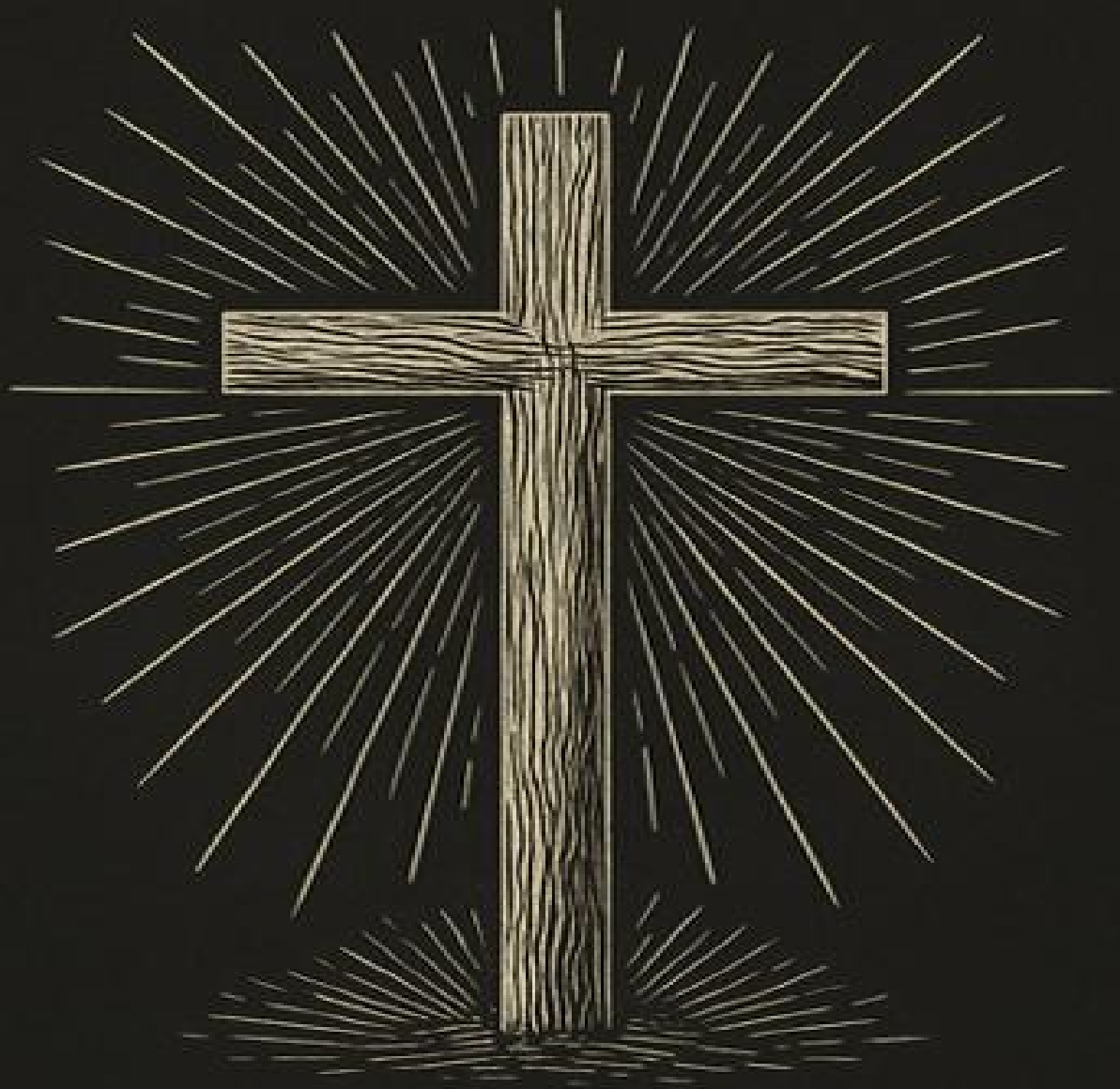
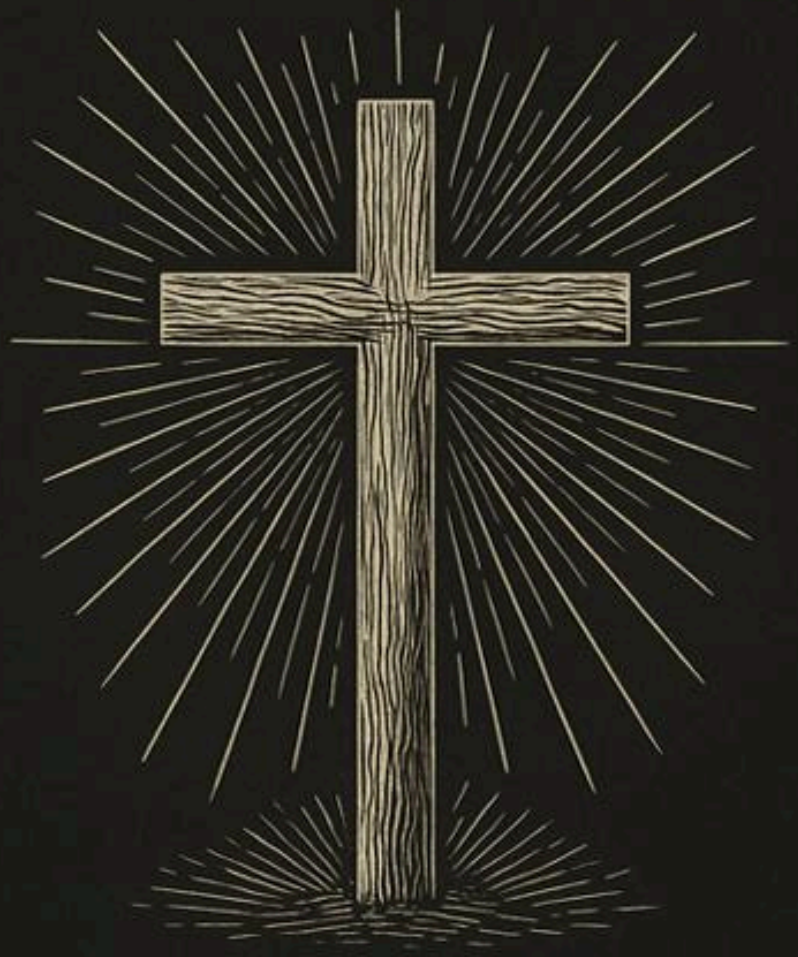
A DECLARATION OF THE TRUE MANNER OF KNOWING CHRIST CRUCIFIED



WILLIAM PERKINS

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A Declaration of the True Manner of Knowing Christ Crucified

by William Perkins

"God forbid that I should rejoice, but in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" - Galatians 6:14

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TO THE READER.

IT is the common sin of men at this day, and that in the very places of learning, that Christ crucified is not known as he ought. The right knowledge of whom, is not to make often mention of his death and passion, and to call him our Saviour, or to handle the whole mystery of God incarnate soundly or learnedly; (though that be a worthy gift of God) but first of all, by the consideration of the passion to be touched with an inward and a lively feeling of our sins, for which our

Redeemer suffered the pangs of hell, and to grow to a through dislike of our selves and our lives past for them, and from the ground of the heart to purpose a reformation and a conformity with Christ in all good duties that concerne man: secondly, in the passion, as in a mirror, to behold, and in beholding to labour to comprehend the length, the breadth, the height, the depth of the love of the Father, that gave his owne deare Son to death; and the goodness of the Son, that loved his enemies more then himselfe; that our hearts might be rooted and grounded in the same love, and be further inflamed to love God again.

To further this true manner of knowing Christ crucified, I have penned these few lines; reade them at thy leasure, and have care to put them in practise: otherwise, thou art but an enemy of the cross of Christ, though thou profess his name never so much. Jan. 3. 1596.

W. PERKINS.

OF THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

IT is the most excellent worthy part of divine wisdom to know Christ crucified. The Prophet **Isaiah** saith; The knowledge of my righteous servant: that is, Christ crucified, shall justify many. And Christ himself saith; This is life eternal, to know thee the only God, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ. And Paul saith; I have decreed to

know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Again, God forbid that I should rejoice in any thing, but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, I think all things but loss, for the excellent knowledge sake of Christ Jesus my Lord, and do judge them but dung, that I might win Christ.

In the right way of knowing Christ crucified, two points must be considered: one, how Man for his part is to know Christ: the other, how he is to be known of man.

Touching the first: Man must know Christ, not generally and confusedly, but by a lively, powerful, and operative knowledge: for otherwise the devils themselves know Christ.

In this knowledge, three things are required. The first is notice or consideration, whereby thou must conceive in mind, understand, and seriously bethink thyself of Christ, as he is revealed in the history of the Gospel, and as he is offered to thy particular person, in the ministry of the word and Sacraments. And that this consideration may not be dead and idle in thee, two things must be done. First, thou must labour to feel thyself to stand in need of Christ crucified; yea, to stand in excessive need even of the very least drop of his blood, for the washing away of thy sins. And unless thou thoroughly feelest thyself, to want all that goodness and grace that is in Christ; and that thou even stand in extreme need of his passion, thou shalt never learn to teach Christ in deed and truth. The second thing is, with the understanding of the doctrine of Christ, to join thirsting, whereby man in very soul and spirit, longs after the participation of Christ, and saith in this case as **Samson** said; Give me water, I die for thirst.

The second part of knowledge, is application, whereby thou must know and believe, not only that Christ was crucified, but that he was

crucified for thee; for thee I say in particular. Here two rules must be remembered and practiced. One, that Christ on the cross was thy pledge and surety in particular, that he then stood in the very room and place, in which thou thyself in thine own person, shouldest have stood: that thy very personal and particular sins were imputed and applied to him: that he stood guilty as a malefactor for them, and suffered the very pangs of hell, and that his sufferings are as much in acceptation with God, as if thou hadst borne the curse of the law in thine own person eternally. The holding and believing of this point, is the very foundation of religion, as also of the Church of God. Therefore in any wise be careful to apply Christ crucified to thyself: and as **Elisha**, when he would revive the child of the **Shunammite**, went up and lay upon him, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his hands upon his hands, and his eyes upon his eyes, and stretched himself upon him: even so, if thou wouldst be revived to everlasting life, thou must by faith as it were set thyself upon the cross of Christ, and apply thy hands to his hands, thy feet to his feet, and thy sinful heart to his believing heart: and content not thyself with Thomas, to put thy finger in his side, but even dive and plunge thyself wholly, both body and soul, into the wounds and blood of Christ. This will make thee to cry with Thomas, and say; My Lord my God: and this is to be crucified with Christ. And yet do not content thyself with this, but by faith also descend with Christ from the cross to the grave, bury thyself in the very burial of Christ: and then look as the dead soldier tumbled into the grave of **Elisha**, was made alive at the very touching of his body: so shalt thou by a spiritual touching of Christ dead buried, be quickened to life everlasting. The second rule is, that Christ crucified is thine, being really given thee of God the Father, even as truly as houses and lands are given of earthly fathers to their children; thus must thou firmly hold and believe: and hence is it, that the benefits of Christ, are before God ours indeed for our justification and salvation.

The third point in lively knowledge is, that by all the affections of our hearts, we must be carried to Christ, and as it were, transformed into him. Whereas he gave himself wholly for us, we can do no less than bestow our hearts upon him. We must therefore labour above all, following the Martyr Ignatius, who said, that Christ his love was crucified. We must value him at so high a price, that he must be unto us better than ten thousand worlds: yea, all things which we enjoy, must be but as dross and dung unto us in respect of him. Lastly, all our joy, rejoicing, comfort, and confidence; must be placed in him. And that thus much is requisite in knowledge, it appears by the common rule of expounding Scripture, that works of knowledge imply affection. And indeed it is but a knowledge swimming in the brain, which doth not alter and dispose that affection, and the whole man.

Thus much of our knowledge. Now follows the second point, how Christ is to be known. He must not be known barely as God, or as man, or as a Jew, born in the tribe of Judah, or as a terrible and just Judge, but as he is our Redeemer, and the very price of our redemption: and in this respect, he must be considered as the common treasure and storehouse of God's Church, as Paul testifies when he saith, In him are all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom hid. And again, Blessed be God, which hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. And St. John saith, that of his fulness, we receive grace for grace. Here then let us mark, that all the blessings of God, whether spiritual or temporal; all, I say, without exception, are conveyed unto us from the Father, by Christ: and so they must be received of us, and no otherwise. That this point may be further cleared, the benefits which we receive from Christ, are to be

handled, and the manner of knowing them. The benefits of Christ are three, his Merit, his Virtue, his Example.

The merit of Christ, is the value and price of his death and passion, whereby any man is perfectly reconciled to God. This reconciliation hath two parts, remission of sins, and acceptation to life everlasting. Remission of sins, is the removing, or the abolishing both of the guilt and punishment of man's sins. By guilt, I understand a subjection or obligation to punishment, according to the order of divine justice. And the punishment of sin, is the malediction or curse of the whole law, which is the suffering of the first, and second death. Acceptation to life everlasting, is a giving of right and title to the kingdom of heaven, and that for the merit of Christ's obedience imputed. Now this benefit of reconciliation, must be known, not by conceit and imagination, nor by carnal presumption; but by the inward testimony of God's spirit, certifying our consciences thereof; which for this cause, is called the spirit of Revelation. And that we may attain to infallible assurance of this benefit, we must call to mind the promises of the Gospel, touching remission of sins, and life everlasting. This being done, we must further strive and endeavour, by the assurance of God's spirit, to apply them to ourselves, and to believe that they belong unto us: and we must also put ourselves often to the exercises of invocation and true repentance. For in, and by our crying unto heaven to God for our reconciliation, comes the assurance thereof, as Scriptures and Christian experience makes manifest. And if so it fall out, that any man in temptation, apprehend and feel nothing but the furious indignation and wrath of God; against all reason and feeling, he must hold to the merit of Christ, and know a point of religion hard to be learned, that God is a most loving Father to them that have care to serve him, even at that instant, when he shows himself a most fierce and terrible enemy.

From the benefit of reconciliation proceed four benefits. First, that excellent peace of God that passeth all understanding, which hath six parts. The first is, peace with God and the blessed Trinity, Rom. 5. 1. Being justified we have peace with God. The second, peace with the good Angels, John 1. 51. Ye shall see the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. And that Angels, like armies of soldiers encamp about the servants of God, and as nurses bear them in their arms, that they be neither hurt by the devil and his Angels, nor by his instruments, it proceeds of this, that they being in Christ, are partakers of his merits. The third is, peace with all such as fear God, believe in Christ. This Isaiah foretold when he said, that the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid, and the lion and a fat beast together, and that a little child shall lead them, Isa. 11. 6. The fourth is, peace with a man's own self, when the conscience washed in the blood of Christ, ceaseth to accuse and terrify: and when the will, affections and inclinations of the whole man, are obedient to the mind, enlightened by the Spirit and word of God, Coloss. 3. 15. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. The fifth is, peace with enemies, and that two ways: first in that such as believe in Christ, seek to have peace with all men, hurting none, but doing good to all. Secondly, in that God restrains the malice of the enemies, and inclines their hearts to be peaceable. Thus God brought Daniel into love and favour with the chief of the Eunuchs. The last is, peace with all creatures in heaven and earth, in that they serve for man's salvation, Ps. 91. 13. Thou shalt walk upon the lion and the asp, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under foot. Hos. 2. 18. And in that day will I make a covenant for them, with the beasts of the field, with the fowls of heaven. Now this benefit of peace, is known, partly by the testimony of the spirit, partly by a daily experience thereof.

The second benefit, is a recovery of that right and title, which man hath to all creatures in heaven and earth, and all temporal blessings, which right Adam lost to himself, and every one of his posterity, 1 Cor. 3. 22. Whether it be the world, or life, or death, whether they be things present, or things to come, all are yours. Now, the right way of knowing this one benefit, is this. When God vouchsafeth meat, drink, apparel, houses, lands, etc. We must not barely consider them as blessings of God, for that very heathen men, which know not Christ, can do: but we must acknowledge and esteem them as blessings, proceeding from the special love of God the Father, whereby he loves us in Christ: and procured unto us by the merit of Christ crucified: and we must labour in this point to be settled and persuaded: and so oft as we see and use the creatures of God for our own benefit, this point should come to our minds. Blessings conceived apart from Christ, are misconceived: whatsoever they are in themselves, they are no blessings to us, but in, and by Christ's merits. Therefore this order must be observed touching earthly blessings: First, we must have part in the merit of Christ: and then secondly, by means of that merit, a right before God, and comfortable use of the thing we enjoy. All men that have and use the creatures of God otherwise, as gifts of God, but not by Christ, use them but as flat usurpers and thieves. For this cause it is not sufficient for us generally and confusedly, to know Christ to be our Redeemer; but we must learn to see, know and acknowledge him in every particular gift and blessing of God. If men, using the creatures of meat and drink, could, when they behold them, withal by the eye of faith, behold in them the merit of Christ's passion, there would not be so much excess and riot, so much surfeiting and drunkenness as there is: and if men could consider their houses and lands, etc. as blessings to them, and that by the fountain of blessing, the merits of Christ, there should not be so much fraud and deceit, so much injustice and oppression in bargaining as there is.

That which I have now said of meats, drinks, apparel, must likewise be understood of Gentry and Nobility, in as much as noble birth without new birth in Christ, is but an earthly vanity: the like may be said of physic, sleep, health, liberty, yea, of the very breathing in the air. And to go yet further, in our recreation Christ must be known: for all recreation stands in the use of all things indifferent: and the holy use of all things indifferent, is purchased unto us by the blood of Christ. For this cause it is very meet, that Christian men and women, should with their earthly recreation, join spiritual meditation of the death of Christ, and from the one, take occasion to bethink themselves of the other. If this were practiced, there should not be so many unlawful sports and delights, and so much abuse of lawful recreation, as there is.

The third benefit is, that all crosses, afflictions, and judgments whatsoever, cease to be curses and punishments to them that are in Christ, and are only means of correction or trial; because his death hath taken away, not some few parts, but all, and every part of the curse of the whole law. Now, in all crosses, Christ is to be known of us on this manner. We must judge of our afflictions, as chastisements or trials, proceeding not from a revenging judge, but from the hand of a bountiful and loving Father; and therefore they must be conceived in, and with the merit of Christ; and if we do otherwise regard them, we take them as curses and punishments of sin. And hence it follows, that subjection to God's hand in all crosses, is a mark and badge of the true Church.

The last benefit is, that death is properly no death, but a rest or sleep. Death therefore must be known and considered, not as it is set forth in the law, but as it is altered and changed by the death of Christ: and

when death comes, we must then look upon it through Christ's death, as through a glass: and thus it will appear to be but a passage from this life to everlasting life.

Thus much of the merit of Christ crucified: Now follows his virtue, which is the power of his Godhead, whereby he creates new hearts in all them that believe in him, and makes them new creatures. This virtue is double: the first is the power of his death, whereby he freed himself from the punishment and imputation of our sins: and the same virtue serveth to mortify and crucify the corruptions of our minds, wills, affections, even as a corrosive doth waste and consume the rotten and dead flesh in any part of man's body.

The second is, the virtue of Christ's resurrection, which is also the power of his Godhead, whereby he raised himself from death to life and the very same power serveth to raise those that belong to Christ, from their sins in this life, and from the grave in the day of the last judgment. Now the knowledge of this double virtue, must not be only speculative; that is, barely conceived in the brain, but it must be experimental: because we ought to have experience of it in our hearts and lives, and we should labour by all means possible, to feel the power of Christ's death, killing and mortifying our sins, and the virtue of his resurrection, in the putting of spiritual life into us, that we may be able to say, that we live not, but that Christ lives in us. This was one of the most excellent and principal things which Paul sought for, who saith: I have counted all things loss, and do judge them to be dung, that I might know him, the virtue of his resurrection, Phil. 3. 8. 10. And he saith that this is the right way to know and learn Christ, to cast off the old man, which is corrupt through the deceivable lusts, and to put on the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. 4. 21. 24.

The third benefit, is the example of Christ. We deceive ourselves, if we think that he is only to be known of us as a redeemer, not as a spectacle or pattern of all good duties, to which we ought to conform ourselves. Good men indeed, that have been, or at present are upon the earth the servants of God, must be followed of us: but they must be followed no otherwise than they follow Christ, and Christ must be followed in the practice of every good duty that may concern us, without exception simply and absolutely, 1 Cor. 11. 1.

Our conformity with Christ stands either in the framing of our inward spiritual life, or in the practice of outward moral duties.

Conformity of spiritual life is, not by doing that which Christ did upon the cross, afterward, but a doing of the like, by a certain kind of imitation. And it hath four parts. The first is, a spiritual oblation. For as Christ in the garden, and upon the cross, by prayer made with strong cries and tears, presented and resigned himself to be a sacrifice of propitiation to the justice of his Father for man's sin: so must we also in prayer, present and resign ourselves, our souls, our bodies, our understanding, will, memory, affections, all we have; to the service of God, in the general calling of a Christian, and in the particular callings, in which he hath placed us. Take an example in David; Sacrifice and burnt offering (saith he) thou wouldst not, but ears thou hast pierced unto me; then said I, lo, I come: I desire to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart, Ps. 40. 7. The second is, conformity in the cross two ways. For first, as he bare his own cross to the place of execution: so must we as good disciples of Christ, deny ourselves, and take up all the crosses and afflictions that the hand of God shall lay upon us. Again, we must become like unto him, in the crucifying and mortifying the body of sin, which we carry about us. Gal. 5. 24. They which are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof. We must do as the Jews did, we

must set up the crosses and gibbets whereon we are to fasten and hang this flesh of ours: that is, the sin and corruption that cleaves and sticks unto us, and by the sword of the spirit, wound it even to death. This being done, we must yet go further, and labour by experience to see and feel the very death of it, to lay it as it were in a grave never to rise again: and therefore, we should daily cast new moulds upon it. The third is, a spiritual resurrection, whereby we should by God's grace use means that we may every day more and more come out of our sins, as out of a loathsome grave; to live unto God in newness of life, as Christ rose from his grave. And because it is a hard matter for a man to come out of the grave or rather dungeon of his sins, this work cannot be done at once, but by degrees, as God shall give grace. Considering we lie by nature dead in our sins, and stink in them as loathsome carrion: first we must begin to stir ourselves as a man that comes out of a swoon, awakened by the word and voice of Christ sounding in our deaf ears; secondly, we must raise up our minds to a better state and condition, as we use to raise up our bodies: after this, we must put out of the grave, first one hand, then the other. This done, we must do our endeavour as it were upon our knees, at the least to put one foot out of the sepulchre of sin, the rather when we see ourselves to have one foot of the body in the grave of the earth, that in the day of judgment we may be wholly delivered from all bonds of corruption. The fourth part is, a spiritual ascension into heaven, by a continual elevation of the heart and mind to Christ, sitting at the right hand of the Father, as Paul saith, Phil. 3. 20. Have your conversation in heaven: and, Col. 3. 1. If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above.

Conformity in moral duties, is either general or special. General, is to be holy as he is holy. Rom. 8. 29. Those whom he knew before he hath predestinated to be like the image of his son, that is, not only in

the cross, but also in holiness and glory. 1 John 3. 3. He which hath this hope, purifies himself even as he is pure.

Special conformity, is chiefly in four virtues; Faith, Love, Meekness, Humility.

We must be like him in faith. For as he, when he apprehended the wrath of God, and the very pangs of hell were upon him, wholly stayed himself upon the aid, help, protection, and good pleasure of his Father, even to the last: so must we by a true and lively faith depend wholly on God's mercy in Christ, as it were with both our hands, in peace, in trouble, in life, and in the very pang of death: and we must not in any wise let our hold go; no though we should feel ourselves descend to hell.

We must be like him in meekness. Matt. 11. v. 29. Learn of me, that I am meek and lowly. His meekness showed itself in the patient bearing of all injuries and abuses, offered by the hands of sinful and wretched men, and in the suffering of the curse of the law, without grudging or repining, with submission to his Father's will in all things. Now the more we follow him herein, the more shall we be conformable to him in his death and passion, Phil. 3. 10.

Thirdly, he must be our example in love: he loved his enemies more than himself. Eph. 5. 2. Walk in love even as Christ loved us, and hath given himself for us an oblation and sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God. The like love ought we to show, by doing service to all men in the compass of our calling, and by being all things to all men (as Paul was) that we might do them all the good we can, both for body and soul, 1 Cor. 9. 19.

Lastly, we must follow Christ in humility, whereof he is a wonderful spectacle, in that being God, he became man for us: and of a man, became a worm that is trodden under foot, that he might save man. Phil. 2. 5. Let the same mind be in you that was in Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God, humbled himself, and became obedient to the death, even to the death of the cross.

And here we must observe, that the example of Christ hath something more in it than any other example hath or can have: for it doth not only show us what we ought to do (as the examples of other men do) but it is a remedy against many vices, and a motive to many good duties. First of all, the serious consideration of this, that the very Son of God himself suffered all the pains and torments of hell on the cross for our sins, is the proper and most effectual means to stir up our hearts to a godly sorrow for them. And that this thing may come to pass, every man must be settled without doubt, that he was the man that crucified Christ; that he is to be blamed as well as Judas, Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Jews: and that his sins should be the nails, the spears, and the thorns that pierced him. When this meditation begins to take place, bitterness of spirit, with wailing and mourning, takes place in like manner. Zech. 12. 10. And they shall look upon him, whom they have pierced: and they shall lament for him as one lamenteth for his only son. Peter in his first Sermon struck the Jews as with a thunder-clap from heaven, when he said unto them, Ye have crucified the Lord of glory, so at the same time 3,000 men were pricked in their hearts, and said, Acts 2. 37. Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved? Again, if Christ for our sins shed his heart's blood, and if our sins made him sweat water and blood; O then why should not we ourselves shed bitter tears, and why should not our hearts bleed for them! He that finds himself so dull and hardened that the passion of Christ doth not humble him, is in a

lamentable case, for there is no faith in the death of Christ effectual in him as yet.

Secondly, the meditation of the passion of Christ, is a most notable means to breed repentance and reformation of life in time to come. For when we begin to think, that Christ crucified, by suffering the first and second death, hath procured unto us remission of all our sins past, and freed us from hell, death, and damnation: then if there be but a spark of grace in us, we begin to be of another mind, and to reason thus with ourselves: What? hath the Lord been thus merciful unto me, that am in myself but a firebrand of hell, as to free me from deserved destruction, to receive me to favour in Christ? yea, no doubt he hath; his name be blessed therefore: I will not therefore sin any more as I have done, but rather endeavour hereafter to keep myself from every evil way. And thus faith purifies both heart and life.

Thirdly, when thou art in any pain of body or sickness, think how light these are, compared to the agony and bloody sweat, to the crown of thorns and nails of Christ. When thou art wronged in word or deed, by any man, turn thine eye to the cross, consider how meekly he suffered all abuses for the most part in silence, and prayed for them that crucified him. When thou art tempted with pride or vain-glory, consider how for thy proper sins Christ was despised and mocked, and condemned among thieves. When anger and desire of revenge inflame thine heart, think how Christ gave himself to death to save his enemies, even then when they did most cruelly entreat him, and shed his blood: and by these meditations, specially if they be mingled with faith, thy mind shall be eased.

Thus we see how Christ crucified, is to be known: and hence ariseth a three-fold knowledge; one of God, the second of our neighbours, the third of ourselves.

Touching the first: if we would know the true God aright, and know him to our salvation, we must know him only in Christ crucified. God in himself and his own majesty, is invisible, not only to the eyes of the body, but also to the very minds of men; and he is revealed to us only in Christ, in whom he is to be seen, as in a glass. For in Christ he setteth forth and gives his justice, goodness, wisdom, and himself wholly unto us. For this cause he is called the brightness of the glory, and the engraven form of the person of the Father, Heb. 1. 3. and the image of the invisible God, Coloss. 1. 15. Therefore we must not know God, and seek him any where else but in Christ: and whatsoever out of Christ, comes unto us in the name of God, is a flat idol of man's brain.

As for our neighbours, those especially that are of Christ's Church, they are to be known of us on this manner: When we are to do any duty unto them, we must not barely respect their persons, but Christ crucified in them, and them in Christ. When Paul persecuted such as called on the name of Christ, he then from heaven cried; Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Here then let this be marked, that when the poor comes to us for relief, it is Christ that comes to our doors, and saith, I am hungry, I am thirsty, I am naked: let the bowels of compassion be in us towards them: as towards Christ, unless we will hear that fearful sentence in the day of judgment, Go ye cursed into hell, etc. I was hungry, and ye fed me not, I was naked, and ye did not clothe me, etc. Matt. 25. 42.

Thirdly, the right knowledge of ourselves, ariseth of the knowledge of Christ crucified, in whom, and by whom, we come to know five special things of ourselves. The first, how grievous our sins are, and therefore how miserable we are in regard of them. If we consider our offences in themselves, and as they are in us, we may soon be deceived, because the conscience being corrupted, often erreth in

giving testimony, and by that means, maketh sin to appear less than it is indeed. But if sin be considered in the death and passion of Christ, whereof it was the cause, and the vileness thereof measured by the unspeakable torments endured by the Son of God: and if the greatness of the offence of man be esteemed by the endless satisfaction made to the justice of God, the least sin that is, will appear to be a sin indeed, and that most grievous and ugly. Therefore Christ crucified must be used of us as a mirror or looking glass, in which we may fully take a view of our wretchedness and misery, and what we are by nature. For such as the passion of Christ was in the eyes of men, such is our passion or condition in the eyes of God: and that which wicked men did to Christ, the same doth sin and Satan to our very soul.

The second point is, that men believing in Christ, are not their own or Lords of themselves, but wholly both body and soul belong to Christ, in that they were given to him of God the Father, and he hath purchased them with his own blood: 1 Cor. 3. 13. Ye are Christ's, and Christ God's. Hence it cometh to pass (which is not to be forgotten) that Christ esteemeth all the crosses and afflictions of his people, as his own proper afflictions. Hence again we must learn, to give up ourselves both body and soul to the honour and service of Christ, whose we are.

The third is, that every true believer, not as he is a man, but as he is a new man, or a Christian, hath his being and subsisting from Christ: We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone, Eph. 5. 30. In which words, Paul alludes to the speech of Adam, Gen. 2. 23. Thou art bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; and thereby he teacheth, that as Eve was made of a rib taken out of the side of Adam, so doth the whole Church of God, and every man regenerate, spring and arise

out of the blood that streamed from the heart and side of Christ crucified.

The fourth is, that all good works done of us, proceed from the virtue and merit of Christ crucified: he is the cause of them in us, and we are the causes of them, in and by him. Without me (saith he John 15. 5.) ye can do nothing: and, Every branch that beareth not fruit in me, mark well, he saith, in me, he taketh away, John 15. 2.

The fifth point is, that we owe unto Christ an endless debt. For he was crucified only as our surety pledge, and in the spectacle of his passion we must consider ourselves as the chief debtors, and that the very discharge of our debt, that is, the sins which are inherent in us, were the proper cause of all the endless pains and torments that Christ endured, that he might set us most miserable bankrupts at liberty from hell, death and damnation. For this his unspeakable goodness, if we do but once think of it seriously, we must needs confess that we owe ourselves, our souls, and bodies, and all that we have, as a debt due unto him. And so soon as any man begins to know Christ crucified, he knows his own debt, and thinks of the payment of it.

Thus we see how Christ is to be known: now we shall not need to make much examination whether this manner of knowing and acknowledging of Christ take any place in the world or no: for few there be that know him as they ought. The Turk even at this very day knows him not, but as he was a Prophet. The Jew scorns his cross and passion. The Popish Churches, though in word they confess him, yet do they not know him as they ought.

The Friars and Jesuits in their sermons at this day, commonly use the passion as a means to stir up pity and compassion towards Christ, who being so righteous a man, was so hardly entreated, and

to inflame their hearers to a hatred of the Jews, and Judas, and Pontius Pilate, that put our blessed Saviour to death; but all this may be done in any other history. And the service of God which in that Church stands now in force by the Canons of the Council of Trent, defaces Christ crucified, in that the passions of martyrs are made meritorious, and the very wood of the cross their only help: and the virgin Mary the Queen of heaven, and a mother of mercy, who in remission of sins may command her Son: and they give religious adoration to dumb crucifixes, made by the hand and art of man.

The common Protestant likewise comes short herein for three causes. First, whereas in word they acknowledge him to be their Saviour that hath redeemed them from their evil conversation, yet indeed they make him a patron of their sins. The thief makes him the receiver, the murderer makes him his refuge, the adulterer (be it spoken with reverence unto his Majesty) makes him the bawd. For generally men walk on in their evil ways, some living in this sin, some in that, and yet for all this, they persuade themselves that God is merciful, and that Christ hath freed them from death and damnation.

Thus Christ that came to abolish sin, is made a maintainer thereof, and the common pack-horse of the world, to bear every man's burden. Secondly, men are content to take knowledge of the merit of Christ's passion for the remission of their sins, but in the mean season, the virtue of Christ's death in the mortifying of sin, and the blessed example of his passion, which ought to be followed and expressed in our lives and conversations, is little or nothing regarded.

Thirdly, men usually content themselves generally and confusedly to know Christ to be their Redeemer, never once seeking in every

particular estate and condition of life, and in every particular blessing of God, to feel the benefit of his passion. What is the cause that almost all the world live in security, never almost touched for their horrible sins? Surely the reason is, because they did never yet seriously consider, that Christ in the garden lay grovelling upon the earth, sweating water and blood for their offences.

Again, all such as by fraud and oppression, or any kind of hard dealing suck the blood of poor men, never yet knew that their sins drew out the heart-blood of Christ. And proud men and women, that are puffed up by reason of their attire, which is the badge of their shame, never cease hunting after strange fashions, consider not that Christ was not crucified in gay attire, but naked, that he might bear the whole shame and curse of the law for us. These such like, whatsoever they say in word, if we respect the tenor of their lives, are flat enemies of the cross of Christ, and tread his precious blood under their feet.

Now then, considering this so weighty and special a point of religion is so much neglected, O man or woman, high or low, young or old, if thou hast been wanting this way, begin for very shame to learn, learning truly to know Christ crucified.

That thou mayest attain to this, behold him often, not in the wooden crucifix after the Popish manner, but in the preaching of the word, and in the sacraments, in which thou shalt see him crucified before thine eyes, Gal. 3. 1. Desire not here upon earth to behold him with the bodily eye, but look upon him with the eye of true and lively faith, applying him and his merits to thyself as thine own, and that with broken and bruised heart, as the poor Israelites stung with fiery serpents even to death, beheld the brazen Serpent.

Again, thou must look upon him first of all as a glass or spectacle, in which thou shalt see God's glory greater in thy redemption, than in thy creation. In the creation appeared God's infinite wisdom, power, and goodness: in thy redemption by the passion of Christ, his endless justice and mercy. In the creation thou art a member of the first Adam, and bearest his image: in thy redemption thou art a member of the second Adam. In the first thou art endued with natural life, in the second with spiritual. In the first thou hast in the person of Eve, thy beginning of the rib of Adam: in the second thou hast thy beginning as thou art born of God out of the blood of Christ. Lastly, in the first God gave life, in commanding that to be, which was not: in the second he gives life, not by life, but by death, even of his own Son. This is the mystery, unto which the Angels themselves desire to look into, 1 Pet. 1. 12.

Secondly, thou must behold him as the full price of thy redemption, and perfect reconciliation with God: and pray earnestly to God, that he would seal up the same in thy very conscience by his holy Spirit. Thirdly, thou must behold Christ as an example, to whom thou must conform thyself by regeneration.

For this cause give diligence, that thou mayest by experience say, that thou art dead, and crucified, and buried with Christ, and that thou risest again with him to newness of life: that he enlightens thy mind, and by degrees reforms thy will and affections, and gives thee both the will and the deed in every good thing. And that thou mayest not fail in this thy knowledge, read the history of Christ's passion, observe all the parts and circumstances thereof, and apply them to thyself for thy full conversion.

When thou readest that Christ went to the garden, as his custom was, where the Jews might soon attach him, consider that he went to the

death of the cross for thy sins willingly, not of constraint; and that therefore thou for thy part shouldest do him all service freely, and frankly, Ps. 110. 3.

When thou hearest that in his agony his soul was heavy unto death, know it was for thy sins, and that thou shouldest much more conceive heaviness of heart for the same: again, that this sorrow of his is joy and rejoicing unto thee, if thou wilt believe in him; therefore Paul saith, I say again, rejoice in the Lord.

When thou readest that in the garden he prayed lying grovelling on his face sweating water and blood, begin to think seriously what an unspeakable measure of God's wrath was upon thy blessed Saviour, that did prostrate his body upon the earth, and cause the blood to follow: and think that thy sins must needs be most heinous, that brought such bloody and grievous pains upon him. Also think it is a very shame for thee to carry thy head to heaven with haughty looks, to wallow in thy pleasures, to draw the innocent blood of thy poor brethren by oppression and deceit, for whom Christ sweat water and blood; and take an occasion from Christ's agony, to lay aside the pride of thy heart, to be ashamed of thyself, to grieve in heart, yea even to bleed for thine own offences, casting down and humbling thyself with Ezra, saying, Ezra 9. 6. O my God, I am confounded and ashamed to lift up mine eyes unto thee, my God: for mine iniquities are increased, my trespass is grown up into heaven.

When thou readest that Christ was taken and bound, think that thy very sins brought him into the power of his enemies, were the very bonds wherewith he was tied: think that thou shouldest have been bound in the very same manner, unless he had been a surety and pledge for thee: think also that thou in the selfsame manner art bound and tied with the chains of thine own sin, and that by nature

thy will, affections, whole spirit is tied and chained to the will of the devil, so as thou canst do nothing but that which he willeth: lastly, think and believe that the bonds of Christ serve to purchase thy liberty from hell, death, and damnation.

When thou hearest that he was brought before Annas and Caiaphas, think it was meet, that thy surety and pledge, who was to suffer the condemnation due unto thee, should by the high priest, as by the mouth of God, be condemned: and wonder at this, that the very co-essential eternal Son of God, even the very sovereign Judge of the world, stands to be judged, that by wicked men; persuading thyself that this so great confusion comes of thy sins. Whereupon being further amazed at thy fearful estate, humble thyself in dust and ashes, pray God so to soften thy stony heart, that thou mayest turn to him, by true faith lay hold on Christ, who hath thus exceedingly abased himself, that his ignominy may be thy glory, and his arraignment thy perfect absolution.

When thou readest that Barabbas the murderer was preferred before Christ, though he exceeded both men and angels in holiness; think it was to manifest his innocency, and that thy very sins pulled upon him this shameful reproach; and in that for thy cause he was esteemed worse than Barabbas, think of thyself as a most heinous and wretched sinner, and (as Paul saith, 1 Tim. 1. 15.) the head of all sinners.

When thou readest that he was openly and judicially condemned to the cursed death of the cross, consider what is the wrath and fury of God against sin, and what is his great and infinite mercy to sinners: and in this spectacle look upon thyself, and with groans of heart cry out, and say, O good God, what settest thou before mine eyes? I, even I have sinned, I am guilty and worthy of damnation. Whence comes

this change, that thy blessed Son is in my room, but of thine unspeakable mercy? Wretch that I am, how have I forgotten myself, and thee also my God? O Son of God, how low hast thou abased thyself for me? Therefore give me grace O God, that beholding mine own estate in the person of my Saviour thus condemned, I may detest and loathe my sins that are the cause thereof, and by a lively faith embrace that absolution which thou offerest me in him, who was condemned in my stead.

O Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, give me thy holy and blessed Spirit, that I may judge myself, and be as vile and base in mine own eyes, as thou wast vile before the Jews: also unite me unto thee by the same Spirit, that in thee I may be as worthy to be accepted before God, as I am worthy in myself to be detested for my sins.

When thou readest that he was clad in purple, and crowned with thorns, mocked and spit upon, behold the everlasting shame that is due unto thee, and be ashamed of thyself; and in this point conform thyself to Christ, and be content (as he was) to be reproached, abused, and despised, so it be for a good cause.

When thou readest that before his crucifying, he was stripped of all his clothes, think it was, that he being naked, might bear thy shame on the cross, and with his most precious and rich nakedness cover thy deformity.

When thou readest the complaint of Christ, that he was forsaken of his Father, consider how he suffered the pangs and torments of hell as thy pledge and surety. Learn by his unspeakable torments what a fearful thing it is to sin against God, and begin to renounce thyself, and detest thy sins, and to walk as a child of light, according to the measure of grace received.

When thou comest to die, set before thine eyes Christ in the midst of all his torments on the cross: in beholding of which spectacle to thy endless comfort, thou shalt see a paradise in the midst of hell; God the Father reconciled unto thee, thy Saviour reaching out his hand unto thee to receive thy soul unto him, and his cross as a ladder to advance it to eternal glory.

Whereas he cried aloud with a strong voice at the point of death, it was to show that he died willingly without violence or constraint from any creature, and that if it had so pleased him, he could have freed himself from death, and have cast his very enemies to the very bottom of hell.

When thou readest that he commended his soul into the hands of his Father, consider that thy soul also (so be it thou wilt believe in him) is delivered up into the hands of God, and shall be preserved against the rage and malice of all thine enemies, and hereupon thou mayest be bold to commend thy spirit into the hands of God the Father.

When thou readest of his death, consider that thy sins were the cause of it, and that thou shouldest have suffered the same eternally, unless the Son of God had come in thy room: again, consider his death as a ransom, and apprehend the same by faith, as the means of thy life: for by death Christ hath wounded both the first and second death, and hath made his cross to be a throne or tribunal seat of judgment against all his and thine enemies.

When thou readest of the trembling of the earth at the death of Christ, think with thyself, it did in his kind, as it were groan under the burden of the sins of men in the world: and by his motion then, it signified that even thou and the rest deserved rather to be swallowed of the earth, to go down into the pit alive, than to have any part in the merit of Christ crucified.

When thou readest of his burial, think that it was to ratify his death, and to vanquish death even to his own den. Apply this burial to thyself, and believe that it serves to make thy grave a bed of down, to free thy body from corruption.

Lastly, pray to God that thou mayest feel the power of the Spirit of Christ weakening and consuming the body of sin, even as a dead corpse rots in the grave till it be resolved to dust.

When thou hast thus perused and applied to thyself the history of the passion of Christ, go yet further, and labour by faith to see Christ crucified in all the works of God, either in thee or upon thee. Behold him at thy table in meat and drink, which is as it were a lively sermon, a daily pledge of the mercy of God in Christ. Behold him in all thine afflictions, as thy partner that pitieth thy case and hath compassion on thee. Behold him in thy most dangerous temptations, in which the devil thundereth damnation, behold him I say as a mighty Samson bearing away the gates of his enemies upon his own shoulders, and killing more by death than by life, crucifying the devil, even then when he is crucified, by death killing death: by entrance into the grave, opening the grave and giving life to the dead, in the house of death spoiling him of all his strength and power. Behold him in all the afflictions of thy brethren, as though he himself were naked, hungry, sick, harbourless; do unto them all the good thou canst, as to Christ himself.

If thou wouldest behold God himself, look unto him in Christ crucified, who is the engraven image of the Father's person; and know it to be a terrible thing in the time of the trouble of thy conscience, to think of God without Christ, in whose face the glory of God in his endless mercy is to be seen, 2 Cor. 4. 6. If thou wouldest come to God for grace, for comfort, for salvation, for any blessing,

come first to Christ hanging, bleeding, dying upon the cross, without whom there is no hearing God, no helping God, no saving God, no God to thee at all.

In a word, let Christ be all things without exception unto thee, Col. 3. 11. For when thou prayest for any blessing either temporal or spiritual, be it whatsoever it will be or can be, thou must ask it at the hands of God the Father by the merit and mediation of Christ crucified. Now look as we ask blessings at God's hand, so must we receive them of him; as they are received, so must we possess and use them daily, namely, as gifts of God procured to us by the merit of Christ: which gifts for this very cause, must be wholly employed to the honour of Christ.

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