

Monergism



# CHRIST AND HIS THREEFOLD OFFICE

J O H N F L A V E L

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# Christ and His Threefold Office

by John Flavel

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## **To the Christian Reader**

My dear and honored friends,

If my pen were both able, and at leisure, to get glory in paper, it would be but a paper glory when I had gotten it; but if by displaying (which is the design of these papers) the transcendent excellency of Jesus Christ, I may win glory to him from you, to whom I humbly offer them, or from any other into whose hands providence shall cast them, that will be glory indeed, and an occasion of glorifying God to all eternity. It is not the design of this epistle to compliment, but to benefit you; not to emblazon your excellencies, but Christ's; not to acquaint the world how much you have endeared me to yourselves, but to increase and strengthen the endearments between Christ and

you, upon your part. I might indeed (this being a proper place for it) pay you my acknowledgments for your great kindnesses to me and mine; of which, I assure you, I have, and ever shall have, the most grateful sense: but you and I are theater enough to one another, and can satisfy ourselves with the enclosed comforts and delights of our mutual love and friendship. But let me tell you, the whole world is not a theater large enough to show the glory of Christ upon, or unfold the one half of the unsearchable riches that lie hid in him. These things will be far better understood, and spoken of in heaven, by the noon-day divinity, in which the immediately illuminated assembly do there preach his praises, shall by such a stammering tongue, and scribbling pen as mine, which does but mar them. Alas! I write his praises but by moon-light; I cannot praise him so much as by halves. Indeed, no tongue but his own (as Nazianzen said of Basil) is sufficient to undertake that task. What shall I say of Christ?

The excelling glory of that object dazzles all apprehension, swallows up all expression. When we have borrowed metaphors from every creature that has any excellency or lovely property in it, until we have stripped the whole creation bare of all its ornaments, and clothed Christ with all that glory; when we have even worn out our tongues, in ascribing praises to him, alas! we have done nothing, when all is done. Yes, woe is me! how do I every day behold reasonable souls most unreasonably disaffected to my lovely Lord Jesus! denying love to One, who is able to compel love from the stoniest heart! yes, though they can never make so much of their love (would they set it to sale) as Christ bids for it. It is horrid and amazing to see how the minds of many are captivated and ensnared by every silly trifle; and how others can indifferently turn them with a kind of spontaneity to this object, or to that (as their fancy strikes) among the whole universe of beings, and scarce ever reluctant, recoil, or nauseate, until they be persuaded to Christ. In their unconverted state, it is as easy to melt the obdurate rocks into sweet syrup, as their hearts into divine love. How do the great men of the world ambitiously court the honors and pleasures of it? The merchants of the earth trade, and strive for the dear-bought treasures of it; while the price of Christ

(alas! ever too low) falls every day lower and lower upon the exchange of this world! I speak it as a sad truth, if there were no quicker a trade (as dead as they say it is) for the perishing treasures of the earth, than there is for Christ this day in England, the exchange would quickly be shut up, and all the trading companies dissolved. Dear Sir, Christ is the peerless pearl hid in the field, Mat. 13:46. Will you be that wise merchant, that resolves to win and compass that treasure, whatever it shall cost you? Ah, Sir, Christ is a commodity that can never be bought too dear. My dear kinsman, my flesh, and my blood; my soul thirsts for your salvation, and the salvation of your family. Shall you and I resolve with good Joshua that whatever others do, "we and our families will serve the Lord;" that we will walk as the redeemed by his blood, showing forth his virtues and praises in the world? that as God has made us one in name, and one in affection, so we may be one in Christ, that it may be said of us, as it was of Austin and Alippous long ago, that they were glued together by the blood of Christ. For my own part, I have given in my name to him long since; woe to me, if I have not given in my heart also; for, should I deceive myself in so deep a point as that, how would my profession as a Christian, my calling as a minister, yea, these very sermons now in your hands, rise in judgment to condemn me? which God forbid. And doubtless, Sir, your eyes have seen both the vanity of all creatures, and the necessity and infinite worth of Christ. You cannot forget what a vanity the world appeared to you, when in the year 1668, you were summoned by the messengers of death (as you and all that were about you then apprehended) to shoot the gulf of vast eternity, when a malignant fever and pleurisy (whereof your physician has given an account to the world) did shake the whole frame of the tabernacle wherein your soul through mercy yet dwells; and long may it dwell there, for the service and praise of your great Deliverer. I hope you have not, nor ever will forget how vain the world appeared to your eye, when you looked back (as it were over your shoulder) and saw how it shrunk away from you; nor will you ever forget the awful apprehensions of eternity that then seized your spirit, or the value you then had for Christ; which things, I hope, still do, and ever will remain with you.

And for you, dear cousin, as it becomes a daughter of Sarah, let your soul be adorned with the excellencies of Christ, and beauties of holiness. A king from heaven makes suit for your love; if he espouse your soul now he will fetch it home to himself at death in his chariot of salvation; and great shall be your joy, when the marriage of the Lamb is come. Look often upon Christ in this glass; he is fairer than the children of men. View him believably, and you cannot but like and love him.

"For (as one well says) love, when it sees, cannot but cast out its spirit and strength upon amiable objects and things love-worthy. And what fairer things than Christ! O fair sun, and fair moon, and fair stars, and fair flowers, and fair roses, and fair lilies, and fair creatures! but, O ten thousand, thousand times fairer Lord Jesus! Alas, I wronged him in making the comparison this way. O black sun and moon; but O fair Lord Jesus! O black flowers, and black lilies and roses; but O fair fair, ever fair Lord Jesus! O all fair things, black, deformed, and without beauty, when ye are set beside the fairest Lord Jesus! O black heaven, but O fair Christ! O black angels, but O surpassingly fair Lord Jesus." I hope you both are agreed with Christ, according to the articles of peace propounded to you in the gospel; and that you are every day driving on salvation work, betwixt him and you, in your family, and in your closets.

And now, my dear, friends, if these discoveries of Christ, which I humbly offer to your hands, may be any way useful to your souls, to assist them either in obtaining, or in clearing their interest in him, my heart shall rejoice, even mine; for none under heaven can be more willing, though many are more able, to help you thither, than is Your affectionate and obliged, kinsman and servant From my Study at Dartmouth, John Flavel. March 14th, 1671.

**To the Christian Readers,** Especially those in the Town and Corporation of Dartmouth, and Parts adjacent, who have either

befriended, or attended these Lectures. Honored and worthy Friends,

Knowledge is man's excellency above the beasts that perish, Psalm. 32:9. the knowledge of Christ is the Christian's excellency above the Heathen, 1 Cor. 1:23, 24. Practical and saving knowledge of Christ is the sincere Christian's excellency above the self-cozening hypocrite, Heb. 6:4, 6. but methodical and well digested knowledge of Christ is the strong Christian's excellency above the weak, Heb. 5:13, 14. A saving, though an imperfect knowledge of Christ, will bring us to heaven, John 17:2, but a regular and methodical, as well as a saving knowledge of him, will bring heaven into us, Col. 2:2, 3.

For such is the excellency thereof, even above all other knowledge of Christ, that it renders the understanding judicious, the memory tenacious, and the heart highly and fixedly joyous. How it serves to confirm and perfect the understanding, is excellently discovered by a worthy divine of our own, in these words:

A young ungrounded Christian, when he sees all the fundamental truths, and sees good evidence and reasons of them, perhaps may be yet ignorant of the right order and place of every truth. It is a rare thing to have young professors to understand the necessary truths methodically: and this is a very great defect: for a great part of the usefulness and excellency of particular truths consists in the respect they have to one another. This therefore will be a very considerable part of your confirmation, and growth in your understandings, to see the body of the Christian doctrine, as it were, at one view, as the several parts of it are united in one perfect frame; and to know what aspect one point has upon another, and which are their due places. There is a great difference between the sight of the several parts of a clock or watch, as they are disjointed and scattered abroad, and the seeing of them joined, and in use and motion. To see here a pin and there a wheel, and not know how to set them all together, nor ever see them in their due places, will give but little satisfaction. It is the frame and design of holy doctrine that must be known, and every

part should be discerned as it has its particular use to that design, and as it is connected with the other parts.

By this means only can the true nature of Theology, together with the harmony and perfection of truth, be clearly understood. And every single truth also will be much better perceived by him that sees its place and order, than by any other: for one truth exceedingly illustrates and leads another into the understanding. Study therefore to grow in the more methodical knowledge of the same truths which you have received; and though you are not yet ripe enough to discern the whole body of theology in due method, yet see so much as you have attained to know, in the right order and placing of every part. As in anatomy, it is hard for the wisest physician to discern the course of every branch of the veins and arteries; but yet they may easily discern the place and order of the principal parts, and greater vessels, (and surely in the body of religion there are no branches of greater or more necessary truth than these) so it is in divinity, where no man has a perfect view of the whole, until he comes to the state of perfection with God; but every true Christian has the knowledge of all the essentials, and may know the orders and places of them all.

And as it serves to render the mind more judicious, so it causes the memory to be more tenacious, and retentive of truths. The chain of truth is easily held in the memory, when one truth links in another; but the losing of a link endangers the scattering of the whole chain. We use to say, order is the mother of memory; I am sure it is a singular friend to it: hence it is observed, those that write of the art of memory, lay so great a stress upon place and number. The memory would not so soon be overcharged with a multitude of truths, if that multitude were but orderly disposed. It is the incoherence and confusion of truths, rather than their number, that distracts. Let but the understanding receive them regularly, and the memory will retain them with much more facility. A bad memory is a common complaint among Christians: all the benefit that many of you have in hearing, is from the present influence of truths upon your hearts; there is but little that sticks by you, to make a second

and third impression upon them. I know it may be said of some of you, that if your affections were not better than your memories, you would need a very large charity to pass for Christians.

I confess it is better to have a well ordered heart, than a methodical head; but surely both are better than either. And for you that have constantly attended these exercises, and followed us through the whole series and deduction of these truths, from text to text, and from point to point; who have begun one sabbath where you left another, it will be your inexcusable fault, if these things be not fixed in your understanding and memories, as nails fastened in a sure place: especially as providence has now brought to your eyes, what has been so often sounded in your ears, which is no small help to fix these truths upon you, and prevent that great hazard of them, which commonly attends bare hearing; for now you may have recourse as often as you will to them, view and review them, until they become your own.

But though this be a great and singular advantage, yet is not all you may have by a methodical understanding of the doctrines of Christ: it is more than a judicious understanding them, or faithful remembering them, that you and I must design, even the warm, vital, animating influences of these truths upon our hearts, without which we shall be never the better; yes, much the worse for knowing and remembering them.

Truth is the sanctifying instrument, John 17:17. the mold into which our souls are cast, Rom. 6:17. according therefore to the stamps and impressions it makes upon our understandings, and the order in which truths lie there, will be the depth and lastingness of their impressions and influences upon the heart; as, the more weight is laid upon the seal, the more fair and lasting impression is made upon the wax. He that sees the grounds and reasons of his peace and comfort most clearly, is like to maintain it the more constantly.

Great therefore is the advantage Christians have by such methodical systems. Surely they may be set down among the most desired things of Christians.

Divers worthy modern pens have indeed undertaken this noble subject before me, Some more succinctly, others more copiously: these have done worthily, and their praises are in the churches of Christ; yet such breadth there is in the knowledge of Christ, that not only those who have written on this subject before me, but a thousand authors more may employ their pens after us, and not interfere with, or straiten another.

And such is the deliciousness of this subject, that, were there ten thousand volumes written upon it, they would never cloy, or become nauseous to a gracious heart. We use to say, one thing tires, and it is true that it does so, except that one thing be virtually and eminently all things, as Christ is; and then one thing can never tire; for such is the variety of sweetness in Christ, who is the delights of the children of men, that every time he is opened to believers from pulpit or press, it is as if heaven had furnished them with a new Christ; and yet he is the same Christ still.

The treatise itself will satisfy you, that I have not boasted in another man's line, of things made ready to my hand; which I speak not in the least to win any praise to myself from the undertaking, but to remove prejudice from it; for I see more defects in it, than most of my readers will see, and can forethink more faults to be found in it, than I now shall stand to tell you of, or answer for. It was written in a time of great distractions; and did you but know how oft this work has died and revived under my hand, you would wonder that ever it came to yours.

I am sensible it may fall under some censorious (it may be, envious) eyes, and that far different judgments will pass upon it. And no wonder if a treatise of Christ be, when Christ himself was to some, "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." I expect not to please

every reader, especially the envious. It is as hard for some to look upon other men's gifts without envy, as it is to look upon their own without pride; nor will I be any further concerned with such readers, than to pity them; well knowing that every proud, contemptuous and envious censure is a grenade that breaks in the hand of him that casts it.

But to the ingenuous and candid reader, I owe satisfaction for the obscurity of some part of this discourse, occasioned by the conciseness of the stile; to which I have this only to say, that I was willing to crowd as much matter as I could into this number of sheets in your hand, that I might therein ease you both in your pains and your purse. I confess the sermons were preached in a more relaxed stile, and most of these things were enlarged in the pulpit, which are designedly contracted in the press, that the volume might not swell above the ability of common readers. And it was my purpose at first to have comprised the second part, viz., The application of the redemption that is with Christ unto sinners, in one volume, which occasioned the contraction of this; but that making a just volume itself, must await another season to see the light. If the reader will be but a little the more intent and considerate in reading, this conciseness will turn to his advantage.

This may suffice to show the usefulness of such composure, and prevent offence; but something yet remains with me, to say to the readers in general, to those of this town in special, and to the flock committed by Christ to my charge more especially.

1. To readers in general, according as their different states and conditions may be; there are six things earnestly to be requested of them.

- (1.) If you be yet strangers to Christ, let these things begin, and beget your first acquaintance with him. I assure you, reader, it was a principal part of the design thereof; and here you will find many directions, helps, and sweet encouragements, to assist a poor

stranger as you are, in that great work. Say not, I am an enemy to Christ, and there is no hope of reconciliation; for here you will see, how "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." Say not, all this is nothing except God had told you so, and appointed some to treat with you about it; "for he has committed unto us the word of this reconciliation." Say not, yes, that may be from your own pity and compassion for us, and not from any commission you have for it; for we "are ambassadors for Christ," 2 Cor. 5:20.

Say not, O but my sins are greater than can be forgiven: the difficulties of my salvation are too great to be overcome, especially by a poor creature as I am, that am able to do nothing, no, not to raise one penny towards the discharge of that great debt I owe to God. For here you will find, upon your union with Christ, that there is merit enough in his blood, and mercy enough in his affections, to justify and save such a one as you are. Yes, and I will add for your encouragement, that it is a righteous thing, with God to justify and save you, that cannot pay him one penny of all the vast sums you owe him; when, by the same rule of justice, he condemns the most strict, self-righteous Pharisee, that thinks thereby to quit scores with him. It is righteous for a judge to cast him that has paid ninety-nine pounds of the hundred, which he owed, because the payment was not full; and to acquit him, whose surety has paid all, though himself did not, and freely confess that he cannot pay one farthing of the whole debt.

(2.) If you be a self-deceiving soul, that easily take up your satisfaction about your interest in Christ, look to it, as you value your soul, reader, that a fond and groundless conceit of your interest in Christ do not effectually and finally obstruct a true and saving interest in him. This is the common and fatal error in which multitudes of souls are ensnared and ruined: for look as a conceit of great wisdom hinders many from the attaining of it; so a groundless conceit that Christ is already your, may prove the greatest obstacle between Christ and you: but here you will meet with many rules that will not deceive you, trials that will open your true condition to you.

You sometimes reflect upon the state of your soul, and enquire, is Christ mine? may I depend upon it, that my condition is safe? Your heart returns you an answer of peace, it speaks as you would have it. But remember, friend, and mark this line, Your final sentence is not yet come from the mouth of your Judge; and what if, after all your self-flattering hopes and groundless confidence, a sentence should come from him quite cross to that of your own heart? where are you then? what a confounded person will you be? Christless, speechless, and hopeless, all at once!

O therefore build sure for eternity; take heed lest the loss of your eternal happiness be at last imputed by you to the deceitfulness and laziness of your own heart: lest your heart say to you in hell, as the heart of Apollodorus seemed in his sufferings to say to him, I am the cause of all this misery to you.

(3.) If you be one whose heart is eagerly set upon this vain world, I beseech you take heed, lest it interpose itself between Christ and your soul, and so cut you off from him forever. O beware, lest the dust of the earth, getting into your eyes, so blind you, that you never see the beauty or necessity of Christ. The God of this world so blinds the eyes of them that believe not. And what are sparkling pleasures that dazzles the eyes of some, and the distracting cares that wholly divert the minds of others, but as a napkin drawn by Satan over the eyes of them that are to be turned off into hell? 1 Cor. 4:3, 4.

Some general aims, and faint wishes after Christ you may have; but alas! the world has centered your heart, entangled your affections, and will daily find new diversions for them from the great business of life; so that, if the Lord break not this snare, you will never be able to deliver your soul.

(4.) If you be a loose and careless professor of Christ, I beseech you, let the things you shall read in this treatise of Christ, convince, shame, reclaim you from your vain conversation. Here you will find how contrary your conversation is to the grand designs of the death

and resurrection of Christ. Oh, rethinks as you are reading the deep humiliation, and unspeakable sorrows Christ underwent for the expiating of sin, you should thenceforth look upon sin as a tender child would look upon that knife that stabbed his father to the heart! you should never whet and sharpen it again to wound the Son of God afresh. To such loose and careless professors, I particularly recommend the last general use of this discourse, containing many great motives to reformation and strict godliness in all that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

(5.) If you have been a profane and vain person, but now are pardoned, and do experience the superabounding riches of grace, my request to you is, that you love Jesus Christ with a more fervent love than ever yet you had for him. Here you will find many great incentives, many mighty arguments to such a love of Christ. Poor soul, consider what you have been, what the morning of your life was, what treasures of guilt you laid up in those days; and then think, can such a one as I receive mercy, and that mercy not break my heart? Can I read my pardon, and mine eyes not drop? What! mercy for such a wretch as I! a pardon for such a rebel! O what an ingenuous thaw should this cause upon my heart! if it do not, what a strange heart is your.

Did the love of Christ break through so many impediments to come to you? Did it make its way through the law, through the wrath of God, through the grave, through your own unbelief and great unworthiness, to come to you? O what a love was the love of Christ to your soul; And is not your love strong enough to break through the vanities and trifles of this world, which entangle it, to go to Christ? How poor, how low and weak is your love to Christ then?

(6.) Lastly, Are you one that have through mercy at last attained assurance, or good hope, through grace, of your interest in Christ? Rejoice then in your present mercy, and long ardently to be with your own Christ in his glory. There be many things dispersed through this treatise, of Christ, to animate such joy, and excite such longings. It

was truly observed by a worthy author, (whose words I have mentioned more freely than his name in this discourse) That it is in a manner as natural for us to leap when we see the new Jerusalem, as it is to laugh when we are tickled: Joy is not under the soul's command when Christ kisses it. And for your desires to be with Christ, what consideration can you find in this world strong enough to rein them in? O when you shall consider what he has done, suffered, and purchased for you, where he is now, and how much he longs for your coming, your very hearts should groan out those words, Phil. 1:23, "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for of Christ.

2. Having delivered my message to the reader in general, I have somewhat more particularly to say to you of this place.

You are a people that were born under, and bred up with the gospel. It has been your singular privilege, above many towns and parishes in England, to enjoy more than sixty years together an able and fruitful ministry among you. The dew of heaven lay upon you, as it did upon Gideon's fleece, when the ground was dry in other places about you; you have been richly watered with gospel-showers; you, with Capernaum, have been exalted to heaven in the means of grace. And it must be owned to your praise, that you testified more respect to the gospel than many other places have done, and treated Christ's ambassadors with more civility, while they prophesied in sackcloth, than some other places did. These things are praise-worthy in you. But all this, and much more than this, amounts not to that which Jesus Christ expects from you, and which in his name I would now persuade you to. And O that I (the least and unworthiest of all the messengers of Christ to you) might indeed prevail with all that are Christless among you, (1 ) To answer the long continued calls of God to you, by a thorough and sound conversion, that the long-suffering of God may be your salvation, and you may not receive all this grace of God in vain. O that the damned might never be set a wondering, to see a people of your advantages for heaven, sinking as much below

many of themselves in misery, as you now are above them in means and mercy.

Dear friends, my heart's desire and prayer to God for you is that you may be saved. O that I knew how to engage this whole town to Jesus Christ, and make fast the marriage-knot between him and you, albeit after that I should presently go to the place of silence; and see men no more, with the inhabitants of the world. Ah sirs! methinks I see the Lord Jesus laying the merciful hand of a holy violence upon you: methinks he calls to you, as the angel to Lot saying, "Arise, lest you be consumed; And "while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, the Lord being merciful unto him. And they brought him without the city, and said, Escape for your life, stay not in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed," Gen. 19:15. How often (to allude to this) has Jesus Christ in like manner laid hold upon you in the preaching of the gospel, and will you not flee for refuge to him? Will you rather be consumed, than to endeavor an escape? A beast will not be driven into the fire, and will you not be kept out? The merciful Lord Jesus, by his admirable patience and bounty, has convinced you how loth he is to leave or lose you. To this day his arms are stretched forth to gather you, and will you not be gathered? Alas for my poor neighbors! Must so many of them perish at last? What shall I do for the daughter of my people?

Lord, by arguments shall they be persuaded to be happy? What will win them effectually to your Christ? They have many of them escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior. They are a people that love your ordinances, they take delight in approaching to God; you have beautified many of them with lovely and obliging tempers and dispositions. Thus far they are come, there they stick; and beyond this no power but your can move them. O you, to whose hand this work is and must be left, put forth your saving power and reveal your arm for their salvation; You have glorified your name in many of them; Lord, glorify it again.

(2.) My next request is, that you will all be persuaded, whether converted or unconverted, to set up all the duties at religion in your families, and govern your children and servants as men that must give an account to God for them in the great day. O that there were not a prayerless family in this town! How little will their tables differ from the manger, where beasts feed together, if God be not owned and acknowledged there, in your eating and drinking? And how can you expect blessings should dwell in your tabernacles, if God be not called on there? Say not, you want time for it, or that your necessities will not allow it; for, had you been more careful of these duties, it is like you had not been exposed to such necessities: besides, you can find time to be idle, you can waste a part of every day vainly; Why could not that time be redeemed for God? Moreover, you will not deny but the success of all your affairs at home and abroad depends upon the blessing of God; and if so, think you it is not the right way, even to temporal prosperity, to engage his presence and blessing with you, in whose hands your all is? Say not, your children and servants are ignorant of God, and therefore you cannot comfortably join with them in those duties, for the neglect of those duties is the cause of their ignorance; and it is not like they will be better, until you use God's means to make them so.

Besides, prayer is a part of natural worship, and the vilest among men are bound to pray, else the neglect of it were none of their sin. O let not a duty, upon which so many and great blessings hang, fall to the ground, upon such silly (not to say wicked) pretenses to shift it off. Remember, death will shortly break up all your families, and disband them; and who then think you will have most comfort in beholding their dead? The day of account also hastens, and then who will have the most comfortable appearing before the just and holy God? Set up, I beseech you, the ancient and comfortable duties of reading the scriptures, singing of psalms, and prayer, in all your dwelling-places. And do all these conscientiously, as men that have to do with God; and try the Lord herewith, if he will not return in a way of mercy to you, and restore even your outward prosperity to

you again. However, to be sure, far greater encouragements than that lie before you, to oblige you to your duties.

(3.) More especially, I have a few things to say to you that have attended on the ministry, or are under my oversight in a more particular manner, and then I have done. And,

1st, I cannot but observe to you the goodness of our God, yes, the riches of his goodness:

Who freely gave Jesus Christ out of his own bosom for us, and has not withheld his Spirit, ordinances and ministers, to reveal and apply him to us. Here is love that wants an epithet to match it:

Who engaged my heart upon this transcendent subject in the course of my ministry among you: a subject which angels study and admire, as well as we:

Who so signally protected and overshadowed our assemble in those days of trouble, wherein these truths were delivered to you. You then sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to your taste: his banner over you was love; your bread was then sure, and your waters failed not: Yes, such was his peculiar indulgence, and special tenderness to you, that he suffered no man to do you harm; and it can hardly be imagined any could attempt it that had but known this, and no worse than this, to be your only design and business:

Who made these meditations of Christ a strong support, and sweet relief to mine, now with Christ, and no less to me, under the greatest exercises and tries that ever befell me in this world; preserving me yet (though a broken vessel) for some farther use and service to your souls:

Who in the years that are past left not himself without witness among us, blessing my labors, to the conversion and edification of many; Some of which yet remain with us, but some are fallen asleep:

Who has made many of you that yet remain, a willing and obedient people, who have in some measure supported the reputation of religion by your stability and integrity in days of abounding iniquity: my joy and my crown; so stand you fast in the Lord!

Who after all the days of fears and troubles, through which we have past, has at last given us and his churches rest; "that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear in righteousness and holiness (which doing, this mercy may be extended to us) all the days of our life."

In testimony of a thankful heart for these invaluable mercies, I humbly and cheerfully rear up this pillar of remembrance, inscribing it with EBENEZER, and JEHOVAH-JIREH!

2dly, As I could not but observe these things to you, so I have a few things to request of you, in neither of which I can bar denial, so deeply Christ's, your own, and my interest lie in them.

(1.) Look to it, my dear friends, that none of you be found Christless at your appearance before him. Those that continue Christless now, will be left speechless then. God forbid that you that have heard so much of Christ, and you that have professed so much of Christ, should at last fall into a worse condition than those that never heard the name of Christ.

(2.) See that you daily grow more Christ-like by conversing with him, as you do, in his precious ordinances. Let it be with your souls, as it is with a piece of cloth, which receives a deeper dye every time it is dipped into a vat. If not, you may not expect the continuance of your mercies much longer to you.

(3.) Get these great truths well digested both in your heads and hearts, and let the power of them be displayed in your lives, else the pen of the scribe, and the tongue of the preacher, are both in vain. These things, that so often warmed your hearts from the pulpit, return now to make a second impression upon them from the press.

Hereby you will recover and fix those truths, which, it is like, are in great part already vanished from you.

This is the fruit I promise myself from you: and whatever entertainment it meets with from others in this Christ-despising age, yet two things relieve me; one is, that future times may produce more humble and hungry Christians than this glutted age enjoys, to whom it will be welcome: the other is, that duty is discharged, and endeavors are used to bring men to Christ, and build them up in him: wherein he does and will rejoice, who is a well-wisher to the souls of men.

## **The Excellency of the Subject**

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." 1 Cor. 2:2.

The former verse contains an apology for the plain and familiar manner of the apostle's preaching, which was not (as he there tells them) with excellency of speech, or of wisdom; I. e. he studied not to gratify their curiosity with rhetorical strains, or philosophical niceties. In this he gives the reason, "for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ," &c.

"I determined not to know." The meaning is not, that he simply despised, or condemned all other studies and knowledge; but so far only as they stand in competition with, or opposition to the study and knowledge of Jesus Christ. And it is as if he should say, it is my stated, settled judgment; not a hasty, inconsiderate censure, but the product and issue of my most serious and exquisite enquiries. After I have well weighed the case, turned it round, viewed it exactly on every side, balanced all advantages and disadvantages, pondered all

things, that are fit to come into consideration about it; this is the result and final determination, that all other knowledge, how profitable, how pleasant soever, is not worthy to be named in the same day with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. This, therefore, I resolve to make the scope and end of my ministry, and the end regulates the mean; such pedantic toys, and airy notions as injudicious ears affect, would rather obstruct than promote my grand design among you; therefore, wholly waving that way, I applied myself to a plain, popular, unaffected dialect, fitted rather to pierce the heart, and convince the conscience, than to tickle the fancy. This is the scope of the words, in which three things fall under consideration;

First, The subject matter of his doctrine, to wit, Jesus Christ. "I determined to know nothing," that is, to study nothing myself, to teach nothing to you, but "Jesus Christ." Christ shall be the center to which all the lines of my ministry shall be drawn. I have spoken and written of many other subjects in my sermons and epistles, but it is all reductively the preaching and discovery of Jesus Christ: of all the subjects in the world, this is the sweetest; if there be any thing on this side heaven, worthy our time and studies, this is it. Thus he magnifies his doctrine, from the excellency of its subject-matter, accounting all other doctrines but airy things, compared with this.

Secondly, We have here that special respect or consideration of Christ, which he singled out from all the rest of the excellent truths of Christ, to spend the main strength of his ministry upon; and that is, Christ as crucified: and the rather, because hereby he would obviate the vulgar prejudice raised against him upon the account of his cross; "For Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness," chapter 1:23. This also best suited his end, to draw them on to Christ; as Christ above all other subjects, so Christ crucified above all things in Christ. There is, therefore, a great emphasis in this word, "and him crucified."

Thirdly, The manner in which he discoursed this transcendent subject to them, is also remarkable; he not only preached Christ crucified, but he preached him assiduously and plainly. He preached Christ frequently; "and whenever he preached of Christ crucified, he preached him in a crucified stile." This is the sum of the words; to let them know that his spirit was intent upon this subject, as if he neither knew, nor cared to speak of any other. All his sermons were so full of Christ, that his hearers might have thought he was acquainted with no other doctrine. Hence observe,

DOCTRINE. That there is no doctrine more excellent in itself or more necessary to be preached and, studied, than the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

All other knowledge, how much soever it be magnified in the world, is, and ought to be esteemed but dross, in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, Phil. 3:8. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. 2:3.

Eudoxus was so affected with the glory of the sun, that he thought he was born only to behold it; much more should a Christian judge himself born only to behold and delight in the glory of the Lord Jesus.

The truth of this proposition will be made out by a double consideration of the doctrine of Christ.

First, Let it be considered absolutely, and then these lovely properties with which it is naturally clothed, will render it superior to all other sciences and studies.

1st, The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the very marrow and kernel of all the scriptures; the scope and center of all divine revelations: both Testaments meet in Christ. The ceremonial law is full of Christ, and all the gospel is full of Christ: the blessed lines of both Testaments meet in him; and how they both harmonize, and sweetly center in Jesus Christ, is the chief scope of that excellent epistle to the

Hebrews, to discover; for we may call that epistle the sweet harmony of both Testaments. This argues the unspeakable excellency of this doctrine, the knowledge whereof must needs therefore be a key to unlock the greatest part of the sacred scriptures. For it is in the understanding of scripture, much as it is in the knowledge men have in logic and philosophy: if a scholar once come to understand the bottom-principle, upon which, as upon its hinge, the controversy turns the true knowledge of that principle shall carry him through the whole controversy, and furnish him with a solution to every argument. Even so the right knowledge of Jesus Christ, like a clue, leads you through the whole labyrinth of the scriptures.

2dly, The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a fundamental knowledge; and foundations are most useful, though least seen. The knowledge of Christ is fundamental to all graces, duties, comforts, and happiness.

(1.) It is fundamental to all graces; they all begin in knowledge; Col. 3:10. "The new man is renewed in knowledge." As the old, so the new creation begins in light; the opening of the eyes is the first work of the Spirit; and as the beginnings of grace, so all the after-improvements thereof depend upon this increasing knowledge, 2 Pet. 3:18. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior." See how these two, grace and knowledge, keep equal pace in the soul of a Christian in what degree the one increases, the other increases answerable.

(2.) The knowledge of Christ is fundamental to all duties; the duties, as well as the graces of all Christians, are all founded in the knowledge of Christ, Must a Christian believe? That he can never do without the knowledge of Christ: faith is so much dependent on his knowledge, that it is denominated by it, Isa. 53:11. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;" and hence, John 6:40, seeing and believing are made the same thing. Would a man exercise hope in God? that he can never do without the knowledge of Christ, for he is the author of that hope, 1 Pet. 1:3, he is also its object, Heb.

6:19. its ground-work and support, Col. 1:27. And as you cannot believe or hope, so neither can you pray acceptably without a competent degree of this knowledge. The very Heathen could say--men must not speak of God without light: the true way of conversing with, and enjoying God in prayer, is by acting faith on him through a Mediator: so much comfort and true excellency there is in it, and no more. O then, how indispensable is the knowledge of Christ, to all that do address themselves to God in any duty.

(3.) It is fundamental to all comforts: all the comforts of believers are streams from this fountain. Jesus Christ is the very object matter of a believer's joy, Phil. 3:3. "Our rejoicing is in "Christ Jesus." Take away the knowledge of Christ, and a Christian is the most sad and melancholy creature in the world: again, let Christ but manifest himself, and dart the beams of his light into their souls, it will make them kiss the stakes, sing in flames, and shout in the pangs of death, as men that divide the spoil.

Lastly, This knowledge is fundamental to the eternal happiness of souls: as we can perform no duty, enjoy no comfort, so neither can we be saved without it, John 17:3. "This is life eternal, to know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." And, if it be life eternal to know Christ, then it is eternal damnation to be ignorant of Christ: as Christ is the door that opens heaven, so knowledge is the key that opens Christ. The excellent gifts, and renowned parts of the moral Heathens, though they purchased to them great esteem and honor among men, yet left them in a state of perdition, because of this great defect, they were ignorant of Christ, 1 Cor. 1:21. Thus you see how fundamental the knowledge of Christ is, essentially necessary to all the graces, duties, comforts and happiness of souls.

3dly, The knowledge of Christ is profound and large; all other sciences are but shadows; this is a boundless, bottomless ocean; no creature has a line long enough to fathom the depth of it; there is height, length, depth and breadth ascribed to it, Eph. 3:18, yes, it

passes knowledge. There is "a manifold wisdom of God in Christ," Eph. 3:10. It is of many sorts and forms, of many folds and plates: it is indeed simple, pure and unmixed with anything but itself, yet it is manifold in degrees, kinds and administrations; though something of Christ be unfolded in one age, and something in another, yet eternity itself cannot fully unfold him. I see something, said Luther, which blessed Austin saw not; and those that come after me, will see that which I see not. It is in the studying of Christ, as in the planting of a new discovered country; at first men sit down by the sea-side, upon the skirts and borders of the land; and there they dwell, but by degrees they search farther and farther into the heart of the country. Ah, the best of us are yet but upon the borders of this vast continent!

4thly, The study of Jesus Christ is the most noble subject that ever a soul spent itself upon; those that rack and torture their brains upon other studies, like children, weary themselves at a low game; the eagle plays at the sun itself. The angels study this doctrine, and stoop down to look into this deep abyss. What are the truths discovered in Christ, but the very secrets that from eternity lay hid in the bosom of God? Eph. 3:8, 9. God's heart is opened to men in Christ, John 1:18. This makes the gospel such a glorious dispensation, because Christ is so gloriously revealed therein, 2 Cor. 3:9. and the studying of Christ in the gospel, stamps such a heavenly glory upon the contemplating soul, ver. 18.

5thly, It is the most sweet and comfortable knowledge; to be studying Jesus Christ, what is it but to be digging among all the veins and springs of comfort? And the deeper you dig, the more do these springs flow upon you. How are hearts ravished with the discoveries of Christ in the gospel? what ecstasies, meltings, transports, do gracious souls meet there? Doubtless, Philip's ecstasy, John 1:25. "We have found Jesus," was far beyond that of Archimedes. A believer could sit from morning to night, to hear discourses of Christ; "His mouth is most sweet", Cant. 5:16.

Secondly, Let us compare this knowledge with all other knowledge, and thereby the excellency of it will farther appear.

1. All other knowledge is natural, but this wholly supernatural, Mat. 11:27. "No man knows the Son, but the Father", neither knows any the Father, save the Son, and he to whom soever the Son will reveal him." The wisest Heathens could never make a discovery of Christ by their deepest searches into nature; the most eagle-eyed philosophers were but children in knowledge, compared with the most illiterate Christians.

2. Other knowledge is unattainable by many. All the helps and means in the world would never enable some Christians to attain the learned arts and languages; men of the best wits, and most pregnant parts, are most excellent in these; but here is the mystery and excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that men of most blunt, dull and contemptible parts attain, through the teaching of the Spirit, to this knowledge, in which the more acute and ingenious are utterly blind. Mat. 11:25, "I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes." 1 Cor. 1:26, 27. "You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise," &c.

3. Other knowledge, though you should attain the highest degree of it, would never bring you to heaven, being defective and lame both in the integrity of parts, the principal thing, viz. Christ, being wanting; and in the purity of its nature: for the knowing Heathens grew vain in their imaginations, Rom. 1:21, and in the efficacy and influence of it on the heart and life, They held the truth in unrighteousness; their lusts were stronger than their light, Rom. 1:18. But this knowledge has potent influences, changing souls, into its own image, 2 Cor. 3:18, and so proves a saving knowledge unto men, 1 Tim. 2:4. And thus I have in a few particulars pointed out the transcendence of the knowledge of Christ.

The use of all this I shall give you in a few inferences, on which I shall not enlarge, the whole being only preliminary to the doctrine of Christ; only for the present I shall hence infer,

#### INFERENCE 1.

The sufficiency of the doctrine of Christ, to make men wise unto salvation. Paul desired to know nothing else; and, indeed, nothing else is of absolute necessity to be known. A little of this knowledge, if saving and effectual upon your heart, will do your soul more service, than all the vain speculation and profound parts that others so much glory in. Poor Christian, be not dejected, because you see yourself out-stripped and excelled by so many in other parts of knowledge; if you know Jesus Christ, you know enough to comfort and save your soul. Many learned philosophers are now in hell, and many illiterate Christians in heaven.

#### INFERENCE 2.

If there be such excellency in the knowledge of Christ, let it humble all, both saints and sinners, that we have no more of this clear and effectual knowledge in us, notwithstanding the excellent advantages we have had for it. Sinners, concerning you I may sigh and say with the apostle, 1 Cor. 15:34. "Some have not the knowledge of Christ, I speak this to your shame". This, O this is the condemnation. And even for you that are enlightened in this knowledge, how little do you know of Jesus Christ, in comparison of what you might have known of him? What a shame is it, that you should need to be taught the very first truths, "when for the time you might have been teachers of others?" Heb. 5:12, 13, 14. "That your ministers cannot speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ," 1 Cor. 3:1, 2. O how much time is spent in other studies, in vain discourses, frivolous pamphlets, worldly employments? How little is the search and study of Jesus Christ.

#### INFERENCE 3.

How sad is their condition that have a knowledge of Christ, and yet as to themselves it had been better they had never had it! Many there be that content themselves with an unpractical, ineffectual, and merely notional knowledge of him; of whom the apostle says, "It had been better for them not to have known," 2 Pet. 2:21. It serves only to aggravate sin and misery; for though it be not enough to save them, yet it puts some weak restraints upon sin, which their impetuous lusts breaking down, exposes them thereby to a greater damnation.

#### INFERENCE 4.

Fourthly, This may inform us by what rule to judge both ministers and doctrine. Certainly that is the highest commendation of a minister, to be an able minister of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3:6. He is the best artist, that can most lively and powerfully display Jesus Christ before the people, evidently setting him forth as crucified among them; and that is the best sermon, that is most full of Christ, not of art and language. I know that a holy dialect well becomes Christ's ministers, they should not be crude and careless in language or method; but surely the excellency of a sermon lies not in that, but in the plainest discoveries and liveliest applications of Jesus Christ.

#### INFERENCE 5.

Let all that mind the honor of religion, or the peace and comfort of their own souls, wholly sequester and apply themselves to the study of Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Therefore spend we ourselves upon other studies, when all excellency, sweetness, and desirableness is centered in this one? Jesus Christ is fairer than the children of men, the chief among ten thousands, "as the apple-tree among the trees of the woods." These things which singly ravish and delight the souls of men, are all found conjunctly in Christ. O what a blessed Christ is this! whom to know is eternal life. From the knowledge of Jesus Christ do bud forth all the fruits of comfort, and that for all seasons and conditions. Hence Rev. 22:2, he is called "the

tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields its fruit every month; and the very leaves of this tree are for healing." In Christ souls have, (1.) All necessaries for food and physic. (2.) All varieties of fruits, twelve manner of fruits; a distinct sweetness in this, in that, and in the other attribute, promise, ordinance. (3.) In him are these fruits at all times, he bears fruit every month; there is precious fruit in Jesus Christ, even in the black month; winter fruits as well as summer fruits. O then study Christ, study to know him more extensively. There be many excellent things in Christ, that the most eagle-eyed believer has not yet seen: Ah! 'tis pity that anything of Christ should lie hid from his people. Study to know Christ more intensively, to get the experimental taste and lively power of his knowledge upon your hearts and affections: This is the knowledge that carries all the sweetness and comfort in it. Christian, I dare appeal to your experience, whether the experimental taste of Jesus Christ, in ordinances and duties, has not a higher and sweeter relish than any created enjoyment you ever tasted in this world? O then separate, devote, and wholly give yourself, your time, your strength to this most sweet transcendent study.

#### INFERENCE 6.

Lastly, Let me close the whole with a double caution; one to ourselves, who by our callings and professions are the ministers of Christ; another to those that sit under the doctrine of Christ daily.

First, If this doctrine be the most excellent, necessary, fundamental, profound, noble, and comfortable doctrine, let us then take heed lest, while we study to be exact in other things, we be found ignorant in this. You know it is ignominious, by the common suffrage of the civilized world, for any man to be unacquainted with his own calling, or not to attend the proper business of it: it is our calling, as the Bridegroom's friends, to woo and win souls to Christ, to set him forth to the people as crucified among them, Gal. 3:1, to present him in all his attractive excellencies, that all hearts may be ravished with his beauty, and charmed into his arms by love: we must also be able to

defend the truths of Christ against undermining heretics, to instil his knowledge into the ignorant, to answer the cases and scruples of poor doubting Christians. How many intricate knots have we to untie? What pains, what skill is requisite for such as are employed about our work? And shall we spend our precious time in frivolous controversies, philosophical niceties, dry and barren scholastic notions? Shall we study everything but Christ? Revolve all volumes but the sacred ones? What is observed even of Bellarmine, that he turned with loathing from school divinity, because it wanted the sweet juice of piety, may be convictive to many among us, who are often too much in love with worse employment than what he is said to loathe. O let the knowledge of Christ dwell richly in us.

Secondly, Let us see that our knowledge of Christ be not a powerless, barren, unpractical knowledge: O that, in its passage from our understanding to our lips, it might powerfully melt, sweeten, and ravish our hearts! Remember, brethren, a holy calling never saved any man, without a holy heart; if our tongues only be sanctified, our whole man must be damned. "We and our people must be judged by the same gospel, and stand at the same bar, and be sentenced to the same terms, and dealt with as severely as any other men: We cannot think to be saved by our clergy; as an eminent Divine speaks. O let the keepers of the vineyard look to, and keep their own vineyard: we have a heaven to win or lose, as well as others.

Thirdly, Let us take heed that we withhold not our knowledge of Christ in unrighteousness from the people. O that our lips may disperse knowledge and feed many. Let us take heed of the napkin, remembering the day of account is at hand. Remember, I beseech you, the relations wherein you stand, and the obligations resulting thence: Remember, the great Shepherd gave himself for, and gave you to the flock; your time, your gifts are not yours, but God's; remember the pinching wants of souls, who are perishing for want of Christ; and if their tongues do not, yet their necessities do bespeak us, as they did Joseph, Gen. 47:15. "Therefore should we die in your presence? Give us food, that we may live and not die." Even the sea

monsters draw forth their breasts to their young ones, and shall we be cruel! Cruel to souls! Did Christ not think it too much to sweat blood, yes, to die for them? And shall we think it much to watch, study, preach, pray, and do what we can for their salvation? O let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ!

Secondly, To the people that sit under the doctrine of Christ daily, and have the light of his knowledge shining round about them.

First, Take heed you do not reject and despise this light. This may be done two ways: First, When you despise the means of knowledge by slight and low esteems of it. Surely, if you thus reject knowledge, God will reject you for it, Hos. 4:6. It is a despising of the richest gift that ever Christ gave to the church; and however it be a contempt and slight that begins low, and seems only to vent itself upon the weak parts, in artificial discourses, and untaking tones and gestures of the speakers; yet, believe it, it is a daring sin that flies higher than you are aware, Luke 10:16 "He that despises you, despises me; and he that despises me, despises him that sent me". Secondly, You despise the knowledge of Christ, When you despise the directions and loving constraints of that knowledge; when you refuse to be guided by your knowledge, your light and your lusts contest and struggle within you. O it is sad when your lusts master your light. You sin not as the heathens sin, who know not God; but when you sin, you must slight and put by the notices of your own consciences, and offer violence to your own convictions. And what sad work will this make in your souls? How soon will it lay your consciences waste?

Secondly, Take heed that you rest not satisfied with that knowledge of Christ you have attained, but grow on towards perfection. It is the pride and ignorance of many professors, when they have got a few raw and undigested notions, to swell with self-conceit of their excellent attainments. And it is the sin, even of the best of saints, when they see how deep the knowledge of Christ lies, and what pains they must take to dig for it, to throw by the shovel of duty, and cry, Dig we cannot. To your work, Christians, to your work; let not your

candle go out: sequester yourselves to this study, look what fellowship, and correspondence are between the two worlds; what communion soever God and souls maintain, it is in this way; count all, therefore, but dross in comparison of that excellency which is in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

## **Christ in His Essential and Primeval Glory**

"Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Proverbs 8:30

These words are a part of that excellent commendation of wisdom, by which in this book Solomon intends two things; first, Grace or holiness, Prov 4:7. "Wisdom is the principal thing." Secondly, Jesus Christ, the fountain of that grace: and look, as the former is renowned for its excellency, Job 28:14, 15, so the latter, in this context, wherein the Spirit of God describes the most blessed state of Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the Father, from those eternal delights he had with his Father, before his assumption of our nature: "Then was I by him," and was wholly swallowed up, and spent in unspeakable delights and pleasures. Which delights were twofold, (1.) The Father and Son delighted one in another (from which delights the Spirit is not here excluded) without communicating that their joy to any other, for no creature did then exist save in the mind of God, verse 30. (2.) They delighted in the salvation of men, in the prospect of that work, though not yet extant, verse 31. My present business lies in the former, viz. the mutual delights of the Father and Son, one with and in another; the account whereof we have in the text; wherein consider,

1. The glorious condition of the non-incarnated Son of God, described by the person with whom his fellowship was, "Then was I by him," or with him; so with him as never was any, in his very bosom, John 1:18, the only begotten Son was in the bosom of the Father, an expression of the greatest dearness and intimacy in the world; as if he should say, enrapt up in the very soul of his Father, embosomed in God.

2. This fellowship is illustrated by a metaphor, wherein the Lord will stoop to our capacities, (as "One brought up with him"), the Hebrew word "amon" is sometimes rendered a cunning workman, or curious artist, as in Cant. 7:1, which is the same word. And indeed Christ showed himself such an artist in the creation of the world; "For all things were made by him, and without him there was nothing made, that was made," John 1:3. But Montanus, and others, render it nutritious; and so Christ is here compared to a delightful child, spotting before its Father: the Hebrew root "shachak", which our translation renders "rejoicing before him," signifies to laugh, play, or rejoice; so that, look as parents delight to see their children sporting before them, so did the Father delight in beholding this darling of his bosom.

3. This delight is farther amplified by the perpetuity, and uninterruptedness thereof; "I was day by day his delight, rejoicing always before him." These delights of the Father and the Son one in another, knew not a moment's interruption, or diminution: thus did these great and glorious persons mutually let forth their fullest pleasure and delight, each into the heart of the other; they lay as it were embosomed one in another, entertaining themselves with delights and pleasures ineffable, and inconceivable. Hence we observe,

**DOCTRINE.** That the condition and state of Jesus Christ before his incarnation, was a state of the highest and most unspeakable delight and pleasure, in the enjoyment of his Father.

John tells us he was in the bosom of his Father: to lie in the bosom is the posture of dearest love, John 13:23. "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved:" but Christ did not lean upon the Father's bosom, as that disciple did in his, but lay in it: and therefore in Isa. 42:1, the Father calls him, "Mine elect in whom my soul delights;" which is variously rendered; the Septuagint--whom my soul takes, or wraps up: others--one that highly pleases and delights my very soul: and 2 Cor. 8:9, he is said, in this estate, wherein I am now describing him, to be rich: and, Phil. 2:7. "To be equal with God, and to be in the form of God," (I. e.) to have all the glory and ensigns of the majesty of God; and the riches which he speaks of, was no less than all that God the Father has, John 16:14. "All that the Father has is mine:" and what he now has in his exalted state, is the same he had before his humiliation, John 17:5. Now to sketch out (as we are able) the unspeakable felicity of that state of Christ, while he lay in that blessed bosom, I shall consider it three ways, negatively, positively, and comparatively.

1. Let us consider that state negatively, by removing from it all those degrees of abasement and sorrow which his incarnation brought him under: as,

First, He was not then abased to the condition of a creature, which was a low step indeed, and that which upon the matter undid him in point of reputation; for by this (says the apostle) "he made himself of no reputation," Phil. 2:7, it emptied him of his glory. For God to be made man, is such an abasement as none can express: but then not only to appear in true flesh, but also in the likeness of sinful flesh, as. Rom. 8:3. O what is this!

Secondly, Christ was not under the law in this estate. I confess it was no disparagement to Adam in the state of innocence, to angels in their state of glory, to be under law to God; but it was an inconceivable abasement to the absolute independent Being to come under law: yes, not only under the obedience, but also under the malediction and curse of the law, Gal. 4:4. "But when the fullness of

time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

Thirdly, In this state he was not liable to any of those sorrowful consequent and attendants of that frail and feeble state of humanity, which he afterwards assumed, with the nature. As, (1.) He was unacquainted with griefs; there was no sorrowing or sighing in that bosom where he lay, though afterwards he became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," Isa. 53:3. "A man of sorrows," as if he had been constituted and made up of pure and unmixed sorrows; every day conversing with griefs, as with his intimate companions and acquaintance. (2.) He was never pinched with poverty and wants, while he continued in that bosom, as he was afterwards, when he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has not where to lay his head," Matth. 8:20. Ah blessed Jesus! you need not to have wanted a place to have lain your head, had you not left that bosom for my sake. (3.) He never underwent reproach and shame in that bosom, there was nothing but glory and honor reflected upon him by his Father, though afterwards he was despised, and rejected of men, Isa 53:3. His Father never looked upon him without smiles and love, delight and joy, though afterwards he became a reproach of men, and despised of the people, Psalm 22:6. (4.) His holy heart was never offended with an impure suggestion or temptation of the Devil; all the while he lay in that bosom of peace and love, he never knew what it was to be assaulted with temptations to be besieged and battered upon by unclean spirits, as he did afterwards, Mat. 4:1, "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil." It was for our sakes that he submitted to those exercises of spirit, "to be in all points tempted like as we are, that he might be unto us a merciful and faithful high-priest, Heb. 4:15. (5.) He was never sensible of pains and tortures in soul or body, there were no such things in that blessed bosom where he lay, though afterwards he groaned and sweat under them, Isa. 53:5. The Lord embraced him from eternity, but never wounded him until he stood in our place and room (6.) There were no hidings or withdrawings of his Father from him; there

was not a cloud from eternity upon the face of God, until Jesus Christ had left that bosom. It was a new thing to Christ to see frowns in the face of his Father; a new thing for him to cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Mat. 27:46. (7.) There were never any impressions of his Father's wrath upon him, as there were afterwards: God never delivered such a bitter cup into his hands before, as that was, Matth. 26:39. Lastly, There was no death, to which he was subject, in that bosom. All these things were new things to Christ; he was above them all, until for our sakes he voluntarily subjected himself unto them. Thus you see what that state was not.

2. Let us consider it positively, what it was, and guess by some particular considerations (for indeed we can but guess) at the glory of it; as, (1.) We cannot but conceive it to be a state of matchless happiness, if we consider the persons enjoying and delighting in each other: he was with God, John 1:1. God, you know, is the fountain, ocean and center of all delights and joys: Psalm. 16:11, "In your presence is fullness of joy." To be enrapt up in the soul and bosom of all delights, as Christ was, must needs be a state transcending apprehension; to have the fountain of love and delight letting out itself so immediately, and fully, and ever lastingly, upon this only begotten darling of his soul, so as it never did communicate itself to any; judge what a state of transcendent felicity this must be. Great persons have great delights.

(2.) Or if we consider the intimacy, dearness, yes, oneness of those great persons one with another: the nearer the union, the sweeter the communion. Now Jesus Christ was not only near and dear to God, but one with him; "I and my Father are one," John 10:30, one in nature, will, love and delight. There is indeed a moral union of souls among men by love, but this was a natural oneness, no child is so one with his father, no husband so one with the wife of his bosom, no friend so one with his friend, no soul so one with its body, as Jesus Christ and his Father were one. O what matchless delights must necessarily flow from such a blessed union!

(3.) Consider again the purity of that delight with which the blessed Father and Son embraced each other; the best creature delights one in another, are mixed, debased, and allayed; if there be something ravishing and engaging, there is also something cloying and distasteful. The purer any delight is, the more excellent. Now, there are no crystal streams flowing so purely from the fountain, no beams of light so unmixed from the sun, as the loves and delights of these holy and glorious persons were: the holy, holy, holy Father embraced the thrice holy Son with a most holy delight and love.

(4.) Consider the constancy of this delight; it was from everlasting, as in verse 23, and from eternity; it never suffered one moment's interruption. The overflowing fountain of God's delight and love never stopped its course, never ebbed; but as he speaks in the text, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Once more, consider the fullness at that delight, the perfection of that pleasure; I was delights: so the word is in its original; not only plural, delights, all delights, but also in the abstract, delight itself: as afterwards from the abundance of his sorrows, he was called, a man of sorrows, so here, from the fullness of his delights: as though you should say, even constituted and made up of pleasure and delight.

3. Once more, let us consider it comparatively, and this state still yet appear more glorious, comparing it with either the choicest delights that one creature takes in another, or that God takes in the creature, or that the creatures take in God: measure these immense delights, between the Father and his Son, by either of these lines, and you shall find them infinitely short: For, (1.) Though the delights that creatures take in each other, be sometimes a great delight; such was Jacob's delight in Benjamin, whose life is said to be bound up in the lad's life, a dear and high expression, Gen. 44:30. Such was that of Jonathan in David, whose soul was knit with his soul, "and he loved him as his own soul," 1 Sam. 13:1, and such is the delight of one friend in another: "there is a friend that is as a man's own soul," Deut. 13:6, yet all this is but creature-delight, and can in no particular equal the delights between the Father and the Son; for this

is but a finite delight, according to the measure and abilities of creatures, but that is infinite, suitable to the infinite perfection of the divine Being; this is always mixed, that perfectly pure. (2.) Or if you compare it with the delight that God takes in the creatures, it is confessed that God takes great delight in some creatures. "The Lord takes pleasure in his saints, he rejoices over them with singing! and rests in his love," Zeph. 3:17; Isa. 62:5. But yet there is a great difference between his delight in creatures, and his delights in Christ; for all his delight in the saints is secondary, and for Christ's sake; but his delights in Christ are primary, and for his own sake: we are accepted in the beloved, Eph, 1:6, he is beloved, and accepted for himself. (3.) To conclude, compare it once more with the delights that the best of creatures take in God, and Christ, and it must be confessed that is a choice delight, and a transcendent love, with which they love and delight in him; Psalm. 73:25. "Whom have I in heaven but you? and on earth there is none I desire besides you." What pangs of love, what raptures of delight did the spouse express to Christ? "O you whom my soul loves!" But surely our delight in God is no perfect rule to measure his delight in Christ by: for our love to God (at the best) is still imperfect; that is the burden and constant complaint of saints, but this is perfect; ours is inconstant, up and down, ebbing and flowing, but this is constant. So then, to conclude, the condition and state of Jesus Christ before his incarnation, was a state of the highest and matchless delight, in the enjoyment of his Father. The uses follow.

### **Use of Information.**

#### INFERENCE 1.

What an astonishing act of love was this then, for the Father to give the delight, the darling, of his soul, out of his very bosom, for poor sinners! all tongues must needs pause and falter, that attempt the expressions of his grace, expressions being here swallowed up: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," John 3:16. So loved them: how did he love them? nay, here you must excuse the

tongues of angels; which of us would deliver a child, the child of our delights, an only child, to death for the greatest inheritance in the world? what tender parent can endure a parting pull with such a child? when Hagar was taking her last leave (as she thought) of her Ishmael, Gen. 21:16. the text says, "she went and sat over against him, a good way off: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over-against him, and lift up her voice, and wept:" though she were none of the best of mothers, nor he the best of children, yet she could not give up the child. O it was hard to part! what an outcry did David make, even for an Absalom! wishing he had died for him. What a hole (as I may say) has the death of some children made in the hearts of some parents, which will never be closed up in this world! yet surely, never did any child lie so close to a parent's heart, as Christ did to his Father's; and yet he willingly parts with him, though his only one, the Son of his delights, and that to death, a cursed death, for sinners, for the worst of sinners. O miranda Dei philanthropic! O the admirable love of God to men! matchless love! a love past finding out! Let all men, therefore, in the business of their redemption, give equal glory to the Father with the Son, John 5:23. If the Father had not loved you, he had never parted with such a Son for you.

## INFERENCE 2.

From one wonder let our souls turn to another, for they are now in the midst of wonders: adore, and be forever astonished at the love of Jesus Christ to poor sinners; that ever he should consent to leave such a bosom, and the ineffable delights that were there, for such poor worms as we are. O the heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of unmeasurable love! O see, Rom. 5:6, 7, 8. Read, and wonder; how is the love of Christ commended in ravishing circumstances to poor sinners! You would be loth to leave a creature's bosom, a comfortable dwelling, a fair estate for the best friend in the world; your souls are loth to leave their bodies, though they have no such great content there; but which of you, if ever you found by experience what it is to be in the bosom of God by divine communion, would be persuaded to

leave such a bosom for all the good that is in the world? And yet Jesus Christ who was embraced in that bosom after another manner than ever you were acquainted with, freely left it, and laid down the glory and riches he enjoyed there, for your sakes; and as the Father loved him; even so (believers) has he loved you, John 17:22. What manner of love is this! Who ever loved as Christ loves? Who ever denied himself for Christ, as Christ denied himself for us?

### INFERENCE 3.

Hence we are informed, That interest in Jesus Christ is the true way to all spiritual preferment in heaven. Do you covet to be in the heart, in the favor and delight of God? Get interest in Jesus Christ, and you shall presently be there. What old Israel said of the children of his beloved Joseph, Your children are my children; the same God says of all the dear children of Christ, Gen. 48:5, 9. You see among men, all things are carried by interest: persons rise in this world as they are befriended; preferment goes by favor: So it is in heaven, persons are preferred according to their interest in the beloved, Eph. 1:9. Christ is the great favorite in heaven: his image upon your souls and his name in your prayers, makes both accepted with God.

### INFERENCE 4.

How worthy is Jesus Christ of all our love and delights? You see how infinitely the Father delights in him, how he ravishes the heart of God; and shall he not ravish our hearts? I present you a Christ this day, able to ravish any soul that will but view and consider him. O that you did but see this lovely Lord Jesus Christ! Then would you go home sick of love: surely he is a drawing Savior, John 12:32. Why do you lavish away your precious affections upon vanity: None but Christ is worthy of them: when you spend your precious affections upon other objects, what is it but to dig for dross with golden mattocks? The Lord direct our hearts into the love Of Christ. O that our hearts, loves and delights did meet and center with the heart of God in this most blessed object! O let him that left God's bosom for

you, be embosomed by you, though yours be nothing to God's; he that left God's bosom for you, deserves yours.

## INFERENCE 5.

If Christ be the beloved darling of the Father's soul, think what a grievous and insufferable thing it is to the heart of God, to see his dear Son despised, slighted, and rejected by sinners: verily, there is no such cut to the heart of God in the whole world. Unbelievers trample upon God's darling, tread under foot him that eternally lay in his bosom, Heb. 10:29. Smite the Apple of his eye, and how God will bear this, that parable, Mat. 21:37, to 40, will inform you, surely he will miserably destroy such wretched sinners. If you would study to do God the greatest despite, there is none like this. What a dismal word is that; 1 Cor. 16:22. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha," (I. e.) let the great curse of God lie upon that man until the Lord come. O sinners! you shall one day know the price of this sin; you shall feel what it is to despise a Jesus, that is able to compel love from the hardest heart. O that you would slight him no more! O that this day your hearts might fall in love with him! I tell you, if you would set your love to sale, none bids so fair for it as Christ.

## **2. Use of Exhortation**

1. To saints: If Christ lay eternally in this bosom of love, and yet was content to forsake and leave it for your sakes; then, (1.) Be you ready to forsake and leave all the comforts you have on earth for Christ: famous Galleacius left all for this enjoyment. Moses left all the glory of Egypt: Peter, and the other Apostles left all, Luke 18:28. But what have we to leave for Christ in comparison of what he left for us? Surely Christ is the highest pattern of self-denial in the world. (2.) Let this confirm your faith in prayer: If he, that has such an interest in the heart of God, intercede with the Father for you, then never doubt of audience and acceptance with him; surely you shall be accepted through the beloved, Eph. 1:6. Christ was never denied

anything that he asked, John 11:42. The Father hears him always; though you are not worthy, Christ is, and he ever lives to make intercession for you, Heb. 7:25.

(3.) Let this encourage your heart, O saint, in a dying hour, and not only make you patient in death, but in a holy manner impatient until you be gone; for where is your soul now going, but to that bosom of love whence Christ came? John 17:24. "Father, I will that they also, whom you have given me, be with me where I am:" and where is he but in that bosom of glory and love where he lay before the world was? ver. 5. O then let every believer encourage his soul; comfort you one another with these words, I am leaving the bosom of a creature, I am going to the bosom of God.

2. To sinners, exhorting them to embrace the bosom-son of God: Poor Wretches! Whatever you are, or have been; whatever guilt or discouragement at present you lie under; embrace Christ, who is freely offered to you, and you shall be as dear to God as the holiest and most eminent believer in the world: but if you still continue to despise and neglect such a Savior, sorer wrath is treasured up for you than other sinners, even something worse than dying without mercy, Heb. 10:28. O that these discoveries and overtures of Christ may never come to such a fatal issue with any of your souls, in whose eyes his glory has been this day opened!

## **The Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Redeemer**

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he has poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the

transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Isa.53:12.

In this chapter, the gospel seems to be epitomized; the subject matter of it is the death of Christ, and the glorious issue thereof: by reading of it, the Eunuch of old, and many Jews since, have been converted to Christ. Christ is here considered absolutely, and relatively; Absolutely, and so his innocence is industriously vindicated, ver. 9. Though he suffered grievous things, yet not for his own sins, "for he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth;" but relatively considered in the capacity of a surety for us: so the justice of God is so fully vindicated in his sufferings; ver. 6. "The Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all." How he came to sustain this capacity and relation of a surety for us, is in these verses plainly asserted to be by his compact and agreement with his Father, before the worlds were made, verse 10, 11,12.

In this verse we have,

1. His work.
2. His reward.
3. The respect or relation of each to the other.

(1.) His work, which was indeed a hard work, to pour out his soul unto death, aggravated by the companions, with whom, being numbered with transgressors; the capacity in which, bearing all the sins of the elect, "he bare the sins of many in and by the manner of his bearing it, viz. meekly, and forgivingly, "he made intercession for the transgressors;" This was his work. (2.) The reward or fruit which is promised him for this work, "therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he will divide the spoil with the strong;" wherein is a plain allusion to conquerors in war, for whom are reserved the richest garments, and most honorable captives to follow the conqueror, as an addition to his magnificence and triumph; these were accustomed to come after them in chains, Isa. 45:14. see Judges 5:3 (3.) The respect or relation between that work and this triumph: some will have this work to have no other relation to that glory, than

a mere antecedent to a consequent: others give it the respect and relation of a meritorious cause to a reward. It is well observed by Dr. Featly, that the Hebrew particle "lachen", which we render therefore, noting order, is not worth so much contention about it, whether it be the order of casualty, or mere antecedence; neither do I foresee any absurdity in calling Christ's exaltation the reward and fruit of his humiliation: however, it is plain, whether one or other, it is that the Father here agrees and promises to give him, if he will undertake the redemption of the elect, by pouring out his soul unto death; of all which this is the plain result:

DOCTRINE. That the business of man's salvation was transacted upon covenant terms, between the Father and the Son, from all eternity.

I would not here be mistaken, as though I were now to treat of the covenant of grace, made in Christ between God and us; it is not the covenant of grace, but of redemption, I am now to speak to, which differs from the covenant of grace, in regard of the federates in this, it is God the Father, and Jesus Christ, that mutually covenant; in that, it is God and man: they differ, also in the receptive part, in this it is required of Christ that he should shed his blood, in that it is required of us that we believe. They also differ in their promises; in this, God promises to Christ a name above every name, ample dominion from sea to sea; in that, to us, grace and glory: so that these are two distinct covenants.

The substance of this covenant of redemption is, dialogue-wise, expressed to us in Isa. 49, where, (as divines have well observed) Christ begins, at the first and second verses, and shows his commission, telling his Father, how he had both called, and prepared him for the work of redemption; "The Lord has called me from the womb - he has made my mouth like a sharp sword, and made me a polished shaft", &c. q. d. by reason of that superabundant measure of the spirit of wisdom and power wherewith I am anointed and filled; my doctrine shall, as a sword, pierce the hearts of sinners; yes, like

an arrow, drawn to the head, strike deep into souls standing at a great distance from God and godliness.

Having told God how ready, and fit he was for his service, he will know of him what reward he shall have for his work, for he resolves his blood shall not be undervalued; hereupon, verse 3, the Father offers him the elect of Israel for his reward, bidding low at first (as they that make bargains use to do) and only offers him that small remnant, still intending to bid higher: But Christ will not be satisfied with these, he values his blood higher than so: therefore, in verse 4 he is brought in complaining, "I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for nothing," q. d. This is but a small reward for so great a suffering, as I must undergo; my blood is much more worth than this comes to, and will be sufficient to redeem all the elect dispersed among the isles of the Gentiles, as well as the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Hereupon the Father comes up higher, and tells him, he intends to reward him better than so; and therefore, verse 6 says, "It is a light thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give you for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation to the ends of the earth." Thus is the treaty carried on between them, transacting it after the manner of men.

Now, to open this great point, we will here consider,

- (1.) The persons transacting one with another.
- (2.) The business transacted.
- (3.) The quality and manner of the transaction, which is federal.
- (4.) The articles to which they agree.
- (5.) How each person performs his engagement to the other.

And, Lastly, The antiquity or eternity of this covenant transaction.

(1.) The persons transacting and dealing with each other in this covenant; and indeed they are great persons, God the Father, and God the Son, the former as a Creditor, and the latter as a Surety. The Father stands upon satisfaction, the Son engages to give it. If it be demanded, why the Father and the Spirit might not as well have treated upon our redemption, as the Father and Son! It is answered, Christ is the natural Son of God, and therefore fittest to make us the adopted sons of God. Christ also is the middle person in the Trinity, and therefore fittest to be the mediator and middle person between us and God. The Spirit has another office assigned him, even to apply, as Christ's viceregent, the redemption designed by the Father, and purchased by the Son for us.

(2.) The business transacted between them; and that was the redemption and recovery of all God's elect: our eternal happiness lay now before them, our dearest and everlasting concerns were now in their hands: the elect (though not yet in being) are here considered as existent, yes, and as fallen, miserable, forlorn creatures: How these may again be restored to happiness without prejudice to the honor, justice and truth of God; this, this is the business that lay before them.

(3.) For the manner, or quality of the transaction, it was federal, or of the nature of a covenant; it was by mutual engagements and stipulations, each person undertaking to perform his part in order to our recovery.

We find each person undertaking for himself by solemn promise; the Father promises that he will "hold his hand, and keep him," Isa. 42:6. The Son promises, he will obey his Father's call to suffering, and not "be rebellious," Isa. 50:5. And, having promised, each holds the other to his engagement. The father stands upon the satisfaction promised him; and, when the payment was making, he will not abate him one farthing, Rom. 8:32. "God spared not his own Son," I. e. he abated nothing of the full price he was to have at his hands for us.

And as the Father stood strictly upon the terms of the covenant, so did Christ also; John 17:45. "I have glorified you on earth, (says he to the Father) I have finished the work you gave me to do; and now, Father, glorify me with your own self." As if he had said, Father, the work is done, now where is the wages I was promised? I call for glory as my due, as much my due as the hire of the laborer is his due, when his work is done.

4. More particularly; we will next consider the articles to which they do both agree; or, what it is that each person does for himself promise to the other. And, to let us see how much the Father's heart is engaged in the salvation of poor sinners, there are five things which he promises to do for Christ, if he will undertake that work.

First, He promises to invest him, and anoint him to a threefold office, answerable to the misery that lay upon the elect as so many bars to all communion with, and enjoyment of God; for, if ever man be restored to that happiness, the blindness of his mind must be cured, the guilt of sin expiated, and his captivity to sin led captive: answerably, Christ must, "of God, be made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," 1 Cor. 1:30. And he is made so to us as our Prophet, Priest, and King; but he could not put himself into either of these; for if so, he had acted without commissions and consequently all he did had been invalid; Heb. 5:5. "Christ glorified not himself to be made an High-Priest, but he that said unto him, You are my Son". A commission therefore to act authoritatively, in these offices, being necessary to our recovery, the Father engages to him to seal him such a threefold commission.

He promises to invest him with an eternal and royal Priesthood, Psalm. 110:4. "The Lord has sworn, and will not repent; You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec." This Melchisedec being King of Righteousness, and king of Salem, that is, Peace, had a royal priesthood; and his descent not being reckoned, it had an adumbration of eternity in it, and so was more apt to type and

shadow forth the priesthood of Christ than Aaron's was, Heb. 7:16, 17, 24, 25, as the apostle accommodates them there.

He promises moreover to make him a Prophet, and that an extraordinary one, even the Prince of prophets; the chief Shepherd, as much superior to all others, as the sun is to the lesser stars; so you have it, Isa. 42:6, 7. "I will give you for a light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes," &c.

And not only so, but to make him king also, and that of the whole empire of the world; so Psalm. 2:6, 7, 8. "Ask of me, and I will give you the Heathen for your inheritance, and the utmost ends of the earth for your possession." Thus he promises to qualify and furnish him completely for the work, by his investiture with this threefold office.

Secondly, And forasmuch as he knew it was a hard and difficult work his Son was to undertake, a work that would have broken the backs of all the angels in heaven, and men on earth, had they engaged in it; therefore he promises to stand by him, and assist and strengthen him for it: so, Isa. 42:5, 6, 7. "I will hold your hand," or take hold of you with my hands, for so it may be rendered, I. e. I will underprop and support your humanity, when it is even overweighted with the burden that is to come upon it, and ready to sink down under it; for so you know the case stood with him, Mark 14:34, and so it was foretold of him, Isa. 53:7. "He was oppressed," &c. and indeed the humanity needed a prop of no less strength than the infinite power of the Godhead: the same promise you have in the first verse also, "Behold my servant whom I uphold."

Thirdly, He promises to crown his work with success, and bring it to an happy issue, Isa. 53:10. "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." He shall not begin, and not finish; he shall not shed his invaluable blood upon hazardous terms; but shall see and reap the sweet fruits

thereof; as the joyful mother forgets her pangs, when she delightfully embraces and kisses her living child.

Fourthly, The Father promises to accept him in his work, though millions should certainly perish, Isa. 49:4. "Surely (says he) my work is with the Lord." And, verse 5. "I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." His faith has therein respect to this compact and promise. Accordingly the Father manifests the satisfaction he had in him, and in his work, even while he was about it upon the earth, when there came such a "voice from the excellent glory, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Fifthly, As he engaged to reward him highly for his work, by exalting him to singular and super-eminent glory and honor, when he should have dispatched and finished it. So you read, Psalm. 2:7. "I will declare the decree; the Lord has said unto me, You are my Son, this day have I begotten you." It is spoken of the day of his resurrection, when he had just finished his sufferings. And so the apostle expounds and applies it, Acts 13:32, 33. For then did the Lord wipe away the reproach of his cross, and invested him with such glory, that he looked like himself again. As if the Father had said, now you have again recovered your glory, and this day is to you as a new birth-day.

These are the encouragements and rewards proposed and promised to him by the Father. This was the "joy set before him", (as the apostle phrases it in Heb. 12:2.) which made him so patiently to "endure the cross, and despise the shame."

And in like manner Jesus Christ restipulates, and gives his engagement to the Father; that, upon these terms, he is content to be made flesh, to divest, as it were, himself of his glory, to come under the obedience and malediction of the law, and not to refuse any, the hardest sufferings it should please his Father to inflict on him. So much is implied in Isa. 50:5, 6, 7. "The Lord has opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back; I gave my back to

the smilers, and my cheeks to them that pulled off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting: For the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; I have set my face as a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." When he says, I was not rebellious, he means, I was most heartily willing, and content to accept the terms; for there is a Meiosis in the words, and much more is intended than expressed. And the sense of this place is well delivered to us in other terms, Psalm. 40:6, 7, 8, 9, 10. "Then said I, Lo I come, I delight to do your will, O God, your law is within my heart." O see with what a full consent the heart of Christ closes with the Father's offers and proposals; like some echo, that answers your voice twice or thrice over. So does Christ here answer his Father's call, "I come, I delight to do your will; yes, your law is in my heart." And thus you see the articles to which they both subscribed, or the terms they agreed on.

(5.) I will briefly show how these articles, and agreements were on both parts, performed, and that precisely and punctually. For, (1.) The Son having thus consented, accordingly he applies himself to the discharge of his work. He took a body, in it fulfilled all righteousness, even to a little, Matth. 3:15. And at last his out was made an offering for sin, so that he could say as it is, John 17:4. "Father, I have glorified you on earth, I have finished the work you gave me to do." He went through all the parts of his active, and passive obedience, cheerfully and faithfully. (2.) The Father made good his engagements to Christ, all along, with no less faithfulness than Christ did his. He promised to assist, and hold his hand, and so he did; Luke 22:43, "And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him." That was one of the sorest brunts that ever Christ met with; this was seasonable aid and support. He promised to accept him in his work, and that he should be glorious in his eyes; so he did: for he not only declared it by a voice from heaven, Luke 3:22!. "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:" But it was fully-declared in his resurrection and ascension, which were a full discharge and justification of him. He promised him that "He should see his seed," and so he did; for his very birth-dew was as the dew of the morning;

and ever since his blood has been fruitful in the world. He promised gloriously to reward and exalt him; and so he has, Phil. 2:9, 10, 11, and that highly and super-eminently, "giving him a name above every name in heaven and earth." Thus were the articles performed.

(6.) Lastly, When was this compact made between the Father and the Son? I answer, it bears date from eternity. Before this world was made, then were his delights in us, while as yet we had no existence, but only in the infinite mind and purpose of God, who had decreed this for us in Christ Jesus, as the apostle speaks, 2 Tim. 1:9. What grace was that which was given us in Christ before the world began, but this grace of redemption, which was from everlasting thus contrived and designed for us, in that way which has been here opened? Then was the council, or consultation of peace between them both, as some take that scripture, Zech. 6:13.

### **Next let us apply it to ourselves.**

Use 1. The first use that offers itself to us from hence, is the abundant security that God has given the elect for their salvation, and that not only in respect of the covenant of grace made with them, but also of this covenant of redemption made with Christ for them; which indeed is the foundation of the covenant of grace. God's single promise is security enough to our faith, his covenant of grace adds--farther security; but both these viewed as the effects and fruits of this covenant of redemption, make all fast and sure. In the covenant of grace, we question not the performance on God's part, but we are often stumbled at the grand defects on our parts. But when we look to the covenant of redemption there is nothing to stagger our faith, both the federates being infinitely able and faithful to perform their parts; so that there is no possibility of a failure there. Happy were it, if puzzled and perplexed Christians would turn their eyes from the defects that are in their obedience, to the fullness and completeness of Christ's obedience; and see themselves complete in him, when most lame and defective in themselves.

Use 2. Hence also to be informed, that God the Father, and God the Son, do mutually rely and trust to one another in the business of our redemption. The Father relies upon the Son for the performance of his part; as it is, Isa. 42:1, " Behold my servant, whom I uphold." Montanus turns it, on whom I lean or depend. As if the Father had said, behold what a faithful servant I have chosen, in whom my soul is at rest: I know he will go through with his work, I can depend upon him. And, to speak plain, the Father so far trusted Christ, that upon the credit of his promise to come into the world, and in the fullness of time to become a sacrifice for the elect, he saved all the Old Testament saints, whose faith also respected a Christ to come; with reference whereto, it is said, Heb. 11:39, 40. "That they received not the promises, God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect," I. e. without Jesus Christ manifested in the flesh, in our times, though believed on, as to come in the flesh, in their times. And as the Father trusted Christ, so does Christ, in like manner, depend upon, and trust his Father. For, having performed his part, and left the world again, he now trusteth his Father for the accomplishment of that promise made him, Isa. 53:10. "That he shall see his seed," &c. He depends upon his Father for all the elect that are left behind, yet unregenerated, as well as those already called, that they shall be all preserved unto the heavenly kingdom, according to that, John 17:11. "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world; and I come unto you: holy Father, keep, through your own name, those whom you have given me." And can it be imagined, that the Father will fail in his trust, who every way acquitted himself so punctually to the Son? It cannot be.

Use 3. Moreover, hence we infer the validity and unquestionable success of Christ's intercession in heaven for believers. You read, Heb. 7:25. "That he ever lives to make intercession; and, Heb. 12:24. "That his blood speaks for good things for them." Non, that his blood shall obtain what it pleads in heaven for, is undoubted, and that from the consideration of this covenant of redemption. For here you see that the things he now asks of his Father, are the very same which his

Father promised him, and covenanted to give him, before this world was. So that, besides the interest of the person, the very equity of the matter speaks its success, and requires performance. Whatever he asks for us, is as due to him as the wages of the hireling, when the work is ended; if the work be done, and done faithfully, as the Father has acknowledged it is, then the reward is due, and due immediately; and no doubt but he shall receive it from the hands of a righteous God.

Use 4. Hence, in like manner, you may be informed of the consistency of grace with full satisfaction to the justice of God. The apostle, 2 Tim. 1:9. tells us, "We are saved according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Jesus Christ before the world began." I. e. According to the gracious terms of this covenant of redemption; and yet you see notwithstanding, how strictly God stands upon satisfaction from Christ; so then, grace to us, and satisfaction to justice, are not so inconsistent as the Socinian adversaries would make them; what was debt to Christ, is grace to us: when you hear men cry out, Here is grace indeed! pay me all, and I will forgive you; remember, how all mouths are stopped with that one text, Rom. 3:24. "Being justified freely by his grace;" and yet he adds, "through the redemption that is in Christ."

Use 5. Again, Hence judge of the antiquity of the love of God to believers! what an ancient friend he has been to us; who loved us, provided for us, and contrived all our happiness, before we were, yes, before the world was. We reap the fruits of this covenant now, the seed whereof was sown from eternity; yes, it is not only ancient, but also most free: no excellencies of ours could engage the love of God; for as yet we were not.

Use 6. Hence judge, How reasonable it is that believers should embrace the hardest terms of obedience unto Christ, who complied with such hard terms for their salvation: they were hard and difficult terms indeed, on which Christ received you from the Father's hand: it was, as you have heard, to pour out his soul unto death, or not to

enjoy a soul of you. Here you may suppose the Father to say, when driving his bargain with Christ for you:

Father. My son, here is a company of poor miserable souls, that have utterly undone themselves, and now lie open to my justice! Justice demands satisfaction for them, or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them: What shall be done for these souls And thus Christ returns.

Son. O my Father, such is my love to, and pity for them, that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their Surety; bring in all your bills, that I may see what they owe you; Lord, bring them all in, that there may be no after-reckonings with them; at my hand shall you require it. I will rather choose to suffer your wrath than they should suffer it: upon me, my Father, upon me be all their debt.

Father. But, my Son, if you undertake for them, you must reckon to pay the last mite, expect no abatements; if I spare them, I will not spare you.

Son. Content, Father, let it be so; charge it all upon me, I am able to discharge it: and though it prove a kind of undoing to me, though it impoverish all my riches, empty all my treasures, (for so indeed it did, 2 Cor. 8:9. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor") yet I am content to undertake it. Blush, ungrateful believers, O let shame cover your faces; judge in yourselves now, has Christ deserved that you should stand with him for trifles, that you should shrink at a few petty difficulties, and complain, this is hard, and that is harsh? O if you knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in this his wonderful condescension for you, you could not do it.

Use 7. Lastly, How greatly are we all concerned, to make it sure to ourselves, that we are of this number which the Father and the Son agreed for before the world was; that we were comprehended in Christ's engagement and compact with the Father?

Objection. Yes, but you will say, who can know that, there were no witnesses to that agreement.

Solution. Yes, We may know, without ascending into heaven, or prying into unrevealed secrets, that our names were in that covenant, if, (1.) You are believers indeed; for all such the Father then gave to Christ, John 17:8. "The men that you gave me (for of them he spoke immediately before) they have believed that you did send me." (2.) If you savingly know God in Jesus Christ, such were given him by the Father, John 17:6. "I have manifested your name unto the men you gave me." By this they are discriminated from the rest, verse 25. "The world has not known you, but these have known," &c. (3.) If you are men and women of another world; John 17:16, "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world." May it be said of you, as of dying men, that you are not men and women for this world, that you are crucified and dead to it, Gal. 6:14, that you are strangers in it? Heb. 11:13, 14. (4.) If you keep Christ's word, John 17:6. "Your they were, and you gave them me; and they have kept your word." By keeping his word, understand the receiving of the word, in its sanctifying effects and influences into your hearts, and your perseverance in the profession and practice of it to the end, John 17:17, "Sanctify them through your truth, your word is truth". John 15:7, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will." Blessed and happy is that soul upon which these blessed characters appear, which our Lord Jesus has laid so close together, within the compass of a few verses, in this 17th chapter of John. These are the persons the Father delivered unto Christ, and he accepted from the Father, in this blessed covenant.

# The Amazing Love of God in Giving His Own Son for Us

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

You have heard of the gracious purpose and design of God, to recover poor sinners to himself by Jesus Christ, and how this design of love was laid and contrived in the covenant of redemption, whereof we last spoke.

Now, according to the terms of that covenant, you shall hear from this scripture, how that design was by one degree advanced towards its accomplishment, in God's actual giving or parting with his own Son for us: "God so loved the world, that he gave," &c.

The whole precedent context is spent in discovering the nature and necessity of regeneration, and the necessity thereof is in this text urged and inferred from the peculiar respect and eye God had upon believers, in giving Christ for them; they only reaping all the special and saving benefits and advantages of that gift: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish."

In the words are to be considered,

1. The original spring or fountain of our best mercies, the love of God. The love of God is, either benevolent, beneficent, or delightful. His benevolent love, is nothing else but his desire and purpose of saving, and doing us good; so his purpose and grace to Jacob is called love, Rom. 9:13. "Jacob have I loved;" but this being before Jacob was, could consist in nothing else but the gracious purpose of God towards him. His beneficent love, is his actual doing, good to the

persons beloved, or his bestowing the effects of his love upon us, according to that purpose. His delightful love, is nothing else but that delight and satisfaction he finds in beholding the fruits and workings of that grace in us, which he first intended for us, and then actually collated or bestowed on us. This love of benevolence, is that which I have opened to you, under the former head, God's compact with Christ about us, or his design to save us on the articles and terms therein specified.

The love of beneficence, is that which this scripture speaks of; out of this fountain Christ flowed to us, and both ran into that of delight, for therefore he both purposed and actually bestowed Christ on us, that he might everlastingly delight in beholding the glory and praise of all this reflected on himself, by his redeemed ones. This then is the fountain of our mercies.

2. The mercy flowing out of this fountain, and that is Christ; The mercy, as he is emphatically called, Luke 1:72. The marrow, kernel, and substance of all other mercies. He gave his only begotten Son: This was the birth of that love, the like whereunto it never brought forth before, therefore it is expressed with a double emphasis in the text, the one is the particle "houtos", so; "he so loved the world;" here is a sic without a sicut: How did he love it? Why, he so loved it; but how much, the tongues of angels cannot declare. And moreover, to enhance the mercy, he is called his only begotten Son: to have given a Son had been wonderful; but to give his only begotten Son, that is love inexpressible, unintelligible.

3. The objects of this love, or the persons to whom the eternal Lord delivered Christ, and that is the world. This must respect the elect of God in the world, such as do, or shall actually believe, as it is exegetically expressed in the next words, "That whoever believes in him should not perish:" Those whom he calls the world in that, he stiles believers in this expression; and the word [world] is put to signify the elect, because they are scattered through all parts, and are among all ranks of men in the world; these are the objects of this

love; it is not angels, but men, that were so loved; he is called "filantropos", a Lover, a Friend of Men, but never "filangelos" or "filokisos", the Lover or Friend of Angels, or creatures of another species.

4. The manner in which this never-enough celebrated mercy flows to us, from the fountain of divine love, and that is most freely and spontaneously. He gave, not he sold, or barely parted from, but gave. Nor yet does the Father's giving imply Christ to be merely passive; for as the Father is here said to give him, so the apostle tells us, Gal. 2:20. That he gave himself; "who loved me, and gave himself for me:" The Father gave him out of good will to men, and he as willingly bestowed himself on that service. Hence the note is,

DOCTRINE. That the gift of Christ is the highest and fullest manifestation of the love of God to sinners, that ever was made from eternity to them.

How is this gift of God to sinners signalized in that place of the apostle, 1 John. 4:10, "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins?" Why does the apostle so magnify this gift in saying, "Herein is love," as if there were love in nothing else! May we not say, that to have a being, a being among the rational creatures, therein is love? To have our life carried so many years like a taper in the hand of Providence, through so many dangers, and not yet put out in obscurity, therein is love? To have food and raiment, convenient for us, beds to lie on, relations to comfort us, in all these is love? Yes, but if you speak comparatively, in all these there is no love, to the love expressed in sending or giving Christ for us: These are great mercies in themselves, but compared to this mercy, they are all swallowed up, as the light of candles when brought into the sun-shine. No, no, herein is love, that God gave Christ for us. And it is remarkable, that when the apostle would show us, in Rom. 5:8, what is the noblest fruit that most commends to men the root of divine love that bears it, he shows us this very fruit of it that I am now opening; "But God,

says he, commends his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:" this is the very flower of that love.

The method into which I will cast this precious point, shall be this: (1.) To show how Jesus Christ was given by the Father. (2.) How that gift is the fullest and richest manifestation of the love of God that was ever made to the world. (3.) And then draw forth the uses of it.

1. How was Jesus Christ given by the Father, and what is implied therein.

You are not so to understand it, as though God parted with his interest and property in his Son, when he is said to give him; he was as much his own as ever. When men give, they transfer property to another; but when God had given him, he was, I say, still as much his own as ever: but this giving of Christ implies,

(1.) His designation and appointment unto death for us; for so you read, that it was done "according to the determinate counsel of God," Acts 2:23. Look, as the Lamb under the Law was separated from the flock, and set apart for a sacrifice; though it were still living, yet it was intentionally, and preparatively given, and consecrated to the Lord: so Jesus Christ was, by the counsel and purpose of God, thus chosen, and set apart for his service: and therefore in Isa. 42:1. God calls him his Elect, or chosen One.

(2.) His giving Christ, implies a parting with him, or setting him (as the French has it) at some distance from himself for a time. There was a kind of parting between the Father and the Son, when he came to tabernacle in our flesh: so he expresses it, John 16:28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father". This distance that this incarnation and humiliation set him at, was properly as to his humanity, which was really distant from the glory into which it is now taken up, and in respect of manifestation of delight and love, the Lord seemed to carry it as one at a distance from him. Oh! this was it that so deeply

pierced, and wounded his soul, as is evident from that complaint, Ps. 32:1, 2. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but you hear not," &c.

(3.) God's giving of Christ, implies his delivering him into the hands of justice to be punished; even as condemned persons are, lay sentence of law, given or delivered into the hands of executioners. So Acts 2:23. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel at God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have slain:" and so he is said, Rom. 8:32 "To deliver him up to death for us all." The Lord, when the time was come that Christ must suffer, did, as it were, say, O all you roaring waves of my incensed justice, now swell as high as heaven, and go over his soul and body; sink him to the bottom; let him go, like Jonah, his type, into the belly of hell, unto the roots of the mountains. Come all you raging storms, that I have reserved for this day of wrath, beat upon him, beat him down, that he may not be able to look up, Psalm. 60:12. Go justice, put him upon the rack, torment him in every part, until all his "bones be out of joint, arid his heart within him be melted as wax; in the midst of his affections," Psalm. 22:14. And you assembly of the wicked Jews and Gentiles, that have so long gaped for his blood, now he is delivered into your hands; you are permitted to execute your malice to the full: I now loose your chain, and into your hand and power is he delivered.

(4.) God's giving of Christ, implies his application of him, with all the purchase of his blood, and settling, all this upon us, as an inheritance and portion, John 6:32,33, "My Father gives you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is he which comes down from heaven, and gives light to the world." God has gives him as bread to poor starving creatures, that by faith they might eat and live. And so he told the Samaritan woman, John 4:10. "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says unto you, Give me to drink, you Would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water." Bread and water are the two necessaries for the support of natural life; God has given Christ, you see, to be all that, and more, to the spiritual life.

2. How this gift of Christ was the highest, and fullest manifestation of the love of God, that ever the world saw: and this will be evidenced by the following particulars:

(1.) If you consider how near and dear Jesus Christ was to the Father; he was his Son, "his only Son," says the text; the Son of his love, the darling of his Soul: His other Self, yes, one with himself; the express image of his person; the brightness of his Father's Glory: In parting with him, he parted with his own heart, with his very affections, as I may say. "Yet to us a Son is given," Isa. 9:6, and such a Son as he calls "his dear Son," Col. 1:13. A late writer tells us, that he has been informed, that in the famine in Germany, a poor family being ready to perish with famine, the husband made a motion to the wife, to sell one of the children for bread, to relieve themselves and the rest: The wife at last consents it should be so; but then they began to think which of the four should be sold; and when the eldest was named, they both refused to part with that, being their first born, and the beginning of their strength. Well, then they came to the second, but could not yield that he should be sold, being the very picture and lively image of his father. The third was named, but that also was a child that best resembled the mother. And when the youngest was thought on, that was the Benjamin, the child of their old age; and so were content rather to perish altogether in the famine, than to part with a child for relief. And you know how tenderly Jacob took it, when his Joseph and Benjamin were rent from him. What is a child, but a piece of the parent enrap't up in another skin? And yet our dearest children are but as strangers to us, in comparison of the unspeakable dearness that was between the Father and Christ. Now, that he should ever be content to part with a Son, and such an only One, is such a manifestation of love, as will be admired to all eternity. And then,

(2.) Let it be considered, To what he gave him, even to death, and that of the cross; to be made a curse for us; to be the scorn and contempt of men; to the most unparalleled sufferings that ever were inflicted or borne by any. It melts our affections, it breaks our heart,

to behold our children striving in the pangs of death: but the Lord beheld his Son struggling under agonies that never any felt before him. He saw him falling to the ground, groveling in the dust, sweating blood, and amidst those agonies turning himself to his Father, and, with a heart rending cry, beseeching him, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass," Luke 22:42. To wrath, to the wrath, of an infinite God without mixture; to the very torments of hell was Christ delivered, and that by the hand of his own Father. Sure then that love must needs want a name, which made the Father of mercies deliver his only Son to such miseries for us.

(3.) It is a special consideration to enhance the love of God in giving Christ, that in giving him he gave the richest jewel in his cabinet; a mercy of the greatest worth, and most inestimable value, Heaven itself is not so valuable and precious as Christ is: He is the better half of heaven; and so the saints account him, Psalm. 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but you?" Ten thousand thousand worlds, says one, as many worlds as angels can number, and then as a new world of angels can multiply, would not all be the bulk of a balance, to weigh Christ's excellency, love, and sweetness. O what a fair One! what an only One! what an excellent, lovely, ravishing One, is Christ! Put the beauty of ten thousand paradises, like the garden of Eden, into one; put all trees, all flowers, all smells, all colors, all tastes, all joys, all sweetness, all loveliness in one; O what a fair and excellent thing would that be? And yet it should be less to that fair and dearest well-beloved Christ, than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths. Christ is heaven's wonder, and earths wonder.

Now, for God to bestow the mercy of mercies, the most precious thing in heaven or earth, upon poor sinners; and, as great, as lovely, as excellent as his Son was, yet not to account him too good to bestow upon us, what manner of love is this!

(4.) Once more, let it be considered on whom the Lord bestowed his Son: upon angels? No, but upon men. Upon man his friend? No, but

upon his enemies. This is love; and on this consideration the apostle lays a mighty weight, in Rom. 5:8, 9, 10. "But God (says he) commends his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, - When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Who would part with a son for the sake of his dearest friends? but God gave him to, and delivered him for enemies: O love unspeakable!

(5.) Lastly, Let us consider how freely this gift came from him: It was not wrested out of his hand by our importunity; for we as little desired as deserved it: It was surprising, preventing, eternal love, that delivered him to us: "Not that we loved him, but he first loved us," 1 John 4:19. Thus as when you weigh a thing, you cast in weight after weight, until the scales break; so does God, one consideration upon another, to overcome our hearts, and make us admiringly to cry, what manner of love is this! And thus I have showed you what God's giving of Christ is, and what matchless love is manifested in that incomparable gift.

Next we shall apply this, in some practical corollaries.

Corollary 1. Learn hence, The exceeding preciousness of souls, and at what a high rate God values them that he will give his Son, his only Son out of his bosom, as a ransom for them. Surely this speaks their preciousness: God would not have parted with such a Son for small matters: all the world could not redeem them; gold and silver could not be their ransom; so speaks the apostle, 1 Peter 1:18. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Such an esteem God had for them, that rather than they should perish, Jesus Christ shall be made a man, yes, a curse for them. Oh then, learn to put a due value upon your own souls: do not sell that cheap, which God has paid so dear for: Remember what a treasure you carry about you; the glory that you see in this world is not equivalent in worth to it. Matth. 16:26. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Corollary 2. If God has given his own Son for the world, then it follows, that those for whom God gave his own Son, may warrantably expect any other temporal mercies from him. This is the apostle's inference, Rom. 8:32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not, with him, freely give us all things?" And so 1 Cor. 3:21, 22. "All is yours, for you are Christ's" That is, They hold all other things in Christ, who is the capital, and most comprehensive mercy.

To make out the grounds of this comfortable deduction, let these four things be pondered, and duly weighed in your thoughts. (1.) No other mercy you need or desire, is, or can be so dear to God, as Jesus Christ is: he never laid any other thing in his bosom as he did his Son. As for the world, and the comforts of it, it is the dust of his feet, he values it not; as you see by his providential disposals of it; having given it to the worst of men. "All the Turkish empire," says Luther, "as great and glorious as it is, is but a crumb which the master of the family throws to the dogs." Think upon any other outward enjoyment that is valuable in your eyes, and there is not so much comparison between it and Christ, in the esteem of God, as is between your dear children and the lumber of your houses, in your esteem. If then God has parted so freely from that which was infinitely dearer to him than these; how shall he deny these, when they may promote his glory, and your good? (2.) As Jesus Christ was nearer the heart of God than all these; so Christ is, in himself, much greater and more excellent than all of them: Ten thousand worlds, and the glory of them all, is but the dust of the balance, if weighed with Christ. These things are but poor creatures, but he is over all, God blessed for ever, Rom. 9:5. They are common gifts, but he is the Gift of God, John 4:10. They are ordinary mercies, but he is The mercy, Luke 1:72. As one pearl, or precious stone is greater in value than ten thousand common pebbles. Now, if God has so freely given the greater, how can you suppose he should deny the lesser, mercies? Will a man give to another a large inheritance, and stand with him for a trifle? how can it be? (3.) There is no other mercy you want, but you are entitled to it by the gift of Christ; it is, as to right, conveyed to you with Christ. So,

in the fore cited 1 Cor. 3:21, 22, 23. "the world is yours, yes, all is yours; for you are Christ's." So 2 Cor. 1:20. "For all the promises of God in Christ, in him they are yes, and in him, amen." With him he has given you all things, 1 Tim. 6:17. richly to enjoy: the word signifies to have the sweet relish and comfort of an enjoyment. So have we in all our mercies, upon the account of our title to them in Christ. (4.) Lastly, If God has given you this nearer, greater, and all comprehending mercy, when you were enemies to him, and alienated from him; it is not imaginable he should deny you any inferior mercy, when you are come into a state of reconciliation and amity with him. So the apostle reasons, Rom. 5:8, 9, 10. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life". And thus you have the second inference with its grounds.

Corollary 3. If the greatest love has been manifested in giving Christ to the world, then it follows, that the greatest evil and wickedness is manifested in despising, slighting, and rejecting Christ. It is sad to abuse the love of God manifested in the lowest gift of providence; but, to slight the richest discoveries of it, even in that peerless gift, wherein God commends his love in the most taking and astonishing manner; this is sin with a witness. Blush, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth; yes, be you horribly afraid! No guilt like this. The most flagitious wretches among the barbarous nations are innocent, in comparison of these. But, are there any such in the world? Dare any slight this gift of God? Indeed, if men's words might be taken, there are few or none that dare do so; but if their lives and practices may be believed, this, this is the sin of the far greater part of the Christianized world. Witness the lamentable stupidity and supineness; witness the contempt of the gospel; witness the hatred and persecution of his image, laws and people. What is the language of all this, but a vile esteem of Jesus Christ?

And now, let me a little expostulate with those ungrateful souls, that trample under foot the Son of God, that value not this love that gave him forth. What is that mercy which you so condemn and

undervalue? is it so vile and cheap a thing as your entertainment speaks it to be? Is it indeed worth no more than this in your eyes? Surely you will not be long of that opinion! Will you be of that mind, think on, when death and judgement shall have thoroughly awakened you! Oh, no: Then a thousand worlds for a Christ! as it is storied of our crooked-backed Richard, when he lost the field, and was in great danger by his enemies that pressed upon him; Oh now, (said he) a kingdom for a horse! Or think we, that any beside you in the world are of your mind? you are deceived, if you think so, "To them that believe he is precious," through all the world, 1 Pet. 2:7. and in the other world they are of a quite contrary mind. Could you but hear what is said of him in heaven, in what a dialect the saved of the Lord do extol their Savior; or could you but imagine the self-revenges, the self torments, which the damned suffer for their folly, and what a value they would set upon one tender of Christ, if it might but again be hoped for; you would see that such as you are the only despisers of Christ. Beside, methinks it is astonishing, that you should despise a mercy in which your own souls are so dearly, so deeply, so everlastingly concerned, as they are in this gift of God. If it were but the soul of another, nay, less, if but the body of another, and yet less than that, if but another's beast, whose life you could preserve, you are obliged to do it; but when it is yourself, yes, the best part of yourself, your own invaluable soul, that you ruin and destroy thereby, Oh, what a monster are you, to cast it away thus! What! will you slight your own souls? care you not whether they be saved, or whether they be damned? is it indeed an indifferent thing with you which way they fall at death? have you imagined a tolerable hell? is it easy to perish? are you not only turned God's enemies, but your own too? Oh see what monsters sin can turn men and women into! Oh the stupefying, besetting, intoxicating power of sin! But perhaps you think that all these are but uncertain sounds, with which we alarm you; it may be your own heart will preach such doctrine as this to you: Who can assure you of the reality of these things? why should you trouble yourself with an invisible world, or be so much concerned for what your eyes never saw, nor midst ever receive the report from any that have seen them? Well, though we cannot now

show you these things, yet shortly they shall be shown you; and your own eyes shall behold them. You are convinced and satisfied that many other things are real which you never saw: but be assured, That "if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation, which at first began to be spoken to us by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness?" Heb. 2:2, 3, 4. But if they be certain, yet they are not near; it will be a long time before they come. Poor soul! how do you cheat yourself? It maybe not by twenty parts so long a time as your own fancy draws it forth for you; you are not certain of the next moment.

And suppose what you imagines: What are twenty or forty years when they are past? yes, what are a thousand years to vast eternity? Go trifle away a few days more, sleep out a few nights more, and then lie down in the dust; it will not be long before the trumpet of God shall awaken you, and your eyes shall behold Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, and then you will know the price of this sin. Oh, therefore, if there be any sense of eternity upon you, any pity or love for yourselves in you; if you have any concernments more than the beasts that perish, despise not your own offered mercies, slight not the richest gift that ever was yet opened to the world; and a sweeter cannot be opened to all eternity!

## **Christ's Wonderful Person**

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14

You have heard the covenant of redemption opened. The work therein propounded by the Father, and consented to by the Son, is

such as infinitely exceeds the power of any mere creature to perform. He that undertakes to satisfy God, by obedience for man's sin, must himself be God; and he that performs such a perfect obedience, by doing, and suffering all that the law required, in our room, must be man. These two natures must be united in one person, else there could not be a concourse or cooperation of either nature in his mediatory works. How these natures are united, in the wonderful person of our Emmanuel, is the first part of the great mystery of godliness: a subject studied and adored by angels! and the mystery thereof is wrapped up in this text. Wherein we have,

First, The incarnation of the Son of God plainly asserted.

Secondly, That assertion strongly confirmed.

(1.) In the assertion we have three parts.

1. The Person assuming, "ho Logos", the Word, That is, the second Person or Subsistent in the most glorious Godhead, called the Word, either because he is the scope or principal matter, both of the prophetic and promissory word; or because he expounds and reveals the mind and will of God to men, as verse 18. The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared or expounded him.

2. The nature assumed, "sarks", Flesh, That is, the entire human nature, consisting of a true human soul and body. For so this word "sarks", in Rom. 3:20, and the Hebrew word "basar" which answers to it, by a usual Metonymy of a part for the whole, is used, Gen. 6:12. And the word Flesh is rather used here, than Man, on purpose to enhance the admirable condescension and abasement of Christ; there being more of vileness, weakness, and opposition to spirit in this word, than in that, as is pertinently noted by some. Hence the whole nature is denominated by that part, and called flesh.

3. The assumption itself, "egeneto", he was made; not fuit, he was, (as Socinus would render it, designing thereby to overthrow the

existence of Christ's glorified body now in heaven) but factus est, it was made, that is, he took or assumed the true human nature (called flesh, for the reason before rendered) into the unity of his divine person, with all its integral parts and essential properties; and so was made, or became a true and real man, by that assumption. The apostle speaking; of the same act, Heb. 2:16. uses another word, He took on him, "epilambanetai", fitly rendered he took on him, or he assumed; which assuming, though; inchoative, it was the work of the whole Trinity, God the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit, forming or creating that nature; as if three sisters should make a garment between them, which only one of them wears: yet, terminative, it was the act of the Son only; it was he only that was made flesh. And when it is said, he was made flesh, misconceive not, as if there was a mutation of the Godhead into flesh; for this was performed, "not by changing what he was, but by assuming what he was not," as Augustine well expresses it. As when the scripture, in a like expression, says, "He was made sin," 2 Cor. 5:21, and made a curse, Gal. 3:13, the nearing is not, that he was turned into sin, or into a curse; no more may we think here the Godhead was turned into flesh, and lost its own being and nature, because it is said he was made flesh. This is the sum of the assertion.

(2.) This assertion ["that the word was made flesh,"] is strongly confirmed. He "dwelt among us," and we saw his glory. This was no phantasm, but a most real and indubitable thing. For, "eskenosen en hemin", pitched his tent, or tabernacled with us. And we are eye-witnesses of it. Parallel to that, 1 John 1:1, 2, 3. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life, &c. declare we unto you." Hence note,

**DOCTRINE.** That Jesus Christ did really assume the true and perfect nature of man, into a personal unions with his divine nature, and still remains true God, and true man, in one person forever.

The proposition contains one of the deepest mysteries of godliness, 1 Tim. 3:16. A mystery, by which apprehension is dazzled, invention astonished, and all expression swallowed up. If ever the tongues of angels were desirable to explicate any word of God, they are so here. Great is the interest of words in this doctrine. We walk upon the brink of danger. The least tread awry may engulf us in the bogs of error. Arius would have been content, if the council of Nice would but have gratified him in a letter, "homousios", and "homoiousios". The Nestorians also desired but a letter, "Theodochos", "theotokos". These seemed but small and modest requests, but, if granted, had proved no small prejudice to Jesus Christ, and his truths. I desire therefore the reader would, with greatest attention of mind, apply himself to these truths. It is a doctrine hard to understand, and dangerous to mistake. I am really of his mind that said, 'It is better not touch the bottom, than not keep within the circle.' He did assume a true human body; that is plainly asserted, Phil. 2:7, 8, &c. Heb. 2:14, 16. In one place it is called taking on him the seed of Abraham, and in the text, flesh. He did also assume a true human soul, this is undeniable by its operations, passions, and expiration at last, Matth. 26:38 and 27:50. And that both these natures make but one person, is as evident from Rom. 1:3, 4. "Jesus Christ was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." So Rom. 9:5, "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." But that you may have a sound and clear understanding of this mystery, I will (1.) Open the nature; (2.) The effects; and (3.) The reasons or ends of this wonderful union.

First, The nature of this union. There are three illustrious and dazzling unions in scripture: that of three persons in one God, Essentially. That of two distinct natures, and persons; by one spirit Mystically: and this of two distinct natures in one person, Hypostatically. This is my task to open at this time: and, for the more distinct and perspicuous management thereof, I shall speak to it both negatively and positively.

1. Negatively. Think not when Christ assumed our nature, that it was united consubstantially, so as the three persons in the Godhead are united among themselves. They all have but one and the same nature and will; but in Christ are two distinct natures and wills, though but one person.

2. Nor yet that they are limited Physically, as soul and body are united in one person; for death actually dissolves that; but this is indissoluble. So that when his soul expired, and his body was interred, both soul and body were still united to the second person as much as ever.

3. Nor yet is it such a mystical union, as is between Christ and believers. Indeed that is a glorious union; but though believers are said to be in Christ, and Christ in them, yet they are not one person with him. They are not christed into Christ, or godded into God, as blasphemous Familists speak.

Secondly, Positively. But this assumption of which I speak, is that whereby the second Person in the Godhead did take the human nature into a personal union with himself, by virtue whereof the manhood subsists in the second person, yet without confusion, both making but one person, "Theanthropos", or Immanuel, God with us.

So that though we truly ascribe a two-fold nature to Christ, yet not a double person; for the human nature of Christ never subsisted separately and distinctly, by any personal subsistence of its own, as it does in all other men, but from the first moment of conception, subsisted in union with the second person.

To explicate this mystery more particularly, let it be considered;

First, The human nature was united to the second person miraculously and extraordinarily, being supernaturally framed in the womb of the Virgin, by the overshadowing power of the Highest, Luke 1:34, 35. By reason whereof it may truly and properly be said to be the fruit of the womb, not of the loins of men, nor by man. And

this was necessary to exempt the assumed nature from the stain and pollution of Adam's sin, which it wholly escaped; inasmuch as he received it not, as all others do, in the way of ordinary generation, wherein original sin is propagated: but this being extraordinarily produced, was a most pure and holy thing, Luke 1:35. And indeed this perfect shining holiness, in which it was produced, was absolutely necessary, both in order to its union with the divine Person, and the design of that union; which was both to satisfy for, and to sanctify us. The two natures could not be conjoined in the person of Christ, had there been the least taint of sin upon the human nature. For God can have no fellowship with sin, much less be united to it. Or, supposing such a conjunction with one sinful nature, yet he being a sinner himself, would never satisfy for the sins of others; nor could any unholy thing ever make us holy. "Such an High-priest therefore became us as is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, Heb. 7:26. And such an one he must needs be, whom the Holy Spirit produces in such a peculiar way--that holy One.

Secondly, As it was produced miraculously, so it was assumed integrally; that is to say, Christ took a complete and perfect human soul and body, with all and every faculty and member pertaining to it. And this was necessary (as both Austin and Fulgentius have well observed) that thereby he might heal the whole nature of that leprosy of sin, which has seized and infected every member and faculty."He assumed all, to sanctify all;" as Damascen expresses it. He designed a perfect recovery, by sanctifying us wholly in soul, body, and spirit; and therefore assumed the whole in order to it.

Thirdly, He assumed our nature, as with all its integral parts, so with all its sinless infirmities. And therefore it is said of him, Heb. 2:17. "That it behaved him, according to all things (that is, all things natural, not formally sinful, as it is limited by the same apostle, Heb. 4:15.) to be made like into his brethren. But here our divines so carefully distinguish infirmities into personal and natural. Personal infirmities are such as befall particular persons, from particular

causes, such as dumbness, blindness, lameness, leprosy, monstrosities, and other deformities. These it was no way necessary that Christ should, nor did he at all assume; but the natural ones, such as hunger, thirst, weariness, sweating, bleeding, mortality, &c., which though they are not in themselves formally and intrinsically sinful; yet are they the effects and consequent of sin. They are so many marks, that sin has left of itself upon our natures. And on that account Christ is said to be sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh", Rom. 8:3. Wherein the gracious condescension of Christ for us is marvelously signalized, that he would not assume our innocent nature, as it was in Adam before the fall, while it stood in all its primitive glory and perfection; But after sin had quite defaced, ruined, and spoiled it.

Fourthly, The human nature is so united with the divine, as that each nature still retains its own essential properties distinct. And this distinction is not, nor can be lost by that union. So that the two understandings, wills, powers &c. namely, The divine and human are not confounded; but a line of distinction runs between them still in this wonderful person. It was the heresy of the Eutychians, condemned by the council of Chalcedon, to affirm, that there was no distinction between the two natures in Christ. Against whom that council determined, that they were united without any immutation or confusion.

Fifthly, The union of the two natures in Christ, as an inseparable union; so that from the first moment thereof, there never was, nor to eternity shall be, any separation of them.

Doubt. If you ask how the union remained between them, when Christ's human soul and body were separated from each other upon the cross? Is not death the dissolution of the union between soul and body?

Resolution. True, the natural union between his soul and body was dissolved by death for a time, but this hypostatical union remained

even then as entire and firm as ever: for, though his soul and body were divided from each other, yet neither of them from the divine nature. Divines assist our conception of this mystery, by an apt illustration. A man that holds in his hand a sword sheathed, when he pleases, draws forth the sword; but still holds that in one hand, and the sheath in the other, and then sheaths it again, still holding it in his hand: so when Christ died, his soul and body retained their union with the divine nature, though not (during, that space) one with another.

And thus you are to form and regulate your conceptions of this great mystery. Some adumbrations and imperfect similitudes of it may be found in nature. Among which some commend that union which the soul and body have with each other; they are of different natures, yet both make one individual man. Others find fault with this, because both these united make but one complete human nature; whereas, in Christ's person, there are two natures, and commend to us a more perfect emblem, namely, That of the Cyon and the tree or stock, which have two natures, yet make but one tree. But then we must remember that the Cyon wants a root of its own, which is an integral part, but Christ assumed our nature integrally. This defect is by others supplied in the Mistletoe and the Oak, which have different natures; and the Mistletoe subsists in union with the Oak, still retaining the difference of nature; and though making but one tree, yet bears different fruits. And so much to the first thing, namely, the nature of this union.

Secondly, For the effects, or immediate results of this marvelous union, let these three be well considered.

1. The two natures being thus united in the person of the Mediator, by virtue whereof the properties of each nature are attributed, and do truly agree in the whole person; so that it is proper to say, the Lord of glory was crucified, 1 Cor. 2:8, and the blood of God redeemed the Church, Acts 20:28, that Christ was both in heaven, and in the earth at the same time, John 3:13.

Yet we do not believe that one nature does transfuse or impart its properties to the other, or that it is proper to say the divine nature suffered, bled, or died; or the human is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent; but that the properties of both natures, are so ascribed to the person, that it is proper to affirm any of them of him in the concrete, though not abstractly. The right understanding at this would greatly assist, in teaching the true sense of the forenamed, and many other dark passages in the scriptures.

2. Another fruit of this hypostatical union, is the singular advancement of the human nature in Christ, far beyond and above what it is; capable of in any other person, it being hereby replenished and filled with an unparalleled measure of divine graces and excellencies; in which respect he is said to be "anointed above, or before his fellows," Gal. 14:8, and so becomes the object of adoration and divine worship, Acts 7:59. This the Socinians oppugn with this argument: He that is worshiped with a divine worship, as he is Mediator, is not so worshiped as God; but Christ is worshiped as Mediator. But we say, that to be worshiped as Mediator, and as God, are not opposite, but the one is necessarily included in the other; and therein is further included the divine religious worship.

3. Hence, in the last place, follows, as another excellent fruit of this union, The concurrence and cooperation of each nature to his mediatory works; for in them he acts according to both natures: the human nature doing what is human, namely, suffering, sweating, bleeding, dying; and his divine nature stamping all these with infinite value; and so both sweetly concur unto one glorious work and design of mediation. Papists generally deny that he performs any of these mediatory works as God, but only as man; but how boldly do they therein contradict these plain scriptures? See 2 Cor. 5:10. Heb. 9:14,15. And so much as to the second thing propounded, namely, the fruits of this union.

Thirdly, The last thing to be opened is the grounds and reasons of this assumption. And we may say, touching that, (1.) That the human

nature was not assumed to any intrinsic perfection of the Godhead, not to make that human nature itself perfect. The divine did not assume the human nature necessarily, but voluntarily; not out of indigence, but bounty; not because it was to be perfected by it, but to perfect it, by causing it to lie as a pipe, to the infinite all filling fountain of grace and glory, of which it is the great receptacle. And so, consequently, to qualify and prepare him for a full discharge of his mediatorship, in the offices of our Prophet, Priest, and King. Had he not this double nature in the unity of his person, he could not have been our Prophet: For, as God, he knows the mind and will of God, John 1:18 and 3:13, and as man he is fitted to impart it suitably to us, Deut. 18:15, 16, 17, 18, compared with Acts 3:22.

As Priest, had he not been man, he could have shed no blood; and if not God, it had been no adequate value for us, Heb. 2:17. Acts 3:28.

As King, had he not been man, he had been an heterogeneous, and so no fit head for us. And if not God, he could neither rule nor defend his body the Church.

These then were the designs and ends of that assumption.

Use 1. Let all Christians rightly inform their minds in this truth of so great concernment in religion, and hold it fast against all subtle adversaries, that could wrest it from them. The learned Hooker observes, that the dividing of Christ's person, which is but one, and the confounding of his natures, which are two, has been the occasion of those errors, which have so greatly disturbed the peace of the church. The Arians denied his deity, leveling him with other mere men. The Apollinarians maimed his humanity. The Sabellians affirmed, that the Father and Holy Spirit were incarnated as well as the Son; and were forced, upon that absurdity, by another error, namely, denying the three distinct persons in the Godhead, and affirming they were but three names. The Eutychians confounded both natures in Christ, denying any distinction of them. The Seleusians affirmed, that he unclothed himself of his humanity when

he ascended, and has no human body in heaven. The Nestorians so rent the two names of Christ asunder, as to make two distinct persons of them.

But you (beloved) have not so learned Christ. You know he is, (1.) True and very God; (2.) True and very man; that, (3.) these two natures make but one person, being united inseparately; (4.) that they are not confounded or swallowed up one in another, but remain still distinct in the person of Christ. Hold you the sound words which cannot be condemned. Great things hang upon all these truths. O suffer not a stone to be loosed out of the foundation.

Use 2. Adore the love of the Father, and the Son, who bid so high for your souls, and at this rate were contented you should be recovered.

1. The love of the Father is herein admirably conspicuous, who so vehemently willed our salvation, that he was content to degrade the darling of his soul to so vile and contemptible a state, which was, upon the matter, an undoing to him, in point of reputation; as the apostle intimates, Phil. 2:7. If two persons be at a variance, and the superior, who also is the wronged person, begin to stoop first, and say, you have deeply wronged me, yes, your blood is not able to repair the wrongs you have done me: however, such is my love to you, and willingness to be at peace with you, that I will part with what is most dear to me in all the world, for peace-sake; yes, though I stoop below myself, and seem, as it were, to forget my own relation and endearments to my own son, I will not suffer such a breach between me and you. John 3:16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."

2. And how astonishing is the love of Christ, that would make such a stoop as this to exalt us! Oh, it is ravishing to think, he should pass by a more excellent and noble species of creatures, refusing the angelic nature, Heb. 2:16, to take flesh; and not to solace and disport himself in it neither, nor experience sensitive pleasures in the body, for, as he needed them not, being at the fountain-head of the highest

joys, so it was not at all in his design, but the very contrary, even to make himself a subject capable of sorrows, wounds, and tears. It was, as the apostle elegantly expresses it, in Heb. 2:9; that he might sensibly taste what relish death has, and what bitterness is in those pangs and agonies. Now, Oh that you would get your hearts suitably impressed and affected with these high impressures of the love both of the Father and the Son! How is the courage of some noble Romans celebrated in history, for the brave adventures they made for the commonwealth; but they could never stoop as Christ did, being so infinitely below him in personal dignity.

Use 3. And here infinite wisdom has also left a famous and everlasting mark of itself; which invites, yes, even chains the eyes of angels and men to itself. Had there been a general council of angels, to advise upon a way of recovering poor sinners, they would all have been in an everlasting demur and loss about it. It could not have entered their thoughts, (though they are more intelligent, and more sagacious creatures) that ever mercy, pardon, and grace, should find such a way as this to issue forth from the heart of God to the hearts of sinners. Oh, how wisely is the method of our recovery laid! So that Christ may be well called, "the power and wisdom of God," 1 Cor. 1:24; forasmuch as in him the divine wisdom is more glorified than in all the other works of God, upon which he has impressed it. Hence it is, that some of the schoolmen affirm, (though I confess myself unsatisfied with it) that the incarnation of Christ was in itself so glorious a demonstration of God's wisdom and power, and thereupon so desirable in itself, that though man had not sinned, yet Christ would have been made man.

Use 4. Hence also we infer the incomparable sweetness of the Christian religion, that shows poor sinners such a fair foundation to rest their trembling consciences upon. While poor distressed souls look to themselves, they are perpetually puzzled. That is the cry of a distressed natural conscience, Micah 6:6 "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" The Hebrew is--how shall I prevent or anticipate the Lord? Conscience sees God arming himself with wrath, to avenge

himself for sin; cries out, Oh, how shall I prevent him; if he would accept the fruit of my body, (those dear pledges of nature,) for the sin of my soul, he should have them. But now we see God coming down in flesh, and so intimately united our flesh to himself, that it has no proper subsistence of its own, but is united with the divine person: hence it is easy to imagine what worth and value must be in that blood; and how eternal love, springing forth triumphantly from it, flourishes into pardon, grace, and peace. Here is a way in which the sinner may see justice and mercy kissing each other, and the latter exercised freely, without prejudice to the former. All other consciences through the world, lie either in a deep sleep in the devil's arms or else are rolling (sea sick) upon the waves of their own fears and dismal presages. Oh, happy are they that have dropped anchor on this ground, and not only know they have peace, but why they have it!

Use 5. Of how great concernment is it, that Christ should have union with our particular persons, as well as with our common nature? For by this union with our nature alone, never any man was, or can be saved. Yes, let me add, that this union with our natures, is utterly in vain to you, and will do you no good, except he have union with your persons by faith also. It is indeed infinite mercy, that God is come so near you, as to dwell in your flesh; and that he has fixed upon such an excellent method to save poor sinners. And has he done all this? is he indeed come home, even to your own doors, to seek peace? does he veil his unsupportable glory under flesh, that he might treat the more familiarly? and yet do you refuse him, and shut your hearts against him? Then hear one word, and let your ears tingle at the sound of it: Your sin is hereby aggravated beyond the sin of devils, who never sinned against a mediator in their own nature; who never despised, or refused, because indeed, they were never offered terms of mercy, as you are.

And I doubt not but the devils themselves, who now tempt you to reject, will, to all eternity, upbraid your folly for rejecting this great

salvation, which in this excellent way is brought down, even to your own doors.

Use 6. If Jesus Christ has assumed our nature, then he is sensibly touched with the infirmities that attend it, and so has pity and compassion for us, under all our burdens. And indeed this was one end of his assuming it, that he might be able to have compassion on us, as you read, Heb. 2:17, 18. "Therefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffers, being tempted, he is able to support them that are tempted." O what a comfort is this to us, that he who is our High-Priest in heaven, has our nature on him, to enable him to take compassion on us!

Use 7. Hence we see, to what a height God intends to build up the happiness of man, in that he has laid the foundation thereof so deep, in the incarnation of his own Son.

They that intend to build high, use to lay the foundation low. The happiness and glory of our bodies, as well as souls, are founded in Christ's taking our flesh upon him: for, therein, as in a model or pattern, God intended to show what in time he resolves to make of our bodies; for he will transform our vile bodies, and make them one day conformable to the glorious body of Jesus Christ, Phil. 3:21. This flesh was therefore assumed by Christ, that in it might be shown, as in a pattern, how God intends to honor and exalt it. And indeed, a greater honor cannot be done to the nature of man, than what is already done, by this grace of union; nor are our persons capable of higher glory, than what consists in their conformity to this glorious head. Indeed the flesh of Christ will ever have a distinct glory from ours in heaven, by reason of this union; for being the body which the Word assumed, it is two ways advanced singularly above the flesh and blood of all other men, namely, subjectively, and objectively: Subjectively, it is the flesh and blood of God, Acts 20:28, and so has a

distinct and incommunicable glory of its own. And objectively, it is the flesh and blood which all the angels and saints adore. But though in these things it be supereminently exalted, yet it is both the medium and pattern of all that glory which God designs to raise us to.

Use 8. Lastly, How wonderful a comfort is it, that he who dwells in our flesh is God? What joy may not a poor believer make out of this? what comfort one made out of it, I will give you in his own words, "I see it a work of God, (says he) that experiences are all lost, when summonses of improbation, to prove our charters of Christ to be counterfeit, are raised against poor souls in their heavy trials. But let me be a sinner, and worse than the chief of sinners, yes, a guilty devil, I am sure my well-beloved is God, and my Christ is God. And when I say my Christ is God, I have said all things, I can say no more. I would I could build as much on this, My Christ is God, as it would bear: I might lay all the world upon it."

God and man in one person! Oh! thrice happy conjunction! As man, he is full of experimental sense of our infirmities, wants, and burdens; and, as God, he can support and supply them all. The aspect of faith upon this wonderful Person, how relieving, how reviving, how abundantly satisfying is it? God will never divorce the believing soul, and its comfort, after he has married our nature to his own Son, by the hypostatical union, and our persons also, by the blessed mystical union.

## **The Authority by Which Christ, as Mediator, Acted**

"For him has God the Father sealed." John 6:27

You have heard Christ's compact, or agreement with the Father, in the covenant of redemption; as also what the Father did, in pursuance of the ends thereof, in giving his Son out of his bosom, etc. Also what the Son has done towards it, in assuming flesh. But though the glorious work be thus far advanced, yet all he should act in that assumed body, had been invalid and vain, without a due call, and commission from the Father, so to do: which is the import of the words now before you.

This scripture is a part of Christ's excellent reply to a self-ended generation, who followed him, not for any spiritual excellencies that they saw in him, or soul-advantages they expected by him, but for bread. Instead of making his service their treat and drink, they only served him, that they might eat and drink. Self is a thing may creep into the best hearts and actions; but it only predominates in the hypocrite. These people had sought Christ from place to place, and having at last found him, they salute him with an impertinent compliment, "Rabbi, whence came you hither?" verse 25. Christ's reply is partly dissuasive, and partly directive. He dissuades them from putting the secondary and subordinate, in the place of the principal and ultimate end; not to prefer their bodies to their souls, their fleshly accommodations to the glory of God. "Labor not for the meat that perishes." Wherein he does not take them off from their lawful labors and callings; but he dissuades them, first, from minding those things too intently: and, secondly, he dissuades them from that odious sin of making religion but a pretense for the belly.

And it is partly directive, and that in the main end and business of life. "But labor for that meat which endures to eternal life;" to get bread for your souls to live eternally by. And, that he might engage their diligence in seeking it to purpose, he shows them not only where they may have it, ["which the Son of man shall give you"] but also how they may be fully satisfied, that he has it for them, in the clause I have pitched on; "For him has God the Father sealed."

In these words are three parts observable.

1. The Person sealing or investing Christ with authority and power; which is said to be God the Father. Though all the persons in the Godhead are equal in nature, dignity and power, yet in their operation there is an order observed among them; the Father sends the Son, the Son is sent by the Father, the Holy Spirit is sent by both.

2. The subject in which God the Father lodges this authority, [Him] that is, the Son of man. Jesus Christ, he is the "proton dektikon" the first receptacle of it, and he must here be understood exclusively. God the Father has so sealed him, as he never sealed any other before him, or that shall arise after him. No name is given in heaven, or earth, but this name by which we are saved, Acts 4:12. "The government is upon his shoulders," Isa. 9.

3. Here is farther observable, the way and manner of the Father's delegating and committing this authority to Christ; and that is, by sealing him. Where we have both a metonymy, the symbol of authority being put for the authority itself, and a metaphor, sealing, which is a human act, for the ratifying and confirming an instrument, or grant, being here applied to God. Like as princes, by sealed credentials, confirm the authority of those that are sent by them; as the Dutch Annotators well express the meaning of it. Hence we note,

**DOCTRINE.** That Jesus Christ did not of himself undertake the work of our redemption, but was solemnly sealed unto that work by God the Father.

When I say, he did not of himself undertake this work, I mean not that he was unwilling to go about it, for his heart was as fully and ardently engaged in it, as the Father's was: so he tells us, Psalm. 40:7. "Lo, I come to do your will, O God; your law is in my heart." But the meaning is, he came not without a due call, and full commission from his Father. And so it is to be understood in opposition to intrusion, not voluntary susception; and this is the meaning of that scripture, John 8:24. "I proceeded and came from

God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." And this the apostle plainly expresses, and fully clear; Heb. 5:4, 5 "And no man takes this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron: so also, Christ glorified not himself to be made an High-priest; but he that said unto him, You are my Son." And on the account of these sealed credentials, he received from the Father, he is called the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Heb. 3:1: That is, one called and sent forth by the Father's authority. Our present business, then, is to open Christ's commission, and to view the great seal of heaven by which it was ratified.

And, to preserve a clear method in the explication of this great truth, into which your faith and comfort is resolved, I shall,

First, Show what was the work and office to which the Father sealed him.

Secondly, What his sealing to this work does imply.

Thirdly, How, and by what acts, the Father sealed him to it.

Fourthly, Why it was necessary that he should be thus sealed and authorised by his Father; and then improve it in its proper uses.

First, What was that office, or work, to which his Father sealed him? I answer, more generally, he was sealed to the whole work of mediation for us, thereby to recover and save all the elect, whom the Father had given him; so John 17:2 "It was to give eternal life to as many as were given him": it was to "bring Jacob again to him," Isa. 49:5, or as the apostle expresses it, 1 Pet. 3:18 "That he might bring us to God." More particularly, in order to the sure, and full effecting of this most glorious design, he was sealed to the offices of a Prophet, Priest, and King, that so he might bring about and compass this work.

1. God sealed him a commission to preach the glad tidings of salvation to sinners. This commission Christ opened and read in the

audience of the people, Luke 4:17, 18, 19, 20, 21. "And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, etc. And he began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

2. He also sealed him to the priesthood, and that the most excellent; authorizing him to execute both the parts of it, namely, oblatory and intercessory. He called him to offer up himself a sacrifice for us. "I have power (says he) to lay down my life, this commandment have I received of my Father," John 10:18. And upon that account, his offering up of his blood is, by the apostle, stiled an act of obedience, as it is, Phil. 2:8. "He became obedient unto death." He also called him to intercede for us; Heb. 7:21, 24, 25. "These priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath; by him that said unto him, The Lord swore, and will not repent, you are a priest forever:" because his sacrifice is virtually continued, in his living forever to make intercession, as it is, verse 24. Yes,

3. He called him to his regal office; he was set upon the highest throne of authority by his Father's commission, as it is, Matth. 28:18. "All power in heaven and earth is given to me." To all this was Christ sealed and authorised by his Father.

Secondly, What does the Father's sealing of Christ to this work and office imply? There are divers things implied in it: As,

1. The validity and efficacy of all his mediatory acts. For, by virtue of this his sealing whatever he did was fully ratified. And in this very thing lies much of a believer's comfort and security, forasmuch as all acts done without commission and authority (how great, or able soever the person that does them is, yet) are in themselves null and void. But what is done by commission and authority, is authentic,

and most allowable among men. Had Christ come from heaven, and entered upon his mediatory work without a due call, our faith had been stumbled at the very threshold; but this greatly satisfies.

2. It imports the great obligation lying upon Jesus Christ to be faithful in the work he was sealed to: for, the Father, in this commission, devolves a great trust upon him, and relies upon him for his most faithful discharge thereof. And, indeed, upon this very account Christ reckons himself specially obliged to pursue the Father's design and end, John 9:4. "I must work the works of him that sent me". And John 5:30. "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me." Still his eye is upon that work and will of his Father. And he reckons himself under a necessity of punctual and precise obedience to it; and, as a faithful servant, will have his own will swallowed up in his Father's will.

3. It imports Christ's complete qualification, or instrumental fitness to serve the Father's design and end of our recovery. Had not God known him to be every way fit, and qualified for the work, he would never have sealed him a commission for it. Men may, but God will not seal an unfit, or incapable person, for his work. And, indeed, whatever is desirable in a servant, was eminently found in Christ: for faithfulness, none like him. Moses indeed was faithful to a pin, but still as a servant: but Christ as a Son, Heb. 3:2. He is the faithful and true witness, Rev. 1:5. For zeal, none like him. The zeal of God's house did eat him up, John 2:16, 17. He was so intent upon his Father's works that he forgot to eat bread, counting his work his meat and drink, John 4:32. Yes, and love to his Father carried him on through all his work, and made him delight in the hardest piece of his service; for he served him as a Son, Heb. 3:5, 6. All that ever he did was done in love. For wisdom, none like him. The Father knew him to be most wise, and said of him before he was employed, "Behold my servant shall deal prudently," Isa. 52:13. To conclude, for self-denial, never any like him; he sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him, John 8:50. Had he not been thus faithful,

zealous, full of love, prudent, and self-denying, he had never been employed in this great affair.

4. It implies Christ's sole authority in the church, to appoint and enjoin what he pleases; and this is his peculiar prerogative. For, the commission God sealed him in the text, is a single, not a joint commission; he has sealed him, and none beside him. Indeed there were some that pretended a call and commission from God; but all that were before him were thieves and robbers, that came not in at the door, as he did, John 10:8. And he himself foretells, that after him some should arise, and labor to deceive the world with a feigned commission, and a counterfeit seal, Matth. 24:24. "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders: insomuch, that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect." But God never commissioned any besides him, neither is there any other name under heaven, Acts 4:12. Thus you see how the validity of his acts, his obligation to be faithful, his complete qualifications, and sole authority in the church, are imported in his sealing.

Thirdly, Let us enquire how God the Father sealed Jesus Christ to this work, and we shall find that he was sealed by four acts of the Father.

1. By solemn designation to this work. He singled him out and set him apart for it: and therefore the prophet Isaiah, chapter 42:1. calls him God's elect. And the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 2:4. Chosen of God. This word which we render Elect, does not only signify one that in himself is imminently, worthy, and excellent, but also one that is set apart and designed, as Christ was, for the work of mediation. And so much is included in Johns 10:36. where the Father is said to sanctify him, That is, to separate, and devote him to this service.

2. He was sealed, not only by solemn designation, but also super-eminent and unparalleled sanctification. He was anointed, as well as appointed to it. The Lord filled him with the Spirit, and that without

measure, to qualify him for this service. So Isa. 61:1, 2, 3 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach," etc. Yes, the Spirit of the Lord was not only upon him, but he was full of the Spirit, Luke 4:1. and so full as was never any beside him, for God "anointed him with the oil of gladness, above his fellows," Psalm 45:7. Believers are his fellows, or co-partners of this Spirit; they have an anointing also, but not as Christ had; in him it dwelt in its fullness, in them according to measure. It was poured out on Christ, our Head, abundantly, and ran down to the hem of his garment. "God gave not the Spirit to him by measure," John 3:34. God filled Christ's human nature, to the utmost capacity, with all fullness of the Spirit of knowledge, wisdom, love, etc. beyond all creatures for the plenary and more effectual administration of his mediatorship: he was full extensively, with all kinds of grace; and full intensively, with all degrees of grace. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, Col. 1:19. as light in the sun, or water in a fountain, that he might not only fill all things, as the apostle speaks, Eph 1:22. but that he might be prompt, expedite, and every way fit to discharge his own work, which was the next and immediate end of it: so that the holy oil that was poured out upon the head of kings and priests, whereby they were consecrated to their offices, was but typical of the Spirit, by which Christ was consecrated, or sealed, to his offices.

3. Christ was sealed by the Father's immediate testimony from heaven, whereby he was declared to be the person whom the Father had solemnly designed and appointed to his work. And God gave this extraordinary testimony of him at two remarkable seasons, the one was just at his entrance on his public ministry, Mat. 3, and the other but a little before his sufferings, Matth. 17:5. This voice was not formed by such organs and instruments of speech, as ours are, but by creating a voice in the air which the people heard sounding therein: by this God owned, approved, and as by a seal ratified his work.

4. Christ was sealed by the Father, in all those extraordinary miraculous works wrought by him, in which the Father gave yet more full and convincing testimonies to the world, that this was he whom

he had appointed to be our Mediator. These were convictive to the world, that God had sent him, and that his doctrine was of God. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him," Acts 10:38. And so, John 5:36. "I have a greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me." Therefore he still referred those that doubted of him, or of his doctrine, to the seal of his Father, even the miraculous works he wrought in the power of God, Matth. 11:3, 4, 5. And thus the Father sealed him.

Fourthly and lastly, We will enquire why it was necessary Christ should be sealed by his Father to this work: and there are these three weighty reasons for it.

1. Else he had not corresponded with the types which prefigured him, and in him it was necessary that they should be all accomplished. You know, under the Law, the kings and high priests had their inaugurations by solemn unctions; in all which this consecration, or sealing of Christ to his work, was shadowed out: and therefore you shall find, Heb. 5:4, 5. "No man takes this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron:" so also (mark the necessary correspondence between Christ and them) "Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, You are my Son."

2. Moreover, here the hearts of believers are the more engaged to love the Father, inasmuch as it appears hereby that the Father's love, and good will to them, was the original and spring of their redemption. For had not the Father sealed him such a commission, he had not come; but now he comes in the Father's name, and in the Father's love, as well as his name; and so all men are bound to ascribe equal glory and honor to them both, as it is, John 5:23.

3. And especially Christ would not come without a commission, because, else you had no ground for your faith in him. How should we have been satisfied that this is indeed the true Messiah, except he had opened his commission to the world, and showed his Father's seal annexed to it? If he had come without his credentials from heaven, and only told the world that God had sent him, and that they must take his bare word for it, who could have rested his faith on that testimony? And that is the true meaning of that place, John 5:31. "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." How so? You will say, does not that contradict what he said, John 8:14. "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true." Therefore you must understand truth, not as it is opposed to reality; but the meaning is, if I had only given you my bare word for it, and not brought other evidence from my Father, my testimony had not been authentic and valid, according to human laws; but now all doubtings are precluded. Let us next improve this.

INFERENCE 1. Hence we infer the unreasonableness of infidelity, and how little rejecters of Christ can have to pretend for their so doing. You see he has opened his commission in the gospel, shown the world his Father's hand and seal to it, given as ample satisfaction as reason itself could desire, or expect; yet even his own received him not; John 1:11. And he knew it before hand, and therefore complained by the prophet, Isa. 53:1. "Who has believed our report?" etc. Yes, and that he is believed on in the world, is by the apostle put among the great mysteries of godliness, 1 Tim. 3:16. A man that well considers with what convincing evidence Christ comes, would rather think it a mystery, that any should not believe. But, Oh the brutish obstinacy, and devilish enmity, that is in nature to Jesus Christ! Devilish did I say? You must give me that word again, for he compelled the devil's assent; "We know you, whom you are." And it is equally as wonderful to see the facility that is in nature to comply (meanwhile) with any, even the most foolish imposture. Let a false Christ arise, and he shall deceive many, as it is, Matth. 24:24. Of this Christ complains, and not without great reason, John 5:43, "I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: If another come

in his own name, him will you receive," q. d. You are incredulous to none but me: every deceiver, every pitiful cheat, that has but wit, or rather wickedness, enough to tell you the Lord has sent him, though you must take his own single word for it, he shall obtain and get disciples; but though I come in my Father's name, That is, showing you a commission signed and sealed by him, doing those works which none but a God can do, yet you receive me not. But in all this, we must adore the justice of God, permitting it to be so, giving men up to such unreasonable obstinacy and hardness. It is a sore plague that lies upon the world, and a wonder that we all are not engulfed in the same infidelity.

INFERENCE 2. If Christ was sealed to his work by his Father, then how great is the sin of those that reject and despise such as are sent and sealed by Jesus Christ? For look, as he came to us in his Father's name, so he has sent forth, by the same authority, ministers in his name; and as he acts in his Father's, so they in his, authority. "As you have sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world," John 17:18. And so, John 20:21. "As my Father has sent me, so have I sent you." You may think it a small matter to despise or reject a minister of Christ, (a sin, in the guilt whereof, I think no age has been plunged deeper than this;) but hear, and let it be a warning to you forever: in so doing you despise, and put the slight both upon the Father that sent Jesus, and upon Christ that sent them: so that it is a rebellion, that however it seems to begin low in some small piques against their persons, or some little quarrels at their parts and utterance, tones, methods or gestures; yet it runs high, even to the fountain-head of the most supreme authority. You that set yourselves against a minister of Christ, set yourselves against God the Father, and God the Son; Luke 10:16. "He that hears you, hears me; and he that despises you, despises me; and he that despises me, despises him that sent me." God expects that you behave yourselves, under the word spoken by us, as if he himself spoke it; yes, he expects submission to his word in the mouths of his ministers from the greatest on earth. And therefore it was that God so severely punished Zedekiah, "because he humbled not himself before Jeremiah the

prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord," 2 Chron. 36:12. God was angry with a great king for not humbling himself before a poor prophet. Yet here you must distinguish both of Persons, and of Acts. This reverence and submission is not due to them as men, but as men in office, as Christ's ambassadors; and must involve that respect still in it. Again, we owe it not to them, commanding or forbidding in their own names, but in Christ's, not inventing their own spleen, but the terrors of the Lord; and then to resist is a high rebellion and affront to the sovereign authority of heaven. And, by the way, this may instruct ministers, that the way to maintain that veneration and respect that is due to them, in the consciences of their hearers, is by keeping close to their commission.

INFERENCE. 3. Hence also we infer, how great an evil it is to intrude into the office of the ministry without a due call. It is more than Christ himself would do; he glorified not himself: the honors and advantages attending that office, have invited many, to run before they were sent. But surely this is an insufferable violation of Christ's order. Our age has abounded with as many church-levelers as state-levelers. I wish the ministers of Christ might at last see and consider, what they were once warned of by a faithful watchman: 'I believe (says he) God has permitted so many to intrude into the ministers' calling, because ministers have too much meddled with, and intruded into other men's callings.'

INFERENCE. 4. Hence be convinced of the great efficacy that is in all gospel ordinances duly administered: For Christ having received full commission from his Father, and by virtue thereof having instituted and appointed these ordinances in the church, all the power in heaven is engaged to make them good, to back and second them, to confirm and ratify them. Hence, in the censures of the church, you have that great expression, Matth. 18:18. "Whatever you bind or loose on earth, shall he bound or loosed in heaven." And so, for the word and sacraments, Matth. 18:18, 19, 20. "All power in heaven and earth is given unto me: Go therefore, etc. They are not the appointments of men; your faith stands not in the wisdom of men,

but in the power of God. That very power, God the Father committed to Christ, is the fountain whence all gospel institutions flow. And he has promised to be with his officers, not only the extraordinary officers of that age, but with his ministers, in succeeding ages, to the end of the world. O therefore, when we come to an ordinance, come not with slight thoughts, but with great reverence, and great expectations, remembering Christ is there to make all good.

INFERENCE. 5. Again, here you have another call to admire the grace and love, both of the Father and Son to your souls: It is not lawful to compare them, but it is duty to admire them. Was it not wonderful grace in the Father to seal a commission for the death of his Son, for the humbling him as low as hell, and in that method to save you, when you might have expected he should have sealed your Mittimus for hell, rather than a commission for your salvation? He might rather have set his irreversible seal to the sentence of your damnation, than to a commission for his Son's humiliation for you. And no less is the love of Christ to be wondered at, that would accept such a commission, as this for us, and receive this seal, understanding fully (as he did) what were the contents of that commission, that the Father delivered him thus sealed, and knowing that there could be no reversing of it afterwards.

O then, love the Lord Jesus, all you his saints, for still you see more and more of his love breaking out upon you. I commend to you a sealed Savior this day; O that everyone that reads these lines might, in a pang of love, cry out with the enamored spouse, Cant. 8:6. "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame."

INFERENCE. 6. Once more; Has God sealed Christ for you? Then draw forth the comfort of his sealing for you, and be restless until you also be sealed by him.

1. Draw out the comfort of Christ's sealing for you. Remember that hereby God stands engaged, even by his own seal, to allow and confirm whatever Christ has done in the business of our salvation. And on this ground you may thus plead with God: Lord, you have sealed Christ to this office, and therefore I depend upon it, that you allow all that he has done, and all that he has suffered for me, and will make good all that he has promised me. If men will not deny their own seals, much less will you.

2. Get your interest in Christ sealed to you by the Spirit, else you cannot have the comfort of Christ's being sealed for you. Now the Spirit seals two ways, Objectively and Effectually; the first is by working those graces in us, which are the conditions of the promises: the latter is by shining upon his own work, and helping the soul to discern it, which follows the other, both in order of nature, and of time. And these sealings of the Spirit are to be distinguished, both the quality of the person sealed, which always is a believer, Eph. 1:13. for there can be no reflex, until there have been a direct Act of faith; and by the matter of which that comfort is made: which if it be of the Spirit, is ever consonant to the written word, Isa. 8:20. And partly by its effects: for it commonly produces in the sealed soul, great care and caution to avoid sin, Eph. 4:30. Great love to God, John 14:22. Readiness to suffer anything, for Christ, Rom. 5:3, 4, 5. Confidence in addresses to God, 1 John 5:13, 14, and great humility and self-abasement; as in Abraham, who lay on his face when God sealed the covenant to him, Gen. 17:1, 2, 3. This, O this brings home the sweet and good of all, when this seal is super-added to that.

## **The Solemn Consecration of the Mediator**

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself." John 17:19

Jesus Christ being fitted with a body, and authorized by a commission, now actually devotes, and sets himself apart to his work. In the former sermon you heard what the Father did; in this you shall hear what the Son has done towards the farther advancement of that glorious design of our salvation: He sanctified himself for our sakes. Wherein observe, (1.) Christ's sanctifying of himself. (2.) The end or design of his so doing.

1. You have Christ's sanctifying of himself. The word "hagiadzo" is not here to be understood for the cleansing, purifying, or making holy that which was before unclean and unholy, either in a moral sense, as we are cleansed from sin by sanctification; or in a ceremonial sense, as persons and things were sanctified under the law; though here is a plain allusion to those legal rites; But Christ's sanctifying himself, imports, (1.) His separation, or setting apart to be an oblation or sacrifice--as the priest and sacrifice. I sanctify myself, imports, (2.) His consecration, or dedication of himself to this holy use and service. So the Dutch Annotations, I sanctify myself, (That is,) I give up myself for a holy sacrifice. And so our English Annotations, I sanctify, (That is,) I consecrate and voluntarily offer myself a holy and unblemished sacrifice to you for their redemption. And thus under the Law, when any day, person, or vessel, was consecrated and dedicated to the Lord, it was so entirely for his use and service, that to use it afterward in any common service, was to profane and pollute it, as you see Dan. 5:3.

2. The end of his so sanctifying himself [for their sakes, and that they might be sanctified, where you have the *Finis cujus*, the end for whom, for their (that is,) for the elect's sake, for them whom you gave me; and the *Finis cui*, the end for which, that they might be sanctified. Where you also see that the death of Christ wholly respects us; he offered not for himself as other priests did, but for us, that we may be sanctified. Christ is so in love with holiness, that at the price of his blood he will buy it for us. Hence the observation is;

DOCTRINE. That Jesus Christ did dedicate, and wholly set himself apart to the work of a Mediator, for the elect's sake.

This point is a glass, wherein the eye of your faith may see Jesus Christ preparing himself to be offered up to God for us, fitting himself to die. And to keep a clear method, I shall open these two things, in the doctrinal part; First, what his sanctifying himself implies: Secondly, How it respects us.

First, What is implied in this phrase, "I sanctify myself". And there are seven things carried in it.

1. This phrase "I sanctify myself" implies the personal union of the two natures in Christ; for what is that which he here calls himself, but the same that was consecrated to be a sacrifice, even his human nature? This was the sacrifice. And this also was himself: So the apostle speaks, Heb. 9:14. "He through the eternal Spirit, offered up himself to God, without spot." So that our nature, by that assumption, is become himself. Greater honor cannot be done it, or greater ground of comfort proposed to us. But having spoken of that union in the former sermon, shall remit the reader there.

2. This sanctifying, or consecrating himself to be a sacrifice for us, implies, the greatness and dreadfulness of that breach which sin made between God and us. You see no less a sacrifice than Christ himself must be sanctified to make atonement. Judge of the greatness of the wound by the breadth of the plaister. "Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offering for sin, you would not; but a body have you prepared me," Heb. 10:5. All our repentance, could we shed as many tears for sin, as there have fallen drops of rain since the creation, could not have been our atonement: "But God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." And had he not sanctified Christ to this end, he would have sanctified himself upon us, in judgement and fury forever.

3. This his sanctifying Himself, implies his free and voluntary undertaking of the work. It is not, I am sanctified, as if he had been merely passive in it, as the lambs that typed him out were, when plucked from the fold, but it is an active verb he uses here, I sanctify myself; he would have none think that he died out of a necessity of compulsion, but out of choice: therefore he is solid to "offer up himself to God", Heb. 10:14. And John 9:18, "I lay down my life of myself; no man takes it from me." And although it is often said "his Father sent him, and gave him"; yet his heart was as much set on that work, as if there had been nothing but story, ease, and comfort in it; he was under no constraint, but that of his own love. Therefore, as when the scripture would set forth the willingness of the Father to this work, it says, God sent his Son, and God gave his Son; so when it would set forth Christ's willingness to it, it says, he offered himself, gave himself; and, here in the text, sanctified himself: The sacrifice that struggled, and came not without force to the altar, was reckoned ominous and unlucky by the Heathen: our Sacrifice dedicated himself; he died out of choice, and was a free-will offering

4. His sanctifying himself implies his pure and perfect holiness, that he had no spot or blemish in him. Those beasts that prefigured him, were to be without blemish, and none else were consecrated to that service. So, and more than so, it behoved Christ to be, Heb. 7:26. "Such an High-Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners:" And what it became him to be, he was. Therefore in allusion to the lambs offered under the law, the apostle calls him a Lamb without blemish, or spot, 1 Pet. 1:19. Every other man has a double spot on him, the heart spot, and the life-spot; the spot of original, and the spots of actual sin. But Christ was without either, he had not the spot of original sin, for he was not by man; he came in a peculiar way into the world, and so escaped that: nor yet of actual sins; for, as his nature, so his life was spotless and pure, Isa. 53:9. "He did no iniquity." And though tempted to sin externally, yet he was never defiled in heart or practice; he came as near as he could for our sakes, yet still without sin, Heb. 4:15. If he sanctifies himself for a sacrifice, he must be as the law required, pure and spotless.

5. His sanctifying himself for our sakes, speaks the strength of his love, and largeness of his heart to poor sinners, thus to set himself wholly and entirely apart for us: so that what he did and suffered, must all of it have a respect and relation to us. He did not (when consecrated for us) live a moment, do an act, or speak a word, but it had some tendency to promote the great design of our salvation. He was only and wholly, and always doing your work, when consecrated for your sakes. His incarnation respects you; Isa. 9:6. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." And he would never have been the son of man, but to make you the sons and daughters of God. God would not have come down in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the habit of a man, but to raise up sinful man unto the likeness of God. All the miracles he wrought Were for you, to confirm your faith. When he raised up Lazarus, John 11:42. "Because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they might believe that you had sent me." While he lived on earth, he lived as one wholly set apart for us: and when he died, he died for us, Gal. 3:13. "he was made a curse for us." When he hanged on that cursed tree, he hanged there in our room, and did but fill our place. When he was buried, he was buried for us: for the end of it was, to perfume our graves, against we come to lie down in them. And when he rose again, it was, as the apostle says, "for our justification," Rom. 4:25. When he ascended into glory, he protested it was about our business, that he went to prepare places for us: and if it had not been so, he would have told us, John 14:2. And now he is there, it is for us that he there lives; for he "ever lives to make intercession for us," Heb. 7:25. And when he shall return again to judge the world, he will come for us too. "He comes (whenever it be) to be glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe," 2 Thess. 1:10. He comes to gather his saints home to himself, that where he is, there they all may be in soul and body with him forever. Thus you see how, as his consecration for us does speak him set apart for our use; so he did wholly bestow himself, time, life, death, and all upon us; living and dying for no other end, but to accomplish this great work of salvation for us.

6. His sanctifying himself for us plainly speaks the vicegerency of his death, that it was in our room or stead. When the priest consecrated the sacrifice, it was set apart for the people. So it is said of the scapegoat; "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness," Levit. 16:21. Thus Isa. 53:6, 7. He stood in our room, to bear our burden. And as Aaron laid the iniquities of the people upon the goat, so were ours laid on Christ; it was said to him in that day, On you be their pride, their unbelief, their hardness of heart, their vain thoughts, their earthly-mindedness, etc. You are consecrated for them, to be the sacrifice in their room. His death was in our stead, as well as for our good. And so much his sanctifying himself [for us] imports.

7. His sanctifying himself, imparts the extraordinariness of his person: for it speaks him to be both Priest, Sacrifice, and altar, all in one: a thing unheard of in the world before. So that this name might well be called Wonderful. I sanctify myself: I sanctify, according to both natures; myself, That is, my human nature, which was the sacrifice upon the altar of my divine nature; for it is the altar that sanctifies the gift. As the three offices never met in one person before, so these three things never met in one priest before. The priests indeed consecrated the bodies of beasts for sacrifices, but never offered up their own souls and bodies as a whole burnt offering, as Christ did. And thus you have the import of this phrase, I sanctify myself for their sakes.

Secondly, I shall show you briefly the habitude and respect that all this has to us; for unto us the scriptures everywhere refer it. So in 1 Cor. 5:7. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Eph. 5:2. "He loved the church, and gave himself for it." See Tit. 2:14. This will be made out, by a threefold consideration of Christ's death. And,

1. Let it be considered, that he was not offered up to God for his own sins for he was most holy. Isa. 53:9. No iniquity was found in him. Indeed, the priests under the law offered for themselves, as well as the people; but Christ did not so, Heb. 7:27. "He needed not daily, as those High-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's." And indeed had he been a sinner, what value or efficacy could have been in his sacrifice? He could not have been the sacrifice, but would have needed one. Now, if Christ were most holy, and yet put to death, and cruel sufferings, either his death or sufferings must be an act of injustice and cruelty, or it must respect others, whose persons and cause he sustained in that suffering capacity. He could never have suffered or died by the Father's hand, had he not been a sinner by imputation. And in that respect, as Luther speaks, he was the greatest of sinners; or, as the prophet Isaiah speaks, all our sins were made to meet upon Him; not that he was intrinsically, but was made so, so, by imputation, as is clear from 2 Cor. 5:21. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin." So that hence it is evident, that Christ's death, or sacrifice, is wholly a respective or relative thing.

2. It is not to be forgotten here, that the scriptures frequently call the death of Christ a price, 1 Cor. 6:20, and a ransom, Matt. 20:28, or counterprice. To whom then does it relate, but to them that were, and are in bondage and captivity? If it was to redeem any, it must be captives: but Christ himself was never in captivity; he was always in his Father's bosom, as you have heard; but we were in cruel bondage and thralldom, under the tyranny of sin and Satan: and it is we only that have the benefit of this ransom.

3. Either the death of Christ must relate to believers, or else he must die in vain. As for the angels, those that stood in their integrity needed no sacrifice, and those that fell, are totally excluded from any benefit by it: he is not a Mediator for them. And among men that have need of it, unbelievers have no share in it, they reject it; such have no part in it. If then he neither died for himself, as I proved before, nor for angels, nor unbelievers; either his blood must be shed

with respect to believers, or, which is most absurd, and never to be imagined, shed as water upon the ground, and totally cast away, so that you see by all this, it was for our sakes, as the text speaks, that he sanctified himself. And now we may say, Lord, the condemnation was your, that the justification might be mine; the agony your, that the victory might be mine; the pain was your, and the ease mine; the stripes your, and the healing balm issuing from them mine; the vinegar and gall were your, that the honey and sweet might be mine; the curse was your, that the blessing might be mine; the crown of thorns was your, that the crown of glory might be mine; the death was your, the life purchased by it mine; you paid the price that I might enjoy the inheritance.

We come next to the inferences of truth deducible from this point, which follow.

INFERENCE 1. If Jesus Christ did wholly set himself apart for believers, how reasonable is it that believers should consecrate and set themselves apart wholly for Christ? Is he all for us, and shall we be nothing for him? What he was, he was for you? Whatever he did, was done for you; and all that he suffered, was suffered for you. O then, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, present your bodies," That is, your whole selves, (for so body is there synecdochically put to signify the whole person) I say, "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service," Rom. 12:1. As your good was Christ's end, so let his glory be your end. Let Christ be the "end of your conversation," Heb. 13:7. As Christ could say, To me to live is you; so do you say, "For us to live is Christ," Phil. 1:21. O that all who profess faith in Christ, could subscribe cordially to that profession, Rom. 14:8. "None of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself; but whether we live, we live to the Lord; and whether we die, we die to the Lord; so then whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." This is to be a Christian indeed. What is a Christian, but an holy dedicated thing to the Lord? And what greater evidence can there be, that Christ set himself apart for you, than your setting yourselves apart for him?

This is the marriage covenant, Hos. 3:3 "You shall be for me, and not for another; so will I be for you." Ah, what a life is the life of a Christian; Christ all for you, and you all for him. Blessed exchange! Soul, (says Christ) all I have is your, Lord, (says the soul) and all I have is your. Soul, (says Christ) my person is wonderful, but what I am, I am for you: my life was spent in labor and travail, but lived for you. And Lord, (says the believers, my person is vile, and not worth your accepting; but such as it is, it is your; my soul, with all and every faculty; my body, and every member of it, my gifts, time, and all my talents are your.

And see that as Christ bequeathed and made over himself to you, so you, in like manner, bestow and make over yourselves to him. He lived not, neither died (as you hear) for himself, but you. O that you, in like manner, would down with self, and exalt Christ in the room of it. 'Woe, woe is me, (says one) that the holy profession of Christ is made a showy garment by many to bring home a vain fame; and Christ is made to serve men's ends. This is to stop an oven with a king's robes. Except men martyr and slay the body of sin, in sanctified self-denial, they shall never be Christ's martyrs and faithful witnesses. O if I could be master of that house-idol, myself, mine own, mine own wit, will, credit, and ease, how blessed were I! O but we have need to be redeemed from ourselves, rather than from the devil and the world. Learn to put out yourselves, and to put in Christ for yourselves. I should make a sweet bargain, and give old for new, if I could shuffle out self, and substitute Christ my Lord in place of myself; to say, not I, but Christ; not my will, but Christ's; not my ease, not my lusts, not my credit, but Christ, Christ. - O wretched idol, myself, when shall I see you wholly decourted, and Christ wholly put in your room? O if Christ had the full place and room of myself, that all aims, purposes, thoughts and desires would coast and land upon Christ, and not upon myself.'

He set himself apart for you believers, and no others: no, not for angels but for you: Will you also set yourselves apart peculiarly for Christ? be his, and no others? Let not Christ and the world share

anal divide your hearts in two halves between them; let not the world step in and say, half mine. You will never do Christ right, nor answer this grace, until you can say, as it is, Psalm. 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but you? and on earth there is none that I desire in comparison of you." None but Christ, none but Christ, is a proper motto for a Christian.

He left the highest and best enjoyments, even those in his Father's bosom, to set himself apart for death and suffering for you: Are you ready to leave the bosom of the best and sweetest enjoyments, you have in this world, to serve him? If you stand not habitually ready to leave father, mother, wife, children, lands, yes, and life too, to serve him, you are not worthy of him, Matt. 10:37.

He was so wholly given up to your service, that he refused not the worst and hardest part of it, even bleeding, groaning, dying work; his love to you sweetened all this to him; Can you say so too; do you "account the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, as Moses did?" Heb. 11:26.

He had so entirely devoted himself to your work, that He could not be at rest until it was finished: he was so intent upon it, that he "forgot to eat bread," John 4:31` ,32. So it should be with you; his service should be meat and drink to you. To conclude:

He was so wholly given up to your work and service, that he would not suffer himself to be in the least diverted, or taken off from it: and if Peter himself counsel him to favor himself, he shall hear, "Get you behind me, Satan." O happy were it if our hearts were but so engaged for Christ! In Galen's time it was proverbial, when they would express the impossibility of a thing, You may as soon take off a Christian from Christ. Thus you see what use you should make of Christ's sanctifying himself for you.

INFERENCE. 2. If Christ has sanctified or consecrated himself for us; learn hence, what a horrid evil it is, to use Christ or his blood, as a

common and unsanctified thing. Yet so some do, as the apostle speaks, Heb. 10:29. The apostate is said to tread upon the Son of God, as if he were no better than the dirt under his feet, and to count his blood an unholy (or common) thing. But woe to them that do so, they shall be counted worthy of something worse than dying without mercy, as the apostle there speaks.

And as this is the sin of the apostate, so it is also the sin of all those that without faith approach, and so profane the table of the Lord, unbelievingly and unworthily handling those awful things. Such "eat and drink judgement to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body," 1 Cor. 11:29. Whereas the body of Christ was a thing of the deepest sanctification that ever God created; sanctified (as the text tells us) to a far more excellent and glorious purpose than ever any creature in heaven or earth was sanctified. It was therefore the great sin of those Corinthians, not to discern it, and not to behave themselves towards it, when they saw and handled the signs of it, as became so holy a thing.

And as it was their great sin, so God declared his just indignation against it, in those sore strokes inflicted for it. As they discerned not the Lord's body, so neither did the Lord discern their bodies from others in the judgements that were inflicted. And, as one well observes, God drew the model and platform of their punishment, from the structure and proportion of their sin. And truly, if the moral and spiritual seeds and originals of many of our outward afflictions and sicknesses were but duly sifted out, possibly we might find a great part of them in the affections of this sin.

The just and righteous God will build up the breaches we make upon the honor of his Son, with the ruins of that beauty, strength and honor which he has given our bodies. O then, when you draw near to God in that ordinance, take heed to sanctify his name, by a spiritual discerning of this most holy, and most deeply sanctified body of the Lord; sanctified beyond all creatures, angels or men, not only in respect of the Spirit which filled him, without measure with inherent

holiness, but also in respect of its dedication to such a service as this, it being set apart by him to such holy, solemn ends and uses, as you have heard.

And let it, forever, be a warning to such as have lifted up their hands to Christ in a holy profession, that they never lift up their heel against him afterwards by apostasy. The apostate treads on God's dear Son, and God will tread upon him for it. "You have trodden down all that err from your statutes," Psalm. 119:118.

INFERENCE. 3. What a choice pattern of love to saints have we here before us! Calling all that are in Christ to an imitation of him, even to give up ourselves to their service, as Christ did; not in the same kind, so none can give himself for them, but as we are capable. You see here how his heart was affected to them, that he would sanctify himself as a sacrifice for them. See to what a height of duty the apostle improves this example of Christ, 1 John 3:16. "hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." Some Christians came up fairly to this pattern in primitive times; Priscilla and Aquila laid down their necks for Paul, Rom. 16:4. That is, eminently hazarded their lives for him; and he himself could "rejoice, if he were offered up upon the sacrifice and service of their faith," Phil. 2:17. And in the next times, what more known, even to the enemies of Christianity, than their fervent love one to another? See how they love one another, and are willing to die one for another!

But alas! the primitive spirit is almost lost in this degenerate age: instead of laying down life, how few will lay down twelve pence for them? I remember, it is the observation of a late Worthy, upon Mat. 5:44. That he is persuaded there is hardly that man to be found this day alive, that fully understands and fully believes that scripture. O, did men think what they do for them, is done for Christ himself, it would produce other effects than are yet visible.

INFERENCE 4. Lastly, If Christ sanctified himself, that we might be sanctified by [or in] the truth; then it will follow, by sound consequence, That true sanctification is a good evidence that Christ set apart himself to die for us. In vain did he sanctify himself (as to you) unless you be sanctified. Holy souls only can claim the benefit of the great Sacrifice. O try then, whether true holiness (and that is only to be judged by its conformity to its pattern, 1 Pet. 1:15. "As he that called you is holy, so be you holy"); whether such a holiness as is, and acts (according to its measure) like God's holiness, in the following particulars, be found in you.

1. God is universally holy in all his ways; so Psalm. 145:17. "His works are all holy:" whatever he does, it is still done as becomes a holy God: he is not only holy in all things, but at all times unchangeably holy. Be you therefore holy in all things and at all times too, if ever you expect the benefit of Christ's sanctifying himself to die for you.

O brethren, let not the feet of your conversation be as the feet of a lame man, which are unequal, Prov. 20:7. Be not sometimes hot, and sometimes cold; at one time careful, at another time careless; one day in a spiritual rapture, and the next in a fleshly frolic: but be you holy "en pase anastrofe", 1 Pet. 1:15. "in all manner of conversation," in every creek and turning of your lives: and let your holiness hold out to the end. "Let him that is holy, be holy still," Rev. 21:11. Not like the hypocrite's paint, but as a true natural completion.

2. God is exemplarily holy, Jesus Christ is the great pattern of holiness. Be you examples of holiness too, unto all that are about you. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works," Matth. 5:16. As wicked men infect one another by their examples, and diffuse their poison and malignity, wherever they come; so do you disseminate godliness in all places and companies; and let those that frequently converse with you, especially those of your own families, receive a deeper dye and tincture of heavenliness every time they come near you, as the cloth does by every new dipping into the vat.

3. God delights in nothing but holiness, and holy ones; he has set all his pleasure in the saints. Be you holy herein, as God is holy. Indeed, there is this difference between God's choice and yours; he chooses not men, because they are holy, but that they may be so; so you are to chose them for your delightful companions, that God has chosen and made holy. "Let all your delights be in the saints, even them that excel in virtue," Psalm. 16:3.

4. God abhors and hates all unholiness; do you so likewise that you may be like your Father which is in heaven. And when the Spirit of holiness runs down this upon you, a sweeter evidence the world cannot give, that Christ was sanctified for you. Holy ones may confidently lay the hand of their faith on the head of this great sacrifice, and say, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

## **The Nature of Christ's Mediation**

"There is one Mediator between God and Man, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 2:5

Great and long preparations bespeak the solemnity and greatness of the work for which they are designed; A man that had but seen the heaps of gold, silver and brass, which David amassed in his time, for the building of the temple, might easily conclude before one stone of it was laid, that it would be a magnificent structure. But lo, here is a design of God as far transcending that, as the substance does the shadow. For, in deed, that glorious temple was but the type and figure of Jesus Christ, John 2:19, 21, and a weak adumbration of that living, spiritual temple which he was to build, cementing the lively stones thereof together with his own blood, 1 Pet. 2:5, 6. that the great God might dwell and walk in it, 2 Cor. 6:16. The preparations

for that temple were but of few years, but the consultations and preparations for this were from eternity, Prov. 8:31. And as there were preparations for this work (which Christ dispatched in a few years) before the world began; so it will be matter of eternal admiration and praise, when this world shall be dissolved. What this astonishing glorious work is, this text will inform you as to the general nature of it: it is the work of mediation between God and man, managed by the sole hand of the man Christ Jesus.

In this scripture (for I shall not spend time to examine the words in their context) you have a description of Jesus the Mediator: and he is here described four ways, namely, by his work or office, a Mediator; by the singularity of his mediation, one Mediator; and by the nature and quality of his person, employed in this singular way of mediation, the man; and lastly, his name Jesus Christ.

1. He is described by the work, or office he is employed as a Mediator, a middle person. So the word imports a fit, indifferent, and equal person, that comes between two persons that are at variance, to compose the difference and make peace. Such a middle, equal, indifferent person is Christ; a day's man, to lay his hand upon both; to arbitrate and award justly and give God his due, and that without ruin to poor man.

2. He is described by the singularity of his mediation, one Mediator, and but one. Though there be many mediators of reconciliation among men, and many intercessors in a petitionary way, between God and man; yet but one only mediator of reconciliation between God and man: and it is as needless and impious to make more mediators than one, as to make more Gods than one. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men.

He is described by the nature and quality of his person—the man Christ Jesus. This description of him by one nature, and that the human nature also (wherein, as you shall see anon, the Lord especially consulted our encouragement and comfort); I say, his

being so described to us, has, through the corruption of men, been improved to the great dishonor of Jesus Christ, both by the Arians and Papists. The former took occasion from hence to affirm, that he was but—a mere man.

The latter allow him to be the true God, but on this weak ground affirm, that he performed not the work of mediation as God, but only as man. Thus what the Spirit ordered for our comfort, is wickedly retorted to Christ's dishonor; for I doubt not but he is described by his human nature in this place; not only because in this nature he paid that ransom (which he speaks of in the words immediately following) but especially for the drawing of sinners to him; seeing he is the man Christ Jesus, one that clothed himself in their own flesh; and to encourage the faith of believers, that he tenderly rewards all their wants and miseries, and that they may safely trust him with all their concerns, as one that will carefully mind them as his own, and will be for them a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God.

4. He is described by his names; by his appellative name Christ, and his proper name Jesus. The name Jesus, notes his work about which he came; and Christ, the offices to which he was anointed; and in the execution of which he is our Jesus. "In the name Jesus, the whole gospel is contained, it is the light, the food, the medicine of the soul," as one speaks. The note from hence is,

DOCTRINE. That Jesus Christ is the true and only Mediator between God and men.

"You are come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," Heb. 12:24. "And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament," etc. Heb. 9:14. I might show you a whole vein of scriptures running this way; but to keep a profitable and clear method, I shall show,

First, What is the sense of this word "Mediator".

Secondly, What it implies, as it is applied to Christ.

Thirdly, How it appears that he is the true and only Mediator between God and men.

Fourthly, In what capacity he performed his mediatory work.

First, What is the sense and import of this word—Mediator? The true sense and importance of it, is a middle Person, or one that interposes between two parties at variance, to make peace between them. So that as Satan is a medium of discord; so Christ is a medium of concord and peace. And he is such a Mediator, both in respect of his person and office; in respect of his person, he is a Mediator, That is, one that has the same nature both with God and us, true God, and true man; and in respect of his Office or work, which is to interpose, to transact the business of reconciliation between us and God. The former some call his substantial, the latter his energetical, or operative mediation: Though I rather conceive that which is called his substantial mediation, is but the aptitude of his person to execute the mediatorial function; and that it does not constitute two kinds of mediation. His being a middle person, fits and capacitates him to stand in the midst between God and us. This, I say, is the proper sense of the word; though "Mesites", a Mediator, is rendered variously; sometimes an umpire or arbitrator; sometimes a messenger that goes between two persons; sometimes an interpreter, imparting the mind of one to another; sometimes a reconciler or peace-maker. And in all these senses Christ is the "Mesites", the middle person in his mediation of reconciliation or intercession; That is, either in his mediating, by suffering to make peace, as he did on earth; or to continue, and maintain peace, as he does in heaven, by meritorious intercession. Both these ways he is the only Mediator. And he manages this his mediation,

1. As an umpire or arbitrator; one that layeth his hands upon both parties, as Job speaks, chapter 9:33. so does Christ, he layeth his hands (speaking after the manner of men) upon God, and says, Father, will you be at peace with them, and re admit them into your favor? If you will, you shall be fully satisfied for all that they have

done against you. And then he layeth his hand upon man, and says, poor sinner, be not discouraged, you shall be justified and saved.

2. As a messenger or ambassador, so he came to impart the mind of God to us, and so he presents our desires to God; and in this sense only Socinus would allow Christ to be Mediator. But therein he endeavors to undermine the foundation, and to exclude him from being, Mediator by a suretyship; which is,

3. The third way of his mediation. So the apostle speaks, Heb. 7: he is the surety, or pledge. Which, as the learned David Pareus well expresses it, is one that engages to satisfy another, or gives caution or security by a pledge in the hand for it. And indeed, both these ways, Christ is our mediator by suretyship, namely, in a way of satisfaction, coming under our obligation to answer the law; this he did on the cross and in a way of caution, a surety for the peace, or good behavior. But to be more explicit and clear, I shall,

Secondly, In the next place enquire, what it implies and carries in it, for Christ to be a Mediator between God and us. And there are, mainly, these five things in it.

1. At the first sight, it carries in it a most dreadful breach and jar between God and men; else no need of a Mediator of reconciliation. There was indeed a sweet league of amity once between them, but it was quickly dissolved by sin; the wrath of the Lord was kindled against man, pursuing him to destruction, Psalm. 5:5. " You hate all the workers of iniquity." And man was filled with unnatural enmity against his God, Rom. 1:30.—haters of God; this put an end to all friendly commerce and fellowship between him and God. Reader, say not in your heart, that it is much, that one sin, and that seemingly so small, should make such a breach as this, and cause the God of mercy and goodness so to abhor the works of his hands, and that as soon as he had made man: for it was a heinous and aggravated evil. It was upright, perfect man, created in the image of God, that thus sinned: he sinned when his mind was most bright, clear and

apprehensive; his conscience pure and active; his will free, and able to withstand any temptation: his conscience pure and undefiled; he was a public as well as a perfect man, and well knew that the happiness or misery of his numberless offspring was involved in him.

The condition he was placed in, was exceeding happy: no necessity or want could arm and edge temptation: he lived amidst all natural and spiritual pleasures and delights, the Lord most delightfully conversing with him; yes, he sinned while as yet his creation-mercy was fresh upon him; and in this sin was most horrible ingratitude: yes, a casting off the yoke of obedience almost as soon as God had put it on. God now saw the work of his hands spoiled, a race of rebels now to be propagated, who, in their successive generations would be fighting against God: he saw it, and his just indignation sparkled against man, and resolves to pursue him to the bottom of hell.

2. It implies, a necessity of satisfaction and reparation to the justice of God. For the very design and end of this mediation was to make peace, by giving full satisfaction to the party that was wronged. The Photinians, and some others, have dreamed of a reconciliation with God, founded not upon satisfaction, but upon the absolute mercy, goodness, and free-will of God. "But concerning that absolute goodness and mercy of God, reconciling sinners to himself, there is a deep silence throughout the scriptures:" and whatever is spoken of it, upon that account, is as it works to us through Christ, Eph. 1:3, 4, 5. Acts 4:12. John 6:40. And we cannot imagine, either how God could exercise mercy to the prejudice of his justice, which must be, if we must be reconciled without full satisfaction; or how such a full satisfaction should be made by any other than Christ. Mercy, indeed moved in the heart of God to poor man; but from his heart it found no way to vent itself for us, but through the heart blood of Jesus Christ: and in him the justice of God was fully satisfied, and the misery of the creature fully cured. And so, as Augustine speaks, "God neither lost the severity of his justice in the goodness of mercy, nor the goodness of his mercy in the exactness of his severity." But if it had been possible God could have found out a way to reconcile us

without satisfaction, yet it is past doubt now, that he has pitched and fixed on this way. And for any now to imagine to reconcile themselves to God by anything but faith in the blood of this mediator, is not only most vain in itself, and destructive to the soul, but most insolently derogatory to the wisdom and grace of God.

And to such I would say, as Tertullian to Marcion, whom he calls the murderer of truth, "spare the only hope of the whole world, O you who destroy the most necessary glory of our faith!" All that we hope for is but a fantasy without this. Peace of conscience can be rationally settled on no other foundation but this; for God having made a law to govern man, and this law violated by man; either the penalty must be levied on the delinquent, or satisfaction made by his surety. As good no law, as no penalty for disobedience; and as good no penalty, as no execution. He therefore that will be made a mediator of reconciliation between God and man, must bring God a price in His hand, and that adequate to the offence and wrongs done him, else he will not treat about peace; and so did our Mediator.

3. Christ being a Mediator of reconciliation and intercession, implies the infinite value of his blood and sufferings, as that which in itself was sufficient to stop the course of God's justice, and render him not only placable, but abundantly satisfied and well pleased, even with those that before were enemies. And so much is said of it. Col. 1:21, 22. "And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight." Surely, that which can cause the holy God, justly incensed against sinners, to lay aside all his wrath, and take an enemy into his bosom, and establish such an amity as can never more be broken, but to rest in his love, and to joy over him with singing, as it is, Zeph. 3:17, this must be a most excellent and efficacious thing.

4. Christ's being a Mediator of reconciliation, implies the ardent love and large pity that filled his heart towards poor sinners. For he does

not only mediate by way of entreaty, going between both, and persuading and begging peace; but he mediates, (as you have heard) in the capacity of a surety, by putting himself under an obligation to satisfy our debts. O how compassionately did his heart work towards us, that when he saw the arm of justice lifted up to destroy us, would interpose himself, and receive the stroke, though he knew it would smite him dead! Our Mediator, like Jonah his type, seeing the stormy sea of God's wrath working tempestuously, and ready to swallow us up, cast in himself to appease the storm. I remember how much that noble act of Marcus Curtius is celebrated in the Roman history, who being informed by the oracle, that the great breach made by the earthquake could not be closed, except something of worth were cast into it, heated with love to the commonwealth, he went and cast in himself. This was looked upon as a bold and brave adventure. But what was this to Christ?

5. Christ being a mediator between God and man, implies as the witness of his person, so his authoritative call to undertake it. And indeed the Father, who was the wronged person, called him to be the umpire and arbitrator, trusting his honor in his hands. Now Christ was invested with this office and power virtually, soon after the breach was made by Adam's fall; for we have the early promise of it, Gen. 3:15. Ever since, until his incarnation, he was a virtual and effectual Mediator; and, on that account, he is called, "the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world," Rev. 13:8. And actually, from the time of his incarnation. But having discussed this more largely in a former discourse, I shall dismiss it here, and apply myself to the third thing proposed, which is,

Thirdly, How it appears that Jesus Christ is the true and only Mediator between God and men. I reply, it is manifest he is so,

1. Because he, and no other, is revealed to us by God. And if God reveal him, and no other, we must receive him, and no other as such. Take but two scriptures at present, that in 1 Cor. 8:5. "The heathen have many gods, and many lords," That is, many great gods, supreme

powers and ultimate objects of their worship; and lest these great gods should be defiled by their immediate and unhallowed approaches to them, they therefore invented heroes, demigods, intermediate powers, that they were as agents, or Lord mediators between the gods and them, to convey their prayers to the gods, and the blessings of the gods back again to them. "But unto us (says he) there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we by him," That is, one supreme essence, the first spring and fountain of blessings, and one Lord, That is, one Mediator, "by whom are all things, and we by him." By whom are all things which come from the Father to us, and by whom are all our addresses to the Father: So Acts 4:12. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." No other name, That is, no other authority, or rather, no other person authorised under heaven, That is, the whole world: for heaven is not here opposed to earth, as though there were other intercessors in heaven besides Christ: no, no, in heaven and earth God has given him, and none but him, to be our Mediator. One sun is sufficient for the whole world; and one Mediator for all men in the world. So that the scriptures affirm this is he, and exclude all others.

2. Because he, and no other, is fit for, and capable of this office. Who but he that has the divine and human nature united in his single person, can be a fit day's-man to lay his hand upon both? Who but he that was God, could support under such sufferings, as were, by divine justice, exacted for satisfaction! Take person of the greatest spirit, and put him an hour in the case Christ was in, when he sweat blood in the garden, or uttered that heart-rending cry upon the cross, and he had melted under it as a moth.

3. Because he is alone sufficient to reconcile the world to God by his blood, without accessions from any other. The virtue of his blood reached back as far as Adam, and reaches forward to the end of the world; and will be as fresh, vigorous, and efficacious then, as the first moment it was shed. The sun makes day before it actually rises, and continues day sometimes after it is set: so do does Christ, who is the

same yesterday, to-day, and forever; so that he is the true and only Mediator between God and men: no other is revealed in scripture; no other is sufficient for it; no other needed beside him.

Fourthly, The last thing to be explained is, in what capacity he executed his mediatory work.

About which we affirm, according to scripture, that he performs that work as God-man, in both natures. Papists, in denying Christ to act as mediator, according to his divine nature, do at once spoil the whole mediation of Christ of all its efficacy, dignity and value, which arise from that nature, which they deny to co-operate, and exert its virtue in his active and passive obedience. They say, the apostle, in my text, distinguishes the Mediator from God, in saying, "there is one God and one Mediator." We aptly reply, that the same Apostle distinguishes Christ from man, Gal. 1:1. "Not by man, but by Jesus Christ." Does it thence follow that Christ is not true man? Or that according to his divine nature only, he called Paul? But what need I stay my reader here; Had not Christ, as Mediator, power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again? John 10:17,18. Had he not, as Mediator, all power in heaven and earth to institute ordinances, and appoint officers? Matt. 28:18. To baptize men with the Holy Spirit and fire? Matt. 3:11. To keep those his Father gave him in this world? John 17:12. To raise up the saints again in the last day? John 6:54. Are these, with many more I might name, the effects of the mere human nature? Or, were they not performed by him as God-man? And besides, how could he, as Mediator, be the object of our faith, and religious adoration, if we are not to respect him as God-man? But I long now to be at the application of this: and the first inference from it, is this,

**INFERENCE 1.** That it is a dangerous thing to reject Jesus Christ the only Mediator between God and man. Alas! there is no other to interpose and screen you from the devouring fire, the everlasting burnings! O it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! And into his hands you must needs fall, without an interest in

the only Mediator. Which of us can dwell with devouring fire? Who can endure the everlasting burnings? Isa. 33:14. You know how they singed and scorched the green tree, but what would they do to the dry tree? Luke 23:31. Indeed, if there were another plank to save after the shipwreck; any other way to be reconciled to God, besides Jesus the Mediator, somewhat might be said to excuse this folly; but you are shut up to the faith of Christ, as to your last remedy, Gal. 3:23. You are like starving beggars, that are come to the last door. O take heed of despising, or neglecting Christ! If so, there's none to intercede with God for you; the breach between him and you can never be composed. I remember, here, the words of Eli, to his profane sons, who caused men to abhor the offerings of the Lord, 1 Sam. 2:25. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" The meaning is, common trespasses between men, the civil magistrate takes cognisance of it, and decides the controversy by his authority, so that there is an end of that strife; but if man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat or arbitrate in that case? Eli's sons had despised the Lord's sacrifices, which were sacred types of Christ, and the stated way that men had then to act faith on the Mediator in. Now, (says he) if a man thus sin against the Lord, by despising Christ shadowed out in that way, who shall entreat for him? What hope, what remedy remains?

I remember, it was the saying of Luther, and he spoke it with deep resentment—"I will have nothing to do with an absolute God," that is, with God without a Mediator. thus the devils have to do with God: but will you, in whose nature Christ is come, put yourselves into their state and case? God forbid!

INFERENCE 2. Hence also be informed, how great an evil it is to join any other Mediators, either of reconciliation, or meritorious intercession with Jesus Christ. O this is a horrid sin, and that which both pours the greatest contempt upon Christ, and brings the surest and sorest destruction upon the sinner! I am ashamed my pen should English what mine eyes have seen in the writings of Papists,

ascribing as much, yes, more to the mediation of Mary than to Christ, with no less than blasphemous impudence, thus commenting upon scripture: "What is that which the Lord says, I have trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was no man with me? true Lord, there was no man with you, but there was a woman with you, who received all these wounds in her heart which you received in your body." I will not blot my paper with more of this, but refer the learned reader as under, where he may (if he have a mind to see more) be informed not only what blasphemy has dropped from single pens, but even from councils, to the reproach of Jesus Christ, and his blood.

How do they stamp their own sordid works with the peculiar dignity and value of Christ's blood; and therein seek to enter at the gate which God has shut to all the worlds because Jesus Christ the prince entered in thereby, Ezek. 44:2, 3. He entered into heaven in a direct immediate way, even in his own name, and for his own sake; this gate, says the Lord, shall be shut to all others; and I wish men would consider it, and fear, lest while they seek entrance into heaven at the wrong door, they do not forever shut against themselves, the true and only door of happiness.

INFERENCE. 3. If Jesus Christ be the only Mediator of reconciliation between God and men; then reconciled souls should thankfully ascribe all the peace, favors, and comforts they have from God, to their Lord Jesus Christ. Whenever you have had free admission, and sweet entertainment with God in the more public ordinances, or private duties of his worship; when you have had his smiles, his seals, and with hearts warmed with comfort, are returning from those duties, say, O my soul, you may thank your good Lord Jesus Christ for all this! had not he interposed as a Mediator of reconciliation, I could never have had access to, or friendly communion with God to all eternity.

Immediately upon Adam's sin, the door of communion with God was locked, yes, chained up, and no more coming near the Lord: not a

soul could have any access to him, either in a way of communion in this world, or of enjoyment in that to come. It was Jesus the Mediator that opened that door again, and in him it is that we have boldness, and access with confidence, Eph. 3:12. "We can now come to God by a new and living way, consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh," Heb. 10:20. The veil had a double use, as Christ's flesh answerable has: it hid the glory of the Sanctum Sanctorum, and also gave entrance into it. Christ's incarnation rebates the edge of the divine glory and brightness, that we may be able to bear it and converse with it; and it gives admission into it also. O thank your dear Lord Jesus for your present and future heaven! these are mercies which daily emerge out of the ocean of Christ's blood, and come swimming in it to our doors. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

INFERENCE. 4. If Jesus Christ is the true and only Mediator, both of reconciliation and meritorious intercession between God and men, how safe and secure then is the condition and state of believers? Surely, as his mediation, by sufferings, has fully reconciled, so his mediation, by intercession, will everlastingly maintain that state of peace between them and God, and prevent all future breaches. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. 5:1. It is a firm and lasting peace, and the Mediator that made it, is now in heaven to maintain it forever, and prevent new jars, Heb. 9:24. "There to appear in the presence of God for us;" according to the custom of princes and states, who, being confederated, have their agents residing in each others courts, who upon all occasions appear in the presence of the prince, in the name and behalf of those whom they represent, and negotiate for.

And here it is proper to reflect upon the profound and incomprehensible wisdom of God, who has made an advantage to us, even out of our sin and misery. Come, see and adore the wisdom of our God, that has so improved, reduced, and disposed the fall of Adam, as to make a singular advantage thereby to advance his offspring to a better state! It was truly said by one of the ancients

upon this account, "That Job was a happier man on the ash-heap, than Adam was in paradise". His holiness indeed was perfect, his happiness was great: but neither of them permanent and indefeasible, as our happiness by the Mediator is. So that, in the same sense some divines call Judas's treasons—a happy wickedness: we may call Adam's fall—a happy fall, because ordered and over-ruled by the wisdom of God, to such an advantage for us. And to that purpose Austin somewhere sweetly speaks, "O how happily did I fall in Adam, who rose again more happy in Christ!" Thus did the Lord turn a poison into an antidote, thus did that dreadful fall make way for a more blessed and fixed state. Now are we so confirmed, fixed, and established in Christ, by the favor of God, that there can be no more such fatal breaches, and dreadful jars between God and his reconciled ones forever. The bone that is well set, is stronger where it is knit, than it was before. blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

INFERENCE. 5. Did Jesus Christ interpose between us and the wrath of God, as a Mediator of reconciliation? did he rather chose to receive the stroke upon himself, than to see us ruined by it? How well then does it become the people of God, in a thankful sense of this grace, to interpose themselves between Jesus Christ and the evils they see like to fall upon his name and interest in the world? O that there were but SUCH a heart in the people of God! I remember it is a saving of Jerome, when he heard the revilings and blaspheming of many against Christ, and his precious truths, "O (said he) that they would turn their weapons from Christ to me, and be satisfied with my blood!" And much to the same sense is that sweet one of Bernard, "Happy were I, if God would vouchsafe to use me as a shield." And David could say, "The reproaches of them that reproached you, fell on me, Psalm. 69:9. Ten thousand of our names are nothing to Christ's name: his name is "kalon onoma", a worthy name; and no man that gives up his name as a shield to Christ, but shall thereby secure and increase the true honor of it. And though wicked men, for the present may bespatter them, yet Jesus Christ will take it out of the dirt, (as one speaks), wipe it clean, and give it us again. Oh, it is the least one can do, to interpose ourselves and all that is dear to us,

between Christ and the wrath of men, when he (as you hear) interposed himself between you and the eternal wrath of God!

## **The First Branch of Christ's Prophetic Office, Consisting in the Revelation of the Will of God**

"A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall you hear in all things whatever he shall say unto you." Acts 3:22

Having, in the former discourses, shown you the solemn preparations, both on the Father's part, and on the Son's, for the blessed design of reconciling us by the meritorious mediation of Christ: and given you a general prospect of that his mediation, in the firmer sermon; method now requires, that I proceed to show how he executes this his mediation, in the discharge of his blessed offices of Prophet, Priest and King.

His Prophetic office consists of two parts; one external, consisting in a true and full revelation of the will of God to men, according to John 17:6. "I have manifested your name to the men you gave me." The other in illuminating the mind, and opening the heart to receive and embrace that doctrine. The first part is contained in the words before us; "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up," etc.

Which words are those of Moses, recorded in Deut. 18:15. And here, by Peter, pertinently applied to Christ, to convince the incredulous

Jews, that he is the true and only Messiah, and the great Prophet of the church; whose doctrine it was highly dangerous to condemn, though out of the mouths of such (otherwise contemptible) persons as he and John were. And it is well observed by Calvin, he singles out this testimony of Moses, rather than any other, because of the great esteem they had for Moses, and his writings, beyond any others. Now in the words themselves are two general parts.

First, Christ, according to the Prophetic office, described.

Secondly, Obedience to him, as such a prophet, strictly enjoined.

First, You have here a description of Christ in his Prophetic office; "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me." Where Christ is described,

1. By his title, Prophet, and that—the prince of the prophets, or the great and chief shepherd, as he is stiled, Heb. 13:10. 1 Pet. 5:4. It belongs to a prophet to expound the law, declare the will of God, and foretell things to come: all these meet, and that, in a singular and eminent manner, in Christ our prophet, Matth. 5:21, etc. John 1:18. 1 Pet. 1:11.

2. He is described by his type; a prophet like unto Moses, who therein typified and prefigured him. But is it not said of Moses, in Deut. 34:10. "that there arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face?" True, of mere men there never arose so great a prophet in Israel, as Moses was, either in respect of his familiarity with God, or of his miracles which he wrought in the power of God: but Moses himself was but a star to this sun. However, in these following particulars, Christ was like him. He was a prophet that went between God and the people, carried God's mind to them, and returned theirs to God, they not being able to hear the voice of God immediately, Deut. 18:16, 17. "According to all that you desires of the Lord your God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, sayings Let me not again hear the voice of

the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not." And upon this their request, God makes the promise which is cited in the text; verse 17, 18. "They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet like unto you," etc. Moses was a very faithful prophet, precisely faithful, and exact in all things that God gave him in charge, even to a pin of the tabernacle. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after: but Christ as a Son over his own house," Heb. 3:5, 6. Again, Moses confirmed his doctrine by miracles, which he wrought in the presence, and to the conviction of gainsayers. Herein, Christ our Prophet is also like unto Moses, who wrought many, mighty, and uncontrolled miracles, which could not be denied, and by them confirmed the gospel which he preached. Lastly, Moses was that prophet which brought God's Israel out of literal Egypt, and Christ his out of spiritual Egypt, whereof that bondage was a figure. Thus he is described by his likeness to Moses, his type.

3. He is described by his stock and original, from which, according to his flesh, he sprang; "I will raise him up from among your brethren. Of Israel, as concerning the flesh, Christ came," Rom. 9:5. And "it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah," Heb. 7:14. He honored that nation by his nativity. Thus the prophet is described.

Secondly, Here is a strict injunction of obedience to this Prophet, Him shall you hear in all things, etc. By hearing, understand obedience. So words of sense are frequently put in scripture, to signify those affections that are moved by, and use to follow those senses. And this obedience is required to be yielded to this prophet only, and universally, and under great penalties. It is required to be given to him only, for so [him] in the text must be understood, as exclusive of all others. It is true, we are commanded to obey the voice of his ministers, Heb. 13:17. But still it is Christ speaking them, by whom we pay our obedience: He that hears you, hears me: We obey them in the Lord, that is commanding or forbidding in Christ's name and authority. So when God said, Deut. 6:13, ["You shall serve him,"]

Christ expounds it exclusively, Matth. 4:10. "Him only shall you serve." He is the only Lord, Jude 4. and therefore to him only our obedience is required. And as it is due to him only, so to him universally; "Him shall you hear in all things:" his commands are to be obeyed, not disputed. A judgement of discretion indeed is allowed to Christians, to judge whether it be the will of Christ or no. We must "prove what is that holy, good, and acceptable will," Rom. 12:2. "His sheep hear his voice, and a stranger they will not follow: they know his voice, but know not the voice of strangers," John 10:4, 5. But when his will is understood and known, we have no liberty of choice, but are concluded by it, be the duty commanded never so difficult, or the sin forbidden never so tempting: and this is also required severely, under penalty of being destroyed from among the people, and of God's requiring it at our hands, as it is in Deut. 18, that is of revenging himself in the destruction of the disobedient. Hence the observation.

DOCTRINE. That Jesus Christ is called and appointed by God to be the great Prophet and teacher of the Church.

He is anointed to preach good tidings to the meek, and sent to bind up the broken hearted, Isa. 61:1. When he came to preach the gospel among the people, then was this scripture fulfilled, Matt. 11:27. "Yes, all things are delivered him of his Father; so as no man knows whom the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." All light is now collected into one body of light, the Sun of righteousness; and he "enlightens every man that cometh into the world," John 1:9. And though he dispensed knowledge variously, in times past, speaking in many ways and divers manners, to the fathers; yet now the method and way of revealing the will of God to us is fixed and settled in Christ: In these last times he has spoken to us by his Son

Twice has the Lord solemnly sealed him to this office, or approved and owned him in it, by a miraculous voice from the most excellent glory, Matth. 3:17 and Matth. 17:5.

In this point there are two things doctrinally to be discussed and opened, namely, What Christ's being a Prophet to the church implies: and how he executes and discharges this his office.

First, What is implied in Christ's being a Prophet to the church: And it necessarily imports these three things.

1. The natural ignorance and blindness of men in the things of God. This shows us that "vain man is born as the wild ass's colt." the world is involved in darkness: The people sit as in the region and shadow of death until Christ arise upon their souls, Matt. 4:15, 16,17. It is true, in the state of innocence man had a clear apprehension of the will of God, without a Mediator: but now that light is quenched in the corruption of nature, "and the natural man receives not the things of God," 1 Cor. 2:14. These things of God are not only contrary to corrupt and carnal reason, but they are also above right reason. Grace indeed uses nature, but nature can do nothing without grace. The mind of a natural man has not only a native blindness, by reason whereof it cannot discern the things of the Spirit, but also a natural enmity, Rom. 8:7, and hates the light, John 3:19, 20. So that until the mind be healed, and enlightened by Jesus Christ, the natural faculty can no more discern the things of the Spirit, than the sensitive faculty can discern the things of reason. The mysteries of nature may be discovered by the light of nature; but when it comes to supernatural mysteries—the most subtle, searching, penetrating wit and reason, is at a loss.

2. It implies the divinity of Christ, and proves him to be true God, forasmuch as no other can reveal to the world, in all ages, the secrets that lay hid in the heart of God, and that with such convincing evidence and authority. He brought his doctrine from the bosom of His Father; John 1:18. "The only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him." The same words which his Father gave him he has given us, John 17:8. He spoke to us that which he had seen with his Father, John 8:38. What man can tell the

bosom-counsels and secrets of God? Who but he that eternally lay in that bosom can expound them?

Besides, other prophets had their times assigned them to rise, shine, and set again by death, Zech. 1:5. "Your fathers, where are they? And do the prophets live forever?" But Christ is fixed and perpetual sun, that gives light in all ages of the world: for he is "the same yesterday, today, and forever," Heb. 13:8. Yes, and the very beams of his divinity shone with awfulness upon the hearts of them that heard him; so that his very enemies were forced to acknowledge, that, "never any man spoke like him," John 7:46.

3. It implies Christ to be the original and fountain of all that light which is ministerially diffused up and down the world by men. Ministers are but stars, which shine with a borrowed light from the sun: so speaks the apostle, 2 Cor. 3:6, 7. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Those that teach men, must be first taught by Christ. All the prophets of the Old, and all the prophets, pastors, and teachers of the New-Testament, have lighted their candles at his torch: it was Christ that "gave them a mouth and wisdom," Luke 21:15. What Paul received from the Lord, he delivered to the church, 1 Cor. 11:23 Jesus Christ is the chief Shepherd, 1 Pet. 5:4. and all the under-shepherds receive their gifts and commissions from him. These things are manifestly implied in Christ's Prophetic office.

Secondly, We shall next enquire how he executes and discharges this his office, or how he enlightens and teaches men the will of God. And this he has done variously, gradually, plainly, powerfully, sweetly, purely, and fully.

1. Our great Prophet has revealed unto men the will of God variously; not holding one even and constant tenor in the manifestations of the Father's will, but as the apostle speaks, "polumeros kai polutropos", at sundry times, and in divers manners, Heb. 1:1. Sometimes he

taught the church immediately, and in his own person, John 18:20. He declared God's righteousness in the great congregation, Psalm. 22:22. And sometimes mediately, by his ministers and officers, deputed to that service by him. So he dispensed the knowledge of God to the church before his incarnation; it was Christ that in the time, and by the ministry of Noah, went and preached to the spirits in prison, as it is 1 Pet. 3:19, that is, to men and women then alive, but now separated from the body, and imprisoned in hell for their disobedience. And it was Christ that was with the church in the wilderness, instructing and guiding them by the ministry of Moses and Aaron, Acts 7:37, 38; and so he has taught the church since his ascension. He cannot now be personally with us, having other business to do for us in heaven; but, however, he will not be wanting to teach us by his officers, whom, for that end, he has set and appointed in the church, Eph. 4:11, 12.

2. He has dispensed his blessed light to the church gradually. The discoveries of light have been "polumeros", that is, in many parts or parcels; sometimes more obscure and cloudy; as to the Old-Testament believers, by visions dreams, Urim, Thummim, vocal oracles, types, sacrifices, etc. which, though comparatively, were but a weak glimmering light, and had no glory compared to that which now shines, 2 Cor. 3:7, 8, 9, 10, 11. yet it was sufficient for the instruction and salvation of the elect in those times, but now is light sprung up gloriously in the gospel-dispensation: "And we all with open face, behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." It is to us not a twilight, but the light of a perfect day; and still is advancing in the several ages of the world. I know more (says Luther) than blessed Austin knew; and they that come after me, will know more than I know.

3. Jesus Christ, our great Prophet, has manifested to us the will of God plainly and perspicuously. When he was on earth himself, he taught the people by parables, and "without a parable he spoke nothing," Matt. 13:3, 4. He clothed sublime and spiritual mysteries in earthly metaphors, bringing them thereby to the low and dull

capacities of men, speaking so familiarly to the people about them, as if he had been speaking earthly things to them, John 3:12. And so (according to his own example) would he have his ministers preach, "using great plainness of speech," 2 Cor. 3:12. and by manifestation of the truth, "commending themselves to every man's conscience," 1 Cor. 4:2. Yet not allowing them to be crude and careless in expression, pouring out undigested, crude words; no, a holy serious, strict, and grave expression befits the lips of his ambassadors: and who ever spoke more weightily, more logically, persuasively than that apostle, by whose pen Christ has admonished us to beware of vain affections and swelling words of vanity? But he would have us stoop to the understandings of the meanest, and not give the people a comment darker than the text; he would have us rather pierce their ears, than tickle their fancies; and break their hearts than please their ears. Christ was a very plain preacher.

4. Jesus Christ discovered truth powerfully, speaking "as one having authority, and not as the Pharisees," Matt. 7:29. They were cold and dull preachers, their words did even freeze between their lips; but Christ spoke with power; there was heat as well as light in his doctrine: and so there is still, though it be in the mouth of poor contemptible men, 2 Cor. 10:4. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the casting down of strongholds: it is still quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged sword; and piercing, to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow," Heb. 4:12. The blessed apostle imitated Christ; and being filled with his spirit, spoke home and freely to the hearts of men. So many words, so many claps of thunder, (as ones said of him) which made the hearts of sinners shake and tremble in their breasts. All faithful and able ministers are not alike gifted in this particular; but, surely, there is a holy seriousness and spiritual grace and majesty in their doctrine, commanding reverence from their hearers.

5. This Prophet, Jesus Christ, taught the people the mind of God in a sweet, affectionate, and taking manner; his words made their hearts burn within them, Luke 24:32. It was prophesied of him, Isa. 42:2.

"He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard on high. A bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench. He knew how to speak word in season to the weary soul," Isa. 61:1. "He gathered the Lambs with his arms, and gently led those that were with young," Isa. 4:11. How sweetly did his words slide to the melting hearts about him! he drew with cords of love, with the bands of a man: he discouraged none, upbraided none that were willing to come to him: his familiarity and free condescensions to the most vile and despicable sinners, were often made the matter of his reproach. Such is his gentle and sweet carriage to his people, that the church is called the Lamb's wife, Rev. 19:7.

6. He revealed the mind of God purely to men; his doctrine had not the least dash of error to debase it; his most enviously observant hearers could find nothing to charge him with: he is "the faithful and true witness," Rev. 1:5, and he has commanded his ministers to preserve the simplicity and purity of the gospel, and not to blend and sophisticate it, 2 Cor. 4:2.

7. And lastly, He revealed the will of God perfectly and fully, keeping back nothing needful to salvation. So he tells his disciples, John 15:15. "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." He was "faithful as a Son over his own house," Heb. 3:6. Thus you have a brief account of what is implied in this part of Christ's Prophetic office, and how he performed it.

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INFERENCE 1. If Jesus Christ, who is now passed into the heavens, be the great Prophet and Teacher of the church; hence we may justly infer the continual necessity of a standing ministry of the church: for

by his ministers he now teaches us, and to that intent has fixed them in the church, by a firm constitution, there to remain to the end of the world, Matt. 28:20. He teaches men more personally, but ministerially. His ministers supply the want of his personal presence, 2 Cor. 5:10. "We pray you in Christ stead." These officers he gave the church at his ascension, that is when he ceased to teach them any longer with his own lips; and so set them in the church that their succession shall never totally fail: for so the word "etheto", he has set, 1 Cor. 12:28. plainly implies. They are set by a sure establishment, a firm and unalterable constitution, even as the times and seasons, which the Father has put ["etheto"] in his own power: it is the same word, and it is well they are so firmly set and fixed there; for how many adversaries in all ages have endeavored to shake the very office itself? pretending that it is needless to be taught by men, and wresting such scriptures as these to countenance their error, Joel 2:28, 29, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy," etc. And Jer. 31:34. "These shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them." As to that of Joel, it is answered, That if an Old-Testament prophecy may be understood according to a New-Testament interpretation, then that prophecy does no way oppose, but confirm the gospel ministry. How the apostle understood the prophet in that his prophecy, may be seen in Acts 2:17, when the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost upon the apostles. And surely he must be a confident person indeed, that thinks not an apostle to be as good an expositor of the prophet, as himself. And for that in Jer. 31 we say,

1. That if it conclude against ministerial teachings, it must equally conclude against Christian conferences.
2. We say that cannot be the sense of one scripture which contradicts the plain sense of other scriptures: but so this would, Eph. 4:11,12. 1 Cor. 12:28.

3. And we say, the sense of that text is not negative, but comparative. Not that they shall have no need to be taught any truth, but no such need to be taught the first truths: That there is a God, and who is this true God: They shall no more teach every "man his brother, saying, allow the Lord! for they shall all "know me." To conclude, God has given ministers to the church for the work of conversion and edification, "until we all come into the unity of the faith, to a perfect man," Eph. 4:11, 12. So that when all the elect are converted, and all those converts become perfect men; when there is no error in judgement or practice, and no seducer to cause it, then, and not until then, will a gospel ministry be useless. But (as it is well observed) there is not a man that opposes a gospel ministry, but the very being of that man is a sufficient argument for the continuance of it.

INFERENCE. 2. If Christ be the great Prophet of the church, and such a Prophet; then it follows, that the weakest Christians need not be discouraged at the dullness and incapacity they find in themselves: for Christ is not only a patient and condescending teacher, but he can also, as he has often done, reveal that to babes, which is hid from the wise and learned, Matth. 11:25. "The testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple," Psalm. 19:7. Yes, and such as you are, the Lord delights to choose, that his grace may be the more conspicuous in your weakness, 1 Cor. 1:26, 27. You will have nothing of your own to glory in; you will not say, as a proud wretch once said, Ego et Deus meus; "I and my God did this." Jesus Christ affects not social glory, he will not divide the praise with any. Well then, be not discouraged; others may know more, in other things than you, but you are not incapable of knowing so much as shall save your souls, if Christ will be your teacher, in other knowledge they excel you: but if you know Jesus Christ, and the truth as it is in him, one drop of your knowledge is worth a whole sea of their gifts: one truth sucked in faith and prayer from the bosom of Christ is better than ten thousand dry notions beaten out by racking the understanding. It is better in kind, the one being but natural, the other super natural, from the saving illuminations and inward teachings of the Spirit: and so is one of those better things that

accompany salvation. It is better in respect of effects; other knowledge leaves the heart as dry, barren, and unaffected, as if it had its seat in another man's head; but that little you have been taught of Christ, sheds down its gracious influence upon your affections, and slides sweetly to your melting hearts. So that as one "preferred the most despicable work of a plain rustic Christian, before all the triumphs of Alexander and Caesar;" much more ought you so prefer one saving manifestation of the Spirit, to all the powerless illuminations of natural men.

INFERENCE. 3. If Christ be the great Prophet and teacher of the church; it follows, That prayer is a proper mean for the increase of knowledge: Prayer is the golden key that unlocks that treasure. When Daniel was to expound that secret which was contained in the king's dream, about which the Chaldean magicians had racked their brains to no purpose; what course does Daniel take? Why, "he went to his house, (says the text, Dan. 2:17, 18) and made the thing known to Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah his companions; that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning his secret." And then was the secret revealed to Daniel. Luther was accustomed to say, "Three things made a divine; meditation, temptation, and prayer." Holy Mr. Bradford was accustomed to study upon his knees. Those truths that are got by prayer, leave an unusual sweetness upon the heart. If Christ be our teacher, it becomes all his saints to be at his feet.

INFERENCE. 4. If Christ be the great Prophet and teacher of the church, We may thence discern and judge of doctrines, and it may serve us as a test to try them by. For such as Christ is, such are the doctrines that flow from him; every error pretends to derive itself from him; but as Christ was holy, humble, heavenly, meek, peaceful, plain and simple, and in all things alien, yes, contrary to the wisdom of the world, the gratifications of the flesh, such are the truths which he teaches. They have his character and image engraved on them. Would you know then whether this or that doctrine be from the Spirit of Christ or no? Examine the doctrine itself by this rule. And

whatever doctrine you find to encourage and countenance sin, to exalt self, to be accommodated to earthly designs and interests, to wrap and bend to the humors and lusts of men; in a word, what doctrine soever directly, and as a proper cause makes them that profess it carnal, turbulent, proud, sensual, etc. you may safely reject it, and conclude this never came from Jesus Christ. The doctrine of Christ is after godliness; his truth sanctifies. There is a spiritual taste, by which those that have their senses exercised, can distinguish things that differ. "The spiritual man judges all things," 1 Cor. 2:15. "His ear tries words, as his mouth tastes meats," Job 34:3. Swallow nothing (let it come never so speciously) that has not some relish of Christ and holiness in it. Be sure, Christ never revealed anything to men, that derogates from his own glory, or prejudices and obstructs the ends of his own death.

INFERENCE. 5. And as it will reeve us for a test of doctrines, so it serves for a test of ministers; and hence you may judge who are authorised and sent by Christ the great Prophet, to declare his will to men. Surely those whom he sends have his Spirit in their hearts, as well as his words in their mouths. And according to the measures of grace received, they faithfully endeavor to fulfill their ministry for Christ, as Christ did for his Father: "As my Father has sent me (says Christ) so send I you," John 20:21. They take Christ for their pattern in the whole course of their ministration, and are such as sincerely endeavor to imitate the great Shepherd, in these six particulars following:

1. Jesus Christ was a faithful Minister, the "faithful and true witness," Rev. 1:5. He declared the whole mind of God to men. Of him it was Prophetically said, Psalm. 40:10. "I have not hid your righteousness within my heart; I have declared your faithfulness, and your salvation; I leave not concealed your loving-kindness and your truth from the great congregation." To the same sense, and almost in the same words, the apostle Paul professed, in Acts 20:20. "I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; and ver. 35. "I have showed you all things." Not that every faithful minister does in

course of his ministry, anatomize the whole body of truth, and fully expound and apply each particular to the people: No, that is not the meaning, but of those doctrines which they have opportunity of opening, they do not out of fear, or to accommodate and secure base low ends, with hold the mind of God, or so corrupt and abuse his words, as to subject truth to their own, or other men's lusts: "They preach not as pleasing men, but God," 1 Thess. 2:4. "For if we yet please men, we cannot be the servants of Christ," Gal. 1:10. Truth must be spoken, though the greatest on earth be offended.

2. Jesus Christ was a tender-hearted Minister, full of compassion to souls. He was sent to bind up the broken in heart, Isa. 61:1. He was full of affections to poor sinners. "He grieved at the hardness of men's hearts, Mark 3:5. He mourned over Jerusalem, "and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how oft would I have gathered your children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings!" Matth. 23:27. His affections yearned when he saw the multitude, as sheep having no shepherd, Matth. 9:37. These affections of Christ must be in all the under shepherds. "God is my witness, (says one of them) how greatly I long after you all, in [or after the pattern of] the affections of Christ Jesus," Phil. 1:8. He that shows a hard heart, unaffected with the dangers and miseries of souls, can never show a commission from Christ to authorize him for ministerial work.

3. Jesus Christ zeal a laborious painful Minister, he put a necessity on himself to finish his work in his day; a work infinitely great, in a very little time; John 9:4. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night comets, when no man can work." O how much work did Christ do in a little time on earth! "He went about doing good," Acts 10:38. He was never idle. When he sits down at Jacob's well, to rest himself, being weary, presently he falls into his work, preaching the gospel to the Samaritan woman. In this must his ministers resemble him; "striving according to his working, that works in them mightily" Col. 1:28, 29. An idle minister seems to be a contradiction in adjecto; as who should say, a dark light.

4. Jesus Christ delighted in nothing more than the success of his ministry; to see the work of the Lord prosper in his hand, this was meat and drink to him. When the seventy returned, and reported the success of their first embassy, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through your name!" "Why, (says Christ) I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven." As if he had said, You tell me no news, I saw it when I sent you out at first: I knew the gospel would make work where it came. "And in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit," Luke 10:17, 18, 21. And is it not so with those sent by him? do not they value the success of their ministry at a high rate? It is not (says one) the expense, but the recoiling of our labors back again upon us, that kills us. Ministers would not die so fast, nor be grey-headed so soon, could they but see the travail of their souls. "My little children, (says Paul) of whom I travail again in birth, "palin odino", until Christ be formed in you", Gal. 4:19. As for those that have the name of shepherds only, who visit the flock only once a year, about shearing time; who have "the instruments of a foolish shepherd," (forcipes et mulctra) the shears and pail, Zech. 11:15, woeful will be their condition at appearing of this great Shepherd.

5. Jesus Christ was a minister that lived up to his doctrine: his life and doctrine harmonized in all things. He pressed to holiness in his doctrine, and was the great pattern of holiness in his life, Matt. 11:28 "Learn of me, I am meek and lowly." And such his ministers desire to approve themselves, Phil. 4:9. "What you have heard, and seen in me, that do." He preached to their eyes, as well as ears, His life was a comment on his doctrine. They might see holiness acted in his life, as well as sounded by his lips. He preached the doctrine, and lived the application.

6. And lastly, Jesus Christ was a minister that minded and maintained sweet, secret communion with God, for all his constant public labors. If he had been preaching and healing all the day, yet he would redeem time from his very sleep to spend in secret prayer; Matt. 14:23. "When he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray, and was there alone." O blessed pattern!

Let the keepers of the vineyards remember they have a vineyard of their own to keep, a soul of their own that must be looked after as well as other men's. Those that, in these things, imitate Christ, are surely sent to us from him, and are worthy of double honor. They are a choice blessing to the people.

# **The Second Branch of Christ's Prophetic Office,**

## **consisting in the Illumination of the Understanding**

"Then He opened their understanding." Luke 24:45

Knowledge of spiritual things is well distinguished into intellectual and practical: the first has its seat in the mind, the latter in the heart. This latter, divines call a knowledge peculiar to saints; and, in the apostle's dialect, it is "The eminency, or excellency of the knowledge of Christ."

And indeed, there is but little excellency in all those petty notions which furnish the lips with discourse, unless by a sweet and powerful influence they draw the conscience and will to the obedience of Christ. Light in the mind is necessarily antecedent to the sweet and heavenly motions and elevations of the affections: For the farther any man stands from the light of truth, the farther he must needs be from the heat of comfort. Heavenly quickening are begotten in the heart, while the sun of righteousness spreads the beams of truth into the understanding, and the soul sits under those its wings; yet all the light of the gospel spreading and diffusing itself into the mind, can never savingly open and change the heart, without another act of Christ upon it; and what that is, the text informs you; "Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures".

In which words we have both an act of Christ upon the disciples' understandings, and the immediate end and scope of that act.

1. Christ's act upon their understandings: He opened their understandings. By understanding is not here meant the mind only,

in opposition to the heart, will, and affections, but these were opened by and with the mind. The mind is to the heart, as the door to the house: what comes in to the heart, comes in at the understanding, which is introductive to it; and although truths sometimes go no farther than the entry, never penetrate the hearts, yet, here, this effect is undoubtedly included.

Expositors make this expression parallel to that in Acts 16:14. "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia." And it is well observed, that it is one thing to open the scriptures, that is, to expound them, and give the meaning of them, as Paul is said to do in Acts 18:3, and another thing to open the mind or heart, as it is here. There are, as a learned man truly observes, two doors of the soul barred against Christ; the understanding by ignorance; and the heart by hardness: both these are opened by Christ. The former is opened by the preaching of the gospel, the other by the internal operation of the Spirit. The former belongs to the first part of Christ's Prophetic office, opened in the foregoing sermon: the latter, to that special internal part of his Prophetic office, to be opened in this.

And that it was not a naked act upon their minds only, but that their hearts and minds did work in fellowship, being both touched by this act of Christ, is evident enough by the effects mentioned, ver. 52, 53. "They returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." It is confessed, that before this time Christ had opened their hearts by conversion; and this opening is not to be understood simply, but *secundum quid*, in reference to those particular truths, in which, until now, they were not sufficiently informed, and so their hearts could not be duly affected with them. They were very dark in their apprehensions of the death and resurrection of Christ; and consequently their hearts were sad and dejected about that which had befallen him, ver. 17. But when he opened the scriptures and their understandings and hearts together, then things appeared with another face, and they returned, blessing and praising God.

2. Here is farther to be considered, the design and end of this act upon their understandings: That they might understand the scriptures: Where let it be marked, reader, that the teachings of Christ, and his Spirit, were never designed to take men off from reading, and studying, and searching the scriptures, as some vain notionists, have pretended, opposing those things which are subordinated, but to make their studies and duties the more fruitful, beneficial, and effectual to their souls: or that they might this way receive the end or blessing of all their duties. God never intended to abolish his Word, by giving his Spirit; and they are true fanatics (as Calvin upon thus place calls them) that think, or pretend so. By this means he would at once impart more light, and make that they had before more operative and useful to them, especially in such a time of need as this was. Hence we observe,

DOCTRINE. That the opening of the mind and heart, effectually to receive the truths of God, is the peculiar prerogative and office of Jesus Christ.

One of the great miseries under which lapsed nature labors, is spiritual blindness. Jesus Christ brings that eye-salve which only can cure it. Rev. 3:18. "I counsel you to buy of me eye-salve, that you may see." Those to whom the Spirit has applied it, can say, as it is 1 John 5:20. "We know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God, and eternal life.

"To the spiritual illumination of a soul, it suffices not that the object be revealed, nor yet that man, the subject of that knowledge have a due use of his own reason; but it is further necessary that the grace and special assistance of the holy Spirit be superadded, to open and mollify the heart, and so give it a due taste and relish of the sweetness of spiritual truth." By opening the gospel, he reveals truth to us, and, by opening the heart, in us. Now, though this cannot be without that, yet it is much more excellent to have truth revealed in

us, than to us. This divines call *praecipuum illud "apogelesma" muneris prophetici*; "the principal perfective effect of the Prophetic office," the special blessing promised in the new covenant, Heb. 8:10. "I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts."

For explication of this part of Christ's Prophetic office, I shall as in the former, show what is included in the opening of their understanding, and by what acts Christ performs it. And,

First, Give you a brief account of what is included in this act of Christ; take it in the following particulars.

1. It implies the transcendent nature of spiritual things, far exceeding the highest flight and reach of natural reason. Jesus Christ must by his Spirit open the understandings of men, or they can never comprehend such mysteries. Some men have strong natural parts, and by improvement of them are become eagle-eyed in the mysteries of nature. Who more acute than the heathen sages? Yet, to them the gospel seemed foolishness, 1 Cor. 1:20. Austin confesses, that before his conversion, he often felt his spirit swell with offence and contempt of the gospel; and he despising it, said, "he scorned to become a child again." Bradwardine, that profound doctor, learned *usque ad stuporem*, even to a wonder, professes that when he read Paul's epistles, he condemned them, because in them he found not a metaphysical wit. Surely, it is possible a man may, with Berengarius, be able to dispute every point of knowledge; to unravel nature from the cedar in Lebanon, to the hyssop on the wall; and yet be as blind as a bat in the knowledge of Christ. Yes, it is possible a man's understanding may be improved by the gospel, to a great ability in the literal knowledge of it, so as to be able to expound the scriptures orthodoxly, and enlighten others by them, as it is Mat. 7:22. The Scribes and Pharisees were well acquainted with the scriptures of the Old Testament; yes, such were their abilities, and esteem among the people for them, that the apostle stiles them the princes of this world, 1 Cor. 2:8. And yet notwithstanding Christ truly calls them blind guides, Mat. 23. Until Christ open the heart, we can know

nothing of him, or of his will, as we ought to know it. So experimentally true is that of the apostle, 1 Cor. 2:14, 15. "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual, judges all things; yet he himself is judged of no man." The spiritual man can judge and discern the carnal man, but the carnal man wants a faculty to judge of the spiritual man: as a man that carries a dark lantern, can see another by its light, but the other cannot discern him. Such is the difference between persons whose hearts Christ has, or has not opened.

2. Christ's opening the understanding, implies the insufficiency of all external means, how excellent soever they are in themselves, to operate savingly upon men, until Christ by his power opens the soul, and so makes them effectual. What excellent preachers were Isaiah and Jeremiah to the Jews? The former spoke of Christ more like an Evangelist at the New than a Prophet of the Old Testament; the latter was a most convictive and pathetic preacher: yet the one complains, Isa. 53:1, "Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" The other laments the successlessness of his ministry, Jer. 6:18. "The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melts in vain." Under the New Testament, what people ever enjoyed such choice helps and means, as those that lived under the ministry of Christ and the apostles? Yet how many remained still in darkness? Matt. 11:27. "We have piped to you, but you have not danced; we have mourned unto you, but you have not lamented". Neither the delightful airs of mercy, nor the doleful ditties of judgement, could effect or move their hearts.

And indeed if you search into the reason of it, you will be satisfied, that the choicest of means can do nothing upon the heart, until Christ by his Spirit open it, because ordinances work not as natural causes do: for then the effect would always follow unless miraculously hindered; and it would be equally wonderful, that all that hear should not be converted, as that the three children should

be in the fiery furnace so long, and yet not be burned: no, it works not as a natural, but as a moral cause, whose efficacy depends on the gracious and arbitrary concurrence of the Spirit. "The wind blows where it wills," John 3:8. The ordinances are like the pool of Bethesda, John 5:4. At a certain time an angel came down and troubled the waters, and then they had a healing virtue in them. So the Spirit comes down at certain times in the word, and opens the heart; and then it becomes the power of God to salvation. So that when you see souls daily sitting under excellent and choice means, and remain dead still, you may say as Martha did to Christ of her brother Lazarus, Lord, if you had been here they had not remained dead. If you had been in this sermon, it had not been so ineffectual to them.

3. It implies the utter impotency of man to open his own heart, and thereby make the word effectual to his own conversion and salvation. He that at first said, "let there be light," and it was so, must shine into our hearts, or they will never be savingly enlightened, 2 Cor. 4:4, 6. A double misery lies upon a great part of mankind, namely, Impotency and Pride. They have not only lost the liberty and freedom of their wills, but with it have so far lost their understanding and humility as not to own it. But, alas! Man is become a most impotent creature by the fall; so far from being able to open his own heart, that he cannot know the things of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 2:14. cannot believe, John 6:44. cannot obey, Rom. 8:7. cannot speak one good word, Matt. 12:34, cannot think one good thought, 2 Cor. 3:5, cannot do one good act, John 15:5. O what a helpless, shiftless thing is a poor sinner! Suitably to this state of impotence, conversion is in scripture called regeneration, John 3:3, a resurrection from the dead, Eph. 2:5. a creation, Eph. 2:10. a victory, 2 Cor. 10:5. Which does not only imply man to be purely passive in his conversion to God, but a renitency, and opposition made to that power which goes forth from God to recover him.

Lastly, Christ's opening the understanding imports his divine power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. Who but God

knows the heart? Who but God can unlock and open it at pleasure? No mere creature, no not the angels themselves, who for their large understandings are called intelligences, can command or open the heart. We may stand and knock at men's hearts, until our own ache; but no opening until Christ come. He can fit a key to all the cross wards of the will, and with sweet efficacy open it, and that without any force or violence to it. These things are carried in this part of his office, consisting in opening the heart: which was the first thing propounded for explication.

Secondly, In the next place, let us see by what acts Jesus Christ performs this work of his, and what way and method he takes to open the hearts of sinners.

And there are two principal ways, by which Christ opens the understandings and hearts of men, namely, by his Word and Spirit.

1. By his word; to this end was Paul commissioned and sent to preach the gospel, Acts 26:18. "To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." The Lord can, if he pleases, accomplish this immediately; but though he can do it, he will not do it ordinarily without means, because he will honor his own institutions. Therefore you may observe, that when Lydia's heart was to be opened, "there appeared unto Paul a man of Macedonia, who prayed him, saying, come over into Macedonia, and help us," Acts 19:9. God will keep up his ordinances among men: and though he has not tied himself, yet he has tied us, to them. Cornelius must send for Peter: God can make the earth produce corn, as it did at first, without cultivation and labor; but he that shall now expect it in the neglect of means, may perish for want of bread.

2. But the ordinances in themselves cannot do it, as I noted before; and therefore Jesus Christ has sent forth the Spirit, who is his Prorex, his viceregent, to carry on this work upon the hearts of his elect. And when the Spirit comes down upon the souls in the administration of the ordinances, he effectually opens the heart to

receive the Lord Jesus, by the healing of faith. He breaks in upon the understanding and conscience by powerful convictions and compunctions? so much that word, John 16:8. imports, "He shall convince the world of sin;" convince by clear demonstration, such as enforces assent, so that the soul cannot but yield it to be so; and yet the door of the heart is not opened, until he has also put forth his power upon the will, and, by a sweet and secret efficacy, overcome all its reductions, and the soul be made willing in the day of his power. When this is done, the heart is opened: saving light now shines in it; and this light set up, the Spirit in the soul is,

1. A new light in which all things appear far otherwise than they did before. The names Christ and sin, the words heaven and hell have another sound in that man's ears, than formerly they had. When he comes to read the same scriptures, which possibly he had read a hundred times before, he wonders he should be so blind as he was, to overlook such great, weighty, and concerning things as he now beholds in them; and says, Where were mine eyes, that I could never see these things before?

2. It is a very affecting light; a light that has heat and powerful influences with it, which makes deep impressions on the heart. Hence they whose eyes the great Prophet opens, are said to be "brought out of darkness into his marvelous light," 1 Pet. 2:9. The soul is greatly affected with what it sees. The beams of light are contracted and twisted together in the mind; and being reflected on the heart and affections, soon cause them to smoke and burn. "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us, and opened to us the scriptures?"

3. And it is a growing light, like the light of the morning which "shines more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. 4:18. When the Spirit first opens the understanding, he does not give it at once a full sight of all truths, or a full sense of the power, sweetness and goodness of any truth; but the soul in the use of means grows up to a greater clearness day by day: its knowledge grows extensively in

measure, and intensively in power and efficacy. And thus the Lord Jesus by his Spirit opens the understanding. Now the use of this follows in five practical deductions.

INFERENCE 1. If this be the work and office of Jesus Christ, to open the understandings of men; hence we infer the miseries that lie upon those men, whose understandings, to this day, Jesus Christ has not opened; of whom we may say, as it is, Deut. 24:4. "To this day Christ has not given them eyes to see." Natural blindness, whereby we are deprived of the light of this world, is sad; but spiritual blindness is much more so. See how dolefully their case is represented, 2 Cor. 4:3, 4. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: whose eyes the God of this world has blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them:" he means a total and final concealment of the saving power of the word from them. Why, what if Jesus Christ withhold it, and will not be a prophet to them, what is their condition? Truly no better than lost men. It is hid "tois apollumenois", to them that are to perish, or be destroyed. This blindness, like the covering of the face, or tying the handkerchief over the eyes, is in order to their turning off into hell. More particularly, because the point is of deep concernment, let us consider,

1. The judgement inflicted, and that is spiritual blindness. A sore misery indeed! Not an universal ignorance of all truths, O no! in natural and moral truths they are oftentimes acute, and sharp sighted men; but in that part of knowledge which wraps up eternal life, John 17:2, there they are utterly blinded: as it is said of the Jews, upon whom this misery lies, that blindness in part is happened to Israel. They are learned and knowing persons in other matters, but they know not Jesus Christ; there is the grand and sad defect.

2. The subject of this judgement, the mind, which is the eye of the soul. If it were put upon the body, it would not be so considerable; this falls immediately upon the soul, the noblest part of man, and upon the mind, the highest and noblest faculty of the soul, whereby

we understand, think, and reason. This in scripture is called "pneuma", the spirit, the intellectual, rational faculty, which the philosophers call "to hegemonikon", the leading directive faculty; which is to the soul what the natural eye is to the body. Now the soul being the most active and restless thing in the world, always working, and its leading, directive power blind, judge what a sad and dangerous state such a soul is in; just like a fiery, high-mettled horse, whose eyes are out, furiously carrying his rider up on rocks, pits and dangerous precipices. I remember Chrysostom, speaking of the loss of a soul, says that the loss of a member of the body is nothing to it; for, says he, If a man lose an eye, ear, hand or foot, there is another to supply its lack, "God has given us those members double; but he has not given us two souls," that if one be lost, yet the other may be saved. Surely it were better for you, reader, to have every member of your body made the seat and subject of the most exquisite racking torments, than for spiritual blindness to befall your soul. Moreover,

3. Consider the indiscernableness of this judgement to the soul on whom it lies: they know it not, no more than a man knows that he is asleep. Indeed it is "the spirit of a deep sleep poured out upon them from the Lord," Isa. 29:10. like that which befall Adam when God opened his side, and took out a rib. This renders their misery the more remediless: "Because you say you see, therefore your sin remains," John 9:41. Once more,

4. Consider the tendency and effects of it. What does this tend to but eternal ruin? for hereby we are cut off from the only remedy. The soul that is so blinded, can never see sin, nor a Savior; but, like the Egyptians, during the palpable darkness, sits still, and moves not after its own recovery. And as ruin is that to which it tends, so in order thereto, it renders all the ordinances and duties under which that soul comes, altogether useless and ineffectual to its salvation. He comes to the word, and sees others melted by it, but to him it signifies nothing. O what a heavy stroke of God is this! Most wretched is their case, to whom Jesus Christ will not apply this eye-salve, that they may see. Did you but understand the misery of such a

state, if Christ should say to you, as he did to the blind man, Mat. 20:33. That will you that I should do for you?" You would return as he did, "Lord, that my eyes may be opened."

INFERENCE 2. If Jesus Christ be the great Prophet of the church, then surely he will take special care both of the church and the under shepherds appointed by him to feed them: else both the objects and instruments upon and by which he executes his office, must fail and consequently this glorious office be in vain. Hence he is said "to walk among the golden candlesticks," Rev. 1:13: and Rev. 2:1. "to hold the stars in his right hand." Jesus Christ instrumentally opens the understandings of men by preaching of the gospel; and while there is an elect soul to be converted, or a convert to be farther illuminated, means shall not fail to accomplish it by.

INFERENCE 3. Hence you that are yet in darkness, may be directed to whom to apply yourselves for saving knowledge. It is Christ that has the sovereign eye-salve, that can cure your blindness; he only has the key of the house of David; he opens, and no man shuts. O that I might persuade you to set yourselves in his way, under the ordinances, and cry to him, "Lord, that my eyes may be opened." Three things are marvelously encouraging to you so to do

1. God the Father has put him into this office, for the cure of such as you be, Isa. 49:6. "I will give you for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation to the end of the earth". This may furnish you with an argument to plead for a cure. Why do you not go to God, and say, Lord, did you give Jesus Christ a commission to open the blind eyes? Behold me, Lord, such a one am I, a poor, dark, ignorant soul. Did you give him to be your salvation to the ends of the earth? No place nor people excluded from the benefit of that right; and shall I still remain in the shadow of death? O that unto me he might be a saving light also? The best and most excellent work that ever you wrought, brings you no glory until it comes into the light! O let me see and admire it!

2. It is encouraging to think, that Jesus Christ has actually opened the eyes of them that are as dark and ignorant as you are. He has revealed those things to babes, that have been hid from the wise and prudent, Mat. 11:25. "The law of the Lord is perfect, making wise the simple," Psalm. 19:7. And if you look among those whom Christ has enlightened, you will not find "many wise after the flesh, many mighty or noble; but the foolish, weak, base, and despised; these are they op whom he has glorified the riches of his grace," 1 Cor. 1:26, 27.

3. And is it not yet farther encouraging to you that hitherto he has mercifully continued you under the means of light? Why is not the light of the gospel put out? Why are times and seasons of grace continued to you, if God have no farther design of good to your souls? Be not therefore discouraged, but wait on the Lord in the use of means, that you may yet be healed.

Question. If you ask, What can we do to put ourselves into the way of the Spirit, in order to such a cure?

Sol. I say, though you cannot do anything, that can make the gospel effectual, yet the Spirit of God can make those means you are capable of using effectual, if he please to concur with them. And it is a certain truth, that your inability to do what is above your power, does no ways excuse you from doing what is within the compass of your power to do. I know no act that is saving, can be done without the concurrence of spiritual grace; yes, and no act that has a remote order and tendency thereto, without a more general concourse of God's assistance: but herein he is not behind hand with you. Let me therefore advise,

1. That you diligently attend upon an able, faithful, and searching ministry. Neglect no opportunity God affords you; for how know you but that may be the time of mercy to your soul? If he that lay so many years at the pool of Bethesda, had been wanting but that hour when the angel came down and troubled the waters, he had not been healed.

2. Satisfy not yourselves with hearing, but consider what you hear. Avow time to reflect upon what God has spoken to you. What power is there in man more excellent, or more appropriate to the reasonable nature, than its reflective and self-considering power? There is little hope of any good to be done upon your souls, until you begin to go alone, and become thinking men and women: Here all conversion begins. I know, a severer task can hardly be imposed upon a carnal heart. It is a hard thing to bring a man and himself together upon this account: but this must be, if ever the Lord do your souls good. Psalm. 4:4. "Commune with your own hearts."

3. Labor to see, and ingenuously confess the insufficiency of all your other knowledge to do you good. What if you had never so much skill and knowledge in other mysteries? What if you be never so well acquainted with the letter of the scripture? What if you had an angelical illumination? This can never save your soul. No, all your knowledge signifies nothing until the Lord show you by special light the deplorable sight of your own heart, and a saving sight of Jesus Christ, your only remedy.

INFERENCE. 4. Since then there is a common light, and special saving light, which none but Christ can give, it is therefore the concernment, of everyone of you to try what your light is. "We know, (says the apostle, 1 Cor. 8:1.) that we all have knowledge." O but what, and whence is it? Is it the light of life springing from Jesus Christ, that bright and morning star, or only such as the devils and damned have? These lights differ,

1. In their very kind and natures. The one is heavenly, supernatural, and spiritual, the other earthly, and natural, the effect of a better constitution or education, James 3:15, 17.

2. They differ most apparently in their effects and operations. The light that comes in a special way from Christ, is humbling, abasing, and soul-emptying light: by it a man sees the vileness of his own nature and practice, which begets self-loathing in him; but natural

light, on the contrary, puffs up, exalts, and makes the heart swell with self-conceitedness, 1 Cor. 8:1.

The light of Christ is practical and operative, still urging the soul, yet lovingly constraining it to obedience. No sooner did it shine into Paul's heart, but presently he asks, "Lord, what will you have me to do?" Acts 9:13. It brought forth fruit on the Colossians, from the first day it came to them, Col. 1:6; but the other spends itself in impractical notions, and is detained in unrighteousness, Rom. 1:18. The light of Christ is powerfully transformative of its subjects, changing the man, in whom it is, into the same image, from glory to glory, 2 Cor. 3:18. But common light leaves the heart as dead, as carnal and sensual, as if no light at all were in it.

In a word, All saving light endears Jesus Christ to the soul; and as it could not value him before it saw him, so when once he appears to the soul in his own light, he is appreciated and endeared unspeakably: then none but Christ; all is but dung, that he may win Christ: none in heaven but him, nor in earth desirable in comparison of him. But no such effect flows from natural common knowledge.

3. They differ in their issues. Natural common knowledge vanishes, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 13:8. It is but a Mayflower, and dies in its month. "Does not their excellency that is in them go away?" Job 4:21. But this that springs from Christ is perfected, not destroyed by death: it springs up into everlasting life. The soul in which it is subjected, carries it away with it into glory. John 17:2. this light is life eternal. Now turn in, and compare yourselves with these rules: let not false light deceive you.

INFERENCE. 5. Lastly, How are they obliged to love, serve, and honor Jesus Christ, whom he has enlightened with the saving knowledge of himself? O that with hands and hearts lifted up to heaven, you would adore the free grace of Jesus Christ to your souls? How many round about you have their eyes closed, and their hearts shut up! How many are in darkness, and there are like to remain,

until they come to the blackness of darkness, which is reserved for them? O what a pleasant thing is it for your eyes to see the light of this world! But what is it for the eye of your mind to see God in Christ? To see such ravishing sights as the objects of faith are? and to have such a pledge as this given you of the blessed visions of glory? for in this light you shall see light. Bless God, and boast not: rejoice in your light, but be proud of it; and beware you sin not against the best and highest light in this world. If God were so incensed against the Heathens for disobeying the light of nature, what is it in you to sin with eyes clearly illuminated with the purest light that shines in this world? You know, God charges it upon Solomon, 1 Kings 11:9. that he turned from the way of obedience after the Lord, had appeared, to him twice. Jesus Christ intended when he opened your eyes, that your eyes should direct your feet. Light is a special help to obedience, and obedience is a singular help to increase your light.

## **The Nature and Necessity of the Priesthood of Christ**

"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." Hebrews 9:23

Salvation (as to the actual dispensation of it) is revealed by Christ as a Prophet, procured by him as a Priest, applied by him as a King. In vain it is revealed, if not purchased; in vain revealed and purchased, if not applied. How is it revealed, both to us, and in us, by our great Prophet, has been declared. And now, from the Prophetic office, we pass on to the priestly office of Jesus Christ, who as our Priest, purchased our salvation. In this office is contained the grand relief for a soul distressed by the guilt of sin. When all other reliefs have been essayed, it is the blood of this great sacrifice, sprinkled by faith upon the trembling conscience, that must cool, refresh, and sweetly

compose and settle it. Now, seeing so great a weight hangs upon this office, the apostle industriously confirms and commends it in this epistle, and more especially in this ninth chapter; showing how it was figured to the world by the typical blood of the sacrifices, but infinitely excels them all: and as in many other most weighty respects, so principally in this, that the blood of these sacrifices did but purify the types or patterns of the heavenly things; but the blood of this sacrifice purified or consecrated the heavenly things themselves, signified by those types.

The words read, contains an argument to prove the necessity of the offering up of Christ, the great sacrifice, drawn from the proportion between the types, and the things typified. If the sanctuary, mercy-seat, and all things pertaining to the service of the tabernacle, were to be consecrated by blood; those earthly, but sacred types, by the blood of bulls and lambs, etc. Much more the heavenly things shadowed by them, ought to be purified or consecrated by better blood than the blood of beasts. The blood consecrating these, should as much excel the blood that consecrated those, as the heavenly things themselves do, in their own nature, excel those earthly shadows of them. Look, what proportion there is between the type and anti-type, the like proportion also is between the blood that consecrates them; earthly things with common, heavenly things with the most excellent blood.

So then, there are two things to be especially observed here: First, The nature of Christ's death and sufferings: It had the nature, use and end of a sacrifice, and of all the sacrifices the most excellent. Secondly, The necessity of his offering it up: it was necessary to correspond with all the types and prefiguration of it under the law: but especially it was necessary for the expiating of sin, the propitiating of a justly incensed God, and the opening, a way for reconciled ones to come to God in. The point I shall give you from it is,

**DOCTRINE.** That the sacrifice of Christ, our High Priest, is most excellent in itself; and most necessary for us.

Sacrifices are of two sorts, eucharistical, or thank-offerings, in testification of homage, duty and service; and in token of gratitude for mercies freely received; and expiatory, for satisfaction to justice, and thereby the atoning and reconciling of God. Of this last kind was the sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ for us: to this office he was called by God, Heb. 5:5. In it he was confirmed by the unchangeable oath of God, Psalm. 110:4. for it, he was singularly qualified by his incarnation, Heb. 10:6, 7. and all the ends of it he has fully answered, Heb. 9:11, 12.

My present design is, from this scripture, to open the general nature and absolute necessity of the priesthood of Christ; showing what his priesthood implies in it, and how all this was indispensably necessary in order to our recovery from the deplorable state of sin and misery.

First then, we will consider what it supposes and implies; and then, wherein it consists. And there are six things which it either presupposes, or necessarily includes in it.

1. At first sights it supposes man's revolt and fall from God; and a dreadful breach made thereby between God and him, else no need of an atoning sacrifice. "If one died for all, then were at dead", 2 Cor. 5:14. dead in law, under sentence to die, and that eternally. In all the sacrifices, from Adam to Christ, this was still preached to the world, that there was a fearful breach between God and man; and even so, that justice required our blood should be shed. And the fire flaming on the altar, which wholly burnt up the sacrifice, was a lively emblem of that fiery indignation that should devour the adversaries. But above all, when Christ, that true and great Sacrifice, was offered up to God, then was the fairest glass that ever was in the world, set before us, therein to see our sin and misery by the fall.

2. His priesthood, supposes the unalterable purpose of God to take vengeance for sin; he will not let it pass. I will not determine what God could do in this case, by his absolute power; but I think it is

generally yielded, that, by his ordinate power, he could do no less than punish it in the person of the sinner, or of his surety.

Those that contend for such a forgiveness, as is an act of charity, like that whereby private persons forgive one another, must at once suppose God to part with his right, and also render the satisfaction of Christ altogether useless, as to the procurement of forgiveness; yes, rather an obstacle, than a means to it. Surely, the nature and truth of God oblige him to punish sin. "He is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity," Heb. 1:13. And beside, the word is gone out of his mouths that the sinner shall die.

3. The priesthood of Christ pre-supposes the utter impotency of men to appease God, and, recover his favor by anything he could do or suffer. Surely God would not come down to assume a body to die, and be offered up for us, if at any cheaper rate it could have been accomplished; there was no other way to recover man and satisfy God. Those that deny the satisfaction of Christ, and talk of his dying to confirm the truth, and give us an example of meekness, patience, and self-denial, affirming these to be the sole ends of his death, do not only therein root up the foundations of their own comfort, peace and pardon, but most boldly impeach and tax the infinite wisdom. God could have done all this at a cheaper rate: the sufferings of a mere creature are able to attain these ends: the deaths of the martyrs did it. But who by dying can satisfy and reconcile God? what creature can bring him an adequate and proportionable value for sin? yes, for all the sin that ever was, or shall be transmitted to the natures, or committed by the persons, of all God's elect, from Adam, to the last that shall be found alive at the Lord's coming? surely, none but Christ can do this.

4. Christ's priesthood implies the necessity of his being God- man. It was necessary he should be a man, in order to his passion, compassion, and derivation of his righteousness and holiness to men. Had he not been a man, he had had no sacrifice to offer, no soul or body to suffer in. The Godhead is immortal, and above all those

sufferings and miseries Christ felt for us. Besides, his being man, fills him with compassion, and tender sense of our miseries: this makes him a merciful and faithful High priest, Heb. 4:15. and not only fits him to pity, but to sanctify us also; for "he that sanctifies, and they that are sanctified, are both of one," Heb. 2:11,14, 17. And as necessary it was our High-priest should be God, since the value and efficacy of our sacrifice results from thence.

5. The priesthood of Christ implies the extremity of his sufferings. In sacrifices, you know, there was a destruction, a kind of annihilation of the creature to the glory of God. The shedding of the creature's blood, and burning its flesh with fire, was but an umbrage, or faint resemblance of what Christ endured, when he made his soul an offering for sin.

And lastly, It implies the gracious design of God to reconcile us at a dear rate to himself in that he called and confirmed Christ in his priesthood by an oath, and thereby laid out a sacrifice, of infinite value, for the world. Sins, for which no sacrifice is allowed, are desperate sins, and the case of such sinners is helpless: But if God allow, yes, and provide a sacrifice himself, how plainly does it speak his intentions of peace and mercy? These things are manifestly presupposed, or implied in Christ's priesthood.

"This priesthood of Christ is that function, wherein he comes before God, in our name and place, to fulfill the law, and offer up himself to him a sacrifice of reconciliation for our sins; and by his intercession to continue and apply the purchase of his blood to them for whom he shed it:" All this is contained in that famous scripture, Heb. 10:7, 8, 9, 10,11, 12, 13. Or, more briefly, the priesthood of Christ is that whereby he expiated the sins of men, and obtained the favor of God for them, Col. 1:20, 22. Rom. 5:10. But because I shall insist more largely upon the several parts and fruits of this office, it shall here suffice to speak this much as to its general nature; which was the first thing proposed for explication.

Secondly, The necessity of Christ's priesthood comes next to be opened. Touching which, I affirm, according to the scriptures, it was necessary, in order to our salvation, that such a Priest should, by such a sacrifice, appear before God for us.

The truth of this assertion will be cleared by these two principles, which are evident in the scripture, namely, That God stood upon full satisfaction, and would not remit one sin without it: and that fallen man is totally incapable of tendering him any such satisfaction; therefore Christ, who only can, must do it, or we perish.

1. God stood upon full satisfaction, and could not remit one sin without it. This will be cleared from the nature of sin; and from the veracity and wisdom of God.

(1.) From the nature of sin, which deserves that the sinner should suffer for it. Penal evil; in a course of justice, follows moral evil. Sin and sorrow ought to go together; between these is a necessary connection, Rom. 6:13. "The wages of sin is death."

(2.) The veracity of God requires it. The word is gone out of his mouth; Gen. 2:17. "in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die." From that time he was instantly and certainly obnoxious and liable to the death of soul and body. The law pronounces him cursed, "that continues not in all things that are written therein to do them," Gal. 3:9. Now, though man's threatening are often vain and insignificant things, yet God's shall surely take place; "not one little of the law shall fail, until all be fulfilled," Matt. 5:18. God will be true in his threatening, though thousands and millions perish.

(3.) The wisdom of God, by which he governs the rational world, admits not of a dispensation or relaxation of the threatenings without satisfaction: for, as good no king, as no laws for government; as good no law, as no penalty; and as good no penalty, as no execution. To this purpose one well observes; "It is altogether indecent, especially to the wisdom and righteousness of God, that

that which provokes the execution, should procure the abrogation of his law; that that should supplant and undermine the law, for the alone preventing whereof the law was before established." How could it be expected, that men should fear and tremble before God, when they should find themselves more scared than hurt by his threats against sin! So then God stood upon satisfaction, and would admit no treaty of peace, on any other ground.

Object. Let none here object, that reconciliation upon this only score of satisfaction, is derogatory to the riches of grace; or that we allow not God what we do men, namely, to forgive an injury freely, without satisfaction.

Sol. Free forgiveness to us, and full satisfaction made to God by Jesus Christ for us, are not "asurata", things inconsistent with each other, as in its proper place shall be more fully cleared to you. And for denying that to God which we allow to men, you must know, that man and man stand on even ground: man is not capable of being wronged and injured by man, as God is by man, there is no comparison between the nature of the offences.

To conclude, man only can freely forgive man; in a private capacity, so far as wrong concerns himself; but ought not to do so in a public capacity, as he is judge, and bound to execute justice impartially. God is our Law-giver and Judge: he will not dispense with violations of the law, but strictly stands upon complete satisfaction.

2. Man can render to God no satisfaction of his own, for the wrong done by his sin. He finds no way to compensate and make God amends, either by doing, or by suffering his will.

(1.) Not by doing: this way is shut up to all the world; none can satisfy God, or reconcile himself to him this way; for it is evident our best works are sinful; "All our righteousness is as filthy rags," Isa. 64:6. And it is strange any should imagine, that one sin should make satisfaction for another. If it be said, not what is sinful in our duties,

but what is spiritual, pure and good, may ingratiate us with God? it is at hand to reply, that what is good in any of our duties, is a debt we owe to God, yes, we owe him perfect obedience; and it is not imaginable how we should pay one debt by another; quit a former by contracting a new engagement. If we do anything that is good, we are beholden to grace for it, John 15:5. 2 Cor. 3:5. 1 Cor. 15:10. In a word, those that have had as much to plead on that score as any now living, have left, and utterly given up all hopes of appeasing and satisfying the justice of God, that way. It is like, holy Job feared God, and eschewed evil as much as any of you; yet he says, Job 9:20, 21. "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul; I would despise my life." It may be David was a man as much after the heart of God as you; yet he said, Psalm. 143:2. "Enter not into judgement with your servant; for in your sight shall no man be justified." It is like Paul lived as holy, heavenly, and fruitful a life as the best of you, and far, far beyond you; yet he says, 1 Cor. 4:4. "I know (or am conscious to myself) of nothing, yet am I not hereby justified." His sincerity might comfort him, but could not justify him. And what need I say more? The Lord has shut up this way to all the world; and the scriptures speak it roundly and plainly: Rom. 3:20. "Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Compare Gal. 3:21. Rom. 8:3.

(2.) And as man can never reconcile himself to God by doing, so neither by suffering: that is equally impossible; for no sufferings can satisfy God, but such as are proportionable to the offence we suffer for. And if so, an infinite suffering must be borne: I say infinite, for sin is an infinite evil, objectively considered, as it wrongs an infinite God. Now sufferings may be said to be infinite, either in respect of their height, exceeding all bounds and limits; the letting out of the wrath and fury of an infinite God: or in respect of duration, being endless and everlasting. In the first sense, no creature can bear an infinite wrath, it would swallow us up. In the second, it may be borne as the damned do; but then, ever to be suffering, is never to have satisfied.

So that no man can be his own priest, to reconcile himself to God by what he can do or suffer. And therefore, one that is able by doing and suffering, to reconcile him, must undertake it, or we perish. Thus you see plainly and briefly the general nature and necessity of Christ's priesthood.

From both these, several useful corollaries, or practical deductions, offer themselves.

Corollary 1. This shows, in the first place, the incomparable excellency of the reformed Christian religion above all other religions, known to, or professed in the world. What other religions seek, the Christian religion only finds, even a solid foundation for true peace and settlement of conscience. While the Jews seek it in vain in the law, the Mohammedan in his external and ridiculous observances; the Papist in his own merits; the believer only finds it in the blood of this great Sacrifice; this, and nothing less than this, can pacify a distressed conscience, laboring under the weight of its own guilt. Conscience demands no less to satisfy it, than God demands to satisfy him. The grand inquest of conscience is, is God satisfied? If he be satisfied, I am satisfied. Woeful is the state of that man, that feels the worm of conscience nibbling on the most tender part of the soul, and has no relief against it; that feels the intolerable scalding wrath of God burning within, and has nothing to cool it. Hear me, you that slight the troubles of conscience, that call them fancies and melancholy whimsies; if you ever had had but one sick night for sin, if you had ever felt that shame, fears horror, and despair, which are the dismal effects of an accusing and condemning conscience, you would account it an unspeakable mercy to hear of a way for the discharge of a poor sinner from that guilt: you would kiss the feet of that messenger that could bring you tidings of peace; you would call him blessed, that should direct you to an effectual remedy. Now, whoever you are, that finest away in your iniquities, that droop from day to day under the present wounds, the dismal presages of conscience, know that your soul and peace can never meet, until you are persuaded to come to this blood of sprinkling.

The blood of this sacrifice speaks better things than the blood of Abel. The blood of this sacrifice is the blood of God, Acts 20:27. Invaluably precious blood, 1 Pet. 1:18. One drop of it infinitely excels the blood of all mere creatures, Heb. 10:4, 5, 6. Such is the blood that must do you good. Lord, I must have such blood (says conscience) as is capable of giving you full satisfaction, or it can give me no peace. The blood of all the cattle upon a thousand hills cannot do this. What is the blood of beasts to God? the blood of all the men in the world can do nothing in this case. What is our polluted blood worth? No, no, it is the blood of God, that must satisfy both you and me.

Yes, Christ's blood is not only the blood of God, but it is blood shed in your stead, and in your place and room, Gal. 3:13. "He was made a curse for us." And so it becomes sin-pardoning blood, Heb. 9:22. Eph. 1:7. Col. 1:14. Rom. 3:26. And consequently, conscience-pacifying, and soul quieting blood, Col. 1:20. Eph. 2:13, 14. Rom. 3:26. O bless God, that ever the news of this blood came to your ears. With hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, admire that grace that cast your lot in a place where this joyful sound rings in the ears of poor sinners. What had your case been, if your mother had brought you forth in the deserts of Arabia, or in the wastes of America! Or that if you have been nursed up by a popish father, who could have told you of no other remedy when in distress for sin, but to go such a pilgrimage, to whip and lash yourself, to satisfy an angry God! Surely the pure light of the gospel shining upon this generation, is a mercy never to be duly valued, never to be enough prized.

Corollary 2. Hence also be inferred of the necessity of faith, in order to a state and sense of peace with God: for to what purpose is the blood of Christ our sacrifice shed, unless it be actually and personally applied, and appropriated by faith? You know when the sacrifices under the law were brought to be slain, he that brought it was to put his hand upon the head of the sacrifice, and so it was accepted for him, to make an atonement, Lev. 1:4. not only to signify, that how it was no more his, but God's, the property being transferred by a kind of manumission; nor yet that he voluntarily gave it to the Lord as his

own free act; but principally it noted the putting off his sins, and the penalty due to him for them, upon the head of the sacrifice: and so it implied in it an execration, as if he had said, upon your head be the evil. So the learned observe; the ancient Egyptians were accustomed expressly to imprecate, when they sacrificed; if any evil be coming upon us or upon Egypt, let it turn and rest upon this head, laying their hand, at these words, on the sacrifice's head. And upon that ground, says the Historian, none of them would eat of the head of any living creature. You must also lay the hand of faith upon Christ your sacrifice, not to imprecate, but apply and appropriate his to your own souls, he having been made a curse for you.

To this the whole gospel tends, even to persuade sinners to apply Christ, and his blood to their own souls. To this he invited us, Matth. 11:28. "Come unto me all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." For this end our sacrifice was lifted up upon the altar; John 3:14, 15. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The effects of the law, not only upon the conscience, filling it with torments, but upon the whole person, bringing death upon it, are here shadowed out by the stingings of fiery serpents; and Christ by the brazen serpent which Moses exalted for the Israelites, that were stung, to look unto. And as by looking to it they were healed; so by believing, or looking to Christ in faith, our souls are healed. Those that looked not to the brazen serpent, died infallibly; so must all that look not to Jesus, our sacrifice, by faith. It is true, the death of Christ is the meritorious cause of remission, but faith is the instrumental applying cause; and as Christ's blood is necessary in its place, so is our faith in its place also. For to the actual remission of sin, and peace of conscience, there must be a cooperation of all the causes of remission and peace. As there is the grace and love of God for an efficient and impulsive cause, and the death of Christ our sacrifice, the meritorious cause; so of necessity there must be faith, the instrumental cause. And these con-causes do all sweetly meet in their influences, and activities, in our remission, and tranquility of

conscience; and they are all (suo genare) in their kind and place absolutely necessary to the procuring and applying of it.

What is the need that the blood of Christ is shed, if I have no interest in it, no saving influences from it? O be convinced, this is the end, the business of life. Faith is the Phoenix-grace, as Christ is the Phoenix-mercy. He is the gift, John 4:10. And this is "the work of God," John 6:29. The death of Christ, the offers and tenders of Christ, never saved one soul in themselves, without believing application. But, woe is me! how do I see sinners, either not at all touched with the sense of sin, and so being whole, need not the physician; or if any be stung and wounded with guilt, how do they lick themselves whole with their own duties and reformations! As physicians say of wounds, let them be kept clean, and nature will find balsam of its own to heal them: If it be so in spiritual wounds, what need Christ to have left the Father's bosom, and come down to die in the quality and nature of a sacrifice for us? O if men can but have health, pleasure, riches, honors, and any way make a shift to still a brawling conscience, that it may not check or interrupt them in these enjoyments, Christ may go where he will for them.

And I am assured, until God show you the face of sin, in the glass of the law, make the scorpions and fiery serpents, that lurk in the law, and in your own consciences, to come hissing about you, and smiting you with their deadly stings, until you have had some sick nights, and sorrowful days for sin, you will never go up and down seeking an interest in the blood of his sacrifice with tears.

But, reader, if ever this be your condition, then will you know the worth of a Christ; then will you have a value for the blood of sprinkling. As I remember it is storied of our crook-backed Richard, when he was put to a rout in a field-battle, and flying on foot from his pursuing enemies; he cried out, O now says he, a kingdom for a horse. So will you cry, A kingdom for a Christ; ten thousand worlds now, if I had them, for the blood of sprinkling.

Corollary 3. Is Christ your High-priest, and is his priesthood so indispensably necessary to our salvation? Then, freely acknowledge your utter impotency to reconcile yourselves to God by anything you can do, or suffer; and let Christ have the whole glory of your recovery ascribed to him. It is highly reasonable that he that laid down the whole price, should have the whole praise. If any man think, or say, he could have made an atonement for himself, he does therein cast no light reproach upon that profound wisdom which laid the design of our redemption in the death of Christ. But of this I have spoken elsewhere. And therefore,

Corollary 4. In the last place, I rather choose to persuade you to see your necessity of this priest, and his most excellent sacrifice; and accordingly to make use of it. The best of you have polluted natures, poisoned in the womb with sin; those natures have need of this sacrifice, they must have the benefit of this blood to pardon and cleanse them, or be eternally damned. Hear me, you that never spent a tear for the sin of nature, if the blood of Christ be not sprinkled upon your natures, it had been better for you, that you had been the generation of beasts, the offspring of dragons or toads. They have a contemptible, but not a vitiated sinful nature, as you have.

Your actual sins have need of the priest, and his sacrifice, to procure remission for them. If he take them not away by the blood of his cross, they can never be taken away, they will lie down with you in the dust; they will rise with you and follow you to the judgement seat, crying, We are your works, and we will follow you. All your repentance and tears, could you weep as many as there be drops in the ocean, can never take away sin. Your duties, even the best of them, need this sacrifice. It is in the virtue thereof that they are accepted of God. And were it not that God had respect to Christ's offering, he would not regard, or look towards you, or any of your duties. You could no more come near to God, than you could approach a devouring fire, or dwell with everlasting burnings.

Well then, say, I need such a price every way. Love him in all his offices. See the goodness of God in providing such a sacrifice for you. Meat, drink, and air, are not more necessary to maintain your natural life, than the death of Christ is to give and maintain your spiritual life.

O then, let your soul grow big while meditating of the usefulness and excellency of Christ, which is thus displayed and unfolded in every branch of the gospel. And, with a deep sense upon your heart, let your lips say, Blessed be God, for Jesus Christ!

## **The Excellency of our High-Priest's Oblation,**

### **being the first Act or Part of His Priestly Office**

"For by one offering he has perfected forever, those who are sanctified." Hebrews 10:14

After this more general view and consideration of the priesthood of Christ, method requires that we come to a nearer and more particular consideration of the parts thereof, which are his oblation and intercession, answerable to the double office of the High-priest, offering the blood of the sacrifices without the holy place, which typed out Christ's oblation, and then once a year bringing the blood before the Lord into the most holy place, presenting it before God, and with it sprinkling the mercy-seat, wherein the intercession of Christ (the other part or act of his priesthood) was in a lively manner typified to us.

My present business is to open and apply the oblation of Christ; the efficacy and excellency whereof is excellently illustrated, by a comparison with all other oblations, in the precedent context, and with a singular encomium commended to us in these words, from the singularity of it. It is but one offering; one not only specifically, but one numerically considered; but once offered, and never more to be repeated: for Christ dies no more, Rom. 6:9. He also commends it from the efficacy of it; by it he has perfected it, that is not only purchased a possibility of salvation, but all that we need to our full perfection. It brings in a most entire, complete and perfect righteousness: all that remains to make us perfectly happy, is but the full application of the benefits procured by this oblation for us. Moreover, it is here commended from the extensiveness of it; not being restrained to a few, but applicable to all the saints, in all the ages and places of the world: for this indefinite, them that that sanctified, is equivalent to a universal, and is as much as if he had said, To all and every saint, from the beginning to the end of the world. Lastly, He commends it from its perpetuity; it perfects forever, that is, it is of everlasting efficacy: it shall abide as fresh, vigorous and powerful to the end of the world, as it was the first moment it was offered up. All runs into this sweet truth:

**DOCTRINE.** That the oblation made unto God by Jesus Christ, is of unspeakable value, and everlasting efficacy, to perfect all those who are, or shall be sanctified, to the end of the world.

Out of this fountain flow all the excellent blessings that believers either have, or hope for. Had it not been for this, there had been no such things in rerum natura, as justification, adoption, salvation, etc. peace with God and hopes of glory, pardon of sin, and divine acceptance: these and all other our best mercies, had been but so many entia, rationis, mere conceits. A man, as one says, might have happily imagined such things as these, as he may golden mountains, and rivers of liquid gold, and rocks of diamonds: but these things could never have had any real existence extra mentem, had not Christ offered up himself a sacrifice to God for us. It is "the blood of

Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered up himself without spot to God, that purges the conscience from dead works," Heb. 9:14. that is, from the sentence of condemnation and death, as it is reflected by conscience, for our works sake.

His appearing before God as our priest, with such an offering for us, is that which removes our guilt and fear together: "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Heb. 9:29. Now, forasmuch as the point before us is of so great weight in itself, and so fundamental to our safety and comfort, I shall endeavor to give you as distinct and clear an account of it, as can consist with that brevity which I must necessarily use. And therefore, reader, apply your mind attentively to the consideration of this excellent Priest that appears before God, and the sacrifices he offers, with the properties and adjuncts thereof; the person before whom he brings, and to whom he offers it; the persons for whom he offers; and the end for which this oblation is made.

First, The Priest that appears before God with an oblation for us, is Jesus Christ, God-man: the dignity of whose person dignified, and derived an inestimable worth to the offering he made. There were many priests before him, but none like unto him, either for the purity of his person, or the perpetuity of his priesthood: they were sinful men, and offered for their own sins, as well as the sins of the people, Heb. 5:3. "but he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," Heb. 7:2. He could stand before God, even in the eye of his justice, as a lamb without spot. Though he made his soul an offering for sin, "yet he had done no iniquity, nor was any guile found in his mouth," Isa. 53:9. and indeed his offering had done us no good, if the least taint of sin had been found on him. They were mortal men, that "continued not by reason of death," Heb. 7:25, but Christ is "a Priest forever," Psalm. 110:4.

Secondly, The oblation or offering he made, was not the blood of beasts, but his own blood, Heb. 9:12. And herein he transcended all other priests, that he had something of his own to offer; he had a

body given him to be at his own dispose, to this use and purpose, Heb. 10:10. he offered his body: "yes, not only his body, but his soul was made an offering for sin," Isa. 53:10. We had made a forfeiture of our souls and bodies by sin, and it was necessary the sacrifice of Christ should be answerable to the debt we owed. And when Christ came to offer his sacrifice, he stood not only in the capacity of a priest, but also in that of a surety: and so his soul stood in the stead of ours, and his body in the stead of our bodies. Now the excellency of this oblation will appear in the following adjuncts and properties of it. This oblation being for the matter of it, the soul and body of Jesus Christ, is therefore,

1. Invaluably precious. So the apostle styles it, 1 Pet. 1:19. "You were redeemed *"timioi aimati"*, with the precious blood of the Son of God:" and such it behooved him to offer. For it being offered as an expiatory sacrifice, it ought to be equivalent, in its own intrinsic value to all the souls and bodies that were to be redeemed by it. And so it was, and more also for there was a redundancy of value, an over plus of merit, which went to make a purchase for the redeemed, as will be opened in its place. So that, as one rich diamond is more worth than a thousand pebbles: one piece of gold, than many counters; so the soul and body of one Christ, are much more excellent than all the souls and bodies in the world.

And yet I dare not affirm, as some do, that by reason of the infinite preciousness of Christ's blood, one drop thereof had been sufficient to have redeemed the whole world: for if one drop had been enough, why was all the rest, even to the last drop, shed? Was God cruel, to exact more from him than was needful and sufficient: Besides, we must remember, that the passions of Christ, which were inflicted on him as the curse of the law, these only are the passions which are sufficient for our redemption from the curse of the law; now it was not a drop of blood, but death which was contained in the curse: this therefore was necessary to be inflicted. But surely as none but God can estimate the weight and evil of sin, so none but he can comprehend the worth and preciousness of the blood of Christ, shed

to expiate it. And being so infinitely precious a thing which was offered up to God, it must,

2. Needs be a most complete and all-sufficient oblation, fully to expiate the sins of all for whom it was offered, in all ages of the world. The virtue of this sacrifice reaches backward as far as Adam, and reaches forward to the last person of the elect springing from him. That the efficacy of it thus reaches back to Adam, is plain: for, on the account thereof, he is stiled "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. 13:8.

And to the same sense a judicious expositor understands those words of Christ, John 8:58. "Before Abraham was, I am." And, look, as the sun at midday extends his light and influence, not only forward towards the West, but also backward towards the East, where he arose; so did this most efficacious sacrifice reach all the elect in the virtue of it, who died before Christ came in the flesh. It is therefore but a vain cavil, that some make against the satisfaction of Christ, to render it needless, when they say, many were saved without it, even as many as were saved before the death of Christ. For they say, the effect cannot be before the cause, which is true of physical, but not of moral causes; and such was Christ's satisfaction. As for example, a captive is freed out of prison from the time that his surety undertakes for him, and promises his ransom; here the captive is actually delivered, though he ransom that delivered him be not yet actually paid. So it was in this case; Christ had engaged to the Father to satisfy for them, and upon that security they were delivered.

And the virtue of this oblation not only reaches those believers, that lived and died before Christ's day, but it extends itself forward to the end of the world. Hence Heb. 13:8. Christ is said to be "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" that is "He is not so a Savior to us that now live, as that he was not their Savior also, that believed in him, before us, from the beginning: yet not so a Savior both to them and us, as that he shall not be the same to all that shall believe on him to the world's end."

To the same sense are those words, Heb. 11:40. rightly paraphrased, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect:" q. d. God has appointed the accomplishment of the promise of sending the Messiah, to be in the last times, that they (namely, that lived before Christ, should not be perfected, that is, justified and saved by anything done in their time, but by looking to our time, and Christ's satisfaction made therein; whereby they and we are perfected together. No tract of time can wear out the virtue of this eternal sacrifice. It is as fresh, vigorous, and potent now, as the first hour it was offered. And though he actually offer it no more, yet he virtually continues it by his intercession now in heaven; for there he is still a Priest. And therefore, about sixty years after his ascension, when he gave the Revelation to John, he appears to him in his priestly garment, Rev. 1:13. "Clothed in a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle:" in allusion to the priestly ephod, and curious girdle.

And as the virtue of this oblation reaches backward and forward, to all ages, and to all believers, so to all the sins of all believers, which are fully purged and expiated by it: this no other oblation could do. The legal sacrifices were no real expiations, but rather remembrances of sins, Heb. 9:9, 12. Heb. 10:3. And all the virtue they had, consisted in their typical relation to this sacrifice, Gal. 3:23. Heb. 9:13. And, separate from it, were altogether weak, unprofitable, and insignificant things, Heb. 7:18. But this blood CLEANSSES from all sins, 1 John 1:7. and sin, originating, or originated, or actual, flowing from them both. It expiates all fully, without exception, and finally, without revocation. So that by his being made sin for us, we are made not only righteous, but "the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5:21.

3. And lastly, to name no more; being so precious in itself, and so efficacious to expiate sin, it must needs be a most grateful oblation to the Lord, highly pleasing and delightful in his eyes. And so indeed it is said, Eph. 5:2. "He gave himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice

to God, for a sweet smelling savor." Not that God took any delight or content in the bitter sufferings of Christ, simply and in themselves considered; but with relation to the end for which he was offered, even our redemption and salvation.

Hence arose the delight and pleasure God had in it; this made him take pleasure in bruising, him, Isa. 53:10. God smelled a savor of rest in this sacrifice. The meaning is, that as men are offended with a stench, and their stomachs rise at it, and on the contrary delighted with sweet odors and fragrances; so the blessed God speaking after the manner of man, is offended, and filled with loathing, and abhorrence by our sins; but infinitely pleased and delighted in the offering of Christ for them, which came up as an odor of sweet smelling savor to him, Whereof the costly perfumes under the law were types and shadows. This was the oblation.

Thirdly, This oblation he brings before God, and to him he offers it up: So speaks the apostle, Heb. 9:14. "Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God." As Christ sustained the capacity of a surety, so God of a creditor, who exacted satisfaction from him; that is, he required from him, as our surety, the penalty due to us for our sin. And so Christ had to do immediately with God, yes, with a God infinitely wronged, and incensed by sin against us. To this incensed Majesty, Christ our High priest approached, as to a devouring fire, with the sacrifice.

Fourthly, The persons for whom, and in whose stead he offered himself to God, was the whole number of God's elect, which were given him of the Father, neither more nor less: So speak the scriptures. He laid down his life for the sheep, John 10:15. for the church, Acts 20:28. for the children of God, John 11:50, 51, 52!. It is confessed, there is sufficiency of virtue in this Sacrifice to redeem the whole world, and on that account some divines affirm he is called the "Savior of the world," John 4:42 et alibi. We acknowledge also, that he purchased the services of others, besides the elect, to be useful to them, as they many ways are. In which sense others take those

scriptures that speak so universally of the extent of his death. We also acknowledge that the elect being scattered in all parts, and among all ranks of men in the world, and unknown to those that are to tender Jesus Christ to men by the preaching of the gospel; the stile of the gospel (as it was necessary) is by such indefinite expressions suited to the general tenders they are to make of him: but that the efficacy and saving virtues of this all-sufficient sacrifice, is co-extended with God's election, so that they all, and no others can, or shall reap the special benefits of it, is too clear in the scriptures to be denied, Eph. 5:23. John 17:2, 9, 19, 20. John 10:26, 27, 28. 1 Tim. 4:10.

Fifthly, The design and end of this oblation was to atone, pacify, and reconcile God, by giving him a full and adequate compensation or satisfaction for the sins of these his elect: so speaks the apostle, Col. 1:20. "And having made peace, through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." So 2 Cor. 5:19. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." Reconciliation is the making up of that breach caused by sin, between us and God, and restoring us again to his favor and friendship. For this end Christ offered up himself to God; I say, not for this end only, but more especially; hence it is called "hilasmos", a propitiation; and so the Seventy render that place, Numb. 15, the propitiating ram. But here I would not be mistaken, as though the reconciliation were made only between us and God the Father, by the blood of the cross; for we were reconciled by it to the whole Trinity. Every sin being made against the divine Majesty, it must needs follow, that the three Persons, having the same divine essence, must be all offended by the commission, and so all reconciled by the expiation and remission of the same. But reconciliation is said to be with the Father, because, though the works of the Trinity, ad extra, be undivided, and what one does, all do; and what is done to one, is done to all; yet by this form and manner of expression (as a learned man well observes), the scriptures point out the proper office of each Person. The Father receives us into favor; the Son mediates, and gives the ransom which

procures it; the Spirit applies and seals this to the persons and hearts of believers. However, being reconciled to the Father, we are also reconciled to the Son, and Spirit, as they are one God in three Persons. And if it be objected, that then Christ offered up a sacrifice, or laid down a price to reconcile us to himself; I shall more fairly and directly meet with, and satisfy that objection, when I come to speak of Christ's satisfaction, which is one of the principal fruits of this excellent oblation. For the present, this may inform you about the nature and precious worth of Christ's oblation. The uses whereof follow in these five practical inferences.

INFERENCE 1. Hence it follows, That actual believers are fully freed from the guilt of their sins, and shall never more come under condemnation.

The obligation of sin is perfectly abolished by the virtue of this sacrifice. When Christ became our sacrifice, he both bare, and bare away our sins. First, They were laid upon him, then expiated by him; so much is imported in that word, Heb. 9:28. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many". To bear, the word is a full and emphatical word, signifying not only to bear, but to bear away. So John 1:29. "Behold the Lamb of God, "ho arion", that takes away the sins of the world;" not only declaratively, or by way of manifestation to the conscience; but really, making a purgation of sin, as it is in Hebrews 1:3, "katarismon poiesamenos", word for word, a purgation being made, and not declared only. Now, how great a mercy is this, "that by him, all that believe should be justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts 13:39. What shall we call this grace? surely, we should do somewhat more than admire it, and faint under the sense of such a mercy. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," Psalm. 32: or, O the blessedness or felicities of him that is pardoned! who can express the mercies, comforts, happiness of such a state as this? Reader, let me beg you, if you be one of this pardoned number, to look over the cancelled bonds, and see what vast sums are remitted to you. Remember what you were in your natural estate: possibly you

were in that black bill, 1 Cor. 6:3. What, and yet pardoned! full and finally pardoned, and that freely, as to any hand that you had in the procurement of it! what can't you do less, than fall down at the feet of free grace, and kiss those feet that moved so freely towards so vile a sinner? It is not long since your iniquities were upon you, and you pinedst away in them. Their guilt could by no creature power be separated from your soul. Now they are removed from you, as far as the East from the West, Psalm. 103:11. So that, when the East and West, which are the two opposite points of heaven, meet, then your soul and its guilt may meet again together.

O the unspeakable efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, which extends to all sins! 1 John 1:7. "The blood of Christ CLEANSES from all sins, sins past and present, without exception. And some divines of good note affirm, all sins to come also; for, (says Mr. Paul Blains), original sin, in which all future sins are, as fruits in the root, is pardoned; and if these were not pardoned, they would void and invalidate former pardons. And lastly, it would derogate from the most plenary satisfaction of Christ. But the most say, and I think, truly, that all the past sins of believers are pardoned, without revocation, all their present sins without exception; but not their sins to come by way of anticipation: and yet for them there is a pardon of course, which is applied on their repentance, and application, of Christ's blood; so that none of them shall make void former pardons. O let these things slide sweetly to your melting heart.

INFERENCE. 2. From this oblation Christ made of himself to God for our sins, we infer the inflexible severity of divine Justice, which could be no other way diverted from us, and appeased, but by the blood of Christ. If Christ had not presented himself to God for us, Justice would not have spared us: And if he do appear before God as our surety, it will not spare him; Rom. 8:32. "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to death for us all." If forbearance might have been expected from any, surely it might from God, "who is very pitiful, and full of tender mercy," James 5:11. yet God in this case spared not. If one might have expected sparing mercy and abatement

from any, surely Christ might most of all expect it from his own Father; yet you hear, God spared not his own Son. Sparing mercy is the lowest degree of mercy, yet it was denied to Christ: he abated him not a minute of the time appointed for his suffering, nor one degree of wrath he was to bear; nay, though in the garden Christ fell upon the ground, and sweat clodders of blood, and in that unparalleled agony scrued up his spirit to the highest intention, in that pitiful cry, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass;" and though he brake out upon the cross, in that heart-rending complaint, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" yet no abatement; Justice will not bend in the least; but having to do with him on this account, resolves upon satisfaction from his blood. If this be so, what is the case of your soul, reader, if you be a man or woman that has no interest in this sacrifice? For if these things be done in (Christ) the green tree, what will be done to (you) the dry tree? Luke 23:31 "That is, if God so deal with me, that I am not only innocent, but like a green and fruitful tree, full of all delectable fruits of holiness, yet if the fire of his indignation thus seize upon me, what will be your condition, that are both barren and guilty, void of all good fruit, and full of all unrighteousness," and so like dry scary wood, are fitted as fuel to the fire? Consider with yourself, man, how canned you imagine you canned support that infinite wrath that Christ grappled with in the room of God's elect! He had the strength of a Deity to support him, Isa. 42:1. "Behold my servant whom I uphold." He had the fullness of his Spirit to prepare him, Isa. 61:11. He had the ministry of an angel, who came post from heaven to relieve him in his agony, Luke 22:43. He had the ear of his Father to hear him, for he cried, "and was heard in that he feared," Heb. 5:7. He was assured of the victory, before the combat; he knew he should be justified, Isa. 50:8. and yet for all this he was sore amazed, and sorrowful even to death, and his heart was melted like wax in the midst of his affections. If the case stood thus with Christ, notwithstanding all these advantages he had to bear the wrath of God for a little time; how do you think, a poor worm as you are, to dwell with everlasting burnings, or contend with devouring fire? Luther saw ground enough for what he said, when he cried, out, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God," That is, with a God

out of Christ: for, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Woe and alas for evermore to that man who meets a just and righteous God without a Mediator! Whoever you are that readest these lines, I beseech you, by the mercies of God, by all the regard and love you have to your own soul, neglect not time, but make quick and sure work of it. Get an interest in this sacrifice quickly, what else will be your state when vast eternity opens to swallow you up? what will you do, man, when your eye-strings and heart strings are breaking? O what a fearful shriek will your conscience give, when you are presented before the dreadful God, and no Christ to screen you from his indignation! Happy is that man who can say in a dying hour, as one did, who being desired, a little before his dissolution, to give his friends a little taste of his present hopes, and the grounds of them, cheerfully answered, I will let you know how it is with me: then stretching forth his hand, said,

"Here is the grave, the wrath of God, and devouring flame, the just punishment of sin, on the one side: and here am I, a poor sinful soul, on the other side: but this is my comfort, the covenant of grace, which is established upon so many sure promises, has saved all. There is an act of oblivion passed in heaven: I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more. This is the blessed privilege of all within the covenant, among whom I am one." O it is sweet at all times, especially at such a time, to see the reconciled face of God, through Jesus Christ, and hear the voice of peace through the blood of the cross.

INFERENCE. 3. Has Christ offered up himself a sacrifice to God for us? Then let us improve, in every condition, this sacrifice, and labor to get hearts duly affected with such a sight as faith can give us of it. Whatever the condition or complaint of any Christian is, the beholding the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world, may give him strong support, and sweet relief. Do you complain of the hardness of your hearts, and want of love to Christ? Behold him as offered up to God for you; and such a sight, (if any in the world will do it) will melt your hard hearts. Zech. 12:10. "They shall look upon

me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn." It is reported of Johannes Milieus, that he was never observed to speak of Christ and his sufferings, but his eyes would drop. Are you too little touched and unaffected with the evil of sin? Is it your complaint, Christian, that you cannot make sin bear so hard upon your heart as you would? Consider but what you have now read; realize this sacrifice by faith, and try what efficacy there is in it to make sin forever bitter as death to your soul. Suppose your own Father had been stabbed to the heart with such a knife, and his blood were upon it, would you delight to see, or endure to use that knife any more? sin is the knife that stabbed Christ to the heart; this shed his blood. Surely, you can never make light of that which lay so heavy upon the soul and body of Jesus Christ.

Or is your heart pressed down even to despondency, under the guilt of sin, so that you cry, how can such a sinner as I be pardoned? my sin is greater than can be forgiven? "Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world." Remember that no sin can stand before the efficacy of his blood. 1 John 1:7. "The blood of Jesus Christ **CLEANSSES** from all sin." This sacrifice makes unto God full satisfaction.

Are you at any time staggering through unbelief filled with unbelieving suspicions of the promises? Look hither, and you shall see them all ratified and established in the blood of the cross, so that hills and mountains shall sooner start from their own basis and centers, than one little of the promise fail. Heb. 9:17, 18, 19.

Do you at any time find your hearts fretting, disquieted, and impatient under every petty cross and trial? See how quietly Christ your sacrifice came to the altar, how meekly and patiently he stood under all the wrath of God and men together This will silence, convince, and shame you.

In a word, here you will see so much of the grace of God, and love of Christ, in providing and becoming a sacrifice for you: you will see

God taking vengeance against sin, but sparing the sinner: you will see Christ standing as the body of sin alone; for, "he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:" that whatever corruption burdens, this, in the believing application, will support; whatever grace is defective, this will revive it.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

## **The Intercession of Christ our High-priest, being the second Act or Part of his Priestly Office**

"Therefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25

Having dispatched the first part, or act of Christ's priesthood, consisting in his Oblation; we come to the other branch of it, consisting in his Intercession, which is nothing else but the virtual continuation of his offering once made on earth; that being the means of reconciling; this, the way and means of his applying to us the benefits purchased by it.

This second part, or branch of his priesthood, was typified by the High-priest's entering with the blood of the sacrifice and sweet incense into the holy place: Lev. 16:12, 13, 14. "And he shall take the censer full of burning coals of fire, from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within

the veil. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. And he shall take the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat, eastward."

Christ's offering himself on earth, answered to the killing of the sacrifice without; and his entering into heaven, there to intercede, was that which answered to the priest's going with blood, and his hands full of incense, within the veil. So that this is a part, yes, a special part of Christ's priesthood; and so necessary to it, that if he had not done this, all his work on earth had signified nothing; nor had he been a priest, That is, a complete and perfect priest, if he had remained on earth, Heb. 8:4. because the very design and end of shedding his blood on earth had been frustrated, which was to carry it before the Lord into heaven. So that this is the principal perfective part of the priesthood: he acted the first part on earth, in a state of deep abasement in the form of a servant; but he acts this in glory, whereto he is taken up, that he may fulfill his design in dying, and give the work of our salvation its last completing act. So much is imported in this scripture, which tells us, by reason hereof, he "is able to save to the uttermost," etc.

The words contain an encouragement to believers, to come to God in the way of faith, drawn from the intercession of Christ in heaven for them. In which you may take notice of these principal parts.

1. The quality of the persons here encouraged, who are described by a direct act of faith, as poor recumbents that are going out of themselves to God by faith; but conscious of great unworthiness in themselves, and thence apt to be discouraged.
2. The encouragement propounded to such believers, drawn from the ability of Jesus Christ, in whose name they go to the Father, to save them to the uttermost, that is fully, perfectly, completely; for so this emphatic word signifies, the saving us wholly, thoroughly,

completely, and altogether; giving our salvation its last act and completion.

The ground or reason of this his saving ability: "Seeing he ever lives to make intercession;" that is he has not only offered up his blood to God upon the tree, as a full price to purchase pardon and grace for believers; but lives in heaven, and that for every to apply unto us, in the way of intercession, all the fruits, blessings, and benefits, that that precious blood of his deserves, and has procured us a price for them. The words thus opened, the point I shall single out, from among many that lie in them, as most suitable to my design and purpose, is this;

DOCTRINE. That Jesus our High-priest lives forever, in the capacity of a potent Intercessor, in heaven for believers.

Here we will enquire, First, What it is for Christ to be an intercessor. Secondly, By what acts he performs that work in heaven. Thirdly, Whence the potency and prevalence of his intercession is. Fourthly, and lastly, How he lives forever to make intercession for us.

First, What it is for Christ to be an intercessor for us. To intercede in general, is to go between two parties, to entreat, argue, and plead with one for the other. And of this there are two sorts; 1. Ex charitate, ut fratres, that whereby one Christian prays and pleads with God for another, 1 Tim. 2:1. 2. Ex officio mediatorio, that whereby Christ, as an act of office, presents himself before God to request for us. Between these two is this difference, that the former is performed not in our own, but in another's name; we can tender no request to God immediately, or for our own sake, either for ourselves, or for others: John 16:23 "Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." But the latter, which is proper to Christ, is an intercession with God for us, in his own name, and upon the account of his own proper merit; the one is a private act of charity, the other a public act of office; and so he is our advocate or court friend, as Satan is or accuser or court-adversary. Satan is "ho antidikos", one that

charges us before God, 1 Pet. 5:8. and continually endeavors to make breaches between us and God. Christ is "ho parakletos", our attorney, or advocate, that pleads for us, and continues peace and friendship between us and God, 1 John 2:2. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

And thus to make intercession, is the peculiar and incommunicable prerogative of Jesus Christ, none but he can go in his own name to God. And in that sense we are to understand that place, Ezek. 44:2, 3. "Then said the Lord unto me, This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it, because the Lord the God of Israel has entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince, the prince he shall sit in it, to eat bread before the Lord," etc. The great broad gate, called here the prince's gate, signifies that abundant and direct entrance that Christ had into heaven by his own merits, and in his own name; this, says the Lord, shall be shut, no man shall enter in by it; all other men must come there, as it were, by collateral or side doors, which looked all towards the altar, namely, by virtue of the Mediator, and through the benefit of his death imputed to them.

And yet, though God has forever shut up and barred this way to all the children of men, telling us that no man shall ever have access to him in his own name, as Christ the Prince had; how do some, notwithstanding, strive to force open the Prince's gate? So do they, that found the intercession of saints upon their own works and merits, thereby robbing Christ of his peculiar glory; but all that so approach God, approach a devouring fire; Christ only, in the virtue of his blood, thus comes before him, to make intercession for us.

Secondly, We will enquire wherein the intercession of Christ in heaven consists, or by what acts he performs his glorious office there. And the scriptures place it in three things:

1. In his presenting himself before the Lord in our names, and upon our accounts. So we read in Heb. 9:28. "Christ is entered into heaven

itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." The apostle manifestly alludes to the High-priest's appearing in the holy of holies, which was the figure of heaven, presenting to the Lord the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, which were on his bosom and shoulders, Exod. 28:9,12, 28, 29. To which the church is supposed to allude in that request, Cant. 8:6. "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm." Now the very sight of Christ, our High priest in heaven, prevails exceedingly with God, and turns away his displeasure from us. As when God looks upon the rainbow, which is the sign of the covenant, he remembers the earth in mercy: so when he looks on Christ, his heart must needs be towards us, upon his account; and therefore in Rev. 4:3, Christ is compared to a rainbow encompassing the throne.

Christ performs his intercession-work in heaven, not by a naked appearing in the presence of God only, but also by presenting his blood, and all his sufferings to God, as a moving plea on our account. Whether he makes any proper oral intercession there, as he did on earth, is not so clear; some incline to it, and think it is countenanced by Zechariah, chapter 1:12,13. Where Christ our Intercessor presents a proper vocal request to the Father, in the behalf of his people; saying "O Lord of hosts, how long will you not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which you have had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the Lord answered him with good and comfortable words." And so Acts 2:23. as soon as he came to heaven, he is said (and that is the first fruits of his intercession) to obtain the promise of the Holy Spirit. But sure I am, an interceding voice is by an usual prosopopeia attributed to his blood; which in Heb. 12:24. is said "to speak better things than that of Abel." Now Abel's blood and so Christ's, do cry unto God, as the hire of the laborers unjustly detained, or the whole creation, which is in bondage, through our sins, is said to cry and groan in the ears of the Lord, Jam. 5:4. Rom. 8:22. not vocally, but efficaciously. A rare illustration of this efficacious intercession of Christ in heaven, we have in that famous story of Amintas, who appeared as an advocate for his brother AEchylus, who was strongly accused, and very likely

to be condemned to die. Now Amintas having performed great services, and merited highly of the common-wealth, in whose service one of his hands was cut off in the field; he comes into the court in his brother's behalf, and said nothing, but only lifted up his arm, and showed them cubitum sine manu, an arm without a hand, which so moved them, that, without a word speaking, they freed his brother immediately.

And thus if you look into Rev. 5:6. you shall see in what posture Christ is represented, visionally there, as standing between God and us; "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain;" that is bearing in his glorified body the marks of death and sacrifice. Those wounds he received for our sins on earth, are, as it were, still fresh bleeding in heaven: a moving and prevailing argument it is with the Father, to give out the mercies he pleads for.

3. And lastly, He presents the prayers of his saints to God, with his merits; and desires that they may for his sake be granted. He causes a cloud of incense to ascend before God with them, Rev. 8:3. All these were excellently typified out by the going in of the High-priest before the Lord, with the names of the children of Israel on his bosom, with the blood of the sacrifice, and his hands full of incense, as the apostle explains them in Heb. 7 and Heb. 9.

Thirdly, And that this intercession of Christ is most potent, successful, and prevalent with God, will be evinced, both from the qualification of this our Advocate, from his great interest in the Father, from the nature of the place he uses with God, and from the relation and interest believers have, both in the Father to whom, and the Son by whom this intercession is made.

1. Our intercessor in the heavens is every way able and fit for the work he is engaged in there. Whatever is desirable in an advocate, is in him eminently. It is necessary that he who undertakes to plead the cause of another, especially if it be weighty and intricate, should be

wise, faithful, tender-hearted, and one that concerns himself in the success of his business. Our Advocate Christ, wants no wisdom to manage his work; he is the wisdom of God, yes, only wise, Jude 25. There is much folly in the best of our duties, we know not how to press an argument home with God; but Christ has the care of it. Our business is in a wise hand: he is no less faithful than wise, therefore he is called "a faithful High-priest, in things pertaining to God," Heb. 2:17. He assures us we may safely trust our concerns with him, John 14:2. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you;" q. d. Do you think I could deceive you? men may cheat you, but I will not; your own hearts may and daily do deceive you, but so will not I. And for tender heartedness, and sensible feelings for your conditions, there is none like him: Heb. 4:15. "For we have not an High-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." We have not one that cannot sympathize, so it is in the Greek: and on purpose that he might the better sympathize with us, he came as near to our conditions, as the holiness of his nature could permit. He suffered himself to be in all points tempted like as we are, sin only excepted.

And then for his concernment and interest in the success of his suit; he not only reckons, but has really made it his own interest, yes, more his own than it is ours: For now by reason of the mystical union, all our wants and troubles are his, Eph. 1:23, yes, his own glory and completeness, as Mediator, is deeply interested in it; and therefore we need not doubt but he will use all care and diligence in that work. If you say, so he may, and yet not speed for all that, for it depends upon the Father's grant: True, but then,

2. Consider the great interest he has in the Father, with whom he intercedes. Christ is his dear Son, Col. 1:13. the beloved of his soul, Eph. 1:6. Between him and the Father, with whom, when he intercedes, there is an unity, not only of nature, but will; and so he always hears him, John 11:42. Yes, and he said to his dear Son, when

he came first to heaven, "Ask of me, and I will give you," Psalm. 2:8. Moreover,

He must needs speed in his suit, if you consider the nature of his intercession, which is just and reasonable for the matter, urgent and continual, for the manner of it. The matter of his requesting most equal: what he desires is not desired gratis, or upon terms unbecoming the holiness and righteousness of God to grant; he desires no more but what he has deserved, and given a valuable consideration to the Father for. And so the justice of God does, not only not oppose, but furthers and pleads for the granting, and fulfilling his requests.

Here you must remember, that the Father is under a covenant tie and bond to do what he asks; for Christ having fully performed the work on his part, the mercies he intercedes for, are as due as the hire of the laborer is, when the work is faithfully done. And as the matter is just, so the manner of his intercession is urgent and continual. How importunate a suitor he is, may be gathered from that specimen, given of it in John 17, and for the constancy, of it, my text tells us, "he ever lives to make intercession:" It is his great business in heaven, and he follows it close. And to close all,

4. Consider who they are for whom he makes intercession: The friends of God, the children of God; those that the Father himself loves, and his heart is propense and ready enough to grant the best and greatest of mercies to: which is the meaning of John 15:26, 27. "The Father himself loves you." And it must needs be so, for the first corner stone of all these mercies was laid by the Father himself in his most free election. He also delivered his Son for us; and "how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" Rom. 8:32. So then there can remain no doubt upon a considering heart, but that Christ is a prevalent and successful intercessor in heaven. There only remains one thing more to be satisfied, and that is,

Fourthly, In what sense he is to live forever to make intercession. Shall he then be always at his work? employed in begging new favors for us to eternity? How then shall the people of God be perfect in heaven, if there be need of Christ's intercession to eternity for them?

I answer, by distinguishing the essence and substance of Christ's offices, from the way and manner of administration. In the first sense it is eternal: for his mediatory kingdom, as to the essence of it, is to abide forever; Christ shall never cease to be a Mediator; the church shall never want a head; for "of his kingdom, there shall be no end," Luke 1:33. However, Christ, as a Mediator, being employed in a kind of subordinate way, 1 Cor. 3:23, when he shall have accomplished that design for which he became a Mediator, "Then shall he deliver up the kingdom (in the sense we spoke before) to the Father, and so God shall be all in all," 1 Cor. 15:24. Then shall the divinity of Christ, which was so emptied and obscured in his undertaking this temporary dispensatory kingdom, be more gloriously manifested, by the full possession, use, and enjoyment of that natural, divine, eternal kingdom, which belongs to all the three co-essential and co-equal persons, reigning with the same power, majesty, and glory, in the unity of the Divine Essence, and common acts, in all, and over all, infix nicely and immutably forever.

And so Christ continues to be our Mediator; and yet that affords no argument that our happiness shall be incomplete, but rather argues the perfection of the church, which thenceforth shall be governed no more as it now is, nor have any farther use of ordinances, but shall be ruled more immediately, gloriously, triumphantly, and ineffably in the world to come. The substance of his Mediatorship is not changed, but the manner of the administration only.

Use 1. Does Christ live forever in heaven to present his blood to God in the way of intercession for believers? How sad then is their case, that have no interest in Christ's blood; but instead of pleading for them, it cries to God against them, as the despisers and abusers of it! Every unbeliever despises it: The apostate treads it under foot. He

that is an intercessor for some, will be an accuser of others. To be guilty of a man's blood is sad; but to have the blood of Jesus accusing and crying to God against a soul, is unspeakable terrible. Surely when he shall make inquisition for blood, when the day of his vengeance is come, he will make it appear by the judgements he will execute, that this is a sin never to be expiated, but vengeance shall pursue the sinner to the bottom of hell. Oh! what do men and women do, in rejecting the gracious offer of Christ! what, tread upon a Savior! and cast contempt, by unbelief and hardness of heart, upon their only remedy! I remember I have read of a harlot that killed her child, and said that it smiled upon her when she went to stab it. Sinner, does not Christ smile upon you in the gospel? And will you, as it were, stab him to the heart by your infidelity? Woe, and alas for that man, against whom this blood cries in heaven!

Use 2. Does Christ live forever to make intercession? Hence let believers fetch relief, and draw encouragement against all the causes and grounds of their fears and troubles; for surely this answers them all.

1. Hence let them be encouraged against all their sinful infirmities, and lamented weaknesses. It is confessed these are sad things; they grieve the Spirit of God, sadden your own hearts, cloud your evidences; but having such a High-priest in heaven, can never be your ruin. 1 John 2:1, 2. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not: and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." [My little children.] Children, especially little children, when first beginning to take the foot, are apt to stumble at every straw; so are raw, young and inexperienced Christians: but what if they do? Why though it must be far from them to take encouragement so to do from Christ and his intercession, yet if by surprisal they do sin, let them not be utterly discouraged: for we have an Advocate, he stops whatever plea may be brought in against us by the Devil, or the law, and answers all by his satisfaction: he gets out fresh pardons for new sins. And this Advocate is with [the Father:] he does not say with his Father, though that had been a

singular support in itself, nor yet with our Father, which is a sweet encouragement singly considered, but with [the Father] which takes in both, to make the encouragement full. Remember, you that are cast down, under the sense of sin, that Jesus, your friend, in the court above, "is able to save to the uttermost." Which is, as one calls it, a reaching word, and extends itself so far, that you cannot look beyond it. "Let your soul be set on the highest mount that any creature was ever set on, and enlarged to take in view the most spacious prospect both of sin and misery, and difficulties of being saved, that ever yet any poor humble soul did cast within itself; yes, join to these all the hindrances and objections that the heart of man can invent against itself and salvation: lift up your eyes, and look to the utmost you cannot see; and Christ, by his intercession, is able to save you beyond the horizon and utmost compass of your thoughts, even to the utmost."

2. Hence draw abundant encouragement against all heart-straitenings, and deadness of Spirit in prayer. You complain your heart is dead, wandering, and contracted in duty: O, but remember Christ's blood speaks, when you cannot; it can plead for you, and that powerfully, when you are not able to speak a word for yourself: to this sense that scripture speaks, Cant. 3:6. "Who is this that comes out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh, and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?" The duties of Christians go up many times, as pillars or clouds of smoke from them, more smoke than fire, prayers smoked and sullied with their offensive corruptions; but, remember, Christ perfumes them with myrrh, etc. He, by his intercession, gives them a sweet perfume.

3. Christ's intercession is a singular relief to all that come unto God by him, against all sinful damps and slavish fears from the justice of God. Nothing more promotes the fear of reverence; nothing more suppresses unbelieving despondencies, and destroys the spirit of bondage. So you find it, Heb. 10:19, 20, 21. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us through the

veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a High priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, 'en pleroforia pisteos', in full assurance of faith": or let us come unto God, as a ship comes with full sail into the harbor. O what a direct and full gale of encouragement does this intercession of Christ give to the poor soul that lay a-ground, or was wind-bound before?

4. The intercession of Christ gives admirable satisfaction and encouragement to all that comes to God, against the fears of deserting him again by apostasy. This, my friends, this is your principal security against these matters of fear. With this he relieved Peter, Luke 22:31, 32. "Simon, (says Christ) Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not," q. d. Satan will fan you, not to get out your chaff, but bolt out your flour: his temptations are leveled against your faith; but fear not, my prayer shall break his designs, and secure your faith against all his attempts upon it. Upon this powerful intercession of Christ, the apostle builds his triumph against all that threatens to bring him, or any of the saints, again into a state of condemnation. And see how he drives on that triumph, from the resurrection, and session of Christ at the Father's right hand; and especially from the work of intercession, which he lives there to perform: Rom. 8:34, 35. "Who is he that condemns. It is Christ that died; yes, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

5. It gives sweet relief against the defects and wants that yet are in our sanctification. We want a great deal of faith, love, heavenly-mindedness, mortification, knowledge. We are short and wanting in all. There are "husteremata", the remains, or things wanting, as the apostle calls them, 1 Thess. 3:10. Well, if grace be but yet in its weak beginnings, and infancy in your soul, this may encourage, that by reason of Christ's intercession, it shall live, grow, and expatiate itself in your heart. He is not only the author, but the finisher of it, Heb. 12:2. He is ever begging new and fresh mercies for you in heaven; and will never cease until all your wants be supplied. He saves "eis to

panteles", to the uttermost, that is as I told you before, to the last, perfective, completing act of salvation. So that this is a fountain of relief against all your fears.

Use 3. Does Christ live forever to make intercession? Then let those who reap on earth the fruits of that his work in heaven, draw instruction thence about the following duties, to which it leads them as by the hand.

1. Do not forget Christ in an exalted state. You see though he be in all the glory above, at God's right hand, and enthroned king, he does not forget you: he, like Joseph, remembers his brethren in all his glory. But, alas, how oft does advancement make us forget him? As the Lord complains in Hosea 13:5, 6 "I did know you in the wilderness, in the land of great drought: but when they came into Canaan, according to their pastures, so were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me." As if he had said, O my people, you and I were better acquainted in the wilderness, when you were in a low condition, left to my immediate care, living by daily faith. O then you gave me many a sweet visit; but now you are filled, I hear no more of you. Good had it been for some saints, if they had never known prosperity.

2. Let the intercession of Christ in heaven for you, encourage you to constancy in the good ways of God. To this duty it sweetly encourages also, Heb. 4:14. "seeing then that we have a great High-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Here is encouragement to perseverance on a double account. One is, that Jesus, our head, is already in heaven; and if the head be above water, the body cannot drown. The other is from the business he is there employed about, which is his priesthood; he is passed into the heavens, as our great High-priest, to intercede, and therefore we cannot miscarry.

3. Let it encourage you to constancy in prayer: O do not neglect that excellent duty, seeing Christ is there to present all your petitions to

God; yes, to perfume as well as present them. So the apostle, Heb. 4:16. infers from Christ's intercession; "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

4. Hence be encouraged to plead for Christ on earth, who continually pleads for you in heaven. If any accuse you, he is there to plead for you: and if any dishonor him on earth, see that you plead his interest, and defend his honor. Thus you have heard what his intercession is, and what benefits we receive by it.

## **A Vindication of the Satisfaction of Christ, as the first Effect or Fruit of his Priesthood**

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal. 3:13

You have seen the general nature, necessity and parts of Christ's priesthood, namely, oblation and intercession. Before you part from this office, it is necessary you should farther take into consideration the principal fruits and effects of his priesthood; which are, complete satisfaction and the acquisition or purchase of an eternal inheritance. The former namely, The satisfaction, made by his blood, is manifestly contained in this excellent scripture before us, wherein the apostle (having shown before, at ver. 10. that whoever "continues not in all things written in the law, to do them, are cursed)" declares how, notwithstanding the threats of the law, a believer comes to be

freed from the curse of it, namely, by Christ's bearing that curse for him, and so satisfying God's justice, and discharging the believer from all obligations to punishment.

More particularly, in these words you have the believer's discharge from the curse of the law, and the way and manner thereof opened.

1. The believers discharge; Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. The law of God has three parts, commands promises, and threatening or curses. The curse of the law is its condemning sentence, whereby a sinner is bound over to death, even the death of soul and body. The chain, by which it binds him, is the guilt of sin; and from which none can loose the soul but Christ. This curse of the law is the most dreadful thing imaginable; it strikes at the life of a sinner, yes, his best life, the eternal life of the soul: and when it has condemned, it is inexorable, no cries nor tears, no reformation nor repentance can loose the guilty sinner; for it requires for its reparation that which no mere creature can give, even an infinite satisfaction. Now from this curse Christ frees the believer; that is, he dissolves the obligation to punishment, cancels the hand-writing, looses all the bonds and chains of guilt, so that the curse of the law has nothing to do with him forever.

2. We have here the way and manner in and by which this is done; and that is by a full price paid down, and that price paid in the room of the sinner, both making up a complete and full satisfaction. He pays a full price, every way adequate and proportionable to the wrong. So much this word, "hemas exegorasen", which we translate redeemed, imports; he has bought us out, or fully bought us, that is, by a full price. This price with which he so fully bought or purchased our freedom from the curse, is not only called "lutron", Mat. 20:28. or ransom, but more emphatically "antilutron", in 1 Tim. 2:5, 6 which might be translated an adequate or fully answerable ransom. And so his freeing us by this price, is not only expressed by "egorasas toi Theoi hemas", "You have bought us to God by your blood," Rev. 5:9. but "exegorasen hemas", he has fully, perfectly, bought us out.

And as the price or ransom paid was full, perfect, and sufficient in itself; so it was paid in our room, and upon our account: so says the text, "By his being made a curse for us," the meaning is not, that Christ was made the very curse itself, changed into a curse; no more than when the word is said to be made flesh, the divine nature was converted into flesh, but it assumed or took flesh; and so Christ took the curse upon himself; therefore it is said, 2 Cor. 5:21. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin;" that is, our sin was imputed to our surety, and laid upon him for satisfaction. And so this word "huper" [for] implies a substitution of one, in the place and stead of another. Now the price being full, and paid in lieu of our sins, and thereupon we fully redeemed or delivered from the curse, it follows, as a fair and just deduction, that,

DOCTRINE. The death of Christ has made a full satisfaction to God for all the sins of his elect.

"He (our surety, Christ) was oppressed, and he was afflicted," says the prophet, Isa. 52:7. it may be fitly rendered, (and the words will bear it without the least force) it was exacted, and answered. But how, being either way translated, it establishes the satisfaction of Christ, may be seen in our learned Annotations on that place. So Col. 1:14. "In whom we have 'apolutrosin dia tou haimatos', redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin." Here we have the benefit, namely, redemption interpreted by way of opposition, "even the remission of sins;" and the matchless price that was laid down to purchase it, the blood of Christ. So again, Heb. 9:12. "By his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained 'aionian lutrosin', eternal redemption for us." Here is eternal redemption, the mercy purchased: his own blood, the price that procured it.

Now forasmuch as this doctrine of Christ's satisfaction is so necessary, weighty and comfortable in itself, and yet so much opposed and intricated by several enemies to it; the method I shall take for the clearing, establishing, and preparing it for use, shall be,

First, To open the nature of Christ's satisfaction, and show what it is.

Secondly, To establish the truth of it, and prove that he made full satisfaction to God for all the sins of the elect.

Thirdly, To answer the most considerable objections made against it.

And lastly, To apply it.

First, What is the satisfaction of Christ, and what does it imply? I answer, satisfaction is the act of Christ, God-man, presenting himself as our surety in obedience to God and love to us; to do and to suffer all that the law required of us: thereby freeing us from the wrath and curse due to us for sins.

1. It is the act of God-man; no other was capable of giving satisfaction for an infinite wrong done to God. But by reason of the union of the two natures in his wonderful person, he could do it, and has done it for us. The human nature did what was necessary in its kind; it gave the matter of the sacrifice: the divine nature stamps the dignity and value upon it, which made it an adequate compensation: so that it was opus "Theandrikon", the act of God-man; yet so, that each nature retained its own properties, notwithstanding their joint influence into the effect. If the angels in heaven had laid down their lives, or if the blood of all the men in the world had been poured out by justice, this could never have satisfied, because that "axiosis", worth and value which this sacrifice has, would have still been wanting. "It was God that redeemed the church with his own blood," Acts 20:18. If God redeem with his own blood, he redeems as God-man, without any dispute.

2. If he satisfy God for us, he must present himself before God, as our surety, in our stead, as well as for our good; else his obedience had signified nothing to us; to this end he was "made under the law," Gal. 4:4. comes under the same obligation with us, and that as a surety, for so he is called, Heb. 7:22. Indeed his obedience and sufferings could be exacted from him upon no other account. It was not for

anything he had done that he became a curse. It was prophesied of him, Dan. 9:26. "The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;" and being dead, the scriptures plainly assert it was for our sins, and upon our account: so 1 Cor. 15:3. "Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures."

And it is well observed by our divines, who assert the vicegerency and substitution of Christ in his sufferings, that all those Greek particles which we translate [for] when applied to the sufferings of Christ do note the meritorious, deserving, procuring cause of those sufferings. So you find, Heb. 10:12. "He offered one sacrifice 'huper hamartion', for sins." 1 Pet. 3:18. "Christ once suffered, 'peri' for sins." Rom. 4:25. "He was delivered, 'dia', for our offences." Mat. 20:28. "He gave his life a ransom, 'anti', for many." And there are that confidently affirm this last particle is never used in any other sense in the whole book of God; as "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," that is one in lieu of another. Just as those whom the Greeks called "antipsuchoi", men that exchanged their lives, or gave life for life, staking down their own to deliver another's, as Philumene did for Aristides. And so the poet Virgil speaks: Si fratrem Pollux alterna morte redemit.

And indeed, this very consideration is that which supports the doctrine of imputation, the imputation of our sins to Christ, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto us, Rom. 5:19. For how could our sins be laid on him, but as he stood in our stead? or his righteousness be imputed to us, but as he was our surety, performing it in our place; so that to deny Christ's sufferings in our stead, is to lose the corner-stone of our justification, and overthrow the very pillar which supports our faith, comfort and salvation. Indeed if this had not been, he would have been the righteous Lord, but not the Lord our righteousness, as he is stiled, Jer. 33:16. So that it was but a vain distinction, to say it was for our good, but not in our stead: for had he not been in our stead, we could not have had the good of it.

3. The internal moving cause of Christ's satisfaction for us, was his obedience to God, and love to us. That it was an act of obedience, is plain from Phil. 2:8. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Now obedience respects a command, and each a command Christ received to die for us, as himself tells us, John 10:18. "I lay down my life of myself; I have power to lay it down, and power to take it again: this commandment have I received of my Father." So that it was an act of obedience with respect to God, and yet a most free and spontaneous act with respect to himself. And that he was moved to it out of pity and love to us, himself assures us: Gal. 5:2. "Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God." Upon this Paul sweetly reflected, Gal. 2:20. "Who loved me and gave himself for me." As the external moving cause was our misery, so the internal was his own love and pity for us.

4. The matter of Christ's satisfaction, was his active and passive obedience to all the law of God required. I know there are some that doubt whether Christ's active obedience have any place here, and so whether it be imputed as any part of our righteousness. It is confessed, that scripture most frequently mentions his passive obedience, as that which made the atonement, and procures our redemption, Matth. 20:28. and 26:28. Rom. 3:24, 25 and elsewhere: but his passive obedience is never mentioned exclusively, as the sole cause, or matter of satisfaction. But in those places where it is mentioned by itself, it is put for his whole obedience, both active and passive, by an usual trope; and in other scriptures it is ascribed to both, as Gal. 4:4. he is said, "to be under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." Now his being "made under the law" to this end, cannot be restrained to his subjection to the curse of the law only, but to the commands of it also. So Rom. 5:19. "As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." It were a manifest injury to this text also, to restrain it to the passive obedience of Christ only. To be short, this twofold obedience of Christ, stands opposed to a twofold obligation that fallen man is under; the one to do what God requires, the other to suffer what he has threatened for disobedience. We owe

him active obedience as his creatures, and passive obedience as his prisoners. Suitably to his double obligation, Christ comes under the commandment of the law, to fulfill it actively, Matth. 3:15. and under the malediction of the law, to satisfy it passively. And whereas it is objected by some, if he fulfilled the whole law for us by his active, what need then of his passive obedience? We reply, great need; because both these make up that one, entire, and complete obedience, by which God is satisfied, and we justified. It is a good rule of Alsted, *obedientia Christi est una copulativa*; the whole obedience of Christ, both active and passive, make up one entire perfect obedience; and therefore there is no reason why one particle, either of the one, or of the other, should be excluded.

5. The effect and fruit of this his satisfaction, is our freedom, ransom, or deliverance from the wrath and curse due to us for our sins. Such was the dignity, value, and completeness of Christ's satisfactions, that in strict justice it merited our redemption and full deliverance; not only a possibility that we might be redeemed and pardoned, but a right whereby to be so, as the learned Dr. Twiss judiciously argues. If he be made a curse for us, we must then be redeemed from the curse, according to justice; so the apostle argues, Rom. 3:25, 56. "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus." Mark the design and end of God in exacting satisfaction from Christ, it was to declare his righteousness in the remission of sin to believers; and lest we should lose the emphatical word, he doubles it, to declare, I say, his righteousness. Everyone can see how his mercy is declared in remission: but he would have us take notice, that his justification of believers is an act of justice; and that God, as he is a just God, cannot condemn the believer, since Christ has satisfied his debts. This attribute seems to be the main bar against remission; but now it is become the very ground and reason why God remits. O how comfortable a text is this! Does Satan or conscience set forth your sin in all its discouraging circumstances

and aggravations? God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation. Must justice be manifested, satisfied and glorified? So it is in the death of Christ, ten thousand times more than ever it could in your damnation. Thus you have a brief account of the satisfaction made by Jesus Christ.

Secondly, We shall gather up all that has been said to establish the truth of Christ's satisfaction; proving the reality of it, that it is not an improper, catachrestical, fictitious satisfaction, by divine acceptation, as some have very diminutively called it; but real, proper, and full, and as such accepted by God. For his blood is the stood of a Surety, Heb. 7:22. who came under the same obligations of the law with us, Gal. 4:4. and though he had no sin of his own, yet standing before God as our Surety, the iniquities of us all were laid upon him, Isa. 53:6. and from him did the Lord, with great severity, exact satisfaction for our sins, Rom. 8:32. punish them upon his soul, Matth. 27:46. and upon his body, Acts 2:23. and with this obedience of his Son, is fully pleased and satisfied, Eph. 5:2. and has in token thereof raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, 1 Tim. 3:16. and for his righteousness-sake acquitted and discharged believers, who shall never more come into condemnation, Rom. 8:1, 34. All this is plain in scripture; and our faith in the satisfaction of Christ, is not built on the wisdom of man, but the everlasting sealed truth of God: yet such is the perverse nature of man, and the pride of his heart, that while he should be humbly adoring the grace of God, in providing such a Surety for us, he is found accusing the justice, and diminishing the mercy of God, and raising all the objections which Satan and his own heart can invent, to overturn that blessed foundation upon which God has built up his own honor, and his people's salvation.

Thirdly, In the next place, therefore, we shall reject those doctrines, and remove the principal of those objections that are found militating against the satisfaction of Christ.

And, in the first place, we reject with deep abhorrence that doctrine, which ascribes to man any power, in whole, or in part, to satisfy God for his own, or other men's sins. This, no mere creature can do by active obedience, were it so complete that he could never sin in thought, word, or deed, any more, but live the most holy life that ever any lived: for all this would be no more than his duty as a creature, Luke 17:10. and so can be no satisfaction for what he is by nature, or has done against God as a sinner. Nor yet by suffering; for we have offended an infinite God, and can never satisfy him by our finite sufferings.

We also, with like detestation, reject that doctrine which makes the satisfaction of Christ either impossible, or fictitious, and inconsistent with grace, in the free pardon of sin. Many are the cavils raised against Christ's satisfaction; the principal are such as these that follow:

Objection. The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction is absurd, for Christ (say we) is God; if so then, God satisfied himself, than which what can be more absurd to imagine?

Solution. I answer, God cannot properly be said to satisfy himself for that would be the same thing as to pardon, simply, without any satisfaction. But there is a twofold consideration of Christ; one in respect of his Essence and Divine Nature, in which sense he is the object both of the offence, and of the satisfaction made for it. Another in respect of his person and economy, or office; in which sense he properly satisfies God, being in respect of his manhood another, and inferior to God, John 14:28. The blood of the man Christ Jesus is the matter of the satisfaction, the Divine Nature dignifies it, and makes it of infinite value. A certain family had committed treason against the king, and are all under the condemnation of the law for it' the king's son moved with pity and love, resolves to satisfy the law, and yet save the family; in order whereunto he marries a daughter of the family, whereby her blood becomes royal blood, and worth the blood of the whole family

whence she sprang; this princess is by her husband executed in the room of the rest. In this case the king satisfies not himself for the wrong, but is satisfied by the death of another, equivalent in worth to the blood of them all. This similitude answers not to all the particulars, as indeed nothing in nature does, or can; but it only shows what it was that satisfied God, and how it became so satisfactory.

Objection. If Christ satisfied by paying our debt, then he should have endured eternal torments; for so we should, and the damned shall.

Solution. We must distinguish between what is essential, and what is accidental in punishment. The primary intent of the law is reparation and satisfaction; he that can make it at one entire payment (as Christ could and did) ought to be discharged. He that cannot (as no mere creature can) ought to lie forever, as the damned do, under sufferings.

Objection. If God will be satisfied for our sins before he pardon them, how then is pardon an act of grace.

Solution. Pardon could not be an act of pure grace, if God received satisfaction from us; but if he pardon us upon the satisfaction received from Christ, though it be of debt to him, it is of grace to us: for it was grace to admit a Surety to satisfy, more grace to provide him, and most of all to apply his satisfaction to us, by uniting us to Christ, as he has done.

Objection. But God loved us before Christ died for us; for it was the love of God to the world that moved him to give his only-begotten Son. Could God love us, and yet not be reconciled and satisfied?

Solution. God's complacent love is indeed inconsistent with an unreconciled state: He is reconciled to everyone he so loves. But his benevolent love, consisting in his purpose of good, may be before actual reconciliation and satisfaction.

Objection. Temporal death, as well as eternal, is a part of the curse, if Christ have fully satisfied by bearing the curse for us, how is it, that those for whom he bare it, die as well as others?

Solution. As temporal death is a penal evil, and part of the curse, so God inflicts it not upon believers; but they must die for other ends, namely, to be made perfectly happy in a more full and immediate enjoyment of God, than they can have in the body: and so, death is theirs by way of privilege, 1 Cor. 3:22. They are not death's by way of punishment. The same may be said of all the afflictions with which God, for gracious ends, now exercises his reconciled ones. Thus much may suffice to establish this great truth.

INFERENCE 1. If the death of Christ was that which satisfied God for all the sins of the elect, then certainly there is an infinite evil in sin, since it cannot be expiated but by an infinite satisfaction. Fools make a mock at sin, and there are but few souls in the world that are duly sensible of, and affected with its evil; but certainly, if God should damn you to all eternity, your eternal sufferings could not satisfy for the evil that is in one vain thought. It may be you may think this is harsh and severe, that God should hold his creatures under everlasting sufferings for sin, and never be satisfied with them any more. But when you have well considered, that the object against whom you sin, is the infinite blessed God, which derives an infinite evil to the sin committed against him; and when you consider how God dealt with the angels that fell, for one sin, and that but of the mind; (for having no bodily organs, they could commit nothing externally against God:) you will alter your minds about it. O the depth of the evil of sin! If ever you will see how great and horrid an evil sin is, measure it in your thoughts, either by the infinite holiness and excellency of God, who is wronged by it; or by the infinite sufferings of Christ, who died to satisfy for it; and then you will have deeper apprehensions of the evil of sin.

INFERENCE. 2. If the death of Christ satisfied God, and thereby redeemed the elect from the curse: then the redemption of souls is

costly; souls are dear things, and of great value with God. "You know, (says the apostle,) that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition; but with the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without spot," 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. Only the blood of God is found an equivalent price for the redemption of souls. Gold and silver may redeem from Turkish, but not from hellish bondage. The whole creation sold to the utmost worth of it, is not a value for the redemption of one soul. Souls are very dear; he that paid for them found them so: yet how cheaply do sinners sell their souls, as if they were but low priced commodities! but you that sell your souls cheap, will buy repentance dear.

INFERENCE. 3. If Christ's death satisfied God for our sins, how unparalleled is the love of Christ to poor sinners! It is much to pay a financial debt to free another, but who will pay his own blood for another? We have a noted instance of Zaleucus, that famous Locrenian lawgiver, who decreed, that whoever was convicted of adultery, should have both his eyes put out. It so fell out that his own son was brought before him for that crime: hereupon the people interposing, made suit for his pardon. At length the father, partly overcome by their importunities, and not unwilling to show what lawful favor he might to his son, he first put out one of his own eyes, and then one of his son's; and so showed himself both a merciful father, and a just lawgiver; so tempering mercy with justice, that both the law was satisfied, and his son spared. This is written by the historian as an instance of singular love in his father, to pay one half of the penalty for his son. But Christ did not divide, and share in the penalty with us, but bare it all. Zaleucus did it for his son, who was dear to him; Christ did it for enemies, that were fighting and rebelling against him: Rom. 5:8. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "O would to God (said a holy one) I could cause paper and ink to speak the worth and excellency, the high and loud praises of our brother ransomers! O the ransomers needs not my report; but O if he would take it, and make use of it! I should be happy if I had an errand to this world but for some few years, to spread proclamations,

and out-cries, and love-letters of the highness [the highness evermore] of the ransomer, whose clothes were wet, and dyed in blood; howbeit, that after that, my soul and body should go back to their mother nothing."

INFERENCE. 4. If Christ by dying, has made full satisfaction, then God is no loser in pardoning the greatest of sinners that believe in Jesus; and consequently his justice can be no bar to their justification and salvation. He is just to forgive us our sins, 1 John 1:9. What an argument is here for a poor believer to plead with God! Lord, if you save me by Jesus Christ, your justice will be fully satisfied at one full payment; but if you damn me, and require satisfaction at my hands, you cannot ever receive it: I shall make but a dribbling payment, though I lie in hell to eternity, and shall still be infinitely behind with you. Is it not more for your glory to receive it from Christ's hand, than to require it at mine? One drop of his blood is more worth than all my polluted blood. O how satisfying a thing is this to the conscience of a poor sinner that is objecting the multitude, aggravations, and amazing circumstances, of his sins, against the possibility of their being pardoned! Can such a sinner as I be forgiven? Yes, if you believe in Jesus, you may; for so God will lose nothing in pardoning the greatest transgressors: "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption," Psalm. 130:7. that is a large stock of merit lying by him in the blood of Christ, to pay him for all that you have done against him.

INFERENCE 5. Lastly, If Christ has made such a full satisfaction as you have heard, How much is it the concernment of every soul to abandon all thoughts of satisfying God for his own sins and retake himself to the blood of Christ, the ransomer, by faith, that in that blood they may be pardoned? It would grieve one's heart to see how many poor creatures are drudging and tugging at a task of repentance, and revenge upon themselves, and reformation, and obedience, to satisfy God for what they have done against him: And alas! it cannot be, they do but lose their labor, could they swelter

their very hearts out, weep until they can weep no more, cry until their throats be parched, alas, they can never recompense God for one vain thought; for such is the severity of the law, that when it is once offended, it will never be made amends again by all that we can do: it will not discharge the sinner, for all the sorrow in the world. Indeed, if a man be in Christ, sorrow for sin is something, and renewed obedience is something; God looks upon them favorably, and accepts them graciously in Christ: but out of him they signify no more than the entreaties and cries of a condemned malefactor, to reverse the legal sentence of the judge. You may toil all the days of your life, and at night go to bed without a candle. To that sense that scripture sounds, Isa. 1. 11. "Behold, all you that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled: This shall you have of mine hand, you shall lie down in sorrow." By fire, and the light of it, some understand the sparkling pleasures of this life, and the sensitive joys of the creatures: but generally it is taken for our own natural righteousness, and all acts of duties, in order to our justification by them before God. And so it stands opposed to that faith of recumbence spoken of in the verse before. By their compassing themselves about with these sparks, understand their dependence on these their duties, and glorying in them. But see the fatal issue, You shall lie down in sorrow, that shall be your recompense from the hand of the Lord that is all the thanks and reward you must expect from him, for slighting Christ's, and preferring your own righteousness before his. Reader, be convinced, that one act of faith in the Lord Jesus pleases God more than all the obedience, repentance, and strivings to obey the law, through your whole life, can do. And thus you have the first special fruits of Christ's priesthood, in the full satisfaction of God, for all the sins of believers!

# **The Blessed Inheritance purchased by the Oblation of Christ, being the second Effect or Fruit of his Priesthood**

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. 4:4, 5

This scripture gives us an account of a double fruit of Christ's death, namely, the payment of our debt, and the purchase of our inheritance.

1. The payment of our debt, expressed by our redemption, or buying us out from the obligation and curse of the law, which has been discoursed in the last exercise.
2. The purchase of an inheritance for those redeemed ones, expressed here by their receiving the adoption of sons, which is to be our present subject. Adoption is either civil, or divine. Of the first, the civil law gives this definition: that it is,

"A lawful act, an imitation of nature, invented for the comfort of them that have no children of their own. Divine adoption is that special benefit whereby God, for Christ's sake, accepts us as sons, and makes us heirs of eternal life with him."

Between this civil and sacred adoption, there is a twofold agreement, and disagreement. They agree in this, that both flow from the pleasure and good-will of the adoptant; and in this, that both confer a right to privileges, which we have not by nature: but in this they differ, one is an act imitating nature, the other transcends nature; the

one was found out for the comfort of them that had no children; the other for the comfort of them that had no father. This divine adoption is, in scripture, either taken properly for that act or sentence of God, by which we are made sons, or for the privileges with which the adopted are invested: and so it is taken Rom. 8:23, and in this scripture now before us. We lost our inheritance by the fall of Adam; we receive it, as the text speaks, by the death of Christ, which restores it again to us by a new and better title. The doctrine hence, is this,

**DOCTRINE. That the death of Jesus Christ has not only satisfied for our debts, but over and above purchased a rich inheritance for the children of God.**

"For this end, or cause, he is the Mediator of the New Testament; that, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called, might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance," Heb. 9:15.

We will here, First, See what Christ paid. Secondly, What he purchased. Thirdly, For whom.

First, that Christ paid. Our divines comprise the virtue and fruits of the priesthood of Christ in these two things, namely, *Solutio debiti, et acquisitio haereditatis*, payment and purchase. Answerable, the obedience of Christ has a double relation, *relatio legalis justitiae*, the relation of a legal righteousness; and adequate and exactly proportioned price. And it has also in it *ratio superlegalis meriti*, the relation of a merit over and beyond the law.

To object (as some do) "the satisfaction of Christ was more than sufficient", according to our doctrine, "and therefore could not be intended, for the payment of our debt," is a senseless cavil. For surely, if Christ paid more than was owing, he must needs pay all that was owing to Divine Justice. And truly it is but a bad requital of the love of Jesus Christ, who, beside the payment of what he owed,

would manifest his bounty by the redundancy of his merit, which he paid to God to purchase a blessed inheritance for us. This over plus of satisfaction (which was the price of that inheritance I am now to open) is not obscurely hinted, but plainly expressed twice in Rom. 5:15. "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift: for if through the offence of one many be dead, 'pollo mallon', much more the grace of God, and the gift of grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, 'eperisseuse'" has abounded or flowed abundantly unto many." So ver. 17. "For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one, 'pollo mallon', much more they which receive 'ten perisseian', the overflowing, or abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." In both which places Christ and Adam are compared as the two roots or common heads of mankind, both agreeing in this property of communicating their conditions to those that are theirs; yet there is a great deal of difference between them! for in Christ the power is all divine, and therefore infinitely more active and effectual: He communicates abundantly more to his, than they lost in Adam; so that his blood is not only sufficient to redeem all those that are actually redeemed by it, but even the whole world also.

And were there so many worlds of men as there are men in the world, it would be sufficient for them also; and yet still there would be an over plus of value: for all those worlds of men would rise but to a finite bulk; but this blood is infinite in its worth and dignity. Since then there is not a whole world, no not half, but the far less part redeemed by the blood of Christ, which was sufficient for so many; great must be the surplusage and redundancy of merit? Here our divines rightly distinguish between the substance and accidents of Christ's death and obedience. Consider Christ's suffering, as to the substance of it, it was no more than what the law required; for, neither the justice, nor love of the Father would permit that Christ should suffer more than what was necessary for him to bear, as our Surety; but, as to the circumstances, the person of the sufferer, the cause and efficacy of his sufferings, etc. it was much more than sufficient: a superlegale meritum, a merit above and beyond what the

law required; for, though the law required the death of the sinner, who is but a poor contemptible creature, it did not require that one, perfectly innocent, should die, it did not require that God should shed his blood: it did not require blood of such value and worth as this was. I say, none of this the law required, though God was pleased, for the advancement and manifestation of his justice and mercy in the highest, to admit, and order this, by way of commutation, admitting him to be our 'antipsuchos', or ransomer, by dying for us.

And, indeed, it was a most gracious relaxation of the law, that admitted of such a commutation as this; for hereby it comes to pass, that justice is fully satisfied, and yet we live and are saved; which, before, was a thing that could not be imagined. Yes, now we are not only redeemed from wrath, by the adequate compensation made for our sins by Christ's blood and sufferings, substantially considered; but entitled to a most glorious inheritance, purchased by his blood, considered as the blood of an innocent, as the blood of God, and therefore as most excellent and efficacious blood, above what the law demanded. And this is the meaning of Athanasius, when he says, "That Christ recompensed, or made amends for small things with great:" he means not, that sin, considered absolutely, and in itself, is small, O no, but compared with Christ's blood, and the infinite excellency and worth of it, it is so. And Chrysostom, to the same purpose, "Christ paid much more (says he) than he owed and so much more, as the immense ocean is more than a small drop." So that it was rightly determined by holy Anselm: "No man (says he) can pay to God what he owes him; Christ only paid more than he owed him." By this you see, how rich a treasure lies in Christ, to bestow in a purchase for us, above what he paid to redeem us; even as much as his soul and body were more worth than ours, for whom it was sacrificed; which is so great a sum, that all the angels in heaven, and men on earth, can never compute and sum up, so as to show us the total of it. And this was that inexhaustible treasure that Christ expended, to procure and purchase the fairest inheritance for

believers. Having seen the treasure that purchased, let us next enquire into the inheritance purchased by it.

Secondly, This inheritance is so large, that it cannot be surveyed by creatures: nor can the boundaries and limits thereof be described, for it comprehends all things; 1 Cor. 3:22. "All is yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Rev. 21:7. "He that overcomes shall inherit all things". And yet I do not think, or say, that *Dominium fundatur in gratia*, that temporal dominion is founded in grace: no, that is at the cast and disposal of Providence. But Christ, by his death, has restored a right to all things to his people.

But, to be more particular, I shall distribute the saints inheritance, purchased by Christ, into three heads; all temporal good things, all spiritual good things, and all eternal good things are theirs.

1. All temporal good things. 1 Tim. 6:7. "He has given us all things richly to enjoy". Not that they have the possession, but the comfort and benefit of all things: others have the sting, gall, wormwood, baits and snares of the creature; saints only have the blessing and comfort of it. So that this little that a righteous man has, is (in this among other respects) better than the treasures of many wicked: which is the true key to open that dark saying of the apostle, 2 Cor. 6:10. "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things." They only possess, others are possessed by the world. The saints *utuntur mundi, et fruuntur Deo*, "use the world, and enjoy God" in the use of it. Others are deceived, defiled, and destroyed by the world; but these are refreshed and furthered by it.

2. All spiritual good things are purchased by the blood of Christ for them; as Justification, which comprises remission of sins and acceptance of our persons by God: Rom. 3:24. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ." Sanctification is also purchased for them; yes, both initial and progressive sanctification: for of "God, he is made unto us, not only wisdom and righteousness, but sanctification also," 1 Cor. 1:30. These two,

namely, our justification and sanctification, are two of the most rich and shining robes in the wardrobe of free grace. How glorious and lovely do they render the soul that wears them! These are like the bracelets, and jewels Isaac sent to Rebecca. Adoption into the family of God is purchased for us by his blood; "For you are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ," Gal. 3:26. Christ, as he is the Son, is *haeres natus*, "the heir by nature;" as he is Mediator, he is *haeres constitutus*, "the heir by appointment," appointed heir of all things, as it is, Heb. 1:2. By the Sonship of Christ, we being united to him by faith, become sons; and if sons, then heirs. "O what manner of love is this, that we should be called the sons of God", 1 John 3:1. That a poor beggar should be made an heir, yes, an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ! Yes, that very faith, which is the bond of union, and consequently, the ground of all our communion with Christ, is the purchase of his blood also: 2 Pet. 1:1. "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ." This most precious grace is the dear purchase of our Lord Jesus Christ; yes, all that peace, joy, and spiritual comfort, which are sweet fruits of faith, are with it purchased for us by this blood.

So speaks the apostle in Rom. 5:1, 2, 3. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Moreover the Spirit himself, who is the author, fountain, and spring of all graces and comforts, is procured for us by his death and resurrection: Gal. 3:13, 14. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." That Spirit that first sanctified, and since has so often sealed, comforted, directed, resolved, guided, and quickened your souls, had not come to perform any of these blessed offices upon your hearts, if Christ had not died.

3. All eternal good things are the purchase of his blood. Heaven, and all the glory thereof is purchased for you that are believers, with this

price. Hence that glory, whatever it be, is called "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you": To the lively hope whereof you are begotten again, "by the resurrection of Christ from the dead," 1 Pet. 1:3, 4. Not only present mercies are purchased for us, but things to come also, as it is, 1 Cor. 3:22. Man is a prudent and prospecting creature, and is not satisfied that it is well with him for the present, unless he have some assurance it shall be well with him for time to come. His mind is taken up about what shall be hereafter; and from the good or evil things to come, he raises up to himself vast hopes or fears.

Therefore to complete our happiness, and fill up the uttermost capacity of our souls, all the good of eternity is put into the account and inventory of the saints estate and inheritance. This happiness is ineffably; it is usually distinguished into what is essential, and what is accessory to it. The essentials of it, as far as we in our embodied state can conceive, is either the objective, subjective, or formal happiness to be enjoyed in heaven.

The objective happiness is God himself, Psalm. 73:25. "Whom have I in heaven but you?" If it could be supposed (says one) that God should withdraw from the saints in heaven, and say, Take heaven, and divide it among you; but as for me, I will withdraw from you; the saints would fall a weeping in heaven, and say, Lord, take heaven, and give it to whom you will; it is no heaven to us, except you be there: Heaven would be very Bochim to the saints without God. In this, our glory in heaven consists, to be ever with the Lord, 1 Thess. 4:17. God himself is the chief part of a saint's inheritance; in which sense, as some will understand, Rom. 8:1. they are called heirs of God.

The subjective glory and happiness is the attemperation and suiting of the soul and body to God. This is begun in sanctification, and perfected in glorification. It consists in removing from both all that is indecent, and inconsistent with a state of such complete glory and

happiness, and in superinducting and clothing it with all heavenly qualities.

The immunities of the body are its freedom from all nature infirmities; which as they come in, so they go out with sin. Thenceforth there shall be no diseases, deformities, pains, flaws, monstrosities; their good physician death has cured all this, and their vile bodies shall be made like unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. 3:21. and be made a spiritual body, 1 Cor. 15:44. For agility, like the chariots of Aminadab; for beauty, as the top of Lebanon; for incorruptibility, as if they were pure spirits.

The soul also is discharged and freed from all darkness and ignorance of mind, being now able to discern all truths in God, that crystal ocean of truth. The leaks of the memory stopped forever; the roving of the fancy perfectly cured; the stubbornness and reluctance of the will forever subdued, and retained in due and full subjection to God. So that the saints in glory shall be free from all that now troubles them; they shall never sin more nor be once tempted so to do, for no serpent hisses in that paradise; they shall never grieve nor groan more, for God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. They shall never be troubled more, for God will then recompense tribulation to their troublers, and to them that are troubled, rest; they shall never doubt more, for fruition excludes doubting.

The formal happiness is the fullness of satisfaction resulting from the blessed sight and enjoyment of God, by a soul so attempered to him, Psalm. 17:15. "When I awake I shall be satisfied with your likeness." This sight of God, in glory, called the beatifical vision, must needs yield ineffable satisfaction to the beholding soul, inasmuch as it will be an intuitive vision. The intellectual or mental eye shall see God, 1 John 3:2. The corporeal glorified eye shall see Christ, Job 19:26, 27. What a ravishing vision will this be! and how much will it exceed all reports and apprehensions we had here of it! Surely one half was not told us. It will be a transformative vision, it will change the beholder into its own image and likeness. "We shall be like him, for we shall

see him as he is," 1 John 3:2. As iron put into the fire, becomes all fiery; so the soul, by conversing with God, is changed into his very similitude. It will be an appropriative vision; "Whom I shall see for myself," Job 19:26, 27. In heaven interest is clear and undoubted, fear is cast out: no need of marks and signs there; for what a man sees and enjoys, how can he doubt of? It will be a ravishing vision; these we have by faith are so, how much more those in glory? How was Paul transported, when he was in a visional way enrapt up into the third heaven, and heard the unutterable things, though he was not admitted into the blessed society, but was with them, as the angels are in our assemblies, a stander by, a looker-on. If a spark do so inflame, what is it to lie down like a Phoenix in her bed of spices! Like a Salamander to live and move in the fire of love! It will also be an eternal vision; *vacabimus et videbimus*, (as Augustinus said) we shall then be at leisure for this employment, and have no diversions from it forever. No evening is mentioned to the seventh day's sabbath; no night in the new Jerusalem. And therefore,

Lastly, It will be a fully satisfying vision: God will then be all in all. "Curiosity itself will be satisfied." The blessed soul will feel itself blessed, filled, satisfied in every part. Ah, what a happiness is here! to look and love, is drink and sing, and drink again at the fountain head of the highest glory! And if at any time its eye be turned from a direct to a reflex sight upon what it once was, how it was wrought on, how fitted for his glory, how wonderfully distinguished by special grace from them that are howling in flames, while himself is shouting aloud upon his bed of everlasting rest; and this will enhance the glory.

And so also will the accessories of this blessedness be; The place where God is enjoyed, the empyrean heaven, the city of God, where Christ ascended, where the great assembly are met. Paradise and Canaan were but the types of it; more excelling and transcending the royal palaces or earthly princes, than they do a pigeon-hole. The company also with whom he is enjoyed, adds to the glory. A blissful society indeed! store of good neighbors in that city. There we shall

have familiar converse with angels, whose appearances now are insupportable by poor mortals. There will be sweet and full closings also between the saints; Luther and Zwinglius are there agreed. Here they could not fully close with one another, and no wonder, for they could not fully close with themselves. But there is perfect harmony and unity; all meeting and closing in God, as lines in the center. This is a blessed glimpse of your inheritance.

Thirdly, All this is purchased for believers: hence it is called, "the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. 1:12. "All is yours, for you are Christ's," that is the tenure, 1 Cor. 3:23. So Rom. 8:30. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Only those that are sons, are heirs, Rom. 8:17. The unrighteous shall not inherit, 1 Cor. 6:9. "It is the Father's good pleasure, to give the kingdom to the little flock," Luke 12:32.

INFERENCE. 1. Has Christ not only redeemed you from wrath, but purchased such an eternal inheritance also by the overplus of his merit for you? O how well content should believers then be with their lot of providence in this life, be it what it will! Content did I say? I speak too low; overcome, ravished, filled with praises and thanksgivings; how low, how poor, how afflicted soever for the present they are. O let not such things as grumbling, repining, fretting at providence, be found, or once named among the expectants of this inheritance! Suppose you had taken a beggar from your door, and adopted him to be your son, and made him heir of a large inheritance, and after this he should contest and quarrel with you for a trifle; could you bear it? How to work the spirit of a saint into contentment with a low condition here, I have laid down several rules in another discourse, to which, for the present I refer the reader.

INFERENCE 2. With what weaned affections should the people of God walk up and down this world, content to live, and willing to die? For things present are theirs if they live, and things to come are

theirs if they die. Paul expresses himself in a frame of holy indifference, Phil. 1:23 "Which to chose I know not." Many of them that are now in fruition of their inheritance above, had vitam in patientia, mortem in desiderio, "Life in patience, and death in desire," while they tabernacled with us. "O (cried one) what would I give to have a bed made to my wearied soul in Christ's bosom? " - I cannot tell you what sweet pain and delightful torments are in his love; I often challenge time for holding us asunder; I profess to you, I have no rest until I be over head and ears in love's ocean. If Christ's love (that fountain of delights) were laid open to me as I would wish, O how overcome would this my soul be! I half call his absence cruel; and the mask and veil on his face a cruel covering, that hideth such a fair, fair face from a sick soul. I dare not challenge himself, but his absence is a mountain of iron upon my heavy heart. O when shall we meet! How long is the dawning of the marriage-day! O sweet Lord Jesus, take wide steps! O my Lord, come over mountains at one stride! O my beloved, flee like a roe, or young hart upon the mountains of separation! O if he would fold the heavens together like an old cloak, and shovel time and days out of the way, and make really in haste the Lamb's wife for her husband! Since he looked upon me, my heart is not mine own."

Who can be blamed for desiring to see that fair inheritance which is purchased for him! But, truly, should God hold up the soul by the power of faith, from day to day, to such sights as these, who would be content to live a day more on earth! How should we be ready to pull down the prison walls, and not have patience to wait until God open the door! As the Heathen said, "Victurosque dii celant, ut vivere durent." And truly the wisdom of God is in this specially remarkable, in giving the new creature such an admirable crisis, and even temper, as that scripture, 2 Thess. 3:5. expresses, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and patient waiting for Christ." Love inflames with desire, patience allays that fervor. So that fervent desires (as one happily expresses it) are allayed with meek submission; mighty love with strong patience. And had not God twisted together these two principles in the Christian's constitution,

he had framed a creature to be a torment to itself, to live upon a very rack.

INFERENCE. 3. Hence we infer the impossibility of their salvation that know not Christ, nor have interest in his blood. Neither Athens, nor merely nominal Christians, can inherit heaven. I know some are very indulgent to the Heathen, and many formal Christians are too much so to themselves: but union by faith with Jesus Christ, is the only way revealed in scripture, by which we hope to come to the heavenly inheritance. I know it seems hard, that such brave men, as some of the Heathens were, should be damned: but the scripture knows no other way to glory, but Christ put on, and applied by faith. And it is the common suffrage of modern sound divines, that no man, by the sole conduct of nature, without the knowledge of Christ, can be saved. There is but one way to glory for all the world, John 14:6. "No man comes to the Father but by me." Gal. 3:14. "The blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles through faith." Scripture asserts the impossibility of being or doing, anything that is truly evangelically good, out of Christ, John 15:5. "Without me you can do nothing." And Heb. 11:6. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Scripture everywhere connects and chains salvation with vocation, Rom. 8:30. and vocation with the gospel, Rom. 10:14. To those that plead for the salvation of Heathens, and profane Christians. we may apply that tart rebuke of Bernard, that while some labor to make Plato a Christian, he feared they therein did prove themselves to be Heathens.

INFERENCE. 4. How greatly are we all concerned to clear up our title to the heavenly inheritance! It is horrible to see how industrious many are for an inheritance on earth, and how careless for heaven. By which we may plainly see how vilely the noble soul is depressed by sin, and sunk down into flesh, minding only the concernments of the flesh. Hear me, you that labor for the world, as if heaven were in it; what will you do when at death you shall look back over your

shoulder, and see what you have spent your time and strength for, shrinking and vanishing away from you? When you shall look forward, and see vast eternity opening its mouth to swallow you up; O then what would you give for a well-grounded assurance of an eternal inheritance!

O, therefore if you have any concernment for your poor souls; if it be not indifferent to you what becomes of them, whether they be saved, or whether they be damned, "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure," 2 Pet. 1:10. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that works in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure," Phil. 2:12. Remember it is salvation you work for, and that is no trifle. Remember, it is your own salvation, and not another's. It is for your own poor soul that you are striving; and what have you more?

Remember, now God offers you his helping hand; now the Spirit waits upon you in the means, but of the continuance thereof you have no assurance; for it is of his own good pleasure, and not at yours. To your work, souls, to your work. Ah, strive as men that know what an inheritance in heaven is worth.

And, as for you that have solid evidence that it is yours; O, that with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, you would adore that free grace, that has entitled a child of wrath to a heavenly inheritance! Walk as becomes heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Be often looking heavenward when wants pinch here. O look to that fair estate you have reserved in heaven for you, and say, I am hastening home; and when I come there, all my wants shall be supplied. Consider what it cost Christ to purchase it for you; and with a deep sense of what he has laid out for you, let your soul say, Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

# **The Kingly Office of Christ, as it is Executed Spiritually upon the Souls of the Redeemed**

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:5

We now come to the Regal office, by which our glorious Mediator executes and discharges the undertaken design of our redemption. Had he not, as our Prophet, opened the way of life and salvation to the children of men, they could never have known it; and if they had clearly known it, except, as their Priest, he had offered up himself, to impetrate and obtain redemption for them, they could not have been redeemed virtually by his blood; and if they had been so redeemed, yet had he not lived in the capacity of a King, to apply this purchase of his blood to them, they would have had no actual, personal benefit by his death; for what he revealed as a Prophet, he purchased as a Priest; and what he so revealed and purchased as a Prophet and Priest, he applies as a King: first subduing the souls of his elect to his spiritual government; then ruling them as his subjects, and ordering all things in the kingdom of Providence for their good. So that Christ has a twofold kingdom, the one spiritual and internal, by which he subdues and rules the hearts of his people; the other providential and external, whereby he guides, rules, and orders all things in the world, in a blessed subordination to their eternal salvation. I am to speak from this text of his spiritual and internal kingdom.

These words are considered two ways, either relatively or absolutely. Considered relatively, they are a vindication of the apostle from the unjust censures of the Corinthians, who very unworthily, interpreted his gentleness, condescension, and winning affability, to be no better than a fawning upon them for self-ends; and the authority he

exercised, no better than pride and imperiousness. But hereby he lets them know, that as Christ needs not, so he never used such carnal artifices: The weapons of our warfare (says he) are not carnal, but mighty, through God, etc.

Absolutely considered, they hold forth the efficacy of the gospel, in the plainness and simplicity of it, for the subduing of rebellious sinners to Christ: and in them we have these three things to consider,

1. The oppositions made by sinners against the assaults of the gospel, namely, imaginations, or reasonings, as the word "logismous" may be fitly rendered. He means the subtleties, slights, excuses, subterfuges, and arguing of fleshly-minded men; in which they fortify and entrench themselves against the convictions of the word: yes, and there are not only such carnal seasonings, but many proud, high conceits with which poor creatures swell, and scorn to submit to the abasing, humble, self denying way of the gospel. These are the fortifications erected against Christ by the carnal mind.

2. We have here the conquest which the gospel obtains over sinners, thus fortified against it; it casts down and overthrows, and takes in these strong holds. Thus Christ spoils Satan of his armor in which he trusted, by showing the sinner that all this can be no defense to his soul against the wrath of God. But that is not all: in the next place,

3. You have here the improvement of the victory. Christ does not only lead away these enemies spoiled, but brings them into obedience to himself, that is makes them, after conversion, subjects of his own kingdom, obedient, useful, and serviceable to himself; and so is more than a conqueror. They do not only lay down their arms, and fight no more against Christ with them; but repair to his camp, and fight for Christ, with those reasons of theirs that were before employed against him: as it is said of Jerome, Origin, and Tertullian, that they came into Canaan, laden with Egyptian gold; that is they came into the church full of excellent learning and abilities, with which they eminently served Jesus Christ. "O blessed victory, where

the conqueror, and conquered, both triumph together!" And thus enemies and rebels are subdued, and made subjects of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. Hence the doctrinal note is,

**DOCTRINE. That Jesus Christ exercises a Kingly power over the souls of all whom the gospel subdues to his obedience.**

No sooner were the Colossians delivered out of the power of darkness, but they were immediately translated into the kingdom of Christ, the dear Son, Col. 1:13.

This kingdom of Christ, which is our present subject, is the internal spiritual kingdom, which is said to be within the saints, Luke 17:20, 21. "The kingdom of God is within you." Christ sits as an enthroned king in the hearts, consciences, and affections of his willing people, Psalm. 110:3. And his kingdom consists in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," Rom. 14:17. and it is properly monarchical, as appears in the margin.

In the prosecution of this point, I will speak doctrinally to these three heads.

First, How Christ obtains the throne in the hearts of men.

Secondly, How he rules in it, and by what acts he exercises his kingly authority.

Thirdly, What are the privileges of those souls over whom Christ reigns. And then apply it.

First, We will open the war and manner in which Christ obtains a throne in the hearts of men, and that is by conquest: for though the souls of the elect are his by donation, and right of redemption; the Father gave them to him, and he died for them; yet Satan has the first possession: and so it fares with Christ, as it did with Abraham, to whom God gave the land of Canaan by promise and covenant, but the Canaanites, Perizites, and sons of Anak, had the actual

possession of it, and Abraham's posterity must fight for it, and win it by inches, before they enjoy it. The house is conveyed to Christ by him that built it, but the strong man armed keeps the possession of it, until a stronger than he comes and ejects him, Luke 11:20, 21, 22. Christ must fight his way into the soul, though he have a right to enter, as into his dearly purchased possession. And so he does; for when the time of recovering them is come, he sends forth his armies to subdue them; as it is Psalm. 110:3. "Your people shall be willing in the day of your power." The Hebrew may as fitly be rendered, and so is by some, "in the day of your armies;" when the Lord Jesus sent forth his armies of prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers, under the conduct of his Spirit, armed with that two edged sword, the word of God, which is sharp and powerful, Heb. 4:12. But that is not all: he causes armies of convictions, and spiritual troubles, to begird and straiten them on every side, so that they know not what to do. These convictions, like a shower of arrows, strike, point blank, into their consciences; Acts 2:37. "When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, and said, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Christ's arrows are sharp in the hearts of his enemies, whereby the people fall under him, Psalm. 45:5, 6. By these convictions he batters down all their loose vain hopes, and levels them with the earth.

Now all their weak pleas and defences, from the general mercy of God, the example of others, etc. prove but as paper walls to them. These shake their hearts, even to the very foundation, and overturn every high thought there, that exalts itself against the Lord. This day, in which Christ sits down before the soul, and summons it by such messengers as these, is a day of distress within: yes, such a day of trouble, that none is like it. But though it be so, yet Satan has so deeply entrenched himself in the mind and will, that the soul yields not at the first summons, until its provisions within are spent, and all its towers of pride, and walls of vain confidence, be undermined by the gospel, and shaken down about its ears: and then the soul desires a parley with Christ. O now it would be glad of terms, any terms, if it may but save its life: let all go as a prey to the conqueror.

Now it sends many such messengers as these to Christ, who is come now to the very gates of the soul; mercy, Lord, mercy, O were I but assured you would receive, spare, and pardon me, I would open to you the next moment! Thus the soul is shut up to the faith of a Christ, as it is, Gal. 3:23. and reduced now to the greatest strait and loss imaginable; and now the merciful King, whose only design is to conquer the heart, hangs forth the white flag of mercy before the soul, giving it hopes it shall be spared, pitied, and pardoned, though so long in rebellion against him, if yet it will yield itself to Christ. Many staggering, hesitations, irresolutions, doubts, fears, scruples, half-resolves, reasonings for and against, there are at the council table of man's own heart, at this time. Sometimes there is no hope; Christ will slay me, if I go forth to him, and then it trembles. But then, who ever found him so that tried him? Other souls have yielded, and found mercy beyond all their expectations. O but I have been a desperate enemy against him. Admit it, yet you have the word of a King for it; "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon him", Isa. 55:7.

But the time of mercy is past, I have stood out too long: yet if it were so, how is it that Christ has not made short work, and cut me off? set fire, hell fire to my soul, and withdrawn the siege? Still he waits that he may be gracious, and is exalted that he may have compassion. A thousand such debates there are, until, at last, the soul considering, if it abide in rebellion, it must needs perish; if it go forth to Christ, it can but perish: and being somewhat encouraged by the messages of grace sent into the soul, at this time, such as in Heb. 8:25. "Therefore he is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him;" and, John 6:37. "He that comes to me, I will in nowise cast out;" and in Matt. 11:28. "Come unto me all you that labor, and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." It is, at last, resolved to open to Christ; and says, "Stand open you everlasting gates, and be you opened you everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Now, the will spontaneously opens to Christ: that royal fort submits and yields; all

the affections open to him. The will brings Christ the keys of all the rooms in the soul. Concerning the triumphant entrance of Christ into the soul, we may say, as the Psalmist rhetorically speaks concerning the triumphant entrance of Israel into Canaan, Psalm. 114:5, 6. "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs; what ails you, O you sea, that you fled? You Jordan, that you were driven back?" So here, in a like rhetorical triumph, we may say, the mountains and hills skipped like rams, and the fixed and obstinate will, starts from its own basis and center; the rocky heart rends in twain. A poor soul comes into the word, full of ignorance, pride, self-love, desperate hardness, and fixed resolutions to go on in its way: and, by an hour's discourse, the tide turns, Jordan is driven back. What ails you, you stout will, that you surrender to Christ! you hard heart, that you relents, and the waters gush out? And thus the soul is won to Christ; he writes down his terms, and the soul willingly subscribes them. Thus it comes in to Christ by free and hearty submission, desiring nothing more than to come under the government of Christ, for the time to come.

Secondly, Let us see how Christ rules in the souls of such as submit to him. And there are six things in which he exerts his kingly authority over them.

1. He imposes a new law upon them, and enjoins them to be severe and punctual in their obedience to it. The soul was a Belialite before, and could endure no restraint; its lusts gave it laws. "We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving diverse lusts and pleasures," Tit. 3:3. Whatever the flesh craved, and the sensual appetite whined after, it must have, cost what it would; if damnation were the price of it, it would have it, provided it should not be present pay. Now, it must not be any longer without law to God; but under law to Christ. Those are the articles of peace which the seal willingly subscribes in the day of its admission to mercy, Mat. 11:29. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." This "Law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus makes them free from the law of sin and death," Rom. 8:2. Here is much strictness, but no bondage; for the

law is not only written in Christ's statute-book, the bible, but copied out by his spirit upon the hearts of his subjects, in correspondent principles; which makes obedience a pleasure, and self-denial easy. Christ's yoke is lined with love, so that it never galls the necks of his people: 1 John 5:3. "His commandments are not grievous." The soul that comes under Christ's government, must receive law from Christ; and under law every thought of the heart must come.

2. He rebukes and chastises souls for the violations and transgressions of his law. That is another act of Christ's regal authority: "whom he loves he rebukes and chastens," Heb. 12:6, 7. These chastisements of Christ are either by the rod of providence upon their bodies, and outward comforts, or upon their spirits and inward comforts. Sometimes his rebukes are smart upon the outward man, 1 Cor. 11:30. "for this cause, many among you are weakly and sick, and many sleep." They had not that due regard to his body that became them, and he will make their bodies to smart for it. And he had rather their flesh should smart, than their souls should perish. Sometimes he spares their outward, and afflicts their inner man, which is a much smarter rod. He withdraws peace, and takes away joy from the spirits of his people. The hidings of his face are sore rebukes. however, all is for emendation, not for destruction. And it is not the least privilege of Christ's subjects to have a seasonable and sanctified rod to reduce them from the ways of sin: Psalm. 23:3. "Your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Others are suffered to go on stubbornly in the way of their own hearts; Christ will not spend a rod upon them for their good, will not call them to account for any of their transgressions, but will reckon with them for all together in hell.

3. Another regal act of Christ, is the restraining and keeping back his servants from iniquity, and withholding them from those courses which their own hearts would incline, and lead them to; for, even in them, there is a spirit bent to backsliding, but the Lord in tenderness over them, keeps back their souls from iniquity, and that when they are upon the very brink of sin: "My feet were almost gone, my steps

were well near slipt," Psalm. 73:2. Then does the Lord prevent sin, by removing the occasion providentially, or by helping them to resist the temptation, graciously assisting their spirits in the trial, so that no temptation shall befall them, but a way of escape shall be opened, that they may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. 10:13. And thus his people have frequent occasions to bless his name for his preventing goodness, when they are almost in the midst of all evil. And this I take to be the meaning of Gal. 5:16. "This, I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh;" tempted by them, you may be, but fulfill them you shall not; my spirit shall cause the temptation to die, and wither away in the womb, in the embryo of it, so that it shall not come to a full birth.

4. He protects them in his ways, and suffers them not to relapse from him into a state of sin, and bondage to Satan and more. Indeed, Satan is restless in his endeavors to reduce them again to his obedience; he never leaves tempting and soliciting for their return; and where he finds a false professor he prevails; but Christ keeps his, that they depart not again. John 17:12. "All that you have given me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." They are "kept by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. 1:5. Kept, as in a garrison, according to the importance of that word. None more solicited, none more safe than the people of God. They are "preserved in Christ Jesus," Jude 1. It is not their own grace that secures them, but Christ's care, and continual watchfulness. "Our own graces left to themselves would quickly prove but weights, sinking us to our own ruin," as one speaks. This is his covenant with them, Jer. 32:4. "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Thus, as a king he preserves them.

5. As a king he Regards their obedience, and encourages their sincere service. Though all they do for Christ be duty, yet he has united their comfort with their duty; "this I had, because I kept your precepts," Psalm. 119:56. They are engaged to take this encouragement with them to every duty, that he whom they seek "is a bountiful rewarder of inch as diligently seek him", Heb. 11:6. O what a good master do

the saints serve! Hear how a king expostulates with his subjects, Jer. 2:31. "Have I been a barren wilderness, or a land of darkness to you?" q. d. Have I been such a hard master to you? Have you any reason to complain of my service? To whoever I have been strait-handed, surely I have not been so to you. You have not found the ways or wages of sin like mine.

6. He pacifies all inward troubles, and commands peace when their spirits are tumultuous. This "peace of God rules in their hearts" Col. 3:15. it does act the part of an umpire, in appeasing strife within. When the tumultuous affections are up, and in a hurry; when anger, hatred, and revenge begin to rise in the soul, this hushes and stills all. "I will hearken (says the church) what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, and to his saints," Psalm. 75:8. He that says to the raging sea, be still, and it obeys him; he can only pacify the disquieted spirit. They say of frogs, that if they be croaking never so much in the night, bring but a light among them, and they are all quiet: such a light is the peace of God among our disordered affections. These are Christ's regal acts. And he puts them forth upon the souls of his people, powerfully, sweetly, suitably.

(1.) Powerfully: whether he restrains from sin, or impels to duty, he does it with a soul determining efficacy: for "his kingdom is not in word, but in power," 1 Cor. 4:20. And those whom his Spirit leads, go bound in the spirit, to the fulfilling and discharge of their duties, Acts 20:22. And yet,

(2.) He rules not by compulsion, but most sweetly. His law is a law of love, written upon their hearts. The church is the Lamb's wife, Rev. 19:7. "a bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench," Isa. 42:2, 3. "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," says the apostle, 2 Cor. 10:1. For he delights in free, not in forced obedience. He rules Children, not slaves; and so his kingly power is mixed with fatherly love. His yoke is not made of iron, but gold.

(3.) He rules them suitably to their natures in a rational way; Hos. 11:4. "I drew them with the cords of man, with bands of love;" that is in a way proper to convince their reason, and work upon their ingenuity. And thus his eternal kingdom is administered by his Spirit, who is his viceregent in our hearts.

Thirdly, and lastly, we will open the privileges pertaining to all the subjects of this spiritual kingdom. And they are such as follow.

1. These souls, over whom Christ reigns, are certainly and fully set free from the curse of the law. "If the Son makes you free, then are you free indeed," John 8:36. I say not, they are free from the law as a rule of life; such a freedom were no privilege to them at all: but free from the rigorous exactions, and terrible maledictions of it; to hear our liberty proclaimed from this bondage, is the joyful sound indeed, the most blessed voice that ever our ears heard. And this all that are in Christ shall hear, "If we be led by the Spirit, we are not under the law," Gal. 5:18. "Blessed are the people that hear this joyful sound," Psalm. 89:15.

2. Another privilege of Christ's subjects, is, freedom from the dominion of sin. Rom. 6:14. "Sin shall not reign over them; for they are not under the law, but under grace." One heaven cannot bear two suns; nor one soul two kings: when Christ takes the throne, sin quits it. It is true, the being of sin is there still; its defiling and troubling power remains still; but its dominion is abolished. O joyful tidings! O welcome day!

3. Another privilege of Christ's subjects, is, protection in all troubles and dangers to which their souls or bodies are exposed. "This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces," Mic. 5:5. Kings owe protection to their subjects: none so able, so faithful in that work as Christ; all "you gave me, I have kept, and none is lost," John 17:12.

4. Another privilege of Christ's subjects, is, a merciful and tender bearing of their burdens and infirmities. They have a meek and patient king; "Tell the daughters of Zion, your king comes meek and lowly;" Mat. 21:5. Mat. 11:29. "Take my yoke, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly." The meek Moses could not bear the provocations of the people, Numb. 11:12. but Christ bears them all: "He carries the lambs in his arms, and gently leads them that be with young," Isa. 42:11. He is one that can have compassion upon the ignorant, and them that are out of the way.

5. Again, Sweet peace, and tranquility of soul, is the privilege of the subjects of this kingdom: for this kingdom "consists in peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," Rom. 14:17. And until souls come under his scepter, they shall never find peace: "Come unto me, you that are weary, I will give you rest." Yet do not mistake, I say not, they have all actual peace, at all times: no, they often break that peace by sin; but they have the root of peace, the ground work and cause of peace. If they have not peace, yet they have that which is convertible into peace at any time. They also are in a state of peace, Rom. 5:11. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." This is a feast every day, a mercy which they only can duly value, that are in the depths of trouble for sin.

6. And lastly, everlasting salvation is the privilege of all over whom Christ reigns. Prince and Savior are joined together, Acts 5:31. He that can say, "you shall guide me with your counsels," may add what follows, "and afterwards bring me to glory," Psalm. 73:24. Indeed, the kingdom of grace does but breed up children for the kingdom of glory. And to speak as the thing is, it is the kingdom of heaven here begun. The difference between them is not specifical, but only gradual: and therefore this, as well as that, bears the name of the kingdom of heaven. The king is the same, and the subjects the same. The subjects of this are shortly to be translated to that kingdom. Thus I have named, and indeed but named, some few of those inestimable privileges of Christ's subjects. We next apply it.

INFERENCE 1. How great is their sin and misery who continue in bondage to sin and Satan and refuse the government of Christ! Who had rather sit under the shadow of that bramble, than under the sweet and powerful government of Christ. Satan writes his laws in the blood of his subjects, grinds them with cruel oppression, wears them out with bondage to divers lusts, and rewards their service with everlasting misery. And yet how few are weary of it, and willing to come over to Christ! "Behold (says one of Christ's heralds) Christ is in the fields sent of God to recover his right and your liberty. His royal standard is pitched in the gospel, and proclamation made, that if any poor sinners, weary of the Devil's government, and laden with the miserable chains of his spiritual bondage, (so as these irons of his sins enter into his very soul, to afflict it with the sense of them) shall thus come and repair to Christ, he shall have protection from God's justice, the Devil's wrath, and sin's dominion; in a word, he shall have rest, and that glorious," Isa. 11:10.

And yet how few stir a foot towards Christ, but are willing to have their ears bored, and be perpetual slaves to that cruel tyrant? O when will sinners be weary of their bondage, and sigh after deliverance! If any such poor soul shall read these lines, let them know, and I do proclaim it in the name of my royal Master, and give him the word of a King for it, he shall not be rejected by Christ, John 6:37. Come, poor sinner, come, the Lord Jesus is a merciful King, and never did, nor will hang up that poor penitent, that puts the rope about his own neck, and submits to mercy.

INFERENCE. 2. How much does it concern us to enquire and know whose government we are under, and who is king over our souls; Whether Christ or Satan be in the throne, and sways the scepter over our souls?

Reader, the work I would now engage your soul in, is the same that Jesus Christ will thoroughly and effectually do in the great day. Then will he gather out of his kingdom every thing that offends, separate the tares and wheat, divide the whole world into two ranks or grand

divisions, how many divisions and subdivisions soever there be in it now. It nearly concerns you therefore to know who is Lord and King in your soul. To help you in this great work, make use of the following hints; for I cannot fully prosecute these things as I would.

1. "To whom do you yield your obedience? His subjects and servants you are to whom you obey," Rom. 6:16. It is but a mockery to give Christ the empty titles of Lord and King, while you give your real service to sin and Satan. What is this but like the Jews, to bow the knee to him, and say, Hail master, and crucify him? "Then are you his disciples, if you do whatever he commands you," John 15:14. He that is Christ's servant in jest, shall be damned in earnest. Christ does not compliment with you; his pardons, promises, and salvation are real; O let your obedience be so too! Let it be sincere and universal obedience; this will evidence your unfeigned subjection to Christ. Do not dare to enterprise anything, until you know Christ's pleasure and will, Rom. 12:2. Enquire of Christ, as David did of the Lord, 1 Sam. 23:9, 10. 11. Lord, may I do this or that? or shall I forbear? I beseech you tell your servant.

2. Have you the power of godliness, or a form of it only? There be many that do but trifle in religion, and play about the skirts and borders of it; spending their time about jejune and barren controversies: but as to the power of religion, and the life of godliness, which consist in communion with God in duties and ordinances, which promote holiness, and mortify their lusts, they concern not themselves about these things. But surely "the kingdom of God is not in words, but in power," 1 Cor. 4:20. It is not meat and drink, (That is, dry disputes about meats and drinks) "but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit; for he that in these things serves Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men," Rom. 14:17, 18. O I am afraid when the great army of professors shall be tried by these rules, they will shrink up into a little handful, as Gideon's army did.

3. Have you the special saving knowledge of Christ? All his subjects are translated out of the kingdom of darkness, Col 1:13. The devil, that rules over you in the days of your ignorance, is called the ruler of the darkness of this world; his subjects are all blind, else he could never rule them. As soon as their eyes are opened, they run out of his kingdom, and there is no retaining them in subjection to him any longer. O enquire then whether you are brought out of darkness into this marvelous light! do you see your condition, how sad, miserable, wretched it is by nature? do you see your remedy, as it lies only in Christ, and his precious blood? Do you see the true way of obtaining interest in that blood by faith? does this knowledge run into practice, and put you upon lamenting heartily your misery by sin? thirsting vehemently after Christ and his righteousness? striving continually for a heart to believe and close with Christ? This will evidence you indeed to be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ.

4. With whom do you delightfully associate yourselves? Who are your chosen companions? You may see to whom you belong by the company you join yourselves to. What do the subjects of Christ among the slaves of Satan? If the subjects of one kingdom be in another king's dominion, they love to be together with their own countrymen rather than the natives of the place; so do the servants of Christ, They are a company of themselves, as it is said, Acts 4:23. "They went to their own company." I know the subjects of both kingdoms are here mingled, and we cannot avoid the company of sinners except we go out of the world, 1 Cor. 5:10. but yet all your delights should be in the saints and in the excellent of the earth, Psalm. 16:3.

5. Do you live holy and righteous lives? If not, you may claim interest in Christ as your King, but he will never allow your claim. "The scepter of his kingdom is a scepter of righteousness," Psalm. 45:6. If you oppress, go beyond, and cheat your brethren, and yet call yourselves Christ's subjects, what greater reproach can you study to cast upon him? What is Christ the King of cheats? Does he patronize

such things as these? No, no, pull off your masks, and fall into your own places; you belong to another prince, and not to Christ.

INFERENCE. 3. Does Christ exercise such a kingly power over the souls of all them that are subdued by the gospel to him? O then let all that are under Christ's government walk as the subjects of such a King. Imitate your King; the examples of kings are very influential upon their subjects. Your King has commanded you not only to take his yoke upon you, but also to learn of him, Matth. 11:29. Yes, and "if any man say that he is Christ's, let him walk even as Christ walked," 1 John 2:6. Your King is meek and patient, Isa. 53:7. as a lamb for meekness: shall his subjects be lions for fierceness? Your King was humble and lowly; Matth. 21:5. "Behold your King comes meek and lowly." Will you be proud and lofty? Does this become the kingdom of Christ? Your King was a self-denying King; he could deny his outward comforts, ease, honor, life, to serve his Father's design, and accomplish your salvation, 2 Cor. 8:9. Phil. 2:1-8. shall his servants be self-ended, and self-seeking persons, that will expose his honor, and hazard their own souls for the trifles of time? God forbid. Your king was painful, laborious, and diligent in fulfilling his work, John 9:3. Let not his servants be lazy and slothful. O imitate your King, follow the pattern of your King: this will give you comfort now, and boldness in the day of judgment, if as he was, so you are in this world, 1 John 4:17.

**The Kingly Office of Christ,**  
**as it is Providentially Executed in the**  
**World, for the Redeemed**

"And has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head, over all things to the church." Eph. 1:22

The foregoing verses are spent in a thankful and humble adoration of the grace of God, in bringing the Ephesians to believe in Christ. This effect of that power that raised their hearts to believe in Christ, is here compared with that other glorious effect of it, even the raising of Christ himself from the dead: both these owe themselves to the same efficient cause. It raised Christ from a low estate, even from the dead, to a high, a very high and glorious state; to be the head both of the world, and of the church; the head of the world by way of dominion, the head of the church by way of union, and special influence, ruling the world for the good of his people in it. "He gave him to be the head over all things to the church."

In this scripture let these four things be seriously regarded.

1. The dignity and authority committed to Christ; "He has put all things under his feet;" which implies, full, ample and absolute dominion in him, and subjection in them over whom he reigns. This power is delegated to him by the Father: for besides the essential, native power and dominion over all, which he has as God, and is common to every person in the Godhead, Psalm. 22:28. there is a mediatory dispensed authority, which is proper to him as Mediator, which he receives as the reward or fruit of his suffering, Phil. 2:8.
2. The subject recipient of this authority, which is Christ, and Christ primarily, and only: he is the first receptacle of all authority and power. Whatever authority any creature is clothed with, is but ministerial and derivative, whether it be political, or ecclesiastical. Christ is the only Lord, Jude, ver. 4. The fountain of all power.
3. The object of this authority, the whole creation; all things are put under his feet: he rules from sea to sea, even to the utmost bounds of God's creation, "You have given him power over all flesh," John 17:2.

all creatures, rational, and irrational animate, and inanimate, angels, devils, men, winds, seas, all obey him.

4. And especially, take notice of the *finis cui*, the end for which he governs and rules the universal empire; it is for the church, That is, for the advantage, comfort, and salvation of that chosen remnant he died for. He purchased the church; and that he might have the highest security that his blood should not be lost, God the Father has put all things into his hand, to order and dispose all as he pleases. For the furtherance of that his design and end, as he bought the persons of some, so the services of all the rest; and that they might effectually serve the end they are designed to, Christ will order them all in a blessed subordination and subserviency thereunto. Hence the point is,

**DOCTRINE. That all the affairs of the kingdom of providence are ordered and determined by Jesus Christ, for the special advantage, and everlasting good of his redeemed people.**

John 17:2. "As you have given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him." Hence it comes to pass, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose," Rom. 8:28.

That Jesus Christ has a providential influence upon all the affairs of this world is evident, both from scripture assertions, and rational observations, made upon the acting of things here below

The first chapter of Ezekiel contains an admirable scheme or draught of providence. There you see how all the wheels, That is, the motions and revolutions here on earth, are guided by the spirit that is in them. And, ver. 26. it is all run up into the supreme cause; there you find one like the Son of man, which is Jesus Christ, sitting upon the throne, and giving forth orders from thence for the government of all: and if it were not so, how is it that there are such strong

combinations, and predispositions of persons and things to such ends and issues, without any communications of councils, or holding of intelligence with one another? As in Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, and innumerable more instances have appeared. Certainly, if ten men, from several places, should all meet at one place, and about one business, without any fore-appointment among themselves, it would argue their motions were secretly over-ruled by some invisible agent. How is it that such marvelous effects are produced in the world by causes that carry no proportion to them? Amos 5:9 and 1 Cor. 1:27 and as often, the most apt and likely means are rendered wholly ineffectual? Psalm. 33:16. In a word, if Christ has no such providential influx, how are his people in all ages preserved in the midst of so many millions of potent and malicious enemies, among whom they live as sheep in the midst of wolves? Luke 10:3. How is it that the bush burns, and yet is not consumed Exod. 3:2.

But my business, in this discourse, is not to prove that there is a Providence, which none but Atheists deny. I shall chose rather to show by what acts Jesus Christ administers this kingdom, and in what manner; and what use may be made thereof.

First, He rules and orders the kingdom of Providence, by supporting, permitting, restraining, limiting, protecting, punishing, and rewarding those over whom he reigns providentially.

1. He supports the world, and all creatures in it, by his power. "My Father works hitherto, and I work," John 5:17. "And in him (that is, in Christ) all things consist," Col. 1:17. It is a considerable part of Christ's glory to have a whole world of creatures owing their being and hourly conservation to him. The parts of the world are not coupled and fastened together as the parts of the house, whose beams are pinned and nailed to each other; but rather as several rings of iron, which hang together by the virtue of a loadstone. This goodly fabric was razed to the foundation when sin entered, and had tumbled into everlasting confusion, had not Christ stepped in to shore up the reeling world. For the sake of his redeemed that inhabits it, he

does and will prop it by his omnipotent power. And when he has gathered all his elect out of it into the kingdom above, then will he set fire to the four quarters of it, and it shall lie in ashes. Meanwhile, he is "given for a covenant to the people, to establish the earth," Isa. 49:8.

2. He permits and suffers the worst of creatures in his dominion, to be and act as they do. "The deceived, and the deceiver, are his," Job 12:16. Even those that fight against Christ and his people, receive both power and permission from him. Say not, that it is unbecoming the most Holy to permit such evils, which he could prevent if he pleased. For as he permits no more than he will overrule to his praise, so that very permission of his, is holy and just. Christ's working is not confounded with the creature's. Pure sun beams are not tainted by the noisome vapors of the dung hill on which they shine. His holiness has no fellowship with their iniquities; nor are their transgressions at all excused by his permissions of them. "He is a rock, his work is perfect, but they have corrupted themselves," Deut. 32:4, 5. This holy permission is but the withholding of those restraints from their lusts, and denying those common assistances which he is no way bound to give them. Acts 14:16. "He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." And yet should he permit sinful creatures to act out all the wickedness that is in their hearts, there would neither remain peace nor order in the world. And therefore,

3. He powerfully restrains creatures by the bridle of providence, from the commission of those things, to which their hearts are propense enough, Psalm. 76:10. "The remainder of wrath you will restrain," or gird up; letting forth just so much as shall serve his holy ends, and no more. And truly this is one of the glorious mysteries of Providence, which amazes the serious and considerate soul; to see the spirit of a creature fully set to do mischief; power enough, as one would think, in his hand to do it, and a door of opportunity standing open for it; and yet the effect strangely hindered. The strong propensions of the will are inwardly checked, as in the case of Laban, Gen. 31:24. or a diversion, and rub is strangely cast in their way; as in the case of

Sennacherib, 2 Kings 19:7, 8. so that their hands cannot perform their enterprises. Julia had two great designs before him, one was to conquer the Persian, the other to root out the Galileans, as he, by way of contempt, called the Christians: but he will begin with the Persian first, and then make a sacrifice of all the Christians to his idols. He does so, and perishes in the first attempt. O the wisdom of Providence!

4. Jesus Christ limits the creatures in their acting, assigning them their boundaries and lines of liberty; to which they may, but beyond it cannot, go. Rev. 2:10. "Fear none at these things that you shall suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, and you shall have tribulation ten days." They would have cast them into their graves, but it shall only be into prisons: They would have stretched out their hands, upon them all; no, but only some of them shall be exposed: They would have kept them there perpetually; no, it must be but for ten days, Ezek. 22:6. "Behold, the princes of Israel were in you, everyone to their power to shed blood." They went as far as they had power to go, not as far as they had will to go. Four hundred and thirty years were determined upon the people of God in Egypt; and then, even in that very night, God brought them forth; for then "the time of the promise was come," Acts 7:17.

5. The Lord Jesus providentially protects his people amidst a world of enemies and dangers. It was Christ that appeared unto Moses in the flaming bush, and preserved it from being consumed. The bush signified the people of God in Egypt; the fire flaming on it, the exquisite sufferings they there endured: the safety of the bush, amidst the flames, the Lord's admirable care and protection of his poor suffering ones. None so tenderly careful as Christ. "as birds flying, so he defends Jerusalem," Isa. 31:5; That is, as they fly swiftly towards their nests, crying when their young are in danger, so will the Lord preserve his. They are "preserved in Christ Jesus", Jude 1, as Noah and his family were in the ark. Hear how a Worthy of our own expresses himself on this point.

"That we are at peace in our houses, at rest in our beds; that we have any quiet in our enjoyments, is from hence alone. Whose person would not be defiled, or destroyed? whose habitation would not be ruined? whose blood almost would not be shed, if wicked men had power to perpetrate all their conceived sin? It may be, the ruin of some of us has been conceived a thousand times. We are beholden to this Providence, of obstructing sin, for our lives, our families, our estates, our liberties, and whatever is or may be dear to us. For may we not say sometimes with the Psalmist, Psalm. 57:4. My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears, and their tongue a sharp sword? And how is the deliverance of men contrived from such persons? Psalm. 8:6. God breaks their teeth in their mouths, even the great teeth at the young lions. He keeps this fire from burning, - some he cuts off and destroys: some he cuts short in their power: some he deprives of the instruments whereby alone they can work: some he prevents in their desired opportunities, or diverts by other objects for their lust; and oftentimes causeth them to spend them among themselves, one upon another. We may say, therefore, with the Psalmist, Psalm. 104:24. O Lord, how manifold are your works! in wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your riches."

6. He punishes the evil doers, and repays, by providence into their own lap, the mischief they do, or but intend to do, unto them that fear him. Pharaoh, Sennacherib, both the Julians, and innumerable more, are the lasting monuments of his righteous retribution. It is true, a sinner may do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged; but oft-times God hangs up some eminent sinners in chains, as spectacles and warnings to others. Many a heavy blow has Providence given to the enemies of God, which they were never able to recover. Christ rules, and that with a rod of iron, in the midst of his enemies, Psalm. 110:2.

7. And lastly, He rewards by Providence the services done to him and his people. Out of this treasure of Providence God repays oftentimes those that serve him, and that with a hundredfold reward now in this

life, Matth. 19:29. This active, vigilant Providence has its eye upon all the wants, straits, and troubles of the creatures: but especially upon such as religion brings us unto. What huge volumes of experiences might the people of God write upon this subject? and what a pleasant history would it be, to read the strange, constant, wonderful, and unexpected acting of Providence, for them that have left themselves to its care?

Secondly, We shall next enquire how Jesus Christ administers this providential kingdom.

And here I must take notice of the means by which, and the manner in which he does it. The means, or instruments, he uses in the governing the providential kingdom, (for he is not personally present with its himself), are either angels or men, "the angels are ministering creatures, sent forth by him for the good of them that shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. 1:14. Luther tells us, they have two offices, *superius canere, et inferius vigilare*, "to sing above and watch beneath." These do us many invisible offices of love. They have dear and tender respects and love for the saints. To them, God, as it were, puts forth his children to nurse, and they are tenderly careful of them while they live, and bring them home in their arms to their Father when they die. And as angels, so men are the servants of Providence; yes, bad men as well as good. Cyrus, on that account, is called God's servant: they fulfill his will, while they are prosecuting their own lusts. "The earth shall help the woman," Rev. 12:16. But good men delight to serve Providence; they and the angels are fellow servants in one house, and to one master, Rev. 19:10. Yes, there is not a creature in heaven, earth, or hell, but Jesus Christ can providentially use it and serve his ends, and promote his designs by it. But whatever the instrument be Christ uses, of this we may be certain, that his providential working is holy, judicious, sovereign, profound, irresistible, harmonious, and to the saints peculiar.

1. It is holy. Though he permits, limits, orders and overrules many unholy persons and actions, yet he still works like himself, most

holily and purely throughout. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, Psalm. 145:17. it is easier to separate light from a sunbeam, than holiness from the works of God. The best of men cannot escape sin in their most holy actions; they cannot touch, but are defiled. But no sin cleaves to God, whatever he has to do about it.

2. Christ's providential working is not only most pure and holy, but also most wise and judicious. Ezek. 1:20. "The wheels are full of eyes:" They are not moved by a blind impetus, but in deep counsel and wisdom. And, indeed, the wisdom of Providence manifests itself principally in the choice of such states for the people of God, as shall most effectually promote their eternal happiness. And herein it goes quite beyond our understandings and comprehensions. It makes that medicinal and salutiferous, which we judge as destructive to our comfort and good, as poison. I remember, it is a note of Suarez, speaking of the felicity of the other world: "Then (says he) the blessed shall see in God all things and circumstances pertaining to them, excellently accommodated and attempered;" then shall they see that the crossing of their desires was the saving of their souls; and that otherwise they had perished. The most wise Providence looks beyond us. It eyes the end, and suits all things thereto, and not to our fond desires.

3. The providence of Christ is most supreme and sovereign. "Whatever he pleases, that he does in heaven and in earth, and in all places," Psalm. 135:6. "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings," Rev. 19:16. The greatest monarchs on earth are but as little bits of clay, as the worms of the earth to him: they all depend on him, Prov. 8:15, 16. "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice; by me princes rule, nobles, even all the judges of the earth."

4. Providence is profound and inscrutable. The judgements of Christ are "a great deep, and his footsteps are not known," Psalm. 36:6. There are hard texts in the works as well as in the words of Christ. The wisest heads have been at a loss in interpreting some

Providence, Jer. 12:1, 2. Job 21:7. The angels had the hands of a man under their wings, Ezek. 1:8. That is, they wrought secretly and mysteriously.

5. Providence is irresistible in its designs and motions; for all providences are but fulfilling and accomplishments of Gods immutable decrees. Eph. 1:11. "He works all things according to the counsel of his own will." Hence Zech. 6:1. the instruments by which God executed his wrath, are called "chariots coming from between two mountains of brass," that is "the firm and immutable decrees of God." When the Jews put Christ to death, they did but do what "the hand and counsel of God had before determined to be done," Acts 4:28. so that none can oppose or resist providence. "I will work, and who shall let it?" Isa 43:13.

6. The providence of Christ are harmonious. There are secret chains, and invisible connections between the works of Christ. We know not how to reconcile promises and providence together, nor yet providence one with another; but certainly they all work together, Rom. 8:28. as adjutant causes, or con-causes standing under, and working by the influence of the first cause. He does not do, and undo; destroy by one providence, what he built by another. But, look, as also seasons of the year, the nipping frosts, as well as the halcyon days of summer, do all conspire and conduce to the harvest; so it is in providence.

7. And lastly, The providence of Christ work in a special and peculiar way for the good of the saints. His providential is subordinated to his spiritual kingdom. "He is the Savior of all men, especially of them that believe," 1 Tim. 4:1. These only have the blessings of providence. Things are so laid and ordered, as that their eternal good shall be promoted and secured by all that Christ does.

INFERENCE 1. If so, See then, in the first place, to whom you are beholden for your lives, liberties, comforts, and all that you enjoy in this world. Is it not Christ that orders all for you? He is, indeed in

heaven, out of your sight; but though you see him not, he sees you, and takes care of all your concerns. When one told Silentarius of a plot laid to take away his life, he answered, *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* "If God take no care of me, how do I live?" how have I escaped hitherto? "In all your ways acknowledge him," Prov. 3:6. It is he that has espied out that state you are in, as most proper for you. It is Christ that does all for you that is done. He looks down from heaven upon all that fear him; he sees when you are in danger by temptation, and casts in a providence, you know not how, to hinder it. He sees when you are sad, and orders reviving providence, to refresh you. He sees when corruptions prevail, and orders humbling providence to purge them. Whatever mercies you have received, all along the way you have gone hitherto, are the orderings of Christ for you. And you should carefully observe how the promises and providence have kept equal pace with one another, and both gone by step with you until now.

INFERENCE. 2. Has God left the government of the whole world in the hands of Christ, and trusted him over all? Then do you also leave your particular concerns in the hands of Christ too, and know that the infinite wisdom and love, which rules the world, manages everything that relates to you. It is in a good hand, and infinitely better than if it were in your own. I remember when Melancton was under some despondencies of spirit about the estate of God's people in Germany, Luther chides him thus for it, "Let Philip cease to rule the world." It is none of our work to steer the course of providence, or direct its motions, but to submit quietly to him that does. There is an itch in men, yes, in the best of men, to be disputing with God: "Let me talk with you of your judgement," says Jeremiah, chapter 12:1, 2. Yes, how apt are we to regret at providence, as if they had no conducency at all to the glory of God, or to our good, Exod. 5:22. yes, to limit providence to our way and time? Thus, the "Israelites tempted God, and limited the holy One," Psalm. 78:18, 41. How often also do we, unbelievably, distrust providence as though it could never accomplish what we profess to expect and believe? Ezek. 37:11. "Our bones are dry, our hope is lost; we are cut off for our part." So

Gen. 18:13, 14. Isa. 40:17. There are but few Abrahams, among believers, who "against hope, believed in hope, giving glory to God," Rom. 4:20. And it is but too common for good men to repine and fret at providence, when their wills, lusts, or humours are crossed by it: this was the great sin of Jonah. Brethren, these things ought not to be so; did you but seriously consider, either the design of providence, which is to bring about the gracious designs and purposes of God upon you, which were laid before this world was, Eph. 1:11. or that it is a lifting up of your wisdom against his, as if you could better order your affairs, if you had but the conduct and management of them; or that you have to do herein faith a great and dreadful God, in whose hands you are as the clay in the potter's hands, that he may do what he will with you, and all that is yours, without giving you an account of any of his matters, Job 33:13. or whether providence has cast others, as good, by nature, as yourselves, tumbled them down from the top of health, wealthy honors and pleasures, to the bottom of hell; or, lastly, did you but consider how often it has formerly baffled and befouled yourselves; you would retract, with shame, your rash, headlong censures of it, and enforce you, by the sight of its births and issues, to confess your folly and ignorance, as Asaph did, Psalm. 73:22. I say, if such considerations as these could but have place with you in your troubles and temptations, they would quickly mold your hearts into a better and more quiet frame.

O that I could but persuade you to resign all to Christ. He is a cunning workman, as he is called, Prov. 8:30. and can effect what he pleases. It is a good rule, *De operibus Dei non est judicandum, ante quintum actum*. "Let God work out all that he intends, but have patience until he has put the last hand to his works and then find fault with it, if you can." You have heard of the patience of Job, "and have seen the end of the Lord," James 5:11.

INFERENCE. 3. If Christ be Lord and king over the providential kingdom, and that, for the good of his people, let none that are Christ's henceforth stand in a slavish fear of creatures. It is a good note that Grotius has upon my text; "It is a marvelous consolation

(says he) that Christ has so great an empire, and that he governs it for the good of his people, as a head consulting the good of the body." Our head and husband, is Lord-general of all the hosts of heaven and earth; no creature can move hand or tongue without his leave or order: the power they have is given them from above, John 19:11, 12. The serious consideration of this truth will make the feeblest spirit cease trembling, and set it a singing; Psalm. 47:7. "The Lord is king of all the earth, sing you praises with understanding,:" that is, (as some well paraphrase it) everyone that has understanding of this comfortable truth. Has he not given you abundant security in many express promises, that all shall issue well for you that fear him? Rom. 8:28. "All things shall work together for good, to them that love God," And Eccl. 8:12. verily "it shall be well with them that fear God,; even with them that fear before him. And suppose he had not, yet the very understanding of our relation to such a king, should, in itself, be sufficient security: for, he is the universal, supreme, absolute, meek, merciful, victorious, and immortal king.

He sits in glory, at the Father's right hand; and, to make his seat the easier, his enemies are a footstool for him. His love to his people is unspeakably tender and fervent, he that touches them, "touches the apple of his eye," Zech. 2. And, it is hardly imaginable, that Jesus Christ will sit still, and suffer his enemies to thrust out his eyes. Until this be forgotten, the wrath of man is not feared; Isa. 2:12, 13. "He that fears a man that shall die, forgets the Lord his Maker." He loves you too well to sign any order to your prejudice, and without his order, none can touch you.

INFERENCE. 4. If the government of the world be in the hands of Christ, Then our engaging and entitling of Christ to all our affairs and business, is the true and ready way to their success and prosperity. If all depend upon his pleasure, then sure it is your wisdom to take him along with you to every action and business; it is no lost time that is spent in prayer, wherein we ask his leave, and beg his presence with us: and, take it for a clear truth, that which is not prefaced with prayer, will be followed with trouble. How easily can

Jesus Christ dash all your designs, when they are at the very birth and article of execution, and break off, in a moment, all the purposes of your hearts? It is a proverb among the Papists, that Mass and meat hinder no man. The Turks will pray five times a day, how urgent soever their business be. Blush you that enterprise your affairs without God: I reckon that business as good as done, to which we have got Christ's leave, and engaged his presence to accompany us.

INFERENCE. 5. Lastly, Eye Christ in all the events of providence; see his hand in all that befall you, whether it be evil or good. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein," Psalm. 111:2.

How much good might we get, by observation of the good or evil that befall us throughout our course!

1. In all the evils of trouble and afflictions that befall you, eye Jesus Christ: and set your hearts to the study of these four things in affliction.

(1.) Study his sovereignty and dominion; for he creates and forms them: they rise not out of the dust, nor do they befall you casually; but he raises them up, and gives them their commission, Jer. 18:11. "Behold, I create evil, and devise a device against you." He elects the instrument of your trouble; he makes the rod as afflictive as he pleases; he orders the continuance and end of your troubles; and they will not cease to be afflictive to you, until Christ say, Leave off, it is enough. The Centurion wisely considered this, when he told him, Luke 7:8. "I have soldiers under me, and I say to one, Go, and he goes; to another, Come, and he comes:" meaning, that as his soldiers were at his beck and command, so diseases were at Christ's beck, to come and go as he ordered them.

(2.) Study the wisdom of Christ in the contrivance of your troubles. And his wisdom shines out many ways in them, it is evident in chasing such kinds of trouble for you: this, and not that, because this

is more apt to work upon, and purge out the corruption that most predominates in you: In the degrees of your troubles, suffering them to work to such a height, else not reach their end; but no higher, lest they overwhelm you.

(3.) Study the tenderness and compassions of Christ over his afflicted. O think if the devil had but the mixing of my cup, how much more bitter would he make it! There would not be one drop of mercy, no, not of sparing mercy in it, which is the lowest of all sorts of mercy: but here is much mercy mixed with my troubles; there is mercy in this, that it is no worse. Am I afflicted? "It is of the Lord's mercy I am not consumed," Lam. 3:2. It might have been hell as well as this; there is mercy in his supports under it. Others have, and I might have been left to sink and perish under my burdens. Mercy, in deliverance out of it; this might have been everlasting darkness, that should never have had a morning. O the tenderness of Christ over his afflicted!

(4.) Study the love of Christ to your soul, in affection. Did he not love you, he would not sanctify a rod to humble or reduce you, but let you alone to perish in your sin. Rev. 3:19. "Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten." This is the device of love, to recover you to your God, and prevent your ruin. O what an advantage would it be thus to study Christ, in all your evils that befall you!

2. Eye and study Christ in all the good you receive from the hand of providence. Turn both sides of your mercies, and view them in all their lovely circumstances.

Eye them in their suitableness: how conveniently providence has ordered all things for you. You have a narrow heart, and a small estate suitable to it: Had you more of the world, it would be like a large sail to a little boat, which would quickly pull you under water: you have that which is most suitable to you of all conditions.

(2.) Eye the seasonableness of your mercies, how they are timed to an hour. Providence brings forth all its fruits in due season.

(3.) Eye the peculiar nature of your mercies. Others have common, you special ones; others have but a single, you a double sweetness in your enjoyments, one natural from the matter at it, another spiritual from the way in which, and end for which it comes.

(4.) Observe the order in which providence sends your mercies. See how one is linked strangely to another, and is a door to let in many. Sometimes one mercy is introductive to a thousand.

(5.) And lastly, Observe the constancy of them, "they are new every morning," Lam. 3:23. How assiduously does God visit your soul and body! Think with yourself, if there be but a suspension of the care of Christ for one hour, that hour would be your ruin. Thousands of evils stand round about you, watching when Christ will but remove his eye from you, that they may rush in and devour you.

Could we thus study the providence of Christ in all the good and evil that befall us in the world, then in every state we should be content, Phil 4:11. Then we should never be stopped, but furthered in our way by all that falls out; then would our experience swell to great volumes, which we might carry to heaven with us; and then should we answer all Christ's ends in every state he brings us into. Do this, and say, Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ!

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