

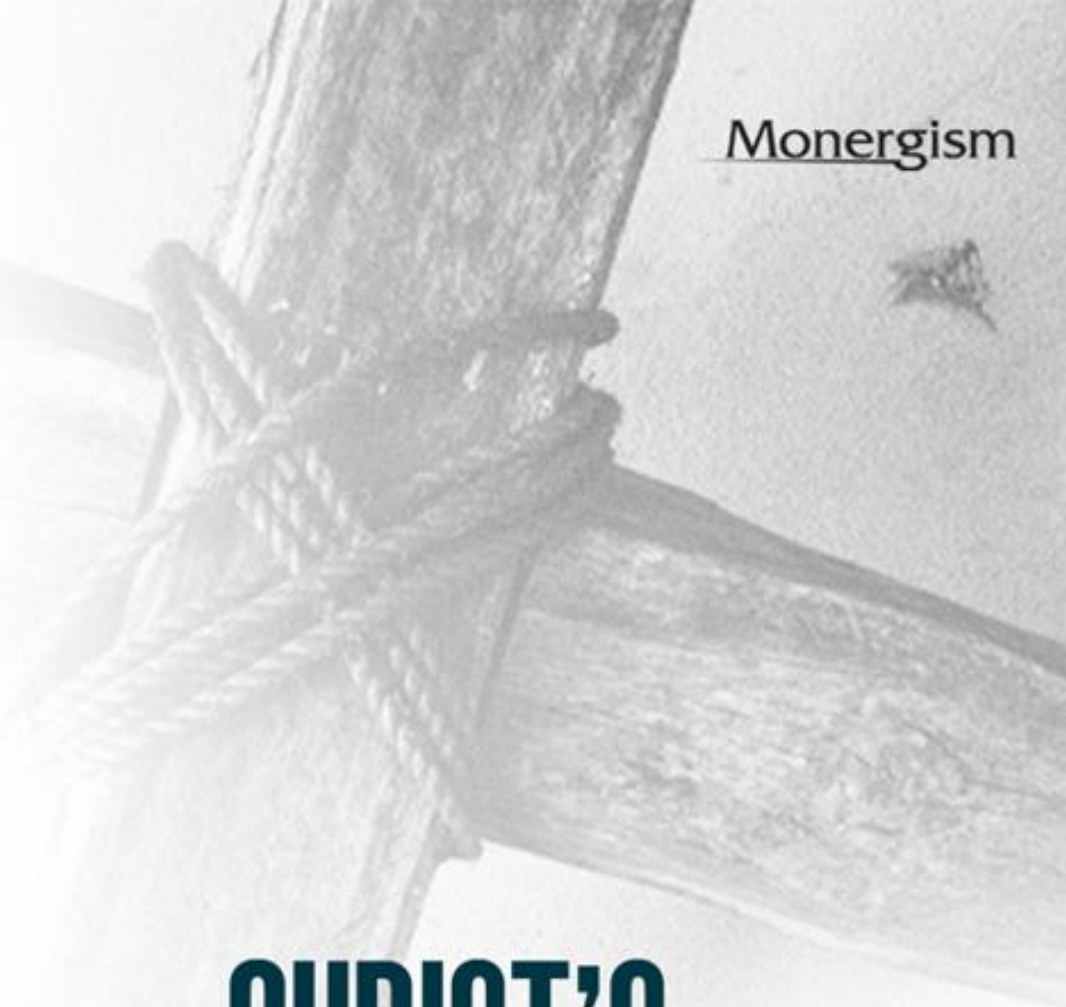


Monergism

**CHRIST'S  
RIGHTEOUSNESS,  
NOT MINE**

19 SERMONS UPON  
PHILIPPIANS 3:7-21

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# Christ's Righteousness, Not Mine

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by Thomas Manton

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## **SERMON I**

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.  
PHIL. 3:7.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[2.] His esteem before and after conversion.

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

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

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

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

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

4. 'By sect a pharisee;' of the strictest among the Jews, Acts 26:5.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[2.] For what. For Christ, for his sake, his laws and doctrines. Christ is to be sought and bought at any hand and rate: Mat. 13:45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' Therefore whatever would keep him from embracing christian doctrine would be loss rather than advantage, however they commended him to men, and might procure him gain and honour, or in the judgment of an ill-guided conscience they might seem to commend him to God.

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

1. The examples of men of worth, who have incurred loss and difficulties in embracing the christian religion, are a great encouragement to godliness. Men that have not so much to lose or to

deny for Christ may be sincere, but certainly it is a greater commendation to religion when those who can well enough make up their interests elsewhere are willing to sacrifice all their interests for Christ. Now these have this happiness above others, that they have something of value to esteem as nothing for Christ, and to commend religion to the world.

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

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

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

[2.] Within the church, or in the bosom of christianity. So men are turned from profaneness to holiness, from formality to serious



godliness. The one is spoken of Isa. 1:16, 17, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.' And in many other places: 'Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Ezek. 33:11; and Hosea 6:1, 'Come, let us return unto the Lord.' And we are warned of the other: 2 Tim. 3:5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power.' They had a map and model of truth, yet deny the power thereof; suffer not this religion to prevail to subdue their hearts unto God. Briefly, then, these latter may either take pleasure in unrighteousness, or repose too much confidence in their supposed righteousness.

(1.) For the first, the words are applicable to them, that when the Spirit of God changeth their hearts, those things which were accounted gain will prove an apparent loss. Sin was formerly to them their delight, or the support of their credit and estate; they thought they could not live without it; but after grace received, they are convinced this was their bane, and shame, and trouble: Rom. 6:21, 'What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.' Now grace teacheth us to abandon the delights of the flesh, and to renounce the most pleasing and profitable sins, as judging them indeed to be loss to us.

(2.) When we trust in a supposed righteousness, and for outward things neglect inward grace. As when, because of baptism or profession, or having high notions of an empty though a strict form, or mere civility and blameless conversation, we neglect faith, hope, and love, and that internal change which is necessary for those which are in Christ: 2 Cor. 5:17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' Those things which men thought gain are nothing to the soul in regard of the new creature: Gal. 6:15, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;' Gal. 5:16, 'Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;' 1 Cor. 7:19, 'Circumcision is nothing, and

uncircumcision nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.' We may undergo the wrath of God notwithstanding all these things. But before the soul was touched with the sense of sin and deserved wrath, and a change wrought in the soul, God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness were contemned and little set by; but when we have a sensible and awakening knowledge of our great necessity, then we see that there is no full and solid satisfaction in order to righteousness and salvation but only in and by Christ; so that all things are as dung and dross, as trouble and loss, in comparison of the knowledge of him and the gain by him.

The reasons of the point.

1. From the state of those who are to be converted. There is in all some false and imaginary happiness, and some counterfeit righteousness, wherein they please themselves. The false happiness is as their god, and the counterfeit is as their Christ and mediator, and so they are secure and senseless; and till God open their eyes, they neither seek after another happiness, nor trouble themselves about the way whereby they may attain it. That men set up a false happiness in their natural estate needs not much proof; for ever since man fell from God he ran to the creature: Jer. 2:13, 'My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' We left the fountain, and betook ourselves to the cistern; and if we can make a shift to patch up a sorry happiness here in the world apart from God, we care not for him, will not come at him: Jer. 2:31, 'Wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?' Our pleasure, profit, and honour, that is our god; and while we enjoy these things without control, we look no further, but count ourselves well paid. Certainly we cannot seek our happiness in an invisible God, nor cannot wait for it to be enjoyed in an invisible world. The flesh must be pleased, and the more it is pleased we think it gain to us, and that so far we have profited. But for the second, that there is something which is instead of Christ to us, to keep the conscience quiet when our affections take up with

present things. Our happiness is to satisfy our desires; our righteousness to allay our fears. Now here we run to a superficial religion, as if it would make us perfect as appertaining to the conscience. Here we fly to something external, which is diversified according to men's education. If pagans, to the ἔργον νόμου, the work of the law: Rom. 2:15, law of nature; if Jews, to the observances of the law; if christians, to their baptism, or to the outward profession of some strict form without the power. And till God breaketh in upon us, and convinceth us of our mistakes, and those follies by which we delude ourselves, we think we have gained a great point if we have come under the form, though we have denied the power; for natural men, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit to God's humbling way, Rom. 10:3, οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν. As long as he can make a shift without Christ, he is disregarded. Therefore now since this is the natural temper of man, the creature must be dethroned that God may be exalted; superficial righteousness must be lost, that Christ may be gained, that we may cordially accept God for our God, and Christ for our redeemer and saviour. Therefore we are dead to the law, that we might live unto God, Gal. 2:19, with Rom. 7:14.

2. From the nature and parts of conversion. It is a turning from the creature to God, from self to Christ, from sin to holiness. Now in all these respects, many things which were formerly gain to us are found to be loss, impediments, and hindrances to our full conversion. Certain it is conversion consists in a turning from the creature to God; for when God is laid aside the creature hath our hearts, and intercepts our love; and till we have another last end and chief good, we are carnal. If we love pleasures more than God, we are of the number of those that love themselves, 2 Tim. 3:4. If we love the praise of men more than the praise of God, John 12:43, how are we faithful to Christ? Therefore till we are inclined to God, turned to God more than to other things, there is no conversion. So for the second part; till turned from self to Christ, till we receive Christ by faith, we cannot come to God as the last end or chief good. So we come to Christ as the way to the Father, John 14:6. Christ alone is

our way, by his merit taking off the legal exclusion, by his Spirit giving us a heart to come to God. Turning from the creature to God, and not by Christ, is no true turning. So believing in Christ, while the creature hath our hearts, is no true believing. Then there is a turning from sin to holiness. This followeth; for an inordinate love of the creature is sin, and love to God and delight to do the things that please him is holiness. We turn to God, not only as our happiness, but as our sovereign and lord. Therefore if we are fitted to obey him by the change of our natures, and do actually obey him by the change of our lives, then we are converts. Now supposing all those things (as they are evident and clear), it must needs follow that those things we formerly counted gain, when we are converted we count loss. Why? Because if we still idolise the creature we lessen God. If we exalt self, we despise or neglect the reconciling and renewing grace of the Redeemer. If we retain our love to sin, we abate of our care of holiness. If the creature be still our idol, how is God our God? If self-righteousness or superficial righteousness be still esteemed, how will Christ be precious to us? If sin be still our delight, holiness will be still our burden. Therefore if God be our God, and Christ our saviour and redeemer, prosperity, riches, credit, pleasure and honour, will be a sorry happiness, and counterfeit and superficial righteousness yield no solid peace to the conscience.

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

[1.] That the Holy Ghost, in converting men to God and Christ, doth enlighten them, as well as turn their hearts and change their practice, is evident: Luke 24:45, 'Then opened he their understandings.' Though a man hath an understanding, yet it needeth the Spirit's illumination: Acts 26:18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light.' The eyes must be opened, that we may discern spiritual and heavenly things: Rev. 3:18, 'And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.' He proffereth eye-salve to the spiritually blind, that they may see and be directed in the ways of holiness. And David beggeth that his eyes may be opened: Ps. 119:18, 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy

law.' And the apostle telleth us that when the Jews shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken from their hearts, 2 Cor. 3:16, the veil of ignorance and prejudice. Surely it is a great advantage to see things in the lively light of the Spirit. So that in the general there must needs be a great change in men's judgments, as if they were opposite to themselves. What they counted happiness before they find a misery; what was gain, to be loss; what peace and life, to be death and torment to them.

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

(1.) We know things more clearly, and have a spiritual discerning, without which, being blinded by the delusions of the flesh, we put darkness for light, and light for darkness. We think our misery to be our happiness, and our true and solid happiness to be our misery and bondage. The curse of our corrupt estate is an injudicious mind, and the blessing of our spiritual estate is a spiritual discerning, 1 Cor. 2:14. A judicious discerning of the worth of things is the work of grace: 2 Cor. 5:16, 17, 'We know no man after the flesh; for whosoever is in Christ, is a new creature.' Knowing things after the flesh is one thing, and after the spirit is another. A new creature hath a new sight of things, looketh upon all things with a new eye; seeth more odiousness in sin, more excellency in Christ, more beauty in holiness, more vanity in the world, than ever before. When a man is changed, all things about him are changed. Heaven is another thing, earth is another thing. He looketh upon body and soul with another eye, and therefore hath another value and esteem of all things. His thoughts are changed about God, about self, about Christ, about sin, and misery by sin, and that superficial righteousness wherewith he contented himself before, and that true holiness which Christ requireth of him. He was wont to marvel why men did keep such a stir about sin; what harm was in it for a man a little to enlarge himself, and gratify his flesh with some forbidden pleasure? Misery out of Christ was another thing while he pleased himself in his counterfeit righteousness: Rom. 7:9, 'For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' His

estate seemed not so out of measure sinful, nor so intolerably dangerous; nor did he see why men made such a talk about Christ, and such ado to go to heaven. But when he is enlightened by the Spirit, his judgment is marvellously changed: 2 Peter 1:9, 'But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' He can now look into eternity, and see that other things are to be minded more than back and belly concerns. In short, he seeth his misery with other eyes, being anointed with spiritual eye-salve, Rev. 3:17, 18; Mat. 13:9, 'For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' There is a sensible and awakening knowledge of our own great necessity. While we are heart-whole we care not for Christ. A true value and esteem of Christ as our remedy and ransom, not a cold and dead opinion: 1 Peter 2:7, 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.' A true sight of the happiness and blessedness offered to us: Eph. 1:17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

(2.) We know things with more certainty and firm belief. With more certainty: Acts 2:36, 'Let the house of Israel know assuredly,' ἀσφαλῶς, safely; John 17:8, ἀληθῶς, surely; 'And have known surely that I came from thee;' John 6:69, 'And we believe and are sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God.' Things work not till they be received with a firm assent: 1 Thes. 2:13, 'For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe.' God's authority breaketh in upon the heart with a convincing power.

(3.) We know things more seriously as we are awakened to a more attentive consideration. It is a great part of the Spirit's work, not only to enlighten the mind, but to awaken it: Acts 16:14, 'And a certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened that she attended

unto the things spoken by Paul.' Many truths lie by, and are lost for want of consideration. Non-attendance to spiritual and heavenly things is the ruin of the far greatest part of the world: Mat. 22:5, 'And they made light of it.' Men will not suffer their minds so long to dwell upon these things as to see what is true misery and happiness, what is gain, and what is loss; and then in seeing they see not, and in hearing they hear not; as when you tell a man of a business whose mind is taken up with other things. Many men have a sudden thought of their misery and happiness, but a glance cannot work a steady contemplation. When our sin is ever before us, when we have serious thoughts of Christ and his salvation, they work most powerfully with us. But most men are never their own selves; have no time to think of God, and Christ, and heavenly things; and discontinuing the use, they lose in time the desire. Too many acquaintance in the world make them strangers to God. If they never sit alone to consider the necessity and worth of these things, how can they affect their hearts?

(4.) We know things with more efficacy and power; not only are mistakes discovered, but lusts subdued. Sin, grace, Christ, and eternity are of weight to move a rock, yet shake not the heart of the carnal professors, because they received the word of God in word only, and not in power. But when the gospel cometh in the Holy Ghost, it cometh in power, 1 Thes. 1:5. Where the apprehension is clear, the assent strong, consideration serious, application close, it must needs be so. Men are pierced to the quick, deeply affected with what they know. A man may give twenty reasons against vices and vanities, and yet follow them; but when he is thus enlightened, his heart yieldeth. This powerful conviction maketh him see the wretchedness of his carnal and blessedness of his spiritual estate; and then losses are gains, and gains are losses.

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

1. There is something that may keep us from God. Naturally we are governed by the wisdom of the flesh. Now what the wisdom of the flesh is the apostle will tell us: James 3:15, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.' Our understanding, as influenced by the flesh, doth only prompt us to pleasure, profit, and honour. The heart pitcheth upon vain delights, and valueth its happiness by them, which while we indulge and cherish, it careth not for God; other things take up his place in the heart. Their belly is their god, Phil. 3:19; mammon is their god, Mat. 6:24; and honour and greatness: John 12:42, 'Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.' Self-love forsaketh idols, and sets up gods instead of the true God, who should be our chief good and last end. But when the mind and heart is changed by grace, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are restored to their due honour. The love of God and heavenly things overcomes that natural delectation which we take in worldly things; and the force of celestial love doth sweetly prevail in the soul, so that you value your happiness by the favour of God, not by the enjoyment of worldly things: Ps. 4:6, 7, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine increased.' Partly because the heavenly light shining upon the soul obscureth all worldly things; and partly because love inclineth us to God and the things which tend to the enjoyment of him; our minds are altered by spiritual eye-salve, and our hearts by the victorious force of celestial love; and then you will judge that the enjoyment of the creature, if it alienate your hearts from God, is a loss rather than a gain to you. You lose by your honour if it make you less zealous for God; by your pleasure if it unfits the heart for God and weakeneth your delight in him; by your profits and wealth, if they cause you to abate of your diligence in seeking after God. Well, then, are you changed? Do you count the world an enemy as it would draw you away from God, however it gratifieth your fleshly mind and fancy? Surely the sanctifying and enlightening Spirit hath been at work in your hearts.



2. That which keepeth you from Christ is a superficial righteousness, which maketh your conviction and conversion more difficult; as it maketh us senseless and ignorant of our danger, and careless of the means of our recovery. Therefore Christ saith, 'Publicans and harlots should enter into the kingdom of God' before pharisees and self-justiciaries, Mat. 21:31. No condition is more dangerous than to be poor and proud, corrupt and rotten, and yet conceited and confident. The most vicious are sooner wrought upon than those that please themselves in external observances, without any real inward holiness or change of heart. They neither understand law nor gospel; not the law in its purity, and strictness, and spiritual exactness; not the gospel, which offereth a remedy only to the penitent, and those which are deeply affected with the pollution of their natures and lives, and the misery consequent, but are puffed up with a vain conceit and opinion of their good estate without any brokenness of heart. They are injurious to the law, as they curtail it, and reduce it to the external work, that the ell may be no longer than the cloth. They make a short exposition of the law, that they may cherish a large opinion of their own righteousness. They are injurious against the gospel, as they continue in their impenitency and unbelief; were never brought home in a broken-hearted manner to accept of Christ. The law well understood would humble them: 'The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin,' Rom. 7:14. The gospel is not for them; for Christ came to call sinners, not those that are righteous in their own eyes, Mat. 9:13. The whole tenor of the gospel is against them, which is a remedy for lost and broken-hearted sinners: 'He came to seek and to save that which is lost;' Luke 15:7, 'Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.' Nothing is more opposite to the frame of the gospel than an impenitent and unbroken-hearted disposition of the spirit, satisfying itself in a partial, external obedience. So the woman that was a sinner was preferred before Simon a pharisee, Luke 7:44; and the self-condemning publican in the parable before the self-justifying pharisee, Luke 18:13; and the penitent adulteress before her conceited accusers, John 8:7. And in the general, the most odious and despised sinners, repenting and

believing in Christ, find more grace and place with him than those that satisfy themselves with exterior righteousness. Well, then, are you of this temper, to count this external, partial righteousness loss rather than gain?

[1.] If so, then you are humbled and awakened with a sense of your lost condition; for God doth not offer grace to sinners, as sinners simply, but to lost sinners, such as are weary and heavy laden, Mat. 11:28; to such as are broken in heart, and grieved, and troubled: Isa. 61:1, 2, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.' To such as confess and forsake their sins.

[2.] Art thou kept vile in thine own eyes, and in a humble admiration of grace after you are partaker of it? Luke 7:47, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' When God is pacified towards them, they loathe themselves for what they have done: Ezek. 16:63, 'That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.'

[3.] Then a partial outside obedience will not satisfy you. Pharisestithed mint and cummin, but neglected the weightier things, Mat. 23:23. 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. 3:8.

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. 2:18, 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 ἐζημιώθην 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 prefer 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. 10:21. 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. 119:133, '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 over-come 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. 4:22. 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 14:26, '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 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 14:26. 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 greatened, 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 unpleasing 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. 11:24, 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. 1:5, '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 5:4, '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 5:23. Therefore, as we love God, so we must love Christ above all. We love God above all: Ps. 73:25, '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. 6:24, '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. 10:37, '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. 8:18, '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. 4:17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' Mark 10:29, 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 14:21, 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 15:10, '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. 16:24, '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 14:28, 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 27:8, '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 4:10; 'If thou hast tasted that the Lord is gracious,' 1 Peter 2:3. 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. 1:30, '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. 8:9; 'He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. 2:7; 'Made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' 2 Cor. 5:21; 'Made a curse for us, that we might have the blessing,' Gal. 3:13. Doth he require so much of us? Surely those who would have benefit by Christ must imitate him: 1 Peter 4:1, '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. 6:33, 'First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness;' Ps. 27:4, '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. 13:45, 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. 4:7, '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. 2:20, your strength, 1 John 4:4, your blessedness, Col. 1:27. 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. 3:17, 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. 9:15, '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. 51:10–12, '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. 4:30. 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. 4:20–22, '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 prevaieth? All this floweth from the same spirit.

4. By delighting in him and the testimonies of his love above all things: Cant. 1:4, '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 1:8, 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. 26:8, '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. 2:29, '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 5:1, '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. 1:20, 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. 11:26, 'Esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;' Acts 5:41, '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. 3:8.

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 1:12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into.' Have higher apprehensions of God by the revelation of this mystery to the church: Eph. 3:10, '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 3:19. 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. 2:10. They have a form of godliness, but not the power, a naked model of gospel truth: 2 Tim. 3:5, '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 6:69, 'And we believe, and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;' Acts 2:36, '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 17:8, '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. 8:28, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God;' 1 John 3:2, 'But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;' 2 Cor. 5:1, '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. 2:2. 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. 8:2, '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. 11:13, '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 2:4, '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. 22:16, '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. 16:16, 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 6:45, '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 2:20. 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. 3:31–33, '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 15:15, '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. 2:2, '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. 1:21. To renew our natures, being carnal, and sinful, and unable to help ourselves: Job 14:4, '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. 2:26. 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. 1:10, 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. 2:10, '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 20:28, '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. 1:20, '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 3:5, 6. 'The captain of our salvation,' to conquer our enemies: Heb. 2:10, 'Christ in us' the pledge of our hopes and joys, and the root of everlasting blessedness: Col. 1:27, '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. 3:10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;' 2 Cor. 3:18, '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 3:2, '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. 31:34, 'For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord;' Jer. 24:7, '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. 6:16, '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. 55:2, '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. 11:28, 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. 8:18, '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. 4:17, '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. 11:25, 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. 5:9, 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. 2:20, '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 2:3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious;' Phil. 1:9, '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 17:17, 'Sanctify them by the truth; thy word is truth;' and chap. 1:32, '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 5:10, '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. 1:6, 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 1:8. 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. 28:9, '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. 1:12, 'I know whom I have believed.' You must know him before you can love him: John 4:10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God.' We must know him before we can obey him: Prov. 19:2, 'Also that the soul be without knowledge is not good;' John 14:21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.'

2. It is pleasant: Ps. 19:8, '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. 24:13, 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 17:3, '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. 11:28, '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. 3:1, '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 excelleth 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. 30:20. 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 prevaieth. 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. 4:5, 'We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord;' Col. 2:8, '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. 5:12, '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. 28:18, 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth;' John 17:2, '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. 2:11, '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 10:36, '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 5:31, '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 3:16–18; 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 accrueth to him? I answer—Partly by his purchase. This was that Christ aimed at in his death: Rom. 14:9, '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 2:36, '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. 45:11. 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 revoltors 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. 2:10.

[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. 8:5, 'They first gave their ownelves 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. 5:18, 'Ye are not under the law.' From the guilt of sin: Col. 1:13, 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. 1:10, '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. 8:10, 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 26:18; 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. 5:9, '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. 12:4, 'Who is lord over us?' The world sticketh at Christ's authority: Luke 19:14, 'We wilt not have this man to rule over us.' His laws, and restraints of repentance, faith, and obedience are their great burden: Ps. 2:3, '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 10:11, '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. 5:23. 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 6:46, '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. 7:21, '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 vitæ et necis, power of life and death: James 4:12, '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 17:2, '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. 26:13, '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. 1:10. '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. 3:8

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. 2:20, '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 20:28, '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 5:27, 'Hear it, and know it for thy good;' Rom. 8:31, '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 13:26, '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 5:31; 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 3:19, '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. 1:15, '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. 1:6, 'To the praise of his glorious grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved;' 2 Cor. 5:1, '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. 4:8, '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. 2:16, '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 1:12, '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. 3:12, 'That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' The words of the spouse do explain this: Cant. 3:4, '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. 13:14; Gal. 3:27, '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 6:56, 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 19:25, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' A sight of our particular interest is attainable, and should be looked after: Gal. 2:20, '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. 3:22. They have an equal obligation to seek after it, for it is the 'common salvation;' 1 John 3:23, 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;' John 6:29, '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. 24:6. Now it is better to be a seeker than a wanderer: Heb. 6:10–12, '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. 2:20. 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. 5:5; Eph. 1:13, '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. 12:24, '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. 5:11, '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. 7:22, '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. 30:8. 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. 16:8, '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. 20:37, '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. 27:32, '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. 29:9–12, '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. 9:13. 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. 30:21, '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. 35:3, 'Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.' And the soul speaketh to God: Lam. 3:24, 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore I will hope in him.' This covenant is carried on in soul-language: Ps. 16:2, '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 2:19, 'Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils believe, and tremble;' Mat. 8:29, '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. 30:6, 'David encouraged himself in the Lord his God;' Hab. 3:18, 'Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation;' Luke 1:47, '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. 119:94.

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. 53:5, '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. 5:9, '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. 1:4; when he knocketh, you should open, Rev. 3:20. When the wind bloweth, let loose the sails, John 3:9; when the waters are stirred, put in for cure, John 5:4. 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. 1:9, or, in another place, μέτοχοι Χριστοῦ, Heb. 3:14, '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 some what whereby to appease your guilty fears: Col. 1:14, '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. 39:4, '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. 18:14, '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. 10:19. 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 3:5, 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 1:4; that is, made like God, and amiable in his sight: 'Partakers of his holiness;' Heb. 12:10, '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. 1:30, '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 expenses to heaven.

5. By him we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life: Rom. 8:17, '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. 1:21, '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. 3:22, 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. 4:8, '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. 8:32, '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 10:42, '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 12:20, 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 27:8, '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. 6:10, '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. 16:26. 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 16:25, '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. 12:16. 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. 11:26, '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 10:29, 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. 7:14, 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. 17:14, 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. 55:1, '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. 3:18, '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 27:8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite though he hath gained?' A worldling doth not always make a thriving bargain: Luke 5:5, '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. 10:16, '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. 13:46; 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. 5:5, 'We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by

faith;' Acts 10:43, '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. 2:7.

## 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. 3:9.

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 33:24. 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. 1:30; and 2 Cor. 5:21, '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. 3:17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' God is satisfied with Christ's obedience to the death, as a perfect ransom for us, and is well pleased with those who make use of it, and apply it in the appointed way; namely, the faith and obedience of Christ; that is, being 'justified by faith.' We continue to live by faith, and being married to Christ, do bring forth fruit unto God. Certainly with the righteousness of God we may appear with all manner of confidence before the throne of God, and look for all manner of blessings from him. The law which condemneth us is the law of God, the wrath which we fear is the wrath of God, and the glory which we expect is the glory of God, and the presence into which we come is the presence of God, and the righteousness by which we stand is the righteousness of God.

Secondly, The description of these different and opposite righteousnesses. His own righteousness he describeth to be that which is by 'the law;' the other, the righteousness which is by 'the faith of Christ.' The meaning is, it is appointed by God, merited by Christ, and received by faith. Now these two are often opposed; as Rom. 3:21, 22, 'But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the

righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference.' So again, Rom. 10:3, 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.' Where you see there is a perfect opposition between our own righteousness and the righteousness of God, the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith. The law may be taken two ways—either for the law of works or the law of Moses.

1. For the law of works, which required a man to be justified by a perfect sinless obedience of his own; this is that which is often opposed to the righteousness of God by faith in Christ; and against this doth the apostle reason when he reasoneth against justification by works or our own righteousness, as will be evident by two places: Rom. 1:17, 18, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.' That is, the wrath and vengeance of God is denounced against those who are under the law-covenant, which they have broken in every point and tittle, in every table, in every commandment. There clearly the two revelations are opposed, the law-covenant in which the wrath of God is revealed, and the gospel-covenant in which the righteousness of God is revealed. The other place is Rom. 3:20, 'Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.' Take the illative particle, therefore, as it is a conclusion or inference drawn out of his former argument; did he prove them guilty of the breach of ceremonies? No; but of moral duties. Take the reason subjoined, 'for by the law is the knowledge of sin;' questionless he meaneth the moral law as it was a covenant of works; by that is the knowledge of sin, *quoad naturam peccati, et inhærentiam in subjecto*, in respect of the nature of sin, and its inherence in us. To fallen man it doth not discover his righteousness but his sin. Now it is impossible for us to be justified by this legal righteousness. None of us have such a

personal legal righteousness; for then there were no sin, no place for confession, nor for Christ. No; we have all broken with God; yea, there is no one work perfectly justifiable by the law: 'all are corrupt and abominable, there is none that doeth good, no not one,' Rom. 3:12.

2. The apostle disputeth also against the works of the Mosaical or ceremonial law, and proves that by that law no man could be justified; and therefore the Jews did seek righteousness where it was not to be found, whilst they stuck so close to that law, being guilty therein of a threefold error—First, that they thought pardon of sin and acceptance with God were to be obtained by the bare works of that law; secondly, that they overlooked, and rejected Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every believer; thirdly that they would keep up this law when it was to cease and be abrogated. These are the errors of theirs which Paul everywhere disputeth against.

Thirdly, His different respect to either of those; he renounced the one and affected the other.

1. That which he renounced was partly the superficial righteousness which consisteth in the external observances of the law, a mere speculative righteousness, and partly the righteousness of the law-covenant, which some did falsely imagine they did or might fulfil; whilst arrogantly holding up the dignity of their own works, they refused to embrace the gospel.

2. That which he affected was, to 'be found in Christ, having the righteousness of God through faith in Christ.' And there—

[1.] The state of his person, or the way how this is applied or conveyed to us; by being found in Christ.' The word found is emphatical, and often used with respect to the day of judgment: 2 Cor. 5:3, 'If so be we shall not be found naked;' and 2 Peter 3:14, 'See that ye be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless;' Mat.

24:46, 'Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.' It implieth two things—

(1.) That the last day is a day of exact search and trial. Wrath maketh inquisition for sinners; we shall be found out to be what we are.

(2.) That the last day cometh upon the greatest part of the world by way of surprisal. They do not look for it, nor prepare for it. It cometh upon them unawares, like 'a thief in the night,' 2 Peter 3:10, unthought of, unexpected by the most, who will not be awakened out of their sins, and do not look for it, but are found of it.

[2.] 'In Christ,' that is, incorporated into his mystical body, or united to him by the Spirit; as a branch ingrafted into the true vine: John 15:2, 'Every branch in me that beareth fruit;' or found in the ark when the flood cometh. Paul was lost before, then found in Christ: 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. 8:1. Being united to him by faith, love, and holiness, we are made partakers of his righteousness.

Again, The righteousness wherewith he would appear before God, the righteousness of God by faith in Christ. The righteousness of the new covenant is twofold—(1.) Supreme, prime, and chief, and that is the righteousness of Christ; (2.) Secondary and subordinate, and that is the righteousness of faith and obedience. As to our first right, faith; as to our continued right, new obedience. These things must be a little cleared, that we may not mistake.

1. For the supreme principal righteousness, by virtue of which we are reconciled to God. It is Christ's obedience unto the death. So it is said, Rom. 5:18, 19, 'As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous;' that is, our great righteousness

before God, by which his justice is satisfied, and by the merit of which all the blessings of the new covenant are procured for us.

2. The subordinate righteousness, or the way, and means, and condition by which we get an interest in and right to this supreme righteousness, is faith and new obedience. But for a distinct use—

[1.] As to our first entrance into the covenant of God, faith is required: Rom. 4:3, 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.'

[2.] As to our continuance in this blessed privilege, new obedience is required; with respect to which it is said, 1 John 3:7, 'Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.' And thereby his interest in Christ is confirmed: 1 John 2:29, 'If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of God.' These scriptures are plain and express; and new obedience has respect to that which is the result of the final judgment: Mat. 25:46, 'And these shall go away into ever-lasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' And the righteous there are such as are fruitful in good works. Now from this exposition we may learn how we are justified by faith only, without works, which Paul asserteth; and by works, and not by faith only, which is the assertion of the apostle James. Justification hath respect to some accusation. Now as there is a twofold law, so there is a twofold accusation and justification—the law of works and the law of grace. Now when we are accused as breakers of the law of works, that is, as sinners, obnoxious to the wrath of God, we plead Christ's satisfaction as our righteousness, no works of our own. But when we are accused as non-performers of the conditions of the covenant of grace, as being rejecters or neglecters of Christ the mediator, we are justified by producing our faith or sincere obedience. So that our righteousness by the new covenant is subordinate to our universal righteousness with respect to the great love of God, and that we have only by Christ. If we are charged that we have broken the first covenant, the covenant of works, we allege Christ's satisfaction and

merit; if charged not to have performed the conditions of the law of grace, we answer it by producing our faith, repentance, and new obedience, and so show it to be a false charge. Our first and supreme righteousness consisteth in the pardon of our sins, and in our acceptance in the Beloved, and our right to impunity and glory. Our second and subordinate righteousness, in having the true condition of pardon and life. In the first sense Christ's righteousness is only our justification and righteousness. Faith and repentance, or new obedience, is not the least part of it. But in the second, believing, repenting, and obeying is our righteousness in their several respective ways; namely, that the righteousness of Christ may be ours, and continue ours.

Doct. It shall go well with those, and those only, who in the day of exact search and trial shall be found in Christ, not having the righteousness which is by the law, but the righteousness of God which is by faith in Christ Jesus.

I shall endeavour to make it good by these considerations—

1. That the day of judgment will be a day of exact search and trial. No man can lie hid in the throng and multitude of mankind, but the state of his person and all his works will be made manifest, whether they be wrought in God. God will not deal with us in the lump, by nations, or by any societies and communities of mankind with which we are bundled up, but by head and poll: Rom. 14:12, 'Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.' Every tub must stand upon its own bottom; and every man must come before his supreme judge, and give an account of his own actions. The particular inquiry that shall be made is expressed by 'opening the books;' Rev. 20:12, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' You see there none shall escape this judicature; kings nor subjects, rich nor poor, powerful nor weak, old nor young; all that have breathed and have life. And the judgment

shall be accurate and particular, for all is upon record; for nothing is missed and mistaken in its circumstances. The books that contain as it were a diary of our lives shall be opened; they are sealed now, it is not known what is in them; but then all actions and events, returns and receipts, mercies, rods, ordinances, providences, sins, graces shall then be produced. God's register is exact, and every man's doom and sentence shall be pronounced accordingly. According to your repentance and faith, or impenitence and disobedience, will Christ deal with you. One place more: Ps. 50:21, 'I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes.' Alas! most men's reckonings are in great confusion now, but then they shall be brought to remembrance with time and place. The sinner may then see the whole story of his life orderly repeated out of God's book of remembrance and the sinner's conscience, to his fearful astonishment and confusion. But to the comfort of the elect, the book of life shall be opened; the graces vouchsafed to them, the services done, and sufferings undergone by them, remembered to their joy and honour.

2. That in this day of exact trial there is no appearing before God with safety and comfort without some righteousness of one sort or another. Why? Because it is a holy and just God before whom we appear: 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' Gen. 18:25; and 1 Sam. 6:20, 'Who is able to stand before the holy God?' If not now in the time of patience, how then in the time of his recompense? His holiness inclineth him to hate sin, and his justice to punish it. The holiness of God is at the bottom of the creatures' fears. We fear his wrath, because it is armed with power, but awakened by his justice, but rooted in his holiness; that is the fundamental reason of our dread. Again, it is a holy law according to which the process of that day shall be guided, a law that is clean and pure, and alloweth not the least evil. When David looked upon the brightness of the sun, he admired God; but when upon the purity of the law, he abaseth himself: Ps. 19:12, 'Lord, who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret sins.' Well, then, there must be one righteousness or another, if we would speed well in that day.

3. The righteousness of the first sort by the law of works we cannot have; for the covenant of works requireth of us perfect obedience upon pain of eternal death if we perform it not; for the tenor of it is, 'Do and live; sin and die.' The least sin, according to that covenant, merits eternal death: Gal. 3:10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.' By this covenant none can stand; for we have all sinned, and are liable to that death: Rom. 3:23, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' Rom. 5:12, 'By sin death entered into the world; and death came upon all, for that all have sinned.' By sin we are all under guilt and the curse, and so are become children of wrath, Eph. 2:3, which is the wretched condition of all mankind. Therefore, if we stick to the old covenant, how shall we appear in the judgment, and what righteousness have we to plead before God? and that is the reason why the saints, who have awakening thoughts of this sin and misery, deprecate the rigour of the first covenant: Ps. 130:3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' Ps. 143:3, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' Woe unto us if God should deal with us according to his strict justice, and we had nothing to bring forth but our own personal righteousness and obedience. We were undone for ever if sentence should pass according to this law.

4. Man having broken the law of nature or works, is lost or disabled to his own recovery, or to do anything whereby to satisfy God. We cannot make any satisfaction to God for the pardon of sin, or escaping the curse of the law; or change our natures to return to the obedience of it; or if we could, the paying of new debts will not quit old scores. What can we do to satisfy justice, and reconcile such rebellious creatures to God? 'The redemption of the soul is precious;' that work would cease for ever if it lay upon man's hands, Ps. 49:7, 8. And as little can we renew the soul as reconcile it. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Surely not one. Will a nature that is carnal resist and overcome the flesh, and abhor the sin which it dearly loveth? Therefore man is shut up under misery, without



strength, unable to recover himself and return to God: Rom. 5:6, 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.'

5. Because man was under such an impotency, Jesus Christ became the mediator, stepped between us and the full execution of the curse; redeemed us from this lost condition, by taking the penalty upon himself, and thereby satisfied the lawgiver, and attained the ends of the law. He became the sacrifice to offended justice: Eph. 5:2, 'And hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;' and a ransom for sinners, 1 Tim. 2:6; which are the two solemn notions by which the death of Christ is set forth. His sufferings were satisfactory to his Father's justice, and expiatory of our sins. This sacrifice and ransom was paid with respect to the curse of the law; that is, to free us from the penalty of the old broken covenant, there being nothing in us to recommend us to God, or to secure us from the dint of God's anger and justice.

6. Upon his death, Christ acquired a new right of dominion and empire over the world, to be their Lord and Saviour, to rule them, and save them upon his own terms: Rom. 14:9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living;' Acts 2:36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ;' Phil. 2:7–11, 'But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' God hath made this God-man supreme prince of his church, and hath given him all power in heaven and in earth, that all rational creatures should pay him all duty, and subjection, and acknowledgment; and his doctrine and

faith should be embraced by all nations in the world, as the means of their recovery to God.

7. Our Redeemer being possessed of this lordship and dominion, hath made a new law of grace, which is propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and favour of God, by offering and granting free pardon, justification, and adoption, and a right to glory, to those that, coming off from the law, will submit to his terms; but peremptorily concluding and sentencing them anew to eternal death who will not embrace these terms and this way of salvation which he hath set up. This is the sum of the gospel in many places: Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;' John 3:16–18, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life: for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.'

Here mark that in this proposition I assert three things—

[1.] That Christ, as Lord of the new creation, hath set down the terms of life and death. I say, that Christ, as king, doth enact the law, the law of grace and promise by which we are justified. He merited it by his death and bloody sufferings, but the grant we have from him as lord and king. He, as having all power, sent abroad his apostles as ambassadors to acquaint the world with his new law; and he doth still execute it as lord and judge, and as a judge he doth justify and condemn, and execute his sentence accordingly, partly in this life, and partly in the life to come, as the scriptures abundantly witness: Acts 17:31, 'Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.'

[2.] The privileges of this new grant are exceeding great; pardon, peace with God, justification from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses; adoption into God's family; the gift of his Spirit to renew us, and maintain his interest in our souls; and a right to everlasting glory as our inheritance. Now surely these are things not to be despised. It will go well with those who have submitted to Christ when they are to appear before their Lord and judge, having such a grant and charter to produce. Certainly to be interested in Christ's satisfaction and merit, so far as to become acceptable and pleasing to God, is no small privilege. To be accepted in the Beloved for the present, and to stand in the judgment hereafter, these are great things indeed. To be adopted into God's family in the kingdom of grace, and to be received into God's presence in the kingdom of glory; to be freed from condemnation to hell, and to have a right and title to heaven, should not this move us?

[3.] The danger of final impenitency and refusing these things, and not submitting to this righteousness, is very grievous, if there were nothing but a forfeiting the hopes and possibility of our recovery; but the scripture calleth it a 'sorer punishment,' Heb. 10:39. The law of grace threateneth the greatest punishment. Conscience in hell will have a special kind of accusations and self-tormentings in reflecting on the refusal of the remedy. Besides, the threatening of the gospel is peremptory, excluding all remedy to all eternity; but the threatening of the law of nature is not peremptory and remediless; there is a remedy at hand to dissolve the obligation of suffering that penalty; namely, Christ's satisfaction (who fulfilled the law, and became a curse for us) is pleadable by all those who sincerely repent and believe.

8. The terms of this new law or covenant are repentance, faith, and new obedience. Or take one mentioned in the text, faith; it is a righteousness which is by faith. Faith is the grand and primary condition of the gospel. If you ask why faith is appointed, we might look no further than the will of the free donor; but faith hath a special aptitude and fitness for this work.

[1.] In respect of God, he having determined to glorify his free mercy, he requireth nothing but our belief and acceptance. 'It is of faith, that it might be of grace,' Rom. 4:16.

[2.] With respect to Christ Jesus, who is the fountain of our life and righteousness, and our head and husband. Faith is the closing act: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him.' The tie and nuptial knot between us and our Lord.

[3.] God had respect also to our necessitous estate, and therefore principally required that they should know Christ and own him, if they will have benefit by him, that such privileges should not be settled upon us without our knowledge, or besides and against our will.

[4.] With respect to the promise, which offers it to us. This happiness and blessedness is spiritual, and for the most part future, and cannot be seen. Now such things are only apprehended by faith: Heb. 11:1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.'

[5.] With respect to God's end, which is the willing subjection of the creature to God. By it we come to Christ as king, priest, and prophet; take his yoke, as well as receive his benefits: Mat. 11:28, 29, 'Come unto me all you that are weary and 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.'

9. This faith is such a hearty assent to the truths of the gospel as causeth us broken-heartedly, thankfully, and fiducially to accept the Lord Jesus as he is offered to us, and to give up ourselves to God by him.

[1.] An assent to the truths of the gospel there must be, for the general faith goeth before the particular, a belief of the gospel before our communion with Christ. This assent must produce acceptance, because the gospel is an offer of blessedness suitable to our

necessities and desires, and receiving is one solemn notion by which faith is expressed. And this acceptance must be broken-hearted, because Christ and his benefits are a free gift to us; and we come to accept this grace as condemned sinners, with a confession of our undeservings and ill-deservings: 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' And that eternal wrath may justly become our portion, God lets none come out of the prison of the first covenant till they have felt somewhat of the smart of it in the sense of our guilt and misery, that we may fly to the ransom of Christ's blood, and the merit of his obedience. Therefore this must be distinctly considered as the procuring cause, which cannot be done seriously without a broken heart.

[2.] A thankful acceptance; for so great a benefit as pardon and life should not be entertained but with a grateful consent, and deep sense of his love, who so freely loved us, and forgave us so great a debt, and doth so freely save us: Luke 7:47, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' Surely Christ should not, cannot be received into the heart without a hearty welcome and cordial embraces.

[3.] It is a fiducial consent, or such as is joined with some confidence and affiance; for there is a confidence and trust to be included in the nature of faith, and cannot be separated from it, and without it we cannot be satisfied with the truth of the offer, and cannot depend upon God's word: Eph. 1:13, 'In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.' Now this trust will make us venture all in his hands, and renounce our dearest lusts and interests.

[4.] It is obediential. We give up ourselves to obey God through Jesus Christ, that we may enjoy, please, and glorify him; which you do when you receive Christ with a hearty consent of subjection, to be guided, ruled, and ordered by him; for he is our Lord as well as our

Saviour: Col. 2:6, 'As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him;' 2 Peter 3:2, 'Of the commandment of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour.' We must obey his strictest laws; and as he is the physician of our souls, we must rest upon his skill, and suffer him to apply his sharpest plasters, take the bitterest medicines, most ungrateful to flesh and blood.

Use. Oh, let us think of these things. The hour of death and judgment will come. How sweet will it be then to be found in Christ, not having our own righteousness? None will be found in Christ but those who believe the gospel, and so accept of Christ as to depend upon him and obey him. We depend upon the merit of his satisfaction for pardon and life, and we keep his commandments and abide in his love, seeking his glory, and yielding ourselves to his obedience, as our Lord and sovereign, that he may conduct us to everlasting glory in his own way. Do this, and you have an interest in his merits and righteousness. We shall one day come to be judged and tried whether we have done so, yea or no; whether we are unbelievers and rebels against the Lord Christ, or whether sound believers.

## SERMON VI

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.—PHIL. 3:10.

PAUL goeth on enumerating his advantages by Christ. The first was his interest in Christ's righteousness; now he mentioneth two other necessary to be added to the former; for whoever boasts of his justification must show it by his sanctification: 'That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness; and that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.'

Here the double benefit is, a conformity to Christ in his life and in his death.

1. To his life, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.'

2. To his death, 'And the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.'

There is a spiritual inward conformity to the death of Christ, when we die unto sin; and outward, in bearing the cross. This is spoken here; and in this latter there is a double benefit which we have in our sufferings for Christ—(1.) Fellowship with Christ; (2.) Conformity to Christ.

[1.] Our conformity to his life, or 'knowing the power of his resurrection,' is mentioned first, before our conformity to his death, which in order of nature should have preceded, because we should first know what we should propound as our hope and scope before we resolve upon the way of dying to sin and dying to the world. Till we live the new life and are excited to the hopes of glory, we cannot encounter sufferings. The new life is the principle, and the hope of glory the end, and the patient continuance in well-doing the way.

Again, it is observable how the apostle increaseth the description of his self-denial, what he accounteth gain, and such gain that he esteemeth all things but loss and dung in comparison of it; not only to know Christ and privileges, but Christ and the sacred influence of his grace. To desire to be found in Christ, not having our own righteousness, will be assented unto by most. We all desire happiness and immunity, to be freed from the penalties of the law and the flames of hell; this point of submission will not be much scrupled at; few value the life of holiness, but the apostle 'counted all things loss and dung, to know him and the power of his resurrection.'

[2.] Again, he reckoneth affliction for Christ's sake among the advantages of Christ. Surely the afflictions of the gospel, when they are holily and patiently endured, are an advantage; not affliction as affliction, but partly from the cause: Phil. 1:29, 'For unto you it is

given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' Bare suffering is not more than believing, nor valuable without believing; but suffering and believing too is more than single believing. A gift and an honour vouchsafed to a few of Christ's choice servants; it is given to all to believe, but to some not only to believe, but to suffer. Partly from the manner, such as argues fellowship and conformity to Christ. To find what exceeding joy and comfort it is to suffer for Christ and with Christ is more worth than all the world. Partly from the end and fruit in this life, as these afflictions promote our dying to sin and the world; therein we feel the virtue of Christ's death, and may glory in the cross of Christ: Gal. 6:14, 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' In the world to come, 'if thereby we may attain the resurrection of the dead,' ver. 11.

[3.] Once more; no affliction, though never so great, was excepted out of Paul's resignation to Christ; for such a fellowship in his sufferings as maketh us conformable to his death doth also include the dying a violent and infamous death for Christ's sake. Now if God call us to this, we must count it an honour, and all things but loss and dung for Christ's honour's sake. An infamous death for Christ is better than all the glory of the world; and we rejoice in the very disgraceful circumstances of our sufferings, and that we are put to shame for Christ's sake: Acts 5:41, 'And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' Now all these circumstances do mightily heighten his self-denial; and yet this is the true spirit of christianity, to count all things but loss and dung for Christ and his righteousness, for Christ and his grace, for Christ and his sufferings, even those which are most painful and disgraceful to us.

I begin with the first benefit, a conformity to the life of Christ, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.' Knowing is here put for sense and experience; and for the word 'resurrection,' there is a first resurrection and a second, with respect to the life of grace and



glory. The Spirit first raiseth us up from the death of sin to the life of grace, and then from the death of nature to the life of glory. Christ raised from the dead, giveth us the Spirit, which beginneth that life of grace here which shall be perfected in heaven. We shall know him and the power of his resurrection fully hereafter, when we are raised by him to eternal life and glory. But we know him and the power of his resurrection here when we experience his virtue, and the sacred influence of his grace in renewing the heart. As we know the power of his death when sin is mortified, and the old man crucified, so we know the power of his resurrection when we feel the operation and virtue of his Spirit in quickening us to newness of life: Rom. 6:4, 5, 'Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.'

Two points from this clause are to be observed. The first is, that an experimental knowledge of Christ is so great a blessing that we should count all things but loss and dung to get it.

I take it for a granted truth that, besides the knowledge of faith, there is an experimental knowledge of Christ, whereby believers, from this effectual working in them, find that to be true which the word affirmeth of him. It is sometimes expressed by taste which is more than sight. Sight doth fitly express the knowledge of faith, and taste the knowledge of experience: 1 Peter 2:3, 'If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' So Ps. 34:8, 'Oh, come, taste and see how good the Lord is.' When we either taste his goodness or feel his power, then we have an experimental knowledge of Christ. Many know Christ so as to be able to talk of him, his birth, life, and doctrine, of his death, passion, and resurrection; but feel nothing, have no real proof within themselves of what they speak, no lively, experimental knowledge of Christ. Many speak of his salvation from day to day, but have not the effects of it. When we find within ourselves the fruits of his sufferings, the comfort of his promises, the

likeness of his death, the power of his resurrection, then we know Christ experimentally. Now the benefits which we have by this experimental knowledge do show the value of it.

1. Experience giveth us a more intimate knowledge of things. While we know things by hearsay, we know them only by guess and imagination; but when we know them by experience, we know them in truth; as he that readeth of the sweetness of honey may guess at it, but he that hath tasted of honey better knoweth what it is: Col. 1:6, 'Since the day that ye knew the grace of God in truth;' that is, knew it indeed, and by sensible experience. Our understandings are much advanced by knowing the same truths more experimentally than we did before; it is a more satisfactory manner of knowledge. A man that has travelled through a country knows it better than he that knoweth it only by a map. When we have tasted of the sweetness of the promise, and pardon of sin, and peace with God, and hopes of glory; when we have lived awhile in communion with Christ, or the love of his people, or walked with God in a heavenly conversation, it is another thing than it was before.

2. Experience giveth a greater confirmation of the truth. *Optima demonstratio est a sensibus*—Sense giveth us the most sure and infallible knowledge of things. A man needeth no reason to convince him that fire is hot who hath been scorched, or that weather is cold who feeleth it in his fingers; so when the promises of God are made good to us, and verified in our experience, we see that there is more than letters and syllables: Ps. 18:30, 'The word of the Lord is a tried word; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.' So when the fruits and effects of the gospel are accomplished in us, and we have the impression and stamp of it upon our own hearts, it is past contradiction but that this is true: 1 Cor. 1:6, 'Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.' It was confirmed among them by miracles, but within them by the gifts and graces of the Spirit: John 8:32, 'Then shall ye know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;' John 17:17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.' When God hath blessed his word to free us from the bondage of sin

and to cleanse and sanctify our hearts, that we may live in love to God, and all purity and holiness to his glory, you find it to be a powerful word, a word which God hath owned, by accompanying it by his Spirit. So 1 Thes. 1:5, 'For our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' That doctrine is certainly owned by God, and blessed to the conviction, conversion, and salvation of many souls, and therefore our assent is stronger. You cannot persuade men against their own sense. They that have felt the power of the Spirit inclining them to God and heavenly things have found the admirable effects which bare speculation could not discover to them in order to faith, certainty, and close adherence; their hearts are confirmed.

3. Experience giveth us greater excitement to the love of Christ and his ways; for though love be built upon the proper reasons of love, yet it is increased by experience. The proper reasons of love are necessity, excellency, and propriety; yet experience addeth a force to all these. And therefore it is said, Phil. 1:9, 'This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge and judgment.' The word, ἐν αἰσθήσει, signifieth spiritual sense or experimental knowledge. This doth increase the love of Christ in us: the more we feel the necessity of Christ, and know his usefulness and excellency in binding up our broken hearts, and subduing our carnal affections, the more shall we love him, as being appointed a saviour for us, to relieve our necessities, and procure blessings for us. When Christ doth heal our diseases, remove our anguish, sanctify our natures, give us the promised help in temptations, relieve us in our distresses, and bridle our corruptions, then we know that he is ours; and so far as propriety conduceth to increase love, we have the more reason to love him. Now that is a notable enforcement: Gal. 2:20, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and gave himself for me;' 1 John 4:19, 'We love him, because he loved us first.' We may know the truth of the gospel by other means, but we cannot know that it belongeth to us by any other means. The grace of the gospel remaineth where it was, in the hands of Christ, and the conditional offers of the gospel, till it be applied and brought into our hearts, and

we are in part put in possession of it by the Spirit of sanctification; and when this is done, we know our interest, and so our sanctifier becometh our comforter, and we carry about in us the matter of our continual joy, confidence, and comfort; and therefore we have greater obligations to love God and Christ: Rom. 5:4, 5, 'And patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.' Our particular interest is assured by experience, whether in ordinances or afflictions, either by the tastes of his love or the effects of his sanctifying grace.

4. The experimental knowledge of Christ doth more engage us to zeal and diligence in the heavenly life. Certainly reports and exhortations cannot do so much as experience. Partly—

[1.] Because when we have experience of the power of Christ's resurrection, it begetteth a new life within us, which inclineth us to God and heavenly things; there is a principle to work upon. Indeed, in the tenders of the gospel there is a principle of reason to work upon, which, with a little common help of the Spirit, may convince us of the duty which we owe to God; but when this life is begun, there is a principle of grace to work upon, an inward mover striving with you, and inclining you to perform this duty. And there is a great deal of difference between blowing to a dead coal and a live coal: 'If you live in the Spirit,' you will more easily be persuaded to 'walk in the Spirit,' Gal. 5:25. Where there is life, it is soon excited to action.

[2.] When this life is gratified with the rewards of obedience, such as are peace of conscience, the comforts of the Spirit, and some tastes of God's acceptance of us unto life by Christ, this is an argument of itself above all arguments to engage us to press on for more. As the Gauls, when once they tasted the Italian grape, could no longer be kept beyond the mountains, but they must get into that country where this plant did grow, or the liquor of it might be had. Or rather, let it be represented to you by a scriptural instance: There were some sent into the land of promise, to bring them the clusters of Canaan

into the wilderness, to animate and encourage them to put in for the good land. So here; God giveth us the Spirit, and sweet foretastes of life eternal, not only as an earnest, 1 Cor. 1:22, to show us how sure, but as the first-fruits, to show us how good, Rom. 8:23. Now surely this experience is more than all motives without the soul, to engage it in this heavenly pursuit.

[3.] When this life is obstructed by our folly and sin, you find more of the displeasure of your Redeemer in your inward man than can possibly be represented to you in your outward condition, by the suspension of his comforts, by a wounded spirit, by the troubles of the sensible soul upon the neglects of his grace; that it is worse to them than the loss of all temporal comforts when the grieved Spirit withdraweth. You know the anger of your Redeemer for the abuse of his grace: Eph. 4:30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' The soul is more awakened by the interruptions of the acts of love, and his wonted quickenings and comforts; yea, by a sore sense of God's wrath and displeasure; it is more than want of health, or loss of estate, or a breach upon our relations. Therefore experience of Christ's dealing with us is a notable part of Christ's spiritual government, and so a notable excitement to the heavenly life.

Use 1. To exhort us to get this experimental knowledge of Christ. An exhortation is discharged by motives and means.

Motives. Sometimes from the danger if you have it not, and the benefit you have had already.

1. If you have it not, you are in danger of atheism. To hear of such a mighty Christ, and feel nothing of the virtue of his death, or of the power of his resurrection, after so long a profession of his name, what is this but a temptation to us that christianity is but an empty pretence? We are told, 1 Cor. 4:20, that 'the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.' It standeth not in notions, and proud boasts of knowledge, or empty discourses, but in the effectual force it hath

upon the heart of man. There is a power, and an admirable virtue, which goeth along with the gospel for the changing of the heart. Now what a dangerous temptation is it when it cometh to you in word only! You hear of great things, but they have not their effect upon your hearts. You meet with nothing but words and notions; nothing of this purifying and sanctifying virtue of the word by the Spirit of Christ. This must follow, either you settle in a cold form, which is practical atheism, and certainly produceth nothing of a divine spirit, or real inclination towards God and another world: 2 Tim. 3:5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;' or settle into an open denying of Christ and the excellency of his religion. The cold form may consist with the grossest sins, which is a practical denying of God; or else you live in doubt and irresolution, and know not what to make of religion, which is a more secret denying of him.

2. If you have not the practical experimental knowledge of Christ, how will you be able to carry on the spiritual life with any delight, seriousness, and success? This appeareth by a serious view of that context which you have, 1 John 5:3–10. In the 3d verse he saith, 'This is love, to keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.' In the 10th verse, 'He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself.' How do we bring these together? I answer—By these propositions, all which are clear when you come to view that scripture. That the readiness of our obedience dependeth upon the fervency of our love, and the fervency of our love dependeth on the strength of our faith, which overcometh the world, the great impediment of obedience. The strength of our faith dependeth on the evidence of the object of our faith, which is, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the true Messiah and head of the church. The evidence of this dependeth on a double testimony—without us, from heaven, and by somewhat within us, which is the testimony of water, blood, and Spirit; and this testimony every sound and true believer hath in himself, and so loveth God and keepeth his commandments. Now judge you whether it doth not concern you to get an experimental knowledge of Christ, and whether you can carry on the spiritual life against the world, the devil, and the flesh,

without it. Either you must suppose to meet with no temptations, or else that temptations will be vanquished by the evidence without us, without any experience of Christ in our own souls. The former is not likely; why else are we warned of enemies and assaults? Not the latter, because our temptations to unbelief are many and strong; for a guilty conscience is not easily settled, nor a man soon brought to trust one whom he hath wronged: sinning Adam is shy of God. Besides, the way of our deliverance is so strange and supernatural, that God should not spare his own Son, but give him up to die for us. Again, the main of our blessings lie in another world, and nature cannot easily look afar off; and for the present we are afflicted, and seemingly forsaken; and the duties of christianity are so opposite to a carnal heart, which would fain be pleased with what is grateful to present sense; besides, we have an opposition to that future and invisible felicity till grace doth overcome it. These and many more things which may be alleged would weaken our hands in duty, if we have not, besides the principles of faith and external confirmations, some experience in our own souls, to assure us that Christ is the Son of God, by his changing us into the divine nature. Surely that doctrine is of God which maketh poor creatures like unto God. This is more sensible and more affecting, as being more at hand. A soul that hath felt this power, findeth the wisdom, power, and goodness of God in it, whilst his conscience is quieted, heart changed, affections raised to heavenly things: you have a confirmation and testimony within you.

3. Without this experimental knowledge of Christ you can have no assurance of your own interest. Though Christ died for sinners, yet many perish for ever. Our certainty and assurance ariseth from a work of the Spirit upon our own hearts, if we have felt the power of his resurrection, if we be risen with Christ. Our sincerity is a far more questionable thing than the truths of the gospel. The stamp of God upon the gospel is more plainly to be seen, whatever thoughts we have of it; but our own case is more hard to be understood. But if Christ hath left his mark and impression upon us, if we be planted into the likeness of his death and life: Rom. 6:4, 5, "Therefore we are

buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' If we be such in the world as he was in the world, we may have boldness: 1 John 4:17, 'Herein our love is made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in the world;' 1 John 2:6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' In short, if Christ hath taken us into the communion of his life and Spirit, there is no scruple to be made of our condition. The more you feel the power of his resurrection, you will have not only some doubtful and slight conjectures, but may assure your hearts before him that he hath loved you, and will be and is your Lord and Saviour.

4. You will not honour christianity, and cannot propagate it to others with such effect, as when you yourselves have had an experimental knowledge of Christ, of his graces and comforts. You cannot propagate it either by word or deed.

[1.] By word. You cannot recommend the heavenly life, nor the comforts of entertaining communion with God, as when you have had experience of them in your own souls. David speaketh affectionately, and like a man of experience: Ps. 34:8, 'Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.' You may the better invite them to Christ when you yourselves have found benefit by him. A report of a report at second or third hand is no valid testimony; none can speak with such warmth and confidence as those that have felt what they speak: 2 Cor. 1:4, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' They that speak feelingly and with a sense speak most effectually for Christ.

[2.] In deed and work. You do most honour Christ when you know him, and the power of his resurrection, and by him are converted to



God; for though this power be within us, and be principally ordained for our comfort and satisfaction, yet the effects and fruits of it appear to others; for the new life cannot be altogether hidden, if it be in us in any power, and so maketh up an inducement and invitation to others to hearken after the ways of God, when they see that God is in you of a truth, and the work of his Spirit showeth itself by a holy and heavenly life. This discovereth the power and virtue of Christ to them: 2 Thes. 1:11, 12, 'Wherefore also we pray for you, that 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 our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ;' 1 Thes. 1:4–7, 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God: for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sakes. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy in the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.' You sanctify God in their eyes, and glorify our Redeemer.

Means. It is the Spirit worketh all, as the fruit of electing grace: 1 Thes. 1:4, 5, 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God: for our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.' And also of redeeming grace, for it is the power of Christ's resurrection; and the apostle telleth us that 'the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe was according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,' Eph. 1:19, 20. We have it by the mediator, yet we must use the means. Now the great means are three—(1.) Sound belief; (2.) Serious meditation and consideration; (3.) Close application. If we would get this experimental knowledge, there 'must be—

[1.] A sound belief of the doctrine of the gospel; for we are told, 1 John 5:10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in

himself;' which is the witness of the Spirit, and water, and blood: 1 Thes. 2:13, 'Ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' We cannot feel the power of the truth till we receive the truth. It is the impression of God on the word which begets faith, but his impression upon our hearts serveth to confirm faith. We discern it in the scriptures before we feel it in our hearts, for this experimental knowledge of Christ is not to begin faith, but to strengthen it and confirm it. We first have a rational proof of the truth of the gospel before we have a sensible proof of it in our own souls. The word must be let into the heart by some means or other before it can discover its effects. There is enough in the truth to discover itself, if the mind be not strangely perverted: 2 Cor. 4:3, 4, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' Upon these grounds we believe, and afterwards feel what we do believe.

2. Serious meditation and consideration is necessary. If there be not a sober and impartial consideration of the things believed as necessary, they cannot work such a change on the heart and life, but will slide away and be ineffectual. Deep thoughts make truth operative; musing maketh the fire burn: 'My heart is inditing a good matter; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer,' Ps. 45:1. Men are biassed by contrary affections, and their hearts are hardened by carnal lusts; therefore till grace softens them we shall be as a stone, or wax that is not softened; they make no impression upon us. It is the great work of eternal grace to give us attentive and awakening thoughts: Acts 16:14, 'Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken by Paul.' Many truths lie by, and are of no use for want of consideration. Serious thoughts of Christ and his salvation work most powerfully with us; but most men are not at leisure, and have not time to think of God, and Christ, and heavenly things, and never sit alone to bethink themselves, and then how can these things work upon them? They hear of Christ, his

death, and resurrection; but because things pass lightly away, they feel nothing.

3. Close application. Things work not upon us at a distance, without being applied; as the plaster doth not cure till laid close to the wound. We ourselves must take home the truth if we would feel the virtue of it. The comfort and the mercy must be brought near to us that was before afar off and at a distance. While it remaineth in the conditional offer, it is as fair for others as for us, and for us as for others. But take it home: Rom. 8:31, 'What shall we say to these things?' Job 5:27, 'Hear it, and know it for thy good.' Every particular person must look upon himself as concerned in the offer of Christ, excite his own heart to it, live in him, and receive his benefits.

Use 2. Have we any experimental knowledge of Christ? Do we know him, and the likeness of his death, and the power of his resurrection? Search, but yet take these two cautions—

1. Look for experience in a way of sanctification and holiness rather than in a way of comfort and ravishing delight, for the one is not so necessary as the other. The Spirit may lay by his comforting office to promote his sanctifying work. God's interest is above your own, and the new nature is the greatest evidence. Consolation is not the highest and most necessary part of Christ's work. It is sin is the true cause of our trouble; get that mortified, and you have an experience of Christ working in you. Your cure may be working, though you have not present ease.

2. Look to the thing, not to the measure and degree. If the Spirit of God possesseth you, and ruleth you for God, and giveth you his nature and image, and inclineth you to God, there is a change, though not carried to such a degree.

Doct. 2. One great point or part of the experimental knowledge of Christ is knowing the power of his resurrection.

We have showed you before that the knowledge of Christ is not a slight and superficial knowledge, but such whereby we are made sensible of his power, to what ends he died and rose again. It is not a naked speculative knowledge. We know Christ aright when we feel his power, and have experience within ourselves of the things which we know.

Now I must show you more particularly what is the power of his resurrection.

1. This power is the Lord's work in regeneration, whereby he bestoweth upon us a new life, a spiritual life of grace; for so it is explained: 1 Peter 1:3, 'Hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

2. This new life is not only an obligation to live in all purity and holiness to the glory of God, but an inclination or a power to do so, because it is from the Spirit of Jesus; for we live to God in the Spirit: 'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies, by the Spirit that dwelleth in you,' Rom. 8:11. The profession of the name of Christ, into which we are baptized, inferreth an obligation, but the actual indwelling of the Spirit in us implieth an inclination, power, or ability to walk with God in all newness of conversation.

3. This Spirit or renewing grace we receive from Christ: Titus 3:5, 6, 'By the renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord.' We have it from Christ as the second Adam, or head of the new creation. Look, as the first Adam was by his sin the fountain cause of spiritual death, for 'in him all sinned,' Rom. 5:12, and through the merit of his sin we were deprived of original righteousness: Rom. 5:19, 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;' in place where of an universal inclination to all evil succeeded: Gen. 6:5, 'That every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;' and our own

particular actual sins do lay us lower under the state of death, and make our deliverance more difficult: Jer. 13:23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil;' so Jesus Christ is the beginning, root, and fountain cause of all the grace that we have; he is the second Adam.

4. This gift of the Spirit is procured for us by the intervention of Christ's merit and mediation, whereby he satisfied divine justice, and acquired those things which divine love and mercy had prepared for us. They were lost in Adam, but purchased by Christ, who was made a curse for us, 'that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,' Gal. 3:13, 14.

5. Though this Spirit and renewing grace were purchased by Christ's death, it is conveyed and applied to us with respect to his resurrection, and so spoken of everywhere in scripture; as here it is called, 'the power of his resurrection;' so it is said, Eph. 2:5, 'He hath quickened us together with Christ.' Not at the same time in our own persons, for so we are quickened a long time after Christ's resurrection in our effectual calling; but by the same power by which Christ was quickened and raised we are quickened and we are raised also, every one of us in his own time. Our head and lord was dead, but is now alive and liveth for ever, for that end and purpose. By his resurrection it appeareth that God is satisfied and appeased, death subdued and overcome, and Christ in a capacity, and exalted, to give us this new life, Acts 5:31. Christ rose 'as the first-fruits of the regenerate,' 1 Cor. 15:20; as 'the first-born from the dead,' Col. 1:18; 'The first-begotten of the dead,' Rev. 1:5. He rose by his own power to immortality and life. So by the same power and virtue will he raise and quicken his members as the first-born among many brethren, and give the rest a share of the Father's goods.

But more particularly, I shall show you how, by virtue of Christ's resurrection, christians obtain the grace of a new life. [For this see

sermon on 2 Corinthians 5:15.]

Secondly, The fellowship of his sufferings, 'that I may be conformable to his death.' Here is the second privilege, conformity to the death of Christ; so the apostle accounts it in this place. Here take notice—

1. Those that would be partakers of Christ must not fancy to themselves an easy life free from all sufferings, but such a condition as they may be conformable to the death of Christ: Rom. 8:17, 'If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.' We must be partakers of his sufferings if we would be partakers of his kingdom. If we be dead with him, and suffer with him, 'we shall also reign with him,' 2 Tim. 2:12. The way to eternal salvation is to tread in Christ's steps, by the cross to come to the crown.

2. These sufferings for Christ should not seem grievous to God's children, and they should be so far from shunning sufferings when God calleth them to it, or from any repining or heartless discouragement, that they ought rather to think it their glory, and their great honour and happiness; for Paul reckoneth it among his advantages. And elsewhere in scripture we are bidden to rejoice in it, if we suffer anything for Christ and his truth; for indeed there is great comfort and joy to be had in suffering for him and with him in his mystical body. They that have tasted this sweetness count all things but loss and dung in comparison of it; and so might we rejoice and be exceeding glad if we consult with the privileges of the Spirit rather than the interest of the flesh: James 1:2, 'Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;' Mat. 5:11, 12, 'Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake: rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.'

3. The two grand things which lighten all our afflictions and sufferings for Christ are those mentioned in the text—fellowship with him, and conformity to him.

[1.] Fellowship with him, 'That I may know the fellowship of his sufferings;' 1 Peter 4:13, 'But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.' How partakers of his sufferings? He suffereth with them, and communicateth his Spirit, and that in a larger measure of comfort than to the rest of his people. As a special measure of wisdom and strength, so a more liberal allowance of supports and comforts: Col. 1:24, 'Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh;' ὑστερήματα Χριστοῦ, the leavings. The sufferings of christians are the sufferings of Christ, and the filling up of his sufferings. Not as if his personal sufferings for the redemption of sinners were imperfect, and to be supplied by our sufferings; that cannot be, for 'by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;' but partly because such is the sympathy between Christ and believers, that their sufferings are his sufferings: Acts 9:4, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' How persecute me? Christ was far enough out of his reach, but he persecuted him in his members. When the toe is trod upon the tongue will cry out, You hurt me. And partly because so strict is the union which is between them and Christ, that he and they make up but one mystical Christ: 1 Cor. 12:12, 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.' That is not Christ personal, but Christ mystical; they are one; he partaketh of their sufferings, and they of his Spirit.

[2.] Conformity to Christ. We must be like him whom we have chosen for our head and chief. What do we with christianity, if we refuse to be like Christ? Rom. 8:29, 'Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son;' to be holy as he was holy, and to be afflicted as he was afflicted: 2 Cor. 4:10, 'Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.' When name dieth, and interests die and languish, when we are scorned, reproached, despitefully used, we carry up and down the sufferings of Christ. Patient undergoing crosses for Christ is an evident resemblance of the cross of Christ; this maketh us like christians,

yea, like Christ himself. And however this seem troublesome and disgraceful to those that are blinded with the delusions of the flesh, yet to a holy man and a believer this should make a bitter cross lovely, that thereby he may be more like his lord and master; as the apostle, 'That I may be conformable to the death of Christ.'

Use 1. Look for sufferings. Every member of Christ's body hath his allotted portion and share. The great wave of affliction did first beat upon Christ, and some drops will light upon us. The bitter cup goeth by course and round. Christ began and drank of it first, the apostles then standing by: John 18:8, 'If ye seek me, let these go.' But their course came next: 1 Cor. 4:9, 'For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death.' And thus it hath gone from hand to hand ever since. All are not made to drink it at once, that some still may be in capacity to pity, help, and sympathise with others; but we have all our course and turn.

2. Propound to yourselves the pattern of Christ. It is a blessed thing to know by experience the sweetness and comfort which cometh by communion with Christ, and conformity to Christ in these sufferings. As Christ suffered, we must suffer; as he died patiently, meekly, so must we bear whatever God will lay upon us; as he had his consolation, so have we sweet comfort and support too; as he had his glory, we must carry it so that we may be partakers of eternal glory by Christ, and our sufferings have the same issue.

## **SERMON VII**

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

PHIL. 3:11.

THE apostle in the context is reckoning up his gain by Christ. We have insisted on two grand privileges and benefits already—



justification and sanctification. This latter consisteth of two parts—conformity to his life and death. The first ennobleth the creature to be admitted unto the life of God; the other part seemingly depresseth the creature, the fellowship of his sufferings, and conformity to his death; yet that is an honour too, and so should be valued and reckoned among other privileges; partly because of its present use, as it helpeth to mortify sin, and deaden our affections to the world; and partly because it is the way and means to our future advancement, and its respect to the third benefit, which is glorification. Our gain by Christ reacheth further than to anything within time. It accompanieth a man, and preserveth his dust in the grave until the last day, and maketh him a partaker of the glorious resurrection of the just. This last benefit, as the fruit of our closing with Christ, the apostle here representeth, 'If by any means we may attain to the resurrection of the dead.'

In the words observe—

1. The benefit to be obtained by Christ, 'The resurrection of the dead.'
2. The submission of a self-denying believer, 'If by any means I might attain to it'

1. The benefit. How is this a great privilege, since there is a resurrection of the wicked? Acts 24:15, 'That there shall be a resurrection, both of the just and unjust.' But their resurrection shall be to condemnation: John 5:29, 'But they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation;' and so a fall rather than a resurrection. Therefore the faithful and the righteous are only called 'Children of the resurrection;' Luke 20:36, 'Neither shall they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.' Not as if the other should rise, but they shall not rise to glory. And Grotius observeth the word in the text is not ἀνάστασις, but ἐξανάστασις, to express that full and blessed resurrection which no death, no evil shall ever follow. Therefore by the 'resurrection of the dead' he understandeth that

eternal life and blessedness which is consequent thereupon: Luke 14:14, 'And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.'

2. The submission of a self-denying believer to use any means to obtain it: 'If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.' The words seem to express a doubtfulness, but indeed they do not. Paul was not doubtful of his particular interest: 2 Cor. 5:1, '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.' Paul could not be doubtful whether by these means he might obtain a blessed resurrection, for there is no uncertainty or fallibility in God's promise; why doth he then thus express himself?

[1.] To intimate the difficulty, thereby to quicken his desire and diligence; as if he had said, I know it is hard to come by this happy estate, but I resolve to pursue it by any means. It is a matter of great difficulty to attain to the glorious resurrection of the just, and have our portion in it; but though it be a difficult thing, yet where the reality is believed, difficulties do but kindle desire and excite our diligence.

[2.] To express the variety of the means, or the way by which God bringeth his people into glory. There is doing good, and suffering evil for his sake. Now whether it be by living to God or suffering for God, Paul submitted to both or either way; and therefore this, 'If by any means,' must be referred to his exercising himself to godliness, implied in that expression, 'Knowing the power of his resurrection; or his patient suffering for Christ, implied in this expression, 'The fellowship of his sufferings, and conformity to his death.' Holiness of life is not the only means, nor are the afflictions of the gospel the only means; sometimes God will use both. Some may get through and escape to heaven without any remarkable afflictions, if they be of eminent holiness; or if they have afflictions, yet they may get to heaven without persecution, as in quiet times when the churches have rest: Luke 2:29, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace

according to thy word.' Others with persecution, but not to effusion of blood: Heb. 12:4, 'Ye have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' Some only suffer spoiling of goods: Heb. 10:34, 'And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and enduring substance.' And others by plain and direct martyrdom: Rev. 12:11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death.' Some have store of inward troubles, as Heman; others not, but are exercised with outward crosses.

[3.] To set forth his full submission. We must neither except one means nor another in bringing us to glory. We know not which way he will take, but we must submit to all, even to death itself: Luke 14:26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'

[4.] His unwearied diligence and earnest endeavour to obtain this happiness whatever it cost him; and therefore he resolveth to be anything and do anything, if he might be happy at length. Though in the meantime we meet with many troubles and crosses, and are put upon duties displeasing to the flesh, yet we must not stick at any means to obtain so excellent an end.

[5.] The value of this benefit, and his ardent and vehement desire to attain it. Paul did all things for the resurrection's sake, or that happiness to which the resurrection of the body is an introduction. He did rest satisfied with the hopes of eternal life, and that perfect holiness and felicity he should then enjoy, as a sufficient recompense for all his losses and labours, disgraces and troubles. The word is emphatical, εἰ πως καταντήσω. The word ἀντῆν, which we translate 'attain,' signifieth to come to the place which is directly opposite to that we are now in. So is the state of glory to the present life; here is misery, there is happiness; here is sin, there is holiness; here shame, there glory; here labour, there rest; here the cross, there the crown; here the conflict, there the full and absolute conquest; here the work, there the reward; here absence from God, there for ever present with

him; here weakness, there perfection; then all good is perfected, and all evil shall cease; here we are capable of a dissolution, the body and soul may be severed, but there eternally united never to part more; here God's children are scattered up and down, living in several places and ages of the world, there all God's family shall meet together in one great congregation. So that the resurrection of the dead is the mark we should aim at in the whole course of our lives, and we should say, 'If by any means;' as if he should say, I shall account it well with me, and that I am recompensed enough, if at length I shall attain the perfection and happiness of that blessed estate.

Doct. That the blessedness of the saints at the general resurrection is so great, that we should be content to use any means, to run any hazards, so we might attain it. I shall show you—

1. What is the happiness of the saints in that day.
2. Give you a short account of the means by which God bringeth us thither.
3. Why we must submit to be guided by him in his own way to this glorious and blessed estate, or use any means that we may attain the resurrection of the dead.

I. What is the happiness of the saints in that day. The blessedness is either subjective and inherent, or relative and adherent.

1. Our personal inherent blessedness is glory revealed in us, Rom. 8:18. Now this glory in us is a complete felicity in body and soul.

[1.] The body hath its felicity, for several reasons; partly—

(1.) Because the man cannot be happy till the body be raised again. The soul alone doth not constitute human nature, or that kind of creature which we call man; the body is one essential part, which doth concur to the constitution of man, as well as the soul; therefore

the soul, though it be a spirit, and can live apart from the body, yet it was not to live apart for ever, but to live in the body; and so remaineth a widow as it were, till the body be raised up and united to it; for without its mate and companion, it remaineth destitute of half itself, which though it may be born for a while, yet not for ever. The soul is waiting to be sent again into the body; and when the hour is come, what shall hinder? There is a relative union, and a deep rooted love and inclination of the soul to its body; so that it is mindful of it, and waiteth with longing when the command of God shall send it to receive the body.

(2.) It is agreeable to the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, that the body, which had its share in the work, should have its share in the reward. It is the body which is most gratified by sin, and the body which is most pained in obedience. What was it which was wearied and tired, and endured all the labours and troubles of christianity, but the body? Therefore the body, which is the soul's sister and coheir, is to share with it in its eternal estate, whatever it be. Before the general resurrection, the wicked are but in part punished, and the godly in part rewarded: there is a time when God will deal with the whole man.

(3.) The estate of those that die will not be worse than the state of those that are only changed at Christ's coming. Now their bodies are not destroyed, but perfected; the substance is preserved, only it is renewed with new qualities. Now there would be a disparity among the glorified if some should have their bodies, others not.

(4.) In the heavenly estate there are many objects which can only be discerned by our bodily senses; as the human nature of Christ, the beams of the heavenly mansion wherein the blessed have their residence, with other the works of God, which certainly are offered to our contemplation. Now if God find objects, he will find faculties. How shall we see else those things which are to be seen, or hear those things which are to be heard, unless we have bodies and bodily senses?

(5.) As Christ was taken into heaven, so shall we; for we shall bear the image of the heavenly one. He carried no other flesh into heaven but what he assumed from the virgin. The very body which was carried in her womb, offered up as a sacrifice for sin, that very body was carried into heaven. Now this σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως, 'this vile body,' shall be likened unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. 3:21. That body that is now subject to so many infirmities, which is harassed and worn out with labours, obnoxious to such pains and sufferings, even this body shall be likened unto his glorious body. This body shall be then immortal, free from all diseases, imperfections, and defects. It shall not be decayed with age, nor wasted with sickness, nor need the supplies of meat and drink to repair it, nor be subject to pains and aches, but remain for ever in an eternal spring of youth. And for clarity and brightness, it shall shine as the sun: 1 Cor. 15:42–44, 'So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.' In short, it is endowed with all the perfections a body is capable of; but the greatest perfection is this, that it shall be united to a soul fully sanctified, that shall never use it as an instrument of sin more.

[2.] For the happiness of the soul, we shall be satisfied with the vision of God, and transformed into the likeness of God: 1 Cor. 13:12, 'For 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 3:2, 'Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be: but we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Our souls shall be naturally and graciously perfected both in our faculties and qualities, and so firmly established in a state of holiness as never to sin more, or to be in danger of sinning again. We shall fully enjoy the vision of God, and by seeing be made like him. If specular vision transformeth us (2 Cor. 3:18, '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), much more the light of glory. We shall be filled with eternal joy and delight, and securely possess our eternal blessedness. The light of God's eternal favour shall shine upon us in its full strength, without cloud or night.

2. Adherent privileges, justification, adoption, and redemption, they are all perfect.

[1.] Justification. We are justified now as soon as we believe. We have a right by covenant to justification, but the solemn sentence is not passed. Then we have our absolution from our judge's mouth sitting upon the throne: Acts 3:19, 'That your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;' that is, our full and final justification, when sin shall never rise up in judgment against us any more.

[2.] Adoption. We have a right now: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' But the full fruition is hereafter: 'Now we are the sons of God; but it doth not appear what we shall be;' Rom. 8:23, 'Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;' when God shall not only take us into his family, but his presence and palace; not only give us a right, but the possession; not only some remote service and ministration, but everlastingly employed in loving, delighting, and praising God; and the tokens of his fatherly affection to us are not only privately exhibited, but manifested before all the world. Then adoption is adoption indeed.

[3.] Redemption. Therefore that day is called 'the day of redemption,' Eph. 4:30, because then we are completely redeemed out of all misery, both of soul and body: Luke 21:28, 'Your redemption draweth nigh;' Eph. 1:14, 'Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory; for then we are completely redeemed from all sin and misery, both in soul and body at once, when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, sin and sorrow no more. Christ is a saviour now, a

redeemer now; he hath saved us, and redeemed us from all evil as to the fulness of his merit; yea, he is a redeemer now, a saviour now, as to partial application, when guilt is pardoned, and the power and reign of sin broken; but at death he is a more perfect saviour and redeemer, when we receive the salvation of our souls. Now the evils introduced by sin yet remain upon the body, but at death the last enemy is destroyed, and the effects of sin cease.

II. The means by which God bringeth us thither. They may be referred to two heads: there is a way of holiness, and patient enduring the cross. In the general, it will cost us something to obtain it, for all excellent things are hard to come by; in particular, that is by self-denial, both in the active and passive part of our obedience. Therefore the apostle, when he showeth what use we should make of the doctrine of the resurrection, he referreth all to these two heads: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Wherefore, my beloved, be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' We ought to be steadfast and unshaken in afflictions, and we ought also to abound in the work of the Lord. Of the two, holiness is the most necessary and indispensable. God may bate some men suffering, but he never bated any man holiness; for 'no unclean thing shall enter there,' Rev. 21:27; and 'without holiness no man shall see God,' Heb. 12:14. There must be mortification of sin, and there must be living to God. Besides, sufferings for religion without holiness are but a scabby sacrifice, and swine's blood offered to him, which are an abomination to the Lord.

1. For the way of holiness, and the active part of our obedience, that consists in two things—dying to sin and living to God.

[1.] Dying to sin. Certainly we must die unto sin; we must 'crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts;' for if pride, worldliness, and sensuality live, we die; for every one of these turneth us to another happiness, and we have our heaven elsewhere than in the habitation of the blessed: Luke 16:25, 'Son, in thy lifetime thou receivedst thy good things.' The pleasures, honours, and profits of the world, whilst



we make these things our felicity and scope, we discharge God from giving us any other reward. The covetous have their portion in this world, and the voluptuous sell their birthright for one morsel of meat, and the ambitious and vainglorious are not contented with the honour which cometh from God only. We shall have pleasures enough, and riches enough, and honours enough, if we can be contented to tarry God's leisure, and will continue with patience in well-doing. But when we will be our own carvers, and set up sense instead of faith, and an imaginary and corrupting felicity instead of the real and sanctifying felicity which is offered to us in the promises of the gospel, we can blame nothing but our perverse choice; and no wonder if God deny to us the happiness we contemn. Flatter not yourselves; there is no leaping from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom; no hope to get to heaven at last, when all our care hath been to heap up treasure to ourselves here in the world; no such connection between vainglory and eternal glory, that after we have served the one, we should obtain the other. No; the scripture is peremptory with us: Rom. 8:13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if through the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;' Gal. 6:8, 'He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.' If the world present to the flesh the bait, faith should show it the hook, and set our loss against our gain. God will not give us two heavens, here in our passage, and hereafter at the end of the journey.

[2.] Living to God. None shall live with God but those that first live to God in a state of holy communion with him, and glorify him upon earth. The spiritual life is heaven begun: if it be begun, it will be perfected; if not, we eternally miss of it. If we look for the resurrection of the dead, we must prepare for it by giving all diligence 'to be found of him in peace,' 2 Peter 3:14, by watching and praying, that we may be 'counted worthy to stand before the Son of man,' Luke 21:36, that we may meet him with cheerfulness and confidence, not fear any evil from him: Acts 24:15, 16, 'And have hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead,

both of the just and the unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to keep always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.' Surely it is no easy thing to attain to this blessedness, and therefore we must set ourselves if by any means to seek after it.

2. As to passive obedience, this must be minded too, that so dying with him, and after his example, we may consequently obtain to rise with him to everlasting life. So great a good as eternal blessedness is to be sought, though with the communion of the sufferings of Christ.

Now here I shall observe two things.

[1.] That no suffering must be excepted out of our resignation. Though all that shall be happy do not suffer death for Christ (for all are not called to so great an honour), yet all must be ready to die for Christ; for he is a christian, and none but he, that can deny life itself for Christ's sake. I prove it, because when Christ would teach his disciples self-denial, he doth instance in this point, to put our self-denial to the trial: Mat. 16:25, 'He that saveth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life, shall save it.' Whether you love an immortal holy life with God, or else your fleshly and earthly life better. This is the great question to be resolved, whether you are heirs of heaven or hell? The unsanctified may have some love to God, but not a love to him above their lives. But if you can, for the love of God, and the hopes of glory, submit even to death itself, this is the proof of your sincerity. Again, Luke 14:26, 'If any man come unto me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' You will think it is a note of excellency, and a commendable qualification of some few extraordinary saints. No; it is that measure of saving grace which constituteth sincerity. Some may more willingly and readily lay down their life for Christ, but all must be contented to do so. If you think this is a hard saying, and who can bear it? I answer—

(1.) There is no room for objections against so plain a word of Christ. It is the wisdom of God, and not our reason, which disposeth the crown of life, and which way we shall obtain it; and when Christ hath stated his terms, it is too late for the vote of man to think to bring down Christianity to a lower rate.

(2.) This self-denial must be acted. When there is no way to escape such sufferings but by sinning, you must cheerfully lay down, not only all your interests, but your lives for Christ's sake. As those martyrs, Heb. 11:35, 'They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.' When they might have been upon certain conditions freed from these cruel pains, they chose rather to suffer and die than accept of these conditions, being contrary to the laws of God. Why? Because they looked for a resurrection to eternal life, that God would give them a glorious, immortal, blessed life, for a little miserable, short, and mortal breath, and would recompense their cruel pains with eternal pleasures. This will explain the apostle's expression, 'If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.'

III. The reasons why, rather than fail and miss of eternal life, we must submit to any means which God hath appointed in this world, or for our trial doth put us upon in the course of his providence.

1. From the absolute dominion and prerogative of God, both to make laws and to put us upon what trials he pleaseth to appoint. He is our lord and sovereign, and therefore it is his wisdom, and not our reason, must determine by what we shall attain to that blessedness for which we were created. In his word he hath prescribed the duties, and hath reserved to himself a liberty in his providence to appoint our trials. To repine against his laws is to question his sovereignty: Ps. 12:4, 'Who have said, With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are our own; who is lord over us?' If we think to speak and do what we please, and as our affections and interests shall move us, we go about to disannul his authority, and question his right to govern. So also to murmur against his providence. He may do with his own as he

listeth, Mat. 20:15. Therefore we must submit to his sharpest dispensations, and be in perfect subjection to the Father of spirits, Heb. 12:9. Our comforts, our lives, are not our own; God, that doth require them, is absolute lord of them. If he cannot dispose of us and our comforts at his own pleasure, he is not, at least he is not owned as our lord and governor.

2. From the temper of his government, or the mitigation of his sovereignty, which he observeth in all his dealings with his people. God is an absolute sovereign, and giveth no account of his matters; therefore we must acquiesce in his laws and providences, though we know not the reasons of them. Yet his sovereignty in the exercise of it is always mitigated, and made sweet to us by his wisdom, power, and goodness, as to the case in hand. For his laws, they are holy, just, and good; there is no modelling and bringing them down to our humours and fancies, but they must stand as they are, being built on eternal equity, and commending themselves by their own evidence to our consciences.

But for his providential dispensations—

[1.] There is much wisdom in them: for he doth not call us to any eminent act of self-denial till we are prepared for it, sufficiently enlightened and confirmed, before we are called to suffer for the truth, or upon the hopes of glory. As Jacob drove as the little ones were able to bear, so doth God lay upon his people no more than they are able to bear, 1 Cor. 10:13. His castles are well victualled before they are besieged; first enlightened, then afflicted: Heb. 10:32, 'After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction;' Gen. 22:1, 'After these things God did tempt Abraham.' After solemn assurances of his love, then he put him upon offering up Isaac. So he deals proportionably with all his children. Their afflictions are according to their strength, and the degree and measure of grace received.

[2.] From the power of God. We have no reason to be discouraged in his service. God can deliver you from hard trials by forbearing to call

you to them, and restraining the rage of enemies by delivering out of their hands by his almighty power; only it is your duty to resolve to be obedient to him, whether he will deliver you or no, and make a way for your escape. This was the resolution of the three children: Dan. 3:17, 18, 'We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king: but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up.' So Paul: Acts 20:22, 24, 'And now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, 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.' We must be positive in our duty, but refer it to God to determine of our lot. If the worst come to the worst, he is able to support us: 2 Tim. 4:17, 18, 'I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion; and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.' It becometh not the servants of God to be tender of the interests of the flesh, if they will be kept blameless to his heavenly kingdom.

[3.] There is relief in his goodness too, who doth extraordinarily support, assist, and comfort his suffering servants in all their conflicts and trials: 1 Peter 4:14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.' Cordials are for a fainting time; and his people in sufferings have a more liberal allowance of his supporting presence, a sweeter taste of his love: Rom. 5:5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.' Clearer hopes of glory than others have. All the saints of God are in a way to glory, but his suffering saints are in the nearest way; yea, they have a reward above the common reward, for those that come out of tribulation wash their garments white in the blood of the Lamb, and are admitted to stand before the throne, Rev. 7:13, 14. Now since these things are so, we may be contented by any means to attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

3. The great difficulty lieth, not in a respect to the end, but the means; and so the trial of our sincerity must be rather looked for there. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity, but the greatest difficulty is to convert them from worldly vanities, and to draw them to seek after it. We have a quick ear for offers of happiness, but we snuff at the troublesome conditions of duty, and obedience, and entire subjection to God. All would attain to the blessed resurrection, but they do not come to this, 'If by any means.' Balaam could say, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his,' Num. 23:10; but he loved the wages of unrighteousness. If the wicked are said to despise eternal happiness, it is not simply as happiness, nor eternal; they like happiness well enough, for they love themselves, and would be happy; nor as eternal, for man, that lost the right object of his desires, hath not lost the vastness of them; he would be happy for ever, but it is not in conjunction with the means. Thus the Israelites despised the pleasant land, and 'murmured in their tents,' Ps. 106:24, 25. What ailed them? The land was a good land, a most fruitful possession; but when the spies brought back word, as of the great fertility of the land, so of the giantly strength and stature of the people and their fortifications, they thought God had deluded them, and resolved to give over the pursuit of Canaan. Canaan was not thought worthy of the pains and difficulties to be sustained in going towards it. So it is in the case of heaven. Heaven is a good place, but out of indulgence to the ease of the flesh, and because of the strictness of holy walking, and the difficulties of obedience, we give over the pursuit after heaven. Therefore if we would be sincere, we must submit to any means prescribed or required.

4. The hope propounded will bear this submission, and so the reason of the thing showeth it. Immortal happiness is most desirable, and endless misery is most terrible. This world is vanity, and hath nothing in it worthy to be compared with the hopes which Christ hath given us of a better life; therefore upon due deliberation we must resolve to let go all that is inconsistent with these hopes. I say, this hope will bear all the costs we lay out upon it.

Reason will teach us two things—(1.) To submit to lesser evils to avoid a greater; (2.) To undergo a lesser evil to obtain a greater good; and both are in the present case.

[1.] To submit to a lesser evil to avoid a greater. You escape at a dear rate when you must sin to escape any trouble in the world. You run into eternal sufferings that you may avoid temporal. No fire like the fire of hell. Christ says, Luke 12:4, 5, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear, Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; I say unto you, Fear him.' Parce imperator, tu carcerem, ille Gehennam—Excuse me, sir; you threaten me only with a prison, but he with hell. It is better for a man to suffer the most cruel punishments, and the worst of torments which man can inflict, than to lie under extreme everlasting pains and the loss of heaven. This is the case here.

[2.] To undergo a lesser evil to obtain a greater good than that evil depriveth us of. This is another head of reasoning the scripture uses in this case: Rom. 8:18, '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;' 2 Cor. 4:17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' The pain and suffering will be short; within a little time you will feel it no more than if it had never been; and if pain be remembered, it will be only to increase our joy.

Use 1. Let us not sit down contented with a worldly portion and happiness. There is another state to be enjoyed after the resurrection. This you must seek after, and propound to yourselves as your great end and scope. This life was not intended to be the place of our perfection, but a preparation to it. God led his people out of Egypt, not to keep them in the wilderness, but to carry them through the wilderness into Canaan. The world was intended for our passage, but heaven for our home; carry yourselves then as strangers and pilgrims, Heb. 11:13, seeking for the city of God, where you may

dwell for ever. You come to renew this profession in the Lord's supper. The Israelites in their first passover stood in the posture of pilgrims, with their loins girt, and their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hands, Exod. 12:11; so must we be, in the course and frame of our souls, pilgrims seeking a heavenly country. The ordinances are our songs in the house of our pilgrimage.

Use 2. Let us seek after this happiness without sticking at any difficulties either in active or passive obedience.

1. In active obedience. We must renounce all the pleasures of sense, how near and dear to us soever they be: Mat. 5:29, 30, 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.' Certainly the damage of sin is more considerable than the delight; the honey will not countervail the sting. If you be men and women of pleasure, how do you keep down the body? 1 Cor. 9:27. Oh, what kind of hearts have they who prefer every vain delight and wanton pleasure before the honour of Christ and the glory of the world to come! cannot leave a vain speech, a new-fangled fashion, deny themselves in anything! Is this submitting to any means? So also for any strict duty. Heaven is at the back of it, and that should sweeten it to us. If it cost you labour, it is for the meat that endureth for ever. Work out your salvation.

2. In our passive obedience. We are uncertain what changes we may see; it is past our skill to understand the methods of providence. We know not what God will do with us; but whatsoever he doth, you must say, 'If by any means I might attain the resurrection of the dead.' If we never suffer, we must be sure to have a heart to suffer if God call us to it. You may be saved without suffering, yet not without a heart that is willing to suffer, if God put you upon it: Acts 21:13, 'I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the



name of the Lord Jesus.' We must be ready. Some cannot suffer a scoff, a frown, or a scorn. This part also doth much concern us in the Lord's supper; because—

[1.] Here we renew our belief of the promise of eternal life: John 6:39, 40, 'And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' Christ hath engaged his fidelity to take charge of our very dust, and to gather it up again, and to give a good account of it at the last day, and raise it up in glory. Our death and rotting in the grave doth not make void his interest, nor cause his affection to cease. Though we die, Christ is still living, and under this obligation to God, and engaged to us by his promise to us, and inclined by his love to receive our dead bodies.

[2.] Here we come to make application of Christ: John 6:54, 'Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' A sincere application of Christ begins that life which shall be perfected by the vision and fruition of God, and he will raise us up that we may enjoy the perfection of it.

[3.] Here we come to bind ourselves by any means to seek after this life, to make a full resignation to give up ourselves to be what God would have us to be, and to do what God would have us to do.

[4.] Here we come to get that peace which may enable us to encounter all troubles which may befall us in our way to heaven: Eph. 6:15, 'Having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' No going to heaven without this shoe. When the quarrel is taken up between God and us, we can the better bear the frowns of the world. He calleth it the 'gospel of peace,' because it mainly dependeth on the terms of grace revealed to us in the gospel or new covenant. The law discovereth the enmity and breach, but the gospel discovereth that peace and friendship may be had. He calleth it the

'preparation,' because this peace breedeth a firmness and resolution to go through all difficulties, and hardships, and crosses: Acts 21:13, 'I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem;' 1 Peter 3:15, 'And be ready to give an answer to every man of the hope that is in thee.' The peace renewed between God and sinners breedeth a resolution to hold on our way to heaven, not broken with crosses and continual hardships.

Use 3. When we are actually tried we must do four things—

1. Be sure you do not ask counsel of the flesh; that will prompt us to present ease. The voice of it is, Favour thyself, love the present world. Ease is pleasing to flesh and blood. We are all by nature addicted to sensuality, or the gratifying of the senses; to say with Issachar, Gen. 49:15, 'That rest is good.'

2. Get a right esteem of this world: 1 Cor. 7:29, 'The fashion of the world passeth away.' It is momentary and fading, and can never give us full content.

3. Look not to the state in which we are, but to that to which we are a-going. God is preparing us for this felicity. And set faith, hope and love a-work.

[1.] Faith, to see it as present. We have it in the promise, though not in possession: Heb. 11:1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' You see not the world to come that you are passing to, but faith believeth the reality of it.

[2.] Hope, which is an earnest expectation, a looking joined with waiting: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;' Titus 2:13, 'Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Think often what you must be and do and possess for ever.

[3.] Love. All your looking to the reward must be mixed with a love to God, that there may be longing as well as looking. Our spiritual joys consist in a holy love and fruition of God. This is that we desire and value: Phil. 1:23, 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' To be with Christ is best of all: 2 Cor. 5:6, 'Knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.' It is love must incline us heavenward, to long after the fruition of him whom we love, that we may see him, and enjoy him, and be ever present with him.

4. By all means labour to get and maintain the assurance of your title: 2 Tim. 4:8, '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 them also that love his appearing.' Now this is gotten by doing rather than searching. It is sin that woundeth conscience, and wasteth comfort, and grieveth the spirit of adoption, by which we 'are sealed to the day of redemption,' Eph. 4:30. But it is holiness, and faithful obedience, and diligence in the heavenly life, that you may keep up your assurance in vigour: Heb. 6:11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' When we grow slothful and remiss, desertions follow to our great discomfort, but our certainty is maintained by watchfulness and diligence: Acts 20:24, 'But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.' He went bound in the spirit to Jerusalem. He had a call, but knew not fully what the issue would be, whether to die at Jerusalem or no; that bonds and afflictions abide me, but I make no reckoning of any such thing: 1 Thes. 3:3, 'That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.' A christian should be of such a temper, that out of the hope of eternity he should not be greatly moved with any temporal things.

## **SERMON VIII**

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.—PHIL. 3:12.

PAUL having spoken much of his self-denial for Christ, would not be misinterpreted, as if there remained no more to be done by him. No; his race was not yet finished, nor yet had he taken hold of the crown, which conquerors in those races were wont to do, from some high place where it was hung and fixed: 'Not as though I had already attained.'

In the words we have—

1. A disclaiming of present perfection.
2. An earnest endeavour to attain it for the future.
3. The reason of his diligence and earnestness; he was 'apprehended of Jesus Christ' for this end.

1. A disclaiming or denial of present perfection, in two expressions, proper to agonistical matters. They had their Olympian, Nemean, Isthmian, and Pythian games, which were the same for nature, only the place differed. Their usual exercises were wrestling, running and the like.

[1.] 'Not as though I had already attained.' It is an agonistical word put for receiving the reward due to the conqueror. In the races there was a crown of leaves generally set over the goal, that he that came thither foremost might catch it and carry it away with him: 1 Cor. 9:24, 'One receiveth the prize.' So 1 Tim. 6:12, 'Take hold of eternal life.' So here, οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον, I have not yet caught the crown from the top of the goal.

[2.] 'Or were already perfect.' This also is an agonistical word, as Faber proveth at large. Though the runner was to catch at the crown, and seize upon it as his right, yet the ἔλλανοδίκαι, the judges, did

first interpose their judgment before he could put it on his head, and when he received the crown from them, he was judged as a perfect wrestler and racer. The word 'perfect,' as applied to racing, was sometimes used of their strength, and sometimes of their reward. Of their strength and agility, having passed the agonistical exercises, 2 Cor. 13:9, 'For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are strong; and this also we wish, even your perfection;' that is, it would be matter of joy to him to see them strong and able to run the spiritual race. Sometimes of their reward, that when the crown was adjudged to them, or that they had done worthily, the more excellent of the racers had the more excellent rewards: τὰ τέλεια τοῖς τελείοις δίδόμενα, saith Philo, which were called perfect rewards or crowns. Well, then, Paul had not yet gotten his crown, but was as the racer in the pursuit, in the way running as hard as he could, that at length he might possibly catch and receive that prize, the crown of eternal life. That he was not yet in heaven was evident, and needed not be so earnestly asserted; therefore the meaning is, that though he were in the way to glory, yet further difficulties remained; and though his estate were so far secured as to exclude diffidence and doubting, yet not so as to exclude caution and diligence; he had not ended his race so as to catch the crown, or receive it from the hand of the judges. Though he were now in prison at Rome, yet some time of living remained, and some further difficulties to be undergone. He speaketh at another rate, 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; 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 them also that love his appearing.'

2. An earnest endeavour for the future: 'But I follow after it that I may apprehend,' διώκω. I run as hard as I can, pursuing and striving to overtake, with as great desire and diligence in that exercise, when he was behind another; so though he had not attained his crown, yet he would not slacken his diligence till he did attain: 'If I may apprehend,' εἰ καὶ καταλάβω, that at length he might take hold of it.

'If I may apprehend,' to exclude security, and to keep on his earnest pursuit by any means.

3. The reason of his diligence: 'That for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' Christ's apprehending may be also interpreted in the agonistical sense. Instead of the crown, he apprehendeth us; for we are his joy, his rejoicing, his crown, if we hold out unto the end. Now we are apprehended by him—

[1.] In effectual calling, as he puts us upon this race, or inclineth us to this course of life. Paul was apprehended by Christ when persecuting the church, and running into destruction; then he converted him, possessed him by his Spirit, thinking of no such matter, posting quite another way. When an enemy, he took hold of him, converted him, inclined him, fitted him for this race, that he might obtain everlasting glory.

[2.] By constant support; for having apprehended us, he still upholdeth us. We are on his hands, and he doth influence, animate, draw, and strengthen us in this race, as concerned in it, that he may not lose the fruit of his own agonies. By his constant influence we are strengthened and quickened till we come to the goal.

Doct. 1. That God's best children, however assured of their good estate, yet till their race be ended, cannot look upon themselves as quite out of danger.

Doct. 2. Whatever degrees are already attained, we must press towards perfection.

Doct. 3. That Christ's apprehending us for the obtaining the end of the spiritual race is a great encouragement to us to go on still.

For the first point, that none of God's children, however assured, can look upon themselves as past all danger till their race be ended.

I will prove to you two things—

1. That God's eminent servants may have assurance.

2. That they are not to look upon themselves as quite out of all danger till their race be ended.

I. That God's eminent servants may have assurance of their sincerity and good estate before God. So had Paul; he asserteth it all along, as we have seen. They may have assurance of their present grace, for Paul looketh upon himself as in the race; and of their final perseverance, for he was apprehended of Christ, that he might at length touch the goal and obtain the reward, to excite his desire and diligence: they may, I say, have assurance in these cases.

1. When grace is not small and indiscernible, but in some degree of eminency, it may be discerned. When grace is weak and small, and doth not discover itself in any eminent and self-denying acts, it is not noted and observed, but where it is in some degree of eminency, it may be discerned. As in Phineas, because he was zealous for God, Ps. 106:31, 'That was accounted to him for righteousness;' it was accepted by God as a testimony of his holiness. Surely great things are more liable to sense and feeling than little; a staff is sooner found than a needle. Some stars are so small that they are scarce seen. A strong faith, a fervent love, and a lively hope will soon discover themselves. It is hard to think that the soul should be a stranger to its own operations; though some lesser inconsiderable action may escape us for want of advertency, yet we know, and others about us know our 'work of faith and labour of love.'

2. It is eminent when this grace is not in their hearts, as a sleepy habit or buried seed, but in continual act: 1 Thes. 1:3, 'I remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope;' Gal. 5:6, 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith that worketh by love.' They that keep grace in lively exercise seldom doubt of the truth of it. The sap is not seen, but apples will appear upon the tree.

3. When they blot not their evidences by frequent interruptions of the spiritual life, and so many sins as others do, which make their sincerity questionable. Though it be hard to state what sins are, and what are not consistent with grace, yet though conscience be not observant of our particular actions, or be confounded by them, yet the course, drift, and tenor of our lives cannot be hidden from it. A man in a journey doth not count his steps, yet observeth his way. When a man mindeth the business of going to heaven in good earnest: Phil. 3:20, 'But our conversation is in heaven;' and of approving himself to God in his whole course: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'But our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world;' 2 Cor. 5:9, 'Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' Surely a man may know his drift and scope.

4. They have assurance, because they have the spirit of adoption in a more eminent degree. All God's children have it: Gal. 4:6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;' Eph. 1:13, 14, 'In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.' But much more they that do more eminently live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. In some the Spirit discovereth himself only in childlike groans; they feel little of childlike joy and confidence. Surely they find the Spirit a comforter who least grieve him.

5. They have a more abundant sense of the love of God and his rich mercies in Christ.

[1.] By long acquaintance with him: Job 22:21, 'Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto thee.'



[2.] By frequent converse with him in the word and prayer: 1 Peter 2:3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious;' Eph. 3:12, 'In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.'

[3.] By the experiences of their afflictions: Rom. 5:3–5, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulation, as knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us;' Heb. 12:11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous but grievous: Nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.'

[4.] By those rewards of obedience which belong to God's internal government, God's hiding or manifesting his favour to his people. Now a close walker hath many of these experiences: John 14:21, 23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' They have more of sensible consolation. Now all these tastes of the love of God conduce to establish the soul in holy security and peace.

6. The change wrought in them by grace is most sensible, and plainly to be discovered. They may see a manifest difference between them and themselves. Their minds are changed: Eph. 5:8, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but are now light in the Lord.' They have another sight of things, of sin, God, Christ, and heaven. So Paul here: Phil. 3:7, 'What things were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ.' Their hearts are changed; they love what they formerly hated, and, on the contrary, they esteem and choose what they formerly slighted: Phil. 3:8, 'Yea, doubtless, 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.' Their lives are changed: 2 Cor. 5:17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.' And there is a difference between them and others: 1 John 5:19, 'And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' There is somewhat of this in all, but in them the change is more notorious and sensible; whereas others cannot so easily interpret their sincerity.

[1.] This is not spoken to infringe the doctrine of the saints' perseverance. No; far be it from me or you to think so; for 'none can pluck them out of Christ's hands,' John 10:28. They are safe in the love and care of Christ, and have his power engaged for their preservation. None can unclasp those mutual embraces of love by which Christ holdeth them, and they hold Christ: Rom. 8:39, 'Nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Yet we must not thence conclude that we have no more care to take, nor danger to be afraid of, or no more to do as necessary to salvation. We have still more work to do, and we have still to encounter new difficulties and dangers till we are in heaven, and much care and diligence is required at our hands in the use of all appointed means, much exercise of faith, and love, and hope; for by these means doth Christ preserve us in a state of holiness and obedience: 1 Peter 1:5, 'Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation;' 2 Peter 1:10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall.'

[2.] Neither is this spoken to hinder the comfort and encouragement which ariseth from the application of this doctrine. The belief of perseverance in the general is one thing, and the belief of my perseverance is another. That is not so evident and certain every way as the doctrine itself; for my own sincerity is more questionable than the truth of God's promise: *conclusio sequitur debiliorem partem*—the conclusion follows the weaker part. It is certain that 'he that believeth in Christ hath eternal life and shall not come into condemnation,' John 5:24; because it is a truth revealed in the word

of God. Amen, the faithful witness, hath assured us of it. But I am a true believer; this may be certain and evidenced to me by such real arguments and grounds of confidence as I have no reason to doubt of it; yet it depending upon spiritual sense and experience, it is not so unquestionably certain as the word of God is. Therefore this being the limiting proposition, the conclusion can bear no more weight than this proposition hath truth in it. Therefore while I am but making out my claim, as I am doing throughout the whole course of my life; though there be no uncertainty in the case, yet since there is no difficulty in the case, I may, and must say with the apostle, 'I press on if I may apprehend;' yet while I am labouring, and striving, and persevering in my faith, love, and obedience, I may encourage myself in the love, faithfulness, and power of God to keep me as he hath kept me hitherto, and that he will preserve me in all difficulties and temptations: 1 Cor. 1:9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;' 1 Thes. 5:23, 24, 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it.'

II. Yet they cannot look upon themselves as quite out of all danger, and past all care and holy solicitude. We are not yet out of gunshot till we come to the end of our race, and are conquerors over all opposition.

Reasons.

1. Because there is no period put to our duty but life; and it is not enough to begin with God, but we must go on in his way till we come home to him. We must not give over working till we obtain our reward: Heb. 3:6, 14, 'But Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;' Heb. 6:11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to

the full assurance of hope unto the end.' These places show we have not done our work till we have done our lives. We must not give over running in the race till we obtain the prize. Though we are translated from death to life, we are not translated from earth to heaven; and therefore you must work, and 'work out your salvation with fear and trembling,' Phil. 2:12.

2. During our lives upon earth there is somewhat yet more to do, and something yet more to suffer; some lust to conquer, some grace to strengthen. Paul was not perfect.

[1.] Sin is slowly weakened, and never perfectly subdued. There is a continual conflict between the flesh and the spirit: Gal. 5:17, 'For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' The leading and commanding faculties of the soul do but imperfectly lead and command; and the faculties that should be commanded and led do but imperfectly obey, yea, often rebel, being put into a distemper by the senses. Now there is danger in a kingdom, where there is a feeble empire, and rebellious subjects.

[2.] There are continual oppositions from the devil and the world, whereby the weak measure of grace present is often interrupted. As sin within disturbeth it, so Satan and the world incessantly assault it. Therefore we must not give over watching till Satan give over tempting, nor striving till the world give over opposing. Well, many a storm and tempest you must expect, and possibly you may be put upon stranger trials than any yet you have undergone. Therefore, if hitherto you have forsaken all and followed Christ, you must follow him to the end. Temptations will haunt you to the last hour of your lives; therefore you must watch and pray that you fall not by these temptations, Mat. 26:41. The danger is not over whilst you are in the way.

3. Some have 'left their first love,' Rev. 2:4, have fainted in the race before they came to the goal: Gal. 5:7, 'Ye did run well; who hindered

you?' Men that have made long profession of the name of Christ may find a great abatement of their integrity in their latter days: 2 Chron. 17:3, 'Jehoshaphat walked in the first ways of his father David.' In his latter time he fell into scandalous sins, partly through the suggestions of Satan. An importunate suitor may at length prevail by his perseverance in his suit. Long conversing with the world, and objects to which we are accustomed, taint the mind. Worldliness formerly hated may creep in. A deformed object is most odious at first sight, afterward it is more reconciled to our thoughts. Indwelling sin, long restrained, may break out again; as roses snipt in summer bud in winter. A man, upon the supposition that he hath grace, and is possessed of the love of God, may grow negligent, and thinketh there needeth not such diligence as when he was doubtful.

4. The nature of the assurance is to exclude fear, which hath torment; but not the fear of caution and diligence; for so, 'Blessed is he that feareth always,' Prov. 28:14; and 'we must pass the whole time of our sojourning here in fear,' 1 Peter 1:17. We need not retain the same doubting perplexities and fears of God's displeasure, but we must retain a fear of sinning, and be much more in the love of God and his service than ever we were before. So that this assurance, if it be right, doth increase our diligence and watchfulness, and make us more obedient, holy, and fruitful towards God. We are never so thankful, humble, and heavenly as when we do most certainly look for salvation.

Use 1. To show us the difference between carnal security and solid assurance of our good estate before God. There are many differences, but it will not suit with my purpose to pursue all.

1. There is a difference in the grounds; the one is a slight presumption of the end without the means, the other goeth upon solid evidences: 1 John 3:19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' The one buildeth upon a sandy foundation, the other upon a rock.

2. They differ in the effects: the one benumbeth the conscience into a stupid, quiet, and lazy peace; the other reviveth the conscience, and filleth it with joy and peace in believing: Rom. 15:13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' With joy and peace in obeying: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' With joy and peace in suffering: 1 Peter 1:8, 'Though now in tribulation, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.'

3. They differ in the way, how either is gotten, or how maintained. Foolish presumption costs a man nothing; like a mushroom, it groweth up in a night, or like Jonah's gourd. We did not labour for it; it came upon men they know not how nor why. The less such men exercise themselves unto godliness, the more confident. A serious exercising of grace would discover their unsoundness. A peace that groweth upon us we know not how, and is better kept by negligence than diligence, is not right. We may say to them, How camest thou by it so soon, my son? Men leap into it upon slight grounds; but a true assurance is gotten with diligence, and kept with watchfulness.

[1.] It is gotten with diligence. The scripture everywhere calls for it, when it persuades us to look after so great a benefit. And surely the counsel of the Holy Ghost is not to be despised: 2 Peter 1:10, 'Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure;' Heb. 6:11, 'That ye show forth the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end,' 2 Peter 3:14, 'Be diligent, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.' Now see after all this warning if the comforts of the Spirit will drop into the mouth of the lazy soul. If you neglect your duty, your sense of your interest will abate. God withdraweth his comforts to awaken his children and quicken them to their duty.

[2.] It is kept with watchfulness. The scripture is plentiful in warnings of that nature. See some places: Heb. 4:1, 'Let us therefore

fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.' The more confident we are of the promise, the more should our caution increase: Heb. 12:28, 29, 'Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire;' 1 Cor. 10:12, 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' The fear of caution doth not weaken assurance, but guard it. And therefore if men be confident of salvation, and gather some ill consequence of it, that tendeth to security and remitting of their watchfulness and care, surely their assurance is not right; that is, if they be bolder with sin, if they stretch conscience, omit some of the more painful and costly duties, take more fleshly liberty and ease, and say, Now I am a child of God, out of danger, and therefore need not be so strict and diligent; these think themselves something when they are nothing.

## SERMON IX

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.—PHIL. 3:12.

USE 2. Is to teach us three duties which are to be observed to the very last—diligence, watchfulness, and self-denial.

1. Diligence. The race is not ended as soon as begun; it is a race from earth to heaven by the way of holiness. New converts are carried on with a great deal of affection and zeal, and make a swift progress at first, but flag and faint afterwards. Therefore you must renew your resolutions for God and heaven. There is many a corruption yet to resist and conquer, many a temptation to overcome, and much necessary work to do, and you received life from Christ to do it. How much is all that you have done already beneath your duty, beneath the majesty of God whom you serve in the spirit, beneath the precious love of Christ, which should both incline and oblige you to live more to him; beneath the promises and advantages you have by grace for your growth and increase; beneath the weight and worth of endless glory into which you are entering! And therefore you should be best at last, from good grow better, and the nearer to enjoyment, be the more earnest in your motions, and the more confidence of obtaining, the more abounding in the work of the Lord.

2. Be not secure, but use all caution and watchfulness that you miscarry not. Man is a very changeable creature, therefore we should always stand upon our guard; considering—

[1.] The course of temptations may be altered; the devil doth not always play the same game; as it is said of Joab, 1 Kings 2:28, he 'turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom.' A man may withstand one kind of brunt, yet fail in another. Every new



condition brings new snares: Hosea 7:8, 'Ephraim is a cake not turned;' that is, baked but of one side. The children of God prosperous differ from the children of God afflicted: Phil. 4:12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' Age hath its weaknesses and frailties as well as youth.

[2.] Corruptions are sometimes strangely disguised. A man may withstand open enemies, yet fail by the insinuations of those who have a show of godliness: 1 Kings 13:4, 19, the man of God withstood the king, but was overcome by the old prophet. We read in history of some that lost their limbs in defence of the truth under pagan persecutions, but after made shipwreck of the faith by errors. Many withstand violence, bear it out well in a storm, yet are soon deluded and turned out of the way.

[3.] There is danger after suffering. Many suffer many things for the truth who after make foul defection from God; they may suffer a while upon the example of others; their particular interest is wrapt up in the public applause which sufferers for the truth receive from the lovers of truth, and that will make even hypocrites suffer much. Yea, continued sufferings may make the soul faint for the present time; the best, being left to themselves in the hour of temptation, may shrink, and without continual aid from heaven will dishonour God and themselves. No experience from heaven, no experience of former joy and sweetness which they have found in the way of truth, nor their former sufferings, will make them adhere to it.

[4.] Where there seemeth to be least danger there is many times most cause of fear. Lot, that was chaste in Sodom, miscarried by incest in the mountains, where was none but his own family.

[5.] When conscience is cast asleep, a child of God may fall into grievous sins. David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment, yet fell into uncleanness and blood, and lieth asleep

in it for a long time, till Nathan the prophet roused him up. Who would have thought that such a tender conscience could ever have been so charmed? But the conscience of a child of God may be strangely deadened and laid by for a time, even after he hath passed over the terrors of the law, and gotten some peace and confidence.

3. Continual self-denial; if you have suffered for Christ, you must suffer still, that you may not lose your cost: Gal. 3:4, 'Have you suffered so many things in vain?' They are lost as to anything you can expect from God. If you have ministered to the saints, you must minister: Heb. 6:10, 11, 'For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope to the end.' If you have mortified and subdued the flesh, you must mortify and subdue it more and more, that you may not be cast-aways: 1 Cor. 9:27, 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway;' as those are who begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh: 2 Thes. 3:6, 7, 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.' If you have endured afflictions, you must endure still: Col. 1:11, 'Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.' The danger is not over whilst you are yet in the way. Take heed of miscarrying in the haven, and falling at last.

Doct. 2. That whatsoever degrees we have already attained, we must press forward to perfection.

As Paul laboured hard after it, so should we all in the sense of our defects, and endeavour a constant progress.

## Reasons.

1. By this our title is assured. All that will be saved must either be perfect or labour after perfection. Perfect none can be, but all must labour after perfection, or else they are not sincere, and so far labour as to be ashamed of defects in holiness, and mourn over them, Rom. 7. Certainly we must not allow ourselves in them; still striving after more, and making further progress every day: Mat. 5:48, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.' Christians are called to perfection, though they cannot fully attain to it in this life. Many after they have gotten such a measure of grace whereby they think they may be assured they are in a state of grace, never look further, but set up their rest; think that hereafter God will make them perfect when they die. Oh, consider, here is the time of growth. Corn doth not grow in the barn, but in the field. Besides, they hazard their claim of sincerity who do not aim at perfection; for where there is true grace there will be a desire of the greatest perfection. As a small seed will seek to grow up into a tree, and there will be trouble about the relics of sin and grief, that they can serve God no more perfectly.

2. By this our hearts are more prepared in this life for our happiness. The more holy and heavenly we grow, the more meet: Col. 1:12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' We are remotely fitted by regeneration: 2 Cor. 5:5, 'Now he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' But next and immediately by growth and increase of grace: 1 John 3:3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' He purifieth himself more and more: Rom. 9:23, 24, 'And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he called: not of the Jews only, but of the gentiles.'

3. By this our glory and blessedness are increased. The best graces have a more honourable crown; for according to the degrees of grace,

so will our glory be. Every vessel is filled according to its capacity; they that are growing here have more in heaven. Glory and blessedness standeth in communion with God and conformity to him, or the vision and full fruition of God: Ps. 17:15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness;' 1 John 3:2, 'But we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.' Now the more holy we are, the more suited to this happiness, and therefore have larger measures of it; if purity of heart be necessary to see God, to enjoy communion with God now, as unquestionably it is: Mat. 5:8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' 1 John 1:7, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' It is unreasonable to imagine that clarified souls have no more fruition of God than those who have only grace enough to make a hard shift to go to heaven. Sicut se habet simpliciter ad simpliciter, ita magis ad magis. If holiness fits to see God, and without it we cannot see him, so a little holiness fits to take in a little of God; and the more of holiness the more of God; and there is the same reason for aiming at the degree as at the thing, heaven being the perfection of holiness. If you do not desire more degrees, you do not desire heaven itself.

Use. Is to persuade us to get ground in our race, which we do as our title is more assured by self-denying obedience.

1. Our end will bear it, to see God and enjoy God: 1 Thes. 2:12, 'That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.' How much is this better than all those worldly things upon which we lay out our labour and diligence?

2. The glory of God requireth it. Less grace may serve for our safety than our comfort; for our comfort than the glory of God: John 15:8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.' Your hearts will never serve you to do any excellent things for God in the world, but you will betray his honour upon all occasions by your weaknesses and infirmities. God hath most honour

from the strong and fruitful christian, who produces the genuine fruits of godliness, and produces them in such plenty that God is mightily honoured by them: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' By your zeal, constancy, and fidelity in your relations. Meekness, patience, strictness, and heavenly-mindedness. But if our lives be filled with sensuality, pride, envy, malice, wherein do you differ from the ungodly world but only in the name, and some little grace buried under a heap of sin?

3. The notion of grace implieth it. You must not only begin it, but continue it till you come to the goal. Besides your entrance into Christianity, there must be a progress. There is a gate, and a way, Mat. 7:14. Will you always keep at the door and entrance? It is not enough to begin, but we must finish in the way of mortification, heavenly-mindedness, self-denial: Prov. 4:18, 'The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;' Ps. 84:7, 'They go from strength to strength;' 2 Cor. 4:16, 'But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.'

Now there is requisite to this—

[1.] A strong faith, or a deep sense of the world to come: Heb. 10:39, 'But we are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.'

[2.] A fervent love, levelling and directing all our actions to God's glory: 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.'

[3.] A lively hope, quickening and strengthening our resolutions for God and the world to come: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' In short, a faith

that we may believe the gospel with an assent so strong as constantly to adhere to the duties prescribed, and to venture all upon the hopes offered therein; a hope so strong that the heart be so set upon glory to come, that present things do not greatly move us, whether the delights or terrors of sense; such a love arising out of the sense of our obligations to God, and a value and esteem of his grace, that we do with all readiness of mind and delight, with frequency and constancy, continue in the obedience of his will, seeking his glory.

Doct. 3. That it is a great encouragement in the spiritual race that Christ apprehended us for this end and scope, that we may apprehend the crown of eternal life.

Christ's apprehending of us implieth—

1. That any motion towards that which is spiritually good proceedeth first and wholly from Christ. He apprehendeth us before we can apprehend him; his person, ways, benefits, but especially our eternal rewards. We have from him beginning and progress; he is the author and finisher; he first layeth hold upon us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins, by his grace, and still upholdeth us by his grace. He puts us into the heavenly race; for till Christ changeth us we take up with things next at hand. A blinded unbelieving sinner cannot see afar off, till the spirit of wisdom and revelation open his eyes: Eph. 1:17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Nor will he regard heavenly things, nor set his heart on another world, nor lay up his hopes in heaven, and forsake all the things he seeth for that God and glory which he never saw. He slighteth the offer; his heart is shut up against it till God open it: Acts 16:14, 'Whose heart the Lord opened, so that she attended to the things spoken by Paul.' Christ's apprehending us in effectual calling is by a work on the will and understanding; till Christ open our eyes and turn our hearts, and

instead of sensual and worldly, make them spiritual and heavenly: Acts 26:18, 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' We disregard these things till our understandings be cleared; have neither sight nor sense of the world to come, will not let go present advantages for heavenly hopes: 1 Cor. 2:14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' Prov. 23:4, 'Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own understanding.' Till the heart be turned our affections are prepossessed, till Christ puts us in the race.

2. Christ's apprehending us implieth a motion on our part, a subordinate operation; for he infuseth a new life, which we receive from Christ, to use it and live by it.' There is a vital power, whereby we are made to stir ourselves in a way of holiness, for thereby we are fitted for operations becoming the new creature enabled and inclined; and so the power of God and the liberty of man do sweetly consist together. Where God is said to create in us a new heart, he is also said to give us a free spirit, Ps. 51:10, 13. Where we are said to be 'God's workmanship in Christ Jesus;' we are said 'To walk in them,' Eph. 2:10. Where he is said to 'take away the heart of stone, and to give us an heart of flesh,' there it is said, 'I will cause you to walk in my statutes,' Ezek. 36:26, 27; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18, 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 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.' God first worketh on us, and then by us. God's work is first, ours subordinate: Cant. 1:4, 'Draw me, we will run after thee;' Ps. 119:32, 'I will walk at liberty, when thou shalt enlarge my heart' We are 'transformed by the renewing of our minds, but so as to prove what is that good, that acceptable and perfect will of the Lord,' Rom. 12:2. Well, then, having such a spirit, and power, and principle of life, with which the rest of the world are not acquainted, let us press forward.

3. The tendency of this life infused is to be considered by us, which is to God and heaven. Converting grace draweth and bendeth the soul

to its end and rest, that we may grow more divine and heavenly; for you are so far sanctified as you are divine and heavenly.

[1.] Divine: 2 Peter 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.' So that we are or should be still growing, breathing, and reaching forth after God, seeking after him, longing to be with him, to be rid of sin, to see his blessed face, and to live in his perfect love, praising him to all eternity. As the seed is working through the dry clods, so doth this principle of grace; it tendeth toward God, that it may have more enjoyment of God in conformity to him, and be more perfectly subject to him, and never grieve him nor dishonour him more. In the world there is not sufficient to answer the desires and expectations of the new creature. Two things the heart looketh for as soon as it is changed by grace—perfect enjoyment of God, and perfect conformity and subjection to him, that he may be with God, and free from sin. For this Paul groans: Rom. 8:23, 'Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.'

[2.] Heavenly; that we may live in heaven above the earth, and our hearts may be above with God as our happiness. The heart is suited to that exceeding glory promised us in the gospel, that we may affect it, care for it, fix it as our scope and home, travel toward it with all zeal and diligence. Well, then, if the first grace do in some measure incline us to seek this happiness with God above as our treasure, hope, and home, as the chief matter of our desires and joys, then we are apprehended by Christ; for none but illuminated souls can discern this glory, none but the sanctified soul is inclined to it: Col. 3:1–3, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;' 2 Cor. 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.'



4. Christ having apprehended us, still keepeth us in his own hands, and will not fail us, but stand by us in the race in which he hath set us; for that we have from him beginning and progress. He is the author and finisher of our faith; having laid hold upon us by converting grace, he still upholdeth us by his confirming grace; and having begun life, maintaineth it by a constant influence. His divine manutency is often spoken of in scripture; so that besides our care, and watchfulness, and incessant labour, we receive a new life, vigour, and assistance from Christ.

Use. Is to press us to answer Christ's apprehension of us by an exact, resolved, diligent pursuit of eternal life, that only will declare that we are apprehended by Christ, that we may be guided by him to the land of promise.

I shall give you two motives—

1. Think often of our great obligation to Christ for the great love he hath showed us in our calling and conversion; that he apprehended you in your sins, called you with a holy calling, gave you some taste of his graciousness in the pardoning of your sins, acquainted you with his great and distinguishing love. And is this to be answered with a cold obedience? Christ snatched you from the furnace of hell as brands plucked out of the burning; you have just cause to bless God to all eternity for making you new creatures, living members of Christ. But wherefore did he make you new creatures, but that at length he might perfect the work begun?

2. Consider how Christ is interested in your preservation. He had his race and his agonies: Heb. 12:1, 2, 'Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now at the right hand of the throne of God.' The 'joy before him' was principally eternal glory, for which end he apprehended us. That is not all; we are his crown, his joy, a church of holy believers: Isa. 53:10, 11, 'When thou shalt make his

soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' A numerous seed, these are called his 'purchased possession,' Eph. 1:14. He had this in his eye as his crown and the reward of his sufferings: Ps. 2:3, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession;' given him as a recompense of his humiliation.

This consideration giveth you a double advantage—

[1.] It assureth you of his willingness and readiness to assist and help you to the end of the race; for Christ will not lose his own crown, if believers be his crown and rejoicing.

[2.] Our Saviour Christ hath given an example of enduring the highest afflictions in this world. Of faith; he hath led us as a captain. Let us lay aside our worldly love, and fear and obey him, for he will be sure to crown all those that follow him.

## **SERMON X**

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth toward those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ—PHIL. 3:13, 14.

IN the words observe two things—

1. The imperfection acknowledged, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.'

2. His eager desire and endeavour after perfection asserted, 'But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and

reaching forth toward those things that are before.'

I begin with the first general branch, an humble acknowledgment of his imperfection renewed. He had said in the former verse 'Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect;' now he repeateth it again, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.'

This he saith for his own sake, and for the sake of the Philippians.

[1.] For his own sake; to keep himself humble, and solicitous about so much of his duty as was yet behind. The meaning is not, I am not yet in heaven. Who knoweth not that, or doubted of that? Surely that needeth not to be disclaimed by this double denial. Nor doth he mean thereby as if he had not a present right to eternal life. We have a right at conversion, but yet this right to salvation is not full till all be ended. It is continued and confirmed by our perseverance in well-doing. Paul's meaning is, that though he had done and suffered many things for Christ, yet there were more labours and difficulties to be undergone. He had not done all which was necessary.

[2.] This he speaketh for the sake of the Philippians, to expel out of them that conceit of perfection which they might foster and cherish in themselves, as if, as soon as they were converted to the gospel, all danger were over, either of deceit by error, or defection in point of practice. No; he telleth them he had not that which they boasted of; he was not yet come to the goal; he needed to do and suffer more things before he could obtain the prize.

Doct. They that have made the furthest progress in Christianity are usually most sensible of their own imperfections.

The reasons of the point.

1. In respect of grace.

[1.] Because as grace increaseth, light increaseth, and so they are more sensible of defects. Novices, who know little, are most apt to be puffed up: 1 Tim. 3:6, 'Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.' A man newly acquainted with religion looketh but to few things, and his knowledge is very indistinct and imperfect; and therefore, looking not into the breadth of religion, they are conceited of those few obvious truths which they understand, as if they knew all that is necessary to be known; as smatterers in learning are most conceited of their learning, because they have not knowledge enough to discover their ignorance. Plutarch recorded the saying of one Manedemus, that young men when they came to study at Athens they were σοφοί; after they had studied a little more, only φιλόσοφοι; but the more they studied, ῥήτορες, had some notions, could prattle of things, but not understand them; but afterwards found themselves μῶροι, fools; as they studied deeper in learning, they knew this only, that they knew nothing. So it is in spiritual things. Who more confident than young professors? But as their knowledge increaseth, they see every day more need of the apostle's direction, 'Be not wise in thine own conceit.' In a clear glass the least mote is soon espied. They discern many remainders of pride, hypocrisy, worldliness, besides their latent corruptions, which they knew not before; and their hasty confidence is soon routed, and they see a need of establishing themselves in the hope of the gospel upon surer terms.

[2.] As grace increaseth, their love to God is increased, and so they hate sin more. Love begets a tenderness; as the spiritual life increaseth, so doth spiritual sense. The least sin goeth to their very souls, which maketh them to think viler of themselves than ever before. We have but a gross sense of sin at first, because we know but a few things, prize ourselves by some sensitive expressions of love to God, or external conformity to his laws; but as we look into the breadth of the commandment, make conscience of a thorough conformity to the will of God, we are more sensible how much we come short of that purity, and holiness, and exactness which the law of God requireth, and do more sorely and bitterly complain of the

relics of sin dwelling in us: Rom. 7:18, 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not;' and ver. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' The increase of light showeth sin to be more than we thought it to be, and the increase of love maketh it to be more a burden to us. Look, as in the body, the better the constitution, the more sensible of pain; so in the soul, the more thoroughly the heart is set to please God, the more grievous is sin to them.

[3.] The longer they live, the more experience they have, and that maketh them wise and provident, that they are not so confident and venturous as others; they have more experience of the craft and subtlety of Satan, who easily surpriseth unwary souls: 2 Cor. 2:11, 'Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' They know the rocks upon which they are apt to split themselves; what advantage he maketh of their passions and affections, and not only of their natural and carnal affections, but sometimes of their religious affections. If they will be sorry for sin, he will tempt them to an over-grief, that they may be swallowed up of sorrow. He would turn their zeal to a furious zeal, that it shall exceed the measure of the cause, or offend in its object. How is a child of God or a disciple of Christ sometimes made Satan's instrument? Mat. 16:23, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Therefore these things make them more wary and watchful than younger christians, who fall as a ready prey into the mouth of the tempter.

2. Because of the world. This flattering tempting world, whose delights often tempt them from God, holiness, and heaven, they have proved it, and tried it to be 'vanity and vexation of spirit' at the last. When the apostle had differenced christians by their several ages and degrees of growth, he adviseth all, 1 John 2:15, 16, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' All christians must take heed of the

world, but none are so likely to do so as those that have smarted for their carnal complacency. They find that the world is more an enemy when it smileth than when it frowneth; that the profits of it are a greater snare than the losses, the pleasure than the pains, and the honours than the disgraces; that the pomp and vanities of the world do easily tempt them to forget God and their souls, death and judgment, heaven and hell. The seasoned christian will be more humble and watchful than the inexperienced.

3. Because of themselves; the longer they live, the more they are acquainted with themselves. You would think it strange that two men should intimately converse together for twenty, or thirty, or forty years, and all this while should not know one another. But it is much more strange that a man should live so long and not know himself, not know his own heart. Too frequently is this so, because most men fly themselves, shun themselves, run away from themselves, never commune with their own hearts. But you cannot imagine a man to be godly and serious, but he will use frequent observation, and 'ponder the path of his feet,' Prov. 4:26; and as one that hath eyes in his head will consider what he doth, and that upon every weighty matter he will use self-communings, and self-reflections: Ps. 4:4, 'Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own hearts upon your beds, and be still.' His duties will often call upon him to examine himself, if he goeth about them conscientiously: 1 Cor. 11:28, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup.' If he omitteth it, God will remember him by many a sharp providence, and put him necessarily upon an inquiry into his state and ways: Lam. 3:4, 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn to the Lord.' Surely this is a duty necessary, and upon solemn occasions indispensable. Now can a man be observant of his course, and seriously examine and consider what he has been before conversion, what he is after grace received, how much he cometh short of his obligations to God, of his advantages by Christ; how much he liveth beneath the provisions appointed for his growth and increase, and beneath the worth and weight of endless glory which he hopeth for; but he must be base in his own eyes, and have a higher sense of his sinfulness than others

have, and so bemoan and bewail himself for his defects, and see that he hath not attained to the height of perfection which christians should aim at?

4. By frequent commerce with God they know more of God, and so more of themselves. A godly man hath much to do with that majesty and perfection which continually aweth him, and keepeth him humble: Job 42:5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' When he had an apparition of God, it affected him more than all the hearsay knowledge which he had of God before. We see our wants in God's fulness; the ocean maketh us ashamed of our drop. We see our vileness in God's majesty; what is the balance-dust to the great mountain, our impurity and sinfulness to God's holiness, our nothingness to his all-sufficiency? All the creatures are nothing but what God maketh them, and continueth them to be every moment. In his supremacy and dominion we see the right that he hath in us to command us as he pleaseth, and so may condemn ourselves for our non-subjection to him. In his beneficence and goodness, we understand more of our obligation to him: the more we think of his majesty and greatness, every service we perform seemeth low and mean; we cannot satisfy ourselves in it, as being much beneath the greatness of God. Certainly sin is more grievous to every one that hath seen God, 3 John 11. Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle when God's glory passed before him, 1 Kings 19:13, and Isaiah crieth out, 'Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of polluted lips, and I dwell among a people of polluted lips,' Isa. 6:5. The more large and comprehensive thoughts we have of God, the more shall we humble ourselves for our own imperfection.

5. Their estate being changed, their work is now to look to the degree. You know, besides the gate in christianity, there is the way. If you have entered the gate, you must see that you walk in the way. Besides making covenant with God, there is keeping covenant with God: Ps. 25:10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies;' Ps. 103:18, 'To such

as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.' Well, then, though we may be comforted that we have entered into covenant with God, yet in keeping covenant we are conscious to many failings, and the covenant is not fully kept till life be ended. All is not done when men have begun a religious life. Many fall off who seemed to have good beginnings. It is one thing to be planted into Christ, another to bring forth fruit with patience. If there were more close walking, the holy life would be a feast and pleasure to us, but by our weaknesses and infirmities we often interrupt the comfort of it. Now good men are troubled that they walk with no more accurateness and resolvedness in the narrow way; that though they have consented to the covenant, yet they do so weakly fulfil their covenant vow; that though married to Christ, they bring forth no more glory to God; that their course doth no more suit with their choice; at least while their pilgrimage is continued, they see a need of constant caution and solicitude.

Use 1. To teach us that growth in grace, and an increase of humility, or a low esteem of ourselves do usually go together. The laden boughs do most hang their heads, and the sun at the highest casts the least shadow. The conceited seem to have more grace than the real christian, but have indeed less; as swollen flesh is to appearance bigger and stronger, but it is not sound; it is their humour, not their growth. Most men are too great and too good in their own eyes. Self-love representeth ourselves to ourselves in a false shape and feigned likeness, much more wise, and holy, and righteous than we are. Whereas the most serious, and they that most mind their business, humble themselves even to the dust; as Agur did: Prov. 30:2, 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of a man.' And Paul calleth himself 'the least of the apostles,' 1 Cor. 15:9; the least of saints, Eph. 3:8, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.' The chiefest of sinners, 1 Tim. 1:15, 'Of whom I am the chief.' Oh what a difference is there between them and the carnal professor! They loathe other men's sins rather than their own, extenuate other men's gifts and graces, and extol and cry up their own; but true humility sits in the dust as in its own proper place.



Only here is a doubt: How can God's children say so in truth? For we must not lie for humility's sake; that is to personate and act a part. There is a threefold judgment, of verity, charity, and sense. First, the judgment of verity is exact. So we are to search and try ourselves to the uttermost, to pry into all the aggravating circumstances: 2 Cor. 13:5, 'Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?' Out of a sense of their obligation to God, and deep displeasure against sin; none can charge others as the godly will charge themselves. Secondly, there is a judgment of charity, which 'hopeth all things,' as long as possibly it can, 1 Cor. 13:7. Charity teacheth us to hope the best of others, for it is a favourable judgment. They may be better than we know, or they may have more to excuse them than we know of, as being more violently tempted, or have not such means to prevent sin. Certainly, charity forbiddeth us to pry into or aggravate their failings 'For love covereth a multitude of sins,' Prov. 10:12. And, thirdly, there is the judgment of sense and experience. We are conscious to our own infirmities more than we can be to others. We have a sense of our own sins, which being compared with that remote view which we have of the sins of others, will make us more condemn ourselves than them. We know our own hearts; we know not another's. We know our own infirmities by experience, others only by speculation. A man that hath the toothache feeleth his own pain, not that of another man's, therefore judgeth his own greater; or they that are troubled with a sharp disease think no grief or pain like theirs.

Use 2. Let us be sensible of our imperfection, and take notice of our defects for caution and humiliation.

1. In point of knowledge: Prov. 26:12, 'Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.' As he said of learning, Many had come to learning, if they had not conceited themselves learned already; so many had attained more perfect knowledge of the ways of God, if they were not blinded by their own prejudices and self-conceit, and their preconceptions. If we had a

true sense of our own imperfection, we would not refuse to yield anything we had taken a liking to, if afterwards it were disproved by apparent and clear light; but dogmatising, especially in doubtful points, hath much divided the christian world.

## 2. In point of daily practice.

[1.] As to the humble and broken-hearted, suing out the pardon of sin: John 13:10, 'Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet;' that is, to cleanse himself from his daily defilements; as a man under the law, if he had touched any unclean thing, was to wash his clothes before even. We are not to sleep and lie down in our sins, upon any pretence of our former justification, as if errors would be pardoned of course, without such running to our advocate, as there was to be a morning and evening sacrifice.

[2.] As to caution and watchfulness, as if quite out of harm's way, and we might play with temptations to sin, and no harm come of it. No; this playing at the cockatrice-hole will cost us dear: Mark 13:37, 'And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.'

3. In point of perseverance, as if we might rest in former doing and suffering for Christ: Ezek. 33:13, 'If he trust in his righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered;' that is, if he presume upon his good estate so as voluntarily and deliberately to fall into sin; if we think our profession shall excuse us in our covetousness, or our countenancing the ways of God in our oppressions, or our praying atone for our sensuality. Man is very apt to make one part of his life a recompense for another, and to excuse his defect in some duties by exceeding in others. The indulgence is sometimes antedated, and we sin upon a presumption we will afterwards repent of it. Sometimes it is postdated; because we have done thus and thus for God, we think God will not be severe to us, but spare us for such a good service or property we think to be in us. Oh, no! you must persevere in a constant, uniform, and self-denying

obedience: or think, I am a child of God; as if that would bear us out in sin.

Secondly, He asserts his endeavour after perfection.

Wherein observe—

1. The thing pursued after, 'The prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.'

2. The manner of his pursuit—

[1.] By fixing his end; for he calleth it σκοπόν, his mark or scope.

[2.] By seriousness, making it his business, 'This one thing I do;' I wholly mind this.

[3.] The earnestness of his pursuit, showed in his diligence and perseverance.

(1.) His diligence, 'I press toward it.'

(2.) His perseverance, 'Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before.'

1. The thing pursued after, τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως, 'the prize of the high calling.' The thing pursued after was salvation by Christ, or heavenly glory, which is set forth by the worth of it; it is βραβῖον, 'a prize,' such as will countervail our endeavours in the race.

2. The hopes of obtaining it, 'The high calling of God in Jesus Christ.' We are invited to these hopes by the effectual call of God: 1 Thes. 2:12, 'Walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.' And this call is given us upon the account of Christ, who hath purchased this favour for us, and opened this hope to us in the promises of the gospel; therefore also called 'his calling,' Eph. 1:18, 'That you may know what is the hope of his calling, and the riches of

the glory of the inheritance of the saints.' By 'his calling' he openeth a large door of hope to us, and inviteth us to partake of this rich and glorious reward, Yea, by this calling, as it ends in conversion, he qualificeth and fitteth us for the participation of it. Calling, as it respects the offer of the word, so it inviteth us; as it respects the powerful and sanctifying operation of the Spirit, so it prepareth and fitteth us for it.

Doct. That the prize of eternal glory is set before those whom God hath effectually called in Christ.

1. There is a twofold calling, outward and inward.

[1.] Outward and external, when a man is by the word invited to the communion of Christ and all his benefits: so 'Many are called but few are chosen,' Mat. 22:14.

[2.] Inwardly, when a man is by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost actually translated and brought into this fellowship and communion: 1 Cor. 1:9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.' These two are so distinct, that a man may have the one without the other, the external without the internal; but the inward call is by the outward, and he that slighteth the outward cannot well expect the inward. Some have only heard the invitation of the gospel, but obeyed it not: Mat. 22:3, 'He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, but they would not come.' To these God offereth heaven, but to these he will not give heaven, for he will save none against their will, nor without their consent. Some seem to comply with the external invitation, but yet are not effectually called, as the man that came to the marriage-feast without a wedding-garment, Mat. 22:11. But those have not the prize, for God is not deceived with shows; but those that mind the message, choose the happiness offered for their portion, pursue after it with all diligence and perseverance, in short, turn to God with all their hearts and souls, these are the called, that 'receive the promise of the eternal inheritance,' Heb. 9:15.

2. In this calling God in Christ hath the greatest hand; it is termed in the text ἡ ἄνω κλήσις, 'the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' This calling is from above, that is, from heaven. The grace cometh from above; it hath its rise from the Lord's goodness and compassion, and is conveyed to us by the merits of Christ through the power of the Spirit; certainly it hath not its rise from man. Yea, the external call may be said to be from above. In Paul's instance especially; Christ called to him from heaven: Acts 9:4, 'He heard a voice from heaven, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Yea, the ordinary call of every christian is in a sense from above; with respect to the original authority, the voice is from heaven: Heb. 12:25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven.' He speaketh to you by his word in the mouth of his messengers; but he in whose name and authority this message is brought, and by whose power it is made effectual, is in heaven.

3. The nature of this calling. Three things are considerable in it—(1.) The work of God; (2.) The duty of man; (3.) The benefits following on both.

[1.] The work of God (for he beginneth) is his giving grace by his divine power, whereby the heart of man is changed and sanctified, and turned to himself. God by his call giveth a real being to things which were not before: Rom. 4:17, 'He calleth the things that are not as though they were.' Verba Dei sunt opera—God's words are works. As in the first creation he called for those things to appear which lay in the dark womb of nothing, and they presently came forth: 'Let there be light, and there was light;' so of graceless he maketh us holy and gracious, of enemies to become friends, of self-lovers to be lovers of God. He bringeth light out of darkness: 2 Cor. 4:6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' This is the act of God's great power and grace whereby he freely prevents man; and if he did not prevent him, he would be for ever miserable; for we have neither ears to hear God's call, nor a heart to turn to him. Yet his call to the deaf is not in vain;

for he giveth ears to hear, and quickens our dead hearts. It is past man's skill to change himself, but not above the great power and mercy of God.

[2.] The duty of man is to be obedient to the heavenly call; for besides God's invitation, there is man's acceptance. God calleth us to Christ as the only remedy for our lost souls, and we receive him by faith: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him.' God calleth to repentance: Mat. 9:13, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' And we consent to return to God: Jer. 3:22, 'Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.' God calleth to obedience, and we say, Ps. 40:8, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' It is fulfilled in christians as well as in Christ. God calls to communion with himself in holy worship: Ps. 27:8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, O Lord, will I seek.' God no sooner calleth but they hear; and what God biddeth them do they do, and forsake they forsake. To many God stretcheth out his hands in vain; God calleth them to purity, but oh, the uncleanness of heart and life! God looketh for grapes, but behold wild grapes. But where God inclineth the heart, they obey his call, though it be to mortify their dearest lusts, to cast away their beloved transgressions, to part with anything rather than part with their God and their Christ. When God called Paul, he made an absolute resignation of himself: Acts 9:6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' ready to go where God will lead him, to do what God will have him.

[3.] The benefit flowing upon both. There followeth a great change, both in the disposition and condition of the man called. As to his disposition, he is made of unholy, holy. As to his condition, of miserable, he is made happy. Two attributes are given to effectual calling; it is a holy calling and a heavenly calling: 2 Tim. 1:9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' Heb. 3:1, 'Wherefore, brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.'

(1.) As to his disposition, the man is powerfully changed, and there is a plain alteration to be found in him; before sinful, now made holy, 'called to be saints,' 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Peter 1:15, 16, 'As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy as I am holy.' We are called out of a state of sin into a state of holiness. God who hath called us is holy, and he calleth us into communion with himself in holiness; and the calling itself is the setting us apart from a common to a holy use; and the grace and favour showed in our calling, obligeth us to holiness. When we consider in what a sinful estate God found us, how freely he loved us, with how great mercy he called us, passing by others worthier than ourselves, we cannot be so unthankful as to deny obedience to his holy will: Eph. 4:1, 'Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.' Especially the honour of him that calleth us being concerned: 1 Peter 2:9, 'That we should be to the praise of him who hath called us.' In short, your calling giveth you great advantages of being holy, a principle or nature in part healed: 2 Peter 1:4, 'Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.' A holy and perfect rule: Gal. 6:16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the whole Israel of God.' A pure reward: 1 John 3:3, 'He that hath this hope in him; purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' The assistance of the Holy Spirit: Heb. 13:21, 'Make you perfect in every good work, working in you what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Ordinances: John 17:17, 'Sanctify them by the truth; thy word is truth.' Providences: Heb. 12:10, 'They verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Now all these things considered, it is a holy calling.

(2.) Their condition is altered; of miserable he is made happy. The great end of our calling is eternal glory: 2 Thes. 2:14, 'Whereunto he hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' That is the end and ultimate effect of it: 1 Peter 5:10, 'The God of all grace, who hath called you to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' The miserable estate out of which, the blessed estate

into which we are called, should deeply affect us. For the present he is an heir of glory, and in due time he shall be translated into the heavenly kingdom. We receive some part of this happiness here, in our justification and adoption, but the great and chief part is not given us in present possession, but reserved in heaven for us, 2 Peter 1:4.

Use. If there be such a prize set before us in effectual calling, then all good christians should look upon themselves as deeply engaged to pursue after it—

1. In respect of the invitation of the external call, that we may not disobey God's call, and neglect this preventing grace, whereby God would draw us to himself. Your sin will be more heinous than the sin of others who were never called. God beggeth for entrance, he standeth at your doors, but you deny entrance to him: Rev. 3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man open to me, I will come in and sup with him.' Christ will bring his entertainment with him, and he knocketh that you may give entrance; he knocketh by the word; he knocketh by his providence, mercies, and afflictions; he knocketh by the motions of his Spirit. Men are a little roused, begin to hearken; conscience stirs a little, yet lie down to sleep again. But God knocketh again, and they are more awakened, and have some affections and desires after heavenly things; but these are choked by the cares of the world, and voluptuous living. Therefore God cometh a third, yea, many a time, and giveth them further calling, that maketh them startle, and awaken a little more; but if they return to their old lusts, and negligent way of living, he may justly give them over to a spirit of deep sleep, to that blindness and wilfulness, that they may be sealed up to eternal condemnation, because they love darkness more than light, a base dirty world before the glory and blessedness promised by Christ. There are thousands, yea, millions in the world, who have not had such an outward powerful call, nor an offer of heaven so importunately urged upon them. Oh, how great is their ingratitude who have offer upon offer, and motions and convictions, but outgrow all feelings of conscience! You judge it



disobedience and rebellion in a servant, if called again and again, and yet he will not come; how shall God judge it otherwise if you harden your hearts and will not hear his voice? Certainly your punishment will be more grievous than that of others: Prov. 1:24–26, 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would not turn at my reproof: I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.' When death cometh, you will only serve for a warning to others not to make bold with God. In the anguish of your souls God will not hear you.

2. To show whether the calling hath had its effect upon you. Doth it make you more heavenly? They that obey this call, their hearts are more heavenly. It is heaven they seek: Col. 3:1, 2, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth.' It is heaven they hope for: 1 Peter 1:3, 'Blessed be God, who hath begotten us to a lively hope.' Heavenly things they savour: Rom. 8:5, 'They that are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.' This is their treasure and portion: Mat. 20:21, 'Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.' Their home and happiness: Heb. 11:13, 'They declare plainly they seek a country.' It is their scope: 2 Cor. 4:18, 'We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen.' And therefore are heavenly: Phil. 3:20, 'Our conversation is in heaven.' Their course is becoming their choice: 1 Thes. 2:12, 'That you walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.' They live as heirs of glory. Heaven they seek in the first place: Mat. 6:33, 'First seek the kingdom of God.' Their conversation, hope, and happiness is in heaven. But when you are of the earth, and savour of the earth, you are not yet called off from the world. Certainly when grace gets the mastery, when it is the governing principle in our hearts, it sets up some scope and end which was not before, for which it employeth our time and strength life and love, minds and hearts, cares and endeavours. A carnal mind

is carried out with greater estimation, resolution, and delight after earthly things than after heavenly; but these are the proper good suited to the divine nature in us. In heaven is the most perfect enjoyment of God and conformity to him. Being born of God, they cannot live without him, nor be satisfied with that partial enjoyment which the present world will only afford. There is the consummation of the new creature.

3. The calling of God gives us hopes of a right to the blessing: 'No man taketh this honour, but he that is called of God;' and of the continuance of that right: 1 Peter 5:10, 'But the God of all grace, who hath called us to this eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' If you have consented to his holy calling, he will not leave till he hath brought you to the full possession of what he hath called you unto.

## SERMON XI

I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.—PHIL. 3:14.

HAVING spoken of the thing pursued after, we come now to the second branch, the manner of prosecution. Where, the first thing observable is his fixing his scope. He propounded this 'prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ' as his mark and scope which he aimed at, 'I press toward the mark.'

Doct. 1. That those that would be christians indeed must make heavenly things their scope.

First, Let me show you how many ways this is done—(1.) Habitually; (2.) Actually.

1. Habitually, when you have first fixed your end, and renounced the devil, the world, and the flesh, and did set upon hopes and resolutions for heaven, and did take the world to come for your portion and happiness, choosing the better part: 2 Cor. 4:18, 'While

we look not to the things which are seen, but to the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' You have fixed this as the end of your faith: 1 Peter 1:9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.' The end of your diligence, and the drift and purpose of all your serving and waiting upon God: Acts 26:7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' This is the end of all our labours: 2 Cor. 5:9, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' Your great ambition, that you may be accepted unto eternal life.

2. Actually; it is not enough to choose the better part, but we must often actually think of it to renew lively affections. Having pitched upon a right end, you must renew your estimation and intention of it, that you may keep it strong and fixed: Prov. 4:25, 'Let thine eyes look right on, and let thy eyelids look straight before thee;' that is, to the end of your journey; that you may still make it your business to go to heaven.

Secondly, We must distinguish again, that the intention of the end and scope is either explicit or implicit, formal or virtual.

1. The formal and explicit intention is by express thoughts of the world to come, when the mind and heart is in heaven. Now these thoughts should be frequent; for 'where the treasure is, the heart will be also,' Mat. 6:21. Can you travel one whole day to such an end, and never think of the place you are going unto? Certainly the end must be intended in every holy action, and therefore often thought of.

2. The implicit and virtual intention is by the ready unobserved act of a potent habit. As a man in a journey doth not always think of the place to which he is going, yet his motion is influenced by it, he is still drawing toward that place; so by the impression of a powerful habit, a christian liveth for God, and heaven, and glory, though he doth not always think of it: 'But our conversation is in heaven,' Phil. 3:20.

But here ariseth a question, When doth the virtual intention suffice without formal noted thoughts?

Ans. (1.) In momentous actions we must notably, formally, and expressly mind our great end, as when we are to do any notable thing for God. As Moses in his eminent self-denial had an eye to the recompense of reward, Heb. 11:26. In lesser things the heavenly frame and bent of heart sufficeth.

(2.) Weak habits and inclinations need more express, formal, noted thoughts than the strong, for without them they cannot do their work; and the habits of grace in most men are weak, temptations many, and the difficulties of obedience great. They cannot easily keep up their lively zeal and earnest diligence if they seldom think of heaven. They are called upon to raise their minds and affections: Col. 3:1, 2, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, and not upon things of the earth.' But now powerful and strong habits, when men have accustomed themselves, and in a manner naturalised themselves to a heavenly mind, the strength of the general inclination sufficeth, and need not so often raise their thoughts as the weaker christians; it is their constant frame: Phil. 3:20, 'But our conversation is in heaven.'

(3.) When spiritual necessity calleth for it through some present distemper or temptation, drawn either from the delights of sense: 1 Peter 1:13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober and hope to the end, for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;' or from the terrors of sense: Rom. 8:18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' In the general, there must be a frequent reviving.

But why must we keep up this fixed intention, and make heavenly things our scope?

[1.] That we may be sincere. One main difference between the sound christian and the hypocrite is in the end and scope; the one looks to men, the other to God; the one is 'fleshly wisdom,' the other is 'godly simplicity,' 2 Cor. 1:12. The one acts to be seen of men, respected and applauded of men; the other maketh God his paymaster, for he expecteth his reward in heaven, and so can go on with his duty when man seeth not, 'because his Father seeth in secret,' Mat. 6:8. When man liketh not what he doeth: Mat. 5:11, 12, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.' Nobody will commend him but God. When man persecuteth him for what he doeth, he looketh upon God that he will recompense his loss, and repay all his cost: Mark 10:29, 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's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecution; and in the world to come eternal life.' As he taketh the other world for his whole treasure and happiness, so he can take God's word for his whole security, which is a notable point of sincerity.

[2.] To direct our way. When the heart and eye is upon the mark, you may the better steer your course in order to it. *Finis est mensura mediorum*—Men take their measures from the end, and by it can the better judge of the aptitude and seasonableness of the means. As the mark guideth the archer how to direct his arrow, so doth the intention guide and direct the soul in all its actions. Certainly if a right mark be in our eye, we are more like to level at it than if we mistake our mark. Therefore fix your end, and you will the better understand your way, and address yourselves to such means as are suited to that end; for our Lord tells us that if our 'eye be single, the whole body is full of light,' Mat. 6:22. Our end shineth to us all the way along, and helpeth us to cut off both those impertinences and inconsistencies with which men fill up their lives. What is the reason

that men who hope to go to heaven yet spend their time in vanities which have no respect to such a purpose, yea, sometimes seem plainly to take the direct way to hell? The reason is, because they have not resolvedly fixed and determined their choice, or do not regard their end. It would cut off and prevent impertinences if you be true to your end and great scope. As when you are melting away your precious time in ease, and idleness, or carnal vanities, either in trifling, or gaming, or impertinent chatting, or censuring: 'What doeth it?' Eccles. 2:2. Is this striving to go to heaven? So for inconsistencies: Gen. 39:9, 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' By sin men do not only forget their end and happiness, but run quite away from it.

[3.] To quicken our endeavours; for the end is the motive as well as the measure. The thought of it makes us vigorous and lively: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord;' 1 Cor. 9:24, 'So run that you may obtain.' The prize and worth of the reward addeth spirits to the runner, maketh him run more swiftly. There is labour and difficulty, but we run for a crown. If now labour and difficulty, hereafter it will be comfortable: John 6:27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you;' Phil. 2:12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.'

[4.] For our joy and solace. A man's end is his solace and support during labours and difficulties, and that afflicted estate wherein God seeth fit to keep us here in the world: Rom. 5:2, 3, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God: and not only so, but we glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience.' A man's temper is much known by this, from whence he fetcheth his comforts and supports.

[5.] To defeat the delightful temptations of sense: Heb. 11:24–26, 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 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; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward.' Most men look to present pleasures rather than future joys.

[6.] To make us constant: Heb. 10:39, 'But we are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of our souls;' that we may neither fail nor faint, because of difficulties in the way. In the spiritual race there are stumbling-blocks in the way, difficulties and discouragements which we cannot easily get over; now the remembering the end puts courage into us.

[7.] To engage us in a uniform course of holiness. No one part of our lives will agree with another if they be not firmly fixed by the power of our last end, which runneth through all the parts, and so puts a harmony into them. Our actions are as a mere lottery; the various fancies men are governed by are jumbled together by chance; and so we either walk at random, or having different ends, are 'double-minded and unstable in all our ways,' James 1:8. The last end fixeth the mind, which otherwise would be tossed up and down in a perpetual uncertainty, and distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects.

Use 1. To persuade us to make heavenly things our scope.

1. For this we were created and sent into the world. It is good to consider the cause for which we were born, and the end for which we were sent into the world: John 18:37, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.' If our Lord Christ did thus, surely man was made for some end, for the wise God maketh nothing in vain. Now what is man's end? Not to fill up the number of things, as stones; not to wax bulky, and increase in growth and stature, as plants and trees; not to eat and drink, and gratify a present appetite, as the beasts. That is a mortal happiness, which will not suit with that immortal spirit which God hath put into us. If we had souls that would perish, it would be more justifiable to look after things that perish. No; they will survive these present things: Eccles. 12:7, 'Then

shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it.' We act here a while; are put upon the stage of the world, and then gone into the other world. Now since we live longest there, this should be our end and scope.

2. For this end we are redeemed. The saints are purchased to eternal glory: Rev. 1:5, 6, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.' As our dominion and kingship is perfect in the other world, so is our priesthood, when we minister in the heavenly temple immediately before the throne. So it is said that 'Christ hath obtained eternal redemption for us.' The virtue is everlasting: Heb. 9:12, 'But by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.'

3. For this end we are sanctified or effectually called. Christ's blessings are not bounded in time, but he hath 'blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places,' Eph. 1:3. They are of a heavenly rise and nature, and of a heavenly tendency; there they began, and there they are consummated.

Use 2. To persuade us often to think of this end and scope, or steadily to fix your eye on this blessedness which is reserved for the people of God, that you may have the mark still in view.

1. It is a certain and sure reward, so as we may expect it from him. You have his promise for your security: 1 John 2:25, 'And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.' Now a promise of God should be as sure as if we had seen it with our eyes, or as those things which we see with our eyes, a greater satisfaction and encouragement to us than all the visible things upon earth. We should do more and go further upon such a promise than we will for all that man can give unto us. Though we be exposed to danger and sufferings and unwearied labours, despised by great and small, yet our end, secured by the Lord's promise, should bear us out.



2. It is a great and full reward. We should labour to get a due sense of the worth of the prize of our high calling. Heaven and eternal glory are no light things: Gen. 15:1, 'I will be thy exceeding great reward.' To have God for our portion and felicity, and in the highest way of fruition we are capable of; what can be added more to our happiness?

3. It is a pure reward; not only complete happiness, but exact holiness; to see God, and be like him. Surely one that is so sanctified and purified in part, should level all his actions and endeavours to this mark: 1 John 3:3, 'He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' And be working toward his final perfection.

Use 3. Measure and value all things with respect to your end. Man is made wise by his end. Now above all things eternity must needs make us wise, because it is the last end which we can propound to ourselves, and so thereby we may understand the true measure and value of all things.

We understand what is evil and what is good.

1. Evil things; as—

[1.] The weight and grievousness of sin. Present punishment doth somewhat discover it: Jer. 2:19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts.' Briars and thorns and sensible smart will teach us that which bare contemplation doth not, but our end will most show it to us; because for temporal pleasures men lose eternal joys; for the ease, and mirth, and pleasure of a moment they have lost all that happiness to which they are called by Christ.

[2.] Afflictions are to be valued with respect to their end. It showeth their lightness; they are not so bad as the world taketh them to be. Tedious for the present, but it is but for a season: 1 Peter 1:6,

'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.' All things are lessened by having eternity in our eye. It is grievous, but not eternal: 2 Cor. 4:17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' A man in the deep waters, as long as he can see banks, is not out of all hope.

[3.] Sufferings for Christ. If we may win eternity with the loss of all the world, we are no losers: Heb. 10:34, 'And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, as knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and a more enduring substance.' On the contrary, it is a sorry bargain to lose eternity for the enjoyment of all the world: Mat. 16:26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'

[4.] Death, the king of terrors. It is not feared by a christian, because it is the entrance into eternal life; when he dieth he shall live: John 11:25, 'Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' It separateth us from our worldly comforts, but bringeth us to God, with whom we shall abide for ever.

2. Good things are also to be valued with respect to their end.

[1.] There are many things which the vain deceived world dotes upon, but they suit not with our scope, help us not to the crown, but divert us rather. 'What doeth it?' is the question we should ask: 'The pleasures of sin are but for a season,' Heb. 11:25.

[2.] The enjoyments of this world. They are valuable upon a natural account, but we must consider them with respect to our end. Are they helps or hindrances to heaven? If hindrances, it is the greatest misery that can befall us. It is a great part of God's curse to condemn some men to worldly felicity: Jer. 17:13, 'All that forsake thee shall be

ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written on the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters;' Luke 16:25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' A little as a help to heaven is a great mercy, and an estate is more valuable by the use than the possession: Luke 12:21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

[3.] Duties. Time spent with God in order to our great end is the best part of our lives: Ps. 84:10, 'For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness;' because there is trading for heaven. When you are employed in the world, you make provision for a few months or days, it may be hours.

[4.] Graces are glorious things, because they are the seed and earnest of eternal glory. It is called an 'immortal seed,' 1 Peter 1:23. By these we are more prepared for, and assured of, our great end.

[5.] Christ is valued as the only way to the Father: John 14:6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me.' And therefore all things are lessened in our estimation in comparison of him: Phil. 3:8–10, 'Yea, doubtless, 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, 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: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.'

[6.] The favour of God. It is heaven begun; the first taste we have of our everlasting comfort, which, if we get, we need not envy the best estate of worldlings: Ps. 17:15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.'

Use 4. Do we make heavenly things our scope? Whither are we going? What is the thing we intend? Riches, pleasures, and honours in this world, or eternal blessedness? Our scope will be known by our work. What do we most resolvedly carry on? None so wicked but they will be religious, till religion crosseth that one thing which they do desire. If we design heavenly things for our scope and happiness, all things will be subordinated to them, and we will hold on our way, though disappointed in other things; for then you will only mind temporal things in order to eternal.

I come now to the next thing to be noted, which is his seriousness. He maketh it his business: 'This one thing I do.' Our scope is known by our work, the main thing we attend upon as our great care and business. That which is our first care and chiefest business is usually called in scripture our 'one thing,' Ps. 27:4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after;' as if all other things should be forgotten for this one thing's sake: Luke 10:42, 'But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the better part.' In short, that is our one thing which is most minded, which taketh up our life and love, heart and mind. It is our work, our one thing which must be more esteemed by you than all things in the world besides; other things must stoop to this one thing, and serve this one thing. This is the business which you have to do, and the end for which you live in the world.

Doct. 2. Those that make heavenly things their scope must also make them their business.

There is a double notion which is of great use to us in the spiritual life—making religion our recreation, and making religion our business.

1. It must be our recreation, in opposition to tediousness and wearisomeness; so we must delight or recreate ourselves in God's statutes: Ps. 119:16, 'I will delight myself in thy statutes;' ver. 47, 'I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.'

2. It must be our business in opposition to slightness.

Why must religion be made our business?

[1.] Because otherwise it is not our scope; for an end is not thoroughly intended unless we use the means to obtain it. True wisdom lieth in the intention of a right end, the choice of apt means, and a dexterous and ready prosecution; the whole fabric falleth if one be wanting. If we have good aims, and do not choose right means, that is superstition. Men have direct aims, but they mistake their way; or if good means, and they refuse to use them, that is sluggishness and spiritual idleness. But when all three concur, a good end, fit means, and a diligent pursuit, that is true wisdom. Some are out in the end; as they that 'labour for the meat that perisheth,' John 6:27, or lay out their strength upon that 'which satisfieth not,' Isa. 55:2; they lay out all their industrious cares about paltry vanities. Others err in the means, while they seek for happiness in a false religion, and the way they take for their cure is a great part of their disease; as Judaism, Turcism, and Popery. But the most common error among us is a defect in the pursuit. Men are convinced of better; they see the right way, but are loath to walk in it. Some decline it wholly, and whilst they talk of heaven, take the way which directly leadeth to hell. Others superficially look after it, and by the by only; they trouble themselves about many things, but they are but trifles and childish toys in comparison of what they should be most taken up withal. Heavenly things have some underling respects, but they bring nothing to perfection, but are carried away with the cares of the world and voluptuous living: Luke 8:14, 'And that which fell among thorns are they who, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.'

[2.] Because this is a matter of unspeakable importance, which must not be forgotten and left undone for three reasons—

(1.) It is not a business arbitrary, but necessary. One thing is necessary. It is not a business that may be done or left undone. No; it must be done or you are undone for ever. If you lose the crown of glory, you lose yourselves everlastingly; nothing concerneth you so much. Within a while it will not be a pin to choose what part you have acted in the world, high or low, rich or poor; as in a choir of voices, it is no matter what part we take, bass, or mean, or treble, but whether we sing well.

(2.) It is a business that must principally be regarded: Mat. 6:33, 'But first seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.' 'First seek;' all other things must give way to it. The apostle saith here, 'This one thing I do;' nothing wholly alien or contrary to this must be regarded; nothing but what keeps a due subordination to this. This is the one thing you have to mind, that is, the one great thing, to make sure of everlasting life. Therefore progress and growth in holiness must be minded seriously, and above other things.

(3.) This is a business that you must be continually a-doing. Our whole life is but a constant progress in the way to heaven. Every day we take is a step nearer; yea, every action, morally considered, is a step to heaven or hell. We must always be treasuring up a good foundation: 1 Tim. 6:19, 'Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.'

[3.] If it be not made our business, some other baser pursuit will be our business. There are two masters, God and mammon, and they go contrary ways, and require our whole strength: Mat. 6:24, 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' To serve God is to give up a man's mind, and heart, and whole man, to do what he requireth, and to do nothing in matter of profit, pleasure, and preferment, but what God alloweth him, or in any other thing. To serve mammon is to follow the world as hard as we can, whatever cometh of it. You cannot serve

God and your lusts too; you must make a business of the one or the other. In short, our strength is too small, it will not suffice for every thing; and our time is too short to be divided, therefore the most necessary things must be regarded.

Use. Is self-reflection. What is the prize you run for? what is the life of your affections employed about? There are a sort of men whose hearts are upon God and the life to come, and make it their first and chiefest business to seek him and serve him, and whose whole life is but a preparation for the world to come. And there are others who are gaping after worldly greatness, and gratifying the desires of the flesh. The world morally considered is divided into two societies; the one of the devil, the other of God. Some seek their happiness upon earth, others an eternal abode in heaven; some are pleasing the flesh, others are pleasing God. By nature we are all of the earthly society, but by grace we are of a heavenly extraction, and tend thither. Of which sort are you? What have you been doing in the world, and what is the end and business for which, and in which, you have laboured until now? What thing or prize have you had in your view and chase? Have you lived for the world or for God? have you spent so many years, and you know not why nor about what you have spent your time? You have been strangely careless and inconsiderate. Certain it is you have not been most for God and most for heaven, for that would more sensibly appear; and religion cannot be your business unless you seriously mind it.

The third thing in the text is his earnest pursuit, showed in his diligence and perseverance.

1. His diligence. It was earnestly sought after, as well as intended; implied in the words ἐπεκτεινόμενος and διώκω, reaching forth and pressing towards; which imply vehement desire and earnest endeavour, using all means, bending all the powers of body and soul; I press as hard as I can.

2. His perseverance is expressed—

[1.] With respect to what was past, 'Forgetting the things behind.'

[2.] With respect to things before, which are to come, 'Reaching unto the things before.'

[1.] What are the τὰ ὀπίσω?

(1.) It may be understood of the things forsaken and renounced, such as pharisaical righteousness, the world, and credit, and honour; that and whatsoever was contrary to Christ's kingdom. The world and the flesh are things behind. We turned our backs upon them in conversion when we turned to God. It is these things that would now call back our thoughts and corrupt our affections when we should run on and reach forward in the heavenly prize.

(2.) Some understand it of the degrees of grace already attained, or services already performed. The apostle did forget, or not consider (which is called 'forgetting' in scripture) how much of the race he had overcome or got through. He overlooked all that was past, how much of the way already spent; he did forget it, so as not to rest in what was already done, or to be puffed up with a vain conceit, as if there were enough done, so as to slacken his pace, or retard himself in his heavenly progress.

[2.] What are the τὰ ἔμπροσθεν, the things before us? They are God, and heaven, and the remaining duties of the holy life; what sins are yet unmortified, what duties are yet almost untouched, what trials you may yet be called to undergo. We must still take pains to advance forward, and do that which is yet unfinished; there is much of the way yet before us. From the whole we see the expressions are agonistical, both the forgetting or reaching forth, and pressing forward, and do give us this third note—

Doct. 3. Those that would make a business of christianity must look upon it or deal in it as a race or passage from earth to heaven.

All things agree.



1. In a race there was a beginning and ending, a place whence we set out, and the goal to which we run. The race should begin at baptism, but it doth at conversion or effectual calling, and endeth not till death; that is the goal, and then we receive the prize: 2 Tim. 4:18, 'The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.' We should start forth or engage in this race betimes. Some defer it till they die; but a stride cannot be called a race: we have already lost the morning of our lives, and a great deal of precious time, of our freshest and flowery time. Surely 'the time past should suffice us,' 1 Peter 4:3. We have been long enough dishonouring God and destroying our own souls. Now let us be obedient to the heavenly call, and begin to set forward, though it be late. But then we must double our diligence; life is uncertain, and our work is long. We were long since called, now let us rouse up ourselves. Death is a time of ending the race, not to begin it. It is not called a jump or a leap, but a race.

2. Between the two terms, that is, from the starting-place to the goal, there was a way marked out, but called κανὼν, the rule, which was a white line, marked out the path within which they were to run; if they transgressed, or went over it or beside it, they did not νομίμως ἀθλεῖν: 2 Tim. 2:5, 'And if a man strive also for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.' 'Strive lawfully,' or run regularly, or else he lost the prize; so that there was a place where he set out, the goal whither he went, and the way by which he passed to his mark. There are frequent allusions to this: 'As many as be perfect, walk by the same rule,' Phil. 3:16. And we have a rule, a straight line to direct our course: Gal. 6:16, 'As many as walk according to this rule.' We all aspire to the crown, but few take the way. We must make straight steps to our feet, run in the way prescribed, within certain bounds and limits: Ps. 119:32, 'I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.'

3. In this race there is a prize, a crown of endless glory which we are running and striving for: 1 Peter 5:4, 'Ye shall receive a crown that fadeth not away.' Their crowns were made of flowers and oaken

leaves. We have somewhat in hand that is worth all our pains, but much more when we come home and meet our Lord.

4. There was an agonothetes. This prize is given by a judge: 2 Tim. 4:8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.' Our claim must be justified before his tribunal.

5. No obtaining the crown without running: Heb. 12:1, 'Let us run with patience the race that is set before us;' 1 Cor. 9:24, 'Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.' And that is no lazy posture. Here is reaching forth, pressing forward; we must bend all the faculties and powers of our souls and bodies to obtain it by faithful and constant diligence. We must do things as for heaven indeed, and make as much speed as we can to get the crown which is offered to us by Jesus Christ.

6. In a race we must hold on without any discontinuance. We are not to stand still and give over, but with a constant earnestness to press toward the mark. So here, there is no standing still, by omitting good duties; by slight occasions we come to leave them off. The fire of the altar was never to go out.

7. There must be no looking back; we must still take pains to press forward. As the true racers do not use to stand still, or look behind them to see how much of the way is already past, or to see how much the rest come short of him, but sets to his business to get through the remainder of the race; so they that set themselves to the heavenly race must not look back in a double sense; first, not to think of what he hath forsaken for Christ: Luke 9:62, 'No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' We must not mind or look at anything behind us; that will turn us back, and stop us in our course. Secondly, not contenting ourselves with that we have got, possibly, heretofore, with what we might have done, but must hold till we apprehend the prize or mark, and still

make forward with all our might. The saints in a sense forget what they have done for Christ: 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungry?'

Use. To persuade us to continue in our christian course till we come to the end of the race. Some races are longer, some shorter; but the end of every man's race is the end of his life.

1. We that have gone so far in the way must hold out, though never so many difficulties and assaults: 'You did run well, who hindered you?' When you have gone so far in the way to heaven, do you begin to look behind you, as if you were about to change your mind? Have you fixed upon these hopes with so great reason and deliberation, and will you draw back and be slight in the pursuit?

2. Is the world and the flesh grown better, or God grown worse? Jer. 2:5, 'Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?'

3. All former watching, striving, and praying is lost. The Nazarite was to begin again the days of his purification if he had defiled himself, Num. 6:12; 2 John 8, 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward;' Gal. 3:4, 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.'

[The doctor's sermon on the 15th verse being printed already among the discourses on peace and holiness, the reader is referred thither. The sermon on the 16th verse never came to the publisher's hands.]

## SERMON XII

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.—PHIL. 3:17.

IN this verse the apostle persuadeth the Philippians to agree in the imitation of his practice of forsaking all for Christ. There were

differences among them; some were thus minded, and some otherwise minded. He would have them agree in one common rule, one common hope, and one common example, that they might avoid deceitful workers, whose walking was not so regular as to become a pattern to others, as in ver. 18. Therefore since all were not to be promiscuously imitated, they should follow the best, viz., himself who had taught them christianity, and those other servants of the Lord who hold on the same course and way of salvation as he did, and breathed out nothing but faith in Christ and holiness, 'Brethren, be ye followers together of me,' &c.

In which words the apostle propoundeth his own example, both at first and second hand.

1. At the first hand, in his own immediate practice, 'Be followers together of me.'

2. At the second-hand, and in the rebound, as it was transmitted to them by the practice of others, 'And mark them that walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.'

1. For the first consideration, as his own practice was a pattern to them of sincere love to Christ. Συμμητηταὶ μου γίνεσθε. The words may bear a double sense—

[1.] Thus do together with me; be followers of Christ as I am. Or—

[2.] Let not a few, but all of you together imitate me; which sense I prefer.

2. For the second consideration, 'Mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.' Where we have—

[1.] A description of the better sort amongst them, in opposition to the deceitful workers who did walk disorderly. If a man would imitate others, he should conform himself to the best, and not the worst of christians. Man is sequacious, inclined to do as others do.

Now they should imitate them who were willing to suffer for Christ, rather than enemies to his cross.

[2.] The charge is σκοπεῖτε, 'Mark them.' In another epistle, Rom. 16:17, it is, 'Mark them which cause divisions and offences, and avoid them.' Here, mark these and imitate them.

Well, then, here is a double example propounded, Paul's and their fellow-christians'.

Doct. That it is the duty of christians to imitate those good examples which God hath set before them.

See this elsewhere: 1 Cor. 4:16, 'Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me;' 1 Thes. 1:6, 'And ye became followers of us and of the Lord;' 1 Thes. 2:14, 'For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.' So 2 Thes. 3:7, 'For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;' and ver. 9, 'Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us;' Heb. 13:7, 'Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.' These and many other places show—(1.) That there are some to whom God hath given graces to make them holy and fit for our imitation; (2.) That he hath commanded us to consider them seriously, that we may imitate them, and follow them in holiness and patience, that our latter end may be like theirs. For the clearing this point, let me show you—

1. The several sorts of examples.
2. What is this imitation.
3. How far we are bound to imitate them.
4. Why we must imitate and follow them.

## I. The several sorts of examples.

First distinction. There are the examples of the saints living in former ages, and the saints living in our times.

1. The saints living in former ages, whose faith and zeal and holiness is recommended to us in the faithful records of time, especially in the scriptures. We are often commanded to imitate them; as Heb. 6:12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' None went to heaven but they first met with occasions to try and express both their faith and patience. We must look for the like; they had faith, so must we; they had patience, we must be patient also if we would attain the happiness offered in the promises: Heb. 12:1, 'Wherefore seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us.' The apostle had given us a spiritual chronicle in the former chapter, or a little book of martyrs, and then frameth his inference or practical deduction from that series of instances. Having such 'a cloud of witnesses;' he calleth them 'a cloud,' to show the number and multitude of these witnesses; for as a cloud is made up of a multitude of vapours gathered together and condensed into one body, so here there are many witnesses that concur in one testimony. So the expression is often used: Isa. 60:8, 'Who are those that fly as a cloud, and as doves to the windows?' noting the multitude of converts. So Ezek. 38:7, 'They shall be as a cloud to cover the land.' Well, then, we are not solitary, nor is our condition singular. So James 5:10, 'Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering afflictions and patience.' They are examples of hard sufferings and great patience. We are not better than our fathers, and should not look for more privilege than the prophets. They have been cast into prisons and dungeons, and burnt and butchered, and sawn asunder, and shall we stick at a little sufferings? Surely, having such forerunners, we may go the more cheerfully. Now these examples should be regarded by us—

[1.] Because they are so many and various, and suited to persons of all degrees and ranks of men, and for all christian ends. In the word of God we have many examples on record fit for all persons to imitate. The prince in Josiah and Hezekiah; the counsellor in Hushai; the rich man in Abraham; the poor in the Shunamite; officers in court, in the eunuch of Candace; the captive in Daniel and the three children; the afflicted in Job; the banished in Joseph; the soldier in Cornelius; women in Sarah, 1 Peter 3:6; the magistrate in Moses and Joshua or Nehemiah; ministers in the apostles of Jesus Christ, a zealous, self-denying company, who left their all to promote the gospel. And then of all graces, Abraham for faith, David for devotion, Job for patience, Timothy for temperance, Paul for diligence and activity in the Lord's work.

[2.] Because these show that there is nothing impossible in our duty, and nothing so difficult but hath been overcome, and may be overcome through Christ strengthening and enabling us. That which is done and hath been done may be done. Our duty is reconcilable with our frailty. The saints departed had the same nature with us, and we the same assistances and encouragements with them. They the same nature with us; flesh and blood as we are: James 5:17, 'Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are.' They had the same interests, relations, concernments, wants, weaknesses, doubts, fears; and we the same encouragements with them, the same cause, the same recompense of reward, the same God, the same Saviour; and did he not suffer as much for us as for them? and therefore we should follow them, and walk in their steps.

[3.] Their examples are a standing testimony to confirm by experience the truth and reality of our blessed hopes, therefore called 'a cloud of witnesses,' Heb. 12:1. They all spake to future generations to believe constantly in God as they did, that we may receive the like reward. The scripture telleth us that every one that believeth 'hath put to his seal that God is true,' John 3:33. Much more these eminent ones; they are an instance of God's fidelity to those that faithfully

adhere to him and self-denyingly believe in him, and so they confirm our faith, and excite and quicken our hope and love.

(1.) It doth confirm our faith. Are the wisest and soberest that ever the world knew deceived? or were the comforts wherewith they were sustained in the most grievous sufferings fantastical impressions? They continually professed the certain knowledge of and comfort in the hopes of an unseen glory, and died in the Lord, Heb. 11:13, commending their souls into the hands of Christ. And is not this to our satisfaction, that surely there is such an estate? And should not we believe to the saving of our souls? Heb. 10:30. That bringeth in the catalogue.

(2.) It doth excite and quicken our love and hope, or that desirous expectation of the promised glory which maketh us delightfully and patiently to continue in the love, service, and honour of God, that we may be where they are: Ps. 55:6, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! for then would I flee away and be at rest.' And may come to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. 12:23. We are entered into that society now, and are companions with them in the faith and patience of the gospel, that at length we may be companions with them in heavenly glory.

2. The example of the saints now living; for God hath left us a continual succession of good examples. Every age hath its stars, or some that shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation: Phil. 2:15, 16, 'Holding forth the word of life.' We still have our examples of faith, and patience, and sobriety, and watchfulness, and self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness. And present examples are of great use; for though the ways of God be lovely in themselves, and worthy to be chosen, though few or none walk in them: Josh. 24:15, 'Choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;' Ps. 119:126, 127, 'It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law.



Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold.' In the most degenerate times we should not slacken our zeal. Yet it is no small comfort and encouragement to have companions in the way to heaven. Woe to him that is left alone. The coals by lying together enkindle one another; and not we alone, but divers others, make the ways of God their choice and practice. Present examples add this above those that are past.

[1.] That they are in our eye. It is a saying of Seneca, that men live non ad rationem sed ad similitudinem, not by reason so much as custom and conformity to the practice of others; as beasts follow the drove, and consider not qua eundum est, sed qua itur not how all should walk, but how others do walk. Certainly example hath a great force in evil, because it is before our eyes. There are two senses of learning—sight and hearing; and proportionably it is an encouragement in good to see others mortify those fleshly lusts which the greatest part of the world make it their business and work to please, and to rule their senses, appetites, and passions. Certainly it is a greater engagement and encouragement to us than barely to read of it and hear of it. We see in fœce Romuli, in the very dregs of christianity, some can be self-denying, mortified, and heavenly. God expects we should profit by what we see, and go and do likewise; for these holy ones were raised up for this very purpose, to instruct the present age and reprove the present age. They are 'the light of the world and the salt of the earth;' Mat. 5:13, 14, to season and direct the world, if it grow unsavoury and noisome.

[2.] There is a greater provocation in the examples of the living; there is direction and confirmation in the examples of the saints departed, but more of excitement and provocation in the examples of the saints living: 2 Cor. 9:2, 'Your zeal hath provoked many;' and Heb. 10:24, 'Let us consider one another, to provoke to love and good works.' There is ἀγαθὴ ἔρις, a holy contention or emulation who shall most excel in godliness. When others are forgetful, negligent, cold, backward, we provoke them by the light of a heavenly conversation,

which shineth into their consciences, and we stir them up to the love of the best things.

[3.] These are yet in the way, and not yet past the pikes, and so partly can the better help and pity us, as being within the reach of our commerce: 'Remember them that are in adversity, as being yourselves also in the body,' Heb. 13:3. We have the examples of the saints departed, but not their counsel. And partly, besides, they are yet filling up the measure of their hardships and conflicts: 1 Peter 5:9, 'Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.' They are under like trials; we are not dealt with more hardly than they; and so engage us to more patience.

Second distinction. There are the examples of the guides and pastors, and of ordinary and private christians.

1. Ministers are more bound to be examples to the flock: 1 Peter 5:3, 'Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.' To have such a conversation as may be worthy their imitation; and their example is more recommended to us: 'I have begotten you to God, therefore be ye followers of me;' 1 Cor. 4:15, 16; Heb. 13:7, 'Who have spoken unto you the word of the Lord, whose faith follow.'

2. Private christians. Not only public eminent persons, such as apostles or pastors, and public teachers, but those in a private sphere. They might have been discouraged if only the example of an apostle or the more eminent christians had been propounded; therefore those of a weaker sort are propounded also, who followed his example, who walked so as they had him for an example. The apostle giveth them his example at second-hand, to show that people of their rank and degree might attain this self-denial.

II. What is this imitation or following? It implieth three things—(1.) Factum; (2.) Alieni facti expressio; (3.) Studium et propositum imitandi.

1. There must be factum, an action. To imitate is not to commemorate, but to walk in the steps of those whom we pretend to imitate; not to admire and commend, but to do likewise. The Jews commended Abraham, and stood much upon the honour of Abraham. Christ tells them, 'If ye were Abraham's seed, ye would do the works of Abraham,' John 8:39; as the pharisees, that honoured the dead prophets but persecuted the living, did not imitate the prophets, but their ancestors that persecuted them.

2. Alieni facti expressio. There must be not only an action, or something done, but a correspondent action, or a conformity to the example, both for matter and manner. We must walk as they walk, do such actions with a like mind. As John Baptist is said to 'go before Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah,' Luke 1:17, with the same affections of zeal and courage against sin.

3. Studium et propositum imitandi, a purpose and endeavour of imitating. Casually a man may fall on some things which another doeth, but then we propound them as a pattern when we fit and frame ourselves to be like him or them whom we imitate. Christ must be imitated principally; secondarily, his choice servants, which is done when we study to express their graces to the life; σκοπεῖτε, in the text, 'Mark them,' and so resemble them for zeal, faith, patience, and meekness. Well, then, here is doing, and doing that which others do, with an endeavour to resemble them. Thus should we look to any one that hath any good thing in him worthy of imitation; as those that delight in a garden, if they hear others have any choice flowers, they will be sure to get a slip or a root, that they may also have somewhat of the kind; the rather because the Spirit worketh uniformly in all the saints.

### III. How far we must imitate them.

1. Not in evil things; for the best have their blemishes, and the saints are not mensura mensurans, the rule measuring, but mensura mensurata, the copy, the instance, not the standard. Therefore the

apostle saith, 1 Cor. 11:1, 'Be ye followers of me, as also I am of Christ.' No farther than they agree with the original pattern. You may observe in the saints departed, whose memory is continued to us in scripture, that some of their practices were sinful, wherein they bewray human infirmity; as we read of Noah's drunkenness by the power and strength of wine; Lot's incest by surprise; Abraham's dissembling about Sarah, as not being his wife; Jacob's deceit in getting the blessing; Joseph's swearing by the life of Pharaoh; David's sin in the matter of Uriah; Peter's denial of Christ; Paul apt to be exalted, 2 Cor. 12:7. In these things the saints are represented as spectacles of natural frailty, written for our caution, not imitation, set up as rocks that we may avoid them.

2. There are exempted cases, or some things done by special dispensation; as Abraham's offering Isaac at God's particular command, Gen. 22:10; the Israelites spoiling the Egyptians, Exod. 12:35; Phineas's slaying the adulterer, Num. 25:7; Elias's calling for fire from heaven, 2 Kings 1:10. So infallible gifts and the universal charge of all the churches were peculiar to the apostles. When the disciples would imitate Elias, Luke 9:54, 55, Christ saith to them, 'Ye know not what spirit ye are of.' This proposal of yours is an abuse of that extraordinary power which Elijah had, and contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and that meekness which should be expressed by christians. So that in things peculiar to their persons and dispensation we should not imitate them, for so we have not like warrant.

IV. Why we must imitate the good examples God hath set before us.

1. Because it is a great part of the communion of saints to profit by one another's graces, or to drive on a joint trade for heaven, wherein they may be mutually helpful to one another: Rom. 1:12, 'That I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.' We ourselves should provoke and encourage by our example and experience, and should be excited and encouraged by their experience and example, to be more obedient to God, and patiently

and comfortably to wait for his salvation. Good is diffusive, and seeketh to propagate itself, as fire turneth all about it into fire. Christian society was appointed for this end and purpose. Temporal society tendeth much to the good of persons civilly associated; but spiritual society, or the communion of saints, is far more excellent and beneficial, that the good and holy may live together, to strengthen and quicken each other by their soundness in the faith, diligence in holy practice, which is a great advantage to poor souls seeking salvation. We are neither born, nor born again for ourselves, but that in several communities and societies we may edify one another in love.

2. It is one end of these graces; for God hath bestowed them, not only for the benefit of those that have them, but also for the sake of others, that by their example they might be gained, and quickened, and awakened: Phil. 1:11, 'Filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God.' We have not grace only that we may be saved, but grace that God may be glorified. Many make a hard shift to get to heaven, and may have grace enough for their own salvation, yet have not grace enough for the honour and glory of God in the world. But when it is so, and God hath raised up some rare choice spirits, surely this should be regarded, or an advantage to gain upon the world is neglected. Noah was raised up in his age to condemn the world, Heb. 11:7, that is, of their sensuality, and laziness, and contempt of God's warnings; and in every age God raiseth up some to quicken the rest. Now this is lost unless we are alarmed and awakened thereby: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' The graces of the saints serve not only to please God, but to honour God thereby. They are as light that shineth to others, that God may be glorified in their conversion and edification: 1 Peter 2:12, '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;' that is, when it shall please him, to visit them with his saving grace. Now if this end be neglected, one means

of saving grace is received in vain: 1 Thes. 1:7, 'So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.'

3. Because they show us the way to heaven more clearly and compendiously. *Longum iter per prœcepta, breve per exempla*—The way is long by precepts, but short by examples. Men can sooner understand an example than they can understand a rule. We see how religion is to be acted and carried on. The ignorant understand it by practice rather than description; and therefore Christ would not only give us a rule, but an example how we should walk in his steps. There are many disputes about the rule and doctrine, but Christ's example is obvious to every considering eye. So by proportion the example of the saints; it is not so exact as the example of Christ, but for the main they are such in the world as he was in the world; and therefore their example is instruction, so far as the rule is exemplified thereby. The apostle saith that many that are not won by the word may be moved by the example of those that profess it, 1 Peter 3:1. In practice, they see the beauty and usefulness of religion; in the rule it is but in notion and idea. The best discourses will not reclaim them when example may reclaim them. Religion put into act is a less disputable thing than religion in the theory. The beauty, use, and excellency of it is seen in practice. Many suspect a rule when strangely surprised by practice. It affects their senses, and by their senses, their minds and hearts.

4. In the example of others we have encouragement as well as instruction. Indeed, this is the great use of examples; they do not bind so absolutely, as encourage, because men are not infallible or impeccable. We may be mistaken if we take them as a rule, but yet when the rule is clear they are a great encouragement. Though they do not prove a duty so surely, or that all is commanded which is practised by them, yet they are an encouragement, as proving that those duties required are not only possible but comfortable. We have nothing to do but what many thousands have done before us: Jer. 6:16, 'Stand upon the ways and see, and ask for the good old paths, where is the good way? and walk therein, and you shall find rest for

your souls.' And there is nothing to suffer but what they have suffered: 1 Peter 5:9, 'Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world;' 1 Cor. 10:13, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.' We want no grace, help, or comfort which they had; we seek and hope for the same glory which they possess: Heb. 6:12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' If we were now to begin before the way were smoothed, it were more discouraging; but the ice is broken, the briars and thorns are cut down, the way to heaven is not untrodden. Others have ventured on the promise of the Mediator, why not we?

Use 1. To show us that good examples must be given and taken.

1. Given, and how exemplary we should be to others. To this end—

[1.] Consider what reverence we owe to weak christians, that we may not set them an ill copy. The poet could say, *Maxima debetur puero reverentia*—We owe more reverence to a child than a man. His meaning is, it is dangerous to let them be privy and conscious to any lightness of ours, lest they adopt it into their manners. Young beginners in religion are apt to take offence, and it is a dangerous thing to lay stumbling-blocks in the way of young converts. Gehazi's crime is mainly aggravated upon this account: 2 Kings 5:26, 'Is this a time to receive money and garments?' A Syrian nobleman had newly experience of the goodness of the God of Israel, which was a means to gain him; the master had refused a reward, and should the servant with a lie receive it, and prejudice Naaman against the true religion which he had newly begun to like?

[2.] We are to account for those sins we cause or draw others to fall into. It is often repeated that Jeroboam the son of Nebat caused Israel to sin by his command and example; his idolatry outlived him. When Jehu destroyed the idolatry of the house of Ahab, or the worship of Baal, yet he kept up the idolatry of the house of Jeroboam, or the calves of Dan and Bethel. And so a man may sin

after he is dead. His example surviveth him; therefore, that none of us may be involved in more sins than his own, we had need be cautious. *Ab alienis parce servo tuo*, Ps. 19:13. It is a mistake; they read *zarim* for *zedim*; but it bears a good sense. It is worthy the care of every good man not to 'be partaker of other men's sins,' 1 Tim. 5:22. What is done by our example will redound to our account. We were first in the transgression; and then what is done by others is but a copy and transcript of our practice.

[3.] How severe God is upon his scandalous children. Though he may pardon their faults as to eternal punishment, yet they smart for it in the world: 1 Sam. 12:14, 'Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.' That sin cost David dear, because he had made others judge ill of the ways of God. His child died, his daughter was ravished, his son Amnon slain in his drunkenness; Absalom driveth him from his palace royal; his subjects deserted him; his wives and concubines were ravished; he forced to go weeping up and down, and forced to shift for his life. He was foretold these should be the effects of his sin, 2 Sam. 12:10–12. There is no dallying with God; though our eternal estate should be secured, our pilgrimage may be made very uncomfortable.

[4.] The office God hath imposed upon his people; they are to show forth his praises, or his virtues, to the world, 1 Peter 2:9, chosen out from the rest of mankind for that purpose, to be a mirror of divine virtues, or to be his image and representation to the world, that he is good, wise, and powerful; and therefore we are to take heed what representations we make of God. By our sinfulness we blaspheme his goodness; by our folly, his wisdom; by our weakness, his power. So again, we are called his 'witnesses;' Isa. 43:10, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.' They are to witness for God to the world, as having experience of his providence and of fulfilling of promises. We are to give a testimony for God to the prejudiced world of the reality of our hopes, and the excellency of our religion, and that purity and strictness which is necessary to everlasting happiness. If we discredit Christ and his profession, we are not witnesses for him, but against



him: Isa. 44:8, 'Ye are my witnesses; is there any god besides me?' Now, how do you convince, reprove, and convert the world? The best testimony given for God is by deeds rather than words; by holy example, and keeping his commandments, than by a loose profession, and empty complimentary respect.

[5.] It is a greater honour for us to be examples and precedents unto others, than to take example from others and be followers of them: 1 Thes. 1:7, 'Ye became examples to all that believed in Macedonia and Achaia.' To be a ringleader in evil is more damnable and evil than to be a follower; so to be the first beginner of any good is most commendable and beneficial: Eph. 1:12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ.' Difference of heavenly rewards are propounded for the same purpose. The disciple hath a disciple's reward, and a prophet a prophet's reward. The least measure of sound grace is saving; but he that is allowedly content with a little grace hath none at all.

2. If you would prove a motive and encouragement to others, let us take good example.

[1.] It is a shame to come short of those who are upon the same level with us, have the same rule that we have, the same hopes, the same spirit of Christ with we, to heal, and cure, and strengthen them. 'I profited,' saith the apostle, 'above many of my equals in the Jewish religion,' Gal. 1:14. And should we not do so in the christian? Surely what we do in religion we should not do negligently and lazily, but should advance and grow in religion, both as to knowledge and practice, and labour to be so far from coming short of our equals for lime, age, and means, that we should rather outstrip them. Still our business is to excel.

[2.] There is none but may learn somewhat from others; for every child of God hath his distinct excellency, either as to knowledge, or judgment, or government of passions, or affections, or holy conference, for they have their peculiar gift to the use of edifying.

Now their graces are ours, and ours are theirs, and thereby excite and quicken one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, 1 Peter 4:12. All gifts or graces we have not as absolute owners, but as dispensers and stewards, that these various graces may make us helpful one to another, and we may learn from one another.

[3.] You lose the benefit of God's dispensation, who hath given us good examples, and set them before our eyes for this very end, that we may do as they do; and we are accountable for examples, as well as for other helps and means of grace. For examples of evil and punishment: Dan. 5:22, 'And thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knowest all this,' viz., God's punishment on his father for his pride. So examples of good: Mat. 12:42, 'The queen of the south shall rise in judgment against this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here.' The examples of such as have taken pains to get knowledge shall be made use of to aggravate their sins to deeper judgment, who do not make use of it to increase their faith and diligence. So also Dionysius and Damaris aggravated the unbelief of the Athenians, Acts 17:34. There want not self-denying christians in every age to condemn the laziness of the rest: Heb. 11:7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen, prepared an ark, by which he condemned the world.'

Use 2. To show us how cautious we should be that we be not infected by bad examples. Example is of great force either way.

Here I shall show you what examples are most forcible to draw us from God and goodness.

1. The examples of those who are near to us in kindred; as Ruth, chap. 1:15, 'And she said, Behold, thy sister is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law.' She spake this to try her, it being a great temptation to do as kindred. Leah gave Zilpah her maid to Jacob to wife, as Rachel had done, and

Bilhah before, Gen. 30:9. So Lot's younger daughter committed incest with her father by the example of her elder sister, Gen. 19:31, 32.

2. Who are gracious with us in friendship; as the disciples murmured against the woman that brought the box of spikenard, by the example of Judas: Mat. 26:8, 'When the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?' Compare John 12:4, 5, 'Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot,' &c. One murmurer may infect a whole company, as Judas doth involve the other disciples in his fault: Num. 11:4, 'And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?' They begun, and the other follow.

3. Who are great over us in power; we tread after their track: as the princes and nobles imitated David's liberality: 1 Chron. 29:6–8, 'Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers over the king's work, offered willingly, and gave, for the service of the house of God, of gold, five thousand talents, and ten thousand talents of silver, and eighteen thousand talents of brass, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. And they with whom precious stones were found, gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord.' And Hezekiah's piety: 2 Chron. 30:24, 'For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and ten thousand sheep.' And the king of Nineveh's devotion: Jonah 3:5, 6, 10, 'And the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least: for word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he rose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.'

4. The examples of men eminent, learned, and gracious, are very powerful: Gal. 2:13, 'And the other Jews dissembled likewise, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their

dissimulation.' This is of great force, and prevaieth not only over the weak, but over the strong also. Such as are endowed with grace and parts will be corrupted by it. We do not so narrowly examine their actions; all is taken for current that they do. A plausible error of theirs is not like a duel, but a war.

5. When examples are general and universal, an evil thing is as it were authorised. Public example is like an inundation, it carries all before it: Exod. 23:2, 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.' Therefore we should follow Micaiah's resolution; when the messengers entreated him to comply with the rest of the prophets in his advice to the king, he replied, 'As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak,' 1 Kings 22:13, 14.

Helps to make us exemplary.

[1.] Love to God, or zeal for his glory: Ps. 119:165, 'Great peace have they that love thy law; and nothing shall offend them.'

[2.] Love to the brethren's souls: 1 John 2:10, 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.'

[3.] A sincere seriousness in our profession: Phil. 1:10, 'That ye may approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.'

[4.] Watchfulness: 2 Cor. 6:3, 'Giving no offence in anything;' 1 Cor. 10:32, 'Give no offence to Jew, nor gentile, nor to the church of God;' Luke 17:3, 'Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.'

[5.] Mortify your dearest lusts, deny and resist the pleasures of senses. Mat. 5:9; as Mahomet cut off the head of beautiful Irene, who was an occasion to draw him from public affairs, to the offence of his bassas. Carry a severe hand over all those affections which carry you to earthly things.

[6.] A heart in heaven, and a way with the wise above. The end shineth to us in all our actions.

## SERMON XIII

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.—  
PHIL. 3:18.

HERE is the reason given why they should be cautious whose example they followed, because there were crept into the church a licentious sort of christians, who framed and accommodated their principles and practices to the ease and indulgence of the flesh.

In the words there is—(1.) An introduction; (2.) The character and brand which he puts on these false teachers.

I. In the introduction three things are asserted—

1. The multitude of these deceitful workers, 'Many walk.'
2. His frequent giving warning of this pest formerly, 'Of whom I have told you often.'
3. His compassionate way of mentioning them for the present, 'And now tell you even weeping.'

1. The multitude of them. Error fretteth like a gangrene; and God suffereth seducers to multiply in a church, partly to punish the small respect that hath been given to his truth: 2 Thes. 2:10, 11, 'With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved: and for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.' Partly that the 'approved may be made manifest,' 1 Cor. 11:19, and the light chaff distinguished from the solid grain. The use of this is, we must not follow the drove, nor be carried away with the

current and inundation of evil examples. Many walk; yet, 'Be ye followers of me.' We should keep with the sounder part. The errors of those that are counted godly draw away many. Vice is a duel, error a war, in which many are killed.

2. His frequent warning. God's faithful ministers must give frequent warning of hazard from errors. Never any epistle was written by the apostles but you will find in them cautions and warnings of this kind. It is our duty not only to fodder the sheep, but bunt out the wolf. Error is touchy, and loath to be meddled with; yet we must warn, and warn often.

3. The compassionate manner wherein he speaketh of them. This is mentioned partly to show what a burden this was to his spirit, and a superaddition of sorrow to his sorrow. When Paul was at liberty he told them of these things; now in prison he writeth about them; for they were the same men of whom he spake before, 'that they added affliction to his bonds!' Phil. 1:16. Partly that his warning might be the better received. The apostle did not inveigh against them out of envy and ill-will, but speaketh with sorrow and tears, out of pure zeal for the glory of God and love to souls.

Doct. There should be more of compassion than of passion showed in reprovng persons that err and go astray from their duty.

Because the apostle's example is of great use to us in like cases, let us a little inquire into the causes of Paul's grief.

1. Negatively. It was not hatred and ill-will to their persons, nor emulation of their credit, nor a desire of venting repronches. Some men's zeal against error is as much to be feared as others lapsing into it; they encounter sin with sin, and speak against those who dissent from them, and it may be from the truth, out of little affection; as Ithacius had nothing good in him but his hatred of the Priscillianists, who were better men than himself, only fallen into separation from the church, and this so far transported him, that every zealous man

was to him a Priscillianist. When wicked men, who have no love of God in their hearts, will be inveighing bitterly against errors, they do not reclaim the wandering, but further alienate and harden them.

2. Positively. The causes were these four—

[1.] Pure zeal for the glory of God, which is more dear to God's servants than all their own interests. Compare Ps. 69:9, with Rom. 15:3, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.' Carnal men are hot in their own cause, cold in God's; but the contrary is true of gracious spirits; as Moses, who was meek in his own cause, but zealous in God's. The dishonour done to God goeth near their hearts.

[2.] The church's welfare, which is highly prized by them: Ps. 122:9, 'Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good;' Isa. 62:1, 'For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace;' Ps. 137:6, 'If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.' Now to persons thus affected, when others do by their false doctrine and disorderly life seduce and disturb the church, it is a real grief to them.

[3.] Pity to souls, both of the seducers and the seduced, the ring leaders and their proselytes, because they brought destruction upon their own heads. It is a grief to a serious christian to see people go to hell by droves. True christians are led by the Spirit of Christ, who was all made up of bowels of compassion. We find him weeping for friends and enemies. Friends, as Lazarus: John 11:35, 'Jesus wept.' Enemies, as the Jews: Luke 19:41, 'When he came near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.' Now his people have the bowels of Christ: Phil. 1:8, 'God is my record how greatly I long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ.' When others incur God's displeasure and endanger their own salvation, it is grievous to them.

[4.] They have a clearer apprehension of the mischievous effects of sin, see more danger in it than the deluded world do: Jer. 13:17, 'If ye

will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places.' Faith hath a great sagacity and foresight in it. As to things hoped, it is a substance; so it is the evidence of things not seen, which compriseth the threatenings: Heb. 11:1, 7, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became the heir of righteousness which is by faith.' When the merry world, blinded with the delusions of the flesh, never thought of a flood, Noah maketh preparation. Paul is in tears whilst those besotted worldlings glory in their shame. God's children know that his threatenings are not a vain scarecrow; they see a storm coining when the clouds are a-gathering, a judgment in the causes, and execution in the sentence; and however men slight the word now, it will one day be found true. These things being realised and set before their eyes by a clear faith, they are affected even to weeping.

I have the more dilated upon these things, because they are so useful to us in times of general apostasy and defection from God.

II. The brand and character he puts upon them, 'They are enemies to the cross of Christ.'

This may be understood either of their doctrine or practice.

1. By their doctrine; and so again two ways—

[1.] As they did detract from the merits of his death by urging the observation of the law of Moses as necessary to justification. They taught sins might be expiated and men saved some other way than by the cross of Christ. The pure gospel is the preaching of the cross; by the adding of the rituals of Moses, they made the cross of Christ of none effect: 'For if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain,' Gal. 2:21. By the blood of his cross Christ made our peace with God, Col. 1:20, and that was enough; but they cried up the



ceremonies as necessary, and so frustrated the grace of God in Christ.

[2.] Another particular doctrine of theirs was, that they might confidently abjure the faith in time of persecution, as Eusebius informeth us. Basilides and the Gnostics had crept into the church in Paul's time; and in scripture we may trace the footsteps of this opinion, by which they persuade a compliance with Jews and gentiles, to avoid the danger of the cross or persecution. Jews: Gal. 6:12, 'As many as make a fair show in the flesh, constrain you to be circumcised, lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ;' and Gal. 5:11, 'If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.' Gentiles: that it was an indifferent thing to be present at idols' feasts, and to eat things offered to idols, 1 Cor. 10. This was their doctrine to shun persecution.

2. Their practice, which was suitable to their doctrine. They were of an unchristian spirit and temper, savouring nothing but the world and the commodities and pleasures of the flesh, loath to suffer anything for Christ, or venture on anything that might bring affliction upon them, but wholly gave up themselves to gratify the present life; therefore they are said to be enemies to the cross of Christ.

This interpretation I prefer for these reasons—

[1.] Because in the nextverse, where the apostle explaineth this clause, he doth not instance in their opinions, but their practice: ver. 19, 'Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things;' where they are set forth as sensual and earthly-minded men, and upon that account enemies to the cross of Christ.

[2.] By the antithesis or description of the opposite state of the true christians, 'But our conversation is in heaven.' True christians are

not described by their opinions, but their conversations; and the kind of their conversation was heavenly, and carried on with respect to their happy state in another world. These then are worldly, and so enemies.

3. Their temper had an influence upon their opinions, as well as their opinions had an influence upon their practice. Their religion was according to their frame of heart, fitted for the conveniency of the flesh, or their ease and quiet in the world.

Doct. That men of an earthly, carnal spirit are enemies to the cross of Christ.

To clear this, observe—

1. That those that profess friendship to Christ may yet be enemies to him. These Gnoslics were a sort of christians. There are open enemies, and secret. The open enemies are such as bid defiance to Christ, and live in professed infidelity; the secret are such as seem to own Christ crucified, yet do really oppose the power and virtue of his passion, not mortifying their fleshly and worldly lusts. So that there are enemies of Christ, not only out of the church, but in the midst, where his kingdom is set up; for he ruleth in the midst of his enemies, Ps. 110:1. Now these secret enemies are of two sorts—such as are enemies to his laws, and enemies to his cross. To his laws, or kingly power: Luke 19:27, 'These mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them,' &c.; Ps. 68:21, 'He will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such as go on still in their trespasses.' He is a God of salvation. To his cross: so those who professed the name of christians, but by their sensual walking and worldly-mindedness declared themselves enemies of the cross of Christ.

2. That friendship and enmity to Christ is not interpreted so much by external profession as by the constitution of our hearts, and the course of our conversations. Christ never respected pure profession,

where men have the hearts of infidels and pagans or the lives of infidels: Luke 6:46, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' Mat. 7:21, 'Not everyone,' &c.; and 1 Peter 1:17, 'Without respect of persons, he judgeth according to every man's work.' God is not προσωπολήπτης. God will not accept of men according to their appearance; as it is a perversion in man's judgment when persons are accepted for things extrinsical and foreign, and such as have no respect to the merits of the cause. Though you may say, I am a christian, no Jew nor infidel, I am a minister; yet, if carnal, if an enemy to the cross which you preach up, if the constitution of heart be quite opposite to the spirit of religion which you profess, you are reckoned not among the friends, but enemies; Christ will not own you.

3. That the worldly spirit is that constitution of heart which is quite blank opposite to the cross of Christ. This is that which I am to prove; but before I go about it, let me drop a consideration or two.

The first is, that the cross of Christ is twofold—what he hath endured for our sake, what we must endure for his sake. The worldly spirit is opposite to both, loath to suffer, though Christ hath commanded us to take up the cross daily, Luke 9:23. In a resolution and preparation of mind we must do so; but then the cross which he endured for our sakes, we are enemies to it whilst we resist the power of it, and are not by it crucified to the world; then this great end of the cross is not fulfilled in us.

The second consideration is, that worldliness is not only opposite to the cross of Christ, but also to the glory of Christ, in several respects. There are two considerations set before us in scripture to wean us from the world—Christ crucified and Christ glorified. Of the former by and by; the latter, Col. 3:1, 'Being risen with Christ, seek those things that are above.' It doth not become the members of a crucified Christ to be earthly-minded, nor the members of a glorified Christ to set their hearts on things so low. A christian should live in a perfect correspondence to all the acts of Christ's mediation. The two solemn

acts are his dying and rising again. As he died and was crucified, we must not mind earthly things; as he rose again, our conversation must be in heaven. The one enforceth mortification, the other vivification, or seeking things above. If we feel not the virtue of the one, or the other, or both, we have lost the benefit of our Christianity, and shall not be reckoned among the friends and disciples, but enemies of Jesus Christ.

Now I prove that the worldly spirit is most opposite to the cross of Christ.

1. The scripture clearly asserts it: James 4:4, 'The friendship of the world is enmity with God;' Mat. 6:24, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon;' 1 John 2:15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' It is apparent in our baptismal vow we are to renounce the world, as one of the enemies of our salvation, as well as the devil and the flesh, when we first enter upon Christianity, and seek after the benefits of the cross.

2. Experience confirmeth it. What is it that most opposeth, and ever hath opposed, the gospel, and lieth point-blank opposite to the spirit of it, but the worldly spirit?

[1.] It was the worldly spirit which caused the Jews to be such obstinate unbelievers, and to persecute Christ and his servants: James 2:5, 6, 'Hath not God chosen the poor to be rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him? Do not the rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats?' The poor Christ and the poor christians they hated. And Luke 16:14, 'And the pharisees, which were covetous, heard all these things, and derided him.' And this is that which continueth them in their unbelief unto this very day; they would have a temporal pompous Messiah, which should come in worldly glory and power, and free them from captivity, and make the rest of the nations stoop to them. This humble crucified Jesus is not for their turn.

[2.] This maketh the Turks adore their Mahomet, because he promiseth success in their worldly enterprises in this world, and a sensual happiness in the world to come.

[3.] This maketh the nominal bastard christian to be such an opposer of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and only to content himself with the name of Christianity. When the church ran into the world and the world into the church, religion began to be corrupted. The rabble of nominal christians, they are worldlings, and measure all by outward pomp, pride, and fleshly glory. There is a contest between the evangelical church of Christ and the carnal worldly church of antichrist, who are most esteemers of the cross of Christ. Now of this controversy you shall be judges where the right lieth. The carnal church pleadeth she is all for the cross; you have crucifixes everywhere painted, carved, gilded; yea, they are ready to worship the cross of Christ with holy worship; they set it in their temples, altars, yea, their highways, market-places; and in every place where they meet with it, bow down to it; they adorn it with gold, and silver, and all costly precious stones; their popes and prelates have it carried before them, their laity wear it in their bosoms; yea, at all times, when they come out of their houses, when they come into churches, when they address themselves to almost anything, sign themselves with the sign of the cross. And are not these better friends of the cross than these new upstart heretics, that are frightened, displeased at the sight of it? But alas I these outward semblances and May-games do but deceive the world, whilst in their doctrine they detract from the merits of Christ crucified, and in their worship turn the simplicity of the gospel into a theatrical pomp, and the discipline of the church into a temporal domination; so that their Christianity looketh like another thing than Christ hath established, like a design and frame of religion calculated for the present world rather than a serious preparation for the world to come. Here the evangelical church, they profess to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified; on him is bottomed all their comfort and hope, 1 Cor. 2:2, and give him the whole honour of our redemption, justification, and salvation, and desire to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and

worship him in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh, without such pompous and ridiculous ceremonies, or any worship and adoration of the material cross, or the sign of it; but to be crucified to the world, and quit all things, that they may have pardon, and peace, and life by the cross of Christ. Now judge you who are friends or enemies to the cross of Christ, those who seek to check their worldly lusts, or they who, since Christ's religion came in fashion, do rest in an outward pageantry and seeming devotion to the cross?

[4.] It is the worldly spirit that distinguisheth the hypocrites from, the sincere in the true church, and where the doctrine of the cross is purely preached. Hypocrites are of two sorts—either such as have the grace of the stony or thorny ground, more gross and open, or more secret and refined.

(1.) Such as have the grace of the stony ground. They are described, Luke 8:13, 'That which fell on the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.' These are such as are impatient of adversity, and therefore change their minds as their carnal interest doth change, and set their sails to that wind which will most bring them to their worldly ends. They have a liking to religion, and are loath to quit the profession of it, but yet loath to endanger their worldly interests; therefore fit their principles to the humours of men, and fashion themselves for all times. This is libertinism, carnal policy, not religion. Of this sort were those spoken of in the text, who would be accounted christians, yet suffer nothing for Christ. To eschew sufferings by lawful means is not culpable: Mat 10:23, 'When they persecute you in one city, flee into another.' Yea, commendable: Prov. 22:3, 'A prudent man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself.' But to disguise religion, and to writhe ourselves into all postures and shapes, that we may secure our temporal interest or worldly portion, is the fault of the third ground, or the property of those hypocrites who are represented thereby. And so we see the world was their bane, because, to shun the cross, or avoid hazard and

trouble, they were willing to comply with the persecutors, and tamper with them to abate their edge. And therefore till you are so far divorced from the world as to take up with a naked Christ and the hopes of a heavenly felicity which he hath promised, you cannot escape this snare.

(2.) There are another sort of hypocrites, who are represented by the thorny ground. They are described, Luke 8:14, 'And that which fell among thorns are they who, when they have heard, go forth and are choked with cares, and riches, and the pleasures of this life; and bring no fruit to perfection.' These either are not assailed with persecutions, or, if they are, endure the brunt, but do not tame their own flesh; though they conquer outward opposition, and keep the profession and form of godliness, deny the power; have not so far felt the power of Christ crucified, as to overcome their worldly affections and sensual inclinations; and so religion is still kept as an underling; and they are not brought into that state of the divine nature or heavenly life that God may have most interest in their hearts, and the main drift and bent of their lives may be for God and the life to come. They do not make heaven their end, so as to part with all to obtain it; therefore they are dwarfs and cripples in religion all their days, never make any sound work of it, so as to honour God, and awaken the careless world to mind better things. Now these are enemies to the cross of Christ, because God hath least of the heart, and the world most, and the strongest interest is that which is opposite to God; the cross hath not had its effect in them.

[5.] It is the worldly spirit that is the great let and hindrance to the sincere, that they cannot do for God as they would. The sincere, and christians indeed, are such as do in affection and resolution forsake all that they have in the world, and look for a portion in the world to come. They by experience find the world to be an enemy to the cross of Christ. I say, they are a people who seek more diligently after heaven than earth, and can let go the world when Christ calleth them to it; yet these find the world and the worldly spirit a mighty

impediment both in doing and suffering for Christ. Till we put off the flesh, the world will never lay by its enmity.

(1.) For doing. The world is always hindering you in the way to life. It is continually a snare in all that you do, clogging and retarding you in your heavenly flights and motions: Heb. 12:1, 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,' &c. Though you do believe a life after this, and are convinced that it is your happiness, and have your estimation and love most set upon it, and do for the main contemn the riches, and honours, and pleasures of the world, yet you find a difficulty to comply with the precepts of Christianity, those of mortification, self-denial, charity, meekness, temperance, heavenly-mindedness; cannot do as you would, because of your inclination to present things, nor so thoroughly comply with that manner of living which Christ hath appointed. Therefore a great part of our religion and constant duty is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, James 1:27. Many christians can hardly escape the blemish of being worldly, and not attending upon communion with God, and the duties of justice and charity, which we owe to men, so entirely as the law of Christianity doth enforce. And that is the reason why the doctrine of overcoming the world is subjoined to the warning of keeping the commandments without grievousness: 1 John 5:3, 4, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous. For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' He knoweth not his own heart that findeth not this.

(2.) Suffering for Christ. What is it that maketh men so tender of suffering but love of the world? If men were crucified to the world, it would be more easy; for we can readily part with things that we do not much value and esteem. These are but small matters in comparison of what Christ hath promised you and purchased for you. If you must endure disgrace for Christ, ἐλαχιστον, it is a small thing with you, 1 Cor. 4:3; if bonds, and afflictions, and hard trials, these things will not much move you, Acts 20:23, 24; Rom. 8:13, 'If



ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' But alas! every one hath not this constancy of mind, and deep sense of the world to come, this weanedness from the present world, and therefore maintain their resolution for God and heaven with great difficulty; the heavenly life is obstructed and weakened by worldly affections.

(3.) Reason will plainly evidence it to you—(1.) From the intent of the cross; (2.) From the nature of the religion that is founded on the cross of Christ, and the graces wherein the life of that religion consisteth.

First, From the end and intent of the cross. Why the Lord did appoint this way to save the world.

1. It was to be an all-sufficient expiatory sacrifice for sin: Eph. 5:2, 'He hath given himself for us, to be an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour.' By it satisfaction is made to God for the sin which the world enticed man to commit. Our first sin was a turning from God to the world. Man would be at his own finding, and left the happiness which he had in God for somewhat in the creature. Now by 'his stripes we are healed,' Isa. 53:5. Therefore they cross this end, and so are enemies, who would tear open Christ's wounds, and make them bleed afresh. These refuse God's remedy.

2. By this cross Christ purchased for us that Spirit of power, and all those ordinances and helps of grace, by which we may overcome the world: Gal. 1:4, 'He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.' Both the internal operation of his Holy Spirit, and the outward ordinances of God, or means of grace, were given us to this end, that our estimation and love which is set upon the creature might be recovered to God, that we might be called off from the creature, and brought back again to God. Now those who mind earthly things are direct enemies to the cross of Christ, because they

go about to defeat the end of it, and this Spirit, which would take them off from the world.

3. By his cross he hath purchased to us that glorious kingdom which is propounded as our happiness; and being formerly shut to all mankind by sin, it is opened by the death of Christ, that believers may enter into it: 1 Thes. 5:9, 10, 'God hath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, that whether we sleep or wake, we should live together with him.' This was his end; and how do they contradict this end who only aim at a worldly happiness, and live as if they desired no better satisfactions than those of the belly and bodily life. Surely these hate the cross, and lightly esteem the glory purchased thereby.

4. That it might be a pattern and example to us of three things—

(1.) Of suffering; (2.) Contentment and patience under suffering; (3.) A glorious issue. Now those that are of a worldly spirit can have no liking to the cross of Christ, but hate, and are enemies to it.

[1.] Of suffering. He endured the cross for our sakes, that we might endure the cross for his sake; take up our cross and follow him, Mat. 16:24. We must have our cross, Col. 1:24, ὑπερήματα Χριστοῦ. We have the remnant of those sufferings which Christ began on the cross, that thereby he may convince us of the vanity and emptiness of the world, which is more than doctrine and hearsay. When we are despised and contemned, and become as the filth and off-scouring of the world, it turneth us more against the world than a lecture or speculative contemplation of these things do, and being sanctified by Christ, doth produce in us a low esteem of the world, and a desire of a better portion.

[2.] Of contentment and patience under sufferings: 'For Christ died, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps,' 1 Peter 2:21. And truly to eye our pattern, Christ, hanging and dying on the cross, will pierce the world to the very heart. He was contented to be the

most despicable object upon earth in the eyes of men. If christians be not ashamed of their head and glorious chief, this spectacle should kill all our worldly affections, and make us despise all the honour, and riches, and pomp, and pleasure of the world, the favour or frowns, the love or wrath, the praise or dispraise of men, so far as it is opposite to the kingdom of Christ. When it is crucified to us, we should be crucified to it: Gal. 6:14, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' The applause of the world should be contemptible unto, and actually abhorred by, a sincere believer; yea, the power, beauty, allurements, as they would interpose to weaken our esteem of Christ, or pursuit of that happiness which he hath offered to us, it should all be trampled upon and rejected by us for Christ's sake.

[3.] Of a glorious issue; for Christ escaped out of death, and entered into glory, which he promised us, and so still by his example calleth us off from the world to heaven: Heb. 12:1, 2, 'Let us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' His cross was the ready way to the crown. Now, as it was to him, it will be so to us; for 'if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him,' Rom. 8:17. The way is rough, but the prize is excellent. He endured cruel pains of body, bitter agonies of soul; but there was a glorious estate at the back of it in the close and issue; not only to recompense his sufferings, but to be a pledge of our hopes. This now is the cross interpreted, and judge you what a perfect contradiction here is all along to a sensual and worldly spirit.

Secondly, Consider the religion founded on the cross; which may be considered—(1.) On God's and Christ's part, as to its precepts and promises; (2.) On our part, as to the graces wherein it is exercised.

I shall only now touch at the latter, and show you that all grace is at mortal enmity with the world: faith, hope, and love, these all engage

us to another world, and do subordinate this unto it.

1. Faith, which is a dependence upon God for something which lieth out of sight. The nature of it is to carry us off from things present to things to come; therefore this being a main grace in the gospel-covenant, surely requireth we should be dead and crucified to the world. The spirit of faith spoken of 2 Cor. 4:13, is a temper of mind prepared for all dangers and hazards, or a ready confession of Christ, with courage, without pusillanimity, or love to our own ease. This is the true spirit of faith, opposite to that spirit of the world which maketh men afraid to venture for Christ.

2. Love. They that love not Christ in sincerity, they are enemies to his cross and kingdom. It argueth such an high esteem of God, and Christ, and his precious benefits, that our souls are drawn off from other things, and all things are made to give way to them: Ps. 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' &c. The love of the world remaining, the love of the Father is not in us.

3. For hope. This wholly carrieth us to a future happiness; for hope that is seen is not hope. To long for a better estate: Rom. 8:23, 'We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption.' To look for it and prepare for it: 1 John 3:2, 3, 'Now we are the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be,' &c. So that the spirit which is in religion is not the spirit of the world, 1 Cor. 2:12; and they that are under the power of a worldly spirit have neither true faith, nor love, nor hope.

Use 1. To show how much they are mistaken who think they shall ever be counted friends of Christ, who would indulge the flesh, and reconcile the love of the world with a profession of godliness. No; be you professors, be you preachers, you are enemies of the cross of Christ, especially they who serve themselves of Christ, and make religion a design and cover to some worldly end. The first sort are confuted by the instance of the young man. He had a mind to be a christian; but when Christ telleth him of selling all, and looking for a

reward in another world, he goeth away sorrowful, for he was very rich, Luke 18:23. There you see plainly that minding earthly things is enmity to the cross of Christ. For the second, none worse enemies than they that think to serve themselves and their worldly ends upon religion; better keep in the world among worldlings, than creep into the church of Christ, and dishonour religion by greediness of filthy lucre, 1 Peter 5:2; Rom. 16:18, 'They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.' To make that your inducement to be religious, to bring your base earthly minds among Christ's servants to infect them, it is worse than if you never professed. No; both one and the other must sit down and count the cost. Never dream of being Christ's unless you can forsake all and follow him under the cross, upon the assurance of a promised treasure in heaven.

Use 2. To press those who would be accounted sincere christians to mortify their affections to earthly things.

1. Else you are not friends to Christ, but enemies. He counteth none friends but those that are prepared to take him and his yoke, take him and his cross; therefore we should examine the strength of our resolution. Can we follow a naked Christ, and be content to obey his counsel for another world, whatever be our lot here? Never dream of building a tower before you sit down and count the cost, whether you have sufficient to finish it, Luke 14:28.

2. Else you feel not the true virtue of Christ's cross. And how will you glory in it when you hear of such a mighty Christ, and feel nothing? Gal. 6:14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.' Therefore consider, What benefit have I found by Christ? I profess to believe the doctrine of the cross, but what good hath it done me? If I pretend it giveth me ease in my conscience, and doth not mortify my lusts, this is the fashion of hypocrites, who would have Christ pacify their conscience, and the world gratify their hearts beside. You will never find rest without taking on Christ's yoke and taking up his burden, Mat. 11:29.

3. You are never dead to the world till the flesh be crucified; for they whose god is their belly will mind earthly things; and flesh must be crucified if the world be crucified, Gal 5:24, for the world is the provision of the flesh.

4. Till you tame the flesh and grow dead to the world you are under the power of Satan: 1 Peter 5:8, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.' The worldly and carnal are 'led captive by him at his will and pleasure,' 2 Tim. 2:26, 2 Cor. 4:10.

5. Your faith in Christ, love to God, and hope of heaven will still be questionable till you be more mortified to the world. What! do you believe in a mortified Christ? What similitude is there between you and him? a christian, and yet worldly! a christian, and yet sensual! a christian, and yet proud! It is as great a contradiction as to say, a believer, and yet an infidel. You that are given to pleasures, do you believe in Christ, a man of sorrows? You that are carried after the pomps and vanities of the world, do you believe in Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world? You that are proud and lofty, do you believe in him who said, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly?'

So your love to God is questionable. What! love an invisible God, and yet dote so inordinately on visible things! A mind that is enchanted with the delusions of the flesh, can it be lifted up to God who dwelleth in another world? Can you love God, and do so little for him? Love him, and the world hath so much of your time, and strength, and care, and delight, and God so little? They are a very corrupt sort of men who are described to 'be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,' 2 Tim. 3:4. So far as we set our hearts upon these things, so far are they deadened and estranged from God. Can you love God when his favour, if not parted with or quite lost, is put to hazard for the world's sake?

Your hope of heaven is questionable. What are you? whither are you a-going? Are you passing to heaven, and are so greedy of this world?

Do you look and long for a better estate, that are so satisfied with your portion here, that seek so earnestly after present things, and so slightly and coldly after those blessed things which are to come? Who is the carnal fool but he that heapeth up treasure to himself, and is not rich towards God? Luke 12:21. Doth he long for heaven that is so loath to depart, and maketh so little preparation for it, or giveth so little diligence to clear up his title or interest in it? To profess the hope of another life, and yet to be digging like a mole in the earth, is incongruous.

## SERMON XIV

Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.—PHIL. 3:19.

HERE is a further description of evil-workers, to show why they should have no fellowship in their sin, either by giving them countenance or following their example, that they might not be involved in their ruin and destruction, 'Whose end is destruction,' &c.

In these words three things are observable—(1.) Their sin; (2.) The aggravations of their sin; (3.) The punishment.

1. Their sin is 'Minding earthly things.'
  2. The aggravations are two, further discovering the nature of it—(1.) 'Whose god is their belly;' (2.) 'Whose glory is in their shame.'
  3. The punishment, 'Whose end is destruction.'
1. Their sin, 'They mind earthly things,' which must be interpreted of their doctrine and practice; for they are considered as a carnal sort of christians, and as seducers of others by their carnal opinions.

[1.] By their doctrine. They corrupted the gospel, and obstructed the progress and power of it, by suiting it to their carnal ends. Such false teachers are elsewhere described by their earthly mindedness, where we are bidden to try the spirits: 1 John 4:5, 'They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.' Their doctrine is a doctrine of licentiousness, calculated for secular interest, or a worldly design, to save themselves from persecution; and worldly-minded men follow them.

[2.] As to their practice, they principally respected their profit and ease, and the commodities of the flesh; so that if their doctrine had been true, their hearts were naught; as if a man should intrude into the ministry, and preach truth, but for worldly ends, not to work in the Lord's vineyard, but to feed on the portion of the Levites; or if they pretend to love God and souls, it is but a net to catch riches, honours, and pleasures.

## 2. The aggravations of their sin.

The first is, 'Whose god is their belly.' They did in effect set up another god, preferring the things which belong to the belly and bodily life before the honour of God. You have a like description elsewhere: Rom. 16:18, 'They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.' Under the pretence of being servants of God and Christ, they opposed God and Christ. They pretend to serve Christ, and love Christ, but indeed were acted only by their own fleshly appetite; temporal ease and pleasure was all they sought after, not the honour of God and salvation of souls, but the satisfying their own sinful inclination.

The second is, 'Whose glory is in their shame;' that is, that they can avoid trouble, and live a life of pomp and ease, when others are afflicted.

Here observe two things—



[1.] How much human nature is distorted and depraved. Man fallen is but the anagram of man in innocency. As in an anagram, the letters are the same, but the order is inverted, so we have the same affections that innocent Adam had, but they are misplaced; our hatred is where our love should be, and our love where our hatred should be; and (that I may not carry the observation too far) our glory is there where our shame should be, and our shame where our glory should be; we are bold in sinning, but ashamed of Christ and strictness. You shall have some men glory in their oaths, and a graceless grace of rash swearing. Some glory in their new-fangled apparel, which is but an ensign hung out to show the vanity of their minds. Some will glory in painting or spotting their faces, which really is their shame. Others will boast of their base and brutish lusts, which certainly are things they ought to be deeply ashamed of.

[2.] Observe how worldliness showeth itself in all the properties of it. We read, 1 John 2:16, 'For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' By the lust of the flesh is meant sensual pleasures; by the lust of the eyes, inordinate desire of riches; by pride of life, ambition, or affectation of honour and glory. Again we read, James 3:15, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.' The wisdom which descendeth not from God is the wisdom of the flesh; that is, earthly, such as carrieth us to the profits of the world; sensual, to the delights of the flesh; devilish, aspiring after greatness and esteem in the world; for pride is 'the condemnation of the devil,' 1 Tim. 3:6; that is, the sin for which the devil was condemned. So here is covetousness expressed by 'minding earthly things;' sensuality, 'their god is their belly;' pride, 'whose glory is in their shame.' The fruit whereby the devil tempted our first parents, Gen. 3:6, was 'good for food;' by that he tempted the lusts of the flesh; 'pleasant to the eyes,' and so came in the lust of the eyes; and 'to be desired to make one wise,' and that was the pride of life, affecting a higher condition than that wherein God had placed them. And with these kind of weapons he sets upon the second Adam, our Lord Christ, in the wilderness, Mat. 4, tempting him to the lusts of the

flesh, when he would have him 'turn stones into bread;' to the lusts of the eyes, when he 'showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;' to pride of life, when he persuaded him 'to cast himself down,' out of vainglory, and tempting God, to show some extraordinary miracle in his preservation. Well, then, there are more sorts of earthly-mindedness than one. A man may love the world that is sensual, as well as a covetous muckworm, because the profits of this life are but one branch of the enticing world. Many a sense-pleaser will think that he despiseth wealth, because he lavisheth it out freely upon his lusts; yet he may be earthly-minded for all that. Voluptuous living breedeth a senselessness of heavenly things, and choketh the good seed, as well as the cares of this world: Luke 8:14, 'They go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life.' Yea, a man may love the world though he should condemn both riches and pleasures, because there is a third evil as dangerous to the spiritual life, and that is pride of life, or glorying in the flesh, or affecting credit, esteem, and reputation with men: John 5:44, 'How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' It is destructive to faith.

3. The last thing is their punishment, 'Whose end is destruction.' Sinners gain little by their sin at last. We swallow the bait, but do not mind the hook: 'Whose end is destruction.' This is the end, not intended by them, but appointed by God as the wages of the carnal life. *Finis operis*, the end of the work; though not *operantis*, of the doer. Their punishment is the reward of their sin. By 'destruction' he meaneth they shall be punished by God with eternal damnation, called elsewhere 'destruction and perdition;' 1 Tim. 6:9, 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful and foolish lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.' So Gal. 6:8, 'For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' Corruption is there opposed to eternal life. Though the substance of body and soul is not annihilated, yet that glory, pleasure, and gain wherein they placed their happiness shall then be

consumed; and when all their comforts are gone, they shall for ever remain under the wrath of a highly provoked and then irreconcilable God.

Doct. Earthly-mindedness is the temper and disposition of such men who are for the present in a state of damnation

Christians, I am upon a profitable point, though it be a terrible one; we cannot be cautious enough of earthly-mindedness, whether we consider the heinousness of the sin or the greatness of the danger. For your help I shall—

1. Show you what is earthly-mindedness.
2. The aggravations of this sin as they lie in the text.
3. The sore punishment appointed to it.

I. What is earthly-mindedness? for this is the crime charged upon these evil-workers, that 'they mind earthly things.' Now it seemeth hard to say that we should not at all mind earthly things. These are necessary to sweeten our pilgrimage, and to support us during our service. We carry about earthly bodies, that need daily sustentation. We have 'an earthly house,' that must be maintained, 2 Cor. 5:1; and the people of God are subject to the common necessities of an earthly life. Therefore surely God, that doth give us these earthly bodies, doth allow us in some sort to mind earthly things, and seek earthly things in some proportion, and with a due subordination to religion and godliness. In our passage to heaven we may mind them, for every wise man must mind his business; but yet they must not be minded only or chiefly.

1. Not only. So some mind them, scarce have any tincture of religion, or regard to life everlasting, but are of the earth, and speak of the earth, and savour only earthly things; aim at nothing but the good things of this world, that they may live in honour, and credit, and pleasure, and estimation with men; savour and love nothing but this;

care for and breathe after nothing but this: 'God is not in all their thoughts,' Ps. 10:4. He speaketh of the worldly atheist, or earthly-minded, as the former verse showeth: 'The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.' They regard not whether God be honoured or dishonoured, pleased or displeased. So heaven is not in all their thoughts: Rom. 8:5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit;' τὰ ἐπιγεια, 'earthly things,' and τὰ σαρκος, 'the things of the flesh,' are the same: Col. 3:2, φρονεῖτε, 'Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.' In the margin it is 'mind.' So John 6:27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life.' These are propounded as incompatible; but their affections bend to the wrong side, and so the one thing necessary is neglected: Luke 10:42, 'One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.' Their life is in a perfect opposition to these counsels and directions; they set their affections on things on earth, mind the things of the flesh, are cumbered about many things, neglect the one thing necessary, labour for the meat that perisheth, slight that which endureth for ever, are dead to God and alive to the world, heap up treasure to themselves, and are not rich toward God, Luke 12:21. All is done to please the carnal mind, nothing done to please God.

2. They must not be chiefly minded. The gross worldling is discovered by the only minding, the secret worldling by the chiefly minding, earthly things; the gross worldling is a practical atheist, the secret worldling is a carnal hypocrite. The rule is, that spiritual and heavenly things must be sought in the first place: Mat. 6:33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;' and we must trust God for other things, in the way of honest and diligent endeavours in the calling wherein God hath placed us. Well, then, the minding of earthly things must be determined by this, when religion is subordinate to the world, and not the world to religion; when the lean kine devour the fat. And though there be some minding both of earth and heaven, yet earth is more minded than heaven; and the

honours, and pleasures, and profits of the world, jostle out better things, and choke the good seed; that though we do not cast off the profession of religion, yet we feel little of the power of it. Religion is an underling, it is so obstructed that it cannot bring forth its fruit with any perfection: Luke 8:14, 'They are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' But because this is a secret evil, and men easily distinguish themselves out of their convictions, we must a little more closely pursue this discovery, that we may find what is the first or chief thing that we mind and regard. That will be known by these things—

[1.] What is your chief end and scope? The chief end and scope must be God and heaven: 2 Cor. 4:18, σκοποῦντες, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal;' and Phil. 3:14, διώκω κατὰ σκοπὸν, 'I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' What is the design of your lives, the main bent and drift of your conversations? Is it to please God, and enjoy God, or to heap up riches to yourselves? If God and the life to come only come in by the by, and be not your designed fixed end, which puts life into your endeavours, you mind earthly things. The end is that which cuts out your work, which formeth your thoughts, chooseth your employments, and by which they are constantly directed and influenced. A present worldly passion may prevail on godly men, but the world is not their great design and interest.

[2.] What is your chief work and business? Next to our scope, our work is to be regarded; first what you aim at, next what you labour for. If the great business of your hearts, and the endeavours of your lives, be about earthly things, you are earthly-minded. Surely our great business is to obtain salvation by Christ: Phil. 2:12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' It is a dangerous thing to miscarry in so weighty a work. All the solicitude and care that we can possibly use is little enough: Acts 26:7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.'

This is the top care, to which all others give place. But now, if the world engross our time, and strength, and care, and thoughts, and divert us from that necessary diligence and needfulness with which soul-affairs should be pursued and attended upon; this we talk of, this we think of, and pursue with all our might, and seek most after, this constantly sets us a-work; surely this is most regarded by you.

[3.] What is the chief joy and trouble of your hearts? Is it to have and want the world? If to have it: Luke 12:19, 'I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, and be merry.' If the world can keep you quiet in the midst of all the dangers of your soul, and you forget eternity, and can live a quiet merry life apart from God, yea, in the neglect of him, so it may be well with you here, and the peace and pleasure you live upon is more fetched from the world than God and heaven, this is a sure and undeceiving note that you mind earthly things more than heavenly, and prefer the honours, pleasures, and profits of the world before God and your salvation, than which there cannot be a worse temper of heart. The saints fetch their joy and solace from spiritual things: Ps. 4:6, 7, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased;' and Ps. 119:14, 'I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.' We must often ask ourselves what is the bottom and bosom cause of our comfort, quietness, and peace? Is it because you are well provided for, and live at ease in the world? or because God is reconciled to you in Christ, and because you hope to live for ever with him in glory, and have good grounds for this hope and confidence? Then it is well. A christian may know what he most mindeth, and, which is all one, what he most esteemeth and prizeth, by the grounds and reasons of his joy and trouble: Ps. 94:19, 'Thy comforts delight my soul;' 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,' Ps. 30:7. If disappointment in the world be the cause of our trouble, and happiness in the world feedeth our solace and joy, surely we mind these things most. But more of this anon.

Having considered earthly-mindedness singly, we must now consider it in act or habit.

In act. Alas! a child of God is too worldly; he may have too great an esteem of earthly things, but doth not ordinarily mind them before God. The habitual bent and inclination of his will is to God and heaven. In particular acts he may carry himself too much like an earthly-minded man, but his heart is not turned to another happiness, for that is contrary to a state of salvation. No prevalent covetousness or voluptuousness or ambition possesseth his heart instead of God. There is a remainder of worldliness in the godly, as well as other sins; he may too much use the world, for the pleasure of the flesh more than for the glory of God; but yet this is not the scope and tenor of his life. He may sometimes desire a greater measure of riches, or honour, or pleasure, than is agreeable with his spiritual happiness; his desires of earthly things may be too eager, his cares about them too solicitous, his trouble too grievous; but he is still growing out of these distempers, and settling his soul to his constant bent, work, and joy. It is not a frame of heart that he can rest in; it is his trouble, and in time he gets above the distemper.

II. The aggravations of this sin; and—

1. The first is, 'Whose god is their belly.' Earthly-mindedness is a renouncing of the true God, and setting up of base idols in his stead.

Now—

[1.] Here mark what is prized by the earthly-minded, the belly. Provision for the flesh is the sum of worldly happiness. Men that have the world at will get no more by it than bodily food and bodily clothing, which the poorest may attain to without so much ado. It is no great happiness whether our dung or excrements be of a finer or coarser matter, whether we have fewer or more dishes to our table, nor what a gay show we make with our apparel. Some have troubled themselves and the world to make themselves great; and what a

sorry happiness have they at last! Hab. 1:16, 'Their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous; a little good cheer and a merry life. They that want it live as well as they, and have more contentment. Are they the nearer to true comfort, or the further from the grave? So Ps. 17:14, 'From men of the world, who have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hidden treasures; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.' They have a belly, well filled and a back well clothed, which is but a sorry addition to their happiness. They use it not well, dispense it not to the glory of God, and so have not the true use of riches.

Object. You will say, There are men of great estates who will not part with anything for the necessary uses of nature, who will not afford themselves conveniences, but fare hard, go meanly, and are in debt to back and belly.

Ans. (1.) Covetousness is usually the purveyor for the flesh, and those that mind earthly things, their god is their belly: Rom. 8:5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;' those that seem to deal hardly with the flesh, yet please it in the hoarding of wealth, though not in the spending of it.

(2.) If they fail in giving nature its due, yet they much more fail in giving grace its due; and so are twice fools, while they transgress both the laws of nature and of grace. They transgress the laws of grace while they do not lay up treasure in heaven, but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; and they transgress the laws of nature while they bereave their souls of good, and do not rejoice in their labour, and that portion of earthly things which God hath given them: Eccles. 5:18, 19, 'Behold that which I have seen; it is good and comely for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun, all the days of his life, which God giveth him; for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.' These deny that real benefit which is in a worldly



portion, which is the supply of the bodily life, or a free and comfortable use of the creature, denying the lawful use of those comforts to himself which God hath given him.

(3.) They lay it up for them that spend it on the belly; for usually God sendeth an heir that wasteth an estate profusely that was greedily and sparingly gotten; and as one goeth to hell in getting, so doth the other in spending it, till all this wealth revolve into other hands that will use it better: Eccles. 2:26, 'To the sinner he giveth travail to gather and to heap up, that he may give it to him that is good before God.' God by his overruling providence disposeth it besides and against the purpose of the gatherer, even to those that fear him, making wicked men but drudges and purveyors for others. Wicked men built the ark, but Noah made use of it. One maketh a garment, and another weareth it: Prov. 13:22, 'The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just;' Job 27:17, 'He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver;' Prov. 28:8, 'He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.' The world will not believe it, but it is a certain truth that estates are ruined by sins of omission as well as commission; though they are not unjustly gotten, yet if they are not well improved for the glory of God and the good of others. Strange are the providential dispensations of God in disposing money, lands, and heritages, till they come into clean and bountiful hands. They are tenacious, sparing to make use of it; but God will put it into their hands who will divide and distribute for his glory.

[2.] This belly is made a god; that is, interpretatively, a man's god, which is his chief good and the last end of all his actions, and upon which all his care, thoughts, and endeavours run most. Thus do the earthly-minded upon the world and the belly, therefore here it is said, 'Their belly is their god;' and elsewhere that 'covetousness is idolatry,' Col. 3:5, and the 'covetous man is an idolater,' Eph. 5:5. That is our god which is most valued by us, and for whose sake we do all things. Now, if we will do more for the world than for God, and more for the belly than for God, and can dispense with God's honour

and glory for an easy and delicate life, and day after day, from morning to evening, do only take care for the flesh, and give earthly things those affections which are only due and proper to God, we make mammon our god, and the belly our god; here is our scope, work, and delight.

[3.] How justly those are deprived of eternal salvation who do thus.

(1.) Partly as they put a vile scorn on God and Christ, who prefer the belly and bodily interest before him. These prefer the body before the soul, which yet is the immortal substance, and will survive the body, and may be rent from it sooner than they imagine: Luke 12:20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee;' or rent from the embraces of the unwilling body. They prefer time before eternity, since they make it their great business to have their will and pleasure for a while. If you will have your own will now, you shall not have it long: 1 John 2:17, 'The world passeth away and the lusts thereof.' You love to please your appetite in meats and drinks, to spend your time in vain sports and pleasures, to be honoured and humoured now, to flow in wealth and live in pomp, and would want nothing for the contentment of the flesh. But how long shall you have your will in these things? When death comes, will you have it then? When you lie in pain on your death-beds, expecting every hour to appear in another world, will you have it then? They prefer earth before heaven. They only mind the way, but never think of home. They are not strangers and pilgrims in the world, but inhabitants, and say, as Peter on the mount, Mat. 17:4, 'It is good to be here;' 2 Tim. 4:10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world.' And should God save them against their wills, and bring them to a place they desire not? They prefer the world before Christ, and should they have benefit by him who do so lightly esteem the rock of their salvation? His servants prize him: Phil. 3:8, 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;' Mat. 13:45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.'

His enemies despise him; to them he is 'a stone of stumbling,' 1 Peter 2:8. Lastly, they prefer the belly before God, a little temporal interest before his favour, love pleasures more than God: 2 Tim. 3:4, 'Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.' Honours more than God: John 12:42, 43, 'Among the chief rulers many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' Profits more than God: 1 John 2:15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Surely then there is a just cause of men's damnation when they love the world more than God, Christ, and heaven.

(2.) They that serve a base god cannot but be of a base spirit, and so can do nothing worthily and generously. Every man's temper is as his god is: Ps. 115:8, 'They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.' They have a dead heart, estranged from the life of God. The carnal life is a spiritual death: 1 Tim. 5:6, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Therefore God punisheth them with eternal death.

(3.) They are not only unfit for God, but opposite to him: Rom. 8:7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' and James 4:4, 'Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.'

2. The second aggravation, 'They glory in their shame,' that is, in their riches and worldly conveniences.

[1.] That which a man prizeth most he will glory in. Now for christians to glory in a life of pomp and ease is to glory in their shame. What a man prizeth most, he will glory in it, boast of it, be it wealth or honour, or wit and parts, or else the Lord: Jer. 9:23, 24, 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man

glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord.' Man will be glorying in something or another, in that which he esteemeth his excellency. Glorying signifieth the apprehension of the good of the thing we glory in, and our benefit by it; it is the content and joy which we take in any benefit, expressed to others, for the glory of God and their good. So Gal. 6:14, 'But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.' True christians will renounce all carnal glorying; if they glory in anything, it will be in God and Christ. It is lawful, if it be a true excellency, to glory in the good things of God bestowed on them, as evidences of his love and approbation of them: 2 Cor. 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in this world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' If it be for the glory of God and good of others; for it is the design of the carnal world to vilify the works of grace in the hearts of the sanctified. If it be for the glory of God: 1 Cor. 15:10, 'But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; for I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' Or if it be for the good of others, to incite them to like experiences: Ps. 34:8, 'Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.'

[2.] The true object of glorying is God and Christ: Jer. 9:23, 24, 'Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord;' Jer. 4:2, 'Thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory;' 1 Cor. 1:30, 31, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us

wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him, glory in the Lord.' To have all this in Christ is matter of glory.

[3.] Not only benefits, but disgraceful sufferings for Christ should be more to us than all the world: Heb. 11:26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt;' Acts 5:41, 'And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;' 2 Cor. 12:9, 10, 'Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.'

[4.] A mortified estate is a greater cause of glory than an exalted, because it is a far greater mercy: Gal. 6:14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Paul, if he were lord of all the wealth and honours in the world, he would not glory in them; if he had all the pleasures which the flesh can desire, he would not glory in them; if he had all the applause man can give him, he would not glory in that; but he would glory in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified to him, and he unto the world. And James 1:9, 10, 'Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low.' The word is *καυχᾶσθω*, glory, that is, let him express his satisfaction and contentment that he is preferred by grace or humbled by grace. To have a weaned heart, whether our condition be high or low, is a greater mercy than we have in all the world, because of its tendency to everlasting happiness.

[5.] The carnal and unsanctified rejoice in earthly things, as pleasing their flesh; and so do the godly also, as far as flesh remaineth in them. But this is our weakness, and so really our disgrace. High thoughts of worldly pomp and greatness show how little we have of a christian spirit. A christian should affect a mortified heavenly life, and value himself and others by better enjoyments. A minister, if he

glory in his greatness and honour, is not a preacher of the cross, but an enemy to it. It is a greater glory to him to be much in the spirit, much in labours, much in afflictions, than to live in pomp, and flow in ease and wealth, and enjoy great revenues. In hoc successisti non Petro, sed Constantino, saith Bernard to Eugenius—In this you succeed not Peter, but Constantine. Christ had not where to lay his head; his witnesses prophesied in sackcloth. Their true glory is to be mortified, holy, heavenly; not to affect grandeur and precedency; that is a disgrace to the preachers of the cross. So for private christians; they should value themselves and others by their grace rather than pomp.

(1.) Themselves. A christian should not glory in this, that he is wealthy, that he thriveth when others are in misery, and so God loveth him better than others. If a stalled ox had reason, would he be so senseless to think his master loveth him better than his fellows because his food is more liberally provided for him, when he is but fatted for the slaughter? As Haman was deceived in misconstruing the queen's invitation of him to a banquet, as a matter of special grace to him, when she did it to have better opportunity to accuse him; so are these deceived in judging God's intention, or the happiness of their condition. Have you dignities, honours; and high places in the world? Do you flow in wealth? Glory not in this as any part of your felicity; all may be blasted in an instant; it may be given you for a snare. Christ gave his Spirit to the rest of the disciples, but the purse to Judas, who was a robber and a thief. Miserable wretches, that shall perish to all eternity, may have more than you have. Are you applauded by men? Will this endear you to God, or abate the least part of your pain in hell? The greatest cause of rejoicing is that you have enough, without all this, in God. If you are advanced on the pinnacle, they that are below are on the safer ground; your wealth will not take away your guilt nor open heaven's gates to you. Are you clothed with gorgeous attire? Glory not in this; the true ornament is grace: 1 Peter 3:3, 4, 'Whose adorning, let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart,

in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great value.' Pride is a greater shame than poverty. The emptiest person may have the best attire. It is not your outside showeth your worth, no more than a rich saddle and trappings show a good horse. All this is not matter of glorying or blessing yourselves.

(2.) Nor value others. Those that have high thoughts of worldly pomp and wealth do not only bless themselves, but admire others for these things: Ps. 10:3, 'The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.' They slight the true christian, and have respect to him that weareth the gold ring and gay clothing: James 2:1-3, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.' They think it a fine thing to be high. And on the contrary, grace teacheth us to value the godly poor: Ps. 16:3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight;' Ps. 15:4, 'In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.' They value a poor man that is godly above a rich man that is wicked, and have a hearty honour and respect for them above the greatest men in the world. When you think too meanly of the estate of poor believers, and admire the rich, you glory in that which should be no glory to a christian.

[6.] This is to bid defiance to your religion which you profess, and to glory in your shame, when you bless yourselves more for having an estate in this world than an interest in the promises. This is as if one that would be accounted a prudent grave man should glory that he hath found a pin. Alas! the world is too low to be a believer's glory; his higher hopes do cloud and disgrace all these things. Who is your Saviour? A crucified Christ. What is the glory of your religion, but

mortification, as the blessed effect of his cross? To glory in any creature, as opposite to Christ and divided from Christ, is to glory in your shame. Carnal glory will shortly make those ashamed that use it. So also when you account a sinful retreat or escape from the cross to be better than disgraceful suffering, this is contrary to the temper of true christians. See Heb. 11:26, Acts 5:41. Let others be ashamed of their master, their religion, their God, yet be not you.

III. The punishment. The carnal life endeth in everlasting destruction: 'Their end is destruction.'

1. It is good to look to the end of things. It maketh one wise: Deut. 32:29, 'Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!' Lam. 1:9, 'She remembereth not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully;' Jer. 17:11, 'As a partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.' On the other side, Heb. 13:7 'Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversations.' Oh, that we had the same thoughts now which we shall have when the end is come, when the mask is taken off, and all shows and fallacies cease, and things appear in their own colours.

2. Worldly pleasures will end in everlasting destruction: 1 Tim. 6:9, 10, 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows;' Rom. 6:21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of these things is death;' ver. 23, 'For the wages of sin is death;' Gal. 6:8, 'He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;' Rom. 8:13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' Therefore do not look what the carnal earthly life is now, but what it will be hereafter: 2 Cor. 11:15, 'Whose end shall be according to their works.' We little think there is so much hurt, but, Rom. 8:6, 'To be carnally-minded is



death.' Now as you would avoid everlasting destruction, cherish these things.

3. The punishment is the more dreadful, to give us the more help, and the more powerful argument against these pleasing lusts. It is sweet to please, the flesh, but it will cost dear. We may counterbalance momentary pleasures with eternal pains; the pleasures are but for a season, but the pain is evermore. If the fearful end of this worldly course were more soundly believed or seriously considered, men would not so eagerly pursue present things. God would order it so that the joy and pain of the other world, which is matter of faith, should be greater than the comfort and pain of this world, which is matter of sense; for things at hand would prevail with us, if things to come were not considerably greater.

Use 1. Do we mind earthly things or heavenly? A man may speak slightly of earthly things, yet these possess our hearts and govern all our choices; for we speak from our convictions, but live by our inclinations; and it is more easy to tip our tongues than change our hearts. A man may be earthly-minded yet profess the belief, hope, and desire of another world; as the Israelites gladly would have Canaan, yet were loath to part with the garlic and onions of Egypt, or run the hazard of the wilderness. A man may be earthly-minded though he have some good affections to religion, but he hath greater and stronger to other things. The business is, which hath the mastery, and can check and control the other? A man may love the world who doth not use ill means to get it; but if his heart be set upon it as his portion, he is earthly-minded. You do not use unlawful means to be rich; but are you not discontented because riches flow not in upon you? You covet not what is unjust, but do not you crave what is superfluous? You do not snatch at what is another's, but do you well improve your own? Men sin in not giving what they should, as well as in getting what they should not. You are not ravenous, yet is not the gain of wealth more sweet to you than that of grace, and your desires after earthly things far greater than after God, Christ, and heaven? You say you are only good husbands; but while you are

good husbands, are you not bad christians, neglecting religion to follow the world, scraping all you can, but doing little or nothing for God? In short, if you would not mind earthly things—

1. Do not fix them as your scope: 1 Tim. 6:9, 'They that 'will be rich fall into temptation and a snare,' So as to be wholly intent upon getting wealth. Not he that is, but he that 'will be rich.' The devil hath you upon the hip when you resolve to make that your scope, care, and work. Be sure the world be not your scope, but the pleasing, and glorifying, and enjoying of God: Ps. 27:4, '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 to inquire in his temple;' Ps. 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.'

2. Let not this be your great work and business: Mat. 6:24, 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon;' Prov. 23:4, 'Labour not to be rich;' that is, so as to jostle out other business which is more necessary. It is worldly things that thrust out heavenly meditations, and worldly business that straitens God's interest in your hearts and families, in praying and instructing your families, so that family prayers are none or cursorily slubbered over, they having other things to mind. The business of the world is not your principal business; it may take up more time, but should not take up more of your hearts. They must have the world, come what will come of their immortal souls. Think often of your great necessities, to get a sinful condemned soul acquitted, a guilty conscience eased, a naughty heart changed, a disordered life reformed, a title to heaven assured: 2 Peter 3:14, 'Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

3. Let not earthly things be your great delight; that in the want of them you be not overtroubled, or in the enjoyment of them overpleased: 1 Cor. 7:29, 30, 'But this I say, brethren, the time is

short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not;' Phil. 4:12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need;' Ps. 62:10, 'Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.'

4. When your estate is yet to be made or gotten, let your desires be modest. When men have enough already, they would have more. As a river, the greater it groweth by receiving in little brooks, the wider and deeper it weareth the channel; so outward things, the more they are increased, the more men enlarge their desires; they would be a little higher in the world, a little better accommodated; and when they have that, then they must have a little more, and so seize upon all things within their grasp: Isa. 5:8, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth;' and so the lust groweth with the possession. Earthly-mindedness is a fire that increaseth, the more wood you put thereon: Eccles. 5:10, 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase.' Therefore we must be content with such things as we have: Heb. 13:5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.' We must bring our minds to our estate, rather than our estate to our minds, or else we shall never be content hereafter. Estate will not do it, if grace do not do it. The way is not to increase our substance, but moderate our desires.

5. Moderate your cares about these things: Mat. 6:25, 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your bodies, what ye shall put on.' Trust yourselves with God; consider his general providence to all creatures: ver. 26, 'Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.' And consider his particular providence as a father: ver. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' So Phil. 4:5, 6, 'Let

your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God;' 1 Peter 5:7, 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' Be careful of your duty, how to manage your affairs most innocently, both in your general and particular calling; but be not careful about events, be not anxious about the issue, which is God's part to determine. When you have done your duty, you should not be further careful about it. God knoweth what is best for you, and how much of worldly prosperity you are fit to enjoy, and to him must the whole business be committed.

6. Look to yourselves. In using an estate we bewray our earthly-mindedness when the world is used more for the service and pleasure of the flesh than the honour of God. It is used for the service of the flesh when all our end is to live in pomp and pleasure, or that we and ours may be great in the world. It is used for God when they are instruments of piety and charity, to serve the Lord, and benefit others, and to do good, and further our own salvation. The scripture speaketh much of the use: Luke 12:21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God;' Luke 16:9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations;' Eph. 4:28, 'Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.'

7. Be willing to resign them up to Christ, when the enjoyment of them is inconsistent with your fidelity to him. Be not unwilling to let go all your earthly conveniences, at least to hazard them for Christ: Luke 14:33, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' We esteem them too much when we prefer them before Christ and our salvation, or strain conscience for the world's sake, or betray our peace, or wound our souls, rather than endure anything when God calleth us thereunto. If we will lose

nothing for Christ, and upon the hopes of the other world, we can expect nothing from him.

Use 2. To dissuade us from earthly-mindedness.

To this end consider—

1. You must shortly die and come to your account, and according to the account you give, and the preparation you have made, you must live in endless joy or misery. When we come to die, it is not the possession, but the use, will comfort us. We can carry nothing with us into the other world but the comfort of a good conscience: Eccles. 5:15, 'As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.' A worldly, wealthy man, when he has made his will, and left all his estate, to such a son such an inheritance, to such a daughter such a portion, to such a friend such a legacy, what hath the poor man left for himself? If he hath not grace, what hath he left to carry with him but the anguish and misery of a guilty conscience, and the expectation of worse to come? Oh, poor miserable creature! when he must bid good-night to all the world, and all things take their leave of him, what a sorry comfort will that be that he hath once gotten great things, and possessed great things here in the world I But if he hath used it well, his works follow him.

2. Consider the danger of abundance. An estate may be too great for us to manage, as Saul's armour for David, 1 Sam. 17:39. It is harder to go to heaven: Mat. 19:24, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' A moderate condition of life is freest from ensnaring temptations. Abundance of all things without any want disposeth to a forgetfulness of God. Greater estates expose men to greater troubles and cares: Eccles. 5:11, 12, 'When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich

will not suffer him to sleep.' But chiefly our account is greater: Luke 16:2, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' Compared with Luke 12:48, 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.' They must give an account for more opportunities of doing good; they have a greater reckoning to make.

3. See by faith those sure, great, and glorious things which are infinitely more worthy your love and labour. The soul is never cured but by diversion. Nothing doth so powerfully quench our carnal pleasures, or inclination to earthly things, as a desire of, or a delight in, higher and better things: Col. 3:2, 'Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.' These things are in two contrary balances; the mote the heart is given to the one, the other gets the less. Moses, Heb. 11:25, 'chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.'

4. Think often of your great necessities: Luke 10:42, 'One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.'

5. Keep a daily jealousy of yourselves. It is a great part of your religion to be 'unspotted from the world,' James 1:27. This will never be without watchfulness, these things do so soon taint us; therefore see how you improve all for God and to eternal ends. Take account often whither the course of your life tendeth, whether to the world or to God and heaven. Because we are not watchful over ourselves, the holy and jealous God watcheth over us, and preventeth our doting on the world by sharp afflictions.

6. Pray often that God would sanctify the labours of your calling, and the enjoyments of the world: 1 Tim. 4:4, 5, 'Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' Prayer blesseth all our enjoyments to us.

## SERMON XV

For our conversation is in heaven.—PHIL. 3:20.

HERE is the opposite carriage of sound believers, and the reason of it. The false christians minded earthly things, and the true christians had their conversation in heaven. The people of God and the people of the world are of divers dispositions; the one are under the power and influence of the wisdom of the flesh, and the other are under the government of a heavenly mind. The natural life in them is overruled by grace. Now our way should be with the wise above; not with the worldly wise who mind earthly things, but with the godly wise whose conversation is in heaven.

The word *πολίτευμα*, which we translate 'conversation,' noteth our manner of living as burghers and citizens, not of earth, but of heaven; that is the city where we are free, and have the right of citizens, though we dwell on earth. Many that dwelt out of the city of Rome had the *jus civilatis Romanæ*, the privileges of the city of Rome belonging to them; as the privilege of being a free man of Rome belonged to one that lived in Judea: Acts 22:28, 'And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, I was free born.' So we, though we are not in heaven, yet carry ourselves as belonging to heaven.

Doct. That a good christian should behave himself as a denizen of the heavenly city. I shall show you—(1.) What it is; (2.) Why.

I. What. I will open that in these considerations—

1. That heaven is a city. A city is taken for three things—

[1.] A place fit for a comfortable and safe habitation.

[2.] For a political society and community living in that place, or at least belonging to it.

[3.] For the condition and estate belonging to that place and community. All these respects are proper here.

[1.] A city is put for a place or habitation, consisting of many houses; for multitudes and vicinity of buildings make a city in this sense. So is heaven a city, a place fitted and furnished from the creation of the world to be the habitation of the blessed; and so it is called 'a city which hath foundations,' Heb. 12:10, because it standeth on the eternal love of God, Mat. 25:34, the everlasting merit of Christ, Heb. 9:12, and his unchangeable covenant: 1 Peter 1:15, 'The word of God endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.' The best things in the world stand upon an earthly foundation, which soon mouldereth away and faileth. We and all things about us are subject to great uncertainties. If a man be but two or three years absent from an earthly city, he will see a new face of things when he cometh again, all things are altered and changed from what he left them; but in heaven there is the same face of things to all eternity. Here we have no μένουσαν πόλιν, 'no abiding city,' Heb. 12:14. Again, this city is said to be 'prepared for us,' Heb. 11:16. It is fitted by the goodness and love of God. He had not done enough to answer his love in the covenant if he had not prepared a better place than the world to be the mansion and residence of his people. To be a God to any is to be an infinite and eternal benefactor. Our Saviour proveth the resurrection from these words, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,' Mat. 22:32.

[2.] Sometimes it is taken for a political society and community, or a corporation under one magistracy or governing power, and ruled by the same laws, and enjoying the same common privileges and immunities. So it is said, Eph. 2:19, 'Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;' Heb. 12:22, 23, 'Ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the



city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and 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.' This is a part of our happiness, that we and the holy angels and blessed saints make up but one community that shall for ever serve and praise the Lord.

[3.] It is taken for the condition and estate of those societies which all the members enjoy there, and the same common privileges; the estate is glorious and everlasting. In the city of God there are eternal honours, riches, and pleasures, peace, safety, full and enduring joy; nothing is wanting which the heart of man can desire; the estate is answerable to the place and company, full and perfect happiness. Well, then, here are all things which may be comprised in the name of a city; here is habitation, society, and estate. The habitation is heaven; the society, saints and angels; the estate, perfect peace and eternal happiness, none of which can be found in the world. It is true they that are in their pilgrimage are not admitted to the full of these privileges till they come home to their own city and country. We are not yet capable of reigning with God, and being admitted into his immediate presence. But though the possession of our full privileges be deferred, with patience we must wait for it; partly because we have a title by God's grant; the new covenant is the charter of this corporation, and it will in time bring us to heaven, as it hath done others before us; partly because if the time of our pilgrimage seem long and tedious, it will shortly expire, and then beginneth our everlasting rest; partly because, besides actual right to eternal life, we have here some first-fruits of this blessed estate. That part above have the full possession of it, but we have the first-fruits; we have justification, and immunity from God's wrath and curse: Rom. 8:33, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.' We have adoption: Eph. 1:5, 'Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.' Sanctification: Eph. 5:25, 26, 'Christ hath loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it.' Peace of conscience: Rom. 5:1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' The use of ordinances, which may put

us in mind, and quicken us to seek after the country to which we do belong. So that this is the city of God.

2. That believers have a right to the heavenly city. By nature we are of another corporation, of the earthly society, not belonging to the holy city of God, but to the kingdom of Satan, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel and the city of God: Col. 1:12, 13, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' It was the mercy of God to translate us into another state and society of men. He found us unmeet, as being under the curse and power of Satan, dead in trespasses and sins; but he drew us out of this corrupt estate, changing our hearts, and pardoning our sins, and by a strong hand rescuing us from the power of the devil, that he might put us under the blessed government of Christ; and then 'we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' Eph. 2:19; and Heb. 12:22, 'We are now come to the city of the living God.' While we are in the way, as soon as converted, upon our sincere faith in Christ we are admitted and incorporated into this blessed city. Not only at last in the close of our days, but now when our hearts are turned to the Lord: Eph. 2:6, 'He hath made us sit together with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' We have a right, though not full possession. Christ is entered, and sat down as head of all the faithful.

3. Being made burgesses of heaven, our manner of living must be suitable; partly because it is the wisdom of God to place all things in their proper places. As in nature, so in a way of grace; light bodies are uppermost and heavy bodies below; so also in a way of grace. Sometimes we read that heaven and glory is prepared for us, Mat. 25:34; and sometimes that we are prepared for heaven and glory; Rom. 9:23, 'Vessels of mercy which he hath afore prepared unto glory.' There must be a suitableness between the receiver and the thing received, and therefore we must be made meet for this blessed estate. From heaven we received our first spiritual being, and there is

the final consummation of it, and there we must converse, and thither we must tend. And partly out of gratitude on our part. Our lives must suit and agree with our heavenly calling: 1 Thes. 2:12, 'Walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.' We must live as those that have a present right, and one day shall have full possession. Shall God advance us to such an estate, and shall we lie grovelling in the dirt, as if we had not such high and blessed hopes, and slight all this mercy and goodness?

4. This suitable manner of living consists partly—(1.) In the exercise of those graces which belong to this blessed estate; (2.) In the constant use of the means, whereby we may attain it; (3.) In such a course of living as suiteth with the properties of it.

[1.] There are certain graces which belong to it, which are given to us for that end and purpose. It is an unseen felicity, and therefore requireth faith to believe it. It is a future felicity, and therefore requires hope to expect it. It is our chief felicity, and therefore requires love to desire it.

(1.) We must certainly believe this blessed estate in the world to come. Faith is at the bottom of all, and therefore deal seriously with your hearts: John 11:26, 'Believest thou this?' Most men here talk of it; take it up from the common report by a human credulity, but are not settled in the firm belief of it by the illumination of the Holy Spirit: Eph. 1:17, 18, 'That the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' This faith goeth before affection, and affection to heavenly things before mortification to earthly things: Heb. 11:13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' Are you verily persuaded that there is eternity at the back of time? that God intends such great things for penitent believers? Surely men's boldness in sinning and

coldness in holy duties showeth their faith is not firm and sound. Sense telleth you that here is no abiding city, for we have seen the ruin of so many castles, palaces, cities, states, and kingdoms, which formerly flourished in great splendour, power, and strength, that now lie in the dust and do not appear. We need not tell you, you must die; graves and skulls show you that; but faith only can tell us there is an abiding city to come, and we must believe it before we can seek after it. Therefore can you depend upon Christ's fidelity and the truth of his promises for the happiness of the world to come? Why, then, if you believe as christians, do not live as infidels. If heaven be not a dream, let not your godliness be but a vain show. We have Christ's word for the reality of it; and for his fidelity, we may be assured that he would not delude us with vain hopes: John 14:2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you.' Wherefore should God flatter a worm, or what need he to court creatures into an imaginary happiness? Surely there is a quiet resting-place prepared for saints in the heavens. God never told us of anything but it came to pass. He told the old world of a flood which should drown the ungodly, and that was a thing as much unseen as heaven and hell is by us: Heb. 11:7, 'By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.' Those that accepted his warning fared well, and others were drowned in the flood. He told the old patriarchs of Christ's coming in the flesh; and rather than go back from his word, the Son of God must come and die. God, that hath kept touch with the world hitherto, will not fail at last. Thus should you rouse up a languid and drowsy faith.

(2.) We must look for this blessed estate by hope, which is acted by serious and heart-warming thoughts. A believer is not already in heaven, but his better part is there; his heart and mind are there, and he expects one day to be there glorified: Titus 2:13, 'Looking for the blessed hope;' Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;' and here in the text, 'From whence we look for a saviour.' Surely they whose minds and thoughts are strangers to heaven do not live in the world as if they were in heaven. Can a man

look for any great benefit, and not think of it? It is against the common experience of mankind. If you were adopted to a rich inheritance, would you not think of it? And do they expect such a glorious estate that never look up all the week long, or have such slight thoughts as rather damp and put out this holy fire than kindle it and keep it alive in you; rather shun all sober and lively thoughts of the life to come, lest they should awaken them out of their security, and that dull form of religiousness wherein they please themselves? Oh, therefore think often and much of that glorious estate, when you shall enjoy the endless sight and love of God, and live with all his blessed ones, and praise and serve him to all eternity. Can you travel one whole day toward such a city, and never think of the place you are going to? Is it your drift to get home, and shall home be never seriously thought of? Have we thoughts enough and to spare for other things, and none for Christ and heaven? If the carnal are delighted in minding earthly things, the souls of the godly should much more be heavenly. Surely if your conversations be in heaven, you would oftener think of it. The great instrument of the soul, next to sound belief, is serious consideration, not cursory and heartless thoughts, but such as are pressing, deep, and ponderous.

(3.) Love bends our desires that way, as well as hope sendeth our thoughts thither. And besides looking, there must be longing; and where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. If you have laid up treasure in heaven, you will be there in heart and mind, in affection and thoughts: Col. 3:2, 'Set your affections on things above, and not on things that are on earth.' That place is your home where you desire to be. If heaven be your home, you still groan and long to be there. But it is the world that is your home, and heaven a strange place, when you are loath to go out of the one, or get into the other. Yea, believers, such as love the world, they do not prize it, they do not love it; but they that believe it long after the enjoyment of this city more than for anything in the world. Have you the heart of christians, and love the world more than heaven? Is any happiness like the enjoyment of God? or do you meet with any such company upon earth as you shall have in heaven? Here we live mixed with

hypocrites and unbelievers, as the wheat with the chaff, obnoxious to the calamities of the earthly life; and shall not all this wean us from a vain and vexatious world, that we may long to be at home? What is it tempts you, maketh your desires so cold? Is it the enjoyment of a plentiful portion in the world? It is a curse to be 'written in the earth,' Jer. 17:13, as it is our felicity and joy to have our 'names written in heaven,' Luke 10:20. Which city is best in your account, and where lieth your portion, in the fruition of the world or the vision of God? Ps. 17:14, 15, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord; from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose bellies 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.' surely it is not the partial fruition of God maketh you so loath to depart, for those kind of enjoyments do not divert you from God, but draw you to him; having a taste, you will long for more. Earth is not heaven when it is at best, nor can you find Mount Sion or the city of the living God in the wilderness. Oh, therefore, if you have any love to God, long for heaven, where you have most of God. Here you have his presence with you, but you are absent from him: 2 Cor. 5:8, 'We are willing rather to be absent from the body, that we may be present with the Lord.'

[2.] In the constant use of the means whereby we may attain it. There is no coming to the end of the journey but by the way, nor obtaining the happiness but by the means. The great difficulty of a christian lieth not so much in a respect to the end as to the means. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity, that they may believe it and accept it as their happiness, look and long for it as such a happiness doth require. But we have a quick ear for offers of happiness, whilst usually we snuff at the conditions of duty and obedience as troublesome. Paul had a great desire of the happiness, yet he doth not stick at the means: 'If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead,' Phil. 3:11. All would be blessed, but they do not come to this resolution, 'If by any means.' Balaam could say, Num. 23:10, 'Let me die the death of the

righteous, and let my last end be like his;' but he loved the wages of unrighteousness. If wicked men are said to despise eternal happiness, it is not as happiness, nor eternal; they like happiness well enough, for all that love themselves would be happy; nor as eternal, for man, that hath lost the right object of his desires, hath not lost the vastness of them; he would be happy for ever; but it is in conjunction with the means that they dislike it. Thus the 'Israelites despised the pleasant land, and murmured in their tents,' Ps. 106:24, 25. What ailed them? The land was a good land, flowing with milk and honey. Ay I but the spies had told them of the giantly strength and stature of the men. Heaven is a good place, but the strictness of holy walking is disliked. We must submit to use all holy means to obtain it. What are they? We do not now speak of the title, but the conversation: Rom. 2:7, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.' When we walk in God's way, when our actions plainly tend to heaven. The believers of the old testament 'declared plainly that they sought a country,' Heb. 11:14. How? By resolving to seek till they find; by being content to be pilgrims in the world, and not giving over till they saw some place of eternal rest. This is the fault of most christians, their actions do not declare plainly that they are for God and heaven, nor doth the course of their lives show it. If they are tending thither, then two things will show it—continuance, and patient continuance, in well-doing.

(1.) Continuance. When we walk in all holy conversation and godliness. Men's end is seen in their constant course, when in all their actions they study to please God. They believe there is such an estate, and they know the excellency and glory thereof, and therefore would not for all the world weaken their hopes, or darken and cloud their interest, nor offend that God from whom they expect it: 1 Cor. 15:58, 'Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' A christian aimeth at heaven in all his business, civil and sacred: Acts 24:15, 16, 'And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And

herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.' He goeth about his earthly business with a heavenly mind; in his attendance upon God in the ordinances: Acts 26:6, 7, 'And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' It is to get more of God and heaven into his heart; more of the first fruits, more of his title and interest, more preparation of heart, new excitement of affections to God and heaven. He heareth that his soul may live; he prayeth that he may live; receiveth that he may take these pledges of heaven out of God's hand. He heareth the word, because there are the promises of eternal life, or directions in the way that leadeth thither. He prayeth, that he may come as near as he can to his Father, and have as much familiarity with him as a soul dwelling in flesh possibly can have. He cometh into the assemblies of God's people, because they are the favourites of heaven.

(2.) Patient continuance, whatever temptations he meeteth with to the contrary: Rom. 8:18, 'But I reckon that the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;' 2 Cor. 4:17, 'For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' These things do not greatly move him. It is for heaven, so that a christian is still travelling to God, improving all business and all conditions to this end, comforting himself with these hopes; so that he is either living for heaven in seeking it, or upon heaven by the joy and hope he deriveth from thence; he is still acting for this blessedness, or encouraging himself by this blessedness, because he expecteth one day to be glorified with God; thence he fetches his solaces and supports. This carriage is not by fits, but it is their constant course: 'Their conversation is in heaven.'

[3.] The course of our living must suit with the properties of this happy estate. (1.) It is a great happiness; (2.) It is a pure happiness; (3.) A happiness that lieth in heaven.



(1.) It is a great happiness, and therefore must not be slightly sought after. No slight thing will become God and heaven; all zeal and diligence is necessary to be exercised. There must be seeking: Col. 3:1, 'Seek things above;' Heb. 11:14, 'They seek a country.' Working: Phil. 2:12, 'Work out your salvation.' Labouring; there must be diligence to get what we seek: John 6:27, 'Labour for the meat that endures.' Watching, Luke 21:36. Striving: Luke 13:24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' Pressing hard: Phil. 3:14, 'I press toward the mark.' We seek it because we want it; here we have it not. We work and labour for it, because heaven will not come with a cold wish, or a few faint and feeble or heartless endeavours. Is this becoming everlasting glory? Is this all we do for God and heaven? We watch, that we may keep up our heavenly affections, and be found in a constant preparation at Christ's coming: 2 Peter 3:14 'Give all diligence, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' We strive because we meet with difficulties within and without; without are temptations, and within are corruptions. And we press forward that every day we may be a step nearer. The life of a christian is a continual motion and nearer approach to the heavenly city. If we do thus, this is to have our conversation in heaven, when the thoughts and hopes put life and vigour into our graces and duties.

2. It is a pure happiness, not a Turkish paradise, but an immaculate and sinless estate; to see God and be like him. Therefore then our conversation is in heaven, when we purify ourselves yet more and more: 1 John 3:2, 3, 'Behold, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as he is pure.' We expect to be presented faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude 24. Therefore now we strive every day more to be without blame before him in love. Christians have a carnal notion of heaven if they look only upon it as a state of personal contentment. No; it is not that alone, but a state of exact conformity to God; and the more pure and

holy you are, the more heaven-like are your conversations; as heaven is the perfecting of that life which is begun here by the Spirit.

3. It is a heavenly happiness; and therefore true believers should be drawing off their hearts from earthly things, that they may wholly breathe and aspire after heavenly things. Worldly and sensual inclinations turn us to another happiness, and make the heart dead and senseless. We seek our heaven and happiness here in the world, rather than in the salvation of the blessed: Luke 16:25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' Because he lived a life of pomp and ease; he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. If we enlarge ourselves in this kind of life, we discharge God from giving us any other happiness. You shall have riches, you shall have honours, because you do so greedily seek after them, but you shall have no more. Sure it is the mortified, self-denying conversation that becometh the citizens of heaven; for they do not seek for their happiness here, but elsewhere: 1 Peter 2:11, 'I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' The citizens of this world must make a fair show in the flesh, to be somebody here, have such provision for their sensuality, or they are comfortless; but the citizens of the other world seek to excel in grace, to be filled with the wisdom that is from above, to entertain communion with God, to get more assurance of his love; for this manner of living suiteth with their hopes. They mortify their members which are upon earth, but seek to cherish and increase the graces of the Spirit which come from God, and lead them to God.

Reasons why.

1. They are made for eternity, and God has given them an immortal spirit that will never perish; and therefore they cannot be satisfied with things that perish in the using. An immortal soul cannot be contented with a mortal happiness: Eccles. 12:7, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God that gave it.' The make and constitution of man showeth the estate he was made for.

Some things were made for heaven and not for earth, as the angels, who are pure spirits; and some things for earth and not for heaven, as the beasts, who have bodies, but a material spirit. Some things were made both for earth and heaven, as man, who hath a mortal body and an immortal spirit. He was made for earth, the place of bodies, in his passage; for heaven as his home, which is the region of spirits. Now the children of God observe the cause for which they were made, and for which they were sent into the world; and therefore regard present things only in their passage, and prepare themselves for the upper place of their abode. The whole drift of their conversation tends that way; that is the estate most in the eye of their faith, hope, and love; they believe it, look and long for it, and prepare for it.

2. They are new made or born again, and the tendency of the life of grace is to God and heaven: 2 Peter 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust.' It is the divine Spirit which is the true Spirit, which carrieth them so far above the world to things to come. The sanctifying Spirit formeth us for this very thing: 2 Cor. 5:5, 'Now he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' He frameth and fitteth men in this life for a state of glory. The heart of a christian is more and more suited to the happiness promised in the gospel; and as they are fitted for it, so they are inclined to it. A christian is born from above, and seeks to get thither. As all things tend to the place of their original, or have a propensity to the place whence they came, as fire and air work upward—you cannot keep them down—so the new nature has a new tendency. Fishes desire to be in the water, and fowls in the air; they have a peculiar nature to carry them to those places. They that have an earthly and worldly nature are all for the world, and relish nothing but the pleasures of the world. Our souls naturally are inclined to earthly things, but being renewed, have a tendency to heavenly things. Love, which is the heart of the new creature, inclines us to be with God and Christ: Phil. 1:23, 'Having a desire to

depart, and to be with Christ;' 1 Thes. 4:17, 'And so shall we ever be with the Lord;' Col. 3:1, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above,' &c. So it inclines us to perfect grace, and freedom from sin, and full likeness to God, never to dishonour God more; as little seeds by degrees work through the thick clods of earth, and grow up to stalk and flower. In short, the illuminate soul can only discern these things; the sanctified soul is inclined to them.

3. There is no condition of rest and tranquillity here in the world; so that a christian is in effect driven hence by the relics of sin, multitude of temptations, manifold afflictions. Though the new nature be strongly inclined to God and heavenly things, the old corrupt nature, having the advantage of things present, would sorely tempt us from him. Therefore God ordereth our condition so that we find little else but occasions of groaning in the world. Within we find the relics of sin, and that maketh us long and wait. If any had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul much more; yet he complains not of that, but of indwelling sin: Rom. 7:24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' A very beast driven to a place where there is neither ease nor rest will groan under it; but yet temptations on every side molest us and trouble us, and afflictions also. How soon and how often is our worldly happiness interrupted, even then when we think ourselves past all hazards and fears of change! Ps. 30:6, 7, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' No man ever slept upon a carnal pillow but had his rest disturbed before his nap was over. It is tedious for us to think of such a mutable condition; but let us look upon God's design in it. God ordereth it that we may always think of our remove, and prepare ourselves to rest in our proper place.

Use 1. To press us to this constant and earnest pursuit after heavenly things. Let thoughts, conferences, discourses, actions still show that you are for God and heaven. When you are alone, oh, think of heaven, where your God and Christ is, and where you in a little time hope to be. When you are in company, comfort one another, warm

one another with discourses of heaven: 'With these words,' saith the apostle. When you are doing anything for God, let heaven put life into your endeavours; doing anything in the world, let heaven regulate and measure your actions; do it so as you may be true to your great end. When you are suffering anything, loss of estate, credit, and esteem in the world, if it be for heaven, it may be the better borne: I have a better and a more enduring substance. Look not to the state in which you are, but that into which you are a-going. In short, be sure you do not want this evidence that your conversation is in heaven.

Motives to enforce it.

1. You are bound to it by oath in baptism: Col. 3:1, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.' You are bound to such a heavenly life; you are planted into the likeness of Christ's death and resurrection. The sacramental resurrection enforceth the obligation; the real resurrection enforceth the effect.

2. The more heavenly you are in your lives, your right is the more evident, and you are more ready for possession. You are in the next meetness: Col. 1:12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' A man reconciled to God and sanctified is in a remote meetness; but the heavenly-minded, the heavenly walkers, are in the next preparation. The first meetness gives us a right, the next meetness a ripeness, like a shock of corn that comes in in its season.

3. This heavenly conversation doth more honour God in the world; when we carry ourselves as men of another world, we do the better convince them of the reality of our profession and hopes. By your serious diligence you condemn the world: Heb. 11:7, 'Noah condemned the world.' Make the world wonder: 1 Peter 4:4, 'They think it strange you run not with them into the same excess of riot.' Awaken the world to think of God: 2 Thes. 1:11, 12, 'Wherefore we pray always for you, that God would count you worthy of his calling,

and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you.' Christ is glorified and you rewarded.

But what is this heavenly conversation? When we so believe as to prize it, so prize it as to seek after it in the first place.

[1.] Do we believe it? Surely they that are drowned in the cares of the world and voluptuous living have no sense of the world to come. That is known by mortification rather than confident presumption: 1 John 5:4, 5, 'And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'

[2.] Do we prize and esteem it? for nothing is sought and laboured for but what is prized. Do we prize it, not with a speculative, but practical esteem? Rom. 2:18, 'Thou approvest the things that are excellent.' The practical esteem is that which draweth our hearts. Is it our treasure? Mat. 6:19, 'Lay up treasure in heaven.' Do you esteem it comparatively above all other things? Mat. 13:45, 46, 'Sell all to buy the pearl of great price.' All is nothing in comparison of this blessed estate. Do you esteem it copulatively, cross and crown, means and end? Ps. 106:24, 'They despised the pleasant land, and believed not his word;' Phil. 3:11, 'If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.'

[3.] Do you seek it? What do you do for it? Our great business in this life is seeking after heaven. Many would be glad their souls might be saved at last, but we cannot believe they are in earnest. Where is that seeking, watching, striving, working, that serious diligence, those lively endeavours, that conscionable care for obtaining so great a benefit? What! seek it, and have no heart to pray for it, hear and meditate of it? Alas! for seeking, watching, working, striving, men are as far from these as they are like to be from heaven itself.

[4.] Do you seek it in the first place, so that all other works and labours are but by the by and subordinate to this? Alas! how can you say so, when religion is looked upon by the by, and you are out of your element when you are employed in the duties of it? You cannot endure to be long held to prayer, or hearing the word; your hearts are not suited to these things.

## SERMON XVI

From whence also we look for our Saviour and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.—PHIL. 3:20.

HERE is the reason and encouragement of the heavenly conversation. Why do believers behave themselves as belonging to that city? Because from thence we look for a Saviour.

Doct. That the earnest expectation of Christ's second coming doth both bind and encourage the saints to have their conversations in heaven.

I shall handle the point in this method—

1. Touch upon the truths contained in the words of the text.
2. How all these do draw up the thoughts and affections of believers to God and heavenly things.

I. The truths contained and implied in the text are these—

First point. That Christ is corporeally and locally in heaven, and not upon earth. Here is his spiritual presence: Mat. 28:20, 'And lo, I am with yon to the end of the world;' but there is his bodily presence: Acts 3:21, 'Whom the heavens must receive until the restitution of all things.' He is there, because he hath business to do there—(1.) To intercede with God; (2.) Powerfully to administer the mediatorial

kingdom for the comfort of the elect, and destruction of his adversaries.

1. To intercede with God: Heb. 9:24, 'He is gone into the holy place not made with hands, there to appear before God for us;' that is, before the throne of the supreme judge, that, by representing his blood shed, he may procure remission of sins for penitent believers. As the high priest under the law, when the sacrifice of atonement for the whole congregation was slain and burnt without the camp; the high priest was to present himself before the mercy-seat with blood and a sweet perfume; so the Lord Jesus having offered up himself a sacrifice of atonement, is gone into the holy place: 'Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us,' Heb. 9:12. There is some little difference among interpreters about the time of his entrance, whether at his solemn ascension, forty days after his resurrection, when he was taken up into heaven, or else immediately upon his death, when he had given up the ghost, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst from the top to the bottom, and his soul, separated from the body, and commended into his Father's hands, entered into paradise; then it seemeth our great high priest did enter into heaven, for it may more properly be said that he entered into heaven with his blood, when his soul was separated, than when his body was risen and made immortal, and both body and soul jointly ascended. The sacrifice of atonement was not complete till the blood was presented before the throne of God in the inner sacrary; so then Christ did present himself as slain in heaven before the supreme judge, as having suffered death, and satisfied justice for the sin of man. Now whether the first or second way of entrance, certain it is he is now in heaven interceding for us.

2. Powerfully to administer the mediatorial kingdom.

[1.] For the comfort of the elect, and to see the fruits of his purchase accomplished to them: Eph. 4:10, 'The same also that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things;' that is, supply his



people with a large and plentiful measure of the gifts and graces of his Spirit. His presence there is far more beneficial to us than if he were here upon earth; yea, not only beneficial, but necessary, as being the means to apply his merits, and confer the mercies purchased by his sacrifice.

[2.] For the destruction of his enemies: Ps. 110:1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;' Heb. 10:12, 13, 'But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.' His person is in heaven above molestation and abuse; his reign and government is opposed in the world, but by degrees it gets ground upon opposition.

Second point. That at the end of time Christ will come from heaven and judge the world. Reason saith he may come; faith, that he shall come. Reason saith he may come; these principles are evident, that man is God's creature, and therefore his subject; that man hath failed in his subjection to his creator and lord; that, having failed, the holy God may justly call him to an account. Of this man is sorely afraid: Rom. 1:32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they that do such things are worthy of death,' &c.; for reason telleth us that God, who is our creator, is also our governor; and if our governor, then he is our judge; and as such man feareth him. Now this judgment is put into the hands of Christ, who is our lawgiver, who gave us this healing law for the reparation of mankind, and to set them in joint again that they may live unto God. And the lawgiver is the judge; and that he hath a right to be lawgiver and judge. God hath justified his call, in that he raised him from the dead: Acts 17:31, 'Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he raised him from the dead.' Faith saith that he will come. What shall I say? Angels foretold it: Acts 1:10, 11, 'And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Ye men of

Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus that is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' The devils tremble at it: Mat. 8:29, 'And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' The saints departed long for it: 'How long, Lord, holy and true?' Rev. 6:10. The prophets proclaimed it; from Enoch downward it hath ever been kept up in the church: Jude 14, 15, 'And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodlily committed, and all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' And the apostles inculcated it everywhere; yea, above all, our Lord hath assured us of it: John 14:2, 3, 'In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' And he hath instituted the Lord's supper to keep up the remembrance and expectation of it: 1 Cor. 11:26, 'For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.'

But doth the apostle refer to so long a while, and not rather speak of our coming up to him, which is nearer at hand, than his coming down to us, which is so far off?

1. Not to infringe the doctrine of the saints' happiness as soon as they die, for we presently receive the salvation of the soul, but lest any should doubt of it, on this occasion let us clear that. The soul returneth to God: Eccles. 12:7, 'The spirit shall return to God that gave it.' It is with Christ: Phil. 1:23, 'I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better;' 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' Luke 23:43; as the wicked are in hell: 1 Peter 3:19, 'The spirits in prison.' So the 'spirits of just men are made perfect,' Heb. 12:24. As soon as 'we are absent from

the body, we are present with the Lord,' 2 Cor. 5:8. The 'beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom,' Luke 16:22; Luke 20:37, 38, 'Now, that the dead are raised, Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto God.' All things, both in heaven and in earth, are said to be reconciled to God by Christ, Col. 1:20, the universality of the elect, whether already glorified or yet upon earth. It cannot be meant of angels; they were never reconciled, because never any breach between God and them.

2. The apostle mentioneth this time, because till then our own salvation is not perfect nor complete for body and soul. The whole church is not perfected and brought together. Then we shall have many privileges that we had not before.

[1.] It is a day of manifestation: Rom. 8:19, 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' All is now hid; Christ is hid, and the saints are hid. Their life is hid: Col. 3:2, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' Their glory is hid: 1 John 3:2, 'Now we are the sons of God, but it doth not appear what we shall be.' But then all shall appear, the persons, their relation to Christ, the glory he will put upon them: 'We shall appear with him in glory;' as Moses told the rebels, Num. 6:16, 'To-morrow the Lord will show who are his.' Jesus Christ will appear in all his royalty and glory, as the great God and Saviour of the world: we shall put on our best robes. In winter the tree appeareth not what it is; the sap and life is hidden in the root; but when summer cometh, all is discovered.

[2.] It is a day of perfection. Everything tendeth to its perfect state, so do the saints. They cannot be contented to be still as they are; therefore this day is the great motive to them. Then they shall have perfect holiness, perfect freedom from sin, and all the fruits and effects of it. Christ is then a perfect Saviour. He saveth us now in part, but then he saveth us to the utmost. Body and soul are then united and perfectly glorified, and fitted to praise God in heaven. Our

Saviour cometh to make an end of what he hath begun. Our souls are made perfect before, but then our bodies are freed from corruption. All christian privileges are then perfect: Eph. 4:30, 'Ye are sealed to the day of redemption;' Eph. 1:14 'Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession;' Luke 21:28, 'Then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth near.' Regeneration is then perfect: Mat. 19:28, '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, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Adoption: Rom. 8:23, 'We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' Justification: Acts 3:19, 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Our judge on his tribunal shall absolve us as with his own mouth, and as it were crown us with his own hands.

[3.] It is a day of congregation or gathering together. The saints are now scattered; they live in diverse ages, countries, towns, and houses, and have little comfort and knowledge one of another. Then all meet in one assembly or congregation: Ps. 1:5, 'The congregation of the righteous.' There is the great rendezvous. Now God's children are scattered up and down where they may be most useful; as stars do not shine in a cluster, but are dispersed up and down the heavens. Then all the four winds shall give up their dead; then the wicked shall be herded together, as straws and sticks are bound in a bundle to set one another a-fire; adulterers together, drunkards together, bound in bundles: Mat. 13:41, 42, 'The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' So the godly shall meet in a congregation, and never separate more. We cannot enjoy one another's fellowship in this life, because God hath service for us in diverse countries; therefore the saints are groaning for that happy day. In a wreck, those that are got ashore are longing and looking for their companions. In short, here the tares are mingled with the

wheat. Jacob's cattle and Laban's cattle are together; but then they shall be separated, and for ever live apart.

[4.] It is a day of glorification: Mat. 24:30, 'They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory;' when Christ shall get himself a glorious name in the final destruction of all his enemies. He got himself a glorious name when he drowned Pharaoh in the sea; what will he do when he casteth all the wicked into hell? Christ showeth his majesty every day, but we have not eyes to see it; our eyes are dazzled with worldly splendour, but then all mists shall vanish. The time shall come when God shall be dishonoured no more, and sin shall have an end. Here God hath not his perfect glory from us nor in us, as passive objects or active instruments. Objectively: Eph. 1:12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory.' If man say nothing or do nothing, the work will speak for itself. As active instruments: Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.' Now both ways will God be more glorified by us actively, as we shall laud him and praise him for evermore without weariness or distraction. Objectively: 2 Thes. 1:10, 'When he shall be glorified in his saints, and be admired in all them that do believe.' Passively, as more of God is seen in them at that day than ever could be thought of.

Third point. That to true christians he will come in the quality of a saviour; not as a rigorous judge to condemn us, but as a saviour to free us from all misery.

1. It showeth the way of our getting to heaven. It is in a way of salvation, which is the recovery of a thing or person lost; so Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost; as a physician saveth another that cureth him of a disease which otherwise would be mortal. The shepherd saveth the sheep that snatcheth it out of the lion's mouth. A prince that rescueth the captive subjects saveth them out of the enemy's hands. There are none brought to heaven but by a saviour who recovereth us out of our lost estate, saves us from sin,

and all the consequences of sin, that maketh us everlastingly blessed. Thus he saveth us satisfacione, merito, et efficacia—by satisfaction, merit, and power.

[1.] By satisfaction he saveth us from the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, which is our great encouragement to wait for his coming: 1 Thes. 1:10, 'To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.' We could never have heart nor hope to think of his coming beneficial to us without this.

[2.] By his merit he procureth the favour of God, and all those blessings which are bestowed upon the people of God. Having expiated sin, he obtained the grant of pardon and life in the new covenant. He hath purchased for us the image and favour of God and eternal happiness: 1 Thes. 4:9, 10, 'For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.'

[3.] By way of efficacy and power, inasmuch as by his Spirit he doth effect and work in us all those things which belong to salvation; so it is said, Titus 3:5, 'He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;' 2 Tim. 1:9, 'He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' Heb. 5:9, 'He is the author of salvation.' There are many adjunct causes, but he is the principal: 'We are saved by his life,' Rom. 5:10. The merit of his humiliation, the power of his exaltation.

2. I shall show what is the work of his second coming. It is to perfect our salvation. Then he shows himself a saviour indeed when he giveth us eternal life and our full happiness. The high priest, after he had been within the veil, was to come out again and bless the people; so Christ shall appear the second time: Heb. 9:28, 'To them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.' If we continue waiting and looking, and do rest upon his

undertaking, and in the meantime be performing the duties required of us, he will come as a saviour.

3. This coming is certainly and earnestly looked for by the godly. It is good to observe how differently this coming of Christ is entertained. It is questioned by the atheists; it is dreaded by the wicked and impenitent; but it is lovingly expected by the godly. For the first, see 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 'There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?' They would eternally enjoy the pleasures of the present world, and therefore labour to banish out of their hearts all thoughts of this great day, and take up all obvious prejudices, to smother the belief of it. They would be glad in their hearts to hear such news, that Christ would never come. Now their wishes easily commence into their opinions. Christ's second coming is their horror and torment, which they would willingly get rid of. For the second, it is dreaded by the wicked and impenitent: Acts 24:25, 'Felix trembled' when Paul 'reasoned of judgment to come.' There is reason for it; for Christ cometh to them as a terrible judge: 2 Thes. 1:8, 'In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' That coming is described as light and as fire. To the third, to the godly, it is not matter of terror, but joy and delight; not like the handwriting on the wall to Belshazzar, but like comfortable tidings to the waiting soul. They look for it, Titus 2:13, they long for it, 2 Tim. 4:8. He cometh to them as a saviour, to put an end to all their miseries.

But more particularly let us explain this looking. It implieth faith, hope, and patience. Faith addeth certainty to hope, hope earnestness to faith, and holy love strength to patience. For because we believe and hope, we patiently wait for the coming of Christ; or rather take in love also, and make patience an act of hope.

[1.] Faith is the ground of this looking; because we believe the promise, therefore we determine that 'he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,' Heb. 10:37. Faith seeth the certainty of Christ's

day afar off, for it is 'the evidence of things not seen;' as Rebecca espied Isaac at a great distance. It looketh upon Christ as if he were on his way, and maketh the believer stand ready to meet him and welcome him. In the eye of faith it is sure and near, and as so apprehended worketh on the soul.

[2.] Love. The saints love Christ though they never saw him. They have heard much of him, felt much of him, tasted much of him, and therefore love his appearing, long for his coming: Cant. 8:14, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be like the young hart or roe upon the mountains of spices.' Christ is not slack, but the church's affections are strong. They have a love to Christ himself, who at his appearing is to be glorified. They have a love to the church in general, which is that day to be adorned as a bride for her husband, and fully to be freed from all sins and troubles; love to themselves and their own happiness, which is that day fully to be perfected: Rev. 22:20, Christ saith, 'I come;' and the church, like a quick echo, saith, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' It taketh the word out of Christ's mouth. Christ's voice and the church's voice are unisons. Christ speaketh in a way proper to him, in a way of promise; and the church speaketh in a way proper to her, in a way of prayer. This is her last suit, 'Even so, come.' You will say, This is the desire of the church in general; but doth every believer so desire it?

Ans. The part followeth the reason of the whole, and the same spirit is in all the faithful. 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come.' The Holy Ghost breedeth this desire. The meanest and weakest, that tremble at their unpreparedness, have some inclination that way. Can a man desire that Christ should come into his heart, and not come to judgment? There may be a drowsiness and indisposition, but no total extinction of the desire of meeting with Christ.

[3.] Hope. Because we believe it and we desire it, therefore we expect it. Only in the looking of hope you may discern contrary affections; as first, there is both rejoicing and groaning. Rejoicing: Rom. 5:3, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Groaning: 2 Cor. 5:2, 'In this



we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;' ver. 4, 'We that are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened.' They rejoice, being under hope, groan because they have not yet attained. We rejoice because the estate to come is so excellent, and we groan because the estate present is so miserable. We rejoice because certain; we groan because we are yet conflicting with difficulties, and are but making out of our claim and title. Once more, there is a desiring and yet a waiting, and hope is described by both. By desiring, which showeth our esteem of the benefit, and earnestness to enjoy it; by waiting or tarrying the Lord's leisure: both are consistent: 'Waiting for and hasting to the coming of the Lord,' 2 Peter 3:12; προσδοκῶντες καὶ σπεύδοντες, contrary words, but coming from the same grace. We render it, 'hastening unto the coming,' but it is only σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν, 'hastening the coming.' Hope would fain enjoy, yet there is a time for labours, difficulties, and troubles. The hope exciteth both the longing expectation and the patient waiting: 1 Thes. 1:3, 'Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope;' Rom. 8:25, 'If we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' The time seemeth long, but the reward is sure, therefore we must wait God's leisure. In short, there are desires which quicken us to use all means to attain it; there is patience to wait God's leisure while we are exercised with difficulties; therefore the saints are described to be such 'as wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus,' 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thes. 1:10. It is made the end of our conversation; we desire, yet wait our time to enjoy the glorious blessings which God hath promised.

II. Why this should draw up the believer's thoughts to heaven and heavenly things.

1. Because Christ is in heaven, and therefore we must be heavenly. He is our adamant or loadstone: Col. 3:12, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.' Members must not be severed from their head. The love which christians bear to Christ should be such, that their

affections should be set on the place where he is, and the things which are in it, and flow from it and tend to it. All this should be dear to a christian; and so it enforceth a heavenly conversation. Love is an affection of union: it desireth to be with the party loved; therefore love to Christ is not satisfied with the present estate, it would be with Christ, and in that state and place where it may have most union with him.

2. Because he cometh from thence to bring us thither. His business at his second coming is to translate us into that heavenly city: John 14:3, 'I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Therefore now we should behave ourselves as candidates of eternity. His whole design is to bring us to that place where he is. Mortification is thence inferred: Col. 3:1, 5, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Mortify your members which are upon earth.' All holiness and godliness of conversation: 2 Peter 3:11, 12, 'Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God;' Titus 2:12, 13, 'Teaching us, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'

3. That he cometh as a saviour; as one—

[1.] That hath done enough to save us from sin and misery, and the flames of hell. Despair crippleth our endeavours. If we could not comfortably hope for heaven, we should never labour for it. But now, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto everlasting life,' Jude 21. Though we be sinners that need a great deal of mercy, we may expect it, and so be encouraged to labour for it. We are engaged by our relation to him.

[2.] He cometh then as a saviour to us; we are his people. There are two relations with respect to the day of judgment—master and husband.

(1.) Master. Good servants wait for their master's coming: Mat. 24:46, 'Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord cometh, he shall find so doing.' Here we have our vales, but then our wages: 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.' Christ doth not come empty-handed to his faithful servants. Well, then, the servant that doth expect his master's coming, will ply his work: 2 Tim. 4:1, 'I charge thee before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his coming and kingdom.'

(2.) As our husband; that is a sweeter relation: 'The bride saith, Come,' Rev. 22:17. We are contracted to Christ now, but then is the day of espousals. A wife that looketh for her husband's coming puts all things in readiness.

#### 4. The looking inferreth a heavenly conversation.

[1.] There is faith in it. Faith, resting upon the promises of God, is assured and fully persuaded of the fruition of glory in God's time. If it be so, whither should our thoughts, words, and actions tend, but to this blessed estate? otherwise our practice will be a manifest contradiction to our faith. You believe there is a God and a life to come, and thereupon promise to renounce the devil, world, and the flesh; but you live as if you were in league with the devil, world, and the flesh, and at defiance with God and heaven; and so have 'a form of godliness,' 2 Tim. 3:5? Do ye believe in Christ to bring you to God and everlasting glory, when your heart is another way, and you live as strangers to the heavenly mind, and have truly an unheavenly conversation. Either you must renounce the faith or your carnal conversation. If you take on the profession of the one to countenance the other, you wrong God and your own souls, and double your sin.

[2.] As there is love in it. If you love Christ, and do not desire to be with him, you go about to reconcile contradictions. As she said to Sampson, Judges 16:15, 'How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?' That is a strange love to be content to be still away from the party loved, and to sit down satisfied with the present happiness.

[3.] Hope. We do place our blessedness in heaven, and yet fly from it as a misery; long and look for that which we have no mind to enjoy. Surely hope withdraweth our minds from, and moderateth our fears and cares about them. Looking, as it noteth a desire or a patient expectation, deadeneth our hearts to the world.

(1.) As a desirous expectation. These vehement desires and groans after an estate of happiness breed sincerity, and endeavours to make it our main scope that we may be approved and accepted of Christ at his coming.

(2.) Patient expectation. This engageth to perseverance, or bringeth forth 'fruit with patience,' Luke 8:15. The reward is yet to come, in the meantime we are pressed with a multitude of temptations, persecutions, remainders of sin. There will a time come when we shall be freed from sin and sorrow for ever. We have God's word to assure us of it; therefore we must content ourselves in God's will. It is his will and pleasure we shall stay a little while longer and suffer more. He might require a far longer time of trial to give us so great a reward, but it is but a short time between our regeneration and full possession.

Use 1. To press you to look for Christ from heaven as a saviour.

To this end—

1. Seek reconciliation, and be at peace with God: 2 Peter 3:14, 'Wherefore, seeing we look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace.' Others tremble at the mention of his coming; the guilt of sin maketh this day terrible to us. When you

have gotten an interest in Christ, and some sure and comfortable hope of absolution, you will cheerfully expect his coming; then he cometh as a saviour: Job 19:25, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.' He cometh as a saviour, not as a severe judge. If you have made your peace with him, there will be a happy meeting at the last day.

2. Be not only reconciled, but renewed and sanctified, as well as justified; for 'The Spirit and the bride saith, Come,' Rev. 22:17. The Holy Ghost, by residing in the hearts of the faithful, breedeth this desire. Nature saith not, Come; this is a disposition above nature. Carnal nature saith, Stay away still. If it might go by voices, whether Christ should come or no, would carnal men give their voice this way? 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' The voice of corrupt nature is, 'Depart,' Job 22:14. They are of the mind of the devil: 'Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come to torment us before the time?' If thieves and malefactors might have the liberty to choose whether there should be an assizes, do you think they would look for, and long for the time of its approach? Till we are renewed we have no inclination to or desire of these things.

3. Labour for some measure of consolation as well as sanctification: Rom. 8:23, 'Ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' The first-fruits are the beginnings of heaven. These being but a little, bear a like proportion with eternal glory, as the first-fruits with the harvest, and do assure us as an earnest of full possession. Well, then, as Daniel looked towards Jerusalem in his prayers, Dan. 6:10, so let us often look to heaven, and remember we have a saviour there, who will one day come from heaven.

Use 2. Prepare for it, make all things ready. There must be strict and heavenly walking, that we may 'have boldness in that day, and may not be ashamed at his coming,' 1 John 2:28. Causes of shame are either nakedness: 2 Cor. 5:3. 'That we may not be found naked,' that

is, destitute of all grace. Folly, or perverse or unadvised choice, when we are blinded by the delusions of the flesh; or when we make a worldly choice, this will appear to be folly and shame: Luke 12:20, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; and then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?' Or hypocrisy, when our cheating and fair pretences shall be discovered: Mat. 22:12, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? and the man was speechless.' Or unfaithfulness, when we have not discharged our trust: Luke 19:22, 'Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.' Or unthankfulness for great benefits, such as we have received by Christ: Rom. 2:4, 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and long-suffering?' Despising not only the mercies of common providence, but the blessings of the covenant: Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?'

But who will have boldness at that day? Such as are united to Christ: Rom. 8:1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.' Such as are by that union assimilated and made like Christ: 1 John 4:17, 'That we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in the world.' If we continue in that blessed and gracious estate faithfully, without defection and apostasy: 1 John 2:28, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' That are not ashamed of Christ's despised ways, but while we are in the world do faithfully promote his kingdom: Luke 9:26, with 21:16, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his glory.' Who persevere in the conflict: 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: 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.'

## SERMON XVII

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.—PHIL. 3:21.

IN the context the apostle showeth the different course of living observed by the true and false christians, 'They mind earthly things,' but 'Our conversation is in heaven.'

Now he giveth two reasons of the heavenly life—

1. One is taken from their expectation of Christ's coming.
2. What he will do at his coming to translate us into the heavenly city and to fit us for it, 'He shall change our vile bodies.'

In which words observe two things—

[1.] The glory which Christ will put upon his saints at his coming, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.'

[2.] The ground of hope, which may facilitate the belief of this blessed condition, 'According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.'

In the first branch observe—

1. The body is spoken of.
2. The body is represented under its double estate and condition.

[1.] What it is now, 'A vile body.'

[2.] What it will be then; it shall be 'fashioned like unto his glorious body.'

3. The nature of this change; it is not substantial, but accidental, imported in the word 'transform,' or fashion; it shall be altered, not

in substance, but in fashion and qualities; we shall have a body still, an organised body with different members; not only a glorious body, but the same body.

1. The body is spoken of—

[1.] Because the soul is made happy and perfect before: Heb. 12:23, 'To the spirits of just men made perfect.'

[2.] Because the great temptation to draw us off from the heavenly life is the love of the body and the interests of the bodily life; either indulgence to things pleasing to the body, or fear of troubles and persecutions. Indulgence to things pleasing; thence we have that caveat, Rom. 13:14, 'Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' Nothing doth more extinguish all hopes and apprehensions of the life to come than carnal and sensual pleasures. Therefore, that we might not indulge ourselves in a liberty of enjoying every tempting pleasure of this mortal life, he showeth us what care Christ will take of the body, what glory he will put upon the body. Fear of troubles and persecutions, that may infringe the happiness and interest of the bodily life: Luke 12:4, 5, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say, Fear him.'

[3.] He speaks rather of the happiness of the body, because this hindereth our glory; for there is no place for our earthly and corruptible bodies in the heavenly city: 1 Cor. 15:50, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.' Flesh and blood, corruptible and earthly as now it is, cannot enter into heaven; therefore, to remove this doubt or fear, he showeth that Christ shall change this vile body.

2. The body is represented under its double estate, what it is now, and what it will be then. Now its present condition, it is a 'vile body.' This is mentioned to show the greatness of the change. However it is



now for the present, it shall be in a blessed and glorious estate hereafter; as to its future estate, it shall be a glorious body. Mark the two opposite terms; now it is a body of vileness, then of glory; these are the two opposite states of the body.

3. The nature of the change; it is not a change of the substance, it is a body still; but in quality, it is now made like the body of his glory, the body which Christ had after the resurrection, and now hath in heaven, the body of his glory.

Secondly, The ground of hope from the power of Christ, 'According to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.' This is added lest any should think this change impossible; it is a thing incredible to flesh and blood. They mocked when he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection, Acts 17:32. Of all articles of the christian faith, *durius creditur*, saith Tertullian, it is most difficultly believed. Therefore the apostle referreth us to the power of God. The power of God is that which faith pitcheth on in the general: Rom. 4:21, 'Being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was also able to perform.' And in particular, faith is helped and relieved by the consideration of God's power in the doctrine of the resurrection: Mat. 22:29, 'Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.' And the power exercised herein also is produced to warrant and encourage faith in other difficulties. He believed even God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Well, then, in this God will show his almighty power, by which he is able to do what he pleaseth; and creatures must not by their vain disputes set limits and bounds to the creator's power.

Doct. That Jesus Christ at his coming will so change these vile bodies of ours that they shall become glorious bodies, and fit to be placed in the heavenly city.

In discussing this point—

1. I shall consider the state of the body as it is now.

2. What our bodies shall be at Christ's coming.

3. I shall prove that these same vile bodies which we now carry about do then become glorious bodies.

4. What grounds there are to facilitate our hopes and expectations.

I. What the body is now; he calleth it a 'vile body;' this must be a little explained.

1. It is vile in respect of its original; it was made out of the dust of the ground: Gen. 3:19, 'Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return.' That curious frame which we see and admire so much, it is but dust well coloured and moulded up into a comely shape. The matter of which it was made was the dust of the earth. All elements meet in mixed bodies, yet in gross and heavy bodies, such as man's is, earth is predominant. This showeth the wisdom and power of God at first, that he could make such a curious frame of dust. We read in the plagues of Egypt, that the magicians could not bring forth lice out of the dust of the ground, Exod. 8:17–19; yet God raised from thence such a noble creature as man is. But it doth much more set forth the wisdom, and goodness, and power of God, that this vile body shall at length become a glorious body, and these corruptible and earthly bodies shall be made spiritual and heavenly, and a clod of earth shall shine like the sun for brightness.

2. As to its constitution, when it is at the best it is but a frail tabernacle, and liable to death and corruption. Our 'foundation is in the dust, and we are crushed before the moth,' Job 4:19. The matter that we are made of is not brass, or iron, or stone, or stiff clay, but dust, which hath no coherence or consistence, but is easily dissipated and scattered with every puff of wind; so is our dusty tabernacle with every blast of God's displeasure: Isa. 40:24, 'He shall blow upon them, and they shall wither.' We are poor, weak, and mutable creatures, that easily fail and disappear.

3. It is a vile body in regard of sustentation and support. He bringeth food for them out of the earth: Ps. 104:14, 'He bringeth forth grass for the cattle, and green herbs for the service of man.' Things bred there and nourished there feed us. As the body is framed out of the dust of the earth, so from the earth it is supported. Meat and drink, and such kind of accommodations, continue and repair this house from day to day; we are forced to shoar up a ruinous tabernacle, which is ready continually to drop down upon our heads.

4. It is a vile body in regard of the many miseries to which it is obnoxious: Job 14:1, 'Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.' Life is but short, but long enough to lay us open to many calamities. There are some common miseries which are incident to all mankind during the bodily estate, but the godly are often exposed to a vilified, persecuted, and calamitous estate: John 15:19, 'Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'

5. It is a vile body, because it is subject to many diseases, aches, and pains. Job and Lazarus had their sores; all have their infirmities to keep them humble. Paul's thorn in the flesh: 2 Cor. 12:7, 9, 'And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. Therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.'

6. It is a vile body, because it is not only the soul of diseases, but often made the instrument of sin. We are bidden to keep our 'vessel in sanctification and honour,' 1 Thes. 4:4, meaning our body; but how many use it only for a channel for lusts to run in, or a strainer for meats and drinks to pass through, oppress nature, and make the body more vile by their brutish lusts and affections?

7. It is vile in death. The body that was dust in its composition will shortly be dust in its dissolution: Eccles. 12:7, 'Then shall the dust

return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return to God that gave it;' that is, be resolved into the matter of which it was once made. It is said of a prince, Ps. 146:4, 'His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.' The greatest potentates in the world are of kin to the dust of the ground, and at length are gathered to the earth from whence they had their beginning.

8. More vile after death. When the soul, the inhabitant, is gone, when it becometh a breathless trunk, it must be removed out of sight; it must be buried in some little pit and hole of the earth, where it may be hidden, to keep others from being offended or infected with its rottenness, stench, and putrefaction: 'That I may bury my dead out of my sight,' saith Abraham concerning his beloved Sarah, Gen. 23:4. The presence of our bodies then is noisome to our dearest friends that most loved us.

This should be often thought of by us—

[1.] To humble us who are but dust and ashes as to our composition, constitution, and dissolution: Gen. 18:27, 'Who am I, that am but dust and ashes, that I should speak unto the Lord?' 'All the nations are but as the dust of the balance unto God,' Isa. 40:15. What should we be proud of? should we glory in the nobility of our birth? We are made out of the dust of the earth as the worms are; yea, the worms are of the elder house, for every creeping thing was made before man. Of our beauty and strength? Prov. 31:30, 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain.' That part we glory in is but dust, and will be dust. Or in pomp of living? 'High and low shall lie down in the dust alike, and the worms shall cover them,' Job 21:26. All of us have bodies subject to the necessities of nature, to the infirmities of nature, to the decays of nature, to the diseases of nature, which will at length totally prevail over us.

[2.] If our bodies are vile bodies, let us not seek the present good of the body as our chief happiness. If anything keep us from heaven, it is the love of the body, which should rather invite us thither, for

hereafter our bodies shall be in their best estate. But alas! most men spend their time in caring for the body, to gratify it with daintiness in feeding, costliness in clothing; all the business of their life is to cherish, deck, and adorn proud rottenness. Now in a body over-cared for usually there dwelleth a neglected soul. This is to adorn the house and slight the inhabitant, to embroider the sheath and let the sword rust, to pamper the mortal body and quite neglect the immortal spirit.

[3.] To comfort those that are decaying more and more as to the bodily life, who are subject to continual pains and diseases, or, as Gaius, have a healthy soul in a sick and crazy body, 3 John 2. Why, here it will be a vile body; it cannot be helped. Beauty will be wrinkled with age, and strength fail and be invaded by diseases. The eternal spring and vigour of youth we look for in the other world.

II. The future condition of our bodies: 'We shall have glorious bodies, like unto his glorious body.' Here let us a little consider what glory Christ will put upon the body, and how Christ will qualify it and fit it for eternal life.

1. It shall be immortal and incorruptible: 1 Cor. 15:42, 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.' Christ will adorn them with immortality and impassibility, that we never may decay, nor be liable to sickness, weakness, and troubles, nor any defects, but endowed with all the perfections a body is capable of.

2. For clarity and brightness it shall be like Christ's glorious body. Therefore it is said, 1 Cor. 15:43, 'It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.' Christ's body shines with light and brightness, a glimpse whereof we had in the transfiguration: Mat. 17:3, 'And he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light;' and Christ in Rev. 1 is represented as the sun in its full strength. His body is wondrous, glorious, now in heaven. When he appeared to Paul, he could not endure the light that

shined to him, Acts 9. Oh, what a glorious time will it be when the body of Christ shall appear, and all the saints with him in glory!

3. It shall be a spiritual body: 1 Cor. 15:44, 'It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.' Now how is it a spiritual body?

[1.] The least in it is that it shall be subject to the spirit. As the soul while it is subject to the flesh is called carnal, so the body while subject to the spirit is termed spiritual; it is the full consummation of the new birth: John 3:6, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit! All is spirit then without any mixture of the rebelling flesh. Certainly the infusion of the life of grace is called 'the first resurrection,' as it carrieth a conformity to this estate.

[2.] It standeth in no need of natural supports; there is no food, raiment, marrying, or giving in marriage: Mat. 22:30, 'But they are as the angels of God in heaven.' There they live not as husbands and wives, but as the pure spiritual angels; we shall not stand in need of meat, drink, and sleep, as now we do. Now what a blessed thing is it to have either privilege, to have bodies wholly obedient to the spirit, and bodies that are not subjected to present necessities!

III. That these same vile bodies shall be changed into glorious bodies.

1. I prove it from the nature of the resurrection. It will not be a resurrection unless that which fell rise again, and that which was dead be revived. Therefore the same bodies which were buried in the grave shall be raised up. If the same body were joined to another soul, or the same soul united to another body, it would not be the resurrection of the same man. Neither at the latter day do we expect a new creation, but a restitution; not a production of a new body, but the raising of that which we had before. These houses of clay, these habitations of flesh, must again receive their old inhabitant. Nothing dieth but the body, and when we died we died in no other body but

our own, and therefore we cannot be said to revive and rise again, but in our own flesh, and in our own body.

2. I prove it from the testimony of scripture, which is full and pregnant to the purpose: John 5:28, 29, 'Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.' Who shall come forth? They who are in the graves; that is, men with respect to their bodies, the same bodies wherein they lived on earth, and which were laid in the grave. So again, Job 19:26, 27, 'And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.' 'In flesh' showeth the reality, 'my flesh' showeth the identity and propriety; it is not a stranger's eye, another eye, but 'these eyes' shall see him: Rom. 8:11, 'He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' So that it is this mortal body which is quickened, and which at the resurrection becometh spiritual and incorruptible. Once more, 1 Cor. 15:53, 'For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.' Not that another body shall succeed in place of this, but this very body shall be changed; not in substance, but qualities. So here in the text, 'Who shall change our vile bodies;' not a body which was never ours, nor never vile, but the same body that was once ours, and was once vile. Again, Rev. 20:13, 'And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.' But if the same bodies did not rise, neither the sea nor the grave would give up their dead. That shall rise again which the grave giveth up, which the sea giveth up; therefore the same body which was buried shall be revived. Thus the scripture is full in the proof of it, as of the resurrection, so of the resurrection of the same numerical body.

3. From the final cause of the resurrection, which is that every one may be judged, and receive according to the things done in the body:

2 Cor. 5:10, '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.' The things were done in the body, and therefore not only the soul but the body must be punished and rewarded. As Tertullian pleadeth, Should Marcion be raised up for Valentinus, and the peccancy of one body be punished in another that never offended?

4. From the pattern of Christ; such a body as Christ had in the resurrection and ascension, such bodies shall we have: 'For our vile body shall be made like his glorious body;' and he rose as 'the first-fruits of them that slept,' as the representative head, 1 Cor. 15:20; 'And he that raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus,' 2 Cor. 4:14. Now the body in which Christ rose was the same body which was assumed of the virgin, which was nailed to the cross, laid in the grave; and with the same body he entered into heaven, and there remaineth the same according to substance and lineaments that it was here upon earth, only changed in qualities. So our bodies remain the same in substance, only freed from the quality of its abasements, and endowed with glorious qualities fit for the heavenly estate; and look, as the decays and reparations of our bodies do not make them cease to be the same bodies we bring with us into the world, so neither the change they undergo by death, nor the glorious qualities wherewith they are endowed when raised again, do make them other bodies for substance than now they are.

IV. What grounds there are to facilitate our belief and hope of the resurrection.

1. It is a work of omnipotency. We are apt to say, How can it be that when our bodies are turned into dust, and that dust mingled with other dust, and hath undergone many transmutations, that every one should have his own body and flesh again? Why, consider the infinite and absolute power of God, and this will make it more reconcilable to your thoughts, and this hard point will be of easier digestion to your faith. To an infinite power there is no difficulty at all. The text saith,



'According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.' How much can God's power outwork our thoughts? For he were not infinite if he might be comprehended. We are no fit judges of the extent of his power. Many things are marvellous in our eyes which are not so to God, Zech. 8:6. Therefore we must not confine God to the limits of created beings, or our finite understandings. Alas! our cockleshell cannot empty an ocean; we do no more know what God can do than a worm knoweth a man. He that made the world out of nothing, cannot he raise the dead? He that made such multitudes of creatures out of the dark chaos, hath he forgotten what is become of our dust? That Almighty, he that gave life and being to that which before was not, cannot he raise the dead? He that turned Moses's rod into a serpent, and from a serpent into a rod again, cannot he raise us out of the dust into men, and turn us from men into dust, and from the same dust raise us up into the same men and women again?

2. We have relief from the justice of God. All nations will grant that God is, and that he is a rewarder of good and bad. Now in this life he doth not dispense these rewards. Many instruments of public good are made a sacrifice to public hatred, and wicked men have the world at will; therefore there is a judgment when this life is ended; and if there be a judgment, men must be capable to receive rewards and punishments. You will say, So they are, by having an immortal soul. Ay! but the soul is not all of man; the body is a part, it hath had its share in the work, and therefore it is most equal to conceive it shall have its share in the reward and punishment. It is the body which is gratified by the pleasures of sin for a season, the body which hath endured the pain and trouble of faithful obedience to Christ; and therefore there shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust, that men may receive according to what they have done in the body. God made the whole man, and therefore glorifieth and punisheth the whole man. The apostle urgeth this to the godly: 1 Cor. 15:29, 'Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead rise not at all, why then are they baptized for the dead?'

3. God's unchangeable covenant-love, which inclineth him to seek after their dust after it hath been so long buried in oblivion. God hath taken a believer into covenant with himself, body and soul; therefore Christ proveth the resurrection from God's covenant-title: Mat. 22:31, 32, 'But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' To be a God to any is to be a benefactor: Gen. 9:26, 'And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.' Not blessed be Shem, but blessed be 'the Lord God of Shem.' To be a benefactor belongs to an infinite eternal power; if he had not eternal glory to bestow upon us, he would not justify his covenant-title: Heb. 11:16, 'Wherefore he is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.' Now God is a benefactor not to one part only, but to their whole persons. Their bodies had the mark of his covenant upon them, their dust is in covenant with him; and where-ever it is disposed, he will look after it; their death and rotting in the grave doth not make void his interest, nor cause his care and affection towards them to cease.

4. The redemption of Christ, which extendeth to the bodies of saints, as often interpreted in scripture, as where Christ speaketh of his Father's charge; this was a special article in the eternal covenant: John 6:39, 'And this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day;' not so much as a leg, nor a piece of an ear. Christ hath engaged himself to this; he is the guardian of the grave; as Rizpah kept the bodies of Saul's sons, 2 Sam. 21:10. Christ hath the keys of death and hell; Christ hath the charge of the elect to the very day of the resurrection, that he may give a good account of them when all perils and hazards are over, and may not lose so much as their dust, but gather it up again. Where the intention of his death is spoken of: 1 Thes. 5:10, 'Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him;' that is, whether dead or alive, for they that are said to be dead in the Lord, are said to be fallen asleep. Whether we live here or die, we should live a spiritual

life here and an eternal life in glory hereafter. So where the obligation is urged: 1 Cor. 6:20, 'For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' There would be no consequence if Christ had not purchased the body as well as the soul; and Christ will not lose the least of his purchase. If he exact duty from the body, you may expect glory for the body. So redemption is particularly applied to the body: Rom. 8:23, 'Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.' The body is bought with the blood of Christ.

#### 5. The honour which is put upon the bodies of the saints.

[1.] They are members of Christ: 1 Cor. 6:15, 'Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.' The members of Christ shall not remain in death, but certainly be raised up again. When a godly man dieth, the union between soul and body is dissolved, but not the union between him and Christ. As Christ's own natural body in the grave was not separated from his person, and the hypostatical union was not dissolved. It was the Lord of glory that was crucified, and the Lord of glory who was laid in the grave; so the mystical union is not dissolved between Christ and his people, who are his mystical body, when they are dead; as some read the place, Isa. 26:19, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.' They are Christ's body though dead in the grave.

[2.] They are temples of the Holy Ghost; therefore if thy body be destroyed, it shall be built up again: 1 Cor. 6:19, 'Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost?' As Christ redeemed not the soul only, but the whole man, so the Spirit in Christ's name taketh possession both of body and soul. The body is cleansed and sanctified by the Spirit, as well as the soul, and therefore it is quickened by the Spirit: Rom. 8:11, 'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that

dwelleth in you.' The Holy Ghost will not leave his mansion or dwelling-place. The dust of believers belongeth to him, who were once his temple; so it is a pledge of the resurrection.

Use 1. Is exhortation to all holy conversation and godliness; and that you may not carry it beyond the matter in hand—

1. Do not debase the body by making it an instrument of sin. It is sacrilege to profane and prostitute that which is holy to a common use. As Belshazzar bid defiance to the God of heaven by quaffing and carousing in the cups of the temple, so do you pollute that which is holy if you defile your bodies by uncleanness and intemperance, which are members of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, in covenant with God, and in time to be glorified for ever. When you make your members weapons of unrighteousness, Rom. 6:13, it is contrary to your covenant dedication, to the honour God putteth, and meaneth further to put upon the body. Do but consider, when lust hath spent our strength, and carnal projects and practices have wasted our spirits, how can we look for the recompense of a glorious reward, a blessed resurrection? Do these believe such an estate that put the body to so vile an use? What! with these eyes to see the Redeemer, which are windows and inlets to sin? Think you that God will put honour upon that body which they dishonour so much? Sure they think their bodies shall never rise again, that care not to what uncleanness they do abuse them.

2. Do not offend God to gratify the body or preserve any bodily interest. Love to the body and the bodily estate proves often an occasion of sinning. Men first mistake self, and then misplace it; they mistake self, thinking themselves more concerned as a body than a soul; yea, farther, prefer the conveniencies of the body before the body itself; and they misplace self when they value these things above the conscience of their duty to God. To please the body they forfeit the comfort and happiness of the soul, as when to gratify a pleasing lust they run the hazard of eternal torments, Mat. 5:29, 30. Or to save the body, when as we should suffer the loss of life, or limb,

or an estate for a good conscience. Oh, consider, whatever your loss be in this kind, it will be repaired. He that healed Malchus's ear, he can restore yourselves to yourselves again, though for his sake you suffer bodily tortures. Surely a man that believes the resurrection of the body should not fear though exposed to fight with beasts at Ephesus, 1 Cor. 15:32, though ready to be torn in pieces by an enraged multitude: Heb. 11:35, 'And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.' To escape upon God's terms, they rejected the deliverance offered by the enemies, and believed the resurrection offered by God; they might have come off body-whole, but not heart-whole. In the intermission of their tortures, being advised to yield, they did believe there was a resurrection to an immortal glorious blessed life, which would recompense their pains with eternal pleasures. Nay, if the trial should not be so high; if for a more plentiful life, and to live at large, men should dispense with a principle of conscience. This should not be; if you love your bodies, your bodies shall be well enough; if you can trust the fidelity of Christ, never leave his service, nor abate anything of your strictness, to please the flesh.'

3. Do not spare the body to do God service. A believer, if he look backward or forward, upward or downward, seeth no reason to spare the body. Backward, what pains did Christ endure in his body? his face spit upon, his hands and feet nailed to the cross, his head crowned with thorns; in his lifetime neglected: 'he bore our sins in his body on the tree;' and shall we be so tender and delicate of our bodies as not to endure a little pains for God's sake? Forward: 2 Cor. 5:1, 'For we know 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 poor house of clay, though that be crumbled into dust, it is better to be worn out with labour than eaten out with rust: Acts 26:7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' At the day of judgment it will be no grief of heart that we have lived faithfully, painfully, in the exercise of godliness, in fasting and praying, and labouring for God; though it have deprived your bodies of some

pleasures which others take, that live a life of pomp and ease, and in carnal delights; when they are full of horror and amazement, you will have your reward. These eyes which are often lifted up in prayer shall see your Redeemer; those knees which are made hard like a camel's hoof by your daily addresses to God shall be softened; those spirits which are wasted in godly exercises shall amply be repaired. Upward, I hope one day my body shall be in heaven, and there is the place of my rest: Rev. 14:13, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours.' The soul will remember the body, as Pharaoh's butler did Joseph: I had strength, and was willing to spend it for God. Downward: 'Fear him that is able to cast both body and soul into hell,' Mat. 10:28. There are pains inflicted immediately on the body; how much better is it to take a little pains now!

Use 2. Is to put us upon self-reflection. How shall we know that this will be our condition, that our bodies shall be raised up to the fellowship of this glory?

1. If we be partakers of the first resurrection. There is the resurrection of the soul from the power of sin, and the resurrection of the body from the power of death. They that have part in the first resurrection, over those 'the second death hath no power,' Rev. 20:6. The resurrection to the life of holiness and the resurrection to the life of glory have an intimate connection the one with the other; and the life of grace is put as the remedy against our death by sin: Rom. 3:10, 'The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.' The sting and hurt of death is taken away when, upon account of Christ's righteousness, we are made partakers of his Spirit. Our conversation is one sort of quickening and resurrection, and maketh way for the other, the quickening and raising of our bodies. Therefore, is the life of grace begun? is the body and soul made a temple of the Holy Ghost, the place where he manifesteth his power and presence? Rom. 8:11, 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth

in you.' He that hath once honoured the body by his presence will not suffer corruption always to remain upon it.

2. How doth this life discover itself? Are you like Christ? 1 John 4:17. If you are such in the world as he was in the world. The change of a christian beginneth in his soul, first changed there into the image and likeness of Christ, and then his body is made like unto his glorious body. Christ beginneth with the soul, but he endeth with the body. Therefore that a christian should look after, to be like Christ in holiness, and then he will be like him in glory, to be such as he was, and to walk as he walked, to be humble, useful, and fruitful, and then God will take care for other things which belong to our happiness. Is our soul ennobled with his image? do we resemble Christ here more and more?

3. You may know that your bodies shall be raised to the fellowship of this glory by the use you put your bodies unto. If we pamper the body, altogether provide for the satisfying its lust, you choose your heaven here, and slight the happiness which God hath intended for it in another world. Some proclaim their atheism, 'Let us eat and drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we shall die.' But you secretly cherish it while you serve your lusts in a more cleanly manner, withhold your hearts from nothing that can satisfy and please your lusts. Will you know whither you shall go, to heaven or hell? Rom. 8:13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;' and Gal. 6:8, 'He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' Do you gratify or crucify the flesh? Flesh-pleasers are flesh-destroyers. For the present you dishonour the body, which should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, and which one day he will make so glorious; and for the future you destroy the happiness of the body. Well, then, if for love to your body you follow only its present lusts, and care only for the things of the body, you act the greatest enmity and hostility against your own bodies that is imaginable; for fleshly lusts do not only war

against the soul, but the body also, and destroy that part which they seem to gratify.

4. If you look, and long, and prepare for a better estate: 2 Cor. 5:1, 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.' There will be an earnest waiting for this glory. Certainly God will never bestow it upon us against our wills, nor without our consent; there must be an earnest desire and a serious preparation. Those that cannot endure to hear of a remove would be always here; they are satisfied with what is now, and cannot part with it for what is to come. We groan chiefly for the intimate presence of our souls with Christ; and some unwillingness ariseth because we are loath to part with the body; but if we are sure that in due time we shall have the society of the body in glory, why should we hang back? These beloved friends, which part with so much pain and grief, shall meet together again with pleasure and joy; therefore we should overcome our natural inclinations to the present life.

## **SERMON XVIII**

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—PHIL. 1:21.

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 smoothby, 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. 2:20, '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 15:8. 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. 14:7–9, '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. 1:2, '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 hum. 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 agency, must have an end, and he could have no end but himself, his service, the declaring of his own glory: Prov. 16:4, '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. 11:36, '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. 1:26; and the psalmist noteth it, Ps. 8:6, '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. 1:10, '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 17:28, 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being;' Heb. 1:3, '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. 9:6, '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. 6:20, '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. 52:3, '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. 5:9; 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 1:18, 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. 21:21. 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 2:19, 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage;' Rom. 7:14, 'Sold under sin.' We are Christ's by conquest: Col. 1:13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.' By strong hand: Luke 11:21, 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. 14, 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. 6:15, '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,' Caut. 2:16. 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. 8:5, 'But first gave their ownelves to the Lord;' 2 Chron. 30:8, '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. 1:23, πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρεῖττον, '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. 119:17, '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 20:24, '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. 118:17, '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. 1:11, 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 your consent to God's terms, this is to believe in him. Take heed you do not make light of Christ, as those did, Mat. 22:5, 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. 24:50, '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. 3:12, '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. 7:25, 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. 12:1, '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. 5:8, '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 you? 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. 6:15, '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. 14:20. And it is known by contrivances, how you shall honour Christ by your place, your relations: Neh. 1:11, '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. 7:2, '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. 3:3, 'They walk as men.' We have higher advantages, and hopes, and obligations upon ourselves than others have. Wherein do you differ? Mat. 5:46, '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 2:12, 'Having your conversation honest among the gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, 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. 3:21, '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 16:14, '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 5:41, 'And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake,' ὅτι κατηξιώθησαν ἀτιμασθῆναι; 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. 1:29.

### Motives.

1. Consider you are not your own, but under another lord. All disorder cometh from looking upon ourselves as our own men: Jer. 2:31, 'We are lords, and will not come at thee;' Ps. 12:4, '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 3:21, '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. 51:6, 'For this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto thee a recompense;' Luke 19:23, '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 17:9, 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. 19:27, 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 παλιγγενεσία, '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 XIX

To die is gain.—PHIL. 1:21.

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 21:19, '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. 3:22. 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. 7:1, '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. 51:5, '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. 4:13, 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 5:7. 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 3:13, '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. 14:13, '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. 2:7. 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 1:5. 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. 11:7, '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. 12:9. And by its disposal; when the body returneth to dust, the soul returneth to God.



The saints resign it: Acts 7:59, '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. 104:14, '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 32:7. 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. 4:16, '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. 1:5, '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. 6:25, but he never commanded us to take no thought for the soul, rather the contrary: Deut. 4:9, '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. 12:2, '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. 1:23, '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. 33:15. 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. 5:1, 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 23:43, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' saith Christ to the good thief. By paradise is meant heaven. See 2 Cor. 12:4. 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 3:13, '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 16:22, '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 3:19; good men to 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. 12:23. 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. 14:13, '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 14:1, '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. 21:21. 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 damp of heart, conflicts with Satan! But there we enter into our master's joy, Mat. 25:21. 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. 15:26. 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. 5:27, '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. 1:22, 'To present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable, in his sight.' Alas! what a trouble have we with sin! Rom. 7:24, '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. 13:12, '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 3:2, '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. 3:18, '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 3:2, '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. 8:18, '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. 12:22, 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. 8:11, '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. 12:4, 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. 23, 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 9:31, '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. 22:30, '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. 2:23, '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. 17:3. 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 16, 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. 2:19, '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 16:9, '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. 13:41. 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. 26:29.

3. Communion with God. Then 'we shall ever be with the Lord,' 1 Thes. 4:17. 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. 5:27.

5. Comforts of this world, they are of use in our passage, and we must possess as if we possessed not, 1 Cor. 7:31; 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. 6:8, '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 12:16, '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 11:26, '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. 15:56, '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.

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