



Fire and Ice Sermon Series

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A Practical Exposition Upon The Fifty-Third Chapter Of Isaiah.

by Thomas Manton

THE THIRD VERSE.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

THE prophet proceedeth now to the second scandal and offence that the Jews took against Christ, who therefore would not believe the report that was made of him. The first was Christ's meanness in his birth and life, which we have handled in the second verse. The next is his sufferings, and those are either of his life or of his death, which are set forth in divers verses following. In this verse the prophet's expressions do chiefly hint the sufferings of his life. Here are divers phrases which discover the several degrees of Christ's sufferings, though I shall not give them to you in the order of the words, because the expressions lie scattered here and there. The degrees are these:—

1. He was not esteemed.
2. He was actually despised, and became an object of scorn and contempt.
3. He was liable to great miseries; and—
4. He was continually pestered with them. This is the sum of this verse. I will make it out unto you from the phrases, opened as the text presenteth them.

1. *He is despised and rejected of men.* That which we read *rejected of men*, the Hebrew *chadal ishim*, signifieth 'the leaving off of men.' It may bear a double interpretation:—

[1.] That Christ was so extremely mean and miserable that it was impossible to be lower as a man. He was the *minimum quod sic* of a man; if he had gone any lower, we must have had some other name for him. In this sense it

is said, Ps. 22:6, 'I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people.' You must seek for some name for him among the worms.

[2.] The leaving off of men; that is, there men left him, they would converse with any other, but not with him. Nobody would deign him speech and company; he was least of all. Our interpretation seemeth to favour this exposition. There is not much matter which you prefer.

2. *A man of sorrows.* A Hebraism to express the height of misery. They use the genitive case of the substantive to express the superlative degree of anything, as 'a man of Belial' for a very wicked man; so 'a psalm of degrees,' an excellent psalm. This expression compelleth some of the wiser Jews to feign two Messiahs, one that is already come, that walketh up and down on the earth under the shape of a beggar, that he may satisfy for the sins of the Jews, and is in a great deal of misery. The other a glorious king, whom they do as yet expect; that is the second expression.

3. *Acquainted with grief. Familiaris morbo,* so Tremellius renders it knowing diseases; that is, by his own experience. Disease is put for any kind of trouble and molestation, because they are the things that are most irksome. For otherwise Christ, though he had many griefs, yet he had no diseases, these usually arising out of some intemperance or badness of constitution, neither of which agree to Christ. He took our personal, not individual infirmities; hunger and thirst he was acquainted with, not stone or gout or fever.

4. *And we hid as it were our faces from him,* or, as it is in the margin, *He hid as it were his face from us;* the Hebrew will bear both. It is either a hiding faces from him or from us. Since the text doth so indifferently allow of both these renderings, I shall show you the sense of both. He hid his face from us, which the Septuagint follows, *To to prosupon auton.* His face was turned away as it were; in modesty say some, as if he were ashamed of the meanness of his condition; but that is unworthy of Christ. The Chaldee paraphrase seemeth to hint another sense, *subtraxit vultum majestatis suae*—he hid the countenance of his divine majesty; that is probable, but doth not thoroughly reach the force of the expression. Others thus—he hid his face as a person doomed to die, as sentenced persons had their faces covered, or when much discountenanced. Thus Haman, when in displeasure with the king, Esther 7:8, it is said 'his face was covered.' So in great sorrow and mourning, 'Thou shalt cover thy face,' Ezek. 12:6; or it is more properly in shame, or as a token of being unworthy the society of men. So it was with the lepers, who by the law were to put a covering upon the upper lip, Lev. 13:45. It is not difficult to reconcile any of these senses with the matter in hand. But let us consider the other reading, 'We hid our faces from him.' This is

a natural gesture, and at all times signifieth some abomination and withdrawing of the mind from a thing; but sometimes it is in one affection, and sometimes in another; as—

[1.] Sometimes in anger; to hate them so as we will not give them a look. Thus God is said to hide his face from his church to express his anger against their sins.

[2.] Sometimes in shame. We turn *away* from them, as rich men do from their poor friends; they scorn to give them a look.

[3] Sometimes in pity. It is such a sad sight that we dare not look on it. I rather prefer that of a scornful shame, being ashamed to follow such a poor, mean, miserable man. Thus many now hide their faces from Christ, when it is disgraceful to close with him. There is nothing now remaineth that is difficult; only it followeth, he was despised and looked upon as a man leprous, whose face should be hid; and therefore we did not esteem him worthy of our company. The sum of the verse amounts to thus much, that Jesus Christ was so miserable in regard of his outward face and appearance, that he was looked upon as an abject, as a man not fit to be kept company with. I shall only note these two things more for explication, because upon them I shall build two points, which shall he all I will handle out of this verse.

1. Some of these expressions set out Christ as indeed he was;

2. Some, only as he was in the apprehension of men. He was in himself ‘a man of sorrows,’ but in the eye of man he was a despised and an abject person: the one is the cause or the occasion of the other; and the prophet so intermingleth these two things in this verse, that the phrases may be taken both ways—how Christ was in himself, and how he was to men.

1. As he was in himself: from thence I observe this point:—*Doct. 1.* That Christ’s appearance in the world, and state of life among men, was not only very mean, but very miserable.

2. From men’s judgment of him: upon this account I observe:—*Doct. 2.* That carnal men do not look upon Jesus Christ as worthy of any esteem from them.

I shall begin with the first, viz.:—

Doct. 1. That Christ’s appearance in the world, and state of life among men, was not only very mean, but very miserable.

I shall take the several degrees in the text to make it out unto you.

1. The lowest step is negative; he was 'not esteemed.' He had not that due respect and value in the world that he might justly look for; and it is a misery to be slighted by those to whom we intend the greatest good. It was much that they should not own him as some eminent man; it was more that they would not give him the respect due to any man, to an ordinary prophet: John 1:11, 'He came to his own, and his own received him not.' There is an emphasis in the words *his own*, those over whom he had a special care, and to whom he meant the greatest good. Mark, everything else acknowledged Christ, but man would not. The angels ushered in his birth, Luke 2:14. The wind and seas obeyed him, Mat. 8:27. The fish paid his tribute to him, Mat. 17:27. The wild beasts, when he was in the wilderness, would not touch him, Mark 1:13. The Holy Ghost would have us to note it as a special circumstance, that he was in the wilderness forty days, and he was with the wild beasts.' Nay, the very devils confessed him, Luke 8:28. The man that had many devils fell down before him, and cried out, and with a loud voice said, 'What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high?' Yet man would not own him. They thought any one was more like to be the Messiah than he. John, though he never did miracles, nor taught with such authority as Christ did, yet they sent an honourable message to him, John 1:19. The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him whether he were the Christ or no. But now they never sent an honourable embassy to Christ, never put him to the question, but only in a scoff asked him whether he were the Christ or no. Yet John gave them as much ground of distaste as Christ did, freely taxing their sins. John was sent to in an honourable way, because he was a priest's son, but Christ only a carpenter's son, therefore Christ was not esteemed. Anything is enough to prejudice them that are not affected to a thing or way. Nay; they not only preferred John before him, though famous for no miracles, but even Barabbas before him: John 18:40, 'When Pilate said, Will ye that I release unto you the king of the Jews? Then cried they all, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.' Any rather than Christ. They had very little esteem of Christ, you see. And this fault is objected to them; indeed, it was a great aggravation of their guilt: Acts 3:14, 'Ye have denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you,' even a cruel highwayman before Christ. *Esteeming* is a relative word, and it implieth every one, even the worst of men, to be higher in their thoughts than Christ.

2. As he was not esteemed, so actually he was despised, and became an object of scorn and contempt.

[1] He was despised and contemned in their thoughts. They looked upon him as an abject, the leaving-off or off-scouring of men; they thought it was a

disgrace for them to converse with him; and therefore Nicodemus went to Christ by night, John 3:2, as being ashamed to be seen in his company by day. So John 9:22, the blind man's parents, that had received a great benefit by him, would make a lie rather than own him. It is said, 'These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.' They thought him unworthy of their company, and therefore every one hid his face from him, and would not seem to look that way.

[2.] In their words they used all kinds of reproaches, they thought no name bad enough for him: John 8:48, 'Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?' There was such a deadly feud between the Jews and the Samaritans, that to call a man a Samaritan was the greatest disgrace that could be, and the ready way to beget him public hatred. Here are two scandals fixed on Christ—a Samaritan, and one that hath a devil; the one reflecteth upon his person, the other on his doctrine. And that which is worthy of your notice is, that to that of his doctrine Christ answereth, but doth not care how they vilified his person. In Mat. 11:19, they call him 'a glutton, a wine-bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners.' They looked upon him as an object of common scorn and hatred. So they accounted him as an enemy to Caesar; anything that would make him obnoxious to danger and scorn. They likewise called him a deceiver Mat. 27:63, 'Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive.' Proud, insulting malice! They would not call him by his own name, but as if he had been so notoriously guilty, that it was a sufficient description of him to say *that deceiver*.

[3.] In their general carriage towards him. To any that seemed to own him, they showed a great deal of contempt and scorn. Because the blind man acknowledged him, they cast him out, or excommunicated him, John 9:34. So John 7:52, by way of taunt they said, 'Art thou also of Galilee?' But chiefly their behaviour to his person was intolerable, and that in the last scene of his life: Mat. 26:68. The rude soldiers make him their game, and blinding him, say, 'Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?' So it is prophesied, Mat. 20:19, 'They shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him.' There is a special emphasis in these words—that he, being a Jew, should be delivered over to the Gentiles to be mocked, scourged, and crucified. Nothing was more vile and abominable, insomuch that they would not come into the place where Pilate sat judging, for fear of being contaminated: John 18:28, 'And they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled.' Therefore it was that Pilate went forth to them, for they would not come in. Look, as it was an aggravation of David's

fault that he made Uriah to be slain with the sword of the children of Ammon, 2 Sam. 12:9, so it was of the Jews' contempt, that they should deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged. Thus you see how he was despised, and looked upon as an abject.

3. *A man of sorrows.* This noteth the multitude of his afflictions, and the greatness of them. He was a man assaulted with all kinds of sorrows, and grievously afflicted with them. A man of sorrows, that is, a man of miseries; the affection is put for the condition, because they left a great impression upon him. All kinds of sorrows he endured for our sakes, as scoffs, persecution, contempt, unkindness, miseries, hunger, thirst, faintness, and weariness. I might tire you with a woful variety of this nature; the scriptures everywhere testify it. Let me briefly tell you, that they were as much as might fit him to be a mediator; his sufferings are to be measured by his mediatorship; and then, they were such as might stand with the holiness of his person. Now, these sufferings were the more grievous to him, because his senses were most quick and smart; and, therefore, he must needs, above other men, have a sensible apprehension of what was done to him. The best constitutions have the most vigorous affections; and therefore, it could not be but that all these sufferings should leave very dolorous impressions upon the spirit of Christ. And, indeed; it is more than probable that he was so wasted with them, and they had so dried up the moisture and freshness of his countenance, that when he was little above thirty they thought him near fifty years of age John 8:57, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?' He was little above thirty; but griefs blasting his beauty, he might appear more aged than he was. Thus you see he was a man of sorrows. I do not touch upon the last scene of his death, the sorrows of his life justly give him that character.

4. *Acquainted with grief.* It was not only now and then, but it was always miserable with him. Acquaintance with a thing or person implieth the usualness of it. Now, Christ was acquainted with grief, that is, accustomed to it, never freed from it. As soon as he began to live he began to suffer. He was exiled, and forced to fly into Egypt as soon as he was a month old, and ever afterward hunted up and down by the pharisees. Trace him through all the scenes of his life, from the cradle to the cross, from the stable to Golgotha, and you shall see that grief was his familiar—he had no other companion. It is an observation in that letter that Lentulus sent concerning him (if that letter be not forged), *Visus est flere saepe, ridere nunquam*—he was often seen to weep, never to laugh, being always acquainted with grief. And in regard of those cruel persecutions that did constantly attend him, he is called in the title of that psalm that sets out the misery of his life, Ps. 22, 'The hind of the morning;' see the title, 'A psalm concerning Aijeleth Shahar,' that is, Christ, who was always from the very morning hunted

and worried by the dogs. He complaineth of it in that psalm, ver. 16, 'The dogs have compassed me.' The dogs hunted him in the morning early and betimes. Herod, one of the dogs, as soon as he was born, endeavours to murder him. So at the time of Christ's death the Holy Ghost giveth us this circumstance John 18:28, 'That they led Christ from Caiaphas unto the judgment-hall, and it was early in the morning.' The bloodhounds were up to worry him betimes in the morning. Well, you see Christ was acquainted with grief, even early, from his first breath to his last gasp, from his lying in the cradle to his *consummatum est* (it is finished) on the cross. Nay, it is very observable, that in the short glory of his transfiguration he was not without sorrow, for even then he remembered his death to come, as you shall see, Luke 9:31; when Moses and Elias appeared to him in glory, 'They spake of his decease, which should be accomplished at Jerusalem.' In the midst of his glory he would remember his death. And therefore, you see, well might the prophet use the expression *acquainted with grief*. So much for the determination of the point, to prove to you that Christ's state of life was so miserable in the world.

I shall now show you why he was so miserable. Why did he undergo all these sorrows? It is a profitable question; as the former for our meditation, so this for our faith. The causes either respect God or the creature.

First, In respect of God; and so it was:—

1. That his promises might be fulfilled. God had foretold it so by the prophets: Mark 9:12, 'It is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought.' Now this sentence is nowhere in one prophet, but the meaning is. It is the constant drift and result of all that is written concerning the Messiah, that he must suffer many things, and be counted as nothing; though he alludeth specially to this chapter and the 22d Psalm. This was so far from being a scandal against Christ, that it rather confirmed him to be the Messiah, for he was just such a one as was promised and prophesied of.

2. That he might declare his obedience to God's decrees and appointment. It is said, Heb. 5:8, that 'He learned obedience by the things that he suffered.' He did by experience find what it was to have a Father whom he must obey, though otherwise he were every way equal to him. But the excellency of his person exempted him not from suffering; for, having taken our debt upon him, his holy life was a part of his obedience to his Father, but his sufferings showed a higher degree of it, which made him a full and complete mediator. To obey God in the ordinary way of our actions is a common lesson to every holy person; but Christ's obedience was chiefly tried by his sufferings, because, being without sin, he never deserved it. Thus much in respect of God.

Secondly, In respect of men; and so—

1. That he might set off his love to us. Usually they are dearer to us that have suffered anything for our sakes, than they that have otherwise done us good. And therefore Christ, to set off his love, spent a miserable thirty-two years and upwards in the world, and afterwards died a terrible death; and that not for himself, but for us. Some say it was to merit his own glory; but it is not good to divert the stream, or any part of it, from that channel in which Christ intended it should run: Dan. 9:26, 'The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.' Christians, all his sufferings were for you.

2. That he might be a perfect mediator for us. Christ was perfect in himself, but he wanted somewhat to make up his office: Heb. 2:10, 'It behoved the captain of our salvation to be made perfect through sufferings; 'Heb. 5:8, 9, 'By the things which he suffered he was made perfect.' Christ was perfect in himself, but not perfect in his office; he was made perfect as a captain of our salvation when he went through those things in which others were to follow him.

3. That he might be able to comfort his people in the like distresses: Heb. 2:18, 'For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' A man can the better comfort others, when he hath had the experience of their miseries in himself. Christ knew how sad it was with his own soul when he was acquainted with these griefs, and therefore no doubt he is willing and able to help you. Experienced men are pitiful; those that have suffered pity others when they are in the like case. It is God's charge often to Israel, that having been strangers in the land of Egypt, they should learn to pity strangers. And certainly whatever is good in the creature, is eminently so in Christ. He hath stronger impressions of affection and pity than we have. Mark what the apostle saith Heb. 4:15, 'For we have not an high priest that cannot be touched, with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all things tempted as we are, yet without sin.' Christ knew how it was with himself. In the like experiences and afflictions, therefore, it cannot but work upon his bowels, though men's hearts are shut up.

To apply it now. Out of all that I have spoken to you, you may infer much for your instruction.

1. The matter, what he suffered.

2. The manner, how he came to suffer.

3. The reasons and ends why, for our good; so that here are three chief lessons for a Christian to learn:—

[1.] Patience and comfort.

[2.] Humility.

[3.] In the end, love.

[1.] It teacheth you patience and comfort. There is a double ground for that. Christ went before you, and he did it that he might have experience and a fellow-feeling of your case and sufferings. Here is the comfort of God's people; they have a high priest that is touched with the feeling of their infirmities. Christ's bowels melt over them whilst God's hand striketh them. A man may have moral grounds of comfort, but here is the true ground, Christ sympathises with us John 18:10, 'The cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' Though it is a bitter cup, yet it is my heavenly Father that hath put it into my hands. There is a difference between the strokes of God upon the wicked and his own people; strokes upon the wicked come from God's hand, but those upon the godly from God's heart. Bear up, then, against the greatest crosses. Art thou looked upon as an abject, the leaving-off of men? So was Christ, and so are many of God's people: 1 Cor. 4:13, 'We are made as the filth of the world, and are as the off-scouring of all things: The world's filth,—worms, not men. Worms are bred out of the world's filth. Art thou compassed about with losses, affliction upon affliction, like waves one in the neck of the other? do men hide their faces from thee, or art thou in no repute, no respect with them? so was Christ, and Christ knoweth what it is for thee to be in such a case. Job heareth of loss upon loss from the Chaldeans, Sabeans, Job 1:14. It is often repeated, 'While he was yet speaking, came another and said.' So Jer. 30:17, 'Zion, whom no man looketh after.' God's people have often become the wagging of the head, but Christ's sufferings teach us patience.

[2] Humility. Christ taught us this in his meanness, and he teacheth it in his sufferings. See the difference between Christ and Adam; Christ would be most abject, Adam would be higher than man. The highest is become the humblest; our first parents would be as gods, and Christ would scarce be as man, even be man's leavings. It is good to learn humility from this pattern showed us in the mount, even in Mount Calvary; to deny ourselves to set up Christ, as Christ denied himself to set up us. Of all things, men cannot endure to cast their crowns at the Lamb's feet—I mean, to sacrifice their glory and esteem to Christ, or to be nothing that he may be all in all. Pride is like the heart, first living and last dying in a man: 3 John 9, 'Diotrephes loved to have the pre-eminence.' Some are all for precedency, they would be preferred before others. You see Christ is otherwise. He freely submitted himself to the most abject condition. Thus it teacheth us humility.

[3.] Considering the end,—his love. All this was for you. Oh, what will you do for God again? Christians should blow up the fire of love by these thoughts. How are we wrought upon by every petty kindness that passeth between man and man! How much more, then, should the consideration of what Christ hath done and suffered endear him to us? And this was done for our sakes. Let it melt our hearts, and draw them out in love to God again.

I proceed now to the second point.

Doct. 2. That carnal men do not look upon Jesus Christ as worthy of any esteem from them. Christ was mean and miserable, and therefore the world esteemed him not, but despised him rather, and looked upon him as an abject, unfit for their converse and society.

I shall give you a few reasons for it.

1. Because they look altogether upon the dark part (as I may speak) of Jesus Christ; they do not consider the light and the more glorious part. In sins they look altogether upon the light part, and not upon the dark—the pleasures of sin, and not the cross and shame that attends them. Now, taking into their thoughts Christ's worst, and sin's best part, no wonder if they miscarry in their judgments. They look upon the world's pomp, but not the world's vanity; upon the pleasures of sin, but not upon the shame and horror that accompany them. Therefore it is said, Prov. 5:3,4, 'The lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword.' Men think to swallow the honey, but do not think of the wormwood. Things are to be esteemed as they prove in the end. Heathens had some light into this truth, that no man is happy till the end, till they try how things prove with them. Things are better known in their departure than in their coming; the sting is in the tail, and therefore you shall see it is said, Deut. 32:29, 'Oh, that they were wise, that they would understand this, that they would consider their latter end.' That is wisdom, not to look upon 'things as they are at present, but what they will prove at the latter end—how we shall find them upon trial. But with Christ they deal otherwise; they look upon Christianity as a hard, laborious thing. Many sad fears they have; a great deal of duty to be performed; much care, much toil, and much grief attends it; with many other inconveniences. But they do not look upon the sweet of all this: Rom. 6:22, 'But now being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.' There is a good end. Carnal men thing it a hard saying to part with pleasures, profits, honour, esteem, to part with all for Christ, and to expect nothing in this world but grief, and sorrow, and care. This is sad. Christ is not esteemed, because they look upon him with

such an unequal, unfaithful eye. We are willing to stumble at his meanness, but will not reflect upon his excellency.

2. Because carnal men want that which should set off Christ to them as an object fit to be esteemed; and that is two things —the Spirit's discovery, and faith's eye; the one to reveal the object, the other to apprehend it.

[1.] They want the Spirit's discovery. A man cannot see the sun without its own light; no more can you see Jesus Christ in his beauty without the Spirit of Christ. Reports and education may do much, but it is the Spirit that sets forth Jesus Christ as a worthy object. What is the reason that many that know Christ and profess him, yet cannot esteem him? The Spirit hath not convinced them of the worth that is in him. A man may be convinced of the truth of a thing, but not practically convinced of the worth of it. And 'flesh and blood doth not reveal that to us,' as Christ said to Peter. The reason why Christ is valued by his own people is because he hath discovered much of himself to them.

[2] They want the eye of faith, and that is the discovering part of the soul, that sheweth much of Christ to it. Till we have faith we judge by sense and carnal reason, and then no wonder if we turn away from him. 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. 11:1. It carrieth the soul within the veil, and sheweth unto us better things, and maketh them present in the heart through hope and the promises. Faith and the Spirit discover a world of satisfaction, sweetness, glory, excellency, and beauty in Christ. There are large discoveries of God's love and purposes, and what he will do for his people.

3. There are perverse inclinations in the heart that carry the soul another way. Men look upon everything as it cometh dyed in the colour of their own affections. Here is the great depravation of nature since the fall, that those things which should follow guide and sit at the stern; vile affections besot the judgment: Rom. 1:26, with 28, 'God gave them up to vile affections;' and presently afterwards, 'He gave them over to a reprobate mind.' Men are so injudicious, because they consult with their affections. Now they cannot make a right judgment. It is true, things should be desired and loved as the judgment propounds them to be good and true; but now, in the disorder of nature, it is otherwise. We let our desires get the start of us, and therefore men do not esteem Christ, because he is so opposite to the chief object of their desires. A worthy thought of Christ would exasperate our base affections that are carried to other things. Hear what the apostle saith: Rom. 8:5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.' They mind only those things, they only savour and relish them.

4. Because they do not know what it is to want Christ. Men make other things serve instead of him, and therefore they do not care for Christ. Now when the soul looks upon the insufficiency of all things else to give rest and quiet to it, then it will prize him. When a man extremely wants a thing, nothing will satisfy him until he obtain it. As Abraham, for want of a child, though he had much, yet he crieth out, ‘What wilt thou give me, since I go childless?’ Such is the language of the soul—What is all this, since I have not Christ? Sampson his victory could do him no good when he had no water to quench his thirst: Judges 15:19, ‘Thou hast given me a deliverance, and now I shall die for thirst.’ Thus carnal men have other things, but they shall die and be damned for want of Christ. If men were brought to this, to see that there were satisfaction nowhere else for them, they would value him.

5. They do not know what it is to have an interest in Christ; they never had experience of him. Here is the difference between Christ and other comforts: The more experience we have had of them, the less satisfaction we perceive to be in them; but the more experience we have of Christ, the more we desire to have. Taste Christ once, and there will be no room left for any other desire. Though you want other things, this maketh amends for all. As Austin crieth out, *Quam suave mihi subito factum est carere suavitatibus nugarum!* (That which is sweet to me is suddenly made into a trifle devoid of sweetness.) A man may be weary of other comforts, of the greatest comfort of life, but you never heard of any that complained they had too much love for Christ. Men are easily prejudiced against Christ that never tried him. They that familiarly conversed with him among the Jews, they saw his miracles, the others saw only his meanness.

Object. But you will say, Do not carnal persons think Jesus Christ worthy of any esteem from them? How is it, then, that they think and speak so honourably of him, and count it a dishonour to them not to profess him? A Turk, or a Jew, or a pagan, they are terms of reproach among us.

Ans. To solve this doubt I shall show you—

1. Affirmatively, in what manner they do esteem him.
2. Negatively, how they do not esteem him.
1. Affirmatively, how they may esteem him.

[1.] Hypocritically in their words: Titus 1:16, ‘They profess they know Christ, but in works they deny him.’ It is not what a man speaketh out of a little traditional knowledge. A man’s carriage is the best measure of his esteem. When the judgment determineth aright, the conversation is proportionable in some measure; that followeth *ultimum dictamen*, the last determination of the heart.

Men may thus profess they know Christ, and value him, who live in a habitual neglect of what he commands, and indulge and allow themselves in a continual practice of what he hath forbidden.

[2] Indefinitely they may esteem him, that is, in some nice and bare speculations, when they do not look upon him as commanding what is contrary to their carnal desires; they consider Christ in an indefinite way, not such a person as he is set forth in the word. Speculative truths and general apprehensions do not thwart our corrupt desires. A man may love Christ in general, but not in a particular way.

[3.] They may have some partial esteem for him, as conceiving him to be able to bring them to happiness: John 6:34, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread.' And with Balaam they may wish, 'Oh that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my last end may be like his.' They would esteem Christ were it not for his hard terms of duty and obedience.

[4.] Customarily, in a traditional way. They esteem Christ so far as he is commonly esteemed of in the world. If anything recede from the general form and usual rate of duties, it is base in their eyes, not being honoured with the common custom and practice of men. Carnal professors will despise others that do more than they. Singing of psalms, repeating of sermons, Christian conference, these meet with a scoff from them. Men of Michal's spirit will scoff at what is more than ordinary, as she did at David when he danced before the ark 2 Sam. 6:20, 'How glorious was the king of Israel to-day! 'But David replieth, 'If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile.'

2. Negatively, how they do not esteem Christ.

[1.] They do not esteem all of Christ.

[2] Nor always. These two will somewhat clear it.

[1.] They do not esteem all of Christ. If Christ be truly precious to the soul, then all of Christ must be precious; not only his name, and offices, and sufferings, but also his ordinances, ministers, members, and government. You must esteem everyone of these. Many esteem Christ in one thing, but not in another; they may delight in his mercy, but not in his holiness; they may love him as a priest to die for them, but not as a king to rule over them; they will not submit to the laws of his kingdom; they find no sweetness in his ordinances; they despise his servants, they do not love a whole Christ. It is a fancy of their own making; they think they esteem Christ, but they esteem him not as he hath set forth himself in his word.

[2.] They do not esteem him always, nor at all times. It appeareth plainly that Christ is set at nought by them in times of outward or inward opposition. Our esteem is shown when it cometh to these cases.

(1st.) In time of outward opposition; when the profession of Christ is oppugned, they lay it down, they do not think him worthy the suffering for. Most men esteem Christ because of the common countenance that is given to his ways in a state or kingdom, and therefore do they so often vary. The same men that were Protestants in King Edward's days were Papists in Queen Mary's, and Protestants again in Queen Elizabeth's. England hath been often used to these changes. Men look to the public favour that is given to the ways of Christ, and so join with them; but in times of disgrace and opposition they hide their faces from him, they will not own him.

(2dly.) In time of inward opposition; they assent to the goodness of Christ in the general, till it comes to a particular trial between him and their lusts. When Christ cometh in competition with their sensual pleasure, and honour, and estimation, then is he set at nought by them. They did not esteem him upon these terms, to part with their lusts for him. So much for the doctrinal part.

Use is for information, to give us the difference between carnal men and the people of God. Christ is an abject to the one, and a jewel to the other. It is good to observe this difference of esteem and valuation, and therefore I shall discover it on both sides.

1. I shall show you how the wicked show themselves to disesteem Christ.
2. How the godly manifest their esteem to him.
1. How the wicked show themselves to disesteem Christ.

[1] They prefer every base lust, the satisfaction of every sinful motion, before him. What care they for obeying Christ, so they may satisfy their present corrupt desires? It is said, Heb. 12:16, that 'Esau' (that *profane person*, as the Spirit of God brandeth him) 'for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.' The birthright among the patriarchs was a pawn of the blessing of being heir of the promise. Now he esteemed the satisfaction of his sensual desires more than his spiritual prerogative; like another profane person that said he would not lose his portion in Paris for his portion in paradise. The Jews would rather have Barabbas delivered to them than Christ. They chose the vile pleasures of sin, or the vain things of the world, rather than the sure mercies of David. These the apostle describes to be, 2 Tim. 3:4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' They prefer a little contemptible pleasure before Christ. They venture their souls for a minute's pleasure, for one dram or taste of it.

[2.] They prefer the pleasing of carnal men before him. They can rather deny the motions of Christ's Spirit than the importunate solicitations of a wicked friend. Many that are not allured into the tents of Shem are easily drawn into sin. The most easy facile natures and dispositions are hard enough to be wrought upon to any good, but they are easily drawn to sin, and to continue wilful and stubborn to Christ. It is said, Prov. 7:22, 'He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.' Whereas a godly man saith as Joseph, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' They cannot so readily comply; others,—they will rather lose their souls than leave their wicked company; they cannot say nay to a solicitation that pleaseth the lust.

[3] They are so far from esteeming Christ, that they think he will be a disgrace to them, and therefore they are ashamed to be joined to him in a more strict and holy way, especially if they be great in the world. They think to be religious is beneath them. Nicodemus, being a rabbi, was ashamed to come to Christ before he was converted; but afterwards this Nicodemus spake boldly for him: John 7:51, 'Nicodemus, that came to Jesus by night, spake boldly, Doth our law judge any man before it hear him?' There is a base disposition in men; they think religion a disgrace, and that it is an abasement to them to stand publicly for the ways of God, to vary from the customs of the world, to begin holy conference, to do something beyond the general tenor and frame of profession in the world.

2. For the godly; they manifest their esteem of Christ divers ways.

[1.] By labouring after communion with him with all care and diligence, and earnestness of desire. Oh, how they prize communion with him! 'Thy loves are better than wine,' Cant. 1:2; 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life,' Ps. 63:3. They would rather have some intimations from God of his love, than life, and comfort, and honour.

[2] By rejoicing in him when they have at any time found him Cant. 1:4, 'The king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee;' that the king should give them any closet-mercies, and the sweet solaces of his chamber: Isa. 61:10, 'My soul shall be joyful in God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation.'

[3.] By prizing those things where they find most of Christ, viz., his ordinances and servants, judging they are the excellent ones of the earth: Ps. 16:3, and Ps. 27:4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.'

[4.] By their boldness in professing him. A man that is ashamed of his religion dishonoureth it: Heb. 11:16, 'They declared plainly that they sought a country, that is an heavenly.' And St Paul saith, Rom. 1:16, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.' Nature brands evil with shame. They conceive more honourably of Christ's ways, than to be afraid to be seen in them.

[5.] By seeking his honour and praise more than their own concerns. It is enough if Christ be exalted. They would fain have him exalted not only in their own hearts, but in the kingdom also where they live. Men desire that what they esteem should be publicly advanced: Ps. 14:7, 'Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When will the Lord bring back the captivity of his people?'

[6.] By avoiding all means whereby Christ may be dishonoured and disesteemed. They would have Christ held forth in, their hearts, and in their ways. Christians are often pressed to live to the glory of God Mat. 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven;' 1 Peter 2:12, 'Having your conversations honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation: One of their questions will be, Shall I not dishonour God by this? Nathan, when he came to David, telleth him he had made the name *of* God to be blasphemed: 2 Sam. 12:13, 'Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.'

[7.] By accounting those things which are dishonourable in the world to be honourable with Christ, such as reproaches and afflictions. It is said, Acts 5:41, 'They departed from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name.' So St Paul saith, Acts 28:20, 'For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.' He holds it up in triumph.

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