

SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 7-21.

SERMON I.

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

PHIL. iii. 7.

THE apostle having shown that he had greater cause of confidence and glorying in the flesh than any of the pretenders among the Judaising brethren, at least was not any whit inferior to them in outward privileges; here he showeth that since he had attained to the knowledge of Christ, he accounted these things not only unprofitable, but hurtful, 'But what things were gain to me, those I accounted loss for Christ.'

In the words we have a comparison of his judgment before his knowledge of Christ and after his knowledge of Christ.

1. Before his knowledge of Christ, gains, *κέρδη*, expressed plurally.
2. Loss afterwards.

Doct. That when the Spirit of God changeth a man's judgment, those things which before conversion seemed to be gain to him will then be accounted loss.

So it was with Paul, and so it will be with all that are like Paul, yea, with all that are brought to the knowledge of Christ.

1. I shall explicate the point.
2. Confirm it.

[1.] In explicating the point, I shall show what those things were.

[2.] His esteem before and after conversion.

[3.] How it holdeth good in other cases in the conversion of others.

First, What are the things spoken of? He enumerateth six causes of carnal boasting—

1. 'Circumcised the eighth day;' admitted into the number of God's people by circumcision, which was done precisely according to the law, not as a proselyte, but as a born Jew rightfully circumcised. Let that be the first privilege.

2. By nation an Israelite, born of a noble tribe of the Israelites, the tribe of Benjamin, 'An Hebrew of the Hebrews.' His stock was of Israel, God's dear servant, and one of the best tribes, of Jacob's beloved wife; not of the children of the bondwoman, of which tribe Saul was elected king, from whence probably our apostle had his name; of that tribe which with the tribe of Judah came to the house of David and the true worship of God at Jerusalem after the revolt of the ten tribes, and in whose territory the temple was situated.

3. 'Hebrew of the Hebrews;' of a family that was never mixed in blood by marriage with those of foreign nations.

4. 'By sect a pharisee;' of the strictest among the Jews, Acts xxvi. 5.

5. Zealous above the ordinary sort of the pharisees, instructed with a commission to persecute the christians, which gave him a reputation in the eyes of those who were zealous for the law.

6. External righteousness before men for legal observances; he never neglected any as long as he lived in that course. Well, then, here were church privileges, circumcision, and here was strictness, and zeal in that profession; and for him to renounce all the institutes of the religion in which he was born and bred, and to have a life free from scandal, this was much, if we consider the state of these things.

Secondly, His esteem of these things before and after conversion.

1. Before conversion, they were gain to him, partly as they might procure his esteem with men, and recommend him to the Judaising brethren. If they had cause to boast in these things, he had much more. And partly as to the favour of God, falsely esteeming them as much conducing to salvation.

2. After conversion, whatever he accounted them before, he is now taught better by the Holy Ghost—(1.) What he accounteth them; (2.) For what he accounteth them so.

[1.] What he accounteth them; *ζημία*, a loss, that is to say, unprofitable and dangerous.

(1.) Worthless and unprofitable, because they could not effectuate what he depended upon them for; they could not give him any acceptance with God.

(2.) Dangerous and prejudicial to better things, as they might withdraw him from the faith of Christ, or put him upon more labour and difficulty to renounce them. It is a matter of great difficulty for a man that hath great carnal privileges not to prize them and value them above the conscience of his duty to God. To excel in parts and privileges, and esteem in the world for a blameless conversation, and yet to prize the grace of Christ so as to leave all things for it, is very hard and difficult, and more hard than for those who have not like impediments.

[2.] For what. For Christ, for his sake, his laws and doctrines. Christ is to be sought and bought at any hand and rate: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' Therefore whatever would keep him from embracing christian doctrine would be loss rather than advantage, however they commended him to men, and might procure him gain and honour, or in the judgment of an ill-guided conscience they might seem to commend him to God.

Thirdly, How it holdeth good in other cases, so as it may be of catholic use and profit to us now to imitate this example.

1. The examples of men of worth, who have incurred loss and difficulties in embracing the christian religion, are a great encouragement to godliness. Men that have not so much to lose or to deny for Christ may be sincere, but certainly it is a greater commendation to religion when those who can well enough make up their interests elsewhere are

willing to sacrifice all their interests for Christ. Now these have this happiness above others, that they have something of value to esteem as nothing for Christ, and to commend religion to the world.

2. It commendeth the worth of christianity to us. There are such huge advantages of being a christian, that those who have most to lose, and have best wisdom to judge, are content to be stript of all rather than miss Christ or lose Christ. *Ἄτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη*, 'what things were gain;' some by his Hebrew stock, his laudable sect, his great fame with his countrymen;' these made him an instance worthy to be produced to confirm the truth of the religion which he professed.

3. Such things will come to be denied by every one that will be a thorough serious christian. In any age there are the rabble of nominal christians, who stand only upon the legs of others, and have a christianity commended to them by the testimony of others and the sufferings of others who have lived before them; and as they are concerned in these things, have nothing but the name and the profession, but have not that constitution of heart or manner of conversation which will become christians. Briefly, then, there is a twofold conversion—one without the church, the other in the church.

[1.] Without the church, from paganism or a false religion to the true: 1 Thes. i. 9, 'And how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.' Now in this conversion those who are so turned must deny their honour and credit with their party, and all the advantages they enjoyed thereby, as Paul did. So Vergerius, who was bishop of Justinople and nuncio to the pope, whilst he opposed the protestants, was conscious to the truth of their doctrine, and turned a reformed preacher among the Grisons.

[2.] Within the church, or in the bosom of christianity. So men are turned from profaneness to holiness, from formality to serious godliness. The one is spoken of Isa. i. 16, 17, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.' And in many other places: 'Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Ezek. xxxiii. 11; and Hosea vi. 1, 'Come, let us return unto the Lord.' And we are warned of the other: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power.' They had a map and model of truth, yet deny the power thereof; suffer not this religion to prevail to subdue their hearts unto God. Briefly, then, these latter may either take pleasure in unrighteousness, or repose too much confidence in their supposed righteousness.

(1.) For the first, the words are applicable to them, that when the Spirit of God changeth their hearts, those things which were accounted gain will prove an apparent loss. Sin was formerly to them their delight, or the support of their credit and estate; they thought they could not live without it; but after grace received, they are convinced this was their bane, and shame, and trouble: Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.' Now grace teacheth us to abandon the delights of the flesh, and to renounce the most pleasing and profitable sins, as judging them indeed to be loss to us.

(2.) When we trust in a supposed righteousness, and for outward things neglect inward grace. As when, because of baptism or profession, or having high notions of an empty though a strict form, or mere civility and blameless conversation, we neglect faith, hope, and love, and that internal change which is necessary for those which are in Christ: 2 Cor. v. 17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' Those things which men thought gain are nothing to the soul in regard of the new creature: Gal. vi. 15, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;' Gal. v. 16, 'Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;' 1 Cor. vii. 19, 'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.' We may undergo the wrath of God notwithstanding all these things. But before the soul was touched with the sense of sin and deserved wrath, and a change wrought in the soul, God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness were contemned and little set by; but when we have a sensible and awakening knowledge of our great necessity, then we see that there is no full and solid satisfaction in order to righteousness and salvation but only in and by Christ; so that all things are as dung and dross, as trouble and loss, in comparison of the knowledge of him and the gain by him.

The reasons of the point.

1. From the state of those who are to be converted. There is in all some false and imaginary happiness, and some counterfeit righteousness, wherein they please themselves. The false happiness is as their god, and the counterfeit is as their Christ and mediator, and so they are secure and senseless; and till God open their eyes, they neither seek after another happiness, nor trouble themselves about the way whereby they may attain it. That men set up a false happiness in their natural estate needs not much proof; for ever since man fell from God he ran to the creature: Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' We left the fountain, and betook ourselves to the cistern; and if we can make a shift to patch up a sorry happiness here in the world apart from God, we care not for him, will not come at him: Jer. ii. 31, 'Wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?' Our pleasure, profit, and honour, that is our god; and while we enjoy these things without control, we look no further, but count ourselves well paid. Certainly we cannot seek our happiness in an invisible God, nor cannot wait for it to be enjoyed in an invisible world. The flesh must be pleased, and the more it is pleased we think it gain to us, and that so far we have profited. But for the second, that there is something which is instead of Christ to us, to keep the conscience quiet when our affections take up with present things. Our happiness is to satisfy our desires; our righteousness to allay our fears. Now here we run to a superficial religion, as if it would make us perfect as appertaining to the conscience. Here we fly to something external, which is diversified according to men's education. If pagans, to the *ἔργον νόμου*, the work of the law: Rom. ii. 15, law of nature; if Jews, to the observances of the law; if christians, to their baptism,

or to the outward profession of some strict form without the power. And till God breaketh in upon us, and convinceth us of our mistakes, and those follies by which we delude ourselves, we think we have gained a great point if we have come under the form, though we have denied the power; for natural men, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit to God's humbling way, Rom. x. 3, *οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν*. As long as he can make a shift without Christ, he is disregarded. Therefore now since this is the natural temper of man, the creature must be dethroned that God may be exalted; superficial righteousness must be lost, that Christ may be gained, that we may cordially accept God for our God, and Christ for our redeemer and saviour. Therefore we are dead to the law, that we might live unto God, Gal. ii. 19, with Rom. vii. 14.

2. From the nature and parts of conversion. It is a turning from the creature to God, from self to Christ, from sin to holiness. Now in all these respects, many things which were formerly gain to us are found to be loss, impediments, and hindrances to our full conversion. Certain it is conversion consists in a turning from the creature to God; for when God is laid aside the creature hath our hearts, and intercepts our love; and till we have another last end and chief good, we are carnal. If we love pleasures more than God, we are of the number of those that love themselves, 2 Tim. iii. 4. If we love the praise of men more than the praise of God, John xii. 43, how are we faithful to Christ? Therefore till we are inclined to God, turned to God more than to other things, there is no conversion. So for the second part; till turned from self to Christ, till we receive Christ by faith, we cannot come to God as the last end or chief good. So we come to Christ as the way to the Father, John xiv. 6. Christ alone is our way, by his merit taking off the legal exclusion, by his Spirit giving us a heart to come to God. Turning from the creature to God, and not by Christ, is no true turning. So believing in Christ, while the creature hath our hearts, is no true believing. Then there is a turning from sin to holiness. This followeth; for an inordinate love of the creature is sin, and love to God and delight to do the things that please him is holiness. We turn to God, not only as our happiness, but as our sovereign and lord. Therefore if we are fitted to obey him by the change of our natures, and do actually obey him by the change of our lives, then we are converts. Now supposing all those things (as they are evident and clear), it must needs follow that those things we formerly counted gain, when we are converted we count loss. Why? Because if we still idolise the creature we lessen God. If we exalt self, we despise or neglect the reconciling and renewing grace of the Redeemer. If we retain our love to sin, we abate of our care of holiness. If the creature be still our idol, how is God our God? If self-righteousness or superficial righteousness be still esteemed, how will Christ be precious to us? If sin be still our delight, holiness will be still our burden. Therefore if God be our God, and Christ our saviour and redeemer, prosperity, riches, credit, pleasure and honour, will be a sorry happiness, and counterfeit and superficial righteousness yield no solid peace to the conscience.

3. From the nature of the Spirit's enlightening.

[1.] That the Holy Ghost, in converting men to God and Christ, doth enlighten them, as well as turn their hearts and change their practice, is evident: Luke xxiv. 45, 'Then opened he their understandings.' Though a man hath an understanding, yet it needeth the Spirit's illumination: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light.' The eyes must be opened, that we may discern spiritual and heavenly things: Rev. iii. 18, 'And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.' He proffereth eye-salve to the spiritually blind, that they may see and be directed in the ways of holiness. And David beggeth that his eyes may be opened: Ps. cxix. 18, 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.' And the apostle telleth us that when the Jews shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken from their hearts, 2 Cor. iii. 16, the veil of ignorance and prejudice. Surely it is a great advantage to see things in the lively light of the Spirit. So that in the general there must needs be a great change in men's judgments, as if they were opposite to themselves. What they counted happiness before they find a misery; what was gain, to be loss; what peace and life, to be death and torment to them.

[2.] That we have great benefit by this enlightening.

(1.) We know things more clearly, and have a spiritual discerning, without which, being blinded by the delusions of the flesh, we put darkness for light, and light for darkness. We think our misery to be our happiness, and our true and solid happiness to be our misery and bondage. The curse of our corrupt estate is an injudicious mind, and the blessing of our spiritual estate is a spiritual discerning, 1 Cor. ii. 14. A judicious discerning of the worth of things is the work of grace: 2 Cor. v. 16, 17, 'We know no man after the flesh; for whosoever is in Christ, is a new creature.' Knowing things after the flesh is one thing, and after the spirit is another. A new creature hath a new sight of things, looketh upon all things with a new eye; seeth more odiousness in sin, more excellency in Christ, more beauty in holiness, more vanity in the world, than ever before. When a man is changed, all things about him are changed. Heaven is another thing, earth is another thing. He looketh upon body and soul with another eye, and therefore hath another value and esteem of all things. His thoughts are changed about God, about self, about Christ, about sin, and misery by sin, and that superficial righteousness wherewith he contented himself before, and that true holiness which Christ requireth of him. He was wont to marvel why men did keep such a stir about sin; what harm was in it for a man a little to enlarge himself, and gratify his flesh with some forbidden pleasure? Misery out of Christ was another thing while he pleased himself in his counterfeit righteousness: Rom. vii. 9, 'For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' His estate seemed not so out of measure sinful, nor so intolerably dangerous; nor did he see why men made such a talk about Christ, and such ado to go to heaven. But when he is enlightened by the Spirit, his judgment is marvellously changed: 2 Peter i. 9, 'But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' He can now look into eternity, and see that other things are to be minded more than back and belly

concerns. In short, he seeth his misery with other eyes, being anointed with spiritual eye-salve, Rev. iii. 17, 18; Mat. xiii. 9, 'For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' There is a sensible and awakening knowledge of our own great necessity. While we are heart-whole we care not for Christ. A true value and esteem of Christ as our remedy and ransom, not a cold and dead opinion: 1 Peter ii. 7, 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.' A true sight of the happiness and blessedness offered to us: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

(2.) We know things with more certainty and firm belief. With more certainty: Acts ii. 36, 'Let the house of Israel know assuredly,' *ἀσφαλῶς*, safely; John xvii. 8, *ἀληθῶς*, surely; 'And have known surely that I came from thee;' John vi. 69, 'And we believe and are sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God.' Things work not till they be received with a firm assent: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe.' God's authority breaketh in upon the heart with a convincing power.

(3.) We know things more seriously as we are awakened to a more attentive consideration. It is a great part of the Spirit's work, not only to enlighten the mind, but to awaken it: Acts xvi. 14, 'And a certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things spoken by Paul.' Many truths lie by, and are lost for want of consideration. Non-attendance to spiritual and heavenly things is the ruin of the far greatest part of the world: Mat. xxii. 5, 'And they made light of it.' Men will not suffer their minds so long to dwell upon these things as to see what is true misery and happiness, what is gain, and what is loss; and then in seeing they see not, and in hearing they hear not; as when you tell a man of a business whose mind is taken up with other things. Many men have a sudden thought of their misery and happiness, but a glance cannot work a steady contemplation. When our sin is ever before us, when we have serious thoughts of Christ and his salvation, they work most powerfully with us. But most men are never their own selves; have no time to think of God, and Christ, and heavenly things; and discontinuing the use, they lose in time the desire. Too many acquaintance in the world make them strangers to God. If they never sit alone to consider the necessity and worth of these things, how can they affect their hearts?

(4.) We know things with more efficacy and power; not only are mistakes discovered, but lusts subdued. Sin, grace, Christ, and eternity are of weight to move a rock, yet shake not the heart of the carnal professors, because they received the word of God in word only, and not in power. But when the gospel cometh in the Holy Ghost, it cometh in power, 1 Thes. i. 5. Where the apprehension is clear, the assent strong, consideration serious, application close, it must needs

be so. Men are pierced to the quick, deeply affected with what they know. A man may give twenty reasons against vices and vanities, and yet follow them; but when he is thus enlightened, his heart yieldeth. This powerful conviction maketh him see the wretchedness of his carnal and blessedness of his spiritual estate; and then losses are gains, and gains are losses.

Use. Is it thus with you? Can you say as Paul did, 'What things were gain to me, those I accounted loss for Christ?' Are your hearts alienated from whatever may keep you from God and Christ?

1. There is something that may keep us from God. Naturally we are governed by the wisdom of the flesh. Now what the wisdom of the flesh is the apostle will tell us: James iii. 15, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.' Our understanding, as influenced by the flesh, doth only prompt us to pleasure, profit, and honour. The heart pitcheth upon vain delights, and valueth its happiness by them, which while we indulge and cherish, it careth not for God; other things take up his place in the heart. Their belly is their god, Phil. iii. 19; mammon is their god, Mat. vi. 24; and honour and greatness: John xii. 42, 'Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.' Self-love forsaketh idols, and sets up gods instead of the true God, who should be our chief good and last end. But when the mind and heart is changed by grace, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are restored to their due honour. The love of God and heavenly things overcomes that natural delectation which we take in worldly things; and the force of celestial love doth sweetly prevail in the soul, so that you value your happiness by the favour of God, not by the enjoyment of worldly things: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine increased.' Partly because the heavenly light shining upon the soul obscureth all worldly things; and partly because love inclineth us to God and the things which tend to the enjoyment of him; our minds are altered by spiritual eye-salve, and our hearts by the victorious force of celestial love; and then you will judge that the enjoyment of the creature, if it alienate your hearts from God, is a loss rather than a gain to you. You lose by your honour if it make you less zealous for God; by your pleasure if it unfits the heart for God and weakeneth your delight in him; by your profits and wealth, if they cause you to abate of your diligence in seeking after God. Well, then, are you changed? Do you count the world an enemy as it would draw you away from God, however it gratifieth your fleshly mind and fancy? Surely the sanctifying and enlightening Spirit hath been at work in your hearts.

2. That which keepeth you from Christ is a superficial righteousness, which maketh your conviction and conversion more difficult; as it maketh us senseless and ignorant of our danger, and careless of the means of our recovery. Therefore Christ saith, 'Publicans and harlots should enter into the kingdom of God' before pharisees and self-justifiers, Mat. xxi. 31. No condition is more dangerous than to be poor

and proud, corrupt and rotten, and yet conceited and confident. The most vicious are sooner wrought upon than those that please themselves in external observances, without any real inward holiness or change of heart. They neither understand law nor gospel; not the law in its purity, and strictness, and spiritual exactness; not the gospel, which offereth a remedy only to the penitent, and those which are deeply affected with the pollution of their natures and lives, and the misery consequent, but are puffed up with a vain conceit and opinion of their good estate without any brokenness of heart. They are injurious to the law, as they curtail it, and reduce it to the external work, that the ell may be no longer than the cloth. They make a short exposition of the law, that they may cherish a large opinion of their own righteousness. They are injurious against the gospel, as they continue in their impenitency and unbelief; were never brought home in a broken-hearted manner to accept of Christ. The law well understood would humble them: 'The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin,' Rom. vii. 14. The gospel is not for them; for Christ came to call sinners, not those that are righteous in their own eyes, Mat. ix. 13. The whole tenor of the gospel is against them, which is a remedy for lost and broken-hearted sinners: 'He came to seek and to save that which is lost;' Luke xv. 7, 'Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.' Nothing is more opposite to the frame of the gospel than an impenitent and unbroken-hearted disposition of the spirit, satisfying itself in a partial, external obedience. So the woman that was a sinner was preferred before Simon a pharisee, Luke vii. 44; and the self-condemning publican in the parable before the self-justifying pharisee, Luke xviii. 13; and the penitent adulteress before her conceited accusers, John viii. 7. And in the general, the most odious and despised sinners, repenting and believing in Christ, find more grace and place with him than those that satisfy themselves with exterior righteousness. Well, then, are you of this temper, to count this external, partial righteousness loss rather than gain?

[1.] If so, then you are humbled and awakened with a sense of your lost condition; for God doth not offer grace to sinners, as sinners simply, but to lost sinners, such as are weary and heavy laden, Mat. xi. 28; to such as are broken in heart, and grieved, and troubled: Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening 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.' To such as confess and forsake their sins.

[2.] Art thou kept vile in thine own eyes, and in a humble admiration of grace after you are partaker of it? Luke vii. 47, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' When God is pacified towards them, they loathe themselves for what they have done: Ezek. xvi. 63, 'That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.'

[3.] Then a partial outside obedience will not satisfy you. Pharisees tithed mint and cummin, but neglected the weightier things, Mat. xxiii. 23. No; you must have your natures changed, every day grow more complete in the will of God.

[4.] Thankfulness for grace will set you a-work for God rather than a legal conscience. You will do what you do for God for love to him rather than fear. Duties are a thank-offering rather than a sin-offering, and will not look upon God's rewards as a debt, but as a further act of his grace; blessing God for Jesus Christ, rather than ascribing anything to yourselves; in short, imploring pardon for our best duties, rather than boast of them. This is the true gospel spirit, and which only declareth that you find a loss rather than a gain in all those empty formal services and that external partial obedience that keep you from Christ. Christ is precious to you that believe.

SERMON II.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.—PHIL. iii. 8.

THESE words are added to the former by way of amplification, for three reasons—

1. To show his perseverance in the contempt and disesteem of all outward and worldly privileges; he had counted them loss for Christ's sake, and did still count them loss: 'I have counted,' and 'do count.' He repeats it over and over; he repented not of his choice in the review; he seeth no cause to recede from it. He had undervalued and quitted everything that might keep him from Christ; and this not only when first converted, but he still continued in the same opinion. We affect novelties, and are transported when we first change our profession, but repent at leisure. No; if he had done it, he would do it again.

2. To comprehend all other things besides the Jewish privileges, wherein he excelled the greatest pretenders among them. He had said before, 'Those things which were gain to me.' Now he extends this rejection to all things imaginable without Christ—honours, wealth, pleasures, all outward and worldly accommodations. A christian can deny anything for Christ's sake, his own honour, his own ease, profit, name, estate, everything but his own God and Christ.

3. In this new proposal he shows the reality of this assertion: 'Yea, doubtless.' It was not a pretended business, nor a bare naked approbation of Christ as more excellent than other things; not a speculative, but a practical esteem: 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.'

In the words observe—(1.) His great contempt of all worldly and