

[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

external privileges ; (2.) The causes of this contempt, out of his esteem and value of Christ.

1. His contempt is set forth by two things—

[1.] The vehemency and greatness of it : ‘ I account them loss,’ yea, I account them ‘ dung.’ So excellent is Christ, and so precious to them that believe in him, that all things compared with him have so much baseness, that a word bad enough cannot be found to express them *σκύβαλα*, the word signifieth the inwards of beasts, or refuse things thrown to dogs.

[2.] The reality and sincerity of it ; here was a real demonstration of it. Many approve the things that are excellent, Rom. ii. 18, yet have no mind to embrace them, because they cannot deny temptations. But the apostle saith not only *ἡγοῦμαι τὰ πάντα*, ‘ I count all things but loss and dung,’ but *ἐξημιώθην τὰ πάντα*, ‘ I have suffered the loss of all things.’ He proveth the sincerity of his purpose by his actual self-denial ; he had suffered the loss of friends and country, and all things dear to him in the flesh, that so he might become a christian. He did not only count them nothing worth, and despise them all, but was content to be stripped of all. These were not brags ; for he really suffered the loss of all, was hungry and naked, went in danger of his life often. We must either lose all, or be prepared to lose all for Christ when called thereto. Paul could value his natural interests as well as another, but in case of necessity, lose friends or lose Christ, then all is counted loss and dung. Men in a shipwreck throw overboard their most precious wares to save their lives.

2. The causes of this contempt were great, and such as did every way justify it. As he contemned great things, so he contemned them for weighty causes. Two are mentioned—

[1.] ‘ The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ;’ that is, that he might obtain the knowledge of Christ, which is so excellent that it made all other things seem vile in his eyes. Those things could only yield a carnal, light, and temporary profit ; this a spiritual, solid, and eternal felicity. To keep them and lose this would be a loss not to be recompensed.

[2.] ‘ That I may gain Christ ;’ that is, have the favour of Christ, which is the highest of all privileges.

I shall now insist upon the greatness and vehemency of his contempt of all worldly and carnal things in comparison of Christ.

Doct. That he that is or would be a good christian should have such an esteem of Christ as to count all things but loss and dung, yea, should readily quit and forsake all things rather than miss of Christ.

1. Let us consider Paul’s self-denial as it is here represented.

2. Give you the reasons why it bindeth all christians, and becometh them to have such a frame of spirit.

I. This instance of self-denial ; and there—

1. The universality of its extent, ‘ All things,’ whatever would detain us from Christ, be they honours, pleasures, profits, yea, life itself, whatever we are and have. This is to be observed—

[1.] Partly because some can deny a few things for Christ, but not all ; their resignation is not entire and unbounded ; but if we keep back any one thing, the price is too short. Any one lust reserved

keeps afoot the devil's interest in the soul ; therefore if we esteem but one thing, though we prefer¹ never so many, before Christ, though we renounce many profits and pleasures, yet that one darling contentment to which we have a special liking will prove a snare to the soul. Herod did many things, but was loath to part with his Herodias. The young man lacked one thing, Mark. x. 21. If a woman love but one man in the world more than her husband, though she love him better than millions of others, yet it is a breach of the marriage covenant. Any one thing reserved may bring us to forsake and neglect him as much as if we had preferred a hundred things before him. That one thing will quickly prevail over us for the entertainment of more ; therefore David prayeth, Ps. cxix. 133, ' Order my steps in thy word, and let not any one iniquity have dominion over me.' If a man be dead to pleasure, yet if he be alive to credit ; if he have a slight esteem of honour and glory, yet the riches of the world have a great interest in him ; if he can bridle passion and anger, and easily become meek, yet his fear may betray him ; if he can withstand boisterous temptations, which by violence would withdraw him from Christ, yet if he be overcome by vain appetites, and cannot tame his own flesh, he may finally miscarry. When men come to take possession of a house, all persons must be outed, or else the possession is not valid and good ; you must deliver up all to Christ, or he will accept of none.

[2.] And partly to show that not only things apparently unlawful must be denied for Christ, but things lawful must be disesteemed, discountenanced, and rejected for his sake.

(1) That our sins must be renounced is out of question. If I cannot deny adultery, gluttony, covetousness, pride, drunkenness, oppression for his sake, surely I am unworthy of him. Therefore there can be no question made of this, that I must put off the old man with his lusts, Eph. iv. 22. These were never worth keeping ; these stick to us as our clothes or the skin on our backs, yet they must be put off, whatever interest they have in our affections. It is no strange motion of the physician if he should require the patient to part with his disease ; or he that minds to bestow new apparel upon us, should require us to cast away our old rags. If we would try it once, it is more pleasant to be rid of sin than to keep it ; and the pleasures of sin would be found more troublesome than the most painful course of obedience. Surely they can leave little for Christ that cannot leave one delightful or profitable sin, or are so far from preferring a saviour before the glorious pomp and vanities of this world, that they cannot leave the abominable crimes of it.

(2.) That lawful things which are not absolutely to be despised, but only comparatively, when they come into competition with Christ, may be comprehended also ; such as are the comfort of our relations, esteem and honour in the world, the natural supports of the present life, yea, life itself. Such things are reckoned up by Christ : Luke xiv. 26, ' If any man come to me, and hate not father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple ; ' where you see that not our lusts only are to be forsaken, but our natural interests, those things which otherwise lawfully we may and ought most dearly to affect ; these must be forsaken, hated, trampled upon in comparison of our love to Christ ; that is, we must resolve to gain Christ, and

¹ Qu. ' postfer,' or some such word ?—Ed.

please and follow him, though with the loss of all things. Nothing must be preferred before the conscience of our duty to him. Whatever is a help to Christ, be it honour, wealth, or pleasure, it must be cherished; and what is a hindrance, it must be cut off and renounced.

2. The degree of forsaking, with loathing and indignation; for the apostle here counteth them loss and dung, as if he could not sufficiently express his abhorrence of them. Whilst we stand peddling, and hanker after these things, the temptation is not fully off; but we are like crows and ravens, though driven from the carrion, yet we keep within scent of it. Pleasures, profits, and honours must be esteemed as dross and dung when they come in competition with Christ. We must not only undervalue these transitory earthly things if they hinder us from Christ, but hate and detest them: 'If any man hate not father and mother,' &c, Luke xiv. 26. The reason is, because none can deny themselves but those that have a low esteem of all worldly things, and a high esteem of Jesus Christ and his favour. Now the more either of these are greatedened, the more we will express our holy indignation at the temptation. What! part with my Christ for paltry vanities and a little unsatisfying pleasure? hazard my eternal hopes for so slight a temptation, sell the birthright for a mess of pottage?

3. Here is the consent of his mind and resolution actually verified; he did not only count them dung and dross, but he had 'suffered the loss of all things.' Paul ran the hazard, and actually quitted his honour and credit, who before had a high esteem of them; and so must we if called thereunto. At first, before the way to heaven was a little smoothed by the holy martyrs and primitive confessors of the christian faith, it was a great deal more rough than now it is; yet there is no man can be true to his duty but he will meet with trouble in the flesh; some of his interests must be sacrificed for Christ's sake, either his reputation, ease, and peace with the world, the opposition and scorn of dear friends and relations, or some expense and cost which his religion will put him upon. There are still duties lying upon us displeasing to the flesh, or some uncompliance with the fashions of the world which will expose us to their contempt or hatred. A dull approbation of that which is good will serve no man in the most prosperous time of religion; but more or less he must manifest his esteem of Christ and contempt of the world by some act of self-denial, and therein be conformed to the Son of God and the rest of his brethren, that have trodden the way to heaven before him. And Moses, being assaulted with all kind of temptations at once, Heb. xi. 24, 25, honour, pleasure, and profit; the honour of the world, which so many greedily catch at, he refused; the profits of the world, which are wont to blind the hearts of men, he despised; the pleasures of the earth, which men so much affect, were no better to him than trash and dung compared with the reproach of Christ. And still the same spirit must be in us. All those things which are pleasing to the flesh, and will draw us off from our duty, must be actually denied, trampled upon, and contemned.

II. The reasons why it binds all christians, and becomes them to have such a frame of spirit.

1. Because this is plainly inferred out of the faith, love, hope, and obedience of the gospel.

[1.] Out of the faith of the gospel. Faith looks on the great things God hath provided for us in Christ as true and good: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' As true, they call for a firm and strong assent; as good, so for our consent and choice, or hearty embracing these things above all others. Now take either notion, and it enforces what we have in hand.

(1.) For assent or a sound belief of eternal blessedness as offered by Christ, which, because it is future, the assent is fiducial, and implieth a dependence upon the veracity and truth of God, that he will make good his promise to us in the appointed way. Now certainly we do not know these things with any firm persuasion, unless we dare venture ourselves in the bottom of the promises, and are resolved to crucify the flesh and sacrifice our interests, and perform duties unpleasing to nature on the hopes they offer to us, and with confidence and joyfulness wait upon God in the midst of all pressures and afflictions.

(2.) As it is a consent, choice, or acceptance, because Christ and his benefits, which are the object propounded to faith, are good, and better than life and all its contentments. Now good is accepted; and because there is a competition, inferior and transitory good things offer and obtrude themselves upon us, and divert us from him. Therefore it is election and choice, which is a preference of Christ above other things, or such an esteem of his incomparable worth as lessens all other things in our opinion of and affection to them. But if our affections continue in strength to worldly things, we have neither this assent nor acceptance; we have not chosen them for our felicity and portion. So that the strength of faith is not to be measured by our overgrown confidence or persuasion of our interest in God's mercy, but by mortifying our affections to present things, so as to be ready to do and suffer anything for Christ's sake: 1 John v. 4, 'This is the victory we have over the world, even our faith.' In short, faith is an assent to the promises as true and good in themselves, and as offered to our choice, as far better than all the honours, profits and pleasures in the world; and therefore we should part with all that is pleasant and profitable to obtain the benefit of them.

[2.] It is inferred out of the love of the gospel; we are to love Christ with a transcendent and superlative love: 'For all men must honour the Son as they honour the Father,' John v. 23. Therefore, as we love God, so we must love Christ above all. We love God above all: Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.' If we love him less than other things, or equal with other things, we do not love him at all; as you degrade a prince if you give him no more honour than you give a constable. Love anything above or equal with God, and in time it will tempt you to desert him or neglect his service: Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or hold to the one and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Now, as you love God, you must love Christ above all, in whom the divine nature is made more amiable to us; therefore our Lord saith, Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.' Therefore certainly

Christ is to be loved above all; and other things relating to him, as his doctrine, benefits, laws, ordinances, these must be prized above any inferior good whatsoever, and all things counted dung and dross rather than despise these things. This love is of the more value, because it is the heart of the new creature, as self-love is of original sin.

[3.] This may be inferred out of the hope of the gospel, which is everlasting life. If there be a certain and desirous expectation of such a blessedness, the will should be so far divorced from all transitory good things, and fixed on the supreme good, that we shall not be diverted either by the comfortable or troublesome things that we meet with here. Surely it is better to suffer a little misery for an eternal reward than to enjoy momentary pleasure and after that endure eternal torment. Eternal pleasures do far excel temporal, as holiness doth sin. Alas! what do we lose if this be our gain? Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us;' 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' Mark x. 29, 30, 'Jesus answered, There is no man that has left house, or brethren, or father, or mother, &c., for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and mothers, &c., with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.' Time will be when we shall neither have miseries to fear nor blessings to desire beyond what we enjoy.

[4.] It may be inferred out of the obedience of the gospel. If we mean not to break with Christ, we must be of this disposition. Certainly Christ stands upon obedience if we would obtain his promises: John xiv. 21, 23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, &c. If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him,' &c.; John xv. 10, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love,' &c. Now as long as we are addicted to the world, and its baits and snares, which gratify this earthly life, we can make no work of christianity. The first lesson of Christ's school is self-denial: Mat. xvi. 24, 'Then said Jesus, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.' Till we prefer Christ before the world and the ease of the flesh, we can never have solid comfort in ourselves. In one kind or other we shall be tried. We may cull out the easy, cheap, and safe part of religion, but that is a christianity of our own, which brings God no glory, and will yield us no comfort. If we will submit to the christianity established by Christ, there are in it many duties displeasing to the flesh, some that lay us open to the disgrace and reproach of the world. We must obey him when his service is most painful and cross to our humours; therefore he bids us sit down and count the charges: Luke xiv. 28, 29, 'For which of you intending to build a tower, sits not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him.' It is good to consider whether we can go on with this warfare or raise up this building, whether we are able to obey his strict laws, to renounce

our accustomed delights and dearest interests, whether we shall endeavour to please God in all things, though never so much against our bent and humour; whether we will entertain afflictions and persecutions with all joy, if they come upon us for Christ's sake. If we flow in wealth, can we live as having nothing, and rejoice that God hath made us low? If indeed we have nothing, can we be satisfied with the favour of Christ and our preferment by grace, use all things not as our own but God's, and be guided by Christ in our whole course, and be contented to be anything or nothing so we may promote his glory?

2. Because Christ hath deserved this esteem—(1.) By what he is to us; (2.) By what he hath done for us.

[1.] By what he is to us, more excellent, more necessary, more beneficial than all things else.

(1.) He is more excellent; the rarest contentments of the world are but base things to his grace, all as dung and dross to one drachm of grace or comfortable experience of the love of God. This world's good things are not only uncertain, but vain and empty as to any solid and real good, such as is hope toward God and peace of conscience: Job xxvii. 8, 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite when God taketh away his soul?' On the other side, Christ is incomparably more excellent: 'If thou knewest the gift,' John iv. 10; 'If thou hast tasted that the Lord is gracious,' 1 Peter ii. 3. All the world could not keep you from him.

(2.) Christ is more necessary, for the soul cometh to him under a deep want and broken-hearted sense of misery. If we want and lose the world, God can easily supply it to us, or give us more than this; and he will save us at last without these things. To want clothing or food is not so bad as to want grace; and to be exposed to temporal ruin is not so great a danger as to be obnoxious to eternal flames.

(3.) More beneficial to a poor guilty sinner; in him alone true peace and happiness is to be found: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' Therefore trample upon all things rather than offend God and lose a saviour, and come short of his grace.

[2.] Consider what he hath done for us. Christ requireth not so much at our hands as he himself hath voluntarily performed, and that for our sakes; he pleased not himself that he might promote the glory of God and our salvation: 'He became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich,' 2 Cor. viii. 9; 'He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 7; 'Made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' 2 Cor. v. 21; 'Made a curse for us, that we might have the blessing,' Gal. iii. 13. Doth he require so much of us? Surely those who would have benefit by Christ must imitate him: 1 Peter iv. 1, 'Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.' It is grievous to the flesh to be crossed, but he hath suffered great sorrows. How can we manifest our thankfulness to him who by these bitter sufferings hath procured pardon of sins and eternal life for us?

Use. Is to press us to reflect upon ourselves. Have we such an esteem of Christ as to count all things but loss and dung, and to be

ready to forsake all for his sake? It is a temper essential to christianity. A man's heart is not sincere to Christ unless he doth prefer him before all the world. Now this esteem will show itself by these things—

1. In labouring to get Christ above all, and with the hazard of all ; this must be the prime care : Mat. vi. 33, ' First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; ' Ps. xxvii. 4, ' One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. ' And it must be carried on whatever it cost us ; the bargain will abundantly recompense the charges we are at : Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ' The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls ; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he sold all he had and bought it ; ' Prov. iv. 7, ' Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom ; and with all thy gettings get understanding. ' Every man is in the pursuit of happiness ; it lieth only in communion with God by Christ. This must be minded whatever is neglected. Now how few have this care to get Christ above all ! Their time and labour is laid out upon unsatisfying vanities ; if they may be rich, if they may live a life of pomp and ease, this taketh up their minds. But if indeed this be the business you look after, to be acquainted with God, to have an interest in Christ, and you are still attending upon this work as the great business of your lives, you may take comfort you have got that disposition which is essential to christianity.

2. A care in keeping Christ above all ; superlative love shows itself in this, in a chariness and tenderness of your interest in Christ above all things which are dearest to you. He is your life, Gal. ii. 20, your strength, 1 John iv. 4, your blessedness, Col. i. 27. Now, then, if you keep your beloved as a bundle of myrrh, or, in plainer terms, if he constantly dwell in your hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 17, and you keep up an habitual dependence upon him, and a constant love to him as to your life, peace, and joy, and are loath to put your comforts to hazard for a little carnal satisfaction, surely then Christ is all in all to you. But when you are careless, and mind not how the spiritual life is obstructed, are not so chary of your respects to your Redeemer, who is so necessary for you, it is time to look about you, and say, Have I the spirit of the gospel ? is Christ so dear and precious to me as he ought to be ?

3. Grief for losing Christ above all. Love is seen in delighting in his presence and mourning for his absence : Mat. ix. 15, ' When the bridegroom is taken away, then shall they mourn. ' Many times by our sin and folly we lose the comforts of his presence, the quickening influences of his grace. Now if you take occasion by every sin to renew the sense of the want of Christ, and keep his room warm for him till he return again, by your longings and lamentings after him, this discovers this temper and frame of heart. Certainly it is a great part of a christian's work to observe the accesses and recesses of the Spirit ; for the retiring of the Spirit is a great punishment of sin, as its continuance is a benefit to be prized above all the world. David was deeply afflicted with the one : Ps. li. 10-12, ' Create in me a clean heart, O God ; renew a right spirit within me : cast me not away from thy

presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me,' &c. No judgment to be dreaded and lamented as the grieving of the Holy Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. But when men are stupid, and never mind whether the Spirit of Christ go or come, surely these have not the heart of christians. Now this holdeth good in cases without us, when Christ's interest riseth or falls, to be affected with joy or grief: 1 Sam. iv. 20-22, 'The women that stood by her said, Fear not, for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel,' &c. Though a son was born, she regarded it not; though she had lost a father and a husband, yet the ark of God is taken, and the glory departed from Israel. The ark was a type of Christ, and one of the highest mysteries of their religion. Are we thus affected with the dishonour done to Christ's name? do you rejoice when his gospel flourisheth and prevaileth? All this floweth from the same spirit.

4. By delighting in him and the testimonies of his love above all things: Cant. i. 4, 'We will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy loves more than wine.' The choicest contentments of the flesh are not so comfortable and satisfying as Christ's love, the joy which results from thence is unspeakable and glorious, 1 Peter i. 8, better felt than uttered. The strength of it is seen in that it can keep itself alive when all outward fuel and matter of comfort faileth.

5. By loving other things for Christ's sake, everything that hath the stamp of Christ is honourable and precious. His ordinances, because Christ is to be found there: Ps. xxvi. 8, 'I love the place where thine honour dwelleth.' His ministers, as they have authority from him to treat with sinners about the greatest matters on earth: Phil. ii. 29, 'Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation.' They bring the Lord's message to the soul: 1 John v. 1, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten.' So in order to Christ, valuing all things more or less as they bring us nearer to Christ.

6. By seeking his honour, glory, and praise more than our own interests. They do not live to themselves; having fixed their end, they take their way as they find it: Phil. i. 20, 21, 'Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death; for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' The scope, end, and business of their living is to honour Christ. They are contented to decrease, so Christ may increase.

7. Things dishonourable are made honourable: Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;' Acts v. 41, 'Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame and reproach for his name.' The more the world despiseth him, the more they prize and worship him. The wise men worshipped him when in a stable. Joseph of Arimathea owned him at the lowest, when he had suffered an ignominious death. It is no great matter to own that which is of public esteem; and now Christ is everywhere received, it is easy to make a general profession of his name.

SERMON III.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.—PHIL. iii. 8.

THIS is the first end or reason why he contemned all things. There are three propositions in the words—

1. That the knowledge of Christ is so excellent, that a gracious heart counteth all things dung and loss rather than miss it.

2. That Christ Jesus must be known as the Lord.

3. That there should be some application when we consider Christ or address ourselves to him.

I. For the first point, that the knowledge of Christ is so excellent that a gracious heart counteth all things dung and loss rather than miss it—(1.) What knowledge he speaketh of; (2.) Why it is so prized.

First, What knowledge he speaketh of. Knowledge is twofold—(1.) A bare speculative knowledge; (2.) Affective and saving.

1. For the first, this is a privilege, to know Christ. It is a mystery hidden from ages, and it is hidden from a great part of the world unto this day. Therefore the bare naked knowledge and contemplation of Christ is a great mystery, is a great privilege. Angels desire to pry into it: 1 Peter i. 12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into.' Have higher apprehensions of God by the revelation of this mystery to the church: Eph. iii. 10, 'To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' But yet if we content ourselves with this general speculative knowledge of Christ, we may perish eternally. As the old world saw an ark built before them, with vast expense and charge, but whilst they entered not into it themselves, they were drowned in the flood. The light of the gospel shineth in the world, but if the darkness comprehendeth it not, but men love darkness more than light, their condemnation is the greater, John iii. 19. Certainly this speculative knowledge is not here meant, but an applicative knowledge: 'My Lord,' an operative and effectual knowledge; for he presently addeth, 'That I may gain Christ,' an experimental knowledge; for ver. 10, he explaineth himself, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.'

2. A saving knowledge, such as is accompanied with faith, love, and obedience. There is *memorative* knowledge, such as children have, whereby the field of memory is planted with the seeds of knowledge, so as they are able to speak of God and Christ by rote; and *opinionative* knowledge, by which men are orthodox in judgment, and can dispute for the truth; but wisdom entereth not upon the heart, as it is Prov. ii. 10. They have a form of godliness, but not the power, a naked model of gospel truth: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.' But there is, besides this, a saving knowledge, such as is accompanied with faith, love, and obedience.

[1.] With faith, which is a certain knowledge and persuasion of the truth of our redemption by Christ upon sufficient evidence, so as

we may venture our souls and all our interests in his hands: John vi. 69, 'And we believe, and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;' Acts ii. 36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made the same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ;' John xvii. 8, 'And have known surely that I came out from thee.' So in many other places faith is expressed by knowledge; as concerning the future recompenses: Rom. viii. 28, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God;' 1 John iii. 2, 'But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' 2 Cor. v. 1, 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Faith goeth not upon hearsay or the tradition of man; it consists not in some light credulity or some loose and wavering conjectures, but is a certain knowledge of the truth concerning Christ's person and offices, and the glorious things purchased thereby, called the 'Assurance of understanding,' Col. ii. 2. Faith addeth certainty and efficacy.

[2.] It is a knowledge accompanied with esteem and love. We never know God in Christ as we ought to know him unless we love him as well as know him: 1 Cor. viii. 2, 'And if any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' A gracious heart seeth more beauty and excellency in Christ than in all the world. This is the true knowledge of Christ, to know him, and prize him, and embrace him as our Lord and Saviour, and prefer him above all things; to prize him more than all my goods, more than all my friends, yea, more than myself. This appreciative knowledge is that which is here spoken of, and is the fruit of certain persuasion: Heb. xi. 13, 'And being persuaded of them, they embraced them.'

[3.] When we know him so as to obey him. In this sense we know no more than we practise: 1 John ii. 4, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' He prattleth of God, but doth not know God. It is a falsehood, *cum intentione fallendi*. A lie is a falsehood with an intention to deceive; he goeth about to deceive himself and others: Jer. xxii. 16, 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy; was not this to know me, saith the Lord?' Our actions give us a better image of our opinions and thoughts than our words, as being more deliberate, and proceeding from the principles we have laid up in our hearts, and chosen to live by; which is to be observed against those that seem to know Christ, but yet have but dead and cold opinions about him and the mystery of his redemption.

Secondly, Why is this knowledge so prized? The reasons are taken from the object and the subject, what is prized, and who prizeth. The knowledge of Christ is to be valued in itself, but the temper of a gracious spirit is such that they must needs prize it.

1. The knowledge of Christ is valuable in itself; it is better than all other knowledge.

[1.] From the author, which is the Spirit of God: Mat. xvi. 16, 17, 'And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed

art thou, Simon Barjona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' All that truly own Christ are taught of God: John vi. 45, 'They shall all be taught of God ; every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to me ;' and again, 'The unction teacheth you all things,' 1 John ii. 20. Now to have the enlightening and sanctifying Spirit is a great privilege and mark of favour which God puts upon us. It is a greater argument of God's friendship than to give you wealth and honour : Prov. iii. 31-33, 'Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways. The froward is abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the righteous. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just.' Many are kept low and bare under the frowns and power of insulting adversaries. You cannot therefore say that God hateth you and loveth them. If God hath given you the saving knowledge of himself and his Christ, this is certainly a greater token of his love, and you should prize this above all other things. He dignified you above those that want it, though they excel in power and pomp of living, and are able to oppress you by it. Again, it is an argument of his favour to you above the rabble of nominal christians : John xv. 15, 'But I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' We may have a form of knowledge, or a model of truth put into our heads by men, but to know Christ so as to believe in him, love him, and obey him, is the special favour which God reserveth for his peculiar people.

[2.] The matter to be known, Christ the Saviour of the world and the repairer of the lapsed estate of mankind. We know him under that notion. There is in him a matchless excellency and sufficiency to do us good. This is enough to take up all our thoughts : 1 Cor. ii. 2, 'I have determined to know nothing amongst you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' This is the most comfortable knowledge in the world if we consider—(1.) Our deep necessity ; (2.) His all-sufficiency.

(1.) Our deep and absolute necessity of a saviour to reconcile us to God, being 'Enemies to him in our minds by evil works,' Col. i. 21. To renew our natures, being carnal, and sinful, and unable to help ourselves : Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? not one.' The work would cease for ever if a saviour were not revealed to restore lapsed mankind, to vanquish and conquer our enemies, being so weak and impotent, and 'taken captive by Satan at his will and pleasure,' 2 Tim. ii. 26. To free us from hell, which we had deserved, and to bring us to happiness, which we had not deserved ; which only the Son of God could do, who died, the just for the unjust, 'to deliver us from wrath to come,' 1 Thes. i. 10, and bring us to God. Surely to those that are sensible of their necessity what can be more sweet and precious ? Hungry consciences will prize the bread of life. To those who lie in tears and anguish of soul through the feelings of sin and the fears of the wrath of God, nothing can be sweeter than to hear of their acceptance in the Beloved, and reconciliation with God by Christ. What have we else to answer against all the terrors of the law and the accusations of conscience, or to comfort us against the

remembrance of our approaching misery, than redemption by Christ? yea, what to allay our present sorrows and trouble about a naughty heart, an opposite world, and a tempting devil, but the remembrance of the captain of our salvation, who hath undertaken to bring us to God, and make us perfect through suffering? Heb. ii. 10, 'For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.'

(2.) His sufficiency to do us good. There is the blood of God to be a ransom for our souls: Acts xx. 28, 'Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' And so to make our peace with God: Col. i. 20, 'Having made peace through the blood of his cross, to reconcile all things to himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven.' The Spirit of God to renew and heal our natures, 'Shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Titus iii. 5, 6. 'The captain of our salvation,' to conquer our enemies: Heb. ii. 10, 'Christ in us' the pledge of our hopes and joys, and the root of everlasting blessedness: Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you the hope of glory.' Surely if we have the eternal Son of God from whom to fetch our daily supplies and our daily delight, we must needs be well provided for, so that the heart of trouble is broken. This is a sufficient remedy against all our fears and sorrows.

[3.] The effect of this knowledge. It is a renewing and transforming knowledge. It impresseth the image of God upon our hearts: Col. iii. 10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;' 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But 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, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Others can talk of God and Christ, but you resemble him, and are changed into his likeness. When sight is perfect, your conformity will be greater: 1 John iii. 2, 'But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' But now it leaveth some impress of God upon the soul, it maketh you more like him, and amiable in his sight.

2. The subjects who thus esteem the knowledge of Christ, their minds and hearts are changed.

[1.] Their minds. It is a special privilege promised in the new covenant: Jer. xxxi. 34, 'For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord;' Jer. xxiv. 7, 'I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord.' Now by this new covenant knowledge they have a spirit of discerning. In discerning there is comparing, differencing, esteeming, choosing. Their minds are awakened; they do compare what they lose and what they gain; on the one side, worldly things are short and uncertain, and which cannot satisfy the heart of man, or if they could satisfy his desires, they cannot give rest to the conscience. That is the trial, rest for souls: Jer. vi. 16, 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way? and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' That is not to be found in the world: Isa. lv. 2, 'Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread,

and your labour for that which satisfieth not?' Let conscience be once awakened with the sense of sin and fear of wrath, it can find nothing in the world to pacify it; but in Christ it may: Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls.' They prefer good or discern bad things: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' Good things: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' They esteem and choose: Heb. xi. 25, 26, 'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.'

[2.] Their hearts are turned as well as their minds convinced. These things do not suit with their scope and end, which is to please and enjoy God: 2 Cor. v. 9, 10, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.'

Use 1. Of reproof—

1. To those who study to know all things else but Jesus Christ. There is no sap or savour to them in this knowledge. They would know the course of nature by philosophy, the affairs of the world by history. We condemn not this knowledge simply, but if it be with the neglect of the knowledge of Christ, alas! it is folly rather than wisdom. To know the creature without the creator, the history of providence but not the way of redemption, the courses of the heavens and not to know how to live and dwell in heaven, is not to seek a salve for the great malady we contracted by the fall; for ignorance in eternal things is the first part of the harm we caught by the fall. This is to heal a cut finger and neglect a deadly wound. No secular wisdom can deliver us from the wrath of God, nor make us everlastingly happy. The angels, who are the spectators, desire to pry into these things; but we, that are the parties interested, should be much more concerned to know our misery and our remedy, our disease and our cure. If God hath laid out the riches of his grace and wisdom to do us good, surely it deserveth our best thoughts.

2. To reprove those that content themselves with a form of knowledge: Rom. ii. 20, 'Thou hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.' No; it must be a practical and experimental knowledge: 'That we may know him, and the power of his resurrection.' Most of christianity is not only to be believed, but felt. It is set forth not only by sight, but taste: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious;' Phil. i. 9, 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,' *αἰσθήσει*, in all sense. Otherwise you know Christ, and are never the better for him; like the nobleman at Samaria, that saw the plenty, but could not taste of it. They hear of a mighty Christ, but feel nothing. Experience is the best seal and confirmation: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them

by the truth ; thy word is truth ;' and chap. i. 32, ' John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.' The testimony of Christ confirmed in us : 1 John v. 10, ' He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' This is knowing ' the grace of God in truth,' as it is Col. i. 6, when we have tasted of the sweetness of the promise, pardon of sin, peace with God, and hopes of glory. *Optima demonstratio est a sensibus*, the best proof is from the senses. Others know it by hearsay, conceits, and imagination. Again, practical knowledge is for use and practice, not for idle speculation. The apostle speaketh of some that are ' barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ,' 2 Peter i. 8. Their christianity serveth them to talk well, and stuffeth their minds with high notions, but they are not thereby made ready to obedience, and prone and forward to please God : 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, ' And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind, all the days of thy life.'

Use 2. Let this be our main study, to know Christ, and to know him as we ought to know him, by the light of the Spirit, in a way of faith, love, and obedience. How hard do many carnal persons study to know the mysteries of nature ! and should not we use the means of praying, reading, hearing, that we may know Christ, begging for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation ? Here consider—

1. The necessity. You must know Christ before you can believe in him : 2 Tim. i. 12, ' I know whom I have believed.' You must know him before you can love him : John iv. 10, ' If thou knewest the gift of God.' We must know him before we can obey him : Prov. xix. 2, ' Also that the soul be without knowledge is not good ;' John xiv. 21, ' He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.'

2. It is pleasant : Ps. xix. 8, ' The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart ; the commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes.' Light is pleasant to the eye, so it is to the eye of the mind : Prov. xxiv. 13, 14, ' My son, eat thou honey, because it is sweet, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste ; so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul when thou hast found it.' Every faculty hath its oblectation ; as the will, in adhering to God ; conscience, in feeling God's love ; so the understanding in the view of truth. Oh, what is the knowledge of Christ, so suitable to our necessities, so ready to relieve them, to have a taste that the Lord is gracious !

3. It is profitable. Its use commendeth it. Curiosities and needless speculations we can well spare ; that is a knowledge occasioneth more pain than pleasure. To have the mind stuffed with needless notions is but a burden, not a perfection ; but this maketh us wise to salvation, and therefore doth most concern us. For what is more comfortable than salvation ? John xvii. 3, ' This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' We begin our everlasting happiness, which consists in the vision of God, when we begin to know him and his Christ. Now if we would have this knowledge, and esteem this knowledge, think often, and by serious awakening thoughts, of the necessity thou hast of Christ : Mat. xi. 28, ' Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy

laden, and I will give you rest.' His all-sufficiency to do thee good by virtue of his double office: Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Use 3. Bless God that he hath given thee this knowledge, this excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, and do not murmur though he hath denied you other things.

1. Remember how it excellet all other gifts. All your wants and losses are nothing to that free grace which he hath showed you and bestowed upon you: 'Eyes to see your teachers,' Isa. xxx. 20. As it is sinful security to be sensible of bodily wants and senseless of spiritual, so it is sinful unthankfulness to take notice of bodily wants, and not to acknowledge this great benefit. The Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee if he hath given thee the knowledge of his Christ, whatever he denieth thee.

2. Remember how a true value and esteem of Christ lesseneth all other things. As the light of the sun obscureth the stars, so all worldly things grow unsavoury and lose their relish where this true light prevaileth. The taste of carnal pleasures is marred, the love of the world decreaseth, and the pleasures of sin become bitter to the soul, which is the true sign of our having received the saving knowledge of Christ. He is so great that he lesseneth all other things to us. The soul seeth so much worth and suitableness in him to all our necessities, and doth so love and esteem him, that it accounteth all things most vile and base in comparison of him, and is willing for his sake to want or lose the rarest contents the world can give, and suffer the greatest evils the devil or man can inflict upon us.

II. Second point. That Jesus Christ must be known as the Lord. So must we preach him, and so must you receive him: 2 Cor. iv. 5, 'We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord;' Col. ii. 8, 'If you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.' Let us see—

1. What this lordship of Christ is; it is that *novum jus domini, et novum jus imperii*, that new right of propriety and government over all men which Christ now hath, as being the sovereign of the world.

Concerning it observe three things—

[1.] It is superadded to the former sovereignty and dominion which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had as creator. This new dominion and sovereignty is not destructive of the former, but accumulative; it did not abolish the power acquired by the creation, for that continueth still, and will continue whilst man receiveth his being from God by creation, and the continuance of his being by preservation; this therefore is superadded to the former by the new title of redeemer; for he is lord, not as creator, but as redeemer: Rev. v. 12, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'

[2.] This office of lord is derivative, and cannot be supreme, but subordinate. Though this office be the greatest and highest that ever was, above all angels and creatures, next unto God, therefore Christ's place upon his investiture and solemn inauguration was at the right hand of the eternal throne of God, yet it is derived from God, and referred to him. Derived from God; for he is, as mediator, made

Lord, and this power was given to him : Mat. xxviii. 18, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth ;' John xvii. 2, 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' God hath made God-man the supreme prince and head of the church, that he might dispense salvation upon his own terms, and his doctrine and faith be embraced by all nations in the world. Here is a new power, new government, and new laws, which shall be the rule of man's duty and God's judgment. It is referred and subordinated to God : Phil. ii. 11, 'And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' The supreme right of governing is still in God, and subjection to him is not vacated, but established and reserved.

[3.] This lordship and dominion which the Redeemer is possessed of is comfortable and beneficial to us ; and the end of it is to effect man's cure and recovery. God had a full right to govern us, which could not be vacated by our sin ; and it was so great that it cannot be greater ; yet it was not comfortable to us. It was but such a right as a prince hath over rebels to punish them. We renounced God's service, and that interest which we had in his gracious protection as our Lord ; therefore was this new interest set afoot to save and recover fallen man, that God might have such an interest in us as might be comfortable to us. So lordship and government is spoken of in scripture as medicinal and restorative, to reduce man to the obedience of God that made him : Acts x. 36, 'Preaching peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.' It is such a lordship as conduceth to make peace between God and man, that we may enjoy his favour and live in his obedience : Acts v. 31, 'He hath exalted him to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' This new lord hath made a new law of grace, which is *lex remedians*, a remedying law, which is propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and favour of God, granting thereby free pardon, and a right to blessedness to all that sincerely repent and believe in him ; but sentencing them anew to death who will not embrace him, John iii. 16-18 ; all which considerations do mightily enforce obedience. It is a beneficial law ; it is a remedying law. They are peremptorily concluded under everlasting death who will not submit to it ; namely, as the old sentence is bound more upon us, and ratified by a new curse.

2. How this right of lordship and empire accrue to him ? I answer—Partly by his purchase. This was that Christ aimed at in his death : Rom. xiv. 9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' It was the fruit and consequent of the humiliation of the Son of God. And partly by the grant of God : Acts ii. 36, 'God hath made this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' 'Made,' that is, appointed or ordained.

3. How we come to be concerned in this lordship, or are related to him ? I answer—By our voluntary consent, acknowledging him to be Lord, and submitting ourselves to him as the Son of God and our sovereign : 'He is thy Lord ; worship thou him,' Ps. xlv. 11. There is a passive subjection and voluntary submission.

[1.] A passive subjection ; so all creatures at all times are under the power of the Son of God and our redeemer ; and amongst the rest, the devils themselves, though revolters and rebels, are not exempted from this dominion ; and he hath a ministry and service for them to do as well as for the good angels. So 'at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, whether of things in heaven, or things on earth, or things under the earth,' Phil. ii. 10.

[2.] We are under his dominion by voluntary submission. Those only are subjects, and admitted into this kingdom, who willingly give up themselves to God the Redeemer, that they may be saved upon his terms, and in the way he hath appointed : 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'They first gave their own selves to the Lord.' So that the devils and wicked men are his against their wills ; but all Christ's people are his by their own consent, to be guided and ordered by him. Well, then, all that have not subjected themselves to God as redeemer are strangers at least, if not enemies.

4. The next thing I shall speak of is both the privileges and immunities on the one hand ; secondly, the duties on the other, of those who are subjects to this Lord.

[1.] Their privileges and immunities are great. Their immunities are freedom from the curse and rigour of the law : Gal. v. 18, 'Ye are not under the law.' From the guilt of sin : Col. i. 13, 14, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son ; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin.' We do not actually partake of the privileges of Christ's kingdom till we are first his subjects. Christ and his people are an opposite state to the devil and his instruments. While we are under the opposite power, we belong not to Christ ; the privileges of his kingdom belong not to us. But as soon as translated, and put into another state, then presently we partake of the privilege of remission of sins ; so from the flames of hell : 1 Thes. i. 10, 'Even Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.' Privileges positive ; grace and glory. We enter as subjects into this kingdom, that we may be reconciled to God, and renewed and fitted to serve and enjoy him. This Christ doth by degrees. He fits us to serve him now by 'putting his laws into our hearts and minds,' Heb. viii. 10, or giving us repentance ; and doth prepare us for the full enjoyment of God more and more. Christ doth not immediately effect our deliverance, but bringeth us into the kingdom of grace first, that he may perfect our cure there, that after we have for a while resisted the devil, and approved our fidelity to him, we may have an inheritance among the sanctified, Acts xxvi. 18 ; and so he may deliver us into the kingdom of glory, when the devil and his instruments shall be cast into hell.

[2.] The duties. The notion of the Lord doth call for duty and obedience, and it is our part to obey : Heb. v. 9, 'He became the author of salvation to them that obey him.' Our obedience is the best testimony of our subjection to him. This is to be pressed, because the carnal world is usually guilty of a double injury to Christ ; one is, that they seem to like him as a saviour, but refuse him as a lord, whereas Christ is not only a saviour to bless, but a lord to rule and command. These two things must not be divided. But some catch at comforts but

neglect duty. Certainly a libertine, yokeless spirit is very natural to us: Ps. xii. 4, 'Who is lord over us?' The world sticketh at Christ's authority: Luke xix. 14, 'We will not have this man to rule over us.' His laws, and restraints of repentance, faith, and obedience are their great burden: Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' If he will come as a saviour, he shall be welcome; but we cannot endure he should be chief. The greatest part of the world is libertine, if not in opinion, yet in practice. They would not be under command. He might have customers more than enough for his benefits, but they look upon self-denial, mortification, and strict walking as harsh and severe. If we love privileges we must not decline duties: Hosea x. 11, 'Ephraim is a heifer not taught, that loveth to tread out the corn,' but will not break the clods. The mouth of the ox was not to be muzzled that trod out the corn. In short, Christ is the 'head of the church,' as well as 'the saviour of the body,' Eph. v. 23. You must give him obedience as well as apply his benefits. Where he is a saviour, he will be prince and lord too. Many carry it so as if they would have Christ to redeem them, but Satan to rule and govern them. Christ must heal their consciences, but the world hath their affections. No; if thou hast no care to obey him as a lord, thy esteem of him is but imaginary, thy knowledge is but partial, thy application of him unsound. The other injury is, that if he will accept of an empty title, and some superficial compliments and observances, he shall have enough of that, and be called Lord oft enough; but there must be a thorough subjection, to do his strict and spiritual duties: Luke vi. 46, 'Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say?' It is a mockage to call him Lord and not do the things which he hath commanded. This is disclaimed: Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' By 'the will of my Father' is meant the whole duty we owe to God; for this is not made void by Christ, but established upon better terms.

Use. To persuade us to own Christ as a lord. All is in his hands; he hath *potestatem vite et necis*, power of life and death: James iv. 12, 'There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' He hath absolute power to dispose and state the terms of salvation and damnation: John xvii. 2, 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.'

1. Let us enter into the state of subjects, servants, and vassals to him, by renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, who were once our old lords, but were indeed our enemies. As the people said, Isa. xxvi. 13, 'Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us.' These must be dispossessed before Christ can take the throne. With godly sorrow and detestation let us throw off these things, resolving no more to hearken to Satan's temptations; to grow more dead to the vanities and pleasures of the world, and to tame and subdue our own flesh. Engage yourselves to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as your God, as your Lord and happiness, returning by Christ through the Spirit to the love and obedience of your creator, and depending upon him for the effects of his love to you. You see his readiness to help poor wretches liable to eternal wrath, and to make them eternally blessed with this

glory. We enter ourselves subjects to this sovereign Lord, that we may enjoy the rights and privileges of his kingdom.

2. Be not subjects only by name and profession, as many are, and by their ignorance, unbelief, and disobedience are little better than heathens and aliens. We must not be partial subjects, to obey in some measure. No; you must 'walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,' Col. i. 10. 'Of the Lord,' that is, the Lord Christ. We must love him, and serve him, and study to please him in all things, not in a few only, which are not cross to our interests and wills, but we must give him an entire universal obedience to all his laws.

SERMON IV.

That I may win Christ.—PHIL. iii. 8.

THIRD point. That there should be some application when we consider Christ and address ourselves to know him. (1.) What is this application; (2.) Why.

I. What is this application.

I shall give you—(1.) Some distinctions; (2.) Some observations.

1. Distinctions. There is a twofold application; one that more immediately respects comfort, the other duty. The application of comfort is when I respect Christ under such a term as implies some privilege to me; that he is my saviour, stood in my room before God, bearing my sins, and suffered the wrath of God for me: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' The application that more immediately respects duty is, when I apprehend Christ under such a term as inferreth my obligation to duty and obedience; as here he speaketh of the knowledge of Christ not only as *the* Lord, but *my* Lord: John xx. 28, 'My Lord and my God.' Now this application is always necessary, and yet questionable. My laying claim to privileges may be disallowed, but my obligation to duty is clear and certain.

2. Another distinction. There is the application of faith and the application of assurance.

[1.] The application of faith is a particular application of Christ and the promise to ourselves, so as to excite us to look after the benefits and ends for which Christ is appointed. This certainly is necessary for all. That which God revealeth I should know for my good: Job v. 27, 'Hear it, and know it for thy good;' Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we then say to these things?' In this business it is the more necessary, because we are concerned both in the merit of the Redeemer and the offer of grace in the promise: Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent.' It is a message from God; sent to excite me to accept of the remedy offered. It is my duty to make general grace particular; as to obey commands moral, so also evangelical. And the true nature of faith is an accepting of Christ, to be to me what God appointed him to be, and to do for me what God hath appointed him

to do for poor sinners; suppose, to 'be prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins,' Acts v. 31; for certainly I for my particular am to accept of the offered remedy; and since the grace of God hath not excepted me, I am not to except myself.

[2.] The application of assurance is, when I actually determine that my own sins are pardoned, that I am adopted into God's family, or that I am appointed to eternal glory by Jesus Christ. This cannot be made without some sense of our sincerity, because the promises of God require a qualification, and performance of duty in the person to whom the promises are made. Therefore we cannot be certain of our own interest till we have performed the duty and have the qualification. We must certainly know that we have performed the duty and are duly qualified. On this application the apostle speaketh, 1 John iii. 19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.'

[3.] The application, which concerneth our own interest in privileges by Christ, may be either implicit or explicit, dark and reserved, or clear and open.

(1.) Implicit, dark and reserved, when we have not so full a persuasion of our good estate, but comfortable encouragements to wait upon God in the way of our duty. This is expressed, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Believers make a shift sometimes to creep into the backdoor of the promise. The general proposal of grace on God's part, and serious diligence on ours in seeking after it, giveth some hope, though as yet our sincerity be not fully witnessed to us, and we have not that sure and firm claim which we may have afterwards.

(2.) More explicit, clear and open. This is expressed in those forms: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of his glorious grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved;' 2 Cor. v. 1, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' A christian knoweth not only where he is, but where he shall be: 2 Tim. v. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.'

Secondly, I shall give you some observations.

1. That the application of faith may be without the application of assurance; sometimes they go both together. The application of faith we have, and must have, because the promise of pardon to the penitent believer is universal, that it includeth you as well as others. God offereth pardon and life to you, and you must consent to accept it upon his terms; and that Christ may be yours, and you his, to the ends propounded in the gospel, you must choose him, and depend upon him as the only mediator, resolving to venture your souls and all your hopes upon him. You are not christians without it. But it may be all this while you do not know that he doth or will own you, because the sincerity of faith and love is doubtful to you. Sometimes they go together, as when your interest in him and his interest in you is clear: Cant. ii. 16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' Resignation and full appropriation here is clear.

2. The one is necessary, the other is comfortable.

[1.] The one is necessary. A sound convert, who esteemeth highly of this knowledge of Christ, hath no rest in his soul till he doth apply Christ; which application is expressed diversely in scripture; sometimes by receiving Christ: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, to as many as believed on his name.' We receive what God offereth; he offereth him to be prince and saviour, and we receive him to be a lord to us, a saviour to us, to guide us, and bring us in particular to God in the way he hath appointed. So it is expressed also by apprehending Christ: Phil. iii. 12, 'That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' The words of the spouse do explain this: Cant. iii. 4, 'I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' When we are resolved not to give over the pursuit till we find Christ, and get him into our hearts, that he may dwell there by faith; choose him, cleave constantly to him. Again, this application is expressed by 'putting on the Lord Jesus,' Rom. xiii. 14; Gal. iii. 27, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' By faith we make application of Christ to ourselves; and Christ so applied is as close and near to us as our garments. So John vi. 56, it is expressed by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him.' He sticketh not so close to us as our garments only, but as a part of our substance. The seeing of meat, though never so wholesome, doth not nourish, but the eating of it; so general grace doth not profit till it be applied. He that resigneth up himself to be ruled by Christ is made a member of his mystical body, and so there is a mutual inhabitation; the same life which enlivened Christ enliveneth us.

[2.] It is comfortable to have a particular interest confirmed to us: Job xix. 25, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' A sight of our particular interest is attainable, and should be looked after: Gal. ii. 20, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' There is a double ground of rejoicing—the certainty of God's promise, and the evidence of our own sincerity.

3. That it is a support to us to have the darker way of applying Christ and his benefits, when we have not the full certainty that they belong to us. This is an encouragement to an humble soul that is willing to obey and wait upon God. They are sensible they have as much need of Christ as others, for they seek after him as lost and undone without him. They have an equal proposal of his grace: 'The righteousness of God is unto all and upon all that believe, and that without difference,' Rom. iii. 22. They have an equal obligation to seek after it, for it is the 'common salvation;' 1 John iii. 23, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;' John vi. 29, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' They are anxious, serious, diligent, and have been kept alive and carried on against the oppositions of the flesh and the world, in the pursuit of this salvation thus long. If they had been asleep, and the good seed had been choked by sensuality, it had been more questionable; still the general grace

upholdeth you in waiting upon God ; you dare not give over following hard after God, though you have not met with full satisfaction. You are of ' the generation of them that seek him,' Ps. xxiv. 6. Now it is better to be a seeker than a wanderer : Heb. vi. 10-12, ' For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed towards his name, in that you have ministered, and do minister, unto the saints : and we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end ; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.'

II. I come to show why there should be such an application of Christ.

1. Because things that nearly concern us do most affect us. The love of God to sinners in general doth not so affect me as when I know that ' he loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. That is the quickening motive to stir us up to the spiritual life ; especially when this ' love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us,' Rom. v. 5 ; Eph. i. 13, ' After ye believed the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' It is not sufficient to know the gospel to be a doctrine of salvation to others, but we must find it to be a doctrine of salvation to ourselves in particular, and apply the promises to our own hearts, that they may quicken and enliven us to obedience. That doth most stir up joy and thankfulness and praise ; for still we are affected with things as we are concerned in them ourselves.

2. Without some application there can be no interest or benefit to us ; for general grace must some way be made particular, or else it cannot profit us ; else why are not all justified, all adopted, all saved ? There is the same merciful God, and the same sufficient Saviour, the same gracious covenant. Some apply this grace, others do not. Blood shed will not avail, unless it be blood sprinkled : Heb. xii. 24, ' And to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' The making atonement is not effectual to salvation unless the atonement be received, owned and applied : Rom. v. 11, ' We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' Christ doth not save at a distance, but as received into our hearts ; as a plaster doth not heal at a distance till it be applied to the sore. It is our souls that were wounded, and our souls must have the cure. The light that illuminateth must shine into the understanding ; the life that quickeneth must be in the substance which is quickened by it. If the bare discovery of grace, without the applying of grace, were enough, the gospel would save all alike, the haters and despisers of it as well as those that submit to it. Therefore we ourselves must be informed, convinced, and converted by it.

3. The scripture insisteth much upon a personal entering into covenant with God ; that every one of us should choose God for our sovereign Lord and portion, and Christ Jesus for our Redeemer and Saviour, and the Holy Ghost for our guide, sanctifier, and comforter. Every one must personally engage for himself. As, for instance, it is not enough that Christ engage for us as the common surety of all the elect : Heb. vii. 22, ' By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.' Something he did for us and in our name ; but every one must take a bond upon himself before he can have the benefit of it. You

must 'yield up yourselves to the Lord,' 2 Chron. xxx. 8. It is not enough that the church engage for us as a visible political body, or a community and society of men that are in visible covenant with God and Christ: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'Thou enteredst into covenant with me, and becamest mine.' They profess in common Christ to be their Lord, and so are a people who are subjects of his kingdom, and have his protection and blessing: but every man must covenant for himself: Ezek. xx. 37, 'I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.' It is an allusion to the sheep passing out of the fold when they were tithed for God: Lev. xxvii. 32, 'Whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy to the Lord.' God will not covenant with us in the lump and body, but every one must particularly be minded of his duty. It is not enough that our parents did engage for us in baptism: Deut. xxix. 9-12, 'Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers with all the men of Israel: your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in the camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water: that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.' They did in the name of their little ones avouch God to be their God, as we devote, dedicate, and engage our children to God in baptism. No man savingly transacts this work for another. We must ratify the covenant in our own persons, and make our own 'professed subjection to the gospel of Christ,' 2 Cor. ix. 13. This is a work cannot be done by proxy and assignees. Our parents' dedication will not profit us without it. Once more, this must not only be done in words, or some visible external rites that may signify so much; as, for instance, when we publicly make profession in the church of Christ's being our Lord; it is not enough, but a man must engage his heart to God: Jer. xxx. 21, 'Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?' Yea, this is a business that must be done between God and our own souls, where no outward witnesses are conscious to it. God speaketh to the soul in this transaction: Ps. xxxv. 3, 'Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.' And the soul speaketh to God: Lam. iii. 24, 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore I will hope in him.' This covenant is carried on in soul-language: Ps. xvi. 2, 'O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord!' Upon this personal inward covenanting all the privileges of the covenant do depend.

4. Because our interest in him is the ground of our comfort and confidence. It is not comfortable to us, or not so comfortable, that there is a God, and there is a Christ. Devils believe so far; but the thoughts of God and Christ are a part of their torment: James ii. 19, 'Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils believe, and tremble;' Mat. viii. 29, 'And they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come to torment us before the time?' The remembrance of God and Christ will be troublesome to us if he be not our God and our Lord. You shall see the saints express their particular interest to be the great cause of their comfort: 1 Sam. xxx. 6, 'David encouraged himself in

the Lord his God ;' Hab. iii. 18, ' Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation ;' Luke i. 47, ' My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' To see a good thing, and you as much need of it as others ; to see a Christ ready to save sinners, and we have no comfort and benefit by him, is a matter of grief rather than of rejoicing.

Use. To press us to this application. A title to his benefits needs good evidence. But we have no reason to scruple our obligation to duty and obedience. If God hath made him Lord and Christ, let him be your Lord and Christ.

1. Resolve to give up yourselves to him, to serve him and obey him, though you know not whether he will give himself to you, to pardon you, and bless you everlastingly. A believer cannot always say, God is mine, or Christ is mine ; yet a believer is always resolved to be his : ' I am thine, save me,' Ps. cxix. 94.

2. In applying Christ to yourselves, seek necessary grace rather than comfort. Go to him to renew and change your natures, rather than to give you peace ; not to have the grief by reason of sin assuaged only or chiefly, but to have the distemper removed. It is a mountebank's care to stop the pain and let alone the cause ; and such a cure do they seek who are more earnest for ease and comfort than for grace. A good christian is troubled with the power of sin as well as the guilt of it, and mindeth the rectitude of all his faculties as well as ease and peace of conscience, that he may be enabled to walk with God thereafter in the ways of obedience, as well as enjoy the pardon of his sins. Christ purchased this double benefit for us : Isa. liii. 5, ' The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Peace and healing. He would be an unwise man who, having broken his leg, should only mind to be eased of his pain, but not take care to have it set right again ; so foolish is that christian who is earnest for comfort, but taketh no care how to be directed and enabled to please God. Sin in some sense is worse than damnation. The taking away of guilt frees us *a malo naturali*, from a natural evil ; but the other, *a malo morali*, from a moral evil. Christ delights to be obeyed in his work ; for it suiteth with his design, which is to restore us to God, and fit us for his service : Rev. v. 9, ' Thou hast redeemed us to God.'

3. When God presseth upon you more than ordinarily, do not receive this grace in vain, and refuse your own mercies. When he draweth, you should run, Cant. i. 4 ; when he knocketh, you should open, Rev. iii. 20. When the wind bloweth, let loose the sails, John iii. 9 ; when the waters are stirred, put in for cure, John v. 4. At such times God doth more particularly apply his grace to you ; therefore you should often apply and entertain the motions before they cool and slacken.

I come now to discourse concerning the end, ' That I may gain Christ.' The apostle would not only know Christ, but gain Christ.

1. Christ is gained when we get an interest in him and his benefits, when God hath called us to the fellowship of his Son, 1 Cor. i. 9, or, in another place, *μέτοχοι Χριστοῦ*, Heb. iii. 14, ' We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.' The ungodly have no part in him, but believers have. The apostle had already won Christ, but he would more and more win, and be more nearly conjoined to him. That I may win Christ, is

that I may get a larger portion in him, or more full enjoyment of him.

2. This word *κερδήσω* is put in opposition to the loss that he had incurred that he might be made a partaker of Christ. There was gain enough to recompense all his losses in having Christ. If God and Christ seem not better things to us than the world, we judge ourselves to have no part in him.

Doct. To be made partakers of Christ is the greatest gain.

To evidence this I shall show you—(1.) What gain we have in having Christ; (2.) How much this gain excelleth all other gain.

I. What gain we have in having Christ.

1. He is our ransom from the wrath of God, and so you have somewhat whereby to appease your guilty fears: Col. i. 14, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' Oh, what a mercy is this to have sin forgiven, to be free from the curse of the law, and the wrath of the eternal God! Ask a tender conscience that groaneth under the weight of sin whether it be not a great benefit to have sin forgiven? Ps. xxxix. 4, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden; they are too heavy for me.' If you think them too scrupulous, go to a stormy wounded conscience: Prov. xviii. 14, 'A wounded conscience who can bear?' Ask Judas, or any of those whose souls are ready to choose strangling rather than life. The damned in hell, who bear their own iniquity, and are past forgiveness, and feel sin to be sin indeed, they would give ten thousand worlds if they had them for the pardon of their sins. Surely then it is great gain to have sin pardoned, to be justified by faith in Christ, and be at peace with God: 'Blessed is he whose sins are forgiven.' The heart of trouble is broken when that is done.

2. It is Christ Jesus hath purchased the favour of God, that we may have comfortable access to him and fellowship with him, he having opened the door by the merit of his passion, and keeping it still open by his constant intercession. By his death he removed the legal exclusion, and remaineth as our intercessor at God's right hand. All the riches in the world could not purchase such a favour for us. Gold and silver are poor corruptible things to the precious blood of the Son of God, by which blood 'we have entrance into the holiest,' Heb. x. 19. Therefore this gain we have by Christ, that we may once more have access to God.

3. Our natures are renewed, and not only the favour and fellowship of God is restored, but his image also. The Spirit is given, whereby we are renewed: Titus iii. 5, 6, 'By the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;' and we are made 'partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Peter i. 4; that is, made like God, and amiable in his sight: 'Partakers of his holiness;' Heb. xii. 10, 'But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' This is profit, not the pelf of this world. All the comforts of the world, that please and feed our sensuality, are nothing to it. If a beast were made a man, he would not complain for want of provender; so if we are made partakers of a divine nature, we have no cause to complain if straitened in the world. Thou hast that which is better, a nature to incline thee to live to God, and with God in a state of holy communion with him.

4. Christ is our treasury and storehouse, from whence we fetch all our supplies : ' But of his fulness we receive grace for grace ; ' 1 Cor. i. 30, ' He is made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' This is the riches of the saints ; they love the true riches. God would not trust the stock in our hands, but Christ keepeth it for us. Therefore in gaining him you gain all things which a gracious heart prizeth, all that is needful to maintain our expences to heaven.

5. By him we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life : Rom. viii. 17, ' If sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' Surely everlasting glory is a greater treasure than all the wealth in the world. Now for a title to this, we have the promise and grant of God, the merit of the Redeemer, and the earnest of the Spirit to build upon ; therefore their gain is exceeding great if they have Christ.

II. How much this gain excelleth all other gain.

1. It is the most comfortable gain, for here is comfort at all times and in all cases. When nothing else can ease the troubled mind, in the day of wrath, in the day of death, this will be a support to you : Phil. i. 21, ' To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' You get infinitely much more than you can lose upon death. Death maketh all other gain useless to us ; openeth a door for us to enter into our greatest felicity. We leave worldly wealth for the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints ; a shed for a palace, an ' earthly tabernacle for a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; ' which is *πολλῶ μάλλον*, ' much more better.' We leave friends for the spirits of just men made perfect ; ordinances for the vision of God. The glory, and riches, and honours of the world are nothing worth when we come to die. If you have not gained Christ, in what a miserable plight will you be then, when you must go into an unknown world, to an unknown God, and have no intercessor at his right hand to plead for you ! When the happiness of God's children beginneth, your worldly happiness endeth. Death parts you and your wealth, but the believer then goeth to take possession of his blessed inheritance.

2. It is the most universal gain : 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, ' All things are yours,' because ' ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Ordinances, providences, graces, comforts, this world, and the next, death between both. Yea, with Christ we receive temporal blessings : 1 Tim. iv. 8, ' Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life, and that which is to come.' So far forth as our wise God seeth them expedient for us, for his own glory, and the good of our souls : Rom. viii. 32, ' He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all ; how shall he not with him give us all things ? ' Protection, maintenance ; if we want these comforts, it is that we may want a snare ; not out of any defect of love in God, but his abundant care and jealousy over us. A father may give his child the inheritance of an orchard, and yet deny him a green apple. God giveth us an ample portion with Christ, but he will dispense the enjoyment of these as he seeth good for us.

3. It is an everlasting gain, that will never fail us, but yield us a blessedness when the world shall be no more : Luke x. 42, ' One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall never be

taken from her.' The better part shall never be taken from us, worldly riches may fail us, but never spiritual gain. If Christ be gain now, he will be gain to you to all eternity. The world now seemeth to gratify our senses, but when you are going out of the world, you will cry out, Oh, how hath the world deceived you! What is a little momentary delight or temporal profit to this eternal treasure that will never fail you? Luke xii. 20, 21, 'And God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; and then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God;' Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, if he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' You are living on earth, and stepping into eternity; look after that gain that will stand by you, and do you good to all eternity.

4. This gain sanctifieth us, all other corrupts us: 1 Tim. vi. 10, 'The love of money is the root of all evil.' It is called 'filthy lucre;' it doth debase the soul to something that is inferior to it; but this gain maketh you of an excellent and divine spirit.

Use 1. For reproof of two sorts of men—

1. Those that take but little or no pains to gain Christ: 'What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Mat. xvi. 26. What pleasure or comfort can you have in all things that you have gained, if you have not gained Christ? How will it be found at last, when it shall be said to thee, Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things;' when your wealth is of no use to you, but your immortal souls must return to God, beggarly and naked as they are.

2. Those that lose Christ, and part with him for a little temporal profit or carnal satisfaction. As many forget God, and Christ, and heaven, and all, so they may have the pleasures of the present life; 'As Esau sold his birthright for one morsel of meat,' Heb. xii. 16. These part with their bargain for trifles. So much of Christ as they have, they part with; profession, ordinances, common graces, some taste of his love, some hopes of his glory he offereth, some sense of religion which formerly held them to their duty. They may go a little way with Christ, and after fall off.

Use 2. Is instruction.

1. If Christ be such gain, then you may make some losses for his sake, and part with other things for Christ's sake, if you cannot have them and Christ too. If you should part with all the world, what is this to Christ? If you should be scorned and derided, it is more than to have worldly wealth at your dispose: Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.' If you part with never so much for him, you can be no losers: Mark x. 29, 30, 'And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel; but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come life everlasting.' Those who suffer loss for Christ are gainers in the end; and in him, and with him, all things that can make them happy. In this life the peace of a good conscience hath a hundred-fold better than all the sufferings of

this world, and in the world to come as happy as heart can wish. See it set forth, Rev. vii. 14, 15, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.' That is happiness indeed, to be for ever before God's throne; they are out of gunshot, free from all temptations and dangers which they are now exposed to.

2. That we should not murmur at our estate, when others go away with other things, if we have Christ. Our heart should rejoice in Christ above all things. What if they have a more plentiful portion in the world? You have that which is better worth, and should be all gain to you: Ps. xvii. 14, 15, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' David allayeth his envy and repinings by this argument.

Use 3. To exhort you and persuade you to get Christ. You hear them gladly who would instruct you in the ways of worldly gain; why should you not be as desirous to gain Christ?

1. He is the best gain, if God be to be preferred before the creature, and eternal glory before fading riches, and the soul before the body. In gaining him you gain the image and favour and fellowship of God, and the hopes of eternal life.

2. This gain may be gotten, and gotten at a cheap rate: Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price;' Rev. iii. 18, 'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.' Means are appointed, word and sacraments.

3. Seek it and have it; choose it and have it. In worldly things you are not sure to speed after all your toil and pains: Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite though he hath gained?' A worldling doth not always make a thriving bargain: Luke v. 5, 'We have toiled all night, and have caught nothing.'

Quest. What must we do that we may gain Christ?

Ans. That cannot be told you in a breath; but if you will gain Christ, you must—

(1.) Use the means; the word, which convinceth you of your lost estate; and the gospel offereth Christ as your gain and suitable remedy; the sacraments: 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?'

(2.) You must submit to his terms; sell all for the pearl of great price, Mat. xiii. 46; renounce your lusts; devote yourselves and your interests to be disposed by him at his will and pleasure.

(3.) Trust in him that is true; depend on his merits and promises: Gal. v. 5, 'We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness

by faith;’ Acts x. 43, ‘To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.’ And when troubles and difficulties arise, continue with patience in well-doing, Rom. ii. 7.

SERMON V.

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.—PHIL. iii. 9.

In these words the apostle amplifieth the gain we have by Christ. He had spoken of gaining Christ, meaning thereby an interest in his person and benefits. Among the prime benefits he mentioneth his righteousness made ours by faith: ‘And be found in him,’ &c.

In the words we have—

1. A distinction between two sorts of righteousness; his ‘own righteousness,’ and the ‘righteousness of God.’

2. A description of either; his own righteousness, ‘which is of the law;’ and the righteousness of God, which is by or ‘through the faith of Christ.’

3. His different respect to either; the one is disclaimed, not ‘having mine own righteousness;’ the other affected; he would ‘be found having the righteousness of faith.’

For explication—

First, The distinction. What is meant by ‘his own righteousness?’ Either the false, superficial righteousness which he had as a pharisee, mentioned ver. 6, ‘Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless;’ exact in legal observances; or else any other righteousness that might be thought of, that standeth in opposition to Christ or in competition with him. It is not meant of the graces of the Spirit, nor of things that stand in a necessary subordination to him. Well, then, any righteousness of our own, opposed to Christ, is excluded. But for the other part of the distinction, what is meant by the righteousness of God? His gracious method or evangelical course of pardoning sin to penitent believers in the gospel, and accepting them to life in Christ. And it is called ‘the righteousness of God,’ because it is found out by God, and accepted by him, and given us by God. It is found out by God: ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit; for I have found a ransom,’ Job xxxiii. 24. The way of satisfying God’s justice by a ransom was not devised or found out by men or angels, but by God himself. And it is given us by God: ‘For he is of God made unto us righteousness,’ 1 Cor. i. 30; and 2 Cor. v. 21, ‘We are made the righteousness of God in him.’ And partly because it is accepted by God. It is a righteousness wherein God acquiesceth, and which he accepteth for our absolution: Mat. iii. 17, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ God is satisfied with Christ’s obedience to the