

SERMONS UPON MARK X. 17-27.

SERMON I.

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?—MARK X. 17.

ANY reigning sin maketh us incapable of faith, and by consequence of salvation, of which we have a notable instance in the conference that passed between Christ and a young ruler of the Jews. The story begins in the words read, 'And when he was gone forth into the way,' &c. The words give an account of a question put to Christ. And here—

1. The time and place, when and where this question was put to him, 'When he was gone forth into the way.' In the 10th verse we read he was in some private house, where the pharisees did resort to him, and dispute with him about divorce; and ver. 13, 'They brought young children to him, that he might bless them.' Now when he had pleaded their right, and 'laid his hands upon them, and blessed them,' Matthew tells us that 'he departed thence,' chap. xix. 15; and by the wayside, as he was in his journey to some other place, this ruler comes to him. Thus doth our Lord find new occasions of doing good; in the house, and by the wayside. Acts x. 38, it is said, 'He went about doing good.' The life of Christ was a constant course of service to God and bounty to men; he went about, and he went about doing good. This is the time and place, when and where.

2. The next circumstance is the person by whom the question was put. The text saith only, 'There came one running to him.' What this one was we shall find by laying several scriptures together. (1.) This one is said to be *νεανίσκος* 'a young man,' Mat. xix. 20; (2.) *Πλούσιος* 'a rich man,' ver. 22, 'He had great possessions.' (3.) *Ἄρχων*, 'a ruler,' Luke xviii. 18. What is meant by that? Possibly one of the chief pharisees, for they were called *ἄρχοντες*, rulers, Luke xiv. 1, or a ruler of the synagogue; or, as Grotius thinks, one of the magistrates of his town, or rather the head and chief of his family. The honourable families among the Jews had their heads and chiefs, whom they called their rulers. Now such a ruler, a young man, an honourable person, a head and chief of his family, he comes to Christ, and puts this question to him.

3. The manner of his address to Christ; it was voluntary, 'He came,' saith the text, that is, of his own accord. It was zealous and earnest, 'He came running to him.' It was humble, 'He kneeled down to him;' and besides, it was civil and respectful; he calls him 'Rabbi,' and gives him the title of 'good,' 'Good master.' He comes with a kind compellation which shows his reverence and respect to Christ. This was the manner of his address.

4. The question itself, which is weighty and serious, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Out of all these circumstances take this observation—

Doct. That men may go very far in a sense of religion, and yet come short of true grace.

I give it with respect to the context. This young man is a pregnant instance. He went far, for, as this text delivers his character to us, you will find few his equals, and the most part of the world left behind him. Here is a young man, a rich man, a nobleman, that is troubled about salvation, and seems to forget himself and his dignity; he comes running to Christ, kneels to him, and puts a serious question; but yet he came short; the context shows that, for when he heard of Christ's terms, he went away sorrowful.

To make good the observation—

1. I shall show what was commendable in this young man.

2. Where the defect and fault was; for here seems to be nothing but what is fair and plausible; he comes, and he comes kneeling to Christ, and says, 'Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'

I. There is something, yea, much commendable in him, and worthy of imitation, and that will appear by considering—(1.) The question which he puts; (2.) The quality of the person that propounded it; (3.) The manner how.

First, The question asked, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' This, for the substance of it, is a good question and very necessary for all to ask. Our hearts would be in a much better frame than they are if we did ask it more and ask it oftener: Oh! how shall we do to be saved?

1. It is not a question about another man, but himself. We read of an impertinent question put by Peter to Christ: John xxi. 21, 'Lord, what shall this man do?' Many do not look inward, and are busy about the concernments of others; but here it is not, What shall *they* do, or what shall *others* do? But, Good master, what is *my* duty? what shall *I* do to be saved?

2. It is not a curious question, or the proposal of some intricate doubt and nice debate: Titus iii. 9, 'Avoid foolish questions.' Curious questions argue wantonness; they that are heart-whole will dispute and wrangle about unprofitable needless points, but neglect those that are most weighty and necessary; and it is a true rule, *Deficit in necessariis qui redundat in superfluis*—Those that wholly give up themselves to vain janglings neglect more necessary and profitable matters. But the young man's question is not about curious speculations, but a weighty point, 'What shall I do to be saved?'

3. It is not about the body, but the soul. There are things necessary

for the outward man ; and questions of that nature are too rife with us : ' What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and what shall we put on ? ' Mat. vi. 25. All men's care is about the body, and these worldly questions do most perplex their hearts, How shall I be clothed and fed ? But this young man's question is not about any matter of the world, but the saving of his soul, How shall I do to live for ever with God ?

4. About his soul ; he doth not ask a frivolous or small thing, but a thing of the greatest moment in all divinity, ' What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ? ' A weighty matter, the weightiest of all others : Mat. vi. 33, ' Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; ' Prov. iv. 7, ' Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. ' And certainly such a question as this discovers a good spirit. (1.) That he was no Sadducee, for he inquires after eternal life, which they denied. The young man was one that did believe in heaven and hell, and inquires after the way how to escape the one and obtain the other. (2.) It discovers some thoughtfulness about it. Many of Christ's own disciples dreamed of an earthly kingdom ; they were ever putting questions to Christ about it : Acts i. 6, ' Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ? ' But his thoughts were more upon the kingdom of heaven than upon a temporal reign, which they fancied to themselves. (3.) It discovered that he was very sensible of the connection that is between the end and the means, that something must be done in order to eternal life. There are some men that would have heaven and happiness, but are loath to be at the cost : Num. xxiii. 10, ' Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his. ' *At oportuit sic vivisse* ; but we must live so, if we would die so. It is presumptuous folly to hope for the end without the means ; there are means leading to the end, which must be inquired after and regarded by us. Well, then, so far the pharisee is right, that without ' holiness no man shall see the Lord. ' (4.) This question so put discovers that he was sensible that a slight thing would not serve the turn, not a little saying and outward profession. This was not a vain and loose person, but a moral man, and one that had done much ; yet, ' What good thing must I do ? ' (5.) This was the errand and great thing that brought him to Christ, to find the way to heaven and true happiness. The man was rich, but he saw that his happiness lay not in riches, but in everlasting salvation, and thereupon he goes to Christ to learn how he should do to obtain it. There were many which followed Christ upon other accounts ; some for his miracles, he cured their diseases ; others for the loaves, John vi. 26 ; but he comes to him about eternal life.

5. This question was seriously put ; he did not ask it in jest, but in the greatest earnest. When men are convinced, things now begin to be real, and seem other than formerly they did ; they think, and speak, and talk like men in another world. Sin is another thing, they were wont to marvel what made men keep such ado about sin. What great harm was it to take a little forbidden pleasure ? That it was hard measure to be held so closely to duty. But now they have other thoughts ; some are anxious, all are solicitous and careful, and enter into consultation about the means of salvation. When the Corinthians were

made sorry by Paul's letter, 2 Cor. vii. 11, 'What carefulness it wrought in you.'

In short (that I may gather up all I have said), necessary questions are better than those which are nice and impertinent, and practical questions are better than speculative, and questions about spiritual and eternal things are better than those that only concern temporal. Questions about the soul are better than those which concern the body, as far as the soul excels the body, and heaven excels the world. Where was the fault of all this? I will show that by and by; only I mention now, there was a leaven of legalism; he thought to earn heaven by his doing, 'What good thing must I do?' as Matthew repeats the question, Mat. xix. 16. Thus far we have the character of the man fair; he was one that comes about a very serious and momentous question to Christ, a question that should be more on our heart.

Secondly, Let us consider the person by whom it was put, by a young man in the prime of his age, by a rich man in the fulness of his wealth, by a man of good rank as well as a good estate, by a ruler while he was in his power and empire.

1. We find him to be *νεανίσκος*, a young man. Julius Pollux tells us that *νεανίσκος* is one that had not yet accomplished his fourth septenary, that is, not yet full twenty-eight years of age. Young men are usually vain, and there is nothing they mind less than the salvation of their soul. If an old man had put this question to Christ, it had been the less remarkable; it is time for them to think of another world that have one foot already in the grave; but this young man comes to Christ to inquire after eternal life. Oh! that other young men would imitate his example, and go so far as he who yet fell short, as we shall see in the process of the story. There is an ignorant and profane conceit which possesseth many men's minds that it is not necessary for young men to study the scriptures, or to trouble themselves much with thinking of heaven and life to come, because they are young, and strong, and lusty, and likely to live many years; therefore they think it is more proper for them to follow the world, and to mind the things of this life, and let old men alone to think of heaven. But this is flat contrary to the word of God, which requires us to 'Remember our Creator in the days of our youth,' Eccles. xii. 1. He that gave all deserves our best, that our first and flowery years should be consecrated to him, while the effects of his creating bounty are most sensible upon us: Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' The world will say, What have young folks to do with so serious a work? When old age hath snowed upon their heads, and the smart experience of more years in the world hath ripened them for so severe a discipline, then it is time to think of repenting, and of cleansing our hearts from sin, and providing for our last end and great account. Oh no! God demands his right of the young man, that his heart be seasoned betimes with grace. In the word of God we read of Josiah, a young king; of Phineas, a young priest; of Daniel, a young prophet; and Timothy, a young evangelist. Oh! that young men would apply their hearts to religion, and make progress therein!

[1.] Consider how convenient and reasonable it is that God should have our first and best. The flower and best of our days is due to

God, who is the best of beings. Under the law the first-fruits were God's; the sacrifices were all offered young and in their strength: Lev. ii. 14, 'If thou offer a meat-offering of the first-fruits unto the Lord, thou shalt offer the meat-offering of the first-fruits, green ears of corn dried by the fire.' They were not to stay till they were ripened. God will not be kept out of his portion. When wit is dulled, ears heavy, body weak, affections spent, is this a fit sacrifice for God? In respect of eternal life, which we look for, we should begin betimes to lay a foundation. If a man has a great way to go, it is good rising early in the morning; many set out too late, never any too soon. And for the conveniency of it, young men are most capable of doing God service; they are best able to take pains in the service of God, and working out their own salvation; they are fittest in regard of strength of body and mind; the faculties of their souls are most vigorous, and the members of their bodies most active; they have quick wits, much firmness of memory, and strength of affection. It is not fit to lay the greatest load on the weakest horse; the weak shoulders of old men are not fit for the burden of religion.

[2.] Consider how necessary it is, because the lusts of youth being boiling hot, need the correction of a more severe discipline. Young men are inclined to liberty and carnal pleasures, and are more apt to be led aside from the right way by the motions of the flesh, and are self-willed and headstrong in their passions, therefore they need look after the world to come, and to exercise themselves in holiness more than others do. As the boiling pot sendeth up most scum, so in the fervours of youth there are the strongest inclinations to intemperance and uncleanness. Who so eager in desires, so bold in enterprises, so confident and presumptuous as they? Therefore they ought to be most heedful, watchful, and seriously religious, lest they be caught in the devil's snares. We read of 'youthful lusts;' 2 Tim. ii. 22, 'Flee also youthful lusts.' Therefore youth had need to be seasoned with the doctrine of the scriptures: 2 Tim. iii. 15, 'And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' The heat and violence of their lusts is broken with a care of the world to come.

[3.] Consider the profit of it.

(1.) The work is more easy the sooner it is taken in hand; whereas the longer it is delayed, the more difficult. Sin groweth stronger by custom, and more rooted: Jer xiii. 27, 'I have seen thy adulteries and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredoms, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?' There is not such another tyrant in the world as sin; by every act it gathereth strength. A twig is easily bowed, but when it groweth into a tree, it is not moved. The man that was possessed of a devil from his childhood, how hardly was he cured! Mark ix. 21. When the disease groweth inveterate, medicines do little good. If you would know what you should do to inherit eternal life, learn it young, and then 'the way of the Lord will be strength to you;' Lam. iii. 27, 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.'

(2.) You hereby provide for the comfort of old age. If you serve

God in your good days, he will help you the better over those evil days wherein there is no pleasure : Isa. xlvi. 3, 4, 'Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all that remain of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb ; and even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs I will carry you.' It will be then no grief of heart to you when old, that you were acquainted with God young ; whereas, on the other side, the vanities of youth will be the burden of age. *Inania juventutis gaudia sunt acerba senectutis gravamina*—Ambrose.

(3.) Our great work, that must be once done, is put out of hazard when we think of heaven seriously while we are young. Most defer this main care out of hope of long life. The young as well as old may die ; the far smaller part of mankind arrive to old age. Life is most uncertain, and such a weighty business as this should not be left at peradventures. Nadab and Abihu were taken away young, and in their sins ; the bears out of the forest devoured the children that mocked the prophet. Therefore, the danger being so great, you should make sure of escape from hell, and of a title to heaven betimes. When children come to the full use of their reason, they stand on their own bottom, whereas before they are reckoned to their parents ; and then woe to them if God crop them off in their flower, and they die in their sins when they are upon their own personal account. All this is spoken to show that younger as well as elder persons should inquire after eternal life.

2. This man was *πλούσιος*, a rich man, one who had great possessions. Rich men usually quench their reason in sensuality, and wallow in all manner of carnal delights, but cast off all thoughts of eternity. But this man, though he had enough to live happily in the present world, yet he thinks of the world to come. Oh ! that all you that are rich in this world would go and do likewise ! Usually men, when they are well at ease, look no further. This is a question rarely moved by men of that sort, 'What shall they do to be saved?' They think heaven is a fit notion to entertain the fancies of the poor and afflicted withal, a pleasant thought wherewith to comfort and relieve their sorrows ; but this rich man, though he had great possessions, yet he hath his trouble upon him about his salvation. It is true in general, of all men there will be but few saved, and among the rich but few of those few : 1 Cor. i. 26, 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.' Usually where is religion more bitterly scoffed at and vilified than among the rich and full-fed worldlings ? They throng their hearts with pleasures, and make it their business to run from one carnal contentment to another, as if they would verify that fool's saying, Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' All their time is spent in sporting, eating, drinking, dressing, and undressing ; this is the business and entertainment of their lives. Oh ! when shall we hear one savoury word from these concerning eternity and the life to come ? But surely it is their duty, as well as of poorer men, to seek an interest in heaven and in the world to come, if indeed there be such a thing, as scripture and reason and conscience will tell us that there is. Certainly we shall not always tarry here, and there will a time come when it will be of no profit to

us that we have lived more plentifully than others, unless we have made provision for a better life. Rich men are wont to command others, and we must command them whose office it is to come to them in a greater name. What to do? 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches.' Charge them that they do not scornfully refuse the gospel, and think to bear it out with their wealth and greatness; so I interpret 'trusting in uncertain riches.' There will a time come when they shall stand on the same level with the poor, therefore let it be their great business to get in with God, and to be useful in their places; to sow to the Spirit rather than to the flesh, that they may be sure of a good estate in the world to come, and take hold of eternal life. This rich man was not satisfied with his estate; he comes with this question, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'

3. He was *ἀρχων*, a ruler, not a vulgar and obscure plebeian, but a man of eminency and authority, a nobleman (to speak in the English language), or the chief of his family. Men of this rank are usually either seeking how they may raise their name and estate in the world by the favour of princes, aiming to be built up every day a storey higher, with new additions of honour and title; this is their great business; it little entereth into their thoughts to have their names written in the book of life; or else abusing their power and greatness, by opposing Christ, his interests, servants, and kingdom; and therefore the psalmist saith, 'Be wise now therefore, O ye kings! be instructed, ye judges of the earth,' Ps. ii. 10. Most men have stumbled upon the corner-stone, and taken no warning by those that have been broken in pieces before them. Or else they are such as are afraid and ashamed to be reckoned among the followers of a despised Christ, as that which would lessen their grandeur, and make them of no reputation among men of their rank and quality; that they should be taken notice of, if they favour religion, and the things of God: John vii. 48, 'Have any of the rulers or the pharisees believed on him?' that is, in the Jewish dialect, have any of the nobles and chiefs? But this man, though a ruler, he comes with his case of conscience to Christ, and he comes openly, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' We have seen his question, and found it to be serious and momentous, such as becomes us all to make, and we have considered his person.

Thirdly, Here is the manner of his address, and thence you may observe—

1. The voluntariness of it. He came not called by others, but he came of himself; not driven by afflictions, or by any bodily or outward necessity, but came to Christ. Many of Christ's own disciples and menial servants came not so. Peter came not till Andrew brought him; yea, the other apostles were all called. Here we read of no calling, no inviting, but he came of his own accord, and that not upon the impulsion, or urging of any bodily necessity. Many came to Christ, but thanks to their calamities and necessities that drove them; they were blind and lame, or possessed with devils, or had their sick to cure; but this man comes without any collateral respect, nothing but a desire of satisfaction to his grand scruples, 'What shall I do to obtain eternal life?' This brings him to Christ.

2. The earnestness and fervour of his coming, 'He came running.' This nobleman seemed to forget and neglect the dignity of his condition; he doth not walk in state, but, when Christ was gone out of the house where he was before, lest he should miss of him, he runs after him. This shows his zeal and forwardness to meet with Christ, and to put this question to him. He had an earnest desire to confer with Christ, and is not ashamed even then to run after him when Christ was a despised person. When David danced before the ark, and Michal scoffed at him, as if it argued lightness, 2 Sam. vi. 16, he said, 'If this be to be vile, I will be more vile.' It was disgraceful in that age for this ruler to come to Christ, much more to run after him. Nicodemus, a man of his rank, was convinced, yet he durst not publicly own Christ, but came to him by night, so as least to be taken notice of; but this man runs after him in the highway, and sets all other respects aside, that he might seek a salve for the sore which run upon him, so great and earnest was his desire to have his conscience satisfied, 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?'

3. Consider his humility and reverence to Christ; he kneeled to him, in token of civil honour and reverence to him, as an eminent prophet and teacher. He was not persuaded, as we that profess ourselves christians are, of the Godhead of Christ, only he took him for some great prophet and a man of God, therefore he cometh and tendereth his petition kneeling. One would think all this respect and fair meaning might be without any fault, and that he had a very good heart, a man that should come, and run, and kneel to Christ, and beg him to answer this question.

4. There is his compellation, 'Good master.' He came not treacherously to entrap Christ, as the lawyer that asked the same question, but not with the same intent: Luke x. 25, 'Behold a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' This man came not to tempt Christ, but to learn of him, out of a good intention and purpose, and with a mind and affection in some degree sincere. The man had some good qualities, for it is said, 'Jesus loved him;' he had moral sincerity, for he did not dissemble; but he came not with a supernatural sincerity, for there was a reservation in his heart, as appears by the sequel; his resolution to follow Christ was not absolute, though he esteems him, and makes fair offers to him. We have seen the first part, namely, what was commendable; a young man, a rich man, a nobleman; he comes with such earnestness, with such a question to Christ, with such a desire to be satisfied, with an intention sincere.

II. But where was his defect? By all that hath been said, a man would think that all this while I have been describing some rare saint. Such is his zeal and forwardness after spiritual and heavenly knowledge, and such is our coldness and carelessness about everlasting concerns, that we should easily think, Surely this is enough, and wonder God should require anything more, and to go further than this man.

1. His fault was that he asked, in the pharisee's sense, what good thing he should do. That will appear by Christ's answer in the process of the story. If the question had been only, By what means must I be saved? or, What is the way to heaven? Christ would have answered

him, as the apostles did in a like case, Acts xvi. 31, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' If the question had been put to him in a broken-hearted manner, and by one that was sensible of his misery and inability, and had come to Christ and said, 'What shall I do?' he would have taught him. Now the pharisee's error was double—he thought that men might be saved by their own works, and that those works were in their own power. He thought of nothing else but of being saved by the merit of his own works, that those were full out-weight with God, and did deserve eternal life; as the Jews elsewhere: Rom. ix. 31, 32, 'Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.' They were ignorant of the law and of themselves; ignorant of the law, and therefore sought justification by the works of the law, and not by faith; and ignorant of themselves, and therefore presumed of their own strength, as if they were able to do whatever good was prescribed to them. As the Jews said to Christ, John vi. 28, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?' They were confident of their own merit and strength. Here was his fault, that he was, as other Jews were, both ignorant of the law and ignorant of himself: of the law, that there is no standing before God by that covenant; and of himself, that he had full strength to perform it. Men by nature retain so deep an impression of the covenant of works, and are ignorant of the perfection of the law and their own impotency, that they know no way of attaining eternal life but by their own works, and doubt not but they shall do well enough; if Christ will tell them their duty, they will do it. In short, this young man was conceited of a righteousness as in himself and from himself, and if Christ had answered him according to that humour, he had done no more good upon him than if a physician should say to a lame man, Run, and you shall be cured. And therefore Christ's business was to bring him to a brokenness of heart by the knowledge of the law, of himself, and his own weakness, as you shall see afterwards.

2. His next fault was, his love of riches and worldly things, which is a dangerous obstruction, and a let to salvation. Fair intentions and good offers profit not where any one thing is loved more than God, where the world is not overcome, and the fleshly mind and interest is not mortified; for we must not confine it only to riches, but pleasure, and honour, or any such thing. For when Christ had taught them that he was Lord and sovereign, and could give laws—he gives him a law to try him, 'Sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come take up the cross, and follow me'—he went away sorrowful. Unless every affection and interest of ours be laid at the feet of Christ, we are not thoroughly converted to him. From this story, consider, whoever believes must determine God is his chiefest good, and Jesus Christ is the only way to God; there must be an intention of God as the last end, and a choice of Christ as the only means; there must be brokenness of heart, a renouncing the world, and an entire dependence on Christ as the only Saviour to bring us to God.

Use. This may humble us, that we go not so far, and to caution us that we do not rest here.

First, To humble us. Alas! most men go not so far as this young rich man, that comes thus seriously to Christ about a question of eternal life. It is a saying of Athanasius, *Utinam omnes essent hypocritæ*—Would to God all men would go so far as hypocrites. He means it not as to dissimulation, but partial obedience. It were a blessed thing for the world if all men went so far as this young man; so as—

1. To have their thoughts taken up about eternal life. The most part of the world never consider whence they are, nor whither they go, nor what shall become of them to all eternity. We busy our thoughts about our temporal interests, and are carking how we may live in the world, and maintain ourselves, but never take care how we shall live for ever. If you go from house to house, you will find this question very rare, 'What shall I do to obtain eternal life?' Go up and down among people everywhere, and you meet with no such language as this. Go to young and old, poor and rich, great and small; we have many thoughts in us how to dispose of our present affairs, but few think of the world to come. Should a man's thoughts be taken up about furnishing his inn, where he tarries but a night, and neglect his home? Thus we busy ourselves about the affairs of this life, when to-morrow we must be gone, and mind not the world to come, where we must abide for ever. Not once a year doth such a thought run in our minds; we never ask or speak about it, nor will we suffer any to do so; so far are we from being diligent and earnest to get it resolved, this is the least part of our care.

2. To be sensible it is no slight matter to have an interest in the world to come. Most men think they shall do well enough for heaven; a small matter will serve the turn for that, and there needs not such great solicitude about it. This was a moral man, no debauched person, yet he is troubled, and makes inquiry after eternal life. Many think a slight saying, God have mercy upon me, or a little overly trust upon the mercy of God will serve the turn.

3. To have such a sense as to choose fit means. He had heard the pharisees long, but was not satisfied; their doctrine was cold, without any spirit and life, and their zeal was all for externals and bodily exercise, that was of little profit. Eternal life was a thing sparingly spoken of by them, but more plentifully by Christ; therefore he goes not to the scribes and pharisees and chief priests, who arrogated to themselves the knowledge of mysteries. Many heap up teachers to please their own lusts.

4. To be so concerned as to be earnest in the means. This man ran after Christ when he missed him in the house, and they will not come to the congregations of the faithful where this great question is discussed, 'What they shall do to inherit eternal life?' Eccles. v. 1, 'Be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools,' and James i. 19, 'Be swift to hear.' But we are cold, slack and negligent. Many are even ready to thrust the means from them, and say unto God, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. Those means that should do them good are tedious and irksome; therefore this should humble us, that we go not so far as this pharisee.

Secondly, To caution us; do not rest in a common work.

1. In a desire of heaven as your only happiness. Alas! this is a

common thing both to regenerate and unregenerate: John vi. 34, 'Lord, evermore give us of this bread.' Is any man such an enemy to himself as not to wish it? Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.' A natural man may discern that true happiness lies not in outward things, but in eternal life, as this man did, and accordingly may have a desire as he had.

2. Do not rest barely in a desire that moveth us to the use of some means, unless it bring us to a perfect resignation to God. This man had a good mind to heaven; he cheapens it, but is not willing to go through with the price. Many have good desires and intentions, but will not 'sell all for the pearl of price,' Mat. xiii. 44; they will not come up to Christ's terms, namely, to lay every affection and lust at Christ's feet, and wholly resign themselves to be guided by him in his own way to happiness, and so they may go to hell notwithstanding all their desires.

3. If we would not rest in a common work, then two things we must take care of, which are opposite to the double defect of this young man—brokenness of heart, and unbounded resignation of ourselves to the will of God; bring yourselves to that, and the thing is done. (1.) Brokenness of heart. This young man hath a great opinion and conceit of his own righteousness; being full of his own righteousness, he came to be approved by Christ rather than be directed. Here lay his great fault; he inquires the way to heaven, but yet believes himself to be in the way already, yea, far gone in that way; holy in his own estimation; therefore you must cherish an humble sense of your own nothingness, for Christ bid him do that. (2.) Resignation of yourselves to God's will. Have a care of the love of riches, or any carnal affection. If you be wedded to any temporal thing, it will be your bane, and destroy all religion, and make you go away sorrowful after many fair offers and many good meanings. It is difficult for the rich, but even the poor have their difficulties too. He that starves as well as he that surfeits hath his difficulties in the way to heaven. Every man hath a tender part of soul, some carnal affection that he doth allow, reserve, and is loath should be touched; therefore, till there be an unbounded resignation, and we fully throw ourselves at Christ's feet, it is impossible ever we should come to the kingdom of heaven. The soul is never right with God whilst we stand haggling and dodging with God. No; give up yourselves to him without reservation, to be guided and ordered by him at his will and pleasure; as Acts ix. 6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' They that are sincere do not dispense with themselves in anything, and say, Thus far they will go, and, The Lord be merciful to me in this; but they absolutely follow Christ. See Luke ix. 59, to the end. Herod did many things; this young man had a forwardness and urgent desire. Thus it is with many; heaven must fall into our lap, or we will have none of it; if it puts us to pains or cost, it is too dear a bargain for us to deal withal; we snuff at God's terms as troublesome, and fling off. No; we should be glad to accept of mercy on any terms, and take heaven at God's price.

[1.] This unbounded resolution must be seriously made: Luke xiv.

26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;' Mark xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.'

[2.] It must be faithfully performed. You must not only renounce but overcome when it cometh to trial, subdue your lusts, run all hazards for Christ, thwart affections, slight disgraces, nicknames, and scorns, and lay all down, nay, life itself, at Christ's feet: Mark xix. 27-29, 'Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee, what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' We must pluck out a right eye and cut off a right hand, Mat. v. 29, 30. Many will perform such duties as cross not any strong bent of their lusts, they will forbear some sins that are not so rooted in their natures, nor grown strong by custom, nor are set on by any forcible temptation, but fail in other things of greater moment, or more nearly concerning them.

There are four points of great weight and moment, which should ever be remembered by them that would make out their gospel qualifications, or new covenant plea of sincerity.

(1.) That any allowed evil habit of soul or reigning sin is inconsistent with that faith that worketh by love, and only maketh us capable of the great privileges of the gospel. That appeareth by the nature of conversion, which lieth in three things—a turning from the creature to God, from self to Christ, from sin to holiness: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and mammon;' James iv. 4, 'Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.'

(2.) That the usual bait of reigning sin is the world. The great difficulty of salvation lies in a man's addictedness to worldly things or temporal satisfactions. When these are highest in our esteem, or dearest to our hearts, it weakeneth God's interest and our care of salvation, and our sense of the world to come: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not;' 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off;' Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.' The world taketh us off from the serious pursuit of heaven: Luke x.

41, 42, 'Martha! Martha! thou art careful, and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful;' and makes us shrink at trials: 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world.'

(3.) That our inclination to worldly things is various according to the temper and constitution of men. As the channel is cut so the river runs: Isa. liii. 6, 'We have turned every one in his own way.' Some are carried away by pride, some by vainglory, some by sensuality, some by worldliness. Uprightness and sincerity lies in observing the tender part of the soul, and preserving ourselves from that sin which is most natural to us: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.'

(4.) That many times, when pretences are fair there is a secret reserve in our hearts. The devil seeketh to deceive men with a superficial change and half reformation, and moveth them to take on the profession of religion, and yet secure their fleshly and worldly interest. The most dangerous cheat of our souls is by halving it between God and mammon: Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and mammon.' When we are not so mortified as to subject ourselves entirely to Christ's direction upon the hopes of eternal life, or the happiness of the world to come, and to part with all things in the world, when it is necessary so to do; or else we must part with this salvation. Many think they are not worldly because they have some thoughts of heaven, and do something for it in seeking after it; but the business is whether you seek it in the first place, and make it your principal end and scope, to which all other things are subordinated and referred? whether you can forsake all rather than miss heaven? Jesus Christ, though he prized good beginnings, and would not discourage any, yet admitteth none to the privileges of grace that are but half converted, whose hearts are in secret league with the world, though they seem to be affected with the offers of eternal life.

SERMON II.

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.—MARK X. 18.

WE have seen the young man's question, here is Christ's answer, in which observe two things—

1. His expostulation with him, 'Why callest thou me good?'

2. His instruction of him, 'There is none good but one, that is God.'

First, For the expostulation, 'Why callest thou me good?' He doth not simply blame him for giving this title to him, but argueth with him about it—

1. To show that he loves no compliments or fair words, which proceed not from sound faith and love to him. Christ saw that he was