(3.) Those whose souls *take their ease* in the profits and pleasures of this world. The rich man, Luke xii. 19. knew he had a soul, but knew not the nature of his soul, else he would not have talked to it as he did. Those that bless their souls in the abundance of their worldly possessions, which perish in the using, know not that their souls are spiritual and immortal, and so perish with a lie in their right hand.

SERMON II.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

DOCTRINE 2. That it is possible the soul may be lost. There is great danger of a man's *losing his own soul*. The word of God is a word of *warning*, Ps. xix. 11.—it tells us what we are in danger of while we go on in sin. The work of ministers is to give warning, Ezek. xxxiii. 7.—according to the word, to show people not only sin in its colours, but sin in its consequences; what hazards they run, while they abide by the choice of their own delusions. Therefore when the prophets prophesied falsely, it is no marvel if the people know not what will be in the end of it, Jer. v. 31. The text gives us warning of the danger we are in of losing our own souls. It is spoken of as a thing very possible, and it is good to know our danger. I shall

Show, I. What the *loss of the soul* is. And,

1. The metaphor must be opened. Interpreters agree not from what it is borrowed, but a metaphor

it is. It stands opposed here to *gaining*. Profit and loss use to be considered together, as v. 25.—losing stands opposed to saving. In the consideration of peril only, it is enough to save; but in the consideration of profit, it is desirable to gain: and so it is to be considered here, not excluding the other, for Luke uses both words. The soul may be said to be lost,

(1.) *Recoverably* in this world.

[1.] As a wandering *sheep* is lost: and thus we are all by nature *lost*, Ps. cxix. 176. compare Isa. liiii. 6. Thus a sinful condition is a lost condition, and they who continue in this condition, are for ever lost: see Matt. xviii. 12. Luke xv. 4. But this is a loss that is recoverable, Matt. xviii. 11. Luke xv. 32; xix. 10. A man loses his soul, while it goes astray from God; and a sad loss it is. Those that deny Christ to gain worldly preferment, by so doing, immediately *lose their souls*. They thus go astray like wandering sheep. As long as we are in any sinful way, so long we are wandering like sheep, which, while they wander, are from under the eye and care of the shepherd, and want the green pastures and the still waters. They are without the society of the flock, and are exposed to be worried by the dogs that seek to devour. This is the condition of backsliders. Let us bless God that there is a return from this lost state.

[2.] As a jewel of value is lost; a piece of silver, that is the comparison, Luke xv. 8, 9. The soul is a piece of silver, more valuable than thousands of gold and silver. It is capable of improvement by trading; it is stamped with God's image and superscription, though many esteem it as the dirt of the earth. This jewel is lost when we are put out of the possession of it. The devil has robbed man of it; that great destroyer of souls. Sensual pleasures take away the heart, and rob men for the present of their own souls, Hos. iv. 11. A man that is drunk, or is carried on by the violence of unbridled passions, has for the present lost his own soul, that precious jewel. The soul is also lost that is drowned in worldly pursuits. How lamentable, that such a precious jewel should be thus trampled upon! But this is recoverable by repentance and regeneration.

[3.] As a bewildered traveller is *lost*. A man is lost when he is out of his way—so is the soul. He that denies Christ, thus loses his soul, i. e. he wanders out of the way of understanding, Prov. xxi. 16. Thus a sinful state, especially a state of backsliding and apostasy, is a lost state, Ps. xiv. 3. *All gone out of the way*. We are lost, when we go out of the right and good way that leads to heaven, and turn aside to crooked paths, and are lost as a man in a wood, or labyrinth, which he cannot get out of. The right way is one, and though it be strait and narrow, yet it is a way of pleasantness, and we may find it, if our eyes look not aside. But by-paths are many, and

the sinner has no satisfaction in them. A man loses his soul when he plunges himself in the depths of Satan, and entangles himself in the snares of this world, those thorns that are in the way of the forward, traversing their way. Such are called upon to return, Jer. iii. 22. and to ask for the old way, Jer. vi. 16.

[4.] As a city or strong hold is *lost* to the enemy. He that turns away from Christ, delivers his soul into the hands of Satan, who gets the command of it, and keeps it as his palace. It should pay tribute to Christ; the strength of it should be employed for Christ; but it is *lost*, Satan has got possession of it, lusts rule, and the powers of the soul are engaged in the devil's cause, and are his armour wherein he trusts, Luke xi. 21, 22. When we yield to the assaults of Satan's temptations, and surrender to him, there is a soul lost. Rest not till it be retrieved. Let Christ come and lead captivity captive; submit to the conduct of Christ the Captain of salvation, yield to him, and he will get it, and take it—he whose right it is. Thus the soul may be lost, and it is possible it may be recovered. Be concerned that you may see yourselves to be in a lost condition. Seek after your own souls. Endeavour to gain possession of them. A man is never master of his own soul till Christ is master of it. Come to him as the great Shepherd, 1 Pet. ii. 25. the great guide to poor travellers. Rest not in a lost condition. Blessed be God, there is hope for lost souls, a remedy is provided. You are lost, but you may be found, if you do as the prodigal son did, return to your father. Aim also to keep possession of your souls. We are in danger of losing our souls every day, in particular temptations; therefore, double your guard. Let your eye be continually upon your souls; keep them with all diligence, and commit the keeping of them to God, 1 Pet. iv. 19. Luke xxi. 19.

(2.) The soul may be lost *irrecoverably* in the other world: and this is especially meant here. They that lose their souls in the by-paths of sin, and do not recover themselves by repentance *out of the snare of the devil*, 2 Tim. ii. 26. will be *lost* to all eternity; so lost as not to be sought for nor saved any more. Thus those that persist in unbelief are said to be *lost*, 2 Cor. iv. 3. *To them that are lost*, i. e. that wilfully shut their eyes against the gospel, and will not receive it. They are *lost*, i. e. not chosen in the counsels of divine love, left to be vessels of wrath, Rom. ix. 22. to them the gospel is hidden, Matt. xiii. 14. *Lost*, i. e. hastening inevitably to destruction. To be lost is to *perish*, perish eternally. Judas is called a *son of perdition*, John xvii. 12. not only actively, as far as was in his power destroying Christ, but passively, to be destroyed. He went to *his own place*, Acts i. 25. compare Ps. cix. 8, &c. which is referred to, and see what it is to be a son of perdition; that is more than to be lost; so the

prodigal was, and yet found; but doomed to perdition, as Eph. ii. 3. children of wrath. The antichrist is called the son of perdition, 2 Thess. ii. 3. and see what that is, v. 12. and Rev. xiv. 9, 10. To perish eternally, is to *lose our souls*,

[1.] As the sinking ship is lost at sea. Lose his soul as the owner and merchant lose the ship and cargo, whatever the value is, when she splits upon a rock, or founders at sea; and many a man's all for this world is lost by the miscarrying of a ship at sea. It is lost without possibility of recovery. We are every one of us, in profession, making a voyage for heaven, are richly laden; the soul is exceedingly precious, it is our all; if that perish, the ship is sunk. It is *cast away*; that is the word in the parallel place, Luke ix. 25. Those that make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, make shipwreck of their own souls, 1 Tim. i. 19. The damnation of hell is compared to a man's sinking into the bottom of the sea. Matt. xviii. 6. Rev. xviii. 21. it is an irrecoverable ruin. Many a hypocrite spreads a large sail, and seems to make way apace for heaven; but there is some secret leak of corruption unstopped, and so he sinks of a sudden, and perishes perhaps within sight of the haven. The storm of persecution sinks many a soul that seemed fair, Matt. vii. 27. Some are sunk by being overloaded with this world, having much of it, and much to do in it, and letting it into their hearts, see 1 Tim. vi. 10.

[2.] As the stakes are lost when a man is beaten in his game; or rather, the money lost, when a man is cheated in his bargain. A good man stakes the world to heaven, hazards his temporal interests for the obtaining of an eternal happiness; and he wins abundantly:—see Paul staking his all for Christ, Phil. iii. 7, 8. A wicked, worldly man, stakes his soul to the world, to secure what he has, and to get more of it, and the devil plays against him, who lies in wait to deceive and destroy souls. The wicked man hazards his soul, and runs a great venture, and saith of the world, as Paul doth there of Christ, I count every thing but loss, even God and Christ, and my soul, and heaven, that I may win the world. Satan is a subtle gamester, and wins the prize by deluding the soul.

[3.] As the cause is lost when a man is cast in it. The life of the soul is the inheritance we are in suit for. Let my soul live, is the demand; it is the inheritance of our fathers, which we are fools if we alienate. A wicked man when he comes to die would commit his soul to God, to be saved. Now here is a double cause to be tried. You demand the life of your soul—what title have you to your own souls, and the happiness of them? what evidences can you produce? were you marked for God? You expect a spiritual happiness from God—what work have you done for him? There is a debt, a great debt, upon your soul—had you an interest in Christ's satisfac-

n? what evidence of that interest have you? Was Christ redemption to you? was he sanctification? Cor. i. 30. Again, you would give your souls up to God. Satan comes, and saith they are his—you give him your hearts. These causes will be tried at a great day, and if we be cast, our souls are lost; writ of error lies from that tribunal: see the verse and the text.

[4.] As the condemned malefactor is lost. He is not at the mercy of the court, he has no reason to expect that his sentence will be reversed, but that it will be strictly executed: and thus the soul that is lost is in a hopeless state, its eternal condemnation sealed. Mercy will then have done its work. When a man has forfeited his life, and is convicted, his life is lost, he is a lost man; the forfeiture will not be taken, for God is righteous. Hence he is said to *take away* the soul, Job xxvii. 8, as forfeited. This is the description of the death of a wicked man, and perhaps of his damnation too, Luke xii. 20. *Thy soul shall be required of thee.* There is a soul lost, required for the satisfaction of wronged justice; hence the sinner had no interest in Christ's satisfaction, and God will abide by what he has said, that the soul that sins shall die. *Required of thee* as unworthy of it—what should he do with a soul that he did it no better than that fool did? v. 19. That soul is lost that is under the curse of God, is convicted and condemned in the judgment of the great day. This is to lose the soul. A man may be a loser in a thing, and yet not absolutely lose it; but this is the absolute losing of the soul.

Having illustrated the metaphor, I will show,

2. What is principally intended by this expression *losing the soul*. It is not the annihilation of the soul, its losing of its being: no; it is a loss (I think) greater than that, even the loss of its well-being, while its existence and faculties shall remain to make it capable of misery: see Matt. xxvi. 24. It is the eternal misery of the soul, under that sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed*, Matt. xxv. 41. The soul is lost, when it is irrecoverably separated from all that is good, and to all the evil, of which it is capable. This is the death of the soul. The text speaks of a misery which will seize the immortal soul—which will reach its nature, and run parallel with its duration. It is hard to conceive of this; as *eye has not seen*, so it is known only to God, Job xxvi. 6. Let us take a view of that misery, and see what it is.

(1.) The lost soul will be for ever separated from the love and favour of God, in which alone the happiness of the soul consists. Hell is the loss of God, and of all good—*Depart from me*; here they said to God, *Depart*, Job xxi. 14. then he will say *so* to them. The favour of God is the life of a soul, Ps. xxx. 5. Lost sinners shall be cast out of that favour, and therefore excluded from all good. The state of lost sinners is darkness, not the least glimpse of the

divine favour, to eternity. God drove out the man from the garden of Eden, Gen. iii. 24. Sinners will then be driven out with an expulsion much worse than that of Adam, which will easily appear if you compare them. Adam was driven out to till the ground, to eat bread; the ground only was cursed for his sake; coats of skins were provided for him, and intimations given of a Saviour, &c. But sinners are driven out at last, and no gleam of favour shall ever be manifested towards them. This is suffering exceeding *damage*. While the sinner lives he has tokens of God's good will, the comforts of this life, a place and a name in the visible church, and the offers of grace. This is the day of God's patience; they have sparing mercy; but then it will be *judgment without mercy*, James ii. 13. Every thing is denied in hell, Luke xvi. 26. The lost soul has lost every thing but its existence.

(2.) The lost soul will lie for ever under the *wrath of God*. Hell is the divine wrath resting upon a soul prepared by sin to be a vessel of that wrath. The soul is lost when those billows and waves go over it. The body will eventually have its share of woe; but the soul being the subject of sin, is to be the subject of wrath, Rom. ii. 8, 9. It is a destruction flowing immediately from God's glorious power, 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. He that knows how to prepare a fire for devils, knows how to prepare it for souls. Who knows the power of God's anger, when it shall appear without any mercy to interpose? Rom. ix. 22. If one drop of this wrath get into the conscience at any time, what work does it make there, Job vi. 2, 3, &c. Ps. lxxxviii. 7, &c. even there, where there are principles of grace. O how dreadful will it be, when it shall be experienced in its full extent! Think what a being the soul is, and what a being God is, and you will say it must needs be a destruction past conception or expression. It must be thus, for the soul is an *intelligent* being, and therefore the more capable of misery. The soul stripped of the body, will understand its own misery, and the faculties will be enlarged to receive the pourings in of divine wrath. The soul is endued with a power of reflection, and that will add greatly to the torment: see Luke xvi. 25. *Son, remember*. There are many things, the remembrance of which will add to the misery, especially the remembrance of sin, of mercy, and of opportunity. The soul is also an *immortal* being, and therefore the greater will be its misery. The soul's immortality will be the perpetuity of its woe. The soul once lost is lost for ever, and its redemption ceaseth for ever. The fire is an everlasting fire; the worm dies not, because the soul dies not, Mark ix. 44. It is the crown of heaven's happiness, that its inhabitants cannot die any more; and the same is the complement of hell's misery. This makes it ceaseless, that it is endless, and remediless. Man is a living soul, and God the avenger

is a *living God*, and therefore there can be no period of the misery.

Show, II. What danger there is of this loss of the soul. Is it possible that such a noble being as the soul, should ever be thus miserable? Some calamities appear so dreadful as that we can hardly think them credible. Many people have such an excess of good nature, (as they call it,) that they cannot believe this concerning any of the children of men, that ever their souls should be lost; but the thing is no such foreign supposition. A lost soul is not a prodigy, one in an age; no, it is the case of multitudes that are gone down to the congregation of the dead, Prov. xxi. 16. and the danger of multitudes that are yet alive, and careless at the pit's brink.

1. It is possible that those who spend their days in mirth and wealth, may lose their souls, and be for ever miserable. It is possible for one that is clothed in purple and scarlet, to be in such an abyss of misery, as not to have a drop of water to cool his tongue, Luke xvi. 19, &c. It is possible for one that thinks he has goods laid up for many years, to have his soul required by devils, Luke xii. 19, 20. Riches profit neither in nor after the day of death. Those that were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living, may be thus brought down: see Isa. xiv. 9.

2. It is possible that those who live within the pale of the visible church, may lose their souls. A man that is called a disciple, and called a Christian, may be lost. It is possible that a man may be found among the wedding guests, and yet perish eternally for want of a wedding garment. It is possible for virgins to be found foolish, and to be excluded, Matt. xxv. 1.—for those that eat bread with Christ, and prophesied in his name, to be dismissed, Matt. vii. 22, 23. It is possible for Capernaum, that had been lifted up to heaven in means and mercies, to be cast down, Matt. xi. 23.

3. It is possible that those who were not far from the kingdom of God, yet may lose their souls: and that those who have promised fair, set out well, and have seemed to begin in the spirit, yet to end in the flesh, and to draw back unto perdition, Mark xii. 34. There were many who came out of Egypt, and yet came short of Canaan—Remember Lot's wife, Gen. xix. 26.

4. It is possible that those may lose their souls, who are very confident of the salvation of them. A man may think himself rich, Rev. iii. 17.—may step up to heaven's gate with that confidence, Matt. xxv. 11. and yet be disappointed. The hypocrite may have a hope that never perishes till it comes to the giving up of the ghost; a house that may stand till the storm comes, and he may lean on it. But what is the danger? Truly, great, if we consider,

(1.) That we are sinful, and deserve to be lost. We are sinners by nature, children of disobedience, and therefore children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3.—sinners by

practice, and every sin has a tendency to the ruin of the soul. The guilt of committed sin merits the wrath; the power of indwelling sin prepares the soul for this destruction. There is a proneness in us to that which is evil. The way to hell is a broad way, and very agreeable to the corrupt nature. If the criminal be really guilty, you will say he is in danger. They know not themselves that think they are in no danger. The way to hell is downhill, Mat. vii. 13.

(2.) That God is righteous, and is engaged in honour to punish sin. We are ready to think, that because God is merciful no souls should perish; but is not his holiness, his beauty, as much as his goodness? If God were altogether such an one as ourselves, we might think there is no danger, Ps. l. 21.—but he is not so; he will by no means clear the impenitently guilty, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Better all should perish, than that there should be unrighteousness with God: see Josh. xxiv. 19, 20.

(3.) That the devil is very busy to deceive and destroy souls. He is a subtle enemy, Gen. iii. 1. a sworn enemy, an industrious enemy, 1 Pet. v. 8. not *what*, but *whom*. Give him the souls, and let who will take the goods. See what kind of enemies we have to grapple with, Eph. vi. 12. My soul is among lions, Ps. lvi. 4. Alas, master, (saith the prophet's servant,) what shall we do?

(4.) That Jesus Christ is very strict in his terms of saving souls. It is true there is a sufficiency both of merit and grace in Christ, for the preventing of this loss of the soul; he came to save souls, but they must be repenting and believing souls. He came to save souls from their sins, not in them, Matt. i. 21. He came to purify, and so to save. Salvation itself will not save those that neglect their souls: even the word of Christ will judge the disobedient, and he himself will have those slain that would not have him to reign over them, Luke xix. 27.

Use 1. If it be possible that souls may be lost, then we have reason to take it as a favour, that we have warning given to us. Where there is a real danger, it is good to be told of it, that we may escape it. We should reckon those our friends that would tell us of any danger to our bodies, much more, to our souls. Why then should we desire still to have smooth things prophesied to us, when smooth things are commonly deceitful, Isa. xxx. 10. Blame not ministers, then, who are earnest with you about your souls. We do it, knowing the terror of the Lord. 2 Cor. v. 11.—we do it out of a tender regard to souls, and to deliver our own souls, Ezek. xxxiii. 9. Count us not enemies then.

2. Then let us fear, Heb. iv. 1. It is possible our souls may be lost; and have we not reason then to be jealous over ourselves? This fear will be awakening to us, to make sure work in this matter, lest we perish with a lie in our right hand. You see there

danger, it is a matter of consequence, and in which many have been deceived; let us therefore try ourselves and fear always, Prov. xxviii. 14. Many will lose their souls; many will come short of eternal life: *Lord, is it I?* If multitudes miscarry, it is good to insure an interest in Christ. Be ruled by Christ, and he will insure your all to you, Heb. i. 7.

3. As it is possible that souls may be lost, so, blessed be God, it is possible that souls may be saved; and that is it which we should therefore make sure. The capacities of souls are such, that either they will be eternally happy, or they will be eternally miserable—and it should be our great concern to make sure to ourselves that happiness, and to flee from that misery. It is possible our souls may be lost; but blessed be God, they are not lost yet—we have yet a cast to throw for eternity. O let us make sure work for our souls; and let this be our aim, and desire, and prayer, Ps. xxxv. 3. *Say unto thy soul, thou art my salvation.*

SERMON III.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

DOCTRINE 3. That if the soul be lost, it is of the inner's own losing—he *loseth his own soul*. This is not implied here, that it is according to the sinner's own choice, to hazard his own soul, and expose himself to all this loss for the gaining of the world. But though it be only implied here, it is expressed elsewhere, and is a great truth, that the ruin of those that perish is of themselves—wilful sinners are self-destroyers, Hos. xiii. 9. These losses must lie at our own door.

1. The damage of the soul in this world, is from sinners themselves. Many that are delivered from eternal ruin, yet are very much damaged in their souls, and it is their own fault. Which of us is there whose spiritual interests have not been injured, and we may thank ourselves.

(1.) It is a loss to the soul to be deprived of the favour of God, and that arises from ourselves, because we do that which forfeits it, Isa. lix. 1, 2. Sin is a wall of partition between us and God, and it is we ourselves that build up that wall. Hence sin is compared to a cloud, a *thick cloud*, Isa. xlv. 22. The cloud that separates between the earth and the sun, is made of vapours rising out of the earth—such is the cloud of sin, Jer. v. 25. We prefer other things before the favour of God, and do not seek it as we should, and so we come to want it. *God waits to be gracious to us, but we are in the pursuit of any good,*

and so neglect him. He says, *Seek ye my face, seek and ye shall find*;—so that it is our own fault if we have it not.

(2.) It is an injury to the soul to be disquieted with the cares of this life, and that is of ourselves. The soul suffers damage by the inordinate pursuits of the things of this world; it is careful and troubled about many things, Luke x. 40, 41. it is divided by opposite objects, and it is often overwhelmed with grief for disappointments; and all this is of ourselves, because we are so foolish as to set our hearts upon these things. *Men pierce themselves through* with many sorrows, 1 Tim. vi. 10. It is of ourselves if we be disquieted with care, for we are invited to *cast our care* upon God, 1 Pet. v. 7. so that if we burthen ourselves with it, it is our own fault, we perplex ourselves.

(3.) It is a prejudice to the soul to be wounded and defiled by sin; and that is of ourselves. If the mind and conscience be wasted and defiled, it is our own doing—*Because of my foolishness*, saith David, Ps. xxxviii. 5. Sense of guilt cannot but be a terror to the soul, and cast a damp upon it. We are polluted in our own ways; see Ps. cvi. 39. Whatever present damage the soul sustains by reason of sin, we bring it on ourselves, and gain the harm and loss: see Jer. ii. 19; iv. 18. The soul is a great loser by every sin: it was sin that broke David's bones, and brought him into straits; and he might thank himself. What enemies are we to our own present peace, by the false steps we take!

(4.) It is hurtful to the soul to be unfitted for holy duties; and that is of ourselves. We have strength sufficient offered us, but we do not make use of it; we do not stir up the gift that is in us, and so we become weak and unstable as water, and cannot excel. We are deluded by this world; and so we are robbed of our strength ere we are aware. We live too far from Christ, and are confident in ourselves, and think we stand; and so we become weak, are foiled by temptation, and fail in every duty.

2. The damnation of the soul in the other world, is from sinners themselves. You have heard what a noble being the soul is, and what a deplorable loss the loss of the soul is; now whence is it that such an excellent being should be thus made miserable? It was once said of the English nation, that it could never be destroyed, unless it destroyed itself by its own intestine broils and animosities: and what is sin, but a broil in the soul itself, which becomes its own destroyer? The reason why sinners die, is because they will die, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. This is an awakening word; the Lord make it so to every one of us. There are great disputes about free-will, and how far that extends. The springs and motions of man's will are secret; but this is an undoubted truth concerning this matter, which we are to hold fast, That they that perish must take

all the blame to themselves, and they that are saved must give all the glory to God. That which I am to prove is, That those who perish, must take all the blame to themselves; for,

(1.) It can be laid upon no other. It is not any other that loses thy soul for thee. We are very apt to lay it upon others. It is an extenuation both of sin and ruin, to have some one upon whom to lay the blame, as Gen. iii. Adam laid it upon Eve, and Eve upon the serpent; but God said to each of them, What is this that thou hast done?

[1.] God is not at all chargeable with the damnation of those that perish; you cannot lay it upon him.

He has no hand in the sin of sinners. It is not God that tempts—Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, Jam. i. 13. It cannot be charged upon the decree of God; that doth not necessitate any man's sin. There is a decree that sinners shall die, but no decree that sinners shall sin. The vessels of mercy *he has prepared* for glory, but vessels of wrath are *fitted* to destruction, Rom. ix. 22, 23. fitted by their own sin. It cannot be charged upon any defect in the soul, as it comes out of God's hand: see Eccl. vii. 29. The soul is made capable of serving, and glorifying, and enjoying God. God doth not incline the will to sin; his hardening the hearts of sinners, is but his letting them alone, Hos. iv. 17. his giving them up to their own hearts' lusts, Ps. lxxxi. 12. his suffering all nations to walk in their own ways, Acts xiv. 16. is but his leaving them to themselves. His grace is his own, he is not debtor to any man, Rom. xi. 35. If the providence of God do concur to the action that is sinful, yet it doth not at all concur to the sinfulness of an action. It is true God made man's mouth, and in his hand our breath is; but if that mouth be set against the heavens, and that breath be threatening and slaughter, that is not God's work. He that speaketh a lie, like his father the devil, speaketh of his own. God permits sin, i. e. doth not hinder it by his sovereign power; but he has done all that became a good and righteous governor to prevent it. The king is not to be blamed if he promulge good and wholesome laws against treason, though he do not set a guard upon every man to keep him from committing it.

Nor has God any pleasure in the ruin of sinners. It is true, as a just governor, he has a hand in it; they fall immediately into his hand, but he has no pleasure in it, he doth not desire it; he has said this, Ezek. xviii. 32. He appeals to them who said his ways were not equal; they could not but know that he had no delight in the death of sinners, comparable to what he had in their salvation, Ezek. xviii. 23; xxxiii. 11. The ever-living God has even sworn this, that we might have strong consolation. He is not willing that any should perish, 2 Pet. iii. 9. It is no pleasure to the Almighty that he should afflict,

much less that he should destroy. As a righteous governor, he will punish sin; but as a good God, he will not delight in the infliction of punishment. It is plain he has used all means to prevent the ruin, has exercised a great deal of patience and forbearance, and given fair warning.

[2.] The devil is not altogether chargeable with man's ruin. It is true he seeks our destruction, seeks whom he may devour, 1 Pet. v. 8. but it is as true that he can but seek it, if we do not give him advantage, and betray ourselves to him. He wars against the soul, but he cannot take it, unless we surrender it to him.

He is an adversary, but he is an adversary that may be conquered. Multitudes have, by the grace of God, overcome the wicked one, 1 John ii. 14. If we put on the whole armour of God, though he fight against our souls, he cannot overcome them. He is an accuser, but we may have an advocate to answer his accusations. Christ has vanquished him, and it is our own fault if we do not pursue the victory.

He is a tempter, but he is a tempter that may be resisted, and he will flee, Jam. iv. 7. He may sit when God gives him leave, but it is our own chaf that then comes uppermost. He may say, Cast thyself down, Matt. iv. 6. but he cannot cast us down. He may do us a great deal of mischief by his access to our fancies, and his influence upon our imaginations, but he cannot force our wills. It is no sin to be tempted, and therefore not ruining. Get thee behind me Satan, repels his motions, and the shield of faith not only shelters us from, but quenches his fiery darts—so that it is our own fault if we be overcome. The devil deceives, Rev. xx. 10. but it is because men are willing to be deceived.

(2.) It must therefore be laid upon the sinner himself—*Thou alone shalt bear it*, Prov. ix. 12. bear the loss, and bear the blame. If the soul be lost, it is of the sinner's own losing; for,

[1.] He does that which is destroying to the soul. The sin is from ourselves, and therefore the loss is. There is nothing we can truly call our own but sin; this is that which we brought into the world, and it is certain (if we continue in an unrenewed state) we shall carry it out; and it is not so with any thing else we have;—it is thy own iniquity.

Sin is the choice of the sinner's own will, his wicked will—We will walk *every one in his own way*, i. e. the way of his own choosing, Isa. lxxv. 12. Sinners choose to walk in the way of lying and drunkenness, &c.—I have loved strangers, and after them I will go. Take away will, the wicked will, and you take away both guilt and hell. Good and evil are set before us, the good way of holiness on the one hand, the evil way of sin on the other hand; and we are told how much it is our own concern to choose the good; but we choose the evil, and so it comes to be our own act. We deceive ourselves, for the matter

laid very plain before us. You were called upon any a time not to do this abominable thing which the Lord hates, but ye would not hear—you chose the way of sinners, rather than the way of good men.

Sin is the product of the sinner's own lust, the fruit of the corrupt nature : see Jam. i. 14, 15. where you have the origin of sin. That which defiles and destroys the man, proceedeth from within, out of the heart, Matt. xv. 19, 20. it is a disease of which we brought the seed into the world with us ; it comes out of the evil treasure of the heart, Matt. xii. 35. and it is this that is the loss of the soul. It is our own iniquity that lays us under the wrath of God, and makes us obnoxious to his curse. The wages of sin is death. We ourselves sow to the flesh, and thus we reap corruption. It is sin that makes the sinner fuel to God's anger, and kindles the fire which shall burn to the lowest hell. It is that bitter root which should have been plucked up, that bears all this gall and wormwood. It is sin that has the direct tendency to ruin, and has been the destruction of thousands and ten thousands of the children of Adam ; that is the way which though it seem right, yet the end thereof is the rays of death.

[2.] Man does not that which would be saving to the soul, and would prevent this ruin ; and to this neglect his misery must be attributed. The sinner loses his own soul by preferring the world before Christ, and the good things that are seen that are temporal, before the great salvation. This is the ruin of souls, that the salvation of the soul is not duly minded. The neglect of the soul is infallibly the losing of it. We are all by nature in a lost condition, and if something be not done towards our recovery, we are eternally lost. Thus sinners lose their souls, they spend those thoughts and cares in the pursuit of the world, which should be bestowed on the soul, and so lose it.

And this through mere carelessness and neglect. Many things are lost by carelessness, and so are many souls. Multitudes lose their souls for want of taking some thought about them ; they know not the things that belong to their everlasting peace, till it is too late, Luke xix. 42. They are careful about many things, but forget the one thing careful. Diligent in the oversight of trifles, and at the same time overlooking the most serious matters. There is no escape for those that neglect the great salvation, Heb. ii. 3. neglect it as needless, or as small. Inconsideration is the ruin of thousands ; they know not, neither do they understand, (Ps. lxxxii. 5.) and so they walk on in the darkness of sin, to the darkness of ruin. They know and believe that which, if duly considered and applied, would save them ; but they have other things that they mind more : this is a very common case. O that you would hear my voice, ye careless ones. Is there any thing that either needs or deserves your care more than the

salvation of your souls ? have you not reason to keep them with all diligence ? and will not your carelessness certainly speak you self-destroyers ? Is not the eye of God upon you, an awful eternity before you, which depends on the present time ?

Men also lose their souls through an obstinate refusal of the Saviour. As the wicked will chooseth the evil of sin, so the same wicked will refuseth the good of the Saviour ;—it is refusing him that speaketh from heaven, Heb. xii. 25. Those that refuse Christ ruin themselves.

They lose their own souls, for they turn a deaf ear to gospel calls ; they are *willingly ignorant*, love darkness rather than light ; they might, but will not, understand their need of Christ, and the way of salvation by him ; they shut their eyes against the gospel discoveries of life and immortality. They study to drown the voice of the word with the noise of other things. They *sit in darkness*, a contented posture. This affected ignorance will aggravate, and not excuse. They *stop their ears*, and this is often punished with a judicial deafness, Isa. vi. 10. Many are resolved to know as little as they can of Christ, lest the light disturb them.

Men also hold fast the deceit of sin. The wilful holding of the sin, is undoubtedly the wilful losing of the soul. They who retain sin are self-destroyers. Christ died to save us from sin, Matt. i. 21. from all iniquity, Tit. ii. 14. but they cannot find in their hearts to leave it. The gospel redemption is from a vain conversation, and this many like and love too well to quit. They nourish this serpent in their bosoms, and it leaves an eternal sting. They would be glad to keep Christ and their lusts too ; but if one must be parted with, it shall be the Saviour, not their sins.

Nor will sinners come to Christ for life and salvation ; he would save them, but they are not willing to be saved. He is come that men might have life, John x. 10. but sinners will not come to him for it—here the blame lies, John v. 40. They do not like the life that is offered to them—a spiritual life, a life of holiness, and love, and communion with God ; they do not relish it ; they see no beauty in Christ. There are other things that they like better, and are taken up with—their farms and their merchandise, Matt. xx. 5.—and they desire to be excused.

They will not use the means prescribed and appointed for the salvation of the soul, and so they lose their souls. They will not read the Scriptures, nor pray, nor sanctify the sabbath, nor join themselves with the Lord's people. They lose their souls because they will not save themselves from an ungodly course. They are not for troubling themselves with these things ; they look upon them as mean, or hard, or needless. They are bid, as Naaman was, to wash in Jordan, but they prefer the rivers of Damascus ; and think all this anxiety unnecessary.

They will not have Christ to reign over them, and so they lose their souls; for Christ will not save, nay, he will destroy, those that he shall not rule, Luke xix. 27. They like Christ and his crown well enough, but they do not like Christ and his yoke. They will not submit to be his subjects, and so they are treated as his enemies. There is in many who profess religion, a secret dislike of the power of religion; close and strict walking with God, they cannot approve.

Nor will they part with this world and their portion in it, and so they lose their souls: that is the case supposed in the text. The soul lost for the gaining, or perhaps the keeping, of the world. They refuse to part with the world for Christ, as he that had *great possessions*, Matt. xix. 22. Ps. xvii. 14. They cannot persuade themselves to leave, lay out, or lose, that which they have set their hearts upon;—it is the piece of ground, and the yoke of oxen, that lose the soul. They will be rich, and thus they are ruined.

Use 1. This will for ever justify God in the condemnation of those that perish. Believe this, and say, The Lord is righteous, and let this tend to reconcile the ruin of so many souls with the goodness of God; let this stop every mouth, Rom. iii. 19. and convince and silence all that are ungodly, Jude 14. See Matt. xxii. 12. he was *speechless*. The heavens will then declare God's righteousness, and all the world will say, that just and true are his ways: for sinners die, only because they will die; they choose their own delusions. Would you have them saved against their wills? The present day of divine patience will justify God in the approaching day of his wrath. The justice of God in the whole proceeding will be manifested in the great day, Ps. li. 4. See this insisted upon, Prov. i. 24, &c. Isa. lxvi. 4. And that which justifies God, will satisfy the saints, who will have nothing to say against it. If after all the means used, the barren tree continue such, *cut it down*—not a word more to say for it, Luke xiii. 9.

2. This will for ever aggravate the destruction of sinners, and will make it so much the more intolerable. Son, remember, Luke xvi. 25.—remember that you brought this upon yourselves; this you may thank yourselves for. The remembrance of the sin will be the aggravation of the misery, especially the recollection, that when time was, it might have been prevented. There was a fair offer made of life and salvation, but it was rejected for a trifle: thou wilt *mourn at the last*, and say, how have I hated instruction. This will sharpen the teeth of the never-dying worm, Mark ix. 44. Listen to the complaints of poor lost sinners, and let that frighten you from that way which leads down to the chambers of death. The greater advantages any had to escape this ruin, the more intolerable will it be, Matt. xi. 21, &c. I speak these things to warn you.

3. Pity and pray for those that you see thus destroying their own souls, and if you can do anything, have compassion upon them, and help them. See their condition to be very painful, but not yet desperate; while there is life there is hope. If you saw a distracted man ready to drown himself, you would do what you could to hinder him;—and can you do nothing to save a soul *from death*, Jam. v. 20. to snatch a soul as a brand out of everlasting burnings. Say to sinners, as Paul did to the jailer, *Do thyself no harm*, Acts xvi. 28. pray earnestly for such. However, take heed of doing that which might further any in this self-destruction. If you cannot help to save their souls, beware of aiding their ruin by hardening them in sin, or tempting them to it; or having fellowship with them, lest you bear sin for them, Lev. xix. 17. and be found partakers of other men's sins, and then of their plagues. It concerns every one, as well as ministers, to keep themselves clear from the blood of all men, Acts xx. 28.

4. Admire the patience and forbearance of God, that we who have been so long destroying ourselves, are not yet destroyed—especially if we be in a hopeful way to salvation. It is no thanks to us, but it is *merely of the Lord's mercies*. If God had not been better to us than we have been to ourselves, we had been in hell long ago, Lam. iii. 32. There are riches of goodness and forbearance in God's dealing with those that *treasure up wrath*, Rom. ii. 4, 5, especially if God has not only spared thee, but saved thee with a great salvation: This magnifies the riches of free grace; when we were hastening to destruction, we were then stopped. God had pity on us when we had no pity on ourselves; in him was our help found, when we were destroying ourselves, Hos. xiii. 19. Not unto us, therefore, not unto us, but to the grace of God be all the glory. This does for ever exclude boasting, for we could destroy ourselves, but we could not save ourselves. How much are we indebted, and what shall we render?

5. Then let every one of us be *wise for ourselves*, and not lose our own souls. My errand to you is, to bring you this serious caution, Men and brethren, do not ruin yourselves; you act rationally in other things, and do not run yourselves upon danger, and why so foolish in this great affair? *Why will ye die?* This is used as the great argument why we should repent, and turn, Ezek. xviii. 31; xxxiii. 11. Thus does God condescend to reason the case with us; and what argument can be more powerful? Be not self-destroyers; be not such enemies to yourselves and to your eternal interests. Consider what the losing of the soul is, and what the salvation of it is; what that death is which you make so light of, and what that life is which is proposed to you. Surely, in dealing with sinners, we have all the reason that can be on our side. Let reason rule you, and show yourselves men.

If you would not lose your souls, have an eye upon

them, be deeply concerned about them; watch over your souls, and take good heed to them. There then begins to be some hope of salvation, when men begin to be thoughtful about their souls.

If you would not lose your souls, you must leave your sins, for sin will be the ruin of the soul. Cast away from you all your transgressions, Ezek. xviii. 31. Hate sin, and abandon it as an enemy to your souls, from a principle of right self-love, though it be a beloved sin: see Matt. v. 29, 30.

If you would not lose your souls, you must commit them to God, through the Mediator. Give your hearts to God, who is the rightful sovereign of the heart, Prov. xxiii. 26. Give them up to God, to be ruled by his laws, sanctified by his Spirit, and renewed according to his image. Finally,

If you would not suffer the loss of your souls, you must be willing to suffer the loss of all things, that you may win Christ, Phil. iii. 8. Make sure your interest in him; accept of him; live looking unto Jesus, and you shall be with him for ever.

SERMON IV.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

DOCTRINE 4. That the soul is more worth than all the world. The soul of man is a jewel of inestimable value. This is plainly intimated here, where the loss of the soul is represented as such a loss that the gain of all the world will not be a compensation for it. Observe here,

1. What those things are that are here compared—the *whole world*, and *thy own soul*; these are here put into the scales against one another. The world here means not the universe, or the whole creation, that is more excellent than any one part, but the things that are seen that are temporal, 2 Cor. iv. 18. the riches, honours, and pleasures, of this present time. See a map of this world, 1 John ii. 16. Now the *whole world* is here set in the balance against one soul, if that one be thy one. It is not a small estate, or a lordship, that is here supposed to be of less value than the soul, but the world, the whole world. Our temporal concerns are compared with our spiritual, the *life that now is, and that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8.

2. What judgment is here passed upon them—That our own souls are of infinitely more value than the whole world. The value of a thing is reckoned partly by its nature and intrinsic dignity, and partly by its use. That is most valuable, that is most delightful, most profitable, and most necessary. We reckon that is most worth, that is most worth to us. Now our

own souls are more to us than all the world is or can be. The design of this is to show of what little worth the world is, and the things of the world: they are weighed in the balance, and found wanting; not worthy to be compared, or to be named, with the soul: see Rom. viii. 18.

3. Who it is that passeth this judgment. It is our Lord Jesus himself, one who had reason to know the worth of souls, for he made them, and bought them; and who (we may be sure) would not underrate the world, for by him *the worlds were made*, Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2. This doctrine I shall endeavour,

I. To prove—That our own souls are more to us than all the world. How insufficient all the world will be to make up the loss of the soul, we shall have occasion to show under the 6th doctrine, (if the Lord will,) at present, I shall endeavour to show the true worth of the soul. To prove this, consider,

1. The *production* of the soul. Trace it up to its original; and it is breathed into us by the breath of God; it is a spark of heaven; it is that part of man by which he is allied to the world of spirits; it is the masterpiece of God's workmanship in this lower world: see Gen. ii. 7. The image of God is stamped upon it, Gen. i. 26, 27. When it returns to God, it doth but as all the waters do, return to the place from whence it came. It is of a noble extraction. That which makes up the world, that men covet so much, is but of the earth, earthy:—honour is a shadow; the pleasures of the world and the wealth of the world are of the earth; gold and silver are but refined earth—Man found thee poor and dirty in a mine, *Herbert*. But man was made last of all the creatures, as the chief of the works of God. It is good for us often to ask whence we came; and being so nobly descended, disdain to serve the base and sordid lusts of the flesh, and to prostitute an immortal soul to the drudgery of this world.

2. The *powers* of the soul. These are very great; its apprehensions are not confined by the horizon of sense, but rove far beyond it. The faculties of the human soul are such as (above any other creature) prove the eternal power and wisdom of the Creator. It is *the soul* that knows right well how marvellous God's works are, Ps. cxxxix. 14. by reflection upon itself. Think what the soul of man is capable of, and you will say that it is of inestimable value.

(1.) It is capable of glorifying God in this world. It has a power of knowing God, as he has been pleased to reveal himself. It is that which is within us, that renders us capable of blessing and praising God, Ps. ciii. 1, 2. It is capable of *knowledge*, in which, especially, the image of God consists, Col. iii. 10. It is capable of reasoning and *bringing to mind*, Isa. xlvi. 8. It is capable of receiving a divine revelation to this purpose, and in the use of instituted ordinances is capable of *having fellowship*

with God—of being wrought upon, and witnessed with, by the Holy Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 16. It is capable of being *sanctified*.

(2.) It is capable of being glorified with God in the other world; of seeing and enjoying him within the veil; of conversing with angels and glorified spirits, and drinking in the sweet and glorious rays of divine grace and love; things which are above, out of the sight of sense. It has a power of doing that, which the body, till it is refined and become a spiritual body, is not able to attain. It is capable of seeing God face to face, which an embodied soul, till stripped of this veil, cannot possibly do, Exod. xxxiii. 20.

(3.) The *perpetuity* of the soul. This is one great thing which speaks the worth of the soul—that it is to last for ever, it is an immortal spirit. It is a flame that can never be extinguished. It will survive the body, and will live and act in a state of separation from it. It is one of those things which are not seen, but are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 18. It is an awful consideration, when a child is born, to think, here is the beginning of a being that will outlive all the ages of time. The world is but for a moment, Prov. xxiii. 5. the fashion of it, the scheme, the outside of it, (for it is but a superficies,) *passeth away*, 1 Cor. vii. 31. 1 John ii. 17. But the soul is perpetual; the things themselves towards which its desires extend, and those desires that are so formed, are eternal. The brute creatures are mortal, but man will be immortal. This makes it such a serious thing for a man to die, above what it is for a beast to die, Eccl. iii. 21. Things are reckoned valuable according to their duration. Gold therefore is the most precious metal, because it will not rust nor waste; but the utmost of the duration of this world's goods is within time.

(4.) The *propriety* of our souls—*thy own soul*. In order to ascertain the right value of a thing, it must be considered, not only what the thing is in itself, but what interest we have in it. The loan of a thing is nothing so valuable as the possession of it. Now the world is but lent us; whatever we have in it, it is not to be called our own; but our souls are our own. We brought them into the world, and we shall carry them out—they are our own, they are, in fact, ourselves. The soul is the man. What is man but a *living soul*? Gen. ii. 7. Abstract the soul as living, and the body is a lump of clay; abstract the soul as rational, and the man is as the beasts that perish. It is a certain truth, that the soul is the man. *Persons*, in Scripture, are often reckoned by souls, as Acts ii. 41. What we are, is more to us than what we have. It is the spirit that is the substance of the man; and what is the chaff to the wheat, the shell to the kernel, the clothes to the body? This is one of the first things that the convinced sinner is made sensible of—that the soul is the man; and if

he would do well for himself, he must do well for his soul.

(5.) The *projects* that are laid about souls. There is great work about souls, more than you think of. That is valuable which those that are intelligent are concerned about. This speaks the soul of man to be of very great value. Consider,

[1.] What projects the love of God has to save souls. The God of infinite wisdom, whose the worlds are, has been pleased to concern himself with a peculiar care about the world of mankind, the world of souls. Some observe, that in Scripture, God is never brought in consulting with himself, but when man is concerned. God has thoughts to *ward*, Ps. xl. 5. Infinite Wisdom was from eternity, devising means that poor banished souls might not be for ever expelled, Eph. i. 11. compare v. 9. God had thoughts of love to the sons of men, *i. e.* the souls of men, before the worlds were.

[2.] What projects the malice of Satan has to destroy souls. It is a sign the soul of man is very precious, when God and Satan, those two adverse powers, are as it were contending for it. He seeks to get and keep possession of the soul, that he may devour it, 1 Pet. v. 8. The great dispute between Michael and the dragon is, who shall rule the souls of men. The devil's agents trade in the *souls of men*. Rev. xviii. 13. The devil saith, as the king of Sodom, Gen. xiv. 21. *Give me the souls*. There is great striving about the soul.

(6.) The *price* that was paid to redeem souls. We reckon the value of a thing by that which a wise man will give for it, who is not ignorant of it, nor under necessity. Christ, the wisdom of God, gave himself, his own precious blood, to redeem souls, and he knew what they were, and had no need of them. The redemption of the *soul is precious*, Ps. xlix. 8. Corruptible things, as silver and gold, would not do: then did Christ, for us men and for our salvation, make his soul an offering, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. *His soul was an offering* for ours, his life a *ransom* for many, Matt. xx. 28. See here the worth of souls—nothing could be a ransom for forfeited souls, but the blood of the Son of God. Lo I come, saith he—for us men and for our salvation, saith the Nicene creed. Neither the fruit of the body, nor the fruit of the estate, would atone for the *sin of the soul*, Mic. vi. 7. but Christ gave himself. Blood of bulls and goats would not do. God proves the excellency of his people by this, Isa. xliii. 4. *I will give men for thee*;—much more doth it demonstrate the excellency of souls, when God gave his Son for them. The blood of Christ is precious blood, of immense value.

(7.) The *pains* that are taken to renew souls. God hath manifested his favour to man in the provision made for his body, that that might be put into, and kept in, a capacity to answer the end of its creation. See the first instance of this care, Gen. i. 29. and

afterwards, Gen. ix. 3. But there is a great deal more done to provide for the soul, and to put that into, and keep that in, a capacity to answer the ends of its creation. The power of God is wonderfully exerted in this important work, to sanctify a soul, to recover it from its degenerate state, to reduce it to its integrity, and to prepare it for glory. The word of God is given for these ends, that mighty word, which is so quick and powerful, Heb. iv. 12. The Spirit of God is at work for the good of the soul—the arm of the Lord is revealed—and the work of faith fulfilled with power. These things show what a value God puts upon souls. A word made us, but far more is required to new-make us.

(8.) The *preparations* that are made to receive souls. There is much in progress for them in the other world. Souls being immortal, have immortal things provided for them.

There are preparations of wrath for sinful souls, to which they are *reserved*, 2 Pet. ii. 9. There is a Tophet that is ordained of old, Isa. xxx. 33. an everlasting fire, that is prepared for the devil and his angels, is reserved for wicked men, Matt. xxv. 41. It is sealed up among his treasures, treasures of wrath, after the long season of his patience.

And there are preparations of glory for sanctified souls. These must needs be of great value, when there is so much laid out to make them great and happy. They have a glory proportioned to their capacities. Knowledge and love are the principal faculties of the soul; and these are sources of bliss in heaven.

II. I shall improve this subject. The serious consideration of the worth of our souls should have a mighty influence upon us to make us religious; for what is religion but a concern about the present and the future state of our souls? The practice of serious godliness is that, and that only, which befriends the soul both in its present and its eternal interests. What is it that we are persuading you to in all our preaching, but to mind your souls and do well for your souls?

Be convinced that you have souls, every one of you. Consider thyself. Thou hast a mortal body and an immortal soul. Most men live as if they had no souls, no souls by which to be *governed*, and no souls for which to *provide*. They discover nothing truly rational, they have no concern for what is immortal. But I hope better things of you, or else I shall never hope any good of you. It is not enough to gainsay this truth, but you must *consider* it.

Be convinced of the worth of your souls. It is no breach of the law of humility to put a value upon our own souls, and to think so well of ourselves as to think ourselves too good to serve sin. Value the body less and the soul more, and it would be better for you. There are some important inferences which may be drawn from these things.

1. *If the soul* be so precious, then those are our best friends that are *friends to our souls*, and we should

look upon them as such. The best friend to souls that ever was, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the soul. Look upon him as a good friend, and prize him accordingly. Study what you shall render for his love. The good Shepherd is the *Shepherd of our souls*, 1 Pet. ii. 25. He laid down his life for our souls, and has provided food, and healing, and rest for them: let our souls love him. Faithful ministers are friends to your souls, Heb. xiii. 17. Their work is to watch for them. Look upon reprovers as friends to your souls, and reckon friendly rebukes as kindness. They are so, Ps. cxlv. 5. They help to prevent sin, and save the soul from death. Let them find more favour now, for they will afterwards appear more kind than flatterers. Those that instruct you and comfort you are friends to your souls. Show yourselves to be friends to the souls of others. Do all the good you can to the souls of those with whom you are connected. Be concerned for the souls of your children and servants; gain their souls, by guiding them to God.

2. If the soul be so precious, then those are our worst enemies that are enemies to our souls. The devil is the great enemy to our souls; he is the tempter, and so is the *destroyer*, and he has his agents, that are busy to ruin souls. There are persons and things that war against the soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. the worst war that can be: those that seduce the soul and beguile it, 2 Pet. ii. 64. that tempt us to sin; that lay stumbling blocks before us; that entice us secretly, though they pretend love;—look upon them as enemies to your souls. David complains often of those that did persecute his soul. Wicked companions are real enemies to the soul; therefore say to such, *Depart*, Ps. cxix. 115. Enemies to the soul are very subtle, Eph. vi. 12. Therefore we have the more need to stand upon our guard. Consider how precious that soul is which they would injure and destroy.

3. If the soul be so precious, then mercies to the soul are the choicest mercies, for which we should pray most earnestly. This is the favour that God bears unto his chosen. The hallowing of God's name by us, and the coming of his kingdom into us, are mercies to the soul which are to be desired above all others,—that is the order in the Lord's prayer: see Matt. v. 33. The renewing of the soul, and the saving of the soul, are things that must have the pre-eminence in our desires and prayers. Other mercies must be begged with a proviso, but mercies to the soul absolutely. Be more earnest for these than for corn, and wine, and oil, Psal. iv. 6, 7. wrestle with God for these, as Jacob did. Be more concerned in prayer about your sins than your afflictions. So likewise we must be most thankful to God for spiritual mercies, Eph. i. 3.—redeeming love, gospel grace, see Ps. ciii. 3, &c. Value every mercy by the reference that it has to the soul, and be

thankful for it accordingly: see Isa. xxxviii. 17. *In love to my soul.* Go by this rule in your valuation of public mercies;—reckon those the *best times* that are opportunities for the soul, in which there are plenty of the means of grace.

4. If the soul be so precious, then judgments upon the soul are the sorest judgments. Spiritual plagues are of all others the worst, and to be most dreaded, as *leanness in the soul*, Ps. cvi. 15. when the mind is blinded, the conscience seared, the heart hardened, and the reins laid on the neck of sinful passions. These are spiritual judgments, Isa. vi. 9, 10. Ps. lxxxi. 12. the worst condition a man can be on this side hell. How sad would our condition be, if we were deprived of both the bodily senses of seeing and hearing, (such instances have rarely been heard of,) but much worse to have the soul blind and deaf. Do not provoke God to deny and withdraw his grace. There are judgments upon the soul too, that sometimes befall God's own children, and they are very painful; as—when the terrors of God set themselves in array against them, Job vi. 4. Ps. lxxxviii. 3. &c. and he wounds the spirit, Prov. xviii. 14. If God has kept us from these terrors, we must be thankful, but not secure. Our Lord Jesus suffered in his soul, that he might have compassion, Matt. xxvi. 38.

5. If the soul be so precious, then the prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity. There is such a thing as soul prosperity, 3 John 2. and it is that which we should most earnestly desire of God, both for ourselves and for our friends. The soul prospers when it is in a good state, and in a good frame, when it is in the right way, and when it grows in grace; as the body prospers that is in health, and as the estate prospers that increases. That is a prosperous soul that is adding grace to grace, and securing not only an entrance, but an abundant entrance, into the kingdom of God, 2 Pet. i. 5. The soul prospers when its holy dispositions are lively, its comforts strong, and its evidences clear—when it is walking in the light, and singing in the ways, of the Lord. Seek this as the best prosperity. Soul prosperity either brings outward prosperity along with it, Matt. vi. 33. or sweetens the want of it; and it is that which all the malice of hell and earth cannot disturb or take away.

6. If the soul be so precious, then we are to look upon that condition as best for us which is best for our souls. That is best for us that is most free from temptations, and that gives us the greatest advantages for spiritual things. That relation is best for us that is best for our souls. Look upon this as a reason why we should be content under afflictions, because they tend to the good of our souls. Though the flesh be destroyed, yet if the spirit be thereby saved, it is well enough, 1 Cor. v. 5. see Heb. xii. 9. Sanctified afflictions are the soul's promotions;—the chastening is bad for the body, but the teaching that

attends it is good for the soul, Ps. xciv. 12; cxix. 71. Submit willingly to that which is for the good of the soul, though it be displeasing to flesh and blood.

7. If the soul be so precious, then they are fools that *despise their own souls*. There are those that do so, Prov. xv. 32. This is the fundamental error of sinners,—they despise this jewel of value, which Christ put such a value upon. Let us see who they are that despise their own souls:

(1.) Those that make a light matter of sin despise their own souls, Prov. xiv. 9. It is certain that sin is a wrong to the soul, Prov. viii. 36. How do people regard their souls that abuse them thus every day? Those that expose their precious souls to the wrath and curse of the eternal God, every day, by wilful sin, do not value them as they should. Those despise their souls that continue in unbelief and impenitency, and will not be awakened to see the misery in which their souls are; they feel nothing from sin, the sins of so many years; they are not concerned, though their souls be ready to drop into everlasting burnings. They despise their souls that rush into sin, Jer. viii. 6. that run upon God, Job xv. 25, 26. There are some so daring as to challenge God himself to damn them. They despise their souls that, when they have fallen into sin, make no haste to repent and turn from it.

(2.) Those that take up with a cheap and easy religion despise their own souls; that are afraid of doing too much for their own souls. Did we put a right value upon our souls, we should object to no pains or care for the securing of their welfare. We should go from strength to strength; we should give diligence to add to our graces, and thus make our calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 5—10. But those that only inquire, will not less serve? manifest that they despise their souls: they labour at the world, and sleep at an ordinance; they crowd their religion into a corner, and make not a business, but a by-business, of it. What account do such make of their souls, who will scarce go over the threshold to hear a sermon; they *refuse instruction*. He that is slothful in work for his soul, is brother to him that is a great waster.

(3.) Those that are prodigal of their time despise their own souls. Time is an opportunity of doing something for the soul, and is to be redeemed accordingly, Eph. v. 16. because there is an eternity depends upon it. Time may be well spent, either in doing something for God with the soul, or in getting something from God for the soul; yet with many their time is a drug. What value do those put upon their souls, that fill up their time with mere recreation, and all this while neglect their souls? Every day might be a harvest day for the soul, but it is idled away; the time of the morning and evening sacrifice stolen away by one idle companion or other. Value your souls, and you will value your time.

1.) Those that make themselves drudges to the world despise their own souls. The soul should be the darling, but many make it a slave, and send it to feed swine, Luke xv. 15. and to provide for the world, Rom. xiii. 14. Those that are eager in pursuit of worldly wealth despise their souls, not only because the soul is neglected and the body preferred over it, but because it is employed in these pursuits, Ps. cxxvii. 2. Care about the world fills the mind and disquiets it. It is a great disparagement to an immortal soul, to be thus wholly employed.

2.) Those that by sin unfit their bodies to aid their souls in the service of God despise them. Drunkenness especially does this, it *overcharges* the heart, Eccl. xxi. 34. Those put a great slight upon their souls that drown them in wine and strong drink, and suffer their hearts thus to be taken away, and themselves to be put out of possession of them. They are like beasts of themselves, only to please a sensual appetite. They are not their own masters—to govern themselves, and by degrees come to be not their own masters—to understand themselves.

3.) Those that venture their souls upon a false and deceitful foundation despise them. What we build upon we shall be sure to lay up in a safe place, and that which we despise we shall venture any where. Those that build their hopes upon the sand, Matt. vii. 26. that presume upon their visible profession, and are willing to take it for granted, without any strict scrutiny, that all is well with them, Rev. iii. 17.

Such have a low opinion of their own souls, and must necessarily end in a painful manner; their souls must perish.

7.) Those that take up with a portion in this life, despise their own souls—who think that will serve them for a happiness which neither suits the nature of a soul, nor will last so long as the soul will last; that take up with that for a portion which doth but fill the belly, Ps. xvii. 14. And when they have a great deal of the world say, Soul, take thine ease, Eccl. xii. 19. And take these for their good things, Eccl. xvi. 25. Let not us despise our own souls, let us desire a better portion for them than the world, and an interest in his love, whose favour is the joy and the felicity of all who truly seek him.

SERMON V.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

DOCTRINE 5. That the *gaining of the world* is sometimes the *losing of the soul*. This is plainly implied here, that the methods men take for the gaining of the world, are the things which commonly prove destructive to the soul: many precious souls

are ruined for ever by the love of this world. This is that which has slain its *thousands* and its *ten thousands*. Hence it is that so many precious souls are irrecoverably lost. The world was the rock they split upon; the world was the enemy that conquered them. We are told what the world is that is so pernicious to souls, 1 John ii. 16. In the things of the world three things are included:

1. The *pomp* of the world—honour, preferment, making a figure in the world, a fair show in the flesh, Gal. vi. 12. The gaining of this poor reputation is often the losing of the soul. To be looked upon as some great one, is a thing very much affected by many, and I am apt to think that more young people are ruined both here and hereafter by pride, than by any one thing in this world. It is thought a desirable thing to look fine, and to be in the way of preferment. Many lose the weight of glory in the other world, by and for the dream and shadow of this world's glory. This was it that Moses by faith conquered, Heb. xi. 24.

2. The *pleasures* of the world the lusts of the flesh, that in the world which gratifies the sensual appetite. This is that which many love more than God, 2 Tim. iii. 4. and live in, 1 Tim. v. 6. The gaining of the world is the *finding of our own pleasure* in it, as Luke xvi. 19. and Luke xii. 19. We reckon those the darlings of the world, that spend their days in mirth and their years in pleasure, and know not what care and sorrow mean; that lie upon beds of ivory, &c. Amos vi. 4—6. to be able to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the desires of it. This is *the world*, the smiles and indulgences of it; this is that, the love of which is oft the ruin of the soul. When men cannot deny the sensual appetite, but will walk in the way of their heart, this defiles and this destroys the soul.

3. The *profits* of the world. These are desired usually for the sake of the two former, though there are some that love wealth only for its own sake, and it is a sore evil, Eccl. vi. 1, 2. The world men are in love with, is an increasing estate. It is the *love of money* that is put for the love of this world, 1 Tim. vi. 10. for that is said to *answer all things*, Eccl. x. 19. that is, all temporal things; it will not answer the needs of the soul. He that had goods laid up for many years, promised himself a full stream of carnal delights—to eat, and drink, and be merry.

This is *the world*. Now I am to show how the gaining of the world is oft the losing of the soul—how these worldly things undo us; and the opening of this will be of use for caution, that being warned of the danger, we may be armed against it.

I. I shall show how the gaining of the world is often the losing of the soul.

1. Many lose their souls in endeavouring to obtain the world. There is an endeavour about the world, that is very well consistent with the saving of the soul,

even honest diligence in a lawful calling, Prov. xxvii. 23, &c. Every one must mind his own business, and labour that he may have to give, Eph. iv. 28. And in this our eyes must be towards God, and our common actions done after a godly sort, with a single eye to the will and glory of God. But there is a pursuit after the world which is destructive to the soul: see that full scripture in general, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

(1.) The inordinacy of the desire after the world is fatal. When men pursue the world from a principle of love to it, and value for it, as the best and chief good, and the highest end of man, this will certainly lose the soul. When present things are made our good things, Luke xvi. 26. our consolation, our reward, our portion, Ps. xvii. 14. this sinks the soul. When the principle of our worldly pursuits is, that we may honour God, and do good, this sanctifies them; but when it is because we look upon them as glory, Gen. xxxi. 1. and as that in which the happiness of the soul consists, this is altogether inconsistent with grace, and a regard to God. It is idolatry, Col. iii. 5. Eph. v. 5. it is having another God before him; it is adultery, Jam. iv. 4. it is enmity against God and the cross of Christ, Phil. iii. 18, 19. God and mammon are opposite masters, Matt. vi. 24. Many souls have been lost that have never run into an excess of riot, by an habitual delight in this world as the best good, Ps. iv. 6. We have all reason here to suspect ourselves: see Rom. viii. 6. The man is as his mind is.

(2.) The irregularity of the pursuits of the world is often fatal. Where the heart is set upon the things of the world, as the best things, they will be sought and laboured for accordingly, Ps. cxxvii. 2. And in these pursuits,

Christ and gospel grace are slighted. Men are too busy making other bargains, and have no heart nor time to attend to Christ. They do not find that repentance and faith, the love of God, and the promises of the covenant, will secure their worldly wealth and glory; and therefore, (whatever others do,) for their parts they will not trouble themselves with such things. These are things far above out of their sight, Ps. x. 5. they have nothing to say against these things; but with them other things preponderate. Time enough to think of these things upon a sick bed: see this set forth in two parables, Matt. xxii. 5. and Luke xiv. 16, &c. They have no thoughts to spare for another world, they are so much taken up with this: careful and troubled about many things, while the one thing needful is postponed, Luke x. 41, 42. The vigour of the soul is quite exhausted in the pursuit of the world, that in the service of God it is become but a dry tree.

Necessary duties also are neglected through worldly pursuits. Many for the gaining of the world omit the doing of that, which their own consciences

tell them they ought to do. Prayer is a needful duty, the soul is certainly lost without it; but those that are eager upon the world, cannot find time to pray—they say to the Almighty, Depart: see Job xxi. 11, 15. They are not for those duties which produce no earthly gain. Their books of trade take up their time and thoughts so much, that God's book is laid aside. Those that are eager in pursuit of the world, cannot find in their hearts to lose one day in seven.

Destroying sins are in the same way ventured upon. Many, to get something of the world, make bold with sin, to the dishonour and ruin of the soul. Foolish and hurtful lusts, wealth gotten by vanity, riches gotten and not by right, Jer. xvii. 11. and treasures of wickedness, attend these persons, and bring them to destruction. Many a man damns his soul, to make himself what the world terms a gentleman. What is more destructive than the commission of sin as the means of increasing wealth? Many men, to get some little of the world, oppress the poor, and defraud their neighbours. Many people are tempted to think that it is no sin, or next none, to tell a lie in the way of their trade, when there is something to be gotten by it, and they know nobody can contradict them. The common excuse is, there is no driving a trade without it; but if it be sin, it is destroying to the soul, and will be found so at last. Many that are eager upon the world, make no conscience what they say, nor what they do, nor who they abuse or trample upon. How injurious to the soul are many of the conditions of getting gain! When the favour of great men is to be had clogged with sinful conditions, and these are complied with, conscience being bribed to say nothing against it; this is dear bought gain, Matt. xxvi. 15. *What will ye give me?* was the question of Judas to Christ's enemies. Micah's Levite will become priest to an idol for preferment, Judg. xvii. 10. Many have been hired to forswear themselves, to murder, to commit adultery; and what evil is it of which the love of money has not been the root. Many have sold the truth, and with it their souls, for the world, Prov. xxiii. 23.

2. Many lose their souls for the keeping of the world. This must come into the consideration of the gaining of the world. The gaining of the world is much the same with the *saving of the life*, v. 25. This is a pernicious branch of covetousness, and fatal to the soul. As grasping at the world is dangerous, so is inordinate attachment to it when we have got it.

The complacency men take in worldly objects, becomes a principle of action fatal to the interests of the soul. To be rich and great upon earth, they consider as the most desirable of all things. The soul rests in this poor advancement, as its portion and happiness too; it is at home in the world, and takes its ease in the world. Why do men so solicitously

what they have gathered, and hold it so fast, because they say, *Blessed is the people that is in a case?* Ps. cxliv. 16. It is a sign of prevailing rust of the Creator, and of prevailing delight in dependence upon, the creature. What is this but ng up our *treasure* in these things? Matt. vi. 19. an will not spend his treasure, but keep it up. at is this but *setting* our *affections* on things be- th? Col. iii. 2. it is reposing the soul in them. he practice arising from this principle is fatal. ny ruin their own souls, because they cannot find in their hearts to *lose* things of the world for God. When these two e in competition, that either they must deny rist or forego pleasure or worldly wealth, they ose rather to deny Christ. Here is the world won l the soul lost, see an instance in Demas, 2 Tim. 10. When the receiving the mark of the beast be- es the condition of buying and selling and get- g gain, as sometimes it is, Rev. xiii. 17. and then n comply with their condition, they forsake the ths and ways of Christ, which formerly they pro- sed. This has been the case of many that have fully apostatized: they could not endure to see spoiling of their goods. Christ was dear, but world was dearer, and therefore, farewell Christ. rist and his truths must be cast overboard rather n they would make shipwreck of an estate: see n xii. 42, 43. they cannot endure hardness and grace. These persons also injure their souls, Because they cannot *lay out* the things of the rld for God. He will not have us to hoard what ers want. We are commanded to be charitable, give alms of such things as we have. Many souls : ruined by uncharitableness: see Matt. xxv. 41. e People think what they do in charity is not of cecity, but a work of supererogation; whereas it our rent to God. So likewise in works of piety; ny cannot submit to charges for the encourage- nt of religion: they like the law of Christ well ough, if their obedience to it will cost them no- ng, but if it prove chargeable, they desire to be cused. This was the case of that rich man, Matt. x. 21, 22. and of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. e thus lose what we save, and this withholding at which is meet tends to a spiritual poverty, which mes upon the soul like an armed man. This is the rst husbandry that can be; it is like grudging ed to the ground.

3. Many lose their souls in the using, or rather e abusing, of what they have in this world. The nning of the world is oftentimes, when it is won abundance, the losing of the soul. When it is t, and men have what they would have in it, it oves a sad occasion of their ruin: the *prosperity* of ls destroys them, Prov. i. 32. Many a man had en happy in the other world if he had not pros- ered in this. The possession of much in the world,

is often the losing of the soul; not in and of itself, for outward prosperity is a good gift of God, and is so to be accounted by us. It is the fruit of his blessing, Deut. xxviii. 2, &c. Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Matt. vi. 33. The good things of this world, if wisely managed and improved, may be furtherances to us in our way to heaven. If kept in its due place, worldly prosperity may be an opportunity of being useful to others, and of honour- ing God. All this, and heaven too—then we serve a good master. Those that are rich in the world, may be the more rich in good works; but then it is not the world that is *gained*, it is only *used*. That is not the point to be *gained*, the prize run for; it is not the ultimate end, but the subordinate means. World- ly prosperity is injurious through the badness of men's hearts. Gaining the world is not in itself a sin, but it is the occasion of sin. Thus the gaining of the world is the losing of the soul, it is such a snare to the soul as does greatly hazard it. The danger is of *abusing* the world, 1 Cor. vii. 31. The world is abused, when it is used for the purposes for which it was never intended. The world, when we have it, is very apt,

(1.) To *estrangle* the soul from God; and so it is lost. If it do not, as it should, endear him to us, it will but make us the more forgetful of him. When men have gained much of the world, they are apt to think they have no need of God, as they had when they were poor, and lived immediately upon Providence: they have something else to support them, and they rest upon this too much. God is often lost in a crowd of worldly enjoyments, and commonly those that are familiar with the world are but strang- ers to God. See what danger there is of this, Deut. vi. 11, 12. and an instance of it, Deut. xxxii. 16, 18. Job xxi. 14. If an ungodly man prosper in the world, it does but make him the more profane and atheistical, Ps. lxxiii. 11, 12. This estrangement from God is gradual and insensible. Multiplicity of busi- ness is thought a good excuse from prayer and read- ing the word, and by degrees the intercourse with him is quite suspended. They that sought God when he slew them, slighted him when the danger was over. That worldly business, or worldly comfort, that steals the heart away from God, is an enemy to it.

(2.) It is apt to *elevate* the soul, and to fill it with pride and so it is lost. The pride of the soul is the ruin of the soul, for it is the preface to destruction. It is that which God resists, and which he will for ever abhor. They that are lifted up with pride, fall into the condemnation of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6. The heart is lifted up to destruction, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. Now this is the effect of gaining the world. There are indeed those who are poor and proud, but generally the rich in this world have need to be charged in the first place, not to be high-minded; so hard is it to keep the mind low when the estate rises. They that

are at ease are *the proud*, Ps. cxliii. 4. This pride makes people contentious with their brethren, Prov. xiii. 10. When Abram and Lot grew rich they could not agree, Gen. xiii. 2, 7. It makes them oppressive and scornful to their inferiors, Job xii. 5. deaf to the reproofs of the word, Jer. xxii. 21. When Alexander had (he thought) conquered the world, he was ruined by pride; he would be deemed a god, and never prospered after.

(3.) It is apt to *rack* the soul asunder with worldly cares; and so it is lost. It thus becomes unfit for the service of God. The more men have of the world, the more trouble they have with it; which, if suffered to take possession of the soul, hurries it into greater disquietude, and exhausts its life and vigour; pierces it through with many sorrows, 1 Tim. vi. 10. The cares of this life choke the word of God, as thorns do the good seed, Matt. xiii. 22. as a ship may be lost for want of ballast, so it may by being overladen. Having too much to do in the world, overwhelms many souls. That which chokes the word chokes the soul. When these cares fill us sleeping and waking, there is danger lest they follow us living and dying; and it is to be feared that is a lost soul whose dying care is only or mainly for the world.

(4.) It is apt to *rock* the soul asleep in carnal security; and so it is lost. Those that have gained the world, are ready upon that to build their hopes for heaven, and to think it must needs be well with them in the other world, because it is so well with them in this, Hos. xii. 7, 8. Prospering worldlings are ready to bless themselves in their successes, Ps. x. 3. and to say, To-morrow must needs be as this day, Isa. lvi. 12. That rich fool that had gotten his barns full, began to set his heart at rest; he had what he would, and said, *Soul, take thine ease*, Luke xii. 19. They that prosper are apt to put far from them the evil day, and so it comes upon them as a snare. Some good people have been almost overcome with this temptation, and it has been to the damage of their souls, Job xxix. 18. Ps. xxx. 6.

(5.) It is apt to make the soul a *drudge* to the body; and so it is lost. When men have gained the world, the soul and all its faculties must presently be engaged to *make provision* for the flesh, Rom. xiii. 14. It is hard to put a knife to the throat, and to check the sensitive appetite, when we have that which tends to the gratifying of it. Here is occasion for self-denial, not temperance through necessity, but of choice. When Solomon had gained the world, he withheld nothing from himself that his eyes desired, Eccl. ii. 9, 10. but if God had not given him repentance, it had been his ruin. The indulging of ourselves in sensual pleasures, is destructive to all the powers of the soul. It is the perverting of the order of nature, when the sensitive appetite must have the command of the rational powers.

(6.) It is apt to make the world a *starting* to the soul; and so it is lost. When the world smiles, we are very apt to be taken in its charms, till we be betrayed to our spiritual enemies. The winning gamester loves the play, and is the more eager upon it. He that gains the world, is in danger of loving more than God; and then how unwilling to part with it. Now the world seems to have purchased the uppermost room in the soul, and to have merited the best respects; and if once men prefer this world before the other, the soul is undone.

II. *Use 1.* If the gaining of the world be so often the losing of the soul, then *wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction*, and it is no marvel that there be so many that *go in thereof*, Matt. vii. 13. Every body is for gaining the world, and few consider that they court their own temptation. It is no wonder the devil prevails against many, when he has such hold of them by the world. It is a fawning, flattering enemy, that kisses, betrays, and kills. What need then have we to be jealous over ourselves. If our danger be so great, let us therefore fear, Heb. iv. 1. The way to hell is down-hill, an easy descent, strowed with the world's roses to deceive unwary souls.

2. Then we have little reason to envy the prosperity of evil doers. If bold and daring sinners gain the world by their impieties, alas, they do but treasure up unto themselves wrath. They grasp at a shadow, and let go the substance—therefore fretteth thyself because of such, Ps. xxxvii. 1, &c. They are but fed as a lamb in a large place to fatten them for the slaughter, Hos. iv. 16. If the wine be red, and give its colour, yet never grudge it them, nor wish for a draught of it; there is death in the cup, there is poison in it. It is like to cost them dear; but what will be the end of these things? Be not desirous of the world's dainties. Dread them, and deprecate them, as Ps. cxli. 4. See a remedy against this envy, Prov. xxiii. 17. Go into the sanctuary, and see the precious soul sinking while the perishing estate is rising, and that will silence all your envy, Ps. lxxiii. 2—18.

3. Then see the reason why God often denies the abundance of this world to good people, and gives them but a little of it; it is because it would be a snare to them. He intends the saving of the soul, and therefore often keeps them low. He crosses them in their worldly pursuits, strips them of their worldly possessions, puts wormwood into their earthly joys, and thus weans them from earth. He does not intend this world for their portion, and a small matter will suffice for their passage. As God often gives, and sends leanness into the soul, Ps. cvi. 15. so he often denies the fatness of the earth, and yet with the dews of heaven makes the soul like a watered garden. Many good people are kept humble, and serious, and close to God, by their crosses

disappointments in the world, these being sanctified to them, Ps. cxix. 67, 71.

Then pity and help those that are launching into the world, and want a living principle of grace in their hearts to secure them from the danger. Those that are entering into the world are entering into temptation, and have need to be well edified. They hope to gain the world, but are not rehensive of the danger of losing their souls:—see it ought to be the care of parents in disposing of their children. Be more solicitous to make them good, than to make them great. You must be diligent for something more than teaching them to live in this world, which they may gain and yet eternally undone.

Then let us not seek great things to ourselves in this world. What a folly is it for us to attempt to spread so large a sail, when we are but tossed thereby so much the more to the storm! A vessel will serve to bear our charges to heaven, and yet should we wish for more, John vi. 27. Prov. xiii. 5. Be not ambitious of honour, nor covetous of wealth. Let us value our souls aright, and esteem other things as they stand in relation to the soul. Contentment with contentment is all the wealth in the world. Subscribe to Agur's prayer, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. I to Jacob's vow, Gen. xxviii. 20. It is not the greatness, but the fitness, of a garment that makes it good. God knows what we can bear, what is fit for

us. Then in all our gainings of the world, let it be our greatest care and endeavour to gain a victory over it. If God succeed honest diligence in worldly business, and bring into your hands plentifully, take heed lest it be to the losing of the soul, 1 John v. 4. you would not have the gaining of the world the losing of the soul,

Let your souls be loose to the gain of this world. Manage all your worldly concerns with a holy inference; and while you do so the world will never hurt you much hurt, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. Value not the things of the world as the best gain. Think what use these things are, what is the best use that can be made of them, to whom they must be left, and how they will serve a man in a dying hour.

Let your souls be carried out towards the gain of another world. Our care about this world will not be inordinate, if it be kept subordinate to the things which belong to our everlasting peace. Gain spiritually by your gains in temporal things. Gain also by your losses; you may do so if you be wise. That is true gain which is gain when we come to die; and at nothing is but Christ.

SERMON VI.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

DOCTRINE 6. That the gain of all the world will not profit him that loseth his soul. He that hazards his soul to gain the world, makes a losing bargain; this is the full scope of the verse, *What is a man profited?* It is taken for granted that interest rules the world of mankind. We see every day what pains men take, what hazards they run, and what hardships they undergo, for profit. They that buy and sell hope to *get gain*, James iv. 13. This is aimed at in every bargain—that profit may be attained. But the misery of it is, that men mistake their true interest, and see things by a false light, and go upon a wrong foundation. They think they are profited by that which is really prejudicial, and fancy that they gain when it is only *loss*. Now the design of the Scriptures is to rectify this mistake; and allowing us to consult our own interest, they make it manifest, that when we prefer the things of the world before the concerns of our souls, we are really enemies to our own *profit*. The account is here balanced, profit and loss compared. See Paul's balancing a believer's account, the produce of which was great gain, Phil. iii. 7, 8.—he wins Christ and loses all he had in the world, and reckons himself an unspeakable gainer, as Matt. xiii. 45, 46. Christ here balances the worldling's account, and the result of that is great loss.

1. The gain supposed, is that of the *whole world*. That is more than ever any body did gain, though some have grasped at it. Gain the *whole world*, i. e. gain that which gratifies the world in their hearts, 1 John ii. 16. Those gain the whole world, or think they do so, that have more than heart could wish, Ps. lxxiii. 7. that spend their days in mirth and wealth. Such have the richest returns of this world's trading, they possess a full stream of outward prosperity, without any eclipse.

2. The loss supposed is that of the *soul*—the better, the immortal, part of us. The soul lost by grasping at the world, gaining the point of worldly advantages, and at the same time making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, 1 Tim. i. 19. The soul losing the favour of God, and so losing itself in this world, as to any real consolation, and in the other world experiencing destruction.

3. The balance of the account is, *What is a man profited?* The proposing of it by way of question implies a strong negation; he is in nothing *profited*. It is to be taken as a challenge to the children of this world, like that, Rom. vi. 21. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?

That is a poor bargain which nobody gets by;—such is the bargain of the covetous that lose their souls to *get*, the apostates that lose their souls to *keep*, and the epicures that lose their souls to *enjoy*, the good things of this world. It is explained in the next words, *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Some think it is borrowed from Job ii. 4. alluding to that obvious remark, that a man will give any thing to save his life; for what good will any thing we have in the world do us if our lives be gone? So it is with the soul, and its life in the future state. This doctrine I shall endeavour to prove and apply.

I. To prove it—That he that loses his soul to gain the world, makes but a poor bargain—he is so far from being a saver, that he is a loser. Now this I shall endeavour to show,

1. By comparing what is gained and what is lost together;—this is necessary in order to the balancing of an account.

(1.) He that gains the world and its happiness, and loses his soul and its happiness, gains *that which is not*, and loses *that which is*; he gains a shadow, and loses a reality. The things of the world are things that *are not*, Prov. xxiii. 5. are not what they pretend to be, and what we consider them to be. They are lying *vanities*, John ii. 8. It is but the *fashion of this world*, the scheme, 1 Cor. vii. 31. it *passeth away*. Spiritual and eternal things are the only real and substantial things. We call the things of this world *substance*, but they are *dissolving substance*, Job xxx. 22. The existence of them as good, is more in our fancy than in the things themselves, Prov. xviii. 11. But the happiness of the soul is a real thing, it is *substance*, Prov. viii. 21. that *which is*; it is enduring substance, Heb. x. 34. If a man part with that which is a substantial happiness for that which is but pretended, what is he profited? Some think it was only a picture of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, that the devil showed to Christ, Matt. iv. 8. and it is little better than such which multitudes grasp at, to their own ruin.

(2.) He gains that *which is another's*, and loses that *which is his own*. I refer to Luke xvi. 12. He that gains the whole world, can himself enjoy but a small share of it; it is taken from others, it is possessed for others, it is enjoyed with others, and it is left to others. What joy we have in the world, strangers intermeddle with it, and participate of it. He that increases his estate, increases his charge, Eccl. v. 11. If Job's substance was great, his household was in proportion. But the happiness of thy soul is thy own; the joys of that a stranger doth not intermeddle with. Then and then only we do well for ourselves, when we do well for our souls, though it be commonly taken otherwise, Ps. xlix. 18.

(3.) He gains that in which his *happiness doth not consist*, and loseth *that in which it doth*, gains that

which, when he has it, will not make a portion to him, and loseth that which, if he had it, would be a portion to him. Luke xii. 15. a man's *life consisteth not* in the things. He may be happy that has but a little of this world. Even the heathen could see this, and spoil much of the comfort of those that were contented with the poor. Jacob desired but food and raiment, that was the inventory of his wishes, Gen. xxviii. 20. and Joseph, chap. xxxiii. 11. he says to Esau, *I have all*, my brother: see Ps. xxxvii. 16. Prov. xv. 16. But the happiness of the man doth consist in the welfare and salvation of the soul. Happy is the people whose God is the Lord. The saving of the soul in the death of the Lord Jesus is great gain, though by the destruction of the flesh, 1 Cor. v. 5.

(4.) He gains that which is but *for a time*, and loseth that *which is for ever*. The world passeth away, the things of it perish in the using, witness Job; however, we shall be taken from them, Luke xii. death will strip us. It is certain we can carry nothing out of the world, 1 Tim. vi. 7. our relation to all earthly things terminates with life. Death is a final farewell to honours, pleasures, and wealth. If the soul must be for ever either in happiness or misery. The good things of the soul are everlasting; they are durable riches, Prov. viii. 18. You would reckon him a fool, that would part with the inheritance of a great estate, for the term of a few years a small tenement. Such, and much greater, is the folly of those that quit an eternal happiness for the momentary enjoyment of the pleasures of sin. That which is the most durable is the most desirable. Man is a creature made for eternity.

2. By considering the consequences of this bargain. Suppose a man, for the gaining of this world's goods, to abandon all thoughts and cares of his soul, and to expose and hazard it to the highest degree; suppose him to succeed in his attempts of gaining the world, and let us see,

(1.) What is his seeming profit. Look upon what appears the fair side of his bargain, and make the best of it. Produce your cause, ye worldlings, bring forth your strong reasons—let us hear what you have profited. He that gains the world, and abandons his soul,

[1.] He has the *pleasures of sense*; he is filled with them. He that lays aside all thoughts of his soul, and has enough of the world—that is neither under the check of conscience, nor the check of poverty—may take a great liberty in indulging the sensual appetite; he may spend his days in mirth; he may be profited, as Solomon was when he withheld his heart from any joy, Eccl. ii. 10. What is a man profited? why, he may eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and fare deliciously every day, as Luke xvi. 19. He that will abandon his soul, perplexes not himself with self-denying duties;—a fine life, if this world were to last always, and if we had bodies only, and

no souls. See the utmost profit that the worldling promised himself, Luke xii. 19. *eat, drink, and be merry*. And is not this poor profit? Yet this is the utmost.—Alas, there is pain in this pleasure; the heart sad, Eccl. vii. 6. This profit is but like the apples of Sodom, or as painted sepulchres.

[2.] He has the *praise* of the world. He that gains the world, shall have the world's good word; he has the honour to be caressed by those that walk after the course of this world, Ps. xlix. 13, 18. They that gain the world, and care not for their souls, may have a name like the names of the great men, and make a fair show in the flesh. There are those whose blessings attend the covetous, Ps. x. 3. Thus he that gains the world is profited. Poor profit! but it gratifies a base disposition, as long as it lasts. It is no profit to be applauded of men and condemned of the Lord.

(2.) What is the want of real profit for all this. We may say, *What is he profited?*—it is *unrighteous mammon* which he possesses, Luke xvi. 11. the deceitfulness of unrighteousness, deceitful riches. He that *gains the world, and abandons his soul*, is,

[1.] A loser in this world. Even here, where he enjoys his gain, and makes his best of it, what is he now profited? Even when he has the most of it,

He is not profited, for he hath nothing to recommend him to the favour of God. His gains of the world will not do it. God loves no man the better for being rich; he beholds the proud afar off. He that abandons his soul, chooses those things in which God delights not. Those that are for *any good* seek not God's favour, Ps. iv. 6. Wanting that favour he has no security nor sweetness of his possessions: see Job xx. 23. A dinner of herbs, with the love of God, is better than a stalled ox, and his hatred therewith.

The worldly man is not profited, for he is often in straits in the fulness of his sufficiency, Job xx. 22. He that gains the world, yet such is its insufficiency to make us happy, that oftentimes some one defect, some one *but*, spoils the sweetness of all his possessions. While Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard, his kingdom did not profit him, because he had not a contented mind, 1 Kings xxi. 4. While Haman wanted Mordecai's cap and knee, his preferments did not profit him, because he had not a meek and humble spirit, Esth. v. 11—13.

Men of this description are not profited, for they have no solid comfort in their souls, especially when they are in affliction. You think those live joyfully that have the world at will, but you know not what stripes they have from their own consciences, and what a terror they are to themselves many times; they have the bitter with the sweet in the day, and they have no relief of visitation, Isa. x. 3. Many gain the world, and yet are themselves like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. They have nothing upon which they can repose their souls with any as-

urance: see Job xx. 12—14. If what they have were gotten by injustice, what comfort have they in it, when conscience is once awake? Thus they who are so eager upon the world, and at the same time careless about their souls, are losers by it even in this world; for the truth of it is, it is godliness with contentment that is the great gain, 1 Tim. vi. 6.—that is all the wealth in the world. He that gains the world, and parts with his soul, is,

[2.] Much more a loser in the other world. Brethren, there is such a world, future indeed, and out of sight, but not the less real. Thoughts of the world to come should make us all serious. Then the gains of the hypocrite are gone, when God *takes away his soul*, Job xxvii. 8. compare the verse after the text; then he will appear a loser when the *Son of man shall come*. He that gained the world will be never the better for it in the other world, for

He shall not have what he gained of the world. What is a man profited by it, when he shall leave it behind him? Money has no currency in the other world. It was only an appurtenance to the body, and therefore, when that was dissolved, all its appurtenances went with it, Job xx. 20. Riches are not for ever; he may have, but he cannot hold. Whose shall these things be? None of thine, to be sure, Luke xii. 20. The great day will burn up all those things which now men set their hearts so much upon, 2 Pet. iii. 10.

It shall not profit a man that he has had the world. If the popish doctrine of purgatory be true, a man may be profited that has gained the world, though he do lose his soul, for he may purchase a recovery; but we have not so learned Christ, who said, *What is a man profited*, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? More is implied than is expressed; not only he is not profited, but he is greatly hurt by it. You shall see it so in three cases. He that loses and abandons his soul, whatever he has gained of this world, whether profit, pleasure, or preferment,

First, He is not profited but prejudiced by it in the hour of death. He is not profited, Prov. x. 2; xi. 4. When a wealthy, worldly man comes to die, what advantage is it to him then to have been rich and great. Death will not be bribed to adjourn the execution of his commission for one moment, Ps. xlix. 6—9. The gain of the world will not mitigate the extremity of dying pangs. If there be bands in the death, the wealth of the world will be no relief. Much less will it remove the sting of death, or quiet the conscience; nay, the worldling is prejudiced by it, for it is so much the harder to part. The more a man has gained of the world, the more terror it is to him to think of parting with it. These are the things that make us loth to die. What is a man profited then by his *great possessions*? but that he *goes away* the more *sorrowful*. That which was always vanity, is then vexation; he parts with the

world as Micah did with his gods—What have I more?

Secondly, He is not profited, but prejudiced, by worldly gain, in the day of judgment. He that has gained the whole world, but abandoned all thoughts of his soul, what is he profited by it when he must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ? All his gains will do him no good, for the Judge is too just to be bribed. Nay, it will make against him; for the more men had of this world, the more they will have to account for in that day of reckoning. The things of the world are talents to be traded with, and we must give account of our stewardship, Luke xvi. 2. What we had under our hand in the world must come into the account then; both how we got it, and what we did with it. It is good for us to be often calling ourselves to an account of these two things now. All that carnal mirth and sensual pleasure, which worldlings are so taken up with, will make against them then, Eccl. xi. 9. For *all these things*, God will bring them into judgment.—Hence we find the *rich men* seeking shelter under the rocks, Rev. vi. 15—17.

Thirdly, He is not profited, but prejudiced, by it, in his eternal punishment;—so the punishment of sin in hell is called, Matt. xxv. 46. What is a man profited by all the wealth of this world, when he comes into that lake which burns eternally with fire and brimstone? The gain of the world will not recover a lost soul, it will not open the gate when once shut, and it will not remove that great gulf, when once fixed;—the gates of the shadow of death cannot be unlocked by a golden key, nor will it give any relief or abatement to the misery. He that had fared sumptuously every day, and drunk wine in bowls, could not there get a drop of water to cool his tongue; nay, he is prejudiced by it. Hell is hell indeed, misery with an emphasis, to those that go thither from the midst of this world's abundance.—Son, remember, Luke xvi. 25. How art thou fallen! Isa. xiv. 12. 16. What *pleasure has he in his house?* Job xxi. 21; xiv. 21, 22. Hell flames will show what a bad bargain they have made for themselves, that to gain the world lost their souls.

II. I shall improve this truth, and very instructive it is, if God give us wisdom and grace to consider it.—Mix faith with this word of Christ, meditate upon it, and digest it. We have reason to take his word in these things, and to rely upon it; and let us from hence learn three good lessons:

1. A holy contempt of this world, especially when it comes in competition with our souls. Our Lord Jesus is here weighing the world and the soul, and on the world, he writes, *Tehel*, Dan. v. 27. See the insufficiency of the world to make you happy if you had never so much of it, and do not overvalue it. Let not that be upon the throne in your hearts, which God has put under your feet. A contempt of the

world is a good step towards our victory over it. We must be thankful for what we have in the world, and diligent about what we have to do in the world, but we must not place our happiness in it.

(1.) In *pursuing* the world, we must not *overvalue* it. It rectifies and sanctifies our worldly pursuit when we put a right estimate upon the things of the world.—Seek them not as your end, but as *means*; not as precious stones to be laid up in your cabinets, but as stepping-stones, to help you through this land of your pilgrimage. Look upon this world's goods as good in their place, but bad out of it; good servants, but bad masters; good things, but not the best things. Do not pursue the world as your portion, Ps. xvii. 14. neither as your reward, Matt. v. 2. nor as your consolation, Luke vi. 24. Value them as good things, but not as *your* good things, *your* chief good. Those overvalue the world, that seek it for itself, and that seek it inordinately, and that seek *much* of it. The same divine penman that says, The hand of the diligent makes rich, says, Labour not to be rich, Prov. xxiii. 4. In valuing the world, go according to God's book of rates. Other things are valued according as they are more or less profitable to us. Think whether the world be profitable to *our* souls or no.

(2.) In *possessing* the world, we must not *value ourselves by it*. Every man has something of a value for himself, and most men measure themselves by the standard of the world—value themselves according to the smiles or frowns of the world. We must not value ourselves as high, because so advanced, nor as safe, because so guarded. When the world flows in plentifully upon you, think, Alas what good will this do me, if my soul should be lost after all? What a base and miserable wretch am I, if in the midst of all, I be a bond-slave to sin and Satan! We must take heed what that is which we bless ourselves in, whether in the deceitful world, Ps. xlix. 18. or in the God of truth, Isa. lxv. 16. Reckon yourselves happy in the favour of God, rather than in the smiles of the world. See by what measures we are to value ourselves, Jam. i. 9—11. Nothing conduceth more to the peace and the purity of our own souls than this contempt of the world.

Learn, 2. A holy concern about our souls. You see where your great interest is not bound up; see then where it is; and since you cannot make the world sure, nor a happiness for yourselves in the world, make that sure that will be made sure—the welfare of your souls. You see what an irreparable loss the loss of the soul is. Men and brethren, look well to your souls. A man would, if it were but to please his fancy, run the hazard of losing some small matter, but this that is your care is not a small thing, for it is your life, Deut. xxxii. 47. Be *concerned* about them, that is, be desirous of their welfare, diligent in the use of means for the further-

e of their welfare. *Keep thy soul*, Deut. iv. 9. What shall I do for my precious soul? Two things should be our concern about our souls:

1.) Their *serviceableness* to God in this world. If our soul is in a manner lost that God has no honour and glory from. Be more solicitous how to honour God with your spirits, than how to honour yourselves with your estates. True religion is inward work, the work of the heart, Rom. ii. 29. The law rules the body, and guides all the actions.—O that the tree be made good—see it to be much more for your true advantage to worship God in the spirit, than to follow after the things of this world. Be solicitous to keep yourselves clean from sinful inclinations, fixed for gracious exercises, Prov. iv. 23. Learn to honour God with your spirits, and then you will know how to honour him with your substance.

2.) Their *salvation* with God in the other world. Be concerned what is likely to become of you to eternity. Let your future unchangeable state be set upon your hearts—the salvation of the soul, Heb. x. 39. 1 Pet. i. 9. Look upon this as the greatest and most desirable good, and pursue it accordingly: prefer this before all other cares. Is there any thing which more deserves or more needs your care than this? It is your great business in this world, that which you were sent into the world. It is your greatest interest as to the other world. Is not this the most thing needful? Had we but a powerful belief of the reality of invisible things, how would that govern all other concerns, in our prayers, in our cares, and in our endeavours.

3. A holy conduct of ourselves according to these principles. Let this word of Christ, that has come to us so fully, dwell in us richly; let this truth rule in our hearts, and rule there. Abide by this principle, that the gain of the world is nothing if the soul be lost; that our worldly interests, how near ever, are not worthy to be compared, not fit to be weighed the same day, with the great interests of our souls.—Be delivered into the mould of this truth. Remember this truth, and make use of it,

(1.) When you are tempted to sin for worldly

profit's sake—tempted to tell a lie, or defraud, or oppress, or do any wrong, for mammon, think, What will this gain be at last? That gain is dear bought that is purchased by sin;—the gain will soon be gone, Prov. xiii. 11. Jer. xvii. 11. but the guilt will remain, and we must repent of it, or do worse. Those who lose more than they get, will soon become bankrupt. Impress this upon your hearts in an hour of such temptation.

(2.) When you are tried by persecution for righteousness' sake—when the world is not to be gotten, but saved, (and there is a fairer pretence for that,) when we must either deny Christ or lose our worldly possessions, then remember this text;—see the verse before the text. If I should lose my soul to save my preferment, I should make but an ill bargain;—this consideration carried the martyrs through the fiery trial. Life is sweet, but eternal life is more sweet, said Bishop Hooper in the prospect of martyrdom: see Acts xx. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 16, 18.

(3.) In the great turns of your lives. Let this Scripture prevent all worldly, sensual choices, which prove so fatal to many. Do not, to get or save in the world, go out of the way of opportunities for your souls: see Ps. cxix. 72. Lot chose for the fat land, but what did it profit him, when in the enjoyment of his choice he had like to have lost his own soul? Postpone the world to the soul. When these interests part, remember this text.

(4.) In the constant tenor of your conversation. Go by this principle, That the saving of the soul is of much greater consequence to you than the gaining of the world, and let your cares be engaged accordingly—much more for your eternal happiness, than for your temporal convenience. Let this govern your aims and intentions, your actions and endeavours, your thoughts about your children, and all other things. Let this moderate worldly pursuits, and invigorate spiritual pursuits. Let Christ be your gain living and dying, Phil. i. 21. and then all is well, and well for ever.

[These sermons were preached in 1696.]