

tion against Job, chaps. i. 9–11, and ii. 4, 5; it is not thee they seek, but themselves; their own commodity rather than thy glory. There is no man to seek this accusation, but to be faithful with God when he crosseth his self-interest, and to be as zealous for him when secular motives are gone as he was before.

6. In every duty we must come farther home to God; for all christianity is a coming to God by Christ. Now we get farther home to God as the divine nature doth prevail in us, and the carnal, self-seeking nature is subdued: 2 Cor. v. 16, ‘Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.’

SERMON XXXI.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth we know him no more.—2 Cor. v. 16.

THERE were false apostles at Corinth, who gloried much in outward things; not only birth, wealth, abilities of speech, but such outward things as had a nearer connection with and respect to religion; as their acquaintance with Christ, that they had known him in the flesh, and owned him when yet alive, and therefore are supposed to be intended in that expression, ‘I am of Christ,’ 1 Cor. i. 12. As others received the doctrine of life from Peter, Paul, Apollos, they immediately from Christ himself. Now this boasting these Corinthian doctors used, as to keep up their own fame among the people, so to lessen and weaken the credit of Paul’s apostleship; for this objection lay against him, that he had not, as other disciples, conversed with our Lord Jesus Christ on earth. Now Paul, that he might give the Corinthians occasion to glory in his behalf, and furnish them with an answer that gloried, *ἐν προσώπῳ καυχόμενος*, ver. 12, in external privileges, though they knew in their consciences they had little reason so to do, he had more valuable things to boast of—namely, that he was much in spirit, much in labours, much in afflictions for the honour of the gospel, and to all which he was carried out by the hopes of eternal life, the terror of the Lord at the day of judgment, ‘and the love of Christ constraining him.’ This was the threefold cord: hope of reward, fear of punishment, and the love of Christ; and these were more valuable considerations whereupon to esteem of any one than external privileges could be. In their outward privileges he could vie with them; for though he was none of Christ’s followers here upon earth, yet he was equal to them, by seeing and having been spoken to by Christ out of heaven: 1 Cor. ix. 1. ‘Am not I an apostle? have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord?’ But Paul did not seek his esteem merely for his vision of Christ, and that ecstasy which befell him at his first conversion, but for the faithful discharge of his work, upon the ground afore-mentioned, that he would

not glory ἐν προσώπῳ, as those others did. Mortified christians, or those that have seriously given up themselves to the Lord's use, should more mind that, and esteem themselves and others for true and real worth, rather than such an external privilege—'Wherefore know we no man after the flesh,' &c.

In the words we have—

1. A general conclusion inferred against the boasting of the Corinthian doctors—*Henceforth we know no man after the flesh*; we own no carnal respect to any man living, and do not value any by outward acquaintance with Christ, but according to the spiritual power that is in him, and taught by him.

2. The conclusion restrained unto the instance of Christ—*Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh*. Where there is—

[1.] A supposition—'Though we have known Christ after the flesh.'

[2.] An assertion—'Yet henceforth know we him no more;' that is, as a friend conversing with us upon earth in an outward way; but as a king and law-giver of the church, that is ascended up to heaven, there to govern the church by his Spirit and laws, offering and designing to us eternal life upon our obedience and fidelity to him. Well then, to know Christ after the flesh is not forbidden with intent to deny his humanity, or to exclude the comfort thence resulting, so we must still know him after the flesh; his human nature is the ground of our comfort; but that we should not esteem and judge of persons by their outward conversing with him, but their loyalty and obedience to him. This I think to be the most proper meaning of the words, though some, with probability, carry them another way, thus—'Henceforth know we know no man after the flesh;' that is, we do not value men for their wealth, honour, nobility; and though we have known Christ after the flesh, alluding to his esteem, when a Pharisee. According to the humour of that sect, he looked for a pompous Messiah, but now owned him as a glorified Saviour, sitting at the right hand of God in the heavens.

First, The general truth—'Henceforth know we no man after the flesh.' This knowledge is a knowledge of approbation: to know is to admire and esteem; as we ourselves should not seek our own esteem thereby, so not esteem others, κατὰ σάρκα, for some external thing, which seemeth glorious in the judgment of the flesh.

Doct. 1. A christian should not religiously value others for external and carnal things.

Let us state it a little, how far we are to know no man after the flesh.

1. Negatively; and there—

[1.] It is not to deny civil respect and honour to the wicked and carnal; for that would destroy all government and order in the world: Rom. xiii. 7, 'Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; and custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; and honour to whom honour.' We are to own parents, magistrates, persons of rank and eminency, with that respect which is due to their rank and quality, though they should be carnal; for the wickedness of the person doth not discharge us of our duty, or make void civil or natural differences and respects due to them.

[2.] Not to deny the gifts bestowed upon them, though common gifts: for your eye should not be evil, because God's is good, Mat. xx.

[3.] You may love them the better when religion is accompanied with these external advantages: Eccl. vii. 11, 'Wisdom with an inheritance is good.' Religious and noble, religious and beautiful, religious and learned, religious and rich; when grace and outward excellency meet, it maketh the person more lovely and amiable.

2. Positively.

[1.] We must not gild a potsherd, or esteem them to be the servants of Christ because of their carnal excellences, and value them religiously, and prefer them before others who are more useful, and who have the image of God impressed upon them. This is to know men after the flesh, and to value men upon carnal respects. We do not judge so of a horse, by the saddle and trappings, but by his strength and swiftness. Solomon telleth us, Prov. xii. 26, 'That the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour;' and explaineth himself, Prov. xix. 1, 'Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.' Grace should make persons more lovely in our eyes than carnal honour and glory.

[2.] The cause of God must not be burdened or abandoned because those of the other side have more outward advantages. This was the case between the apostle and the Desp.¹ And this is clearly to know men after the flesh, and such a course will justify the Pharisee's plea, John vii. 48, 49, 'Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed on him? but this people which knoweth not the law are cursed.' The truth is not to be forsaken because there is eminency, pomp, worldly countenance, repute for learning, on the other side. To this head may be referred the plea between the protestants and the papists about succession. Suppose it true that there were no gaps in their succession, that ours as to a series of persons cannot be justified, yet the plea is naught: for this is to know men after the flesh, and to determine of truth by external advantages. So if we should contemn the truths of God because of the persons that bring them to us; as usually we regard the man more than the matter, and not the golden treasure so much as the earthen vessel; it was the prejudice cast upon Christ, 'Was not this the carpenter's son?' Mattheo Langi, Archbishop of Salzburg, told every one that the reformation of the mass was needful, the liberty of meats convenient, to be disburdened of so many commands of man concerning days just; but that a poor monk should reform all was not to be endured—meaning Luther.

[3.] We should not prefer these, to the despising and wrong of others: 1 Cor. xi. 22, every one took his own supper, but despised the church of God, that is, excluded the poor, who were of the church as well as they.

[4.] To value others for carnal advantages, so as it should be a snare or matter of envy to us: Prov. iii. 31, 32, 'Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways; for the froward is an abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the righteous.'

[5.] Know no man after the flesh, so as to forbear christian duties to them, of admonition or reproof, or to accommodate God's truths to their liking: Mark xii. 14, 'Master, we know that thou art true, and

¹ So in original edition. Probably for 'desputers.'—ED.

carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth.'

[6.] Not to comply with carnal men for our own gain and advantage, Jude 16, 'Having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage;' to soothe people in their errors or sins.

The reason is taken from the posture of the words in the context; this disposition, whatever it be, is an effect of the new nature, of the love of Christ, and a branch of not living to ourselves.

(1.) The new nature: ver. 17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' A new creature hath a new judgment of things; when a man is changed, his judgment of things is altered.

(2.) Of the love of Christ, ver. 14. He that loveth Christ as Christ, will love Christ in any dress of doctrine, plain and comely, or learned or eloquent, in any condition of life in the world, high or low; is not swayed by external advantages.

(3.) A branch of the spiritual life, ver. 15. The faithful, being born again of the Spirit, do live a new and spiritual life. Now this is one part of this life, not to know any man after the flesh; to be dead to things of a carnal interest, not moved with what is external and pleasing to the flesh. Let the carnal part of the world please themselves with these vain things—pomp of living, external rank, possession of the power of the church, &c.

Use is that of the apostle; James iv. 1, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons;' that is, do not esteem things that are religious for those things which have no affinity with or pertinency to religion. His reason is couched in the exhortation. Christ is the Lord of glory, and puts an honour upon all things which do belong to him, how despicable soever otherwise in the world's eye; not external things, but religion, should be the reason and ground of our affection.

Secondly, We come to the conclusion restrained to the instance of Christ—'Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.'

Doct. 2. A mere knowing of Christ after the flesh ought to cease among christians that have given up themselves to live to him, as dying and rising again for their sakes.

1. I shall prove to you that knowing Christ after the flesh was not that respect that he looked for when he was most capable of receiving love in this kind, namely, during his personal abode in the world. Even then an outward, ceremonious respect to his person was not so pleasing to him as a serious attention to his doctrine and counsel, and ever met with a correction and reproof from Christ, rather than approbation and acceptance with him; at least, Christ aimed at some higher thing, which was of more value and esteem with him. Search all his life. You read of some that desired to see him, John xii. 20–23; some Greeks that had a curiosity to see his person, and be more familiarly acquainted with him. Now Christ teacheth that the true means to know him to salvation was not to see with the eyes of the body, but by faith, in the spirit, as lifted up to glory. They impartially propound the matter to Philip, and he consults with Andrew, and both of them present their request to Christ; but he diverts to

the doctrine of the cross, and the glory that should ensue, to teach them to lay aside doting on his bodily presence, and to think of communion with him in his sufferings, and the duty that belonged to his exaltation. They came to see a man lately cried up by popular applause, and to gaze on him who was made so famous in the late triumph. So when some depended upon their hearing of him, and resort to his doctrine, he telleth them this would not do without other things: Luke xiii. 26, 'Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.' Yet if there be no more but kind converse, or an outward resort to his ministry as to an ordinary man—'I know you not;' this acquaintance is disclaimed. Some that not only heard, but commended him, as that forward woman: Luke xi. 27, 28, 'And a certain woman lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.' Yea, rather; it is a reproof. Oh no, woman; that is a blessed thing to hear the word of God, and keep it; that is not the use to applaud the person, but obey the doctrine. Still he calleth for a more spiritual respect. When they told him that his kindred, his mother and brethren, stood without to speak with him, Mat. xii. 47-50, Christ saith, 'Whosoever doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, sister, and mother.' Believing in Christ, and obeying God's will, rendereth us more acceptable than if we did touch him in blood and kindred. Augustine saith of the Virgin Mary, *Beatior Maria percipiendo fidem Christi quam concipiendo carnem Christi; Materna propinquitas, &c.*—that she was more happy in carrying Christ in her heart than conceiving of him in her womb. So Mark v. 18, 19, when Christ had cured a man that was possessed of a whole legion of devils, 'he prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but bid him go home to his friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.' Our love to Christ is better shown, not in our human and passionate affections to his bodily presence, but in performance of those religious services he requireth of us; he lingered after his bodily presence, but Christ expected not the offices of human conversation, but duty and obedience to his commands from him. So there is a famous instance of Christ's entertainment at Bethany, Mark x. 38-52. There were two sisters, severally employed; Martha busied in the ministries and services of the outward entertainment, 'but Mary sat at Christ's feet (the posture of disciples) and heard his word;' the one careful to entertain Christ in her heart, the other into her house. Christ, wherever he came, was willing to improve the opportunity, and to leave some spiritual blessing behind him. He came not to be feasted, but to refresh souls. Martha complaineth of Mary, as if her devotion had been unseasonable, to leave the burden of the household affairs to her alone; but Christ showeth Mary's respect was more pleasing to him than Martha's, hearkening to his word rather than making provisions for his person. Many would seem to gratify Christ with an outward and carnal respect, but do not hearken to his gracious words. So in other things; weeping for him when he went to suffer: Luke xxiii. 28, 'Weep not for me, ye daughters

of Jerusalem, but weep for yourselves and children.' That would not comport with the end of the death of Christ, which was not to be looked upon as a spectacle of human calamity, but as a mystery of higher consideration, and God looked for more noble and spiritual motions than this passionate condoling. So to fight for him; Peter was in a rage when they came to attack Christ, and therefore draweth on a whole troop: John xviii. 11, 'Put up thy sword in thy sheath, Peter. The cup which my Father hath put into my hand, shall I not drink of it?' Peter's act seemed to express much zeal and affection to Christ's person, but Christ showeth that he was appointed for a higher purpose, and checketh Peter for his rashness. Nay, the disciples languishing for the comforts of his bodily presence, then Christ told them, John xiv. 15, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' When a man is ready at our command, and willing to do what we would have him to do, it is a sign of his love; to be up and be doing is a sure manifestation of obedience; so John xx. 27, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend.' Mary Magdalene was now fallen at Christ's feet, and embraced them, Mat. xxviii. 9. They came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. In a humble and affectionate devotion, she hangeth about our Saviour; but Christ forbids this embracing—'Touch me not;' it comes of human affection, out of a compliment; but Christ rejects this testimony of her love, and directs her to a more acceptable service,—to carry tidings to his brethren of his resurrection. And it is more acceptable and pleasing to him to be about our service, and doing good in our station, than to be performing these offices of human love, and kindness to his person, entertaining him, seeing, hearing him, weeping for him, defending him. Otherwhiles he bids them come to him: Luke xxiv. 39, 'Handle, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have;' for a confirmation of their faith.

2. There is a knowing Christ after the flesh since his ascension into heaven.

[1.] By a naked profession of his name, without conformity to his laws. There are disciples in name, and disciples in deed: John viii. 31, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' Christ hath some disciples who are so in reality, and others who are so in show only; there is no true ground of solid comfort but in being real disciples. Others are but christians in the letter, not in the spirit. Those that are in the letter have notions of God and Christ, and heaven and hell; but they have but names and notions of these things, but feel nothing of the power and life that accompanieth these things. A man may profess himself a christian, and yet perish with unbelievers; yea, be as great an enemy to Christ as the Jews that crucified him, and the heathens that worshipped other gods. A grieving of his Spirit, a despising the fruits of his purchase, a refusal of his holy ordinances, and a hatred of his servants, is no less offensive to him, and may argue as little affection in us, as either the spite of the Jews or idolatry of the heathens did in them to Christ. I call this profession of careless, lawless christians, a knowing Christ after the flesh, because it is a mere carnal, human, natural respect to Christ's memory, such as a man beareth to his famous ancestors, or the

deceased heroes of his country, not befitting him who is our mediator, and lord of all things, who is best remembered when our hearts are converted to him, and when his laws are obeyed; such as the Jews did bear to Abraham, the founder of their nation, or Moses the law-giver of their country. Surely Abraham and Moses were as dear to the carnal Jews as Christ can be to us; but Christ telleth them, 'If you were Abraham's seed, you would do the works of Abraham,' John viii. 39; and John v. 46, 'If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me.' They were Abraham's seed after the flesh, not after the spirit; they were Abraham's seed after the flesh, but that did avail them nothing, since they did not follow his example, but sought to kill him, which was far from Abraham's spirit and temper. A little of men's practice is a surer rule to try by than all their fair language and complimentary respect: John ix. 28, 29, 'Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake to Moses: but as for this fellow, we know not whence he is.' However he, or such as he, were so fully resolved to become disciples to Christ, yet they would cleave to Moses, John ix. 28. Thus are the best of men mistaken and abused by their carnal successors: they made use of Moses' name to excuse their disobedience to Christ. It is an old trick of degenerate men to cry up the names of pious ancestors, and externally to adore the memory of saints departed; but such motives of love are but carnal, when there is an apparent inconformity between you and the persons whom you would magnify. We detest the memory of Annas and Caiaphas, Judas, and such others as conspired to take away the life of Christ; so did they of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Ahab was accounted as wicked by them as Pilate by us; therefore to rest in a naked, historical belief, and mere profession of the name of Christ, when there is such an apparent insubjection to his laws, it is but a knowing Christ after the flesh, owning him as the God of the country upon custom and tradition. Well then, Christ is never rightly entertained but when his doctrine is received and entertained by faith; though there should be a hatred of his persecutors, a quarrelling for his religion, you put him to more shame in your conversations, and crucify him afresh every day: Heb. vi. 6, 'Seeing they have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame.' A quarrelling ruffian may be ready to fly in the face of him that shall speak a disgraceful word against his father, when his own dissolute and ungracious wicked courses grieve his father's spirit, and shame him more than all their reproaches; so many will pretend much love to Christ, and in a heat and quarrel be ready to venture their lives for their religion. No man would have his religion despised; but yet he shameth and bringeth it most into contempt that matcheth it with disproportionate practices; as those are called enemies to the cross of Christ that preached Christ, but yet lived in a sensual and earthly manner, Phil. iii. 19.

[2.] By acts of sensitive affection in the reading or meditating on the story of Christ's sufferings, or when you hear his passion laid open in a rhetorical fashion. Men, at such occasions, find that there is stirred up in themselves some fond pity at his sufferings, and indignation at the Jews, and are ready to fly in the face of Judas that betrayed

him, and the rulers and those that put him to death. All this is but a human natural respect, such as we will find in ourselves at any tragical representation, true or false. Let a man but read the sad preparation of Abraham, when he went to sacrifice his son Isaac; or the pitiful words and moans of Jacob, when they told him that some beast had devoured Joseph, and showed him his coat; the sacking of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, or how they handled that miserable king Zedekiah, when they had first slain his children before his face, and then put out his eyes; or the lamentations of Dido for Æneas, when she slew herself. These stories will draw as many tears from our eyes as the story of Christ's sufferings; things of small importance, well represented to the fancy, may thus affect us. And besides, these light affections do not comply with God's end in the mystery of redemption. We are not to reflect upon the death of Christ as a tragical accident or sad story, but as a well-spring of salvation; and God looketh for more noble and spiritual motions—namely, that we should be affected with the horror of our sins that crucified the Lord of glory, and the terror of that dreadful severity which God manifested on his own Son when he took our burden upon him, and the admiration of his incomparable wisdom, which could join his mercy with his justice, the unspeakable joy of salvation, which is derived thence to us, and the ardent love which we should bear to the Father, who hath given his Son to die for us. These are the true resentments of the death of Christ; even that we may raise our hopes of mercy upon the foundation of his merit and satisfaction as the price of our blessings, and engage ourselves to God in a way of thankfulness for his great love and mercy, and increase our hatred of sin, having such a glass wherein to view our hatefulness. Now these are spiritual respects; the other are but carnal, such as we would show to man pitifully handled.

[3.] By expressing our respects more in the pomp and pageantry of outward compliments, rather than serious devotion, or a hearty obedience to his laws, or worshipping him in spirit and in truth. This is also a knowing Christ after the flesh, or a carving out a respect to him that rather suiteth with our carnal minds than his glorious estate now in heaven. The whole genius of the popish religion runneth this way, where the worship of Christ is turned into a theatrical pomp, and the simplicity of the gospel is changed into weak and silly observances and beggarly rudiments, which betray it to the contempt and scorn of all considering men, and is no more pleasing to Christ than the mockage of the Jews and soldiers that put a purple robe upon Christ, and cried, Hail, king of the Jews! when they spit upon him, and buffeted him. In christians it is but to compliment Christ, to feast and make mirth for his memory, and deck our bodies and houses, whilst we look not after rejoicing in the spirit; to be all for sumptuous temples, and costly furniture, and rich altar-cloths and vestments, while his laws are trampled under foot; and those that would sincerely worship Christ, and make it their business to go to heaven, are despised and malign'd, and it may be condemn'd to the fires. It is not the pomp of ceremonies, but faith and brokenness of heart, and diligence in his service, and living in the Spirit, that Christ mainly looketh after. Religion looketh more like a worldly thing in a carnal dress, but the

king's daughter is glorious within, Ps. xlv. 13. The glory of the true church, and every member thereof, is in things spiritual, as knowledge, faith, love, hope, courage, zeal, sobriety, patience, humility; these are the true glories of the saints, not golden images, and rich accommodations, and outward triumph, and carnal revellings. And the great thing Christ hath commended to us in his doctrine is a holy heart and a holy life: Ps. xciii. 5, 'Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever;' not pomp and gaudry of worship, but purity and holiness, that is a standing ornament.

[4] By herding with a stricter party, whilst yet our hearts are not subdued to God. There are three places prove this: Gal. vi. 15, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but a new creature;' Gal. v. 6, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith that worketh by love;' and 1 Cor. vii. 19, 'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God.' Men hug others because they are of their party and fellowship; it is religion enough to be one of them, of such a party and denomination as obtains the vogue, and is of most esteem among christians in that age. Yet how strict soever our party be, if our hearts be not subdued to Christ, all is as nothing in the sight of God; till a man be a new creature, it is but a fleshly knowing of Christ. A man may change his party, as a piece of lead will receive any impression, either angel or devil, or what you stamp upon it.

3. This knowing Christ after the flesh will do us no good, be of no comfort and use to us as to the salvation of our souls.

[1.] Because God is no respecter of persons: 1 Peter i. 17, 'If you call him father, who without respect of persons judgeth every man according to his works.' The *προσωποληψία* is the outward appearance, but God is *ἀπροσωληπτῶς κρίνοντα*, one that doth not judge by outward respects. The *prosopon* of the Jew was his knowledge of the law, and enjoying the ordinances of God; the *prosopon* of the christian is his profession of respect to Christ and esteem of him. But God judgeth not by the appearance, but by the internal habit and constitution of the heart, manifested by an uniform obedience to his whole will; otherwise circumcision may become uncircumcision, or christianity as paganism. Therefore it is not enough to profess you are for Christ, of his faction and party; for there is a faction of christians as well as a religion. They are of the faction of christians, whose interest and education leadeth them to profess love to Christ, without any change of heart, or serious bent of soul towards him. Now this is the *prosopon* according to which God may be supposed to judge; for you do not think riches or poverty, fear or love, can so much as be supposed to be in God, but profession or not profession is that he looks to.

[2.] Because Christ hath put us upon another trial than a fond affection to his outward person and memory, namely, by our respect to his commandments: John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' There is the main; other things will not pass for love, though they be taken for such in the world. And John xv. 14, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I

command you.' Perfect friendship consists in harmony, or an agreement in mind and will. If you have any true love to Christ, it will make the soul hate everything which it knoweth to be contrary to his nature and will: Ps. xvii. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil;' and constraineth the soul to set about everything which it knoweth will please and honour him: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us;' if we do but love him, and be sensible of the obligation he hath left upon us. So it will be in a real spiritual love.

[3.] Because they cannot truly challenge the name of christians that do only know Christ after the flesh. Christ, being now exalted, requireth a spiritual converse with him. When Christ hath laid aside his mortal life, we should lay aside our carnal conceits and affections. There were some Jewish imposters that Eusebius writeth of, mongrel christians, Chocabites and Nazarites, who called themselves the Lord's kinsmen; a sort of cozening and heretical companions they were, who, for their own purposes, foraged the country up and down, as the gipsies now do, amusing the world with genealogies, and drawing the vulgar after them, with many vain fancies, denied the resurrection, interpreting all said about it of the new creature, pretending belief in Christ, but observing the law of Moses, against whom the Epistle to the Galatians is supposed to be written. And there were some that knew Moses after the flesh, and seemed to pretend much zeal to the law of Moses. Now the apostle saith they deserved to be called the concision rather than the circumcision, whereof they gave out themselves to be patrons and defenders. The true believers had right to that title, because they had the thing signified by circumcision, worshipping God with the inward and spiritual affection of a renewed heart, and trusting in Christ alone for salvation, who was the substance of the shadows, and renouncing confidence in fleshly privileges, worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus. So for christians glorying in externals is scarce worthy the name of christianity, if they have the name, not the reality.

[4.] Because this knowing Christ after the flesh is inconsistent with his glorious estate in heaven. It pleased him not in the days of his flesh. A divine spiritual affection doth only befit the state of glory to which he is exalted. Now he is ascended into heaven, he is to be known in faith and worshipped in spirit; his body is above all kindness, and his memory is to be respected not as the memory of an honourable man, but as one who is Lord of the church, and governeth it by his Spirit to the end of the world, Phil. ii. 10, 11; not, 'Lord, Lord,' but obedience, Mat. vii. 22.

Use 1. Is reproof of those that please themselves with that deceit of heart, that if they had lived in the days of Christ, conversed with our Saviour, and heard his doctrine, and seen his miracles and holy life, they would not have used him as the Jews did, but expressed kindness and love to his person. Now to these let me say—

1. That it is an old deceit of heart. We usually translate the scene of our duty to former times, and lay aside at the present that work and expression of love which God hath called us to. God knoweth in what age to cast you, and what means and dispensations are fittest for you; he that doth not improve present means will not improve any:

1 Peter. i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' If ye receive his doctrine, obey his laws, believe in him, love him, rejoice in the midst of afflictions, you express your love to Christ.

2. It is not likely you would do otherwise, having the same temper and constitution of soul which they had that opposed Christ, the same root of bitterness in you. You hate those in whom there is the image of Christ, and some representation of his holiness and meekness. We read of those, Mat. xxiii. 29, 30, 'Who build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets,' who yet persecuted Christ; as many will condemn the former adversaries of the martyrs, Bonner and Gardiner. Christ taught no other doctrine than that which the prophets and martyrs had done; but dead saints do not exasperate. And what entertainment would a rude, dissolute sort of people give to such a man but holy person as Christ was, that was so free in his reproofs?—'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do,' John viii. 44. He that now showeth a spiteful and malicious mind against the truth and servants of God shall never make me think otherwise, but if he had lived in Christ's days he would have been as ready and forward to persecute him as the worst. Certainly a Herod and a Herodias to John Baptist would have been an Ahab and a Jezebel to Elijah; ask them what they thought of Ahab and Jezebel, they would have made many great protestations that they would have done far otherwise, but they did the same things to him that came in the spirit and power of Elias. No miscreant but will cry out on the treachery of Judas, the envy and malice of the high priests, the fury of Jews; yet the same thing is done by them whilst godliness is persecuted; they are still desirous to break this vessel where this treasure lieth; dead saints are out of sight, no eyesore to them, no way offensive to their ears.

3. If you should, this would not save you, without conversion to God. The same laws were in force then that are now; knowing Christ after the flesh would do you no good, but a spiritual and true affection to him. The reward was still promised to true disciples: John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' When some came to see him, he exhorted to imitation of his example and subjection to his laws. It is but an outside appearance, unless we humbly engage in his service, and have a desire to please him in all things. Oh! therefore let us make this use of the love of Christ, and the sense of our engagements to him, as to know Christ, not after the flesh, but so as to love him and serve him, and subject ourselves to his laws.

Use 2. Have we a better knowledge of Christ? Do we know him after the flesh, or after the spirit?

1. The ground of our knowledge, what is it?—common tradition, human credulity, or the illumination of the Holy Ghost? The same truths work differently, as represented in a different light. Common report begets a cold christianity, Mat. xvi. 16, 17; 1 John v. 4, 5;

1 Cor. ii. 4. Hearsay is an advantage, yet not to be rested in. We stand upon higher ground than heathens, yet are not taller men: John iv. 42, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the saviour of the world.' We ourselves should be acquainted with Christ; then we know the truth with more efficacy: John viii. 32, 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;' with more clearness and certainty: John xvii. 8, 'They have known surely—ἀληθῶς—that I came out from thee'; Acts ii. 36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly—ἀληθῶς—that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' You may venture safely upon it, build on it as a sure foundation; the other is but a dead and weak thing, it vanquisheth no temptations, subdueth no carnal affections.

2. The fruits and effects of our knowledge.

[1.] It is a transforming knowledge: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.' Such a knowledge as begets union with Christ, and a thorough change, so as to be converted to him; for it follows in the next verse to the text—'Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' Christ liveth a new kind of life in heaven, so should we upon earth; he hath laid aside his mortal life, so should we our carnal life, live to God in the spirit—'Know him, and the power of his resurrection,' Phil. iii. 10. Christians are to be esteemed by their profiting in godliness; that is, knowing him after the spirit. When we know that spiritual power which is in him, and feel it in ourselves, renewing and changing the heart, we find the power of his resurrection raising us from the death of sin to the life of grace, if we are planted into Christ as living members of his mystical body.

[2.] It is a knowledge that obscureth the splendour of all outward excellences in our opinion, estimation, and affection: 1 Cor. ii. 2, 'For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified;' Phil. iii. 8, 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.' All is nothing to this.

[3.] It weaneth the heart from outward observances and bodily exercises to solid godliness, or looking after the life and power of them. The ordinances of the law, though of God's own institution, are called carnal: Heb. vii. 16, 'Not after the law of a carnal commandment;' the worship of the gospel, spirit and truth: John iv. 23, 24, 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' The more true knowledge of the gospel, the more of this. As the apostle distinguisheth the περιτομή from the κατατομή, Phil. iii. 2, 3; and the apostle speaketh of the Jew, Rom. ii. 28, 29, 'For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter,

whose praise is not of men but of God.' So it is with better reason true of the christian, the worship of the gospel consisting little of externals, but being rational spiritual worship: 1 Peter iii. 21, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;' Col. ii. 6, 'As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him'—we receive his Spirit. That is a sorry zeal, and hath little of a christian spirit, that runneth altogether upon outward things. Christianity first degenerated by this means, and the life and power of it was extinguished when it began to run out altogether in form, and men out of a natural devotion grew excessive that way. A christian, in obedience to God, is to use his instituted externals, but his heart is upon the spirit and soul of duties. Multiplying rites and ceremonies has eaten out the life and heart of religion. The more spiritual and substantial worship is the better, if there be humble and affectionate reverence, a ready subjection and submission to him flowing from grace, engaging the heart to God, and animated by the influence and breathing of his Spirit.

SERMON XXXII.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—
2 Cor. v. 17.

THIS is an inference out of the former doctrine. Two things the apostle had said—'Henceforth we no more live to ourselves,' ver. 15, and, 'Henceforth know we him no more,' ver. 16. There is a change wrought in us—a change of life, and a change of judgment; a new life, because there is a new judgment. Now in the text he showeth a reason why he changed his judgment and life, and lived and judged otherwise than he did before, because there is such a change wrought in all that belong to Christ, that they are, as it were, other persons than they were. As when Saul prophesied: 1 Kings x. 6, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be turned into another man,' not in respect of person, or in regard of substance, but some gifts and graces. So these should be as other creatures, as new creatures. Now these things should only be in esteem with christians which belong to the new creature or regeneration. 'Therefore if any man be in Christ,' &c.

In the words we have a proposition—(1.) Asserted; (2.) Explained.

1. The proposition asserted is hypothetical, in which there is—(1.) An hypothesis or proposition—*If any man be in Christ*; (2.) The assertion built thereon—*He is a new creature*—*καινή κτίσις*, a new creation. The act of creation is signified by this form of speech, as well as the thing created.

2. The proposition explained; for there is—(1.) A destructive work, or a pulling down of the old house—*Old things are passed away*;