

Besides all that hath been said, consider these two things. 1. You that sin presumptuously,—that know to do good and do it not,—that know what is evil, yet will not forbear,—you cannot sin so cheap as others; though sin will cost every one dear, yet it will cost you dearer. You go directly against conscience; and if there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, you shall be sure to be punished. 2. You who sin presumptuously, cannot take so much pleasure in your sin as another may have. One whose conscience is less enlightened, though his sin will be bitter to him afterwards, yet at present he may roll it as honey under his tongue, and find pleasure in it: but you that sin against your knowledge, you cannot have so much pleasure in sin as he, for conscience will put forth a sting, and all the threatenings of the word will set themselves in battle array against you, so that you can have no quiet. And that trouble thou feelest now in thy conscience, is but the beginning of sorrow.

QUEST. *What shall we do, that we may not sin presumptuously against conscience?*

Ans. 1. Take heed of little sins; though—to speak properly—there are no such things as little sins, no little treason, but comparatively, one sin may be lesser than another. Take heed of little sins. The frequent committing of lesser sins, will prepare for greater. A lesser distemper of the body,

if it be let alone, prepares for a greater distemper; being unjust in a little, prepares for being unjust in much, Luke xvi. 10. Such as were at first more modest, yet by accustoming themselves to lesser sins, by degrees their sins have grown up to a greater height; jail sins have begun at little sins.

A. 2. If you would not sin presumptuously, viz. Knowingly and wilfully, then reverence the dictates of conscience; get conscience well-informed by the word, as you set your watch by the sun, and then be ruled by it; do nothing against conscience. If conscience saith do such a thing, though never so unpleasing, set upon the duty. When conscience saith, Take heed of such a thing? come not near the forbidden fruit. Conscience is God's deputy or proxy in the soul; the voice of conscience is the voice of God; do not trifle with checks of conscience, lest God suffer thee to harden in sin, and by degrees come to presumptuous sin.

A. 3. Labour to have your knowledge sanctified. Men sin against their knowledge, because their knowledge is not sanctified. Sanctified knowledge works upon the soul; it inclines us to do good; it makes us flee from sin; sanctified knowledge is like a breastplate, which keeps the arrow of presumptuous sin from entering.

SERMON VI.

COL. iii. 11. "*But Christ is all in all.*"

THE philosopher saith every science takes its dignity from the object; the more noble the object, the more rare the knowledge. Hence it is, that Jesus Christ being the most sublime and glorious object, that knowledge which leads us to Christ must needs be most excellent; it is called "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ," Phil. iii. 8. So sweet is this knowledge, that St. Paul, "determined to know nothing but Christ," 1 Cor. ii. 2. And indeed what needed he to know more? for "Christ is all in all." In the text there is a negation and an assumption: something

the apostle sets down privatively, and something positively.

1st, Privatively. St. Paul tells the Colossians what will not avail them, "neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth," &c. Circumcision was a great privilege; it was a badge and cognizance to distinguish the people of God from those who were *exteri* and foreign; it was a pail between the garden enclosed, and the common. The people of circumcision were a people of God's circumspection,—they were under his eye, and his wing,—they were his household family; rather than they should

want, God would make the heavens a granary, and rain down manna upon them,—he would set the rock abroach, and make it a lively spring. How glorious was circumcision! Rom. ix. 4, 5. What rich jewels hung upon Israel's crown! But in matters of salvation, all this was nothing, "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision," &c. From whence we may observe, that external privileges commend no man to God; whether wise, or rich, or noble, this doth not set us off in God's eye, 1 Cor. i. 26. God sees not as man sees. We are taken with beauty and parts,—these things avail not with God; God lays his left hand upon these, as Jacob did upon Manasseh, Gen. xlviii. 14. God often passeth by those who cast a greater splendour and lustre in the world, and looks upon them of an inferior alloy; the reason is, "that no flesh should glory in his presence," 1 Cor. i. 29. If God should graft his grace only upon wisdom and parts, some would be ready to say, my wisdom, or my eloquence, or my nobility hath saved me; therefore "not many wise, not many noble are called." God will have no priding or vaunting in the creature.

Use. Rest not in outward privileges or excellencies,—these are no stocks to graft the hopes of salvation upon,—many of Christ's kindred went to hell. Paul is called "the servant of the Lord," Rom. i. 1. And James is called "the brother of the Lord," Gal. i. 19. It is better to be the servant of the Lord, than the brother of the Lord. The virgin Mary was saved, not as she was the mother of Christ, but as she was the daughter of faith; it is grace, not blood gives the precedency; an heart that hath Christ formed in it, is God's delight, and this brings me to the next.

2d, The apostle sets down something positively; but "Christ is all in all;" in which words there is,

1. The subject, Christ. His name is sweet, it is "as ointment poured forth," Cant. i. 3. It was Job's wish, "O that my words were now written! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" Job xix. 23, 24. And it is my wish, O that this name—this sweet name—of Christ, were now written,—that it were graven with the pen of the Holy

Ghost in our hearts for ever. The name of Christ hath in it, saith Chrysostom, a thousand treasuries of joy.

2. The predicate, "all in all." Christ is all fulness,—all sweetness,—he is all that is imaginable,—all that is desirable; he who hath Christ, can have no more, for "Christ is all."

The proposition out of the words, is, that Jesus Christ is the quintessence of all good things, "he is all."

1. Sometimes faith is said to be all, Gal. v. 6. Nothing availeth but faith; faith is all, as it is an instrument to lay hold on Christ, whereby we are saved; as a man is saved by catching hold on a bough.

2. Sometimes the new creature is said to be all, Gal. vi. 15. Nothing availeth "but a new creature;" the new creature is all, as it qualifies and fits for glory; "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. It is a saying of Chrysostom, at the day of judgment God will ask that question, as our Saviour did, Mat. xxii. 20., "Whose is this image and superscription." So will God say, Whose image is this? If thou canst not shew him his image consisting in holiness, he will reject thee; thus the new creature is all.

3. Here in the text Christ is said to be all; but in what sense is Christ all? (1.) Christ is all by way of eminency; all good things are eminently to be found in him, as the sun doth virtually contain in it the light of the lesser stars. (2.) Christ is all, by way of derivation; all good things are transmitted and conveyed to us through Christ; as your rich commodities, jewels and spices come by sea, so all heavenly blessings sail to us through the red sea of Christ's blood, Rom. xi. 36., "Through him and to him are all things." Christ is that spiritual pipe, through which the golden oil of mercy empties itself into the soul. Christ must needs be all, for "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," Col. ii. 9. He hath a partnership with God the Father, John xvi. 15., "All things that the Father hath are mine;" so that there is enough in him to scatter all our fears,—to remove all our burdens,—to supply all our wants; there can be no defect in that which is infinite.

Use 1st, Information. And it hath six branches. *1st,* It shows us the glorious fulness of Jesus Christ; "he is all in all." Christ is a panoply, a magazine and storehouse of all spiritual riches; you may go with the bee from flower to flower, and suck here and there a little sweetness, but you will never have enough till you come to Christ, for he is "all in all."

Now in particular, Christ is all in six respects: (1.) Christ is all in regard of righteousness. 1 Cor. i. 30., "He is made to us righteousness." The robe of innocence, like the vail of the temple, is rent asunder, ours is a ragged righteousness. Isa. lxiv. 6., "Our righteousness is as filthy rags." As under rags the naked body is seen; so under the rags of our righteousness, the body of death is seen; we can defile our duties, but they cannot justify us; but Christ is all in regard of righteousness. Rom. x. 4., "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth:" that is, through Christ we are as righteous as if we had satisfied the law in our own persons. Jacob got the blessing in the garment of his elder brother: so in the garment of Christ our elder brother, we obtain the blessing; Christ's righteousness is a coat woven without seam. "We are made the righteousness of God in him." (2.) Christ is all in regard of sanctification. 1 Cor. i. 30., "He is made to us sanctification." Sanctification is the spiritual enamel and embroidery of the soul; it is nothing else but God's putting upon us the jewels of holiness,—the angels glory by it,—we are made as the king's daughter, "all glorious within," Ps. xlv. 13. This doth tune and prepare the soul for heaven; it turns iron into gold; it makes the heart which was Satan's picture, Christ's epistle. The virgins, Esth. ii. 12., had their 'days of purification;' they were first to be perfumed and anointed, and then they were to stand before the king; we must have the anointing of God, 1 John ii. 27., and be perfumed with the graces of the Spirit, those sweet odours; and then we shall stand before the King of heaven. There must be first our days of purification before our days of glorification. What a blessed work is this! a soul beautified and adorned with

grace, is like the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. O what a metamorphose is there! I may allude to that Cant. iii. 6. So, who is this that comes out of the wilderness of sin, perfumed with all the graces of the Spirit? Holiness is the signature and engraving of God upon the soul. But whence is this? Christ is all; he is made to us sanctification; he it is that sends his Spirit into our hearts to be a refiner's fire, to burn up our dross, and make our graces sparkle like gold in the furnace; Christ ariseth upon the soul "with healing in his wings," Mal. iv. 2. He heals the understanding, and saith, "let there be light;" he heals the heart by dissolving the stone in his blood; he heals the will, by filing off its rebellion. Thus he is all in regard of sanctification. (3.) Christ is all in regard of divine acceptance. Eph. i. 6. He hath made us favourites—so Chrysostom and Theophylact render it; through Christ God is propitious to us, and takes all we do in good part. A wicked man being out of Christ, is out of favour; as his ploughing is sin, Prov. xxi. 4., so his praying is sin, Prov. xv. 8. God will not come near him, his breath is infectious; God will hear his sins, and not his prayers; but now in Christ God accepts us, Eccl. ix. 7. As Joseph did present his brethren before Pharaoh, and brought them into favour with the king, Gen. xlvii. 2., so the Lord Jesus carries the names of the saints upon his breast, and presents them before his Father, so bringing them into repute and honour; through Christ God will treat and parley with us, he speaks to us, as Isa. lxii. 4. Through the red glass every thing appears of a red colour; through the blood of Christ we look of a sanguine complexion, ruddy and beautiful in God's eyes. (4.) Christ is all in regard of divine assistance; a Christian's strength lies in Christ: Phil. iv. 13. Whence is it a Christian is able to do duty, to resist temptation, but through Christ's strengthening? Whence is it that a sparkle of grace lives in a sea of corruption, the storms of persecution blowing, but that Christ holds this sparkle in the hollow of his hand? Whence is it that the roaring lion hath not devoured the saints, but that the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath

defended them? Christ not only gives us our crown but our shield; he not only gives us our garland when we overcome, but our strength whereby we overcome, Rev. xii. 11., "They overcame him—that is, the accuser of the brethren—by the blood of the Lamb." Christ keeps the fortroyal of grace that it be not blown up; Peter's shield was bruised, but Christ kept it that it was not broken. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," Luke xxii. 32., that it be not in a total eclipse. The crown of all the saints' victories must be set upon the head of Christ, Rom. viii. 38. Write the name of Michael upon all your conquests. (5.) Christ is all in regard of pacification; when conscience is in an agony, and burns as hell in the sense of God's wrath; now Christ is all, he pours the balm of his blood into these wounds,—he maketh the storm a calm. Christ doth not only make peace in the court of heaven, but in the court of conscience; he not only makes peace above us, but within us, John xvi. Saith Cyprian, all our golden streams of peace flow from this fountain. John xiv. 27., "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Jesus Christ not only purchased peace for us, but speaks peace to us; he is called the "Prince of peace," Isa. ix. 6. Thus Christ is all in regard of pacification, he makes peace for us, and in us; this honey and oil flow out of the rock Christ. (6.) Christ is all in regard of remuneration; he it is that crowns us after all our labours and sufferings; he died to advance us; his lying in the wine-press, was to bring us into the wine-cellar; he is gone before, to take possession of heaven in the name of all believers.' Heb. vi. 20., "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Christ is gone to bespeak a place for the saints, John xiv. 2. He makes heaven ready for them, and makes them ready for heaven. Thus Christ is all in regard of remuneration. Rev. xxii. 12., "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me."

Use 2d, If Christ be all, it shews what a vast disproportion there is between Christ and the creature; there is as much difference as between *ens* and *nihil*; Christ is all in all, and the creature is nothing at all.

Prov. xxiii. 5., "Wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?" The creature is a nonentity; though it hath a physical existence, yet considered theologically, it is nothing; 'tis but a gilded shadow, a pleasant fancy; when Solomon had sifted up the finest flour, and distilled the spirit of all created excellency, here is the result, "ALL WAS VANITY," Eccl. ii. 11. We read the earth in the creation was void, Gen. i. 2.: so are all earthly comforts void,—they are void of that which we think is in them,—they are void of satisfaction,—therefore they are compared to wind, Hos. xii. 1. A man can no more fill his heart with the world, than he can fill his belly with the air he draws in. Now the creature is said to be nothing, in a threefold sense.

1. It is nothing to a man in trouble of spirit; if the spirit be wounded, outward things will no more give ease than a crown of gold will cure the headach.

2. The creature is nothing to a man that hath heaven in his eye; when St. Paul had seen that light shining from heaven, surpassing the glory of the sun, Acts xxvi. 13., though his eyes were open, "he saw no man," Acts ix. 8.: so he that hath the glory of heaven in his eye, is blind to the world, he sees nothing in it to allure him, or make him willing to stay here.

3. The creature is nothing to one that is dying. A man at the hour of death is most serious, and is able to give the truest verdict of things; now at such a time the world is nothing, 'tis in an eclipse; the sorrow of it is real, but the joy imaginary. O then what a vast difference is there between Christ and the creature! Christ is "all in all," and the creature nothing at all; yet how many damn their souls for nothing?

4. It shews whither the soul is to go in the want of all. Go to Christ who is all in all. Dost thou want grace? Go to Christ. Col. ii. 3., "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Christ is the great Lord treasurer; go then to Christ. Say, "Lord, I am indigent of grace, but in thee are all my fresh springs, fill my cistern from thy spring. Lord, I am blind, thou hast eye-salve to anoint me; I am defiled thou hast water to cleance me;

my heart is hard, thou hast blood to soften me; I am empty of grace, bring thy fulness to my emptiness." In all our spiritual wants, we should repair to Christ, as Jacob's sons did to their brother Joseph: "He opened all the store-houses," Gen. xli. 56., and "gave to his brethren corn and provision for the way," Gen. xlii. 25. Thus the Lord hath made Christ our Joseph, Col. ii. 3., "In whom are hid all treasures." O then, sinners, make out to Christ; he is 'all in all;' and to encourage you to go to him, remember there is in him not only fulness, but freeness. "O every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" Christ is not only full as the honey-comb, but he drops as the honey-comb.

5. If Christ be all, see here the Christian's inventory, how rich is he that hath Christ! He hath all that may make him completely happy. Plutarch reports that the wife of Phocion being asked where her jewels were, she answered, "My husband, and his triumphs are my jewels!" so, if a Christian be asked, where are his riches, he will say, "Christ is my riches." A true saint cannot be poor; if you look into his house, perhaps he hath scarce a bed to lie on, 1 Cor. iv. 11., "Even to this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling-place." Come to many a child of God, and bid him make his will, he saith as Peter, Acts iii. 6., "Silver and gold have I none:" yet he can at the same time make his triumph with the apostle, 2 Cor. vi. 10., "As having nothing, yet possessing all;" he hath Christ who is all. When a believer can call nothing his, he can say all is his. The tabernacle was covered with badgers' skins, Exod. xxv. 5., yet most of it was of gold; so a saint may have a poor covering, ragged clothes, but he is inlaid with gold, 'Christ is formed in his heart,' and so he is all glorious within.

6. How could a Christian sit down satisfied with Christ! 'Christ is all.' What though he wants other things, is not Christ enough? If a man hath sunshine, he doth not complain he wants the light of a candle; hath he not enough who hath 'the unsearchable riches of Christ?' I have read of a godly man, who being blind, his friend

asked him if he was not troubled for the want of his sight; he confessed he was; "Why," saith his friend, "are you troubled because you want that which flies have, when you have that which angels have?" So I say to a Christian, Why art thou troubled for wanting that which a reprobate has, when thou hast that which the glorified saints have? Thou hast Christ with all his perquisites and royalties! Suppose a father should deny his son furniture for his house, but should settle all his land upon him, had he any cause to complain? If God denies thee a little furniture in the world, but in the mean time settles his land upon thee, he gives thee the field wherein the pearl of price is hid, hast thou any cause to repine? a Christian that wants necessaries, yet having Christ, he hath the one thing needful, Col. ii. 10., "Ye are complete in him." What! complete in Christ, and not content with Christ? Luther saith, the sea of God's mercy should swallow up our particular afflictions; surely this sea of God's love in giving us Christ, should drown all our complaints and grievances; let the Christian take the harp and the viol, and bless God.

7. If Christ be all, see the deplorable condition of a Christless person; he is poor, he is worth nothing, Rev. iii. 17., "Thou art wretched, miserable and poor," &c. The sadness of a man that wants Christ, will appear in these seven particulars.

(1.) He hath no justification. What a glorious thing is it when a poor sinner is absolved from guilt, and is declared to be *rectus in curia!* but this privilege flows from Christ; all pardons are sealed in his blood, Acts xiii. 39., "By him all that believe are justified;" so that he who is out of Christ is unjustified; the guilt of sin cleaves to him; he must be responsible to justice in his own person, and the curse stands in full force against the sinner.

(2.) He that wants Christ, wants the beauty of holiness; Jesus Christ is a living spring of grace, John i. 14., "Full of grace and truth." Now a Christless person, is a graceless person, he hath not one shred of holiness. The scions must first be ingrafted into the stock, before it can receive sap and influence from the root; we must first

be ingrafted into Christ, before we can “of his fulness receive grace for grace,” John i. 16. A man out of Christ is red with guilt, and black with filth; he is an unhal- lowed person, and dying in that condition, is rendered incapable of seeing God, Heb. xii. 14.

(3.) He that wants Christ, hath no true nobility; it is through Christ that we are a-kin to God,—of the blood-royal of hea- ven; it is through Christ that “God is not ashamed to be called our God,” Heb. xi. 16. But out of Christ we are looked upon as ignoble persons; the traitors’ blood runs in our veins; a man out of Christ is base born; whoever is his natural father, the devil is his spiritual father, John iv. 48.

(4.) He that wants Christ, wants his freedom; John viii. 36., “If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed.” A man out of Christ, is a slave, when he sins most freely.

(5.) He that wants Christ, hath no abi- lity for service; he is as Samson, when his locks were cut,—his strength is gone from him—he wants a vital principle,—he can- not walk with God,—he is like a dead mem- ber in the body, that hath neither strength nor motion, John xv. 5., “Without me ye can do nothing.” The organs will make no sound, unless you blow in them: so unless Christ by his Spirit breathe in the soul, it cannot make any harmony, or put forth strength to any holy action.

(6.) He that wants Christ, hath no con- solation; Christ is called “the consolation of Israel,” Luke ii. 25. A Christless soul is a comfortless soul; how can such an one have comfort when he comes to die? He is in debt, and hath no surety; his wounds bleed, and he hath no physician; he sees the fire of God’s wrath approaching, and hath no screen to keep it off; he is like a ship in a tempest; sickness begins to make a tempest in his body, and sin to make a tempest in his conscience, and he hath no where to put in for harbour; oh the terror and anguish of such a man at the hour of death! Isa. xiii. 8., “Their face shall be as flames;”—an elegant expression. The mean- ing is, such fear and horror shall seize upon sinners in the evil day, that their counte- nances shall change and be as pale as a

flame. What are all the comforts of the world to a dying sinner? He looks upon his friends, but they cannot comfort him; bring his bags of gold and silver, they are as smoke to sore eyes, it grieves him to part with them; bring him music, what comfort is the harp and viol to a condemned man? There is in Spain tarantulas, venomous spiders, and those who are stung with them, are almost dead, but are cured with music; but those that die without Christ, who is the consolation of Israel, are in such hell- ish pangs and agonies, that no music is able to cure them.

(7.) He that wants Christ, hath no sal- vation. Eph. v. 23., “He is the Saviour of the body;” he saves none but those who are members of his body mystical; a strong scripture against the doctrine of universal redemption; Christ leaped into the sea of his father’s wrath, only to save his spouse from drowning; “he is the Saviour of the body;” so that those who die out of Christ, are cut off from all hopes of salvation.

Use 3d, It reproves them who busy themselves about other things with a ne- glect of Christ: Isa. lv. 2., “Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which sat- isfieth not?” If you get all the world, you are but golden beggars without Christ. The physician finds out noxious diseases, but is ignorant of soul-diseases; and while he gets receipts to cure others, he neglects the receipt of Christ’s blood to cure himself. The lawyer while he clears other men’s titles to their land, he himself wants a title to Christ. The tradesman is busied in buy- ing and selling, but neglects to trade for the pearl of price; like Israel, who went up and down to gather straw, or like the loadstone, that draws iron to it, but refuseth gold. Those who mind the world, so as to ne- glect Christ, their work is but spider-work. Hab. ii. 13., “Is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the fire, and weary themselves for very vanity?”

1. If Christ be all, then set a high valu- ation upon Jesus Christ, 1 Peter ii. 7., “To you which believe, he is precious.” If there were a jewel which contained in it the worth of all jewels, would you not prize that? Such a jewel is Christ; so precious

is he, that St. Paul counted all things “ dung,” that he “ might win Christ,” Phil. iii. 8. O that I could raise the appreciation of Jesus Christ! Prize Christ above your estates, above your relations; that man doth not deserve Christ at all, who doth not prize Christ above all. Jesus Christ is an incomprehensible blessing; whatever God can require for satisfaction, or can desire for salvation, is to be found in Christ; O then let him be the highest in our esteem! No writing shall please me, saith St. Bernard, if I do not read the name of Christ there. The name of Christ is the only music to a Christian’s ear, and the blood of Christ is the only cordial to a Christian’s heart.

2. If Jesus Christ be all, then make sure of Christ; never leave trading in ordinances, till you have gotten this pearl of price. In Christ there is the accumulation of all good things; O then let not your souls be quiet, till this bundle of myrrh lie between your breasts! Cant. i. 13. In other things we strive for property,—this house is mine, these jewels are mine,—and why is not this Christ mine? There are only two words which will satisfy the soul, Deity and property: *quid est Deus, non est meus?* saith Austin. What was it better for the old world they had an ark, as long as they did not get into the ark? And that I may persuade all to get Christ, let me shew you what an enriching blessing Christ is.

(1.) Christ is a supreme good; put what you will in the balance with Christ, he doth infinitely outweigh. Is life sweet? Christ is better. He is the life of the soul, Col. iii. 4., “ his loving-kindness, is better than life,” Ps. lxxiii. 3. Are relations sweet? Christ is better. He is the friend that “ sticks closer than a brother.”

(2.) Christ is a sufficient good; he who hath Christ, needs no more; he who hath the ocean, needs not the cistern. If one had a manuscript that contained all manner of learning in it, having all the arts and sciences, he need look in no other book, so he that hath Christ, needs look no further. Christ gives grace and glory, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. The one to cleanse us, the other to crown us; as Jacob said, “ It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive,” Gen.

xliv. 28. So he that hath Christ, may say, it is enough, Jesus is yet alive.

(3.) Christ is a suitable good; in him dwells all fulness, Col. i. 19. He is whatever the soul can desire, &c. Christ is beauty to adorn, gold to enrich, balm to heal, bread to strengthen, wine to comfort, salvation to crown; if we are in danger, Christ is a shield; if we are disconsolate, he is a sun; he hath enough in his wardrobe abundantly to furnish the soul.

(4.) Christ is a sanctifying good, he makes every condition happy to us, he sweetens all our comforts, and sanctifies all our crosses.

1. Christ sweetens all our comforts; he turns them into blessings; health is blessed; estate is blessed, relations are blessed. Christ’s love is as the pouring sweet water on flowers, which makes them cast a more fragrant perfume. A wicked man cannot have that comfort in outward things which a godly man hath; he may possess more, but he enjoys less; he who hath Christ may say, this mercy is reached to me by the hand of my Saviour, this is a love-token from him, an earnest of glory.

2. Christ sanctifies all our crosses, they shall be medicinal to the soul; they shall work sin out, and work grace in. God’s stretching the strings of his viol, is to tune it, and make the music better: Christ sees to it that his people lose nothing in the furnace but their drossy impurities.

(5.) Christ is a rare blessing, there are but few that have him; the best things when they grow common, begin to be slighted; when silver was in “ Jerusalem as stones,” 1 Kings x. 27., it was apt to be trod upon; Christ is a jewel that few are enriched with, which may both raise our esteem of him, and quicken our pursuit after him; those to whom God hath given both the Indies, he hath not given them Christ; they have the fat of the earth, but not the dew of heaven; and among us Protestants, many who hear of Christ, but few that have him. Read Luke iv. 25. There are many in this city who have Christ sounded in their ears, but few who have Christ formed in their hearts. O how should we labour to be of this few! They who are Christians, should be restless.

(6.) Christ is a select choice good. God shews more love in giving us Christ, than in giving us crowns and kingdoms. God may give us other things, and hate us; but in giving Christ to a man, he gives him the blessings of the throne. What though others have a crutch to lean on, if thou hast a Christ to lean on? Abraham sent away the sons of the concubines with gifts, but 'he gave all he had to Isaac,' Gen. xxv. God may send away others with a little gold and silver; but if he gives thee Christ, he gives thee all that ever he hath; for "Christ is all, and in all."

(7.) Christ is such a good, as without which nothing is good; without Christ health is not good, it is fuel for lust; riches are not good, they are golden snares; ordinances are not good, though they are good in themselves, yet not good to us,—they profit not,—they are as breasts without milk, as bottles without wine,—nay, they are not only a dead letter, but a savour of death; without Christ, they will damn us; for want of Christ, millions go loaded to hell with ordinances.

(8.) Christ is an enduring good; other things are like the lamp, which while it shines it spends, the heavens "shall wax old like a garment," Ps. cii. 26. But Jesus Christ is a permanent good, with him are durable riches, Prov. viii. 18. They last as long as eternity itself lasts.

(9.) Christ is a diffusive communicative good; he is full, not only as a vessel, but as a spring, he is willing to give himself to us. Now then if there be all this excellency in Jesus Christ, it may make us ambitiously desirous of an interest in him.

QUEST. *But how shall I get a part in Christ?*

Ans. 1. See your need of Christ, know that you are undone without him. How obnoxious are you to God's eye! how odious to his nature! how obnoxious to his justice! O sinner, how near is the sergeant to arrest thee! The furnace of hell is heating for thee, and what wilt thou do without Christ? It is only the Lord Jesus can stand as a screen to keep off the fire of God's wrath from burning thee. Tell me then, is there not need of Christ?

A. 2. Be importunate after Christ, "Lord,

give me Christ, or I die!" As Achsah said to her father Caleb, Josh. xv. 19., "Thou hast given me a south land, give me also springs of water:" so should a poor soul say, "Lord, thou hast given me an estate in the world, but this south land will not quench my thirst, give me also springs of water; give me those living springs which run in my Saviour's blood; thou hast said, 'Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely,' Rev. xxii. 17, 18. Lord, I thirst after Jesus Christ, nothing but Christ will satisfy me; I am dead, I am damned without him, O give me this water of life!"

A. 3. Be content to have Christ, as Christ is offered, a Prince and a Saviour, Acts v. 31. Be sure you do not compound or indent with Christ. Some would have Christ and their sins too. Is Christ all, and will you not part with something for this all? Christ would have you part with nothing but what will damn you, if you keep, namely, your sins. There are some bid fair for Christ, they will part with some sins, but keep a reserve. Doth that man think he shall have Christ's love that feeds sin in a corner? O part with all for him who is all! Part with thy lusts, nay thy life if Christ calls. It exhorts us not only to get Christ, but to labour to know that we have Christ, John ii. 3., "Hereby ye do know that we know him." This reflex act of faith is more than the direct act. Some divines call it the perception, or sensible feeling of faith. Now concerning this knowledge that Christ is ours—which is the same with assurance—I shall lay down these four corollaries or conclusions:

First, That this knowledge is feasible,—it may be had, 1 John v. 13., "These things have I written to you that believe, that ye may know ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

1. Why else doth God bid us make our "calling and election sure," 2 Pet. i. 10., it assurance may not be had? and to "prove ourselves, whether we are in the faith," 2 Cor. xiii. 5., if we cannot come to this knowledge that Christ is ours?

2. What are all the signs which the scrip-

ture gives of a man in Christ but so many ciphers, if the knowledge of this interest may not be had? 1 John iii. 14. and John iv. 13.

3. There are some duties enjoined in scripture which to perform is utterly impossible, if the knowledge of an interest in Christ be not attainable; we are bid 'to rejoice in God,' Phil. iv. 4. And 'to rejoice in tribulation,' 1 Pet. iv. 13. How can he rejoice in suffering, who doth not know whether Christ be his or not?

4. Why hath Christ promised to send the Comforter, John xiv. 16., whose very work it is to bring the heart to this assurance, if assurance that Christ is ours may not be had?

5. Some of the saints have arrived at this certainty of knowledge; therefore it may be had. Job knew that his Redeemer lived, Job xix. 25. And St. Paul had this assurance, 2 Tim. i. 12., Gal. ii. 20. Yea, may some say, Paul was an eminent believer, a Christian of the first magnitude, no wonder if he had this jewel of assurance! nay, but the apostle speaks of it as a case incident to other believers, Rom. viii. 35., "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" He doth not say, "Who shall separate *me*?" but *us*! so that by all it appears that a believer may come to spell out his interest.

Caution 1. Not that the saints have always the same certainty, or that they have such an assurance as excludes all doubtings and conflicts; there will be flowings and ebbings in their comforts, as well as in their graces. Was it not so in David? Sometimes we hear him say, God's loving-kindness was before his eyes, Ps. xxvi. 3. As it is a proverbial speech, "I have such a thing in my eye, I see it just before me." But at another time, "Where are thy former loving-kindnesses?" Ps. lxxxix. 49. These doubtings and convulsions God suffers in his children sometimes, that they may long the more for heaven, where they shall have a constant spring-tide of joy.

Caution 2. Not that all believers have the same assurance. 1. Assurance is rather the fruit of faith, than faith: now as the root of the rose or tulip may be alive, where the flower is not visible, so faith may live in the heart, where the flower of assurance

doth not appear. 2. Assurance is difficult to be obtained; it is a rare jewel, but hard to come by; not many Christians have this jewel. God sees it good sometimes to withdraw assurance from his people, that they may walk humbly. Satan doth what he can to way-lay and obstruct our assurance; he is called 'the red dragon,' Rev. xii. 3. If he cannot blot a Christian's evidence, yet sometimes he casts such a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read his evidence, the devil envies that God should have any glory, or the soul any comfort. That we want assurance, the fault for the most is our own; we walk carelessly, neglect our spiritual watch, let go our hold of promises, comply with temptations; no wonder then if we walk in darkness, and are at such a loss, that we cannot tell whether Christ be ours or not. Assurance is very sweet; this wine of paradise cheers the heart.

Assurance is very useful, it will put us upon service for Christ. (1.) It will put us upon active obedience. Assurance will not—as the Papists say—breed security in the soul, but agility; it will make us mount up with wings, as eagles, in holy duties; faith makes us living, assurance makes us lively; if we know that Christ is ours, we shall never think we can love him enough, or serve him enough, 2 Cor. v. 14., "The love of Christ constrains us." (2.) Assurance will put us upon passive obedience, Rom. v. 3, 5., "We glory in tribulation, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." Mr. Fox speaks of a woman in Queen Mary's days, who when the adversaries threatened to take her husband from her, she answered, "Christ is my husband;" when they threatened to take away her children, she answered, "Christ is better to me than ten sons;" when they threatened to take away all from her, saith she, "Christ is mine, and you cannot take away him from me." No wonder St. Paul was willing to be bound and die for Christ, Acts xxi. 13.; when he knew that Christ loved him, and had given himself for him, Gal. iii. 20. Though I will not say, Paul was proud of his chain, yet he was glad of it, he wore it as a chain of pearl.

QUEST. *But how shall I get this jewel of assurance?*

Ans. 1. Make duty familiar to you. When the spouse sought Christ diligently, she found him joyfully, Cant. iii. 4.

A. 2. Preserve the virginity of conscience. When the glass is full you will not pour wine into it, but when it is empty : so when the soul is cleansed from the love of every sin, now God will pour in the sweet wine of assurance, Heb. x. 22., "Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."

A. 3. Be much in the actings of faith; the more active the child is in obedience, the sooner he hath his father's smile; if faith be ready to die, Rev. iii. 2. If it be like armour hung up, or like a sleepy habit in the soul, never look for assurance.

A. 4. If Christ be all, then make him so to you. (1.) Make Christ all in your understanding, be ambitious to know nothing but Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 2. What is it to have knowledge in physick? To be able with Esculapius and Galen to discourse of the causes and symptoms of a disease, and what is proper to apply, and in the mean time to be ignorant of the healing under Christ's wings? What is it to have knowledge in astronomy, to discourse of the stars and planets, and to be ignorant of Christ, that bright morning-star which leads to heaven? What is it to have skill in a shop, and ignorant of that commodity which doth both enrich and crown? What is it to be versed in music, and to be ignorant of Christ, whose blood makes atonement in heaven, and music in the conscience? What is it to know all the stratagems of war, and to be ignorant of 'the Prince of peace'? O make Christ all; be willing to know nothing but Christ; though you may know other things in their due place, yet know Christ in the first place; let the knowledge of Jesus Christ have the pre-eminence; as the sun among the lesser planets. This is the crowning knowledge, Prov. xiv. 18., "The prudent are crowned with knowledge." We cannot know ourselves unless we know Christ, he it is who lights us into our hearts and shews us the spots of our souls, whereby we abhor ourselves in dust and ashes. Christ shews us our own vacuity and indigency; and until we see our own emptiness, we are not fit to be filled with the golden

oil of mercy. We cannot know God, but through Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. (2.) Make Christ all in your affections. Desire nothing but Christ; he is the accumulation of all good things. "Ye are complete in him," Col. ii. 10. Christ is the Christian's perfection; what should the soul desire less? What can it desire more? Love nothing but Christ; love is the choicest affection,—it is the richest jewel the creature hath to bestow,—O if Christ be all, love him better than all! Consider 1st, If you love other things, when they die, your love is lost; but Christ lives for ever to requite your love. 2^d, You may love other things in the excess, but you cannot love Christ in the excess. 3^d, When you love other things, you love that which is worse than yourselves; if you love a fair house, a pleasant garden, a curious picture, these things are worse than yourselves; if I would love any thing more intensely and ardently, it should be something which is better than myself, and that is Jesus Christ. He who is all, let him have all: give him your love who desires it most, and deserves it best.

(3.) Make Christ all in your abilities, do all in his strength, Eph. vi. 10., "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." When you are to resist a temptation, to mortify a corruption, do not go out in your own strength, but in the strength of Christ: "Be strong in the Lord." Some go out to duty in the strength of parts, and go out against sin in the strength of resolution, and they came home foiled. Alas! What are our resolutions, but like the green withs which did bind Samson! A sinful heart will soon break these; do as David when he was to go up against Goliath; saith he, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord." So say to thy Goliath lust, I come to thee in the name of Christ. Then we conquer, when the Lion of the tribe of Judah marches before us.

(4.) Make Christ all in your aims; do all to his glory, 1 Pet. iv. 11.

(5.) Make Christ all in your affiance; trust to none but Christ for salvation; the Papists make Christ something but not all. And is there not naturally a spice of popery in our hearts? We would be grafting happiness upon the stock of our own righ-

teousness. "Every man," saith Luther, "is born with a pope in his heart." O make Christ all in regard of recumbency; let him be your city of refuge to flee to, and your ark.

(6.) Make Christ all in your joy. Gal. vi. 14., "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," Luke i. 47. O Christian, hast thou seen the Lord Jesus? hath this morning-star shined into thy heart with its enlightening, quickening beams? Then rejoice and be exceeding glad. Shall others rejoice in the world; and will not you rejoice in Christ? How much better is he than all other things? It reflects disparagement upon Christ when his saints are sad and drooping. Is not Christ yours, what would you have more?

OBJ. 1st, But, saith one, "I am low in the world, and that takes off the chariot-wheels of my joy, and makes me drive heavily."

Ans. But hast thou not Christ? And is Christ all? Ps. xvi. 5, 6.

OBJ. 2d, If indeed I knew Christ were mine, then I could rejoice; but how shall I know that?

Ans. 1. Is thy soul filled with pantings after Christ? Dost thou desire as well water out of Christ's side to cleanse thee, as blood out of his side to save thee? These sighs and groans are stirred up by the Spirit of God; by the beating of this pulse, judge of the life of faith in thee.

A. 2. Hast thou given up thyself by an universal subjection to Christ? this is a good sign that Christ is thine.

A. 3. Be thankful for Christ; God hath done more for you in giving you Christ, than if he had set you with the princes of the earth, Ps. cxliii. 8., or had made you angels; or had given you the whole world. In short, God cannot give a greater gift than Christ; for in giving Christ he gives himself to us; and all this calls aloud for thankfulness.

Use ult. Here is a breast of comfort to every man that hath Christ, "Christ is all;" it is good lying at this fountain-head. When a Christian sees a deficiency in himself, he may see an all-sufficiency in his Saviour. "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord!" Ps. cxliv. ult. That servant needs not want who hath his master's full purse at command: he needs not want who hath Christ, for "Christ is all and in all." What though the fig-tree doth not flourish, if thou hast Christ the tree of life, and all fruit growing there? In the hour of death, a believer may rejoice; when he leaves all, he is possessed of all. As Ambrose said to his friend, "I fear not death, because I have a good Lord," so may a godly man say, "I fear not death, because I have a Christ to go to; death will but carry me to that torrent of divine pleasure which runs at his right hand for evermore." I will end with that, 1 Thess. iv. 18. "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

SERMON VII.

PHIL. iv. 9. "Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you."

WHAT the particular reason of my choice of this scripture this day is, if you compare my present situation,† with the intent of the apostle, in these words, you will easily understand. These words of the apostle, being part of the close of his

† This sermon was preached by Mr. Watson on the eve of his ejection from the rectorship of St. Stephens, Walbrook, on nonconformity, after the restoration.

epistle to the Philippians, are his valediction or farewell to them: It is not unknown to you, that I must now be parted from you; and I have pitched on this scripture, to be the close of my twenty years ministry among you. God hath sent me among you to be a builder; and I have chosen this text, to be a hammer to fasten and drive home those nails of instruction