

SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS I. 21.

SERMON I.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—PHIL. i. 21.

PAUL had professed his indifferency to life or death, so Christ might be glorified by either; either by his ministry or martyrdom; his aim and scope was Christ's glory. Now how God would use him to such a purpose he was altogether unconcerned, and professeth, if he might have his option and choice, he would give the case back again to God to determine it as it might be most for his service and glory. Now here he beginneth to debate the case, and showeth in what respects life and death were valuable. If you put life in one scale and side of the balance, there is his service in the gospel; if death in the other side, there is eternal profit: 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'

Here I shall show—

1. Why he desired life, 'To me to live is Christ.'

2. Why he submitted to death, 'To die is gain.'

[1.] The purpose and business of the present life is Christ's service.

[2.] The gain and profit of his death is the perfect enjoyment of Christ; if he did live, he should preach Christ; if he did die, he should go to Christ, and remain with him for ever.

I must not dissemble it that some read the text thus, 'Christ is gain to me both in life and death, whatsoever falleth out.' This interpretation, though not unsuitable to the context, yet it doth not run so smoothly, and cannot be so easily wrought out of the Greek tongue as our translation.

I shall treat of the purpose and business of life; ἐμοὶ τὸ ζῆν Χριστός. The infinitive of the verb is put for the substantive, τὸ ζῆν for ζωή, my life is Christ. Now Christ may be said to be the life two ways—as the principle or as the end. As the principle: Gal. ii. 20, 'Christ liveth in me.' Secondly, as the end and scope; so here he is both author and end. As we live in him and by him, so we live for him and to him. The latter supposeth the former. Our tendency is according to the principle by which we are acted. That life which we have from Christ is used for Christ; his meaning is, that the service and honour of Christ was the scope and business of his life.

Doct. That the great end and business of a christian's life should be to honour and glorify Christ.

I argue it thus—

First, We have life from him, and therefore it will be to him. I speak it not of life natural, but spiritual. The tendency of it is to Christ, from whose influence we receive it; the end is according to the principle. We live in Christ, to Christ. A supernatural influence causeth a supernatural tendency. Carnal men, that act by their own life, live upon their own root, bring forth fruit to themselves, make it their business to please the flesh. Water riseth no higher than its fountain, and the fruit is always according to the influence of the root; but they that are ingrafted into Christ, they live out of themselves, and therefore do not live for themselves, but that their heavenly Father may be glorified, John xv. 8. It is the application of the parable of the vine; as rivers run into the sea from whence their channels are filled, so doth grace cause all the issues and outgoings of the spiritual life to return to Christ from whence they came.

Secondly, I argue from the right Christ hath to our service. We are his by every kind of right and title. If we were at our own dispose, we might live as we list; but no creature is *sui juris*, its own, to use as it will, much less the saints: Rom. xiv. 7-9, 'For no man of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' The apostle is there pressing to unity, notwithstanding lesser differences. The saints do not always agree in the means, by reason of the difference of light. They all agree in the scope; they do all things to the Lord, that is, the Lord Christ; for he speaketh of his dying and rising again. Now this he argueth from Christ's right, because we are the Lord's, which is acknowledged and improved to this end by the saints. Christ hath a right over all; weak and strong christians all agree in this, and wholly surrender themselves to Christ's use, living and dying. A whole christian is Christ's; take him in his person, his relations, conditions of life, and all his concernments, he is Christ's, and therefore to him to live is Christ.

To make this more clear, let us examine the several titles Christ hath to a believer.

1. By creation. So Christ hath a right to us, together with the Father and Spirit. He made the world: Heb. i. 2, 'Hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.' Men and angels were the work of his hands.

In creation three things are considerable—

(1.) The absolute right it gave him; (2.) The intention of the Creator; (3.) The obligation left upon the creature.

[1.] The absolute right that accrueth to him from hence. The creature is wholly and solely of him and from him, and of nothing else in the world, and therefore is wholly and solely his to dispose of. There is nothing ours, but his. What joint or member of the body, or faculty of the mind, was by thyself bestowed upon thyself, or made by thy direction and request? It was all made by God out of nothing, therefore it is all

his. Thy tongue is not thine own to speak what thou pleasest, nor thy heart thine to think what thou pleasest, or covet what thou pleasest, nor thy hand to do what thou pleasest, nor thy feet to go whither thou pleasest. We neither made nor can keep any of these things longer than God willeth, and therefore they must be employed for him. Self-love is God's prerogative. He alone can love himself and seek himself, because he alone is without obligation and dependence; but no creature was made terminatively for itself, to live to itself, for he that made it hath a right to all that we are and have; and to use ourselves otherwise than for his glory, ultimately and terminatively, it is to rob God of his property, and defeat the great owner of his right in us. But that is not all I would speak under this head, that God has a right, but he has an absolute right, such as no other can have. They distinguish in the civil law of a twofold dominion. There is *dominium jurisdictionis et proprietatis*, the dominion of jurisdiction over men, or reasonable creatures, who are only capable of passive jurisdiction or government. The dominion of propriety respects other things, as beasts and things inanimate. This is more absolute than the former; for a man may dispose of his own goods more absolutely than of those things over which he hath only a jurisdiction; as, for instance, a potter hath more power over his clay than a man over his beast, more power over his beast than his slave, over his slave than his free servant, and a man hath more power over his servants than a prince over his subjects. Now both these kinds of dominion hath God over us, not only that of jurisdiction, but propriety; and hath a more absolute power over us than the most absolute monarch, not only over his subjects and slaves, but over his goods and lands; for they did not make these things, but acquire a right, being made. A civil right cannot be so great as a natural, and no such natural right that any man hath. A man hath not such a power over the vineyard which he hath planted as God hath over the creatures which he hath made. The husbandman cannot make a vine, but he may set it and dress it; but God made us out of nothing. Nor is the power of the potter such over his clay, for he only giveth shape by art, but God gives our whole being; therefore he hath an absolute power to use us as he pleaseth. I may do with my own as it pleaseth me.

[2.] The next thing in creation is the intention of the Creator. God would not let fall his right. There is nothing made by any one but he expects some use and service for it. It is irrational to do a thing because we will do it, without any purpose. God being a rational agent, must have an end, and he could have no end but himself, his service, the declaring of his own glory: Prov. xvi. 4, 'He hath made all things for himself.' No creature was made for itself, but all for God. They are from him and for him: Rom. xi. 36, 'For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' Some things God made immediately for himself, as men and angels; other things for himself ultimately and terminatively, but immediately for man's good. And indeed the whole creation, except the angels, are subjected to our dominion or created for our use. The heavens, though not under our dominion as the beasts, yet were created for our use; the lower heaven to give us breath, the middle heaven to give us light and heat, the highest heaven for

our dwelling-place. The sun shineth for us, the winds blow for us, the water runneth for us, so the earth is settled for us. God is the ultimate result and issue of them, but they were made for us immediately. But man's obedience and service he hath reserved by a special command unto himself. He that by creation gave a being to all things, imposed an end upon them. Now this is the end imposed upon men, that they should more immediately dispose of themselves to his service and glory. Our end was not to eat, drink, trade, sleep, enjoy pleasures and honours, but to serve and honour God. That is our end ultimately and terminatively, and therefore that should be our main business. All other things keep their end for which they were created; the sun to enlighten the world by day, and for that end he still serveth; the moon and stars to rule the night; therefore if we were made for this purpose, to know, love, fear, obey, and serve God, this should be our business and scope; to do otherwise is as unnatural to us as it is for the sun not to shine or the stars not to convey their light and influence.

[3.] Besides the right and intention of the Creator there is an obligation left upon the creature to love and serve him that created us, namely, as he showed more love to us than he did to any other creatures except the angels. He gave being to other things, to man his image. Now the whole use of an image and picture lieth in the resemblance. We do not answer the dignity put upon us in our creation if we do not resemble the wisdom, purity, goodness, and mercy of God, which we can only do by living to him. We deface that which God intended for a glory to man, and cast it away as a thing nothing worth. He made man lord of all things, Gen. i. 26; and the psalmist noteth it, Ps. viii. 6, 'Thou hast put all things under him.' Subject to our dominion, or created for our use; and shall we not serve him that hath made the whole course of nature to serve us? All the creatures are at work for us night and day, for a poor worm of six feet long; and shall not God be honoured and served for this? We are troubled if the creatures do not serve us, if the course of nature be varied, if the sun do not shine in its season, and showers of rain in their season; and why are we not troubled if we do not serve God? There is no debt from the creatures to us; they serve us only by the bounty and appointment of God. We are not only appointed to serve him, but indebted to him. In our constitution every member of the body is an obliging mercy; if we want any one sense, and could meet with a person that can restore it, as the loss of an eye or an arm, how would we love and honour him! And will not you remember your Creator, who gave them to us at first?

2. Preservation, by which the title of creation is daily renewed and reinforced. Now Christ is interested in all this, as all things in heaven and earth are gathered together in him: Eph. i. 10, 'That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.' *Ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι*, is the apostle's word, as the words of a speech are recapitulated and summed up that they may not be lost. And if we consider the creature's mutability, and how every moment we are in danger to be lost, preservation is as beneficial as creation. We are continued by his providential influence every moment in our being

and operation, as the beams are by the sun : Acts xvii. 28, 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being ;' Heb. i. 3, 'And upholdeth all things by the word of his power.' Things were not made that they should act and subsist of themselves, as the house abideth when the architect is gone ; therefore we are bound to serve him every moment : Neh. ix. 6, 'Thou, even thou, art Lord alone ; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all.' And he doth not this out of necessity, but of his own free will. If God should turn you off for preservation to yourselves, what would you do to keep yourselves from falling into nothing? If you live, and act as your own men, is not God disengaged from providing for you? As he that leaveth his master's work is no longer reckoned as a branch of the family, but left to live upon his own calling.

3. Redemption. This giveth a proper right to the second person : 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'For ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' They are not yours, but God's. To make this consideration the more effectual, let us consider—(1.) The right ; (2.) The price.

[1.] Let us consider how there accrueth to Christ a right by redemption. God had a right in us by creation, a fair and full right, which we could not make away by sin. We had indeed sold ourselves unto God's adversary for enjoying the pleasures of the flesh : Isa. lii. 3, 'Ye have sold yourselves for nought.' Though we could not alienate ourselves by any covenant, implicit or express, from God's dominion of jurisdiction over us, yet we did renounce his service ; so that God was no otherwise our lord than a king over rebels and traitors, who may withdraw their allegiance, yet cannot abrogate and make void his jurisdiction. This right that God had in us did only move him to take vengeance of us, as the right of a prince to chastise the rebels, and reduce them by strong hand to their obedience. We had interest in his gracious protection ; so that now to restore us, not only to his service, but favour, Jesus Christ came and made satisfaction, and therefore is said to purchase us to God, Rev. v. 9 ; and therefore this should highly oblige us to serve him. God lost no right by the fall, but we lost privilege ; it was a right that was comfortable and beneficial to us, and therefore we are not our own, but his, by all the laws of equity.

[2.] Consider the price that was paid for us. The apostle Peter gives us an account of that : 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'We were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' The greatness of the price doth argue his full propriety in us. That which was bought with silver and gold gave the buyer an interest in the thing or person so bought, not only in lands, but servants ; as if a man had bought another out of captivity, or he had sold himself, all his time, strength, and service belonged to the buyer. Yea, the dominion was so absolute, that the servant had no plea against his master if he had died by his stripes after a while, 'He is his money,' saith the law, Exod. xxi. 21. But now we are bought with the blood of the Son of God, and therefore what degree of service can be answerable to so great a price? Judas sold our Saviour at a cheap rate, for thirty pieces

of silver; but before God's tribunal it was blood of a higher price; and as to us, the indignity and cheap price that was put upon him maketh the obligation the greater; therefore we should wholly bend ourselves to promote his glory.

4. By conquest. Prisoners of war were theirs that took them till they paid their ransom. The apostle alludeth to it: 2 Peter ii. 19, 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage;' Rom. vii. 14, 'Sold under sin.' We are Christ's by conquest: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.' By strong hand: Luke xi. 21, 22, 'When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil.' Indeed this conquest is sweet, for it is not a captivity, but a rescue; as Abraham pursued after the kings that took Lot prisoner, Gen. xiv., and rescued him, and would have nothing for his pains but the liberty of the persons. So that it is a blessed conquest, but yet such as giveth Christ an interest in us, as David got an interest in Michal, Saul's daughter, by slaying Goliath.

5. Actual possession. When we are united to him by the Spirit, our property in ourselves is quite destroyed by our union with Christ; so that our bodies and souls are not our own to dispose of, but his. Thence the apostle: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.' Christ hath a right in everything that is a christian's; it is actually seized upon by the Spirit.

6. By resignation and voluntary consent. When Christ taketh hold of us by his Spirit, we take hold of him. Christ maketh over himself to us, and we give up ourselves to him, every interest and concernment to him: 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16. We are so. It is the time of spiritual marriage between Christ and the soul. We give up all to him, every interest, relation, concernment; and this must not be retracted in word or deed. Therefore unless we mean to retract our vows, and deal treacherously in the covenant, we should live as those that are Christ's: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord;' 2 Chron. xxx. 8, 'Yield yourselves to the Lord.'

Thirdly, The third reason is taken from the value of his service. Life is only then worth the having when we may honour Christ by it, otherwise not. For a man that hath an interest in better things to desire life merely for itself, is foolish; for it is better to be with God, Phil. i. 23, *πολλῶ μάλλον κρείττον*, 'by much more the better.' For a saint to live here with so much trouble and molestation is no eligible thing; but yet if Christ hath any use for us, we must be content. David prayeth for life, but still in order to service: Ps. cxix. 17, 'Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word.' Paul loved his work rather than his life, and preferred obedience before safety: Acts xx. 24, 'Neither count I my life dear unto me, so I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' So that was David's hope in the prolongation of life: Ps. cxviii. 17, 'I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.' Further opportunities to honour God. This is that which maketh life to be life

indeed, communion with God in Christ. It is not he who lives longest and most plentifully, but most serviceable to God's glory, that makes life to be life indeed.

Use 1. To persuade us to make it our business to honour Christ, to advance him. It doth not only concern public persons, such as Paul was, but every private christian.

To this purpose I shall—(1.) Give you directions; (2.) Motives.

1. You must close with him by faith, and use him to the end for which God hath appointed him: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'That our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him.' Now when did you close with him by faith? Faith has a double office—it accepts Christ from God, and presents Christ to God. It makes use of him in all our converse with him; it accepts Christ in the word, and maketh use of him in prayer. In the word God offereth him to you as Lord and Saviour, to give you repentance and remission of sins. Now when you consent to God's terms, this is to believe in him. Take heed you do not make light of Christ, as those did, Mat. xxii. 5, *οἱ δὲ ἀμελήσαντες*; they slighted, disregarded, neglected him; they had other business to mind. No; this is your work, your hearts should be set on it. After long traverses you must say, as Laban, Gen. xxiv. 50, 'The thing is of the Lord.' I can say nothing against it. I will see what Christ will do for my soul; oh, that I may be found in him! It presents Christ to God: Eph. iii. 12, 'In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.' You gather heart and confidence by dealing with God in his name. All religion lieth in a coming to God by him, Heb. vii. 25, but that coming is not meant of one duty, but the principal aim and purpose of the soul in all, rejoicing in God.

2. Consecrate and dedicate yourselves to Christ's use: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' There is the foundation of our obedience: 2 Cor. v. 8, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord.' You owe yourselves to him, and therefore you give up yourselves to him; as Paul said to Philemon, ver. 19, 'Thou owest unto me even thine own self.' Lord, I am thine. Your business is first to take Christ, but then to surrender yourselves to his use.

3. Use yourselves as those that are Christ's, that is, improving your time, and estates, and strength, and relations, and talents, and interests for his glory. A good christian would have nothing, but he would make some advantage of it for Christ's use, and this will be seen by checking temptations upon this account: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot?' This body is Christ's, this time which I misspend is Christ's, this money is Christ's; hereby you own God's impress upon you. 'Holiness to the Lord' should be written upon all things, Zech. xiv. 20. And it is known by contrivances, how you shall honour Christ by your place, your relations: Neh. i. 11, 'Grant him mercy in the sight of this man; for I was the king's cupbearer.' He had improved his place for God. God hath advanced me, made me a minister, a magistrate, a master of a

family, given me a great estate. What are the workings of your hearts? 2 Sam. vii. 2, 'I dwell in a house of cedar; but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.'

4. Honour him by the holiness of your conversations, when you walk so as remembering that Christ's honour lieth at stake, at another rate than others do: 1 Cor. iii. 3, 'They walk as men.' We have higher advantages, and hopes, and obligations upon ourselves than others have. Wherein do you differ? Mat. v. 46, 'What do ye more than others?' Both for matter and aim, your business should be so as to bring Christ into request with others: 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversation honest among the gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.'

5. By all your enjoyments, temporal and spiritual, let Christ be endeared to you: 1 Cor. iii. 21, 'All things are yours, because you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' All mercies swim to you in his blood. Get actual possession of an evangelical right, sanctified by Jesus Christ. As to quickening enlargements, it is a sign you have them from Christ when you honour him and esteem him the more for them: John xvi. 14, 'He shall take of mine, and glorify me.' It is a sign the Spirit of Christ dwelleth and worketh in us when all that enlightening, quickening comfort and refreshing which we have is used to the glory of Christ.

6. When you are willing to undergo any trouble, and count it an honour to suffer for Christ's sake. To die for Christ, saith Ignatius, is greater than to be monarch of all the world: Acts v. 41, 'And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake,' ὅτι κατηξιώθησαν ἄτιμασθῆναι; that they were so far dignified as to be disgraced for Christ. *Cur non me quoque torque donas?*—Why don't you honour me with a chain also? said one. Suffering is a privilege: 'To you it is given to suffer for Christ,' Phil. i. 29.

Motives.

1. Consider you are not your own, but under another lord. All disorder cometh from looking upon ourselves as our own men: Jer. ii. 31, 'We are lords, and will not come at thee;' Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?' Prodigals will say, I spend nothing but my own. The covetous will say, 'Shall I take my bread and my wine,' &c.

2. We have owned Christ's right in baptism. There the hands of consecration passed upon us: 1 Peter iii. 21, 'Baptism doth also now save us; not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' You that have professed the christian religion, you rescind your baptismal vow by a loose life. Your parents consecrated you to Christ, and you will not stand to it.

3. There will a day of accounts come, when the great God of recompenses will reckon with you: Jer. li. 6, 'For this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto thee a recompense;' Luke xix. 23, 'At my coming I will require mine own with usury.' If there were no day of account, we are so much obliged; but there is a day

of inquiry what portion you had ; thus much time, thus much estate. What a poor account will most be able to make !

4. The utility and profit of it as to present comfort and final reward.

[1.] For the present an interest in Christ's intercession : John xvii. 9, 10, 'I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine : and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.' Those who glorify Christ on earth, he is pleading their cause in heaven. You are his factors, he is your advocate. It is a sweet thing to have our Redeemer speak well of us behind our back ; when we are praying, to have him pleading, Father, this is one that glorified me. He makes a good report of you in heaven.

[2.] Hereafter it will turn to a good account, whatever it cost you for the present. David's companions in the wilderness had hard service in the wilderness, and little wages ; but when David was crowned in Hebron, they were all advanced to offices and places of power and trust. We may meet with many a frown, and hard entertainment in the world, but we shall not repent it in the day of Christ's royalty. There is a notable passage, Mat. xix. 27, 28, 'Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee ; what shall we have therefore ? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones.' What had Peter to forsake ? A net, a cottage, a fisher-boat ; a great all ! But we are apt to think much of what we part with for Christ's sake ; a little scorn, a disgraceful word, some paring of our maintenance ; presently we say, What shall we have therefore ? We need not seek another paymaster ; Christ will not be behindhand with us *ἐν παλιγγενεσίᾳ*, 'in the regeneration.' Surely we do not think often enough of the general renovation of all things ; if we did, we would glorify God more. If you live to Christ, you shall live with Christ, enjoy his company in heaven.

SERMON II.

To die is gain.—PHIL. i. 21.

I COME to the benefit of death, 'To die is gain.' Some refer it to martyrdom, as if the gain would be to Christ. In his life he would glorify him by preaching, in his death by martyrdom. It is true, in this sense, 'to die is gain,' no loss to the church, but an advantage, and making for her increase. *Sanguis martyrum est semen ecclesie*—The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. And God's honour is thereby promoted : John xxi. 19, 'Signifying by what death he should glorify God.' It is so said concerning Peter's martyrdom. It is for the glory of the truth, when they are ready to seal it with their blood, and to stand to the defence even to the death. It is an evidence of the

truth of God's promise, when they can hazard all in hope of the accomplishment of them; and it commendeth God's service when we are willing to please him, though with the loss of all. But this cannot be meant, for it is not usual to call anything we do or suffer for God gain to him; and it suiteth not with the context, where his service in the gospel and his eternal interests are put in competition; not the glory that Christ had by his life, and the glory Christ might have by his death, those are not the things that come in competition, but his service and glorious estate in heaven; his own unspeakable joy and comfort, that is the gain he meaneth.

Doct. Whosoever dedicate their lives to Christ will find death itself to be great gain and advantage to them.

Death is theirs, because they are Christ's, devoted to his use and service, 1 Cor. iii. 22. It is theirs, that is, it conduceth to their use and benefit; their gain, and not their terror; an enemy to nature, but a friend to grace. In this sense it is said, Eccles. vii. 1, 'The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.' It is meant of those that leave a good name and a good savour behind them; for so the whole verse runs, 'A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of one's death better than the day of one's birth.' The name of the wicked rotteth, but the name of the godly is a sweet perfume; when the matter of the perfume is burnt, the scent remaineth behind them; so when the person is gone, the savour of a good name liveth and remaineth behind them. Now to these is the day of their death better than the day of their birth, not only in that respect of name and reputation which increaseth after death, when their failings are 'buried with them,' and removed out of sight; but generally it is better with them, in regard both of sin and misery. In regard of sin, they are born in sin: Ps. li. 5, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;' but die in the Lord; are laid to sleep in the bosom of Jesus: 1 Thes. iv. 13, 14, 'I would not have you ignorant concerning them that are asleep; but if you believe that Jesus died, and rose again, so also they that sleep in Jesus,' &c. Born unclean, but die perfect. In regard of misery, birth lets us into troubles: 'Man is born to troubles, as the sparks fly upward,' Job v. 7. It is natural to us, as the ascending of light bodies and the descending of weighty and heavy bodies; but death delivereth us out of them. In the grave there is rest: Job iii. 13, 'I shall lie still and be quiet; I shall sleep and be at rest.' Not only a privative rest, or a cessation of troubles, but a positive rest, a blessed enjoyment of God: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.' These scriptures confirm the point.

In the illustration of it I shall perform three things—

1. Show that presently upon dying, man is capable of this gain, or of a blessed estate.

2. I shall show you what this gain is.

3. That it is proper and peculiar only to those that dedicate their lives to Christ.

I. This is strongly implied, if not expressly asserted in this place, that as soon as he dieth man is capable of great gain, for otherwise the whole reasoning would fall to the ground, which is mainly built

upon supposition of his gain. There are a sort of men in the world so drowned in sense that they cannot believe things to come, either questioning the immortality of the soul, or else, which is a step to it, asserting the sleep of it, and all because they so fancy it to be tied to the body as that it cannot exercise its functions and operations without it. Those that deny the being of the soul, or abiding of it after the body is dissolved, I shall deal with them in another place. I shall only speak now to those that grant the abiding of the soul, but in a deep sleep, without any sense or feeling of good or evil. I must show the falsehood of this opinion, or else all I shall speak will be to no purpose.

First, That the soul is distinct from the body, and is not merely the vigour of the blood, appeareth by scripture, reason, and experience.

1. In scripture we read that when man's body was organised and framed, God 'breathed into him the spirit of life,' Gen. ii. 7. The life of man is a distinct thing from this mass of flesh that is proportioned into hands and feet, head and belly, arms and legs, bones and sinews; and this life of man, whatever it be, it is such a life as implieth reason, and a faculty of understanding, and willing or choosing: 'In him was life, and this life was the light of men,' John i. 5. It doth not only enliven this flesh, but discourse and choose things at its own pleasure; a life that hath light in it. It is distinct from the body in its nature, being a substance immaterial, and not capable of being divided into parts, as the body is; for it is a spirit, not created of matter, as the body was. The body was framed out of the dust of the ground, and therefore can be resolved into it again, but the spirit was immediately created by God himself out of nothing; therefore the scripture saith, Eccles. xi. 7, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it;' where the body, that was dust in its composition, shall be dust in its dissolution. There is described the first and last condition of the body in regard of its material cause, and the soul is described in the kind of its being; it is a spirit, or an immaterial substance; its author, God, gave it. He framed the body too, but not so immediately. In ordinary generation, our natural fathers are distinguished from the Father of our spirits, Heb. xii. 9. And by its disposal; when the body returneth to dust, the soul returneth to God. The saints resign it: Acts vii. 59, 'They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

2. It is distinct in its supports. The body is supported by outward means and the help of the creature, but the soul is supported without means, by the immediate hand and power of God himself. The body is patched up with daily supplies from without; as it was made out of the earth, so is its food brought out of the earth: Ps. civ. 14, 'He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth fruit out of the earth.' And its clothing; but the soul needeth none of these things.

3. It is distinct in its operations. There are certain operations of the soul wholly independent upon the matter; as understanding and willing, for they agree to God and angels, who have no bodies: and there is no proper instrument in the body by which they should be

exercised, as sight by the eye, hearing by the ear. Nay, it understands not only corporeal things, which are received by the ministry of the senses, but spiritual things, as God and angels, who have no bodies; and it can reflect upon itself; therefore it hath operations proper and peculiar to itself, so that it doth not depend upon the body.

4. It is distinct from the body.

[1.] As to weakness and perfection. The soul perisheth and decayeth not with the body. When the body droopeth and languisheth, the soul is well, yea, best, and better than it was before. There are distinct periods of time beyond which it is impossible to add a cubit or hair's-breadth to one's stature; but the soul is ever growing forward to its perfection; and multitude of years, though they bring on much weakness, yet increase wisdom, Job xxxii. 7. Yea, the soul is strongest when the body is weakest. Dying christians have manifested the highest excellency under bodily infirmities; and when least of the life of nature, most glorious expressions of the life of grace: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.'

[2.] As to pleasure and pain, joy and comfort. When all the joy of the body is gone, the joys of the soul are enlarged; as when the bodies of the martyrs on the rack were under torturings, their souls have been filled with inward triumphings, and their consolations: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ.' When the flesh is scorched, their souls are refreshed.

5. They are distinct in the commands God hath given about it. Christ hath commanded us to 'take no thought for the body,' Mat. vi. 25, but he never commanded us to take no thought for the soul, rather the contrary: Deut. iv. 9, 'Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently.' The great miscarriage of men is, because they pamper their bodies and neglect their souls. All their care is to keep up their bodies in due plight, but never regard their souls, which were more immediately given them by God, and carry the most lively character of his image, and are capable of his happiness.

Secondly, The soul is not only distinct from the body, but can live and exercise its operations apart from the body. There are many arguments from reason to prove the immortality of the soul; but let us consider scripture, which should be reason enough to christians. That it can do so appeareth by that expression of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 'I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth), such an one caught up to the third heaven.' If Paul had been of this opinion, that the soul separated from the body is void of all sense, he must then have known that certainly his soul remained in his body during this rapture, because, according to this supposition, in that state alone could he see and hear those things which he saw and heard. And that argument is not contemptible to prove the possibility, where among other things it is said, 'Death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ.' Therefore the soul liveth in a state to enjoy him, and in a sense of God's love to us, and our love to him.

Thirdly, That the souls of the saints not only can live apart from

the body, but actually do so, appeareth from scripture. First take a passage next the text: Phil. i. 23, 'For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.' *Ἀναλύσαι* is to be dissolved; it giveth us the right notion of death; it is not a destruction of the godly, but the separation of the soul from the body, dissolving of things before conjoined, when the soul is set at liberty from the fetters and captivity wherein it remained in the body. That was it he desired, to set sail for heaven. But how can it be *πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον*, by 'much more the better,' if the soul were deprived of all sense and feeling, and did remain in a dead sleepy estate? Is it not better for a gracious man to wake than to sleep, to work than to be idle and sit still, to use the faculties granted us by God than to lie in a senseless condition? What profit is it to be with the Lord, and not to enjoy his company? or not to know where we are? Oh, it is better to have our present knowledge of Christ and service to him, and those sips and tastes of spiritual comfort which the present state will admit, than to lie in such a stupid lethargy, without all understanding or spiritual sense. It would be a loss of happiness for Paul to be dissolved, when his body should lie rotting in the grave, and his soul without all fruition of God. What can be imagined to be a happiness, but to be eased of present labours? God's people are wont to reckon much of their present service and enjoyment of God, though accompanied with afflictions. Surely Paul would never be in a strait, if to be only reduced into a condition of stupid sleep, without the enjoyment of God, wherein we do nothing, feel nothing. God's people, I say, are wont to prefer the most afflicted condition with God's presence above the greatest contentment in his absence: 'If thou go not up with us, carry us not up hence,' Exod. xxxiii. 15. Better be with God in the wilderness than in Canaan without him. So that this drowsy doctrine, which puts the soul in such an inactive estate, cannot be endured, wherein souls departed enjoy no more happiness than stocks and stones, or inanimate creatures, till the resurrection. So 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, '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: for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' Surely if the soul slept till the resurrection, they should not say, when this house is dissolved, but when this body is raised, and this tabernacle is restored. When they desire to part with the body, it is not for want of love to their bodies, but out of love to their souls. Paul could have wished mortality to be swallowed up of life, that the mortal body might have gone to life with the immortal soul. It were absurd to long for the dissolution of that state in which we feel the love of God and Christ to us with joy unspeakable and glorious, only for an estate where there is no sense of God, or Christ, or itself, or celestial and heavenly things. It followeth afterwards, ver. 6, 'Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.' We should rather be absent from him when out of the body, and have no understanding, no love, no communion with him. The next place is Luke xxiii. 43, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' saith Christ to the good thief. By paradise is meant heaven. See 2 Cor. xii. 4. What he calls the

third heaven, ver. 2, he calls paradise, ver. 4; an allusion, not to ordinary gardens, as Eden, or that garden which Adam dressed in innocency. Christ saith he was in paradise in regard of his soul, for his body was to be laid in the sepulchre. His divine nature is not intended, for so he was always in heaven: John iii. 13, 'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven.' Now this soul of Christ, when separated from the body, was it destitute of all sense, yea or no? Can any christian think so of their blessed Lord and Saviour? Surely then it is not contrary to nature that the soul act or feel out of the body. He promiseth the penitent thief he shall be with him. Surely he speaketh it to comfort him, and this comfort was not to commence till sixteen or seventeen hundred years afterwards, if the soul slept till the resurrection. To evade the place, they refer *σήμερον*, 'to-day,' to *λέγω*, 'I say, I say to-day;' but the pointing in the Greek copies showeth otherwise. The sense is otherwise, for it is Christ's answer to his desire, 'Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' But now Christ, to encourage him, promiseth more than was asked, as God usually doth abundantly above what we can ask or think: I will not defer thy desire so long. None can imagine the words to be a denial, or that Christ would put him off to some hundred years after. Christ's *hodie*, 'to-day' answereth his *quando*, 'when,' in that parable, which must be supposed to speak according to the current of those times: Luke xvi. 22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom;' in the twinkling of an eye, or the turning of a thought. A great comfort when you come to die; in a moment angels will carry you to Christ, and Christ to God. Agonies of death are terrible, but there are joys just ready; as soon as you are loose from the prison of the body, you enter into your eternal rest; the soul flieth hence to Christ to be where he is. In short, men are in their final estate as soon as they die; they go to their own place: wicked men to the prison of hell, 1 Peter iii. 19; good men to 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23. Would those things be said of them if they did lie only in a dull sleep without any life, light, joy, or act of love to God? Now present sleep is a burden to the saints, as it is an interruption to their service.

II. I shall show what that gain is which blessed spirits departed do enjoy. I confess we should rather labour to obtain it than scrupulously to define it. When we get up thither, we shall understand it better.

Here I shall show you—(1.) What this blessed state is; (2.) The comfortable adjuncts of it; (3.) That we lose nothing but what is made up.

1. What it is.

[1.] Privatively.

(1.) A freedom from all misery. Death is a haven of rest after storms and tempests: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from their labour.' Here the church's name is 'O thou afflicted and tossed with tempests!' but there is our haven. Here, alas! are tossings and shakings: Job xiv. 1, 'Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.' It is well they are few, because so full of trouble. A tired man would fain go to rest. Nay, it is for our

profit that there are troubles (it being so natural to us to be led by sense), to imbitter our present estate; but there are no more then: here there are not only outward afflictions, molestations, death of friends and dear relations, sorrow, crying, sighing, pains; but then 'God will wipe away all tears from our eyes,' Rev. xxi. 21. But also there are inward troubles by reason of doubts, temptations, corruptions, defects, and weaknesses. How many cloudy days doth a christian pass over in the world! What dampings of heart, conflicts with Satan! But there we enter into our master's joy, Mat. xxv. 21. There is no serpent in the upper paradise.

(2.) Freedom from sin: then sin shall be wholly subdued when they die, for death is the last enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 26. If sin continued after death, death would not be the last enemy. There we are brought to God as a proof of Christ's death: Eph. v. 27, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish;' Jude 24, 'And to present you faultless before the presence of his glory;' Col. i. 22, 'To present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable, in his sight.' Alas! what a trouble have we with sin! Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If any man had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul had; in perils often, whipped, scourged, imprisoned, stoned. Oh, but this body of death! His lusts troubled him more than scourges, and this captivity to the law of sin more than prisons. We are sinning here while others glorify God. Here we are born in sin, and after the new birth much corruption still remains in us. *Dejectum, non ejectum*; sin is cast down, not cast out. But death works a perfect cure; it puts off all our sins at once.

[2.] Positively.

(1.) The vision of God: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'But now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known;' 1 John iii. 2, 'But we know when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Here we know little of him, only his track, shadow, picture; but there face to face. In the church there is only hearing of him by the ear, but in heaven there will be seeing. Now we know God only by hearsay, but see him not; still τὸ θεῖον is ἀκατάληπτον, the divine nature is incomprehensible; angels clap their wings, and cover their faces. Finite cannot comprehend infinite, no more than a cockle-shell can the ocean.

(2.) The full fruition of God. Here, 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;' but there much more: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' by it we become like him. In a stamp impressed, the wax receiveth only the form and figure, without any real quality, as a golden seal leaveth no tincture of gold, nor a brazen seal the property of brass. In a glass, besides figure and proportion, there is a representation of motion, but no other real qualities. But here, as iron in the fire seemeth to be fire, we are like him in holiness and happiness. There is in God τὸ μακάριον καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν, happiness and holiness; these are communicated to us.

(1st.) In holiness; we love him everlastingly, as God loveth himself. Moses, by conversing with God, his face shone. We love little because we know little. To love God out of a participation of the same nature, the lowest is to love him out of interest, the highest out of a principle of holiness; not because good and bountiful, but because holy. While sight is weak, holiness is weak; and while holiness is weak, love is imperfect; for holiness is nothing in effect but love. We wander after other things, but this love is expressed by receiving, delighting, lauding, praising him for evermore.

(2d.) In happiness; for there is as much fruition of God as we are capable of: Rom. viii. 18, 'Glory revealed in us.' There God is all, here there is no room to receive him, no faculties to behold his glory, no means to convey it.

2. The comfortable adjuncts of it.

[1.] The place, which is very glorious. The pavement and nether part, we cannot look upon it without wonder; but the seat of the blessed is much more glorious, as the holiest of all exceeded the outward court. Here we are in the place of our service; how pleasant soever our seat be, there is inconvenience, a mixture of winter and summer, sickness and health, life and death; it is a middle place between heaven and hell, and hath a mixture of both. The best contentments are mixed with dregs, but there is pure contentment without any sorrow at all.

[2.] The company: Heb. xii. 22, 23, 'But ye are come to mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.' Besides God, and Christ's human nature, there are an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Heaven is no solitude; there is company enough, good and blessed company. What a joy will it be to behold Christ's glory, angels and archangels ministering to him; to see the first parents of mankind, Adam and Eve, and the blessed patriarchs! Mat. viii. 11, 'They shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Enoch and Elias, the two persons that were translated into heaven in an extraordinary way. See Paul with his crown of righteousness upon his head; our friends with whom we mingle souls. Between this blessed company there is great love; every one is loving, and every one is lovely. The apostle telleth us that when faith and hope cease, love remaineth; not only as terminated on God, but as terminated on the saints. They shall not only love God above all, but love one another with a most pure and perfect love. They shall love God more than themselves, and others as themselves. As the loops of the tabernacle did couple the curtains one to another, so dear love unites the glorified saints. No more strife between Luther and Zuinglius, Hooper and Ridley, Calvinists and Lutherans; not to come nearer home, and mention those invidious names which are set up as flags of defiance to divide us into several herds and factions. And as mutual love, so there will be mutual honouring one another, and rejoicing in one another without envy, according to the honour God puts on them. Their will is perfectly conformable to God's, rejoicing in each other as their

own. Those two querulous words, *mine* and *thine*, will no more set us at variance ; for one hath not the less comfort because another hath more ; as a great multitude hear a speech, one hears not the less because another hears it with him ; or the sun shines on a multitude, every one hath all ; or as in a chorus of voices, every one is partaker of another's voice as well as his own. Neither are they set together as mute spectators and mere strangers. There is a communion between the blessed spirits. Paul when he was rapt into the third heaven, heard *ἄρρητα ῥήματα*, unutterable words, words not fit to be uttered, 2 Cor. xii. 4, which is not lawful or possible. He doth not speak so much of what he saw, but heard. God revealed himself to Moses by sight, Exod. xxiii., to Paul by hearing. We cannot intrude into those secrets, to know what and how this communion is maintained ; but somewhat we may guess at ; holy and gracious conferences concerning the wisdom of God, his decrees, the works of his power, the riches of his grace, the fruits of Christ's death ; as in Christ's transfiguration, Luke ix. 31, ' They appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.' To meet with holy prophets, and tell them now all is come to pass, now all hazards and dangers are over, certainly a sweet communion it will be ; as travellers when they come into their inn talk of the dirtiness of the way. Only here now I shall inquire whether the saints know one another in heaven, fathers their children, and children their fathers, husbands their wives, friends their acquaintance ; yea, those that never saw one another's faces ?

Ans. Yes, but not after the flesh, in a carnal natural way: Mat. xxii. 30, ' They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.' But they rejoice in one another in a spiritual way, as they are related to Christ. Though it be a double contentment to see that our relations do increase the number of blessed spirits, it is not to be imagined there will be a perfect oblivion of all things. Memory is not abolished, but perfected ; for those that never knew one another in the flesh shall then know one another. Adam knew Eve in the state of integrity, though he never saw her before : Gen. ii. 23, ' And Adam said, This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' So when restored to a perfect state ; the disciples knew Moses and Elias, though they had never seen them, Mat. xvii. 3. We shall be suddenly enlightened to know them in that great council of souls ; being of the same company. we shall know our fellows. In that parable of Dives and Lazarus, Luke xvi., there is a representation of the everlasting estate. Abraham knew Lazarus, and the rich glutton knew him in Abraham's bosom. Ministers shall have knowledge of souls they have gained to Christ : 1 Thes. ii. 19, ' For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? ' Such as were converted, edified by him. Such believers are welcomed to heaven by the poor whom they have relieved : Luke xvi. 9, ' Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' Angels do not only know themselves, but all the elect whom they are to gather from the four winds, Mat. xiii. 41. It is more probable they shall know one another.

III. That we shall lose nothing but what shall be made up.

1. Do we lose friends? There are better in heaven; our best friends love us not so dearly as every one doth there. This is the true communion of saints; we have communion not only with one or two, but all; now two or three berries on the top of the uppermost bough. It is well if two or three mortified humble christians can meet together, and breathe out their souls in supplications: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name.' There is an innumerable company; there is none but such. Here saints and hypocrites are mixed and blended together in promiscuous herds, there none but the wheat is gathered into the barn. There will need no fears and suspicions, no unclean enters there. Christ, that giveth entrance into heaven, cannot be deceived; there they are perfect. Our communion is often interrupted by our infirmities; here full of contention or clashing, there all agree in the same aim and the same work; and this union and communion is constant without end; now often diverted by present weaknesses and intervenient occasions; we must break off company and societies, if not affections; there we shall never part, but always be praising God.

2. Is it ordinances we lose? There the Lamb shall be the light of the new temple. We shall study divinity in Christ's face; that will be our bible, there we shall drink of the fruit of the vine new with Christ, Mat. xxvi. 29.

3. Communion with God. Then 'we shall ever be with the Lord,' 1 Thes. iv. 17. There will be no cloud on that day.

4. Service and opportunities of glorifying God. We shall be more active to his praise. The instrument will be perfectly in tune. Here we often jar, there will be no spot or blemish, Eph. v. 27.

5. Comforts of this world, they are of use in our passage, and we must possess as if we possessed not, 1 Cor. vii. 31; but there we are free from all needs. No man complains, when he is recovered out of a disease, that he has no more need of physic.

Use 1. To commend Christ's service to you. If you have dedicated your life to the flesh, then death will be bitter: Gal. vi. 8, 'For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.' A man should consider all things with respect to his latter end, that he may have the same notion of things living and dying. But Christ's servant, what comfort shall he have when he goeth hence to his master? John xii. 16, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be.' Oh, follow him; you will not repent of it at last. Believe this that is spoken; if you did believe, surely you could not be so slack in his service: John xi. 26, 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, though he die yet shall he live. Believest thou this?' Did we strongly consider and soundly believe these truths, Christ would have more servants than he hath. Oh, then, there is a great deal of profit in Christ's service as to present comfort and final reward.

Use 2. A meditation for the dying. We should hear for the time to come, and not only hear, to learn to live by the word, but learn to die. To make you willing to die, consider, death is not a loss, but a gain. You leave earth for heaven, misery for complete happiness, a temporal life for an eternal; a shed is taken down that a palace

may be raised up in its stead ; you exchange a lease for an inheritance, and hard service for perfect freedom. Death is terrible upon a natural and legal account, as it puts an end to our present comforts ; and upon a legal account, as it is attended with sin : 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin.'

Use 3. To confute their fondness that would divide these two. Many would have death to be gain, but do not take care to live to Christ. Alas ! that is a foolish thought. You would have comfort, but you deny duty ; you would live to the flesh, yet die in the Lord. God might have customers more than enough for heaven upon these terms. To die to you will be loss : 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' You cannot expect to go from Delilah's lap to Abraham's bosom. No ; you go from pleasure to pain, from your friends to devils, from opportunities of grace to torments and inflicting of punishments, from your house to the prison of hell.

Use 4. Comfort concerning departed friends. Will you envy at their preferment, whine and murmur at their gain ? If you loved them indeed, you would be glad when it is well with them ; and where can it be better for them than in heaven, in the bosom of Jesus Christ ? The soul is there. You leave the body in the grave, but Christ will not leave it there : 'Thou fool ! that which thou sowest lives not except 't die.' Oh, then comfort you one another with these words.
