

SERMONS UPON LUKE XIX. 10.

SERMON I.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.
LUKE xix. 10.

THIS is given as a reason why Christ came to invite himself to Zaccheus' house, who was a publican. We find, ver. 7, 'The people murmured, saying, That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner.' Christ defendeth his practice by his commission, or the errand for which he came into the world, 'For the Son of man,' &c.

In which words—

1. The person, or the character by which he was described, 'The Son of man.' Christ is called so, not to deny his godhead, but to express the verity of his human nature, and that he was of our stock and lineage. He might have been a true man though he had not come of Adam, but his human nature had been framed out of the dust of the ground, as Adam's was, or created out of nothing: 'But he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,' Heb. ii. 11. He would be of the mass and stock with us.

2. His work, 'He is come to seek and to save.' The first word, 'to seek,' showeth his diligence; he leaveth no place unsought where his hidden ones are. The second word, 'to save,' showeth his sufficiency of merit and power; both show his kindness and good-will to mankind, to recover us out of our lapsed estate.

3. The object of this grace and favour, 'That which was lost.' The object of Christ's salvation is man lost and undone.

Doct. That the great end and business of Christ's coming is to seek and save that which is lost.

Here I shall inquire two things by way of explication.—

1. In what sense we are said to be lost.

2. How Christ cometh to seek and save such.

I. In what sense we are said to be lost; two ways, really and indeed, or in our own sense and apprehension.

1. Really and indeed; so we are lost to God and lost to ourselves. As to God, he hath no glory, love, and service from us, and so is deprived and robbed of the honour of his creation. The father in the parable, by whom God is resembled, saith, Luke xv. 24, 'This my son was lost and is found.' Lost as to themselves, so they are said to be lost, as they are out of the way to true happiness, and as they are in the

way to everlasting destruction. In the former respect we are compared to lost sheep, who when they are once out of the way, know not how to find it again: Ps. xiv. 3, 'They are all gone aside;' and Isa. liii. 6, 'All we like sheep have gone astray.' Swine and other creatures, if they wander all day, will easily find the way home again; but we are gone astray like sheep. *Domine, errare per me potui, redire non potui*—Lord, I have wandered of myself, but I cannot return of myself. In the second respect, as they are in the way to destruction; so we are compared to the lost son, who undid himself, and wasted his substance with riotous living, Luke xv. 13. So we are lost by reason of original sin, or the corruption introduced by Adam's first sin, hereditarily derived to us from our first parents: Ps. li. 5, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' And also by reason of actual sins, whereby we involve ourselves more and more in the wrath and curse of God: Eph. ii. 1, 2, 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; and ver. 3, 'We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Take one distinction more; some are lost totally, and others totally and finally too. All men in their natural estate, whether they be sensible or insensible of it, are lost totally: Isa. liii. 6, 'All we like sheep have gone astray,' not one excepted: the elect, though for the present they are totally lost, yet they are not finally lost. But those that still continue in their impenitency and unbelief are both totally and finally lost, justly given over and designed to everlasting perdition and destruction. In which sense Judas is called the son of perdition: John xvii. 12, 'Those which thou hast given me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.' Unbelief persisted in is a sign of perdition. Therefore the apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost.' Well, then, such as refuse the gospel are in an actual state of perdition, and while they continue to repel and refuse the benefit of the gospel, there is no hope of them. Thus we are really and indeed lost.

2. Some are lost and undone in their own sense and feeling. All by reason of sin are in a lost state, but some are apprehensive of it; when the soul is made sensible of its utter perishing condition, and fear of its aggravated punishment by reason of actual sin; as the lost son apprehended his perishing for want of bread: Luke xv. 17, 'And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!' Thus would Christ represent the sensible sinner, that is apprehensive of his condition. Now such a sense is necessary to prepare us for a more broken-hearted and thankful acceptance of the grace of the gospel.

[1.] Because the scripture speaketh of an awakening before conversion: Eph. v. 14, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' While we are asleep, we are neither sensible of our misery, nor care for our remedy, but please ourselves with dreams and fancies; but when a man's conscience doth rouse him up out of the sleep of sin, and awaken him to some sight and sense of his miserable condition, he is in a good measure prepared to hearken to the

offers of the gospel, and to be affected with and entertain the grace of Christ: so Ps. xxii. 27, 'All the nations of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord;' first remember, then turn. They are like men sleeping and distracted before; they do not consider whence they are, what they are doing, whither they are going, what shall become of them to all eternity.

[2.] Till we are sensible of our lost estate, we have not that trouble for sin, that hunger and thirst for grace, which the scripture expresseth everywhere in the calls and invitations of the gospel: as Mat. ix. 12, 13, 'The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;' and Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest;' Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;' Heb. vi. 18, 'Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before us.' They that are heart-whole will not value the spiritual physician, neither will they that feel not their load care for offers of ease. None will prize bread but the hungry, nor come to the waters but the thirsty, nor make haste to the city of refuge but those that see an avenger of blood at their heels. Or to divest these things of their metaphor; sin unseen grieveth not; that which the eye seeth not the heart rueth not; it is the hungry conscience that cannot be satisfied without Christ's renewing and reconciling grace; it is the curse driveth us to the promise, and the tribunal of God's justice to the throne of grace; one covenant to another. None do with such sighs and groans mourn and wait in the use of means till they obtain mercy as those who have a sight and sense of their lost estate, or their sad and miserable case by nature.

[3.] It appeareth by the types, the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt and Babylon, which figured our restoration by Christ. Now God would not deliver his people out of Egypt till they sighed and groaned out of the anguish of their spirits for their cruel bondage: Exod. iii. 7, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters, for I know their sorrows.' So God delivered them not out of their captivity of Babylon till they were sensible of their being ready to perish under it: Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 'Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts.' Now the great truth figured hereby is our perishing condition under the captivity of sin before the Spirit of life entereth into us.

[4.] By experience it appeareth that Christ is not valued, nor his grace so highly prized, till men have a sensible awakening knowledge of their own misery and lost estate by reason of sin. When sin is sin indeed, then grace is grace indeed and Christ is Christ indeed. If men have a superficial sense of sin, they have a superficial faith in Christ. The slight person doth the work of an age in a breath. We are all sinners, but God is merciful. Christ died for sinners, and there is an end both of their law and gospel work. If men have a doctrinal and speculative knowledge of sin, they have also a doctrinal opinionative faith in Christ. Always according to our sense of the disease so is our carriage about the cure and remedy. It must needs be so, for God by the one will advance the other, 'that where sin aboundeth, grace

might much more abound,' Rom. v. 26 ; that is, rather in our sense and feeling than in our practice ; so that one wounded for sin will more earnestly look after a cure. Others may dispute for the gospel, but they feel not the comfort of it. Well, then, I have proved to you that every man is in a lost condition, sensible or insensible of it, and that we ought to have a deep sense of this upon our hearts, to count ourselves lost and undone, that we may be more prepared and fitted to entertain the offers and calls of the gospel, and prize our Redeemer's grace.

II. In what sense Christ is said to seek and save such. Here is a double work—seeking and saving.

1. What is his seeking ? It implieth—

[1.] His pity to us in our lost estate, and providing means for us, in that he doth not leave us to our wanderings, or our own heart's counsels, but taketh care that we be brought back again to God: John x. 16, 'Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.' It is spoken of his care to bring in his own among the gentiles; he will in due time convert and bring in all that belong to the election of grace. Christ hath not only a care of those that are already brought in, but of those who are yet to be brought in; they are his sheep, though yet unconverted, in respect of his eternal purpose; and his heart is upon them, when they little think of him, and his love to them. So the Lord Jesus appeared in the vision to Paul: Acts xviii. 10, 'Fear not, I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.' He doth not say, *There are* much people, Corinth was a populous city, and it is good casting out the net where there are store of fish; but, *I have* much people. It is not meant of those Corinthians that were already converted to God, for at that time there were few or none, for all those at Corinth that were converted were converted by Paul: 1 Cor. iv. 15, 'Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.' Or if some few were already converted, Paul was not afraid of them. But there are much people, viz., who were elected by God, redeemed by Christ, though yet wallowing in their sins; such as these he findeth out in their wanderings.

[2.] His seeking implieth his diligence and pains to reduce them: Luke xv. 4, 'What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and seeketh after that which was lost till he find it?' It requireth time and pains to find them, and gain their consent. A lost soul is not so easily recovered and reduced from his straying; there is many a warning slighted, many a conviction smothered, and tenders of grace made in vain, till they are taken in their month: Isa. lxxv. 2, 'I have spread out my hands all the day long unto a rebellious people,' as requiring audience.

I evidence this two ways—

(1.) Christ is said to seek after us by his word and Spirit.

(1st.) By his word, he cometh as a teacher from heaven, to recall sinners from their wanderings. At first he came in person: 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,' Mat. ix. 13.

Besides his giving repentance as prince and lord of the renewed estate, or dispenser of the grace of the gospel, there is his calling to repentance; and Christ was very painful in it, going up and down, and seeking all occasions to bring home poor creatures to God. Thus he was now calling home to God Zaccheus, a publican; so the woman of Samaria, when he was faint and hungry, John iv. 34, he telleth her his 'meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work.' To seek and save lost souls was meat and drink to Christ. So still he doth send ministers, giving them gifts, and inspiring them with a zeal for God's glory and compassion over souls, that 'with all meekness they may instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,' &c., 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. Now these are to be 'instant in season and out of season,' 2 Tim. iv. 2; as the woman lighted a candle to seek her lost groat, Luke xv. 8. So Christ causeth the candlestick of the church to be furnished with burning and shining lights, men of prudence, zeal, and holiness, and compassion over souls, that he may at length gain on a people. And indeed Christ never lights a candle but he hath some lost groat to seek.

(2d.) By his Spirit striving against and overcoming the obstinacy and contradiction of our souls. By his call in the word he inviteth us to holiness, but by his powerful grace he inclineth us. Man is averse from God; he resists not only external offers, but internal motions, till by his invincible grace he changeth our hearts, and so in the day of his power we become a willing people: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people are willing in the day of thy power.' It is the good shepherd that bringeth home the sheep upon his own shoulders rejoicing, Luke xv. 5.

(2.) This seeking is absolutely necessary; if he did not seek them, they would never seek him. It is our great duty to seek after God; the scripture calleth for it everywhere: Isa. lv. 6, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.' By the motions of his Spirit he urgeth us thereunto: Ps. xxvii. 8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face.' The course of his providence inviteth us; both afflictions: Hosea v. 15, 'In their afflictions they will seek me early;' and mercies: Acts xvii. 27, 28, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live and move, and have our being.' And his people are described to be a generation of them that seek him, Ps. xxiv. 6. Yet if Christ had not by his preventing grace sought us, we could never seek after him: Isa. lxx. 1, 'I am found of them that sought me not.' I prevented their seeking of me, by sending and seeking after mine own first. Christ beginneth with us first: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he first loved us.' He chooseth us before we choose him: John xv. 16, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.' He seeketh us first before we seek him; for we are fugitives and exiles, our hearts are averse from God, and there is a legal exclusion in the way. Sweetly Bernard to this purpose, *Nemo te quærere potest, nisi qui prius invenerit; vis inveniri ut quæraris, quæri ut inveniaris; potes quidem inveniri, non tamen præveniri.* God will be sought that he may be found, and found that he may be sought. We cannot seek him till we find him; we may return to him, but we cannot

prevent him; for he pitied our misery, and sought us, when we had neither mind nor heart to seek him.

2. To save them. Two ways is Christ a saviour—*merito et efficacia*, by merit and by power. We are sometimes said to be saved by his death, and sometimes to be saved by his life: Rom. v. 10, 'If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.' There is the merit of his humiliation, and the efficacy and power of his exaltation. He procureth salvation for us by his meritorious satisfaction, and then applieth it to us by his effectual and invincible power.

Here I shall do two things—(1.) I shall show why it is so; (2.) I shall prove that this was Christ's great end and business.

First, Why it is so.

1. With respect to the parties concerned. In saving lost creatures, Christ hath to do with three parties—God, man, and Satan.

[1.] With God. God's wrath was to be pacified by the blood of his cross: Col. i. 20, 'Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself.' His blood was to be shed on earth, and represented and pleaded in heaven. Now thus he came to save us, that is, to die for us, and give his life a ransom for many here upon earth: Mat. xx. 28, 'The Son of man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' In heaven it is represented: Heb. ix. 24, 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.'

[2.] The next party is man, who is to be saved, who is guilty and unholy. His guilt is removed by Christ's substituting himself in man's stead, and bearing his sins. But man by a foolish obstinacy is apt to turn the back upon his own mercies, so that there needeth the efficacy of the Spirit of Christ to gain his consent, as well as the merit and mediatorial sacrifice of Christ to reconcile him to God. We are so prepossessed with a false happiness, and biassed by sinful inclinations, so indisposed for the waiting for and receiving of the offered mercy in that humble and submissive way wherein God will dispense it, that unless Christ save us by a strong hand we are not likely to be the better for the tender of the gospel to us: John vi. 44, 'No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;' and ver. 65, 'No man can come to me, except it were given him of my Father;' and John v. 40, 'Ye will not come unto me that you might have life.' So that as we are deservedly cut off by the law, so also we are become morally impotent, and avèrse to the undeserved, free, and gracious tenders of the gospel; and having wilfully pulled upon ourselves just misery, we do obstinately reject free mercy tendered to us upon the terms of the gospel. We are lost before, unless Christ satisfy the old covenant, and we are lost again, unless he qualify us for the privileges of the gospel. And as the gospel transcends the law, so our disobedience to the gospel doth so far exceed in evil our disobedience to the law; so that we are doubly lost, utterly lost, unless Christ help us.

[3.] With Satan, who is a tempter and an accuser; as an accuser

not a whisperer, but *κατήγορος*, 'accuser;' Rev. xii. 10, 'For the accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night.' And *ἀντίδικος* an 'adversary;' 1 Peter v. 8, 'Because your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' As a tempter, by the baits of the world he doth solicit and entice our flesh to a rebellion against God; his assaults are daily and assiduous, and the baits presented are pleasing to our flesh. So that to begin an interest for God, or to keep it alive, and maintain it in ourselves, the divine power is necessary. As to begin it: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;' Luke xi. 21, 22, 'When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoil.' So to maintain and keep it still alive: 1 Peter i. 5, 'Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation;' 1 John iv. 4, 'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.' Nothing else, nothing less, can do it than the power of Christ.

2. With respect to the parts of salvation. There is redemption and conversion, the one by way of impetration, the other by way of application. It is not enough that we are redeemed, that is done without us upon the cross; but we must also be converted, that is real redemption applied to us. We must again recover God's favour and image; his image was first lost, and then his favour: so is our recovery; first we recover his image: Titus iii. 5, 'He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;' that is, put us into the way of salvation. Sanctification is spoken of as a principal branch of our salvation: Mat. i. 21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins;' he hath his name and office for that use. And then, recovering the image of God, we also recover his favour, are adopted into his family, are justified and freed from the guilt of sin: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.'

3. With respect to eternal salvation, which is the result of all, that is to say, it is the effect of Christ's merit and of our regeneration; for in regeneration that life is begun in us which is perfected in heaven. With respect to our justification, for thereby the sentence of death is taken off, and he that is justified 'shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life,' John v. 24. Yea, our sanctification is acted in obedience performed upon the encouragements and hopes of gospel grace, before we are capable of eternal happiness; for the apostle telleth us, Heb. v. 9, that Christ is 'become the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him.' He bringeth us at length to live in those eternal mansions which he hath prepared for us. This is the salvation, from whence Christ is chiefly denominated our Saviour, and that which we are to endeavour and look after throughout our whole life.

SERMON II.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.
LUKE XIX. 10.

SECONDLY, I am to prove that this was Christ's great end and business.

1. It is certain that Christ was sent to man in a lapsed and fallen estate, not to preserve us as innocent, but to recover us as fallen. The good angels are preserved and confirmed in their first estate, they are kept from perishing and being lost. And so would Adam have been saved, if God had kept him still in a state of innocency; but our salvation is a recovery and restoration, being lost and undone by the fall: Rom. iii. 23, 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' that is, lost the perfection of our nature and the consequent privileges.

2. Out of this misery man is unable to deliver and recover himself. Not able to reconcile or propitiate God to himself, by giving a sufficient ransom to provoked justice: Ps. xlix. 8, 'For the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever;' that is, if it should lie upon our hands. And man cannot change his own heart: 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one,' Job xiv. 4. There is no sound part left in us to mend the rest, this is a work for the spiritual physician. We have need of a saviour to help us to repentance, as well as to help us to pardon.

3. We being utterly unable, God, in pity to us, that the creation of man for his glory might not be frustrated, hath sent us Christ. First, he was from the love of God predestinated to this end from all eternity, to remedy our lapsed estate: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' He was from all eternity appointed by the Father to save sinners. Secondly, he was spoken of and promised for this end in paradise, presently after the fall: Gen. iii. 15, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' Thirdly, he was shadowed forth in the sacrifices and the other figures of the law; therefore said to be 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8. Fourthly, he was prophesied of by the prophets, as one that should 'make his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10; as the anointed one that should 'be cut off, not for himself, but to make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,' Dan. ix. 27-29. Fifthly, he was waited for by all the faithful, before his coming, as the consolation of Israel: Luke ii. 25, 'And behold there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel;' John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad;' 1 Peter i. 10, 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.' Sixthly, in the fulness of time the Son of man came, not at first to judge or sentence any, but to save the lost world: Luke ix. 56, 'For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them;' John iii. 17, 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might

be saved.' The errand of his first coming was to offer salvation to the lost world, and not only to offer it, but to purchase it for them : John xii. 47, 'I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' All these places show that at his first coming he laid aside the quality of a judge, and took the office of a saviour and a mediator ; as a prophet, to reveal the way of salvation ; as a priest, to procure it for us by the merit of his sacrifice ; as a king, powerfully to bring us to the enjoyment of it. He did not come down to punish the ungodly world ; as Gen. xviii. 21, 'I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come up unto me ;' and so to put an end to transgression. But he would come with an offer of peace and salvation, and during this whole dispensation leaves room for faith and repentance. Seventhly, when he was upon earth, you find him conversing with sinners, as the physician with the sick, to heal their souls ; and when the pharisees excepted against this familiarity, as if it were against decency that so great a prophet should converse with the poorest and worst, he showeth it was needful for their cure. When they objected, Luke xv. 2, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,' he defendeth himself by the parable of the lost sheep, and lost groat, and lost son. So here, when they murmur at him for being Zaccheus' guest, he pleadeth his commission and great errand into the world. So when a woman that was a sinner washed his feet with her tears, he preferreth her before Simon a pharisee, Luke vii. 44-47. He pleadeth his being a physician of souls when he sat at meat with Matthew a publican, Mat. ix. 12. So those that would have the adulteress stoned, he said to them, John viii. 7, 'He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her.' He spake many parables against those that were conceited of their righteousness and despised sinners, Luke xviii. 9; the parable of the two sons, Mat. xxi. 28-31. Now all these show that his great work was to bring lost sinners to repentance, that they might be saved. Eighthly, after he had offered himself through the eternal Spirit, that he might purge our consciences from dead works, he went to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, that he might powerfully apply his salvation. Therefore it is said, Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' So that still he is upon the saving dispensation till he come to judgment ; then all are *in termino*, in their final estate, where they shall remain for ever. Ninthly, the ministry and gospel was appointed to give notice of this : 1 John iv. 14, 'And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.' Well, then, if Christ had not been willing to save us, he would never have laid down his life to open a way for our salvation, nor would he have sent his ambassadors to pray and beseech us to accept of his help.

Use 1. Information.

1. How contrary to the temper of Christ they are who are careless of souls. We should learn of Christ to be diligent and industrious, to reduce the meanest person upon earth that is in a course of any danger of ruin to the soul. Surely this care of seeking and searching out and reducing sinners to repentance should be imitated of all. These words are spoken by Christ upon another occasion, why his little ones should

not be despised: Mat. xviii. 11, 'For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.' He came to redeem the meanest believer. Now his little ones are despised by laying stumbling-blocks in their way, or neglecting the means by which they may be reduced to God, as if their souls were not worth the looking after. Hath the minister no poor ignorant creature to instruct? or the father of the family no children or servants to bring home to God? Or the good christian no brothers, nor sisters, nor neighbours, who walk in a soul-destroying course? How can we think ourselves to belong to Christ when we are so unlike him? Oh! seek and save that which is lost; do what you can to pluck them out of the fire; they are lost and undone for ever if they continue in their carnal and flesh-pleasing course. Be they never so mean, you must seek to save them, for you must not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons.

2. How much they obstruct the end of Christ's coming who hinder the salvation of lost souls, either by depriving them of the means of grace, as the pharisees, who 'would neither enter into the kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer them that were entering to go in,' Mat. xxiii. 13; but seek all means to divert them; or else by clogging his grace with unnecessary conditions or preparations, and so shut up the way to the city of refuge, which was to be smoothed or made plain, Deut. xix. 2, 3, that nothing might hinder him that fled thither, no stop, nor stumbling-block, no hill, nor dale, nor river without convenient passage. It is enough they are sensible that they are lost creatures. And it is not the deepness of the wound is to be regarded, but the soundness of the cure: they have a sense of sin and misery, Christ seeketh such to save and cure. Some exclude all conditions and means; he must look to nothing in himself to make out his claim, but only to Christ's blood shed for the expiation of his sins. Alas! Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, not only as a priest, but as a prophet and as a king; not only to die for sins, but to call us to repentance, and to work it in us by his Spirit. He findeth us lost sinners, but he doth not leave us so. And conversion is a part of his salvation, as well as redemption. He saveth us by renewing God's image in us, as well as procuring his favour for us. To be saved from our sins is salvation, Mat. i. 21; to be regenerated is salvation, as well as to be reconciled to God; and so the scripture speaketh of it.

3. It informeth us that, if men be not saved, the fault is their own, for Christ doth what belongeth to him; he came to seek and to save what is lost; but we do not what belongeth to us, we are not willing to be saved. The scripture chargeth it upon our will, we will not submit to his saving and healing methods: Mat. xxiii. 37, 'I would have gathered thee as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not.' Christ would, but we will not. So John v. 40, 'Ye will not come to me, that you might have life.' You complain of want of power, when ye are not willing to leave your sins. You say, I cannot save myself, when thou art not willing that Christ should save thee; thou wilt not receive the grace and help offered to thee. Possibly thou wouldst be freed from the flames of hell, but thou wouldst not leave thy sins. There is no man perisheth in his sins, but because he would not be saved. Is not Christ able to help thee? Yes; the doubt lieth

not there. Is he not willing to help thee? Say it if thou canst. Why did he die for thee? Why did he send means to offer his help? Why did he bear with thee so long, and warn thee so often of thy danger, when thou thoughtest not of it? If he were not willing to help thee out of thy misery, why doth he so often tender thee his saving grace? Surely the defect is in thy will, not in Christ's; thou art in love with the sensual pleasures of sin, loath to exchange them for the salvation Christ offereth. Christ inviteth thee, and thy excuse is, I cannot; when the truth is thou wilt not come to him. The business is not whether thou canst save thyself, but whether thou art willing Christ should save thee? Christ is not unwilling to do that which he seeketh after with so much diligence and care. Say not then in thy heart, I know Christ can save me if he will. Why, he is as willing as able to save thee; but he will not save thee by force, against thy will, or without or besides thy consent. Certainly none perish in their sins but because they would not be saved; they refuse the help which God offereth, and will not improve the power which he hath given. They refuse his help: 'I would have purged thee, but thou wouldst not be purged,' Ezek. xxiv. 13. They do not use the power they have, for there is no wicked man but might do more than he doth. They are slothful servants that hide their talents in a napkin, Mat. xxv. 26. They put off the word, quench their convictions, will not bestir themselves, nor hearken to Christ's offers. If others had these helps, they would have repented long ago: Mat. xi. 21, 22, 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which are done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.'

Use 2. To press you to accept of this grace, and deal with Christ as a saviour. This title is not a title of terror and dread, but of life and comfort. Oh! submit then to his healing methods, and suffer Christ to save you in his own way.

Arguments to press you to accept of this grace.

1. Consider the misery of a lost condition. We were all lost in Adam, and can only be recovered by Christ; we fell from God by his first transgression, and so were estranged from the womb, and went astray as soon as we were born: Ps. lviii. 3, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.' And every sin that we commit is a farther loss of ourselves, for every wicked man doth more undo himself, and plunge himself into farther perdition; for our sins make a greater distance between God and us: Isa. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' And what will be the issue but the wrath of God, and miseries in this life, together with the everlasting torments of the damned in hell? These are the due effects and punishment of sin: Rom. ii. 9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentiles.' Now this must be thought on seriously by every one that will believe in Christ; he came to recover us out of these losses. Many have been recovered, and many shall be so; but then you must submit to him, otherwise the wrath of God abideth on you:

John iii. 36, 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.'

2. Think of the excellency and reality of salvation by Christ : 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' It is worthy to be credited, worthy to be embraced. There is in us a defect in point of assent, and also in point of acceptance ; if we were persuaded of the truth and worth of this salvation, we would not slight it and neglect it as we do ; it allayeth our fears, and satisfieth our desires. Oh ! then, let us receive it with a firm assent, and with our dearest and choicest affections. It is vile ingratitude that we are no more affected with it. If it were a dream, or a doctrine not suited to our soul-necessities, then our carelessness might be the better excused. Usually we talk of it like men in jest, or hear it like stale news. Surely we do not regard it as lost and undone creatures should do, that have this only remedy to free us from eternal misery, or bring us to eternal happiness, nor with that hearty welcome which so necessary and important a truth doth require.

3. You have the means ; you have the offer made to you : Isa. xxvii. 13, 'And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which are ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.' Some apply this to Cyrus's proclamation for the return of God's own people from their captivity into their own country to worship God. The ten tribes had been carried captive into the land of Assyria, many had fled into Egypt, but the ten tribes returned not on Cyrus's proclamation. However it hath a spiritual meaning and use. Others make it an allusion to the year of jubilee, and the trumpet which then sounded, wherein men were set free, and returned each one to his inheritance and possession again, Lev. xxv. 9, 10 ; a type of the evangelical trumpet under the Messiah, whereby God's elect are called out of their spiritual thralldom under sin and Satan, to inherit a share in the kingdom of grace : Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek : he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.' Time was when Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel : Mat. xv. 24, 'I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel ;' but now to people of all lands and countries : Rev. v. 9, 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

4. If you continue in your impenitency and unbelief, it is a shrewd presumption that you are lost, not only in the sentence of God's law, but in the purpose of his decree : 2 Cor. iv. 3, 'For if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ;' that is, passed by, as those to whom the gospel will do no good. Certainly such as refuse the gospel are in an actual state of perdition, lost, undone, destroyed. We speak upon supposition, if they continue so, they are castaways. It is not an

immediate absolute prediction. We cannot give out copies of God's decrees, or seal them up to final perdition; but we can reason from the rules of the gospel: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth not shall be damned.' It is not a peremptory sentence; but we must warn you of your danger, though we do not pronounce God's doom that you are reprobates; that may come afterwards.

But what must we do?

Directions. 1. Do not resist or refuse Christ's help, but when the waters are stirred, put in for cure. As we are to wait upon God diligently in the use of means for the saving of our souls, so we are to entertain and improve the offers, and to give serious regard to the friendly convictions and motions of the Spirit of God, not smothering or quenching them, lest our last estate be worse than the first. No water so soon freezeth in cold weather as that which hath been once heated; no iron so hard as that which hath been oft heated and oft quenched; therefore set in with such strivings of the Spirit. Christ hath sought thee out, and found thee in these preparative convictions, and now he cometh to save thee; having made thee sensible of thy wound, let him go on with the cure. If we refuse his help, or delay it, as Felix, Acts xxiv. 25, 'When I have a more convenient season I will send for thee,' we lose this advantage. Therefore when Christ knocketh, open to him; when he draweth, run after him; when the wind blows, put forth the sails. One time or another God meeteth with every man that liveth under the gospel, so that his heart saith, I must be another man, or I shall be undone and lost for ever; then Christ cometh to seek after thee and save thee in particular. Oh! give way and welcome to his saving and healing work; if you resist this grace by obstinacy and hardness of heart, or elude the importunity of it by neglect and delay, you lose an advantage which will not be easily had again, and so put away your own mercy.

2. Seek an effectual cure; seek not only to be saved from wrath, but to be saved from sin. He doth not only procure it for us by his merit, but worketh it in us by his Spirit, and giveth a penitent heart, as well as absolution from sin. Man's misery consists of two parts—sin and condemnation for sin; man's salvation therefore must have two parts opposite to these evils—sanctification, which is salvation from sin, and pardon of sin and justification, whereby a man is delivered from guilt and condemnation. These two are inseparable; we must have both or none: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;' 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' Man's justification is not the cause of his sanctification, nor his sanctification the cause of his justification, but Christ is the cause of both; but yet he is first sanctified, then justified. First we recover his image, then his favour, then his fellowship. Now you must look after both these, not to be eased of the fear of hell only, but to be fitted for God. The penitent heart seeketh both: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' He were a foolish man that, having his leg broken, should only seek to be eased

of the smart, and not to have his leg set right again. Sin is the mire that carnal persons stick in, and are unwilling to be drawn out of it. Therefore you are rightly affected when you seek not the one only, but the other also ; to have sin subdued as well as pardoned.

3. Being justified and sanctified, you must live to the glory of God. For you were not only lost to yourselves, but to God ; and you must be recovered not to yourselves only, but to God also. You are redeemed to God : 'Thou hast redeemed us to God ;' Rev. v. 9 ; and this redemption is applied to you : Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God.' You are mortified to the law : Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' You are married to Christ : Rom. vii. 4, 'That you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God.' In short, as we are under the new covenant, we are obliged to live unto God ; as we are justified and pardoned, we are encouraged to live unto God ; as we are sanctified, we have a principle of grace to incline us to live unto God ; and we shall have, besides this habitual principle, his Spirit to work in us what is pleasing in his sight.

4. You must continue with patience in well-doing till you come to live with God. Till then Christ's salvation is not perfect ; he hath not saved us to the uttermost ; nor is our recovery perfect ; we are not fully cleansed from all sin, nor do we serve God perfectly, nor enjoy full communion with him. Here Christ seeketh, and there he saveth us ; indeed here he puts us into the way of salvation, but then are we completely saved. A wicked man is gone out of the way, losing himself more and more ; but the regenerate person, though he be put into the way, yet he is not come to the end of the journey, and therefore now we are but expecting and waiting for the salvation of God. It is said, Heb. ix. 28, 'That unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.' Then he will reward all his faithful servants that look for him. Heretofore he came to purchase salvation, then to confer and bestow salvation. Then man shall be delivered from all sin, and all the sad and woful consequents of sin, and that for ever. Now this is that we look for and wait for, and that in the way of well-doing ; for when Christ hath sought us out and brought us home, we must wander no more. Well, then, being renewed and justified, we must wait for the time when we shall be rid and freed from sin and sorrow for ever.

Use 3. Is to press us to thanksgiving that the Son of God should come from heaven to seek and save those that are lost, and us in particular. Thankfulness for redemption and salvation by Christ being the great duty of christians, I shall a little enlarge upon it.

1. Consider how sad was thy condition in thy lost estate. You were fallen from God, and become an enemy to him in thy mind by evil works : Col. i. 21, 'And you, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled ;' and were a wretched bondsman to Satan, led captive by him at his will : 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.' And thy

work was to pursue vain pleasures, suitable to thy fleshly mind : Titus iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures;' running with the rest of the wicked world into all manner of sin : Eph. ii. 2, 'Wherein in times past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' And all this while thou wert under a sentence of condemnation : John iii. 18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already.' And there was nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between thee and execution, and the wrath of the eternal God ready ever and anon to break out upon thee : John iii. 36; 'He that believeth not the Son of God, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Surely we that were lost were not worth the looking after. Now, that God should, with so much ado, and so much care, seek to save such wretched creatures, oh ! how should we be affected with the mercy ! Which of you, having a servant that ran away from you sound and healthy, but afterwards is become blind, deformed, and diseased, will seek after him, and cure him with costly medicines and much care, and bring him into the family, and receive him with so much tenderness, as if all this had not been ? And yet this, and much more, is the case between us and God.

2. Consider how many thousands there are in the world whom God hath passed by, and left them in their impenitency and carnal security, under the bondage of sin and the vassalage of Satan ; and how few there are that shall be saved, in comparison of the multitude that shall be eternally destroyed ; and that God should call thee with an holy calling, and bring thee in, to be one of that little flock that is under that good shepherd's care ; and that when there is but, as it were, one of a family and two of a tribe, that thou shouldst be singled out from the rest, and chosen, when they are left. What mere grace, and astonishing distinguishing mercy is this ! 'Who maketh thee to differ from another ? and what hast thou that thou hast not received ?' 1 Cor. iv. 7. The Lord hath passed by thousands and ten thousands who, for deserts, were all as good, and, for outward respects, much better than us. We were as deep in original sin as they, and for actual sin, it may be, more foul and gross ; and for dignity in the world, many more rich, more honourable, more wise, are left in a state of sin to perish eternally. And that thou shouldst be as a brand plucked out of the burning ; that God should reform thy crooked, perverse spirit, and pardon all thy sins, and lead thee in the way of righteousness unto eternal glory : how should thy heart and mouth be filled with the high praises of God ! and how should you say, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed my soul !

3. Consider what preventing grace God used towards you ; how he sought you out, when you sought not him, that he might save you. As this saving mercy was not deserved by you, so it was not so much as desired by you. The Lord pitied thee when thou hadst not an heart to pity thyself, and prevented thee with his goodness. It is good to observe the circumstances of our first awakening, or reduction from our wanderings. The apostle speaketh of the called *κατὰ πρόθεσιν*, 'according to his purpose,' Rom. viii. 28. Not the purpose of them that are converted, but the purpose of God : 'For whom he

did foreknow he also did predestinate, and whom he did predestinate, them he also called,' ver. 30. Many come to a duty with careless and slight spirits, or by a mere chance; as Paul's infidel: 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25, 'But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of the heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' Oh! how many do thus stumble upon grace unawares, as not minding or desiring any such matter! Yet God directeth a seasonable word, that pierceth into their very hearts. Sometimes when opposing and persecuting, as Paul, Acts ix. Many that come to scoff: 'I have seen his ways; I will heal him,' Isa. lvii. 18. Some are leavened with prejudice, loath to come, drawn against their consent: John i. 46, 'Nathanael saith to Philip, Can any good come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see;' yet there he met with Christ. Various circumstances there are which show Christ's vigilancy and care in seeking after lost souls.

4. That he hath made the cure effectual, notwithstanding the reluctancies of our carnal hearts. We are all of us full of the wisdom of the flesh, and that is enmity to God: Rom. viii. 7, 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Now, that our hearts should be quite changed, and have another bias and inclination put upon them, this is the Lord's doing, and it should be marvellous in our eyes: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' That we should be so quite altered as now to mind serious, spiritual, and heavenly things, surely nothing could do this but the almighty Spirit of Christ, or that efficacy which is proper to the mediator.
