

Christ All in All

by Thomas Watson

Christ is the quintessence of all good things, and all good things are found in Him.

Scripture: Romans 5:3, 1 Corinthians 2:2, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 1:6, Philippians 3:8, Philippians 4:13, Colossians 3:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:18

Topics: "Christ Supremacy", "Salvation Assurance"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches about the incomparable greatness and sufficiency of Christ, emphasizing that Jesus Christ is all in all. He highlights the futility of relying on external religious privileges or worldly possessions for salvation, stressing that true salvation and acceptance with God come only through faith in Christ. Watson explains that Christ is all in all by way of eminency and derivation, being the source of all spiritual blessings and the quintessence of all good things. He urges believers to make Christ the center of their understanding, affections, abilities, aims, trust, and joy, emphasizing the importance of seeking assurance of their relationship with Christ and finding comfort in the all-sufficiency of Jesus.

Transcript

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"Christ is all in all." Colossians 3:11

The philosopher says every science takes its dignity from the object; the more noble the object--the more rare the knowledge. Hence it is that Jesus Christ, being the most sublime and glorious object, that knowledge which leads us to Christ must be most excellent. It is called "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ," Philippians 3:8. So sweet is this knowledge, that Paul determined to know nothing but Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:2. And, indeed, what more did he need to know--for "Christ is all in all". In the text the apostle gives us a negative, and something positively.

First, NEGATIVELY. Paul tells the Colossians what will not avail them, "neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision avails." Circumcision was a great privilege; it was a badge to distinguish the people of God from those who were foreign. It was a wall between the enclosed garden and the common field. The people of circumcision were a people who were under God's eye and His wing. They were His household family. Rather than they should lack, God would make the heavens a granary, and rain down manna upon

them. He would pierce the rock, and make it a lively spring.

How glorious was the privilege of circumcision! Romans 9:4-5. What rich jewels hung upon Israel's crown! But, in matters of salvation, all this was nothing, "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision." From whence we may observe that external religious privileges commend no man to God; whether wise, rich, or noble--none of this sets us off in God's eye, 1 Corinthians 1:26. God does not see as man sees. We are taken with beauty and abilities--but these things avail nothing with God. God lays His left hand upon these--as Jacob did upon Manasseh, Genesis 48:14. God often passes by those who cast a greater splendor and luster in the world--and looks upon them as an inferior alloy. The reason is "that no flesh should glory in His presence!" 1 Corinthians 1:29. If God should graft His grace only upon wisdom and abilities, some would be ready to say, "My wisdom, or my eloquence, or my nobility has saved me." Therefore, "not many wise. . . not many noble are called." God will have no pride or boasting in the creature.

USE 1. Do not rest in outward privileges or excellencies--these are no stocks to graft the hopes of salvation upon! Many of Christ's kindred went to hell. Paul is called "the servant of the Lord," Romans 1:1. And James is called "the brother of the Lord," Galatians 1:19. It is better to be the servant of the Lord than the brother of the Lord. The virgin Mary was saved not because she was the mother of Christ--but because she was the daughter of faith. It is grace, not blood--which gives acceptance with God. A heart which has Christ formed in it--is God's delight.

Second, the apostle sets down something POSITIVELY; but "Christ is all in all." Note the sentence structure:

The subject--"Christ". His name is sweet--it is "as ointment poured forth," Song of Solomon 1:3. It was Job's wish, "O that my words were now written! that they were engraved with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever!" Job 19:23-24. And it is my wish that this name, this sweet name of Christ, were not written, that it were engraved with the pen of the Holy Spirit in our hearts forever. "The name of Christ has in it," said Chrysostom, "a thousand treasuries of joy."

The predicate--"all in all". Christ is all fullness, all sweetness. He is all that is imaginable, all that is desirable. He who has Christ can have no more--for Christ is all. The proposition out of the words is that Jesus Christ is the quintessence of all good things; He is all.

Sometimes faith is said to be all, Galatians 5:6. Nothing avails but faith. Faith is all as it is the instrument to lay hold on Christ, whereby we are saved--as a man is saved by catching hold on a bough.

Sometimes the new creature is said to be all, Galatians 6:15. Nothing avails but a new creature. The new creature is all--as it qualifies and fits for glory. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Hebrews 12:14. It is a saying of Chrysostom that, at the day of judgment, God will ask that question, as our Savior did, Matthew 22:20, "Whose image and superscription is this?" So will God say, "Whose image is this?" If you cannot show Him His image consisting in holiness, He will reject you. Thus the new creature is all.

Here in the text Christ is said to be all--but in what sense is Christ all?

Christ is all by way of eminency. All good things are eminently to be found in Him--as the sun virtually contains in it the light of the lesser stars.

Christ is all by way of derivation. All good things are transmitted and conveyed to us through Christ. As our rich commodities, such as jewels and spices--come to us by sea--so all heavenly blessings sail to us through the red sea of Christ's blood! Romans 11:36, "For everything comes from Him; everything exists by His power and is intended for His glory. To Him be glory evermore! Amen." Christ is that spiritual pipe through which the golden oil of mercy empties itself into the soul!

Christ must be all, for "in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead," Colossians 2:9. He has a partnership with God the Father. John 16:15, "All things that the Father has, are Mine." So there is enough in Him to scatter all our fears, to remove all our burdens, to supply all our needs. There can be no defect in that which is infinite.

USE 2. Information. It shows us the glorious fullness of Jesus Christ. He is all in all. Christ is a treasury and storehouse of all spiritual riches. You may go with the bee from flower to flower, and suck here and there a little sweetness--but you will never have enough until you come to Christ, for He is all in all. Now, in particular, Christ is all in six respects:

1. Christ is all--in regard of RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1 Corinthians 1:30, "He is made to us, righteousness." The robe of our innocence, like the veil of the Temple, is rent asunder. Ours is a ragged righteousness. Isaiah 64:6, "Our righteousness is as filthy rags." As under rags, the naked body is seen--so under the rags of our righteousness the body of death is seen. We can defile our duties--but they cannot justify us; but Christ is all in regard of righteousness. Romans 10:4, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to everyone who believes." That is, through Christ, we are as righteous as if we had fully satisfied the law in our own persons. Jacob got the blessing in the garment of his elder brother. So, in the garment of Christ, our older brother, we obtain the blessing. Christ's righteousness is a coat woven without seam. "We are made the righteousness of God in Him," 2 Corinthians 5:21.

2. Christ is all--in regard of SANCTIFICATION. 1 Corinthians 1:30, "He is made to us, sanctification." Sanctification is the spiritual enamel and embroidery of the soul; it is nothing else but God's putting upon us the jewels of holiness. The angels glory in it. We are made as the king's daughter, "all glorious within," Psalm 45:13. This tunes and prepares the soul for heaven. It turns iron into gold; it makes the heart, which was Satan's picture--into Christ's living epistle. The virgins in Esther 2:12 had their "days of purification." They were first to be perfumed and anointed--and then they were to stand before the king. So we must have the anointing of God, 1 John 2:27, and be perfumed with the graces of the Spirit, those sweet fragrances--and then we shall stand before the King of heaven! There must be first our days of purification, before our days of glorification. What a blessed work is this!

A soul beautified and adorned with grace is like the sky, bespangled with glittering stars. Oh, what a metamorphosis is there! I may allude to that passage in Song of Solomon 3:6. "Who is this that comes out of the wilderness of sin, perfumed with all the graces of the Spirit?" Holiness is the signature and engraving of God upon the soul. But where does this come from? From Christ--who is all in all. He is made to us sanctification. It is He who sends His Spirit into our hearts to be a refiner's fire, to burn up our dross and make our graces sparkle like gold in the furnace! Christ arises upon the soul "with healing in His wings," Malachi 4:2. He heals the understanding and says, "Let there be light." He heals the heart--by dissolving the stone in His blood. He heals the will--by filing off its rebellion. Thus He is all in regard of sanctification.

3. Christ is all--in regard of ACCEPTANCE with God. Ephesians 1:6. "He has made us favorites," as some render it. Through Christ, God is propitious to us and takes all we do in good part. A wicked man, being out of Christ, is out of God's favor. Even his plowing is sin, Proverbs 21:4. God will not come near him; his breath is infectious. God will hear his sins--and not his prayers. But now, in Christ, God accepts us. As Joseph presented his brethren before Pharaoh and brought them into favor with the king, Genesis 47:2; so the Lord Jesus carries the names of the saints upon His breast and presents them before His Father, thus bringing them into repute and honor. Through Christ, God will treat and parley with us. Through the red glass--everything appears a red color; through the blood of Christ--we look of a sanguine complexion, ruddy and beautiful in God's eyes.

4. Christ is all--in regard of divine ASSISTANCE. A Christian's strength lies in Christ, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13. How is a Christian able to do duty, to resist temptation--but through Christ's strengthening? How is it that a spark of grace lives in a sea of corruption, the storms of persecution blowing--but that Christ holds this spark in the hollow of His hand? How is it that the roaring lion of hell has not devoured the saints? Because the Lion of the tribe of Judah has defended them! Christ not only gives us our crown--but our shield. He not only gives us our garland when we overcome--but our strength whereby we overcome. Revelation 12:11, "They overcame him--that is, the accuser of the brethren--by the blood of the Lamb." Christ keeps the royal fort of grace--so that it is not blown up. Peter's shield was bruised--but Christ ensured that it was not broken. "I have prayed for you--that your faith fail not," Luke 22:32, that it be not a total falling away. The crown of all the saints' victories must be set upon the head of Christ!

5. Christ is all--in regard of PEACE with God. When conscience is in agony, and burns as hell in the sense of God's wrath--now Christ is all. He pours the balm of His blood into these wounds, He makes the storm calm. Christ not only makes peace in the court of heaven--but in the court of conscience. He not only makes peace above us but within us, John 16. Said Cyprian, "All our golden streams of peace flow from this fountain!" John 15:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Jesus Christ not only purchased peace for us--but speaks peace to us. He is called the Prince of peace, Isaiah 9:6. Thus Christ is all in regard of peace. He makes peace for us and in us; this honey and oil flow out of the rock--Christ.

6. Christ is all--in regard of REMUNERATION. It is He who crowns us after all our labors and sufferings. He died to advance us. His lying in the wine-press, was to bring us into the banqueting house! He is gone before to take possession of heaven in the name of all believers. Hebrews 6:20, "Where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Christ has gone to prepare a place for the saints, John 14:2. He makes heaven ready for them--and makes them ready for heaven. Thus Christ is all in regard of remuneration. Revelation 22:12, "Behold, I come quickly--and My reward is with Me."

USE 3. If Christ is all, it shows what a vast disproportion there is between Christ and the creature. There is as much difference as between something and nothing. Christ is all in all--and the creature is nothing at all. Proverbs 23:5, "Will you set your eyes on that which is not?" The creature is a nonentity. Though it has a physical existence, yet, considered theologically, it is nothing. It is but a gilded shadow, a pleasant dream. When Solomon had sifted up the finest flour and distilled the spirit of all created excellency, here is the result, "All was vanity," Ecclesiastes 2:11. We read that the earth in creation was void, Genesis 1:2. So are all earthly comforts void. They are void of that which we think is in them. They are void of satisfaction; therefore, they are compared to wind, Hosea 12:1. A man can no more fill his heart with the world than he can fill his belly with the air he draws in. Now the creature is said to be nothing, in a threefold sense:

1. It is nothing to a man in trouble of spirit. If the spirit is wounded, outward things will no more give ease--than a crown of gold will cure the headache.

2. The creature is nothing to a man who has heaven in his eye. When Paul had seen that light shining from heaven, surpassing the glory of the sun, Acts 26:13, though his eyes were open, "he saw no man," Acts 9:8. So he who has the glory of heaven in his eye, is blind to the world. He sees nothing in it to allure him or make him willing to stay here.

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

USE 4. It shows where the soul is to go in the lack of all. Go to Christ who is all in all. Do you lack grace? Go to Christ. Colossians 2:3, "In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Christ is the great Lord treasurer; go then to Christ. Say, "Lord, I am indigent of grace--but in You are all my fresh springs. Fill my cistern from Your spring. Lord, I am blind, You have eye-salve to anoint me. I am defiled, You have water to cleanse me. My heart is hard, You have blood to soften me. I am empty of grace, bring Your fullness to my emptiness." In all our spiritual needs, we should resort to Christ--as Jacob's sons did to their brother Joseph. "He opened all the storehouses," Genesis 42:25. Thus, the Lord has made Christ our Joseph. Colossians 2:3, "In whom are hidden all treasures." Oh, then, sinners, make out to Christ! He is all in all; and, to encourage you to go to Him, remember there is in Him not only fullness, but freeness. "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters!" Christ is not only full as the honeycomb--but He drops as the honeycomb.

USE 5. If Christ is all, see here the Christian's richness. How rich is he, who has Christ! He has all that may make him completely happy. The wife of Phocion, being asked where her jewels were, answered, "My husband and his triumphs are my jewels!" So, if a Christian is asked where his riches are, he will say, "Christ is my riches!" A true saint cannot be poor. If you look into his house, perhaps he has scarcely a bed to lie on. 1 Corinthians 4:11, "Even to this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling-place." Come to many a child of God and bid him make his will, and he will say as Peter, Acts 3:6, "Silver and gold have I none." Yet he can at the same time make his triumph with the apostle, 2 Corinthians 6:10, "As having nothing--yet possessing all." He has Christ, who is in all. When a believer can call nothing his, he can say all is his.

The Tabernacle was covered with badgers' skins, Exodus 25:5, yet most of it was of gold; so a saint may have a poor covering, such as ragged clothes--but he is inlaid with gold. Christ is formed in his heart--and so he is all glorious within.

How a Christian should sit down satisfied with Christ! "Christ is all." What? Though he lacks other things--is not Christ enough? If a man has sunshine, he does not complain that he lacks the light of a candle. Has he not enough, who has "the unsearchable riches of Christ?" I have read of a godly man who, being blind, was asked by his friend if he was not troubled for the lack of his sight. He confessed he was. "Why," said his friend, "are you troubled because you lack that which flies have--when you have that which angels have?" So I say to a Christian, "Why are you troubled for lacking that which a reprobate has--when you have that which the glorified saints have? You have Christ with all His benefit and royalties!"

Suppose a father should deny his son furniture for his house--but should will all his land to him. Has he any cause to complain? If God denies you a little furniture in the world--but in the meantime wills His land to you; if He gives you the field wherein the pearl of price is hidden, have you any cause to repine? A Christian who lacks necessities, yet has Christ, has the one thing needful. Colossians 2:10, "You are complete in Him." What! complete in Christ and not content with Christ? Luther said, "The sea of God's mercy should swallow up our particular afflictions." Surely this sea of God's love in giving us Christ, should drown all our complaints and grievances. Let the Christian take the harp and the violin and bless God.

USE 6. If Christ is all, see the deplorable condition of a Christless person. He is poor; he is worth nothing. Revelation 3:17, "You are wretched, miserable and poor." The sadness of a man who lacks Christ, will appear in these seven particulars:

1. He who lacks Christ, lacks justification. What a glorious thing it is, when a poor sinner is absolved from guilt and is declared to be acquitted of all charges of sin! But this privilege flows from Christ; all pardons are sealed in His blood. Acts 13:39, "By Him all who believe are justified;" so that he who is out of Christ is unjustified. The guilt of sin cleaves to him. He must be responsible to justice in his own person, and the curse stands in full force against the sinner.

2. He who lacks Christ, lacks the beauty of holiness. Jesus Christ is a living spring of grace. John 1:14, "Full of grace and truth." Now a Christless person, is a graceless person; he does not have one shred of holiness. The sapling must first be engrafted into the stock before it can receive sap and influence from the root. We must first be engrafted into Christ before we can of His fullness receive grace for grace, John 1:16. A man out of Christ, is red with guilt and black with filth. He is an unhallowed person and, dying in that condition, is rendered incapable of seeing God, Hebrews 12:14.

3. He who lacks Christ, has no true nobility. It is through Christ that we are akin to God--and of the royal blood of heaven. It is through Christ that "God is not ashamed to be called our God," Hebrews 11:16. But out of Christ, we are looked upon as ignoble people. The traitors' blood runs in our veins. A man out of Christ is base born. Whoever is his natural father--the devil is his spiritual father, John 4:48.

4. He who lacks Christ, lacks his freedom. John 8:36, "If the Son sets you free--you shall be free indeed." A man out of Christ is a slave, even when he sins most freely.

5. He who lacks Christ, has no ability for service. When Samson's locks were cut, his strength was gone from him. He lacks a vital principle; he cannot walk with God. He is like a dead member in the body, which has neither strength nor motion. John 15:5, "Without Me you can do nothing." The flute will make no sound, unless you blow in it. So, unless Christ by His Spirit breathes in the soul--it cannot make any harmony or put forth strength to any holy action.

6. He who lacks Christ, has no consolation. Christ is called "the consolation of Israel," Luke 2:25. A Christless soul is a comfortless soul. How can such a one have comfort, when he comes to die? He is in debt--and has no surety. His wounds bleed--and he has no physician. He sees the fire of God's wrath approaching--and has no screen to keep it off. He is like a ship in a tempest. Sickness begins to make a tempest in his body, sin begins to make a tempest in his conscience--and he has nowhere to put in for harbor. Oh, the terror and anguish of such a man at the hour of death! Isaiah 13:8, "Their face shall be as flames" is an appropriate expression. The meaning is, such fear and horror shall seize upon sinners in the evil day, that their countenances shall change and be as pale as a flame.

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

7. He who lacks Christ, has no salvation. Ephesians 5:23, "He is the Savior of the body." He saves none but those who are members of His body mystical, a strong Scripture against the doctrine of universal redemption. Christ leaped into the sea of His Father's wrath--only to save His spouse from drowning! He is the Savior of the body, so that those who die out of Christ, are cut off from all hopes of salvation.

USE 7. It reproves those who busy themselves about other things--and neglect of Christ. Isaiah 55:2, "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfies not?" If you get all the world, you are but golden beggars, without Christ. The physician finds out deadly bodily diseases--but is ignorant of soul diseases. While he gets remedies to cure others--he neglects the remedy of Christ's blood, to cure himself. The lawyer, while he clears other men's titles to their land, he himself lacks a title to Christ. The tradesman is busied in buying and selling--but neglects to trade for the pearl of great price. He is like Israel, who went up and down to gather straw, or like the loadstone who draws iron to it but refuses gold. Those who mind the world so as to neglect Christ--their work is but spider-webs. "They work so hard--but all in vain!" Habakkuk 2:13

1. If Christ is all, then set a high valuation upon Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:7, "To you who believe, He is precious." If there were a jewel which contained in it the worth of all jewels, would you not prize that? Such a jewel is Christ. So precious is Christ, that Paul counted all things dung that he might win Christ, Philippians 3:8. Oh, that I could raise your appreciation of Jesus Christ! Prize Christ above your estates, and above your relations. That man does not deserve Christ at all, who does not prize Christ above all. Jesus Christ is an incomprehensible blessing. Whatever God can require for satisfaction, or can desire for salvation--is to be found in Christ. Oh, then, let Him be the highest in our esteem! "No writing shall please me," said Bernard, "if I do not read the name of Christ there." The name of Christ is the only music to a Christian's ear--and the blood of Christ is the only cordial to a Christian's heart!

2. If Jesus Christ is all, then make sure of Christ; never leave trading in ordinances until you have gotten this pearl of great price. In Christ there is the aggregation of all good things. Oh, then, let not your souls be quiet until this bundle of myrrh lies between your breasts! Song of Solomon 1:13. In other things we strive for property: "this house is mine, these jewels are mine." Why not, "this Christ mine!" There are only two words which will satisfy the soul: Deity and property. What, was it better for the old world, if they had an ark--as long as they did not get into the ark?

"The unsearchable riches of Christ." Ephesians 3:8. That I may persuade all to get Christ--let me show you what an enriching blessing Christ is:

1. Christ is the most SUPREME good. Put what you will in the balance with Christ--He infinitely outweighs it. Is life sweet? Christ is better. He is the life of the soul, Colossians 3:4. "His loving-kindness is better than life," Psalm 63:3. Are relations sweet? Christ is better. He is the friend who "sticks closer than a brother."

2. Christ is the most sufficient good. He who has Christ needs no more. He who has the ocean--needs not the cistern. If one had a manuscript which contained all knowledge in it, having all the arts and sciences--he need look in no other book. So he who has Christ needs look no further. Christ gives both grace and glory, Psalm 84:11; grace to cleanse us--and glory to crown us. As Jacob said, "It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive," Genesis 14:28. So he who has Christ may say, "It is enough, Jesus is yet alive!"

3. Christ is the most SUITABLE good. In Him dwells all fullness, Colossians 1:19. Christ is whatever the soul can desire. Christ is beauty to adorn, gold to enrich, balm to heal, bread to strengthen, wine to comfort, and salvation to crown. If we are in danger, Christ is a shield; if we are disconsolate, He is a sun. He has enough in His wardrobe, to abundantly furnish the soul.

4. Christ is the most SANCTIFYING good. He makes every condition happy to us; He sweetens all our comforts--and sanctifies all our crosses.

Christ sweetens all our comforts. He turns them into blessings. Health is blessed; estate is blessed; relations are blessed. Christ's love is like pouring sweet water on flowers, which makes them give a more fragrant perfume. A wicked man cannot have that comfort in outward things which a godly man has. He may possess more--but he enjoys less. He who has Christ may say, "This mercy is given to me by the hand of my Savior; this is a love-token from Him, a pledge of glory!"

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

5. Christ is the most RARE blessing; there are but few who have Him. The best things, when they grow common, begin to be slighted. When silver was as common in Jerusalem as stone, 1 Kings 10:27, it was apt to be trod upon. Christ is a jewel that few are enriched with, which may both raise our esteem of Him and quicken our pursuit after Him. Those to whom God has given both the Indies, He has not given them Christ. They have the fat of the earth--but not the dew of heaven. And, among us Protestants, many hear of Christ but few have Him. Read Luke 4:25. There are many in this city who have Christ sounded in their ears--but few who have Christ formed in their hearts. Oh, how should we labor to be of this few! They who are Christians should be restless.

6. Christ is the most choice good. God shows more love in giving us Christ--than in giving us crowns and kingdoms. God may give a man many worldly things--and hate him; but in giving Christ to a man He gives him the blessings of the throne. What if others have a crutch to lean on--if you have a Christ to lean on? Abraham sent away the sons of the concubines with gifts but "he gave all he had to Isaac," Genesis 25. God may send away others with a little gold and silver--but if He gives you Christ, He gives you all that ever He had, for "Christ is all, and in all."

7. Without Christ, nothing else is good. Without Christ, health is not good; it is fuel for lust. Riches are not good; they are golden snares. Ordinances are not good; though they are good in themselves, yet not good to us. They do not profit. They are as breasts without milk, as bottles without wine. Nay, they are not only a dead letter--but a savor of death. Without Christ, they will damn us. For lack of Christ, millions go loaded to hell with ordinances.

8. Christ is the most ENDURING good. Other things are like the lamp which, while it shines, it spends itself. The heavens "shall wax old like a garment," Psalm 102:26. But Jesus Christ is a permanent good; with Him are durable riches, Proverbs 8:18. They last as long as eternity itself lasts.

9. Christ is a DIFFUSIVE, communicative good. He is full not only as a vessel--but as a spring. He is willing to give Himself to us. Now, then, if there is all this excellency in Jesus Christ, it may make us ambitiously desirous of an interest in Him.

Question 1. But how shall I get a part in Christ?

Answer 1. See your need of Christ. Know that you are undone without Him. How obnoxious are you to God's eye! How odious to His pure and holy nature! How obnoxious to His justice! Oh, sinner, how near is the sergeant to arrest you! The furnace of hell is being heated for you--and what will you do without Christ? It is only the Lord Jesus--who can stand as a screen to keep the fire of God's wrath from burning you! Tell me, then, is there no need of Christ?

Answer 2. Be importunate after Christ. "Lord, give me Christ--or I die!" As Achsah said to her father Caleb, Joshua 15:19, "You have given me a south land--give me also springs of water"; so should a poor soul say, "Lord, You have given me an estate in the world--but this south land will now quench my thirst. Give me also springs of water; give me those living springs which run in the Savior's blood! You have said, 'Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life!' Lord, I thirst after Jesus Christ; nothing but Christ will satisfy me. I am dead. I am damned without Him. Oh, give me this water of life!"

Answer 3. Be content to have Christ, as Christ is offered--as both a Prince and a Savior, Acts 5:31. Be sure you do not barter with Christ. Some would have Christ--and their sins too. Is Christ all, and will you not part with something for this all? Christ would have you part with nothing, but what will damn you--namely, your sins. There are some who bid fair for Christ; they will part with some sins but keep a secret reserve of darling sins. Does that man think he shall have Christ's love--who feeds sin in secret? Oh, part with all--for Him who is all! Part with your lusts, nay, your life--if Christ calls you to that! This exhorts us not only to get Christ, but to labor to know that we have Christ. 1 John 2:3, "This is how we are sure that we have come to know Him."

Now, concerning this knowledge that Christ is ours, which is the same as assurance, I shall lay down these corollaries or conclusions:

First, realize that this knowledge is attainable--it may be gotten. 1 John 5:13, "I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." Why else does God bid us make our calling and election sure, 2 Peter 1:10, if assurance may not be had? And why does God bid us make to prove ourselves, whether we are in the faith, 2 Corinthians 13:5, if we cannot come to this knowledge that Christ is ours?

What are all the signs which the Scripture gives of a man in Christ--but so many ciphers--if the knowledge of this interest may not be had? 1 John 3:14 and 1 John 4:13.

There are some duties enjoined in Scripture which are utterly impossible to perform if the knowledge of an interest in Christ is not attainable. We are bid to rejoice in God, Philippians 4:4, and to rejoice in tribulation, 1 Peter 4:13. How can he rejoice in suffering--who does not know whether Christ is his or not?

Why has Christ promised to send the Comforter, John 14:16, whose very work it is to bring the heart to this assurance, if assurance that Christ is ours, may not be had?

Some of the saints have arrived at this certainty of knowledge; therefore, it may be had. Job knew that his Redeemer lived, Job 19:25. And Paul had this assurance, 2 Timothy 1:12 and Galatians 2:20. Yes, some might say that Paul was an eminent believer, a Christian of the first magnitude; so it is no wonder he had this jewel of assurance! Nay--but the apostle speaks of it as a case incident to other believers, Romans 8:35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Not me--but us! So that by all it appears that a believer may come to spell out his interest.

Caution 1. Not that saints have always the same certainty, or that they have such an assurance as excludes all doubtings and conflicts. There will be flowings and ebbings in their comforts--as well as in their graces. Was it not so in David? Sometimes we hear him say that God's loving-kindness was before his eyes, Psalm 26:3. But at another time, "Where are Your former loving-kindnesses?" Psalm 89:49. These doubtings and convulsions God allows in His children, sometimes, that they may long the more for heaven where they shall have a constant springtime of joy.

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

Assurance is difficult to be obtained. It is a rare jewel, hard to come by. Not many Christians have this jewel. God sees it good, sometimes, to withdraw assurance from His people--that they may walk humbly. Satan does what he can to waylay and obstruct our assurance; he is called the red dragon, Revelation 12:3. If he cannot blot a Christian's evidence, yet sometimes he casts such a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read his evidence. The devil envies that God should have any glory--or the soul any comfort.

That we lack assurance is, for the most part, our own fault. We walk carelessly, neglect our spiritual watch, let go our hold of promises, and comply with temptations. No wonder, then, if we walk in darkness, and are at such a loss that we cannot tell whether Christ is ours or not. Assurance is very sweet; this wine of paradise cheers the heart.

Assurance is very useful, it will put us upon service for Christ. It will put us upon active obedience. Assurance will not, as the Papists say, breed carnal security in the soul--but agility. It will make us mount up with wings as eagles in holy duties. Faith makes us living; assurance makes us lively. If we know that Christ is ours--we shall never think we can love Him enough or serve Him enough. 2 Corinthians 5:14, "The love of Christ constrains us!" Assurance will put us upon patient suffering for Christ. Romans 5:3-5, "We glory in tribulation, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." Mr. Foxe, in his Book of Martyrs, speaks of a woman in Queen Mary's days who, when the adversaries threatened to take her husband from her, answered, "Christ is my husband!" When they threatened to take away her children she answered, "Christ is better to me than ten sons!" When they threatened to take away all from her, said she, "Christ is mine, and you cannot take Him away from me!" No wonder Paul was willing to be bound and die for Christ, Acts 21:13, when he knew that Christ loved him and had given Himself for him, Galatians 2:20. Though I will not say Paul was proud of his chain, yet he was glad for it; he wore it as a chain of diamonds!

Question 2. But how shall I get this jewel of assurance?

Answer 1. Seek Christ diligently. When the spouse sought Christ diligently, she found Him joyfully, Song of Solomon 3:4.

Answer 2. Preserve the virginity of conscience. When the glass is full you will not pour wine into it, only when it is empty. Just so, when the soul is cleansed from the love of every sin, then God will pour in the sweet wine of assurance. Hebrews 10:22, "Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."

Answer 3. Be much in the actings of faith. The more active the child is in obedience, the sooner he has his father's smile. If faith is ready to die, Revelation 3:2, if it is like armor hung up, or like a sleepy habit in the soul, never think that you can have assurance in such a state.

Answer 4. If Christ is all, then make Him so to you.

Make Christ all--in your understanding. Be ambitious to know nothing but Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:2. What is it to have knowledge in medicine? To be able, with Galen, to discourse of the causes and symptoms of a disease and what is proper to apply--and, in the meantime, to be ignorant of the healing under Christ's wings? What is it to have knowledge in astronomy, to discourse of the stars and planets--and to be ignorant of Christ, that bright morning-star which leads to heaven? What is it to have skill in a shop--and be ignorant of that commodity which both enriches and crowns? What is it to be versed in music--and to be ignorant of Christ, whose blood makes atonement in heaven, and music in the conscience? What is it to know all the stratagems of war--and to be ignorant of "the Prince of Peace"?

Oh, make Christ all! Be willing to know nothing but Christ. Though you may know other things in their due place--yet know Christ in the first place. Let the knowledge of Jesus Christ have the pre-eminence, as the sun among the lesser planets. This is the crowning knowledge. Proverbs 14:18, "The prudent are crowned with knowledge." We cannot know ourselves, unless we know Christ. It is He who takes us into our hearts and shows us the spots of our souls, whereby we abhor ourselves in dust and ashes. Christ shows us our own emptiness and poverty. Until we see our own emptiness, we are not fit to be filled with the golden oil of mercy. We cannot know God--but through Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:6.

Make Christ all--in your affections. Desire nothing but Christ. He is the aggregation of all good things. "You are complete in Him," Colossians 2:10. Christ is the Christian's perfection. Why should the soul desire less? How can it desire more? Love nothing but Christ. Love is the choicest affection; it is the richest jewel the creature has to bestow. Oh, if Christ is all, love Him better than all!

Consider, first, if you love other things, when they die your love is lost; but Christ lives forever to requite your love.

Consider, second, you may love other things in excess--but you cannot love Christ in excess.

Consider, third, when you love other things, you love that which is worse than yourselves. If you love a fair house, a pleasant garden, a skillfully drawn picture, these things are worse than yourselves. If I would love anything more intensely and ardently, it should be something which is better than myself, and that is Jesus Christ. He who is all, let Him have all. Give Him your love--who desires it most, and deserves it best.

Make Christ all--in your abilities; do all in His strength. Ephesians 6:10, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." When you are to resist a temptation, or to mortify a corruption--do not go out in your own strength, but in the strength of Christ. Be strong in the Lord. Some go out to duty in the strength of

their abilities, and go out against sin in the strength of their resolutions--and they both come home foiled. Alas! What are our resolutions but like the green cords which bound Samson! A sinful heart will soon break these. Do as David when he was to go up against Goliath. He said, "I come to you in the name of the Lord." So say to your Goliath lust, "I come to you in the name of Christ." Then we conquer, when the Lion of the tribe of Judah marches before us.

Make Christ all--in your aims; do all to His glory, 1 Peter 4:11.

Make Christ all in your trust. Trust none but Christ for salvation. The Papists make Christ something, but not all. And is there not naturally a spice of popery in our hearts? We would be grafting happiness upon the stock of our own righteousness. "Every man," said Luther, "is born with a pope in his heart!" Oh, make Christ all in regard of reliance! Let Him be your city of refuge to flee to, your ark of salvation.

Make Christ all in your joy. Galatians 6:14, "God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh, Christian, have you seen the Lord Jesus? Has this morning-star shone into your heart with its enlightening, quickening beams? Then rejoice and be exceeding glad! Shall others rejoice in the world--and will not you rejoice in Christ! How much better is He than all other things! It reflects disparagement upon Christ--when His saints are sad and drooping. Is not Christ yours? What more would you have!

Objection. But, says one, "I am low in the world, and that takes off the chariot wheels of my joy, and makes me drive heavily."

Answer. But have you not Christ? And is Christ all? Psalm 16:5-6.

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

Answer 1. Is your soul filled with pantings after Christ? Do you desire water out of Christ's side to cleanse you--as well as blood out of His side to save you? These sighs and groans are stirred up by the

Spirit of God. By the beating of this pulse, judge of the life of faith in you.

Answer 2. Have you given up yourself by an universal subjection to Christ? This is a good sign that Christ is yours.

Answer 3. Be thankful for Christ. God has done more for you in giving you Christ--than if He had set you with the princes of the earth, Psalm 118:8, or had made you angels, or had given you the whole world. In short, God cannot give a greater gift than Christ, for, in giving Christ, He gives Himself to us, and all this calls aloud for thankfulness.

Here is a breast of comfort to every man who has Christ: Christ is all. It is good lying at this fountainhead. When a Christian sees a deficiency in himself, he may see an all-sufficiency in his Savior! "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord!" Psalm 144:15. That servant has no lack--who has his master's full purse at command. He who has Christ, has no lack--for "Christ is all and in all." What if the fig-tree does not flourish--if you have Christ, the Tree of Life, and all fruit growing there? In the hour of death, a believer may rejoice; when he leaves all, he is possessed of all. As Ambrose said to his friend, "I fear not death because I have a good Lord", so may a godly man say, "I fear not death, because I have a Christ to go to! Death will but carry me to that torrent of divine pleasure which runs at His right hand forevermore."

I will end with 1 Thessalonians 4:18, "Comfort one another with these words."

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