

CHRISTIAN CLASSICS ETHEREAL LIBRARY

**The Causes and
Danger of
Slighting Christ
and His Gospel.**

Richard Baxter





*Christian Classics
Ethereal Library*

The Causes and Danger of Slighting Christ and His Gospel.

Author(s): Baxter, Richard (1615-1691)

Publisher: Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library

Contents

Title Page	1
Preface	2
The Causes and Danger of Slighting Christ and His Gospel, &c.	3
Chapter I. What It Is to Make Light of Christ.	4
Chapter II. Why Christ Is Made So Light Of.	7
Chapter III. Considerations to Awaken Those Who Make Light of Christ.	13
Chapter IV. Considerations to Reform Those, Who Make Light of Christ.	17
Chapter V. Directions for Those Who Desire to Make Light of Christ No More.	22
Indexes	27
Index of Pages of the Print Edition	28



This PDF file is from the Christian Classics Ethereal Library, www.ccel.org. The mission of the CCEL is to make classic Christian books available to the world.

- This book is available in PDF, HTML, and other formats. See <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/baxter/causes.html>.
- Discuss this book online at <http://www.ccel.org/node/3604>.

The CCEL makes CDs of classic Christian literature available around the world through the Web and through CDs. We have distributed thousands of such CDs free in developing countries. If you are in a developing country and would like to receive a free CD, please send a request by email to cd-request@ccel.org.

The Christian Classics Ethereal Library is a self supporting non-profit organization at Calvin College. If you wish to give of your time or money to support the CCEL, please visit <http://www.ccel.org/give>.

This PDF file is copyrighted by the Christian Classics Ethereal Library. It may be freely copied for non-commercial purposes as long as it is not modified. All other rights are reserved. Written permission is required for commercial use.

THE
Causes and Danger

Of slighting

CHRIST and his GOSPEL:

OR,

Eternal Salvation *made light of* by Multitudes,
to whom it is freely offered.

Written by the Reverend, Learned and Holy
MR. RICHARD BAXTER.

ABRIDGED,
By BENJAMIN FAWCETT.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?
[Heb. ii. 3.](#)

SALOP:

Printed by J. COTTON, and J. EDDOWES;

And sold by J. Buckland, at the *Buck*, in *Pater-noster-Row*; T. Field, at the *Wheat-Sheaf*,
and *Corner of Pater-noster-Row, Cheapside*; and E. Dilly, at the *Rose and Crown*, in the
Poultry, London.

MDCCLXIII.

[Price stich'd 3d.]



THE
PREFACE

THE Substance of the *following Pages* was first preached in the Parish Church at *Kidderminster* in the Course of the *Author's* stated Ministry. It was afterward preached in one of the largest Parish Churches in *London*, to an Auditory so much crouded, that one Nobleman was obliged to stand all the Time; and two others returned back, because they could not get within Hearing, tho' Mr. *Baxter's* Voice was remarkably loud and clear; and tho' he himself had sent the Day before to desire Room might be provided for his Noble Friend: Even the *Incumbent* of the Parish had no other Place left for him, but to sit in the Pulpit behind the Preacher. To this last Circumstance Mr. *Baxter* refers, in an *Elegy* which he wrote on the Death of that Reverend Brother, inserted amongst his *Poetical Fragments*, wherein he says,

“*At once one Pulpit held us both.*”

Here *Indifference in Religion* is traced up to its real Sources; its destructive Nature and Tendency faithfully represented; the best Remedies are applied, in Order, by a divine Blessing, to check its almost universal Prevalence. With what Propriety and Seriousness does the *Author's Preface* say,—“*It is the slighting of Christ and Salvation, that undoes the World. O happy Man, Reader, if you escape but this Sin! Thousands split their Souls on the Rock, upon which they should be built. Look among Rich and Poor, High and Low, Young and Old, and see whether it appears not, by the whole Tendency of their Conversation, that they value something else more than Christ. Notwithstanding the Proclamations of his Grace in the Gospel, and the common Profession of being his Disciples, and of believing the glorious Things he has promised in another World; does it not appear, by Deceitfulness in his Service, by heartless Endeavours to obtain his Kingdom, and by busy and delightful Pursuits of the present World, that the Generality of such as are called Christians, are really making light of Christ? And if so, what Wonder if they perish by their Contempt? Will you but seriously read, and well consider as you read, till your Heart be sensible what a Sin it is to make light of Christ and your own Salvation, and till the Lord that bought you, be advanced in the Esteem and Affections of your Soul; this will fulfill my Desires.*”—And this will indeed fulfill the Desires of those who first requested this Abridgment, and also, of its Compiler.

B. F.



THE
Causes *and* Danger
Of slighting
CHRIST and his Gospel, &c.

[Matthew xxii. 5-](#)

But they made light of it.

CHAP. I.

What it is to make light of Christ.

THE blessed Son of God, who thought it not enough to die for the World, but would himself also be the Preacher of Grace and Salvation, comprizes the Substance of his Gospel in the *Parable* to which the Text belongs. By the *King*, that is here said to make the Marriage, is meant God the Father, who, sent his Son into the World, to cleanse Men from their Sins, and espouse them to himself. By the *King's Son*, for whom the Marriage is made, is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who took to his Godhead the Nature of Man, that he might be capable of being their Redeemer when they had lost themselves in Sin. By the *Marriage* is meant the uniting of Christ to the Souls of Sinners, when he gives up himself to them to be their Saviour, and they give up themselves to him, as his redeemed, to be saved and ruled by him. The Perfection of this Marriage will be at the Day of Judgment, when the Union between Christ and his whole Church shall be publicly solemnized. The Word here translated *Marriage*, rather signifys the *Marriage Feast*, and intimates, that all Men are invited by the Gospel to come in and partake of Christ and Salvation, even all the peculiar Blessings of Christ's Disciples. The *Invitation* is from the blessed God. The *Servants* that invite, are the Preachers of the Gospel, who are sent by God for that Purpose. The *Preparation*, for the Feast, is the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the opening a Way for Sinners to return to God. *Second Messengers* are said to be sent, because God takes not the first Denial, but exercises his Patience till Sinners are obstinate. The first Persons invited, are the *Jews*. But on their obstinate Refusal, and being sentenced to Punishment, the *Gentiles* are invited, and graciously prevailed with to come in. 'The Number of those that come in, is so great, that the *House is filled with Guests*. Many come sincerely, regarding not only the Pleasure of the Feast, but the Honour of the Marriage; not only seeking the Pardon of Sin, and Deliverance from divine Wrath, but engaging themselves to Christ in all holy Obedience. Some come in only for the Feast, without having the Wedding-Garment; they only aim at Self, and not at glorifying, and serving their Redeemer. These last are sentenced to everlasting Misery, and speed as ill as those that refused to come in at all; for a Faith that will not work, is but like that of the Devils; and they that expect to be pardoned and saved by such a Faith, are mistaken.

The Words of the Text describe the bad Entertainment which the Gospel finds with many to whom it is sent, even after a *first* and *second* Invitation. *They make light of it*, and are taken up with other Things. Tho' the *Jews* were the first that were thus guilty, yet too among us *Gentiles* follow them to this Day. The Text in Effect declares, that notwithstanding all the wonderful Love and Mercy God has manifested in giving his Son to be the Redeemer of the World, and his Son in giving himself, and in being a sufficient Sacrifice for Sin; notwithstanding all Christ's personal Excellencies, and the full and glorious Salvation he has purchased, and all his free Offers, and frequent and earnest Invitations to Sinners; yet *many*



make light of, and despise all this, prefer their worldly Enjoyments before it.” Not that all do so, or that they all continue to do so, who were once guilty of it. God has his Chosen, whom he will *compel to come in*. But till the Spirit of Grace overcome the Obstinacy of Men’s Hearts, they hear the Gospel *as a Tale that is told*, and the great Things contained in it, are disregarded. More distinctly to illustrate the Sentiments of the Text, *this Chapter* will shew *what it is to make light of Christ*; and (*Chap. 2*) *why Christ is made so light of*: Then (*Chap. 3*) will be suggested some *Considerations to awaken those that make light of Christ*; and also (*Chap. 4*) other *Considerations to reform them*: To which will be added (*Chap. 5*) *Directions* for those that desire to make light of Christ no more.

That which carnal Hearers make light of, includes in it, *Christ himself*, and the *Blessings*, which he bestows.—Concerning *Christ himself*, the Gospel declares his Person and Nature, and the great Things he has done and suffered for Men, his redeeming us from the Wrath of God by his Blood, and purchasing a Grant of Salvation for us. The same Gospel makes an Offer of Christ to Sinners, that if they will accept him on his easy and reasonable Terms, he will be their Saviour, the Physician of their Souls, their Head, and their Husband.—*the Blessings which Christ bestows* upon Sinners, are the Pardon of all their past Sins, and Deliverance from the Wrath of God, and a sure Way of obtaining Pardon for all the Sins they shall commit hereafter, provided they obey sincerely, and turn not again to the Rebellion of their unregenerate State. They shall have the Holy Spirit to be their Guide and Sanctifier, to dwell in their Souls, to help them against their spiritual Enemies, and conform them more and more to a divine Likeness, to heal their spiritual Diseases, and bring them back to God. They shall, also have a right to everlasting Glory, when this Life is ended, and their Bodies shall be raised up to partake of it at the great Day. Besides these, they shall have many excellent Priviledges and Means, abundant Preservation and Provision in their Way, and the Foretaste of their future Joy. All these Blessings the Gospel offers to them that will accept of Christ on his reasonable Terms. For *this is the Record, that God hath given to us eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath Life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life*.

The Sin of making light of Christ and Salvation appears in the following Instances.

1. When Men take no great Heed to what the Gospel declares, as if it was not a certain Truth, or else was a Matter that little concerned them, or as if God had not written it for them.

2. When the Gospel does not affect Men, or go to their Hearts; but tho’ they seem to attend to what is said, yet they are not awakened by it from their Security, nor doth it in any Measure excite such holy Emotions in their Souls, as Things of such everlasting Consequence ought to do. We tell Men what Christ hath done and suffered for their Souls, and it scarce moves them. We tell them of keen and cutting Truths, but Nothing will pierce them. We can make them hear, but cannot make them feel. Our Words stop in the Porch of their Ears



and Fancies, but enter not into their inward Parts. It is as if we spake to Men that have not Hearts. *Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For the Heart of this People is waxed gross, and their Ears are dull of hearing, and their Eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and should be converted, and Christ should heal them.*

3. Men make light of Christ, when they have no high Esteem for him and Salvation by him, but whatsoever they may say with their Tongues, or may speculatively believe, yet in their serious and practical Thoughts they have a higher Esteem for the Things of this World, than they have for Christ and the Salvation he hath purchased. It is despising Christ, to account his Doctrine but a *Question of Words and Names*, like *Gallio*; or a *Superstition of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive*, like *Festus*; or to ask the Preachers of the Gospel, as the *Athenians* did, *What will this Babler say?*

Men make light of Christ, when being informed of the Truths of the Gospel, on what Terms Christ and his Blessings may be had, how it is the Will of God they should believe and accept the Offer, and how he commands them to do it upon Pain of Damnation; and yet they will not consent, unless they could have Christ on Terms of their own. They will not part with their Portion in this World, nor lay down their Pleasures, Profits, and Honours at the Feet of Jesus, to be content to take only so much of them back, as is consistent with his Will and Interest, but think it a hard saying, to be resolved to forsake all for Christ. 'Tis a high Contempt Of Christ and everlasting Life, when Men might have their Part in him, if they would; but they will not, unless they may keep the World too, and are resolved to please their Flesh, whatever be the Consequence.

It is also a making light of Christ and Salvation, when Men will promise fair, and profess their Willingness, to have Christ upon his own Terms, and to forsake all for him; but they nevertheless cleave to the World, and to their sinful Courses, nor will suffer their Practice to be changed by all that Christ hath done or said.—This is the Sin of making light of Christ and Salvation.



CHAP. II.

Thy Christ is made so light of.

IT may seem a Wonder that ever Men, who have the Use of their Reason, should be so foolish as to make light of Things of infinite Importance. But the Causes are such as these—

1. Some Men understand not the Meaning of the *Words* in which the Gospel is expressed; and how can they value what they do not understand? Tho' we speak to them as plainly as we can, yet they have so estranged themselves from God, and the Concerns of their Souls, that they know not what we say. It is with them as if God in just Judgment had said, *With stammering Lips and another Tongue will I speak to this People.*

2. Some understand the Words we speak, but not the *Matter*, because they are carnal. *For 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.* The Things of the Spirit are not well known by bare Report, but by spiritual Taste, which none have but those that are taught by *the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God.*

3. Carnal Minds apprehend not a *Suitableness* in these spiritual and heavenly Things, and therefore set light by them. Tell them of everlasting Glory, and they hear you, as if you, as if you was persuading them to go and play with the Sun. The Affairs of another World are out of their Element, and therefore they have no more Delight in them, than a Fish would have in the pleasantest Meadow, or a Swine in a Jewel. *They that are after the Spirit, may mind the Things of the Spirit; but they that are after the Flesh, do mind the Things of the Flesh.*

4. The chief Cause of slighting Christ and Salvation, is a secret Root of *Unbelief*. Whatsoever Men may pretend, they do not really believe the Word of God. They are taught in general to say, the Gospel is true; but they never saw the Evidence of its Truth, so as to be firmly persuaded of it; nor have they got their Souls settled on the Infallibility of God's Testimony; nor have they considered the Truth of the particular Doctrines revealed in Scripture. O *Sinners*, did you but really believe the Gospel Account of the Evil of Sin, of your Need of Christ, and what he hath done for you, and what you must be, and do; if ever you are saved by him, and what will become of you for ever, if you remain in Disobedience; I dare say this would cure the Contempt of Christ, and you would not make so light of your own Salvation! But Men do not believe, while they say so, and even while they themselves think so. *There is in them an evil Heart of Unbelief*, which makes them *depart from the living God*. Tell any Man he shall have a Gift of ten Thousand Pounds, if he will but go some Miles for it; if he believes you; he will go; if he believes not, he will not go. And if he will not go, supposing her is able, you may be sure he does not believe. I know a slight Belief may consist with a wicked Life; but a sincere Belief is inconsistent with so great Neglect of the Things that are believed.



5. Christ and Salvation are made light of, because of Men's *Hardness of Heart*. The Heart is naturally hard, and grows harder by Custom in Sin, especially by long Abuse of Mercy, Neglect of the Means of Grace, and resisting the Spirit of Grace. Hence it is that Men are turned into such Stones. And till God cure them of the Stone in the Heart, no Wonder if they feel not what they know, nor regard what Preachers say, but make light of all. 'Tis hard preaching a Stone into Tears, or making a Rock to tremble. When Men's Hearts are like the Highway, that is trodden to Hardness; or like the Clay, that is hardened in the Fire; when no Mercies can melt them to Repentance; when *they have Consciences seared with a hot Iron*; then it is no Wonder if they *be past Feeling*, and *work all Uncleaness with Greediness*, so as to make light of Christ and everlasting Glory. O that this were not the Case of too many of our Hearers ! Had we but living Souls to speak to, they would hear, and feel, and not make light of what we say. I know they are naturally alive, but they *are dead in Trespasses and Sins*. Were there but one Spark of the Life of Grace in them, the Doctrine of Salvation, by Jesus Christ would appear to them to be the weightiest Business in the World. O how confident should I be to prevail with Men, to mind the Concerns of Eternity more than Time, if they had but Life, and Sense, and Reason! How deplorable is the Condition of their Souls, who are fallen under this fearful Judgment of spiritual Deadness, and Blindness, and Hardness of Heart!

13

6. Multitudes make light of Christ and Salvation, because they are *wholly sensual*. The Concerns of another World are out of Sight, and so far from their Senses, that they cannot regard them; but present Things are in their Eyes, and in their Hands. There must be a living Faith to prevail over Sense, before unseen Things will be duly regarded. Sense works with great Advantage, and therefore powerfully opposes Faith, where Faith itself is found; and no Wonder if it carries all before it, where there is no true and lively Faith to resist it, and to lead the Soul to higher Things. *They*, in the Text, who *made light of Christ and Salvation, went their Ways*, as it is added, *one to his Farm, another to his Merchandise*. Men have Houses and Lands to look after, Wife and Children, Body and outward Estate, and therefore they forget that they have a God, a Redeemer, a Soul to mind. These worldly Things are near at Hand, and therefore work naturally and forcibly; but the other are thought to be a great Way off, and therefore too distant to work on their Affections. Their Bodies have Life and Sense, and therefore if they want Meat, or Drink, or Cloaths, will feel their Wants, and make them known, and never rest till they are supplied. Men cannot make light of their bodily Necessities; but their Souls being spiritually dead, are insensible of their Wants, and will therefore be as quiet, when starving and languishing to Destruction, as if all were well and Nothing ailed them. Thus poor People are so attentive to their bodily Wants, as if they had Nothing else to mind; having their Trades and Callings to follow, and so much to do from Morning to Night, they can find no Tune for Christ and Salvation. Jesus would teach them,

14

but they have no Leisure to hear him. The Bible is before them, but they cannot spare Time to read it. A Minister is in the Town with them, but they cannot go to ask him, *What must we do to be saved?* And when they do hear, their Hearts are so full of the World, they cannot mind what they hear, nor is there any Room to pour into them the Waters of Life. *The Cares of the World choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful. No Man can serve two Masters, God and Mammon. If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* Men will set light by Christ and Salvation, while they so highly value any Thing upon Earth. This is the Ruin of many Thousand Souls! It would grieve the Heart of any serious Christian, to see how eagerly this vain World is every where followed, and the World to come neglected. To compare the Care Men take for the World, with the Care of their Souls; and the Time they spend about the World, with the Time they employ for their Salvation. To see how the World fills their Mouths, their Hands, their Houses, their Hearts, while Christ hath little more than a bare Title of Respect. To come into their Company, and hear no Discourse but of the World. To come into their Houses, and hear and see Nothing but for the World, as if this World would last for ever, or would purchase them another. If I ask the Ministers of the Gospel how their Labours succeed? They tell me, "People continue still the same, and give up themselves wholly to the World, so that they mind not what we say to them, nor will give a full Entertainment to the Word: and all because of the deluding World." And O that too many Ministers themselves did not make light of that Christ whom they preach, thro' being drawn away by the Love of this World! In a Word, Men of a worldly Disposition judge of Things according to worldly Advantages. Thus Christ *is despised and rejected of Men, they hide as it were their Faces from him, and esteem him not, they see no Form, nor Comeliness, nor Beauty, that they should desire him.*

7. Inconsideration is another Cause why Men make light of Christ. They do not soberly attend to the Truth and Importance of Soul-Concerns. They suffer not their Minds to dwell so long upon them, till they procure a due Esteem, and deeply affect their Hearts. If these Things are assented to, but not closely considered, how should they have their proper Influence? While Men have Reason given them to think and consider of the Things that most concern them, and yet they will not see it, this occasions their making light of such Things, and treating them with Contempt.

8. Christ and Salvation, are made light of, because Men remain *insensible of their Sin and Misery.* Their Eyes were never opened to see themselves as they are; nor their Hearts truly humbled in the Sense of their own Wretchedness. If this were done, they would soon be brought to value a Saviour. A Heart broken for Sin can no more make light of Christ and Salvation, than a hungry Man of his Food, or a sick Man of his Physician. When Sin and Guilt are groaned under, as an intolerable Burthen, then Nothing will serve the Turn but Christ. Till Men are deeply humbled, they can part with Christ and Salvation for a Lust, for a little worldly Gain, for that which is less than Nothing. But when God hath inlightened



their Consciences, and broken their Hearts, then they would give a World for Christ; then they *count all Things but Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord.* When *they are once pricked in their Hearts* for their Sin and Misery, then they cry out, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* When they are awakened by the Word or Providence of God, then they will ask with the *Jailor, Sirs, what must we do to be saved?* Thus God will bring Men low by Humiliation, before he bring them to Salvation.

9. Men take occasion to make light of Christ, because the *Gospel is grown common* to them. They hear of it every Day, and the Frequency dulls their Affections. Were it a Rarity, it might be more regarded; but now they plead, "We have these Things every Day." They make not light of their Meat and Drink, their Health or Life, because they possess them every Day. They make not light of the Sun, because it shines every Day; at least they should not, for the Mercy is the greater by its Constancy. Yet Christ and Salvation are made light of, because they hear of them often. Pearls are trod in the Dirt, where they are common. The heavenly *Manna* is counted dry. *The full Soul loatheth an Honey-Comb, but to the hungry Soul every bitter Thing is sweet.*—Once more;

10. Christ is made light of, either because Men think *he is theirs already, or because he may easily be theirs at any Time.* It is true, that Grace is free, and the Offer is universal, where-ever the Gospel is preached. And it is true, that Men may have Christ whenever they are willing to comply with his Terms. But if you are not willing now, how can you think you shall be willing hereafter? If you can make your own Heart willing, why not do it immediately? Can you do it better, when Sin hath more hardened it, and God may have given you over to yourself? O *Sinners*, you might do much, tho' you are not able of yourselves to come in; if you would but now subject yourselves to the Working of the Spirit, and set in while the Gales of Grace continue! Did you know what a hard Thing it is to be so much as willing to have Christ and Grace; when the Heart is given up to its own corrupt Bias, and the Spirit hath withdrawn its former Influences, you would not be so confident of your own Strength to believe and repent, nor would you from such foolish Confidence continue to make light of Christ. If indeed it be so easy a Matter, as you imagine, for a Sinner to believe and repent at any Time, how comes it to pass that it is done by so few, while Multitudes perish in their Impenitence, amidst all desirable Helps and Means? It must be allowed that the Thing is very reasonable and easy in itself to a pure Nature; but while Man is spiritually blind and dead, the Things are scarcely possible to him, which are ever so easy to others. To gracious Souls, it is the easiest and sweetest Life in the World, to live in the Love of God, and the Thoughts of that Life to come, where all their Hope and Happiness lieth. But it is as easy to remove Mountains, as to bring carnal Hearts to this. These Men however condemn themselves; for if they think it so easy a Matter to repent, and believe, and so have Christ and Salvation, they have then the less Excuse for neglecting what they thought so easy. O miserable impenitent Souls! What think you to reply, when God shall ask you, "Why did

17

18

you not repent, and “love your Redeemer above the World, when you imagined you could easily do it at any Time?”

Are such as these the Causes why Multitudes make light of Christ and Salvation? How great then is the Folly, and how contemptible are the Judgments of all carnal Men, and how little need have we to be discouraged by their Sneers or Insults! That Man must be foolish or mad, that knows no Difference between Dirt and Gold. And it is the Height of Folly and Madness, to set light by Christ and Salvation, and be daily toiling for the Dirt of this World. And yet how lamentably prone are many weak Persons to be ashamed of Godliness, if such Fools or Madmen do but deride them for it; and to think hardly of a holy Life, if such as these do but rail at it! On the contrary, if you perceive any setting light by Christ and Salvation, let their Wisdom and Words be light in your Esteem, and hear their Reproaches of a holy Life with the tender Compassion with which you would hear the Ravings of a Madman.

Are the best Ministers of the Gospel despised, and do they complain of the ill Success of their Labours? Wonder not, since the Ministry of Apostles succeeded no better, tho’ they had Miracles to second their Doctrines. If any Preachers could have shaken and torn in Pieces the Hearts of Sinners, *they* could have done it. If any could have made all cry out, as some did, *What shall we do?* it would have been Apostles. It is not therefore for Want of good Preachers, that Men make light of Christ and Salvation. The first News of Pardon for Sin, and the Hope of Glory, and the Danger of everlasting Misery, would turn the Hearts of Men within them, if they were as tractable in spiritual Matters, as in temporal. But, alas! it is far otherwise. Let it not seem strange to Ministers, nor let them be too much discouraged by it, if, when they have said all that they can desire in Order to win the Hearts of Men to Christ, the greatest Part still slight him, and tho’ they bow the Knee to him, and honour him with their Lips, yet basely prefer every worldly and carnal Pleasure or Profit before him. While it is thus with many, blessed be God, it is not thus with all.

But before we, that are Ministers, enquire after this great condemning Sin amongst our Hearers, we should take Care that we be not guilty of it ourselves. God forbid, that having undertaken the sacred Office of revealing the Excellencies of Christ to the World, we should make light of him ourselves, and slight that Salvation which we daily preach. The Lord knows we are all of us so defective in our Esteem for Christ, and do our great Work so negligently, that we have Reason to be ashamed of our best Sermons; but should this Sin prevail in us, *we are of all Men most miserable*. I love not Censoriousness, *Brethren*; yet I dare not befriend so vile a Sin in myself, or others, under Pretence of avoiding it; especially when there is so great a Necessity first to heal it in us, who make it our Business to heal it in others. O that there were no Cause to complain that Christ is made light of by those that preach him!—Are not Studies neglected?—Are not Ministrations lifeless and formal?—How little is done out of the Pulpit, for reprovng Sin, and saving Men’s Souls?—Is there not a perpetual Neglect of those Things in which the Interest of Christ consists; even the healing.



reforming, and enlarging his Churches?—Are not many made Preachers before they are Christians, and therefore, by their own covetous and worldly Lives, lose the most precious Advantages for doing good to Souls? If such Ministers believe the Scriptures which they preach, methinks their studying and preaching should fill them with Terror.



CHAPT. III.

Considerations to awaken those who make light of Christ.

THE Office God hath called me unto, is, by declaring the Glory of his Grace, to help under Christ to the saving of Men's Souls. I hope, my dear *Readers*, you think I am now engaged on no other Errand. The Lord knows I had not set Pen to Paper, but in Hope to succeed in this Work for your Souls. I have considered, and often considered, why so many Thousands should perish, when God hath done so much for their Salvation; and I find that which is mentioned in my Text, is the Cause. It is one of the Wonders of the World, that when *God hath so loved the World as to give his Son*, and Christ hath made a Satisfaction by his Death sufficient for all, and offereth the Benefits of it so freely to all, even *without Money, and without Price*, that nevertheless most of the World, should perish; yea, most of those that are thus called by his Word. Here is the Reason; when Christ hath done all this; *Men make light of it*. God hath shewed that he is not unwilling, and Christ hath shewed that he is not unwilling, that Men should be restored to divine Favour, and be saved; but Men are themselves actually unwilling. *God hath no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live*. But Men take such Pleasure in Sin, that they will die before they will turn. The Lord Jesus was content to be their Physician, and hath provided them a sufficient Remedy, even his own Blood; but if Men make light of it, and will not apply it, what Wonder if they perish after all? It is a most lamentable Thing to see how most Men spend their Care, their Time, their Pains for known Vanities, while God and Glory are cast aside! That he who is All, should seem to them as Nothing; and that which is Nothing, should seem to them as good as All! That God should set Mankind in such a Race, where Heaven or Hell is their certain End, and that they should sit down, and loiter, or run after the childish Toys of this World; and so much forget the Prize they should run for! Were it but possible for one of us to see the whole of this Business, as the All-feeing God does; to see at one View both Heaven and Hell, to which Men are so near, and see what most Men in the World are minding, and what they are doing every Day, it would be the saddest Sight that could be imagined. O how should we wonder at their Madness, and mourn over their Self-Delusion! O poor distracted World! What is it that you run after? And what is it that you neglect? If God had never told them what they were sent into the World to do, or whither they were going, or what was before them in another World, then they had been excusable; but he hath told them over and over, till they are weary of it. Had he left it doubtful, there had been some Excuse; but it is his sealed Word, and they profess to believe it, and would take it ill of us if we should question whether they do believe it or not.



I accuse not any particular Persons of this Crime; but seeing, it is Abe most common Cause of Men's Destruction, I suppose you will judge it the fittest Matter for our Enquiry, and that the Cure of it deserves our greatest Care. Now it is the Case of most Sinners to think themselves freest from those Sins to which they are most enslaved. And one Reason why we cannot reform them, is, because we cannot convince them of their Guilt. It is the Nature of Sin so far to blind and stupify the Sinner, that he knows not what he does, but thinks he is free from it, when it reigns in him, or when he is committing it. It brings Men to be so much unacquainted with themselves, that they know not what they think, what they mean and intend, nor what they love or hate, much, less what they are disposed or habituated to. They are alive to Sin, and dead to all the Reason, Consideration, and Resolution that should recover them; as if it were only by their Sinning that we must know they are alive. May I hope that you who now read, are but willing to know the Truth of your Case, and then I shall be encouraged to proceed to an Enquiry. God will judge impartially. And why should not we do so? Let me therefore by these following Questions try whether you are not Slighters of Christ and your own Salvation. And follow me, I beseech you, by putting them close to your own Hearts, and faithfully answering them.

1. Things that Men highly value, will be *remembered*, and will be the Matter of their freest and sweetest Thoughts. Do not those then make light of Christ and Salvation, who think of them so seldom and coldly, in Comparison with other Things? Follow thy own Heart, Man, and observe what it daily runs out after; and then judge whether it makes light of Christ. We cannot persuade Men to one Hour's sober Consideration what they should do for an Interest in Christ, or in Thankfulness for his Love, and yet they will not believe that they make light of him.

2. Things that we highly value, will be Matter of our *Discourse*. The Judgment and Heart will command the Tongue. Freely and delightfully will our Speech run after them. Do not those then make light of Christ and Salvation, that shun the Mention of his Name, unless it be in a vain or sinful Manner? And those that love not the Company where Christ and Salvation are much talked of, but think it .troublesome, and had rather hear some merry Jests, or idle Tales or talk of their worldly Affairs? If from Morning to Night they scarce speak a serious Word of Christ, judge whether they do not make light of him. O how earnestly do they talk of the World, and speak Vanity; but how heartlessly of Christ and Salvation!

3. The Things we highly value, we *desire to secure* to ourselves, and therefore do any Thing requisite to put them out of all Doubt and Fear. Do not those then make light of Christ and Salvation, who :have lived *twenty* or *thirty* Years in Uncertainty about their Interest in them, and never seek to have their Doubts resolved? Are you certain you shall be saved? O that you were! If you had not made light of Salvation; you could not have rested till you had made it sure, or done your best to make it so. Is there none to enquire of, to help you in such a Work? You have Ministers appointed to that Office; have you gone to them, and

told them the Doubtfulness of your Case, and intreated their Help in judging of your Condition? Alas, Ministers may sit in their Studies from Year to Year, before ten Persons in a Thousand come to them on such an Errand! And do not the Generality therefore make light of Christ?

4. The 'Things we value, *deeply affect* us, and our Hearts will be moved according to our Esteem for them. If Men did not make light of spiritual and eternal Things, how would their Hearts work, when they hear or read of them? What strong Affections, what Melting of Heart, what Sorrow for Sin, what Astonishment in the View of their Misery, what Joy at the Tidings of Salvation by Christ, what Resolution on the Discovery of their Duty, would they be conscious to? What should we have, if it were not for this Sin? Whereas now we are more likely to weary them, fill them with Disgust, or lull them asleep, with Things of this unspeakable Importance: By their Carelessness, one would imagine they were not the Persons spoken to.

5. Our Estimation of Things will appear in our *diligent Endeavours*. What we most value, we shall think no Pains too great to obtain. Do not those then make light of Christ and Salvation, who think any Thing too much which they do for Christ, who murmur at his Service; and think it grievous, and say, "This is more than needs?" For the World, they will labour all the Day, and all their Lives; but for Christ and Salvation, they are afraid of doing too much. Let us preach to them ever so long, we cannot bring them to relish and resolve upon a Life of Holiness. In their Houses, you shall not hear them read a Chapter, or pray with their Families once a Day; nor will they allow God one Day in Seven, as he requires; but Pleasure, or worldly Business, or Idleness must have a Part. Many of them are even so far hardened, as to reproach all who will not be as mad as themselves. And is not Christ worth seeking? Is not everlasting Salvation worth more than all our Diligence in Duty? Let common Sense judge, if that Soul makes not light of Christ and Salvation, who prefers his Ease before them.

6. That which we most highly value, we think we cannot *buy too dear*. Christ and Salvation are freely given, and yet most Men go without them, because they cannot enjoy them and the present World together. They are only called to part with that which would hinder them from Christ, and they will not do it. They are called only to give God his own; and to reign all to his Will; and to forsake the Pleasures and Profits of this World, when they must either part with Christ or them; and they will not. They think this too dear a Bargain, and plead, "We cannot spare these Things. We must look to our Estates. We must keep up our Credit with Men; how else shall we live? We must have our Pleasure, whatever becomes of Christ and Salvation." As if they were afraid of being Losers by Christ, or thought *a Man would be profited, if he should gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul*. Christ has solemnly declared, that *whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be his Disciple*. Far are



those Men from forsaking all for Christ, and yet they would have it thought that they are his Disciples indeed.

7. That which Men highly esteem, they are desirous to *help their Friends to*, as well as themselves. .And do not these Men make light of Christ and Salvation, who can take so much Care to leave their Children Portions on Earth, but do so little to help them to Heaven? Who provide outward Necessaries for their Families, but do Nothing for saving their Souls? Their neglected Children and Friends will testify, that Christ was made light of, or the Souls of Children and Friends would have been tenderly and faithfully regarded.

8. That which Men highly esteem, they will manifest by their *successfully pursuing*, if it be attainable. You may see how many make light of Christ, by the little Knowledge they have of him, and their little Communion with him, and their having no Graces communicated from him. Alas, how many Ministers can speak it with Sorrow of Heart, that many of their People know almost Nothing of Christ, tho' they hear of him daily! They know not what they must do to be saved! And if we ask them an Account of these Things, they answer as if they understood not what we say, and tell us they are no Scholars, and therefore think their Ignorance will excuse them. If such Persons had not made light of Christ and Salvation, but had bestowed half as much Pains to know and enjoy the Lord, as they have done to understand their Trades and Affairs in the World, they would not have been so ignorant as they are. When Men in a few Years have learned a difficult Trade; but, perhaps in twenty or thirty, have not learned any easy Catechism, or the Meaning of their Creed, nor will bear to be examined about such Things; does not this shew that they have slighted them in their Hearts? How will these Despisers of Christ be able in the great Day to look him in the Face, and give an Account of these Neglects!

After having suggested these Things for your Conviction, do not some of your Consciences by this Time smite you, and say, "I am the Man who have made light of my Salvation?" If Conscience does not say so, it is because you still make light of it, notwithstanding all that has been said to you.



CHAP. IV.

Considerations to reform those, who make light of Christ.

FAIN would I have this damning Distemper cured, if it be the Will of the Lord; and therefore I am very unwilling to leave you, *Sinners*, in such a desperate Condition; did I but know how to remedy it. I will now add some Considerations, which may move you to look better about you. If you are Men of Reason and Understanding, I beseech you weigh them, and make a faithful Use of them: lay open your Hearts to the Work of Grace, and seriously survey the dismal Case you are in, if you are really such as make light of Christ.

1. Consider you make light of him, who did not make light of you, tho' you deserved to be so treated by him. You were worthy of Nothing but Contempt. As Men, what are you but Worms to God? As Sinners you are far more vile than Toads. Yet Christ was so far from making light of you, and of your Happiness, that he humbled himself to put on mortal Flesh, lived a Life of Suffering, and offered himself a Sacrifice to the Justice which you had provoked, that your miserable Souls might have a Remedy. No less hath he shewed to us than Miracles of Love and Mercy, and yet shall we slight them? *Angels*, whom they less concern, *desire to look into them*; and shall redeemed Sinners make light of them? What more than devilish Ingratitude is this? The Devils never had a Saviour offered to them, but you have; and do you yet make light of him

2. Consider, the Work of Man's Salvation by Jesus Christ is the Master-Piece of all the Works of God, in which he designs his Love and Mercy to be magnified, as his Wisdom and Power were in Creation. For this Reason the Name of Jesus is *Wonderful*. *Greater Love* could none shew *than this*. How great was the Evil and Misery from which he delivered us and the Good he procured for us? All are Wonders, from his Birth to his Ascension. And from our new Birth to our Entrance into our Masters Joy, All are Wonders of matchless Mercy. And do you make light of them?

3. Consider, the Things you make light of are the most excellent and of the highest Importance. You slight you know not what. Had you well known, you could not have done it. *If thou hadst known the Gift of God, and who it is that speaks to thee, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living Water*; as our Lord argued with the Woman of Samaria. *Had the Princes of this World known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory*. So had you known what Christ is, you would not have made light of him. Had you but seen what they possess in Heaven, and also what Miseries they endure who are shut out, you would never afterwards have made so light of Christ. O Sirs! the Gospel treats not of Things trifling, or to be jested with. I profess to you, when I have the most serious Thoughts of those Things, I am ready to wonder the Souls of Men are not overwhelmed with them; that the Greatness of the Subject does not even drive Men besides themselves; and especially, that Men should be so stupid, as to make light of them. O Lord, that Men did but know



what everlasting Glory, and everlasting Torments are! Would they then hear, and read, and think of these Things as they do? Could they forbear crying out in the Congregation, or rest till they have gone to their Minister, and learned what they should do to be saved, that this great Business might be put out of Doubt? Amazing, that an everlasting Heaven and Hell should work no more on Men! How can you forbear thinking, when you are alone, what it is to be everlastingly in Joy or Torment? Why do not such Thoughts break your Sleep, and interrupt you in the Midst of your Labours? How can you have any Peace in your Minds? How can you eat, or drink, or sleep, till you have got some Ground of everlasting Consolations? Is that a Man, or a Corps, that is not affected with these momentous Things? That can sleep, rather than tremble, when he hears how he must stand at the Bar of God? That can follow his worldly Business, and make Nothing of the Business of Salvation or Damnation, even tho' he knows it is near at Hand?—Truly I wonder at the very best of God's Saints upon Earth, that they are no better, and do no more in so weighty an Affair. I wonder at those, whom the World accounts more holy than needs; and despises for making too much ado; that they do so little for Christ and their Souls; that they pour not out their Souls in every Supplication; that they are not more taken up with God and that their Thoughts are not more serious in Preparation for their last Account. I wonder they are not a hundred Times more strict in their Lives, and more laborious and unwearied in their striving for the Crown.—As for myself, I am ashamed of my dull and careless Heart, of my slow and unprofitable Course of Life, and of every Sermon I preach, to think what I have been speaking of, and who sent me, and how much the Salvation or Damnation of Men is concerned in it. I am ready to tremble, lest God should judge me as a Slighter of his Word; and of the Souls of Men, and lest in the best Sermon I should be guilty of their Blood. Methinks we should not speak a Word to Men, in Matters of such Consequence, without Tears, or without the greatest possible Earnestness; and we do not so, because we are too much guilty of the Sin which we reprove.

5. Confider who it is that sends this weighty Message to you. Is it not God himself? Shall the God of Heaven speak, and Men make light of it? You would not slight the Voice of an Angel or a Prince.

Confider whose Salvation you make light of. Is it not your own? Are you no more near or dear to yourselves, than to make light of your own Happiness or Misery? Are you in no Care whether you shall be saved or damned? Is Self Love lost? Are you turned your own Enemies? As he that slights his Food, slights his Life; so if you slight Christ, whatsoever you may think, you will find it was your own Salvation that you slighted. It is Christ who says, *All they that hate me, love Death.*

6. Confider how it aggravates your Sin in making light of the Gospel, that you profess to believe it. It is no Wonder a professed Infidel should make light of it, who neither believes that Christ ever died, or rose again, or that there is a Heaven or Hell. But you inexcusable,

who make it your Creed and Religion, call yourselves Christians, have been baptised into this Faith, and seem to stand to it. What! believe that you shall live in endless joy or Torment, and yet make so light of escaping Torment, and obtaining Joy! What! believe that God will shortly judge you, and yet treat Preparation for it with Indifference! Either say plainly, "I am no Christian. I do not believe these wonderful Things. I will believe Nothing but what I see." Or else let your Hearts be affected with your Belief, and live as you say you believe, when you repeat the Creed, and mention *Christ's Coming to Judgment, and the Life everlasting*.

7. Consider what those Things are which you prefer before Christ and Salvation. Have you found a better Friend, or a greater and surer Happiness? Good God! What Dung is all that Men make so much of, while they let light by eternal Blessedness? What Joys are they daily taken up with, while Matters of Life and Death are neglected? Had you every One a Kingdom in your Hopes, what were it, compared with an everlasting Kingdom? What is all the Glory and Dignity of this World, all its Lands and Lordships, its Crowns and Kingdoms, but like some poor Creature, that borrows fine Cloths, and mimicks the Part of a King on a Stage, and after a few Minutes comes down, and is stript of all his Finery? Were it not for God's Interest in the Authority of Magistrates, and the Service they might do him, all their Glory is but a Vapour. Death levels all. What Difference is there at Judgment, between your having been a rich Man or a poor Man; a *Dives* or a *Lazarus*? O that Men knew what a fleeting Shadow they catch at, while they neglect the everlasting Substance? The most powerful, rich, and prosperous Sinners only lay in Fuel for their Sorrows, while they are fancying it will be a Treasure of Enjoyments. Alas, they are dreaming of Happiness, and when they awake, what a Change will they find! Their Crown is made of Thorns. Their Joy has such a Sting, as will pierce their Heart thro' all Eternity, except unfeigned Repentance prevent. O how sadly will these Wretches be convinced e'er long, what a foolish Bargain they made, in selling Christ and Salvation for these Trifles! Let your Farms and Merchandize then save you, if they can; and do that for you which Christ would have done. Cry then to your *Baal* to save you.

8. Consider that to set light by Christ and Salvation is a certain Sign you have no Part in them. If you continue to do so, Christ will set as light by you. *Them that honour him, he will honour; and they that despise him, shall be lightly esteemed*. You will feel one Day, that you cannot live without him. You will then confess your Need of him. And then you may look for a Saviour where you will, for he will be no Saviour to you, who refused to value him, and submit to him, while he was offered to you. Then who will be the Loser by your Contempt? O what will it be for a poor miserable Soul to cry to Christ for Help in the Day of Extremity, and to hear him say, "Thou didst set light by me in the Day of thy Prosperity, and I will now set as light by thee in thy Adversity. *Because I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded; But you have set at Nought all my*

33

34

Counsel, and would none of my Reproof; I also will 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 come upon you. Then shall you call upon on me, but I will not answer; you shall seek me early, but you shall not find me. For you hated Knowledge; and did not chuse the Fear of the Lord. You would none of my Counsel, you despised all my Reproof. Therefore shall you eat of the Fruit of your own Way, and be filled with your own Devices. You that, as Esau, for one Morsel of Meat sold your Birthright, shall then find no Place for Repentance, tho' you seek it carefully with Tears." Do you think that Christ shed his Blood to save them who continue to make light of it, and that prefer their Lusts before his Salvation? Tho' you set so light by Christ and Salvation, God does not do so. He values the Blood of his Son, and everlasting Glory, and will make you value them, if ever you have them. All the World cannot save him who sets light by Christ. And can you find Fault for being denied what you yourselves made light of, and for missing the Salvation which you slighted?



9. Consider, the Time is near when Christ and Salvation will no more be made light of, as they now are.. When God hath shaken your careless Soul out of your Body, and you must answer for all your Sins in your own Name; O then, what would you give for a Saviour! When a Thousand Bills shall be brought against you, and not one to relieve you, you will then reflect, "Now would Christ have stood between me and the Wrath of God! Had Is not despised him, he would have answered every Demand!" When you see the World hath left you, your Companions in Sin have deceived both themselves and you, and that all your merry Days are fled away; then, what would you give for the Christ and Salvation, which you now account not worth your Labour? When you shall see the Judgment-Day, and yourselves doomed to everlasting Perdition for your Wickedness, do you think you shall then make as light of Christ, as you do now? Why will you not judge now, as you know you shall judge then? Will Christ then be worth ten Thousand Worlds, and is he not now worth your highest Esteem, and your best Affections!



10. Consider, God will not only deny you the Salvation you made light of, but he will take from you all that which you preferred before it. He that *loves Christ in Sincerity, shall with him have all Things*, so far as here they will be for his good; and have Christ hereafter, when earthly Enjoyments shall have lost all their Value. He that esteems any Thing here more than Christ, shall have his Comforts on Earth imbittered to him, and be left comfortless for ever and ever.

And what think you now? Does it not appear by these Considerations to be a heinous Sin to make light of Christ and Salvation? Ought you not to be careful lest this should prove your own wretched Condition? God knows it is too common. Whoever is found guilty at last of this Sin, *good were it for that Man if he had never been born*. He had better have been a *Turk* or a *Savage*, that never heard the Name of a Saviour, nor ever had the Offer of Salva-

tion. Christ, whom you make light of, must be your Judge, and for this Sin will he judge you. And as Christ himself asks, *how can you escape the Damnation of Hell?* Or, as the Apostle asks, *how shall you escape if you neglect so great Salvation?* Can you escape without a Christ; or will a despised Christ then save you? If *he be cursed that setteth light by his Father, or his Mother*; what then is he that setteth light by Christ? It is among the aggravated Sins of *Jerusalem*, that in her were those who *set light by Father and Mother*, but how much more aggravated to set light by *the Father of Spirits?* In the Name of God I beseech you to consider, how you will bear his final Displeasure, whom you now make light of. You that cannot make light of a little Sickness, or Want, or even of a Tooth-Ach, but groan as if you were undone; how can you make light of the Fury of the Lord, which will burn against the Contemners of his Grace? Is it not absolutely necessary to think of these Things before it be for ever too late?



CHAP. V.

Directions for those who desire to make light of Christ no more.

HAVING endeavoured to convince you of the Evil and Danger of this Sin, I now come to know what you are resolved, upon. What says Conscience? Will you set as light by Christ and Salvation, as you have formerly been doing? Are you resolved still to persist in the same sinful Course? I hope not. O let not your Ministers, who would fain save you, be brought Witnesses against you to condemn you. At least, I beseech you, put not this upon me. If the Lord than say to us at Judgment, "Did you never tell these Men what Christ hath done and suffered for their Souls, and their own need of him, and how nearly it concerned them to regard their own Salvation, and not make light of it?" We must then say, "Yes, Lord, we told them of it as plainly as we could. We would have done it upon our Knees to them, if we had thought thereby to have prevailed. We intreated them as earnestly as we could to consider these Things. They heard of these Things every Day; but alas, we could never fasten them on their Hearts! They gave us the Hearing, but they made light of all that we could say to them." How wretched will your Condition be, if you force us to such an Answer as this!

Perhaps you may be secretly hoping that you are not in the Number of those who make light of Christ. And for fear you should deceive yourselves with false Hopes, let me excite your Caution and Jealousy by mentioning some of those Things on which false Hopes are commonly founded. As for Instance;—You may have a notional and speculative Knowledge of Christ, and of the Necessity of his Blood, and of the Excellency of Salvation; and yet may perish as Neglecters of Christ. This is too common amongst professing Christians.—You may say all that other Men do of Christ. Even *Balaam* could utter some Evangelical Truths. A Devil could say, *Jesus I know, and Paul I know; for the Devils also believe and tremble.*—You may weep at the History of Christ's Sufferings, when you read how he was abused by the *Jews* and the *Romans*; and yet you may make light of him, and perish for doing so.—You may have a Desire after the Word, and Ordinances of Christ. *Herod heard the Word gladly*; and so do many, who must nevertheless perish as Neglecters of Salvation.—You may have a longing after Christ to ease your present Distress, and to save you from the Wrath of God; and yet you may perish for making light of Christ.—You may *do many Things* in Obedience to Christ, so as to consist with your worldly Schemes and Interests, and may escape much of the Pollutions of the World thro' the Knowledge of Christ; and yet may neglect him.—You may part with much of the World for Christ, as *Ananias* and *Sapphira* did. Many will lose some of their Profits and Pleasures in Hope of Salvation, who shall perish everlastingly, because they had no more Value for Salvation.—You may be esteemed and admired by others on Account of your Zeal for Christ: and yet perish for making light of him.—You may verily think of yourselves, that you prefer Christ and Salvation before every Thing else, and yet you may be mistaken, and may be judged Despisers of Christ. For Christ does not justify

39

40

all them, who justify themselves.—You may zealously preach Christ and Salvation, and reprove others for their Neglect, and lament this Sin in the greatest Part of the World, as I am often doing; and yet if you or I have no better Evidence to prove our sincere Esteem .for Christ and Salvation, we are utterly undone.

But that your Hopes in a Matter of such infinite Importance may not deceive you, there are two Things which are absolutely necessary to be found in you. One Thing is this,—Your Esteem for Christ and Salvation must be greater than for all the Honours, Profits, or Pleasures of this World; or else you slight him. No les than this will be accounted sincere, or be accepted to your Salvation. Think not this hard, when there is no Comparison between the Things in Question. To esteem the greatest Glory on Earth, before Christ and everlasting Glory, is a greater Folly in itself, and a greater Injury to Christ, than to esteem a Dog before your Prince would be either foolish, or unjust. *If any Man come to me, says our Lord, 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.*—You must likewise manifest this Esteem for Christ and Salvation in your daily Endeavours, by your seeking after Christ, and parting with any Thing that he shall require of you. *God is a Spirit*, and will not take an hypocritical Profession, instead of the Heart and spiritual Service which he commands. He will have the Heart, or Nothing; and even the chief Room in the Heart.—If, after considering these two Things, you still say, that you do not make light of Christ, or will do no more, let me farther try you in a few Particulars, whether you really mean as you say, and do not dissemble.

1. Will you for the Time to come make Christ and Salvation the chief Matter of your Care and Study? Thrust them not out of your Thoughts, as a needless or unprofitable Subject; nor allow them only some slight and transient Thoughts, which will not affect you. Will you make it your Business, at least once a Day, when you are alone, to think seriously, what Christ has done for you; or what he will do, if you do not make light of it; what it is to be everlastingly happy or miserable; what all Things in this World are in Comparison of your everlasting Salvation, how soon they will leave you, and what you will then think of them? Will you resolve to withdraw yourselves frequently from the World, and set yourselves to such Considerations as these? If you will not, are you not Slighters of Christ and Salvation, who will not be persuaded to think on them seriously?

2. Will you for the Time to come set a higher Value on the Word of God, which is the Discovery and Charter of your Salvation, and your Guide to it? You cannot esteem Christ, without esteeming his Word. *Whoso despiseth the Word, shall be destroyed.* Will you therefore attend to the publick Preaching of the Word? Will you daily read it? Will you resolve to obey it whatever it may cost you? If you will not do this, but will make light of the Word of God, you will be judged to have made light of Christ and Salvation, whatever you may fondly promise yourselves.



3. Will you for the Time to come set a higher Value on Christ's Ministers, whom he has appointed to guide you to Salvation? And will you make Use of them for that End? Alas! it is not enough to speak well of your Ministers, and duly contribute to their Maintenance. They are to be as Physicians under Christ, to apply his Remedies to your spiritual Diseases, both in publick and in private; that you may go to them, for their Instructions and Advices, their Exhortations and Prayers. Will you go to them in private, and solicit their Help? And if you have not such near you as are rightly disposed to help you, will you go to such as are, and ask them, *What you shall do to be saved*, and how you shall prepare for Death and Judgment? Will you obey the Word of God in their Mouths? If you will not inquire of those that should teach you, nor use the Means Christ has appointed for your Help, your own Consciences shall one day witness against you, that you made light of Christ and Salvation. If you doubt whether it be your Duty thus to ask Counsel of your Ministers, as sick Men do of their Physicians, let your own Necessities and the express Declarations of the Word of God resolve you. *The Priest's Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth; for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.*



4. Will you for the Time to come make Conscience of daily fervent Prayer to God, that you may have a Part in Christ and Salvation? Do not go out of Doors in the Morning, nor lie down to Rest at Night, till you have first breathed out these Desires to God. Say not, "God knows my Necessities without praying so often." For tho' he does, yet he will have you to know and feel them, and have your Desires and all the Graces of his Spirit exercised in Prayer. It is he that commands you to *pray without ceasing*. Christ himself spent whole Nights in Prayer, and encourages us *always to pray, and not to faint*. And if you will not be persuaded to this, how can you say that you do not make light of Christ and Salvation?



5. Will you for the Time to come cast away your known Sins at the Command of Christ? If you have been proud or contentious, malicious and revengeful, be so no more. If you have been Adulterers, or Swearers, or Drunkards, be so no more. You cannot esteem Christ and Salvation, while any known Sin is cherished. What say you? Are you resolved to part with every Sin? If not, when you know it is the Will of Christ, and he has told you that such shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, are not you making light of him?

6. Will you for the Time to come serve God in the most expensive as well as the cheapest Part of his Service? Will you do it not only with your Tongues, but with your Estates, and all your Abilities? Shall the Poor find that you value Christ more than all the World? *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep yourselves unspotted from the World*. Will you resolve to cleave to Christ, and make Salvation sure, tho' it cost you all you have in the World? If you think these Terms are too dear, you make light of Christ, and will be judged accordingly.

7. Will you for the Time to come value every Thing that tends to your Salvation, and use every Help that God offers you? Attend upon the Word, Sacraments and Prayer; instruct

Children and Servants in the Knowledge of Christ; sanctify the Lord's Day; get into good Company, who set their Faces Heaven-ward; and take Heed of the Company of the Vain, the Voluptuous; the Scornful, or any that would hinder you in your sacred Work? Will you do these Things; or by neglecting them shew, that you are Slighters of Christ?

. 8. Will you do all these Particulars, not as your Toil, but as your Pleasure and Delight? Will you account it your highest Honour, to be the Disciples of Christ, to be admitted to serve and worship him, and to rejoice with holy Confidence in the Sufficiency of his Sacrifice; by which you may have Pardon of all Sin, and a Right to *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*? If you will do these Things sincerely, you will shew your real Value for Christ and Salvation.

Dearly Beloved in the Lord, I have now done what I proposed on this weighty Subject; and what Effect it will have upon any Heart I know not; nor is it in my Power to accomplish what my Soul earnestly desires. Were it the Lord's Will that I might have my Wish, the Words you have been reading should so impress you, as to awaken you out of your Security, and prevent your perishing with those, who make light of Christ and Salvation. O that I could make every Man's Conscience a faithful Preacher to himself, that being ever present with you it might prevail! O that the next Time you go prayerless to Bed, or into your Business, Conscience might cry out, "Have you no more value for Christ and Salvation!" O that the next Time you are tempted to think hardly of a holy Life, I will not say, to scoff at it as more than is needful, Conscience might loudly say, "Dare not to make light of Christ and Salvation!" O that the next Time you are ready to rush upon any known Sin, and to gratify corrupt Inclination against the Command of God, Conscience might earnestly ask you, "Is Christ and Salvation of no more Worth, than to cast them away for every vile Lust!" O that when you are following the World with your most eager Desires, and forgetting an eternal World, and the awful Change which is so near, Conscience might remind you of the infinite Worth of Christ and Salvation! And that when you are next spending the Lord's Day in idleness, or in vain Amusements, Conscience might faithfully tell you what you are doing! In a Word, that in all your Neglects of Duty, and in all your cold and formal Prayers and religious Services, Conscience might tell you how unsuitable such Endeavours are to an eternal Reward, and that Christ and Salvation should not be so slighted! I will say no more but this, That it is most lamentable, when God has provided a Saviour for the World, when Christ has suffered so much for Sin, made such a compleat Atonement to Divine Justice, and purchased so glorious a Kingdom for his Saints; and when all this is so freely offered to Sinners, to lost, undeserving, and Hell deserving Sinners; so many Millions should nevertheless perish everlastingly, because they make light of their Saviour and Salvation, and prefer this vain World and their own abominable Lusts! I have delivered my Message; may the Lord open many a Heart to receive it! I have endeavour'd to persuade with *the*



Words of Truth and Soberness ; may the Lord persuade more effectually, or all I have said is in vain.

FINIS.

Indexes

Index of Pages of the Print Edition

ii iii iv 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34
35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45