

## OF CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

HEBREWS vii. 17.—*Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

It is evident from the context, that the apostle is speaking of Christ as a Priest, applying to him this passage taken from Psal. cx. 4. *Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.* Where two things are proposed; 1. That he is indeed a Priest, whose business it is to offer sacrifices. 2. That he is so *after the order of Melchisedec*; noting thereby the similitude betwixt the two, the one being a notable type of the other. This likeness consists not in an unbloody sacrifice, that of bread and wine, which Melchisedec brought forth to Abraham when he returned from the slaughter of the kings who had taken Sodom and Gomorrah; but, (1.) In the name, Christ being the true ‘King of righteousness,’ and ‘King of peace,’ in which respect Melchisedec was only a type of him, Heb. vii. 2. (2.) In their original; ver. 3. Melchisedec is represented as ‘without father, without mother, without descent, having no beginning of days;’ nothing being recorded of his birth and parentage, he is like an immortal. In this he was a notable type of Christ, who had no father as man, no mother as God, was God himself from eternity, and his goings forth were of old, from everlasting. (3.) In their continuance, because Melchisedec’s death is no where recorded, ver. 8.; but is represented as one who liveth. So Christ our High Priest liveth for ever, to make intercession for us. (4.) In their office, Melchisedec was priest of the most high God, and king of Salem, or Jerusalem. So Christ is a Priest, who offered himself a sacrifice to God, and he is constituted King of Zion, of the church. (5.) In respect of unity. Melchisedec is set forth as having neither predecessor nor successor in his office. So Christ was set up to be a priest from everlasting, and is represented as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and the sacrifice that he offered being perfect, there is no more occasion for any other priests; and he has no successor, having an unchangeable and perpetual priesthood. (6.) In respect of dignity; Melchisedec being proposed as greater than Abraham. So Christ is greater than both: for he said, ‘Before Abraham was, I am.’ Thns Christ is a Priest, and that for ever. In this office is contained the grand relief of poor souls distressed and perplexed with the guilt and burden of their sins. When all other remedies have been tried in vain, it is the blood of the sacrifice of Christ, sprinkled by faith upon the trembling conscience, that must cool and refresh, and sweetly compose and settle it.

The doctrine arising from the text is,

Doct. 'Christ executeth the office of a Priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.'

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew that Christ is truly and properly a Priest.

II. Explain the nature of Christ's priestly office.

III. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to shew that Christ is truly and properly a Priest. This is evident, if we consider, 1. That the scripture holds him forth as such, Psal. cx. 4. and Heb. v. and other places of that epistle. 2. Because he exercises the acts of the priestly office, in offering sacrifice, and praying for his people. 3. Because he was typified by such as were really priests, as all the Levitical priests, and Melchisedec.

Quest. Wherein did Christ's priestly office differ from the priestly office under the ceremonial law?

1. The priests under the law were priests after the order of Aaron: but Christ is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. Who this Melchisedec was, it is in vain to inquire, and cannot possibly be known; the Holy Ghost designedly concealing his genealogy, beginning and ending, and descent, that so he might be a fitter type of Christ and his everlasting priesthood. He was like a man dropt from the clouds, and at last caught up again, and none knew how. It is said of him, Heb. vii. 3. that he was 'without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.' Now, Christ was a Priest after the order of this Melchisedec, not by a corporeal unction, legal ceremony, or the intervening act of a human ordination, but by a divine and heavenly institution, and immediate unction of the Spirit of life, in that extraordinary manner, whereby he was to be both King and priest unto God, as Melchisedec was, Heb. vii. 16. He was not a Priest after the order of Aaron, because the law made nothing perfect, but was weak and unprofitable; and therefore was to be abolished, and to give place to another priesthood. Men were not to rest in it, but to be led by it to him who was to abolish it, Heb. vii. 11, 12. The ministry and promises of Christ were better than those of the law; and therefore his priesthood, which was the office of dispensing them, was to be more excellent too, Heb. viii. 6. For when the law and covenant were to be abolished, the priesthood, in which they were established, was likewise to die.

2. The priests under the law were sinful men, and therefore of-

ferred sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the sins of the people, Heb. v. 3. But Christ was ‘holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself,’ Heb. vii. 26, 27. He was perfectly pure and holy, and could stand before God even in the eye of his strict justice, ‘as a lamb without blemish and without spot.’ Though he ‘made his soul an offering for sin,’ yet he ‘had done no iniquity, neither was there any guile found in his mouth.’ And indeed his sacrifice had done us no good, had he been tainted with the least sin.

3. The priests under the law were many, because they were mortal; death as an universal deluge was continually sweeping them off the stage. But Christ as a Priest for ever, Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 23. ‘This man continueth ever.’

4. The priesthood under the law was changeable; but Christ’s priesthood is unchangeable. The legal dispensation was to continue only for a time. It was but like the morning star to usher in the rising sun, which so soon as he appears in our horizon, it evanishes and shrinks away, Heb. vii. 12. God confirmed this priesthood with an oath, Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 21. as well as a King. Those offices which were divided before between two families, were both united and vested in Christ; this being absolutely necessary for the discharge of his Mediatory undertaking, and for the establishment of his kingdom, which being of another kind than the kingdoms of this world, even spiritual and heavenly, therefore needed such a King as was also a minister of holy things. And the apostle tells us, Heb. vii. 24. that ‘this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.’

5. The priests under the law offered many sacrifices, and of various kinds, as lambs and rams, calves and bullocks, and the blood of many beasts: but Christ offered but once, and that but one sacrifice,\* even the sacrifice of himself. So it is said, Heb. ix. 25, 26. ‘Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year, with the blood of others; (for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world): but now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.’ And herein he excelled and far transcended all other priests, in this, that he had something of his own to offer. He had a body given him to be at his own disposal for this very end and purpose. It is said, Heb. x. 5, 7, 10. ‘Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, ‘Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not but a body hast thou prepared me. Then said I, Lo, I

come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' He offered up his body, and not only his body, but his soul also was made an offering for sin, Isa. lxxiii. 10. We had made a forfeiture both of our souls and bodies by sin. It was therefore necessary that the sacrifice of Christ should be answerable to the debt which we owed to God. And when Christ came to offer up 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.

6. All those sacrifices that the priests offered under the law were types of the sacrifice of Christ, which he was to offer in the fulness of time, they not being sufficient in themselves to purge away sin, nor acceptable to God any further than Christ was eyed in them. But Christ's sacrifice was the thing typified by all these oblations, and is efficacious in itself for the satisfaction of justice, and the expiation of sin, Heb. x. 1, 4, 14. 'For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' His sacrifice was invaluablely precious, and of infinite efficacy and virtue. And such it behoved to be: for it being offered as an expiatory sacrifice, it ought to be proportioned and equivalent, in its own intrinsic value, to all the souls and bodies that were to be redeemed by it. So that as one rich diamond is more in worth than ten thousand pebbles, or one piece of gold than many counters, so the sacrifice of Christ's soul and body is far more valuable than all the souls and bodies in the world.

7. The priests under the law appeared before God in behalf of the people, in the temple made with hands; but Christ appeareth in heaven itself. The Levitical priests offered sacrifices and made prayers for the people in the temple; and the high priest, who was an eminent type of Christ, entered into the holy of holies, the figure of heaven, once a-year, and that not without blood. This was typical of Christ's entering into heaven itself in his people's name, to appear for them before the throne of God. Hence it is said, Heb. ix. 24. 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' 1 John ii. 1. 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'

8. The priests under the law had only the office of priesthood; but Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King.

II. Let us take a view of the nature of Christ's priesthood. The office of the priests was to offer sacrifices, and to pray for the people. Hence there are two parts of Christ's priestly office, namely, oblation of the sacrifice, and intercession.

*Of CHRIST'S OBLATION.*

One part of Christ's priestly office was the oblation of a sacrifice. Where we may consider,

1. The import of offering.
2. What was the sacrifice.
3. How often he did offer himself.
4. For whom he did so.
5. For what ends he did offer himself.
6. The efficacy of his one offering.

*First*, I am to shew what the import of offering is. It signifies the voluntariness of Christ's sufferings, Eph. v. 2. ‘Christ hath given himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. He laid down his life of himself, that he might take it again. ‘He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.’ For,

1. Though he well knew his sufferings beforehand, and that dreadful storm of the divine wrath and indignation that was to fall upon him, and all the abuse, indignities, and torments, he was to meet with from wicked men and on the cross, yet he did not withdraw from that dreadful apparatus of a violent death when his time was come; he would not suffer his disciples, could they have done it, to rescue him from the impending danger: nay his delivering himself up to his blood-thirsty pursuers, after he had exhibited a remarkable instance of his divine power, in making them fall to the ground with a word, John xviii. 28. was an evidence, that he was nowise constrained, but a hearty volunteer in his then intended offering. The cup of his sufferings was continually before his eyes; he never declined to drink of it: nay, he was pained and straitened till he drank it to the bottom.

2. The strong cry he uttered immediately before his yielding up his soul on the cross, was an evidence there was more than a natural power attending him in that important crisis. He was no criminal in the eye of God and scripture, and could not have been put to death unless he had pleased, being the most high God, and

Sovereign of men and angels, and therefore having the whole creation at his command. The strong cry he then uttered was not the effect of weakness or reluctance to part with his life, such as a criminal may be supposed to give, but rather a shout of triumph, proceeding from one who had spontaneously offered himself to such a dreadful death, testifying before God, angels, and men, his joy and exultation in having performed the arduous work he had of his own proper motion engaged to achieve.

*Secondly,* Let us consider what was the sacrifice he offered np. On this head it may not be improper to observe, that sacrifices were of two sorts.

1. Some were eucharistical, or thank-offerings in testimony of homage, subjection, duty, and service; as the dedication of the first fruits, the meat and drink offerings. By these the sacrificer acknowledged the bounty and goodness of God, and his own unworthiness to receive the least of his favours, rendered praise for mercies received, and desired the divine blessing. But Christ's sacrifice was not of this kind.

2. Some sacrifices were expiatory, for the satisfaction of justice, and the purging away of sin. The institution of this kind of sacrifices was upon a double account. (1.) That man is a sinner, and therefore obnoxious to the just indignation and extreme displeasure of the holy and righteous God, and laid fairly open to all the fierceness of wrath and vengeance. (2.) That God was to be propitiated, that so he might pardon man. These truths are rooted and deeply engraven in the natural consciences of men, as appears by the pretended expiations of sin among the Heathens. But they are more clearly revealed in sacred writ. Under the law, without the effusion of blood there was no remission, to intimate unto us, that God would not forgive sin without the atonement of justice, which required the death of the offender: but it being tempered with mercy, accepted of a sacrifice in his stead.

Of this last kind was the sacrifice of Christ, which he offered for us, even a sacrifice of expiation. All this was requisite to a real and proper sacrifice, concurred in his sacrifice. As,

1. The person offering was to be a priest. It was the peculiar office of a priest under the law to offer sacrifices. So says the apostle, Heb. v. 1. 'Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.' In like manner Christ, that he might offer this sacrifice, was called to that office, and made an High Priest in the house of God; as appears from Heb. v. 4, 5, 6, and 10. He is called 'the Apostle and High Priest of our pro-

fession; and it is said, 'Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.'

2. There was something to be offered, and that was himself, He was the sacrifice that he offered up unto God. Our great High Priest behoved to have a sacrifice answerable to the debt that we owed to God; and the debt was the forfeiture of both soul and body to the wrath of God, and the curse of the law: and therefore our High Priest was to have a soul and body to suffer in as our Surety. 'He made his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10. 'My soul,' says he 'is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. A body hast thou prepared me,' Heb. x. 5. And it is said, Heb. x. 10. 'We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. He himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree,' 1 Pet. ii. 24. He took upon him our nature, that he might have a proper sacrifice to offer. Christ was a sacrifice in his human nature. He suffered in his soul and body. It is to be observed, that doing or suffering belongs to the whole person. Hence the church is said to be redeemed with 'the blood of God,' Acts xx. 28. Yet the notion of a sacrifice importing suffering, and the divine nature not being capable of it, he himself was the sacrifice indeed, not in the divine, but in the human nature. Even as a murderer is said to kill a man, though he kill not the soul. Now, that he suffered in his body, appears from the history of his passion in the evangelists. And his soul-sufferings also are evident from the same history. His sufferings in his soul he himself testifies, when he says, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.' These were the soul of his sufferings, and far greater than those of his body. They consisted (1.) In his being deserted of God, whereby all comfort was eclipsed from his holy soul, Psal. xxii. 1. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (2.) In the impressions of God's wrath on it, which produced that bloody sweat in the garden, by which blood transpired from his sacred body. God knew how to let him feel his wrath as our Surety; and yet was pleased with him as a Son. (3.) In the assaults of the powers of darkness and spiritual wickednesses, who assailed him with redoubled fury in that hour of darkness. The prince of this world attacked him more fiercely then than ever before.

3. There was an altar on which this sacrifice was offered: for it is the altar that sanctifieth the offering, and renders it acceptable to God, and useful to man; and that was his divine nature. 'Through the eternal Spirit,' says the apostle, 'he offered himself without spot unto God,' Heb. ix. 14. and so by his blood purgeth our consciences from dead works. For Christ as God sanctified himself as

man, that so, through the virtue and merit of his sacrifice, his people might be sanctified also, John xvii. 19. There behoved to be something to add an infinite value and efficacy to the sufferings of his humanity; which could be nothing else but the divine nature. The human nature suffered, and the divine nature sanctified the humanity; and, by reason of this admirable union, and the reflection of the Divinity upon the humanity, what was done to the human nature upon the cross is ascribed to the whole person. They ‘crucified the Lord of glory,’ says the apostle; and, ‘God purchased the church with his own blood.’ It was this that made his sufferings acceptable and highly pleasing to God, whose justice was to be appeased and satisfied; and it was this that made them efficacious for man, whose happiness and commerce with God were to be restored and his guilt removed. So that he had a human nature that served for a sacrifice, and a divine nature wherein he subsisted, from whence that sacrifice derived an infinite dignity and value. Thus Christ was a priest in his person, a sacrifice in his humanity, and the altar in his Divinity.

4. In a sacrifice the things offered were to be of God's appointment, or else it had not been an acceptable sacrifice, but will worship; and no more a sacrifice on God's account, than the cutting off a dog's neck, or offering swine's blood, as appears by the law given by Moses concerning free-will offerings, Lev. v. So that what Christ offered was appointed and prepared by God. He prepared him a body, that he might offer it for a sacrifice. It was a living body, a body animated with a rational soul, which soul was separated from his body in the offering; and therefore he is said to ‘have made his soul an offering for sin;’ and that soul and body constituted his human nature. This was the sacrifice that was appointed of God for the expiation of the elect's sin. Hence says the apostle, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. ‘Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold;—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

5. The thing offered in sacrifice was to be destroyed. This is essential to a sacrifice. Those things that were endued with life were killed, that so they might be offered to God in sacrifice, and their blood was poured out, and the other parts of them, besides the blood were burned with fire, either wholly or in part. And thus was Christ sacrificed. His dying and bleeding on the cross, answered the killing and shedding of the blood of the Levitical sacrifices: and his sufferings (expressed by the pains of hell) were correspondent to the burning of these sacrifices. It is said, Heb. xiii. 12, 13. ‘Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his

own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.' His sufferings without the gate are held forth here, as answering the burning of the sacrifices without the camp.

6. The person to whom the sacrifices were offered, was God, and he only. It was gross idolatry to offer them to any other. Hence they are called 'things pertaining to God,' Heb. v. 1. and Christ's sacrifice was thus offered up to God, Heb. ii. 17. He performed the office of a merciful and faithful High Priest in offering up himself a sacrifice to God. God was the party offended by man's sin, and whose justice behoved to be satisfied, Eph. v. 2. Here is a mystery of wonders, where one party is the party offended, the priest, and the sacrifice.

*Thirdly*, I come now to consider how often Christ did offer himself. It was only once, Heb. ix. 28. 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ;' and that one and once offering fully answered the end of his offering himself: for, says the apostle, 'by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' Heb. x. 14. This was the difference, as I have observed above, between the Levitical priests and our High Priest, that they offered many sacrifices, which argued the imperfection of their ministry; but Christ only once, Heb. x. 14. just cited. As for the notion of the sacrament's being changed into a sacrifice, as the Papists pretend, there is no foundation for it: for there Christ is not offered to God, but to us; and it is no renewal of that sacrifice, but a solemn commemoration of it.

*Fourthly*, I go on to shew for whom Christ offered himself a sacrifice.

1. It was not for his own sins, for he had none; but for the sins and transgressions of others, Dan. ix. 26. 'The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.' He could not suffer for any sin of his own; for he was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' Though he made his soul an offering for sin, yet he had done no iniquity, neither was guile found in his mouth. As the legal lambs were without blemish, so Christ was a Lamb without spot. His extraordinary and miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin was an effectual bar against original sin, and he had no actual sin in the course of his life. He was infinitely holy as God, and habitually holy as man. Every power and faculty of his soul, and every member of his body, was elevated and raised to the highest pitch of holiness. And he fulfilled all righteousness in his life, and gave complete satisfaction to all the demands of the law;

so that he needed not, as the Levitical priests, first to offer sacrifice for his own sin, and then for the sins of the people.

2. Christ did not offer up this sacrifice for the sins of fallen angels; for there was no sacrifice appointed for them. Whenever they rebelled against their sovereign Lord and Creator, they were immediately expelled from the divine presence, and are kept in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day. Christ took not upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. He offered up the sacrifice of himself to make an atonement for the sins of men.

3. Christ did not die a sacrifice for every man and woman in the world. It is true, there was virtue and efficacy enough in his oblation to satisfy offended justice for the sins of the whole world, yea, and of millions of worlds more; for his blood hath infinite value, because of the infinite dignity and excellency of his person. And in this sense some divines understand those places of scripture where he is called the Saviour of the whole world. Yet the efficacy and saving virtue of his sacrifice extendeth not unto all. For,

*1st.* It is restricted in scripture to a certain number, called sometimes the church of God, as Acts xx. 28. ‘Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,’ Eph. v. 25. ‘Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.’ Sometimes they are called his sheep, as John x. 15. ‘I lay down my life for my sheep.’ They are also called those that were given to him by the Father, John xvii. 2. ‘Thou hast given him power of all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.’ See also John x. 26,—29. In these places of scripture, and others that might be named, you see that Christ’s death is restricted to a certain number of persons, exclusive of all others.

*2dly,* If Christ would not pray for every one in the world, then certainly he did not die for every one in particular. But so it is that he excludes the reprobate world from the benefit of his prayer, John xvii. 9. ‘I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me.’ Both the parts of Christ’s priesthood, his offering sacrifice and his intercession, are of the same latitude and extent. We find them joined together in the scripture by an inseparable connection, Rom. viii. 34. ‘It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us, 1 John ii. 1, 2. ‘If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins. So that Christ intercedes for all those for whom he satisfied offended justice: but he intercedes not for the whole world, but only for those whom God hath given him; and therefore he did not satisfy offended justice for all men.

*3dly,* Christ's death is an act of the highest love that ever was or can be manifested to the world. 'Greater love,' says he, 'hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' And says the apostle, Rom. v. 8. 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Now, it is plain, and cannot be denied, that every one of Adam's posterity is not the object of Christ's dearest love: and therefore he did not lay down his life for every one of them.

*4thly,* To affirm that Christ offered up himself a sacrifice with a design and intention to save all mankind, great absurdities would follow. As,

(1.) That Christ died for many, yea for innumerable multitudes, who never heard of his blessed name, nor of the blessings and benefits which were purchased by his death.—But this runs cross to the strain and current of the scripture, which tells us plainly, that there can be no salvation but by faith in Christ; and that without hearing of him there can be no faith, Rom. x. 14, 15, 16.

(2.) If Christ died for all, then this absurdity would follow, that he died for those whom he knew to be children of wrath and sons of perdition, whom God had passed by, and left to perish eternally in that miserable condition into which they had plunged themselves by sin.

(3.) If Christ died for all men, then he died for those who are now roaring in hell, and scorched and tormented with unquenchable fire, without any hope of redemption; and so he bare the punishment of their sins, and they are also now bearing and shall bear it for ever themselves.

(4.) If Christ died with an intention to save all men, then he is an imperfect and incomplete Saviour, who hath satisfied offended justice for their sins, and purchased redemption by his blood, but cannot apply it. He is only a true Saviour of those who are actually saved, and obtain salvation by him.

(5.) If Christ died for all men, then he died in vain for the most part, and his death and sacrifice had little effect; for the generality of men and women will perish eternally. There are many nations in the world that never heard of Christ; and even where the gospel is preached, our Saviour tells us, that 'wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many go in thereat; but that strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it, Mat. vii. 12, 13. 'Many are called, but few are chosen.' So that Christ did not offer up the sacrifice of himself for every one in particular.

4. Christ died for the elect, and for all the elect, and none else.

God designed to save some of the lost posterity of Adam, for the manifestation of the glory of the exceeding riches of his grace; and Christ died for all these, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6, Compare the following scriptures, Acts xiii. 48. Rom. iv. 25. and v. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. 1 Pet. ii. 21, 24. &c. from which we may be fully convinced that Christ died only for the elect.

*Fifthly*, I come now to shew, for what ends Christ offered up himself a sacrifice. It was to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God. The grand design and intendment of this oblation was to atone, pacify, and reconcile God, by giving him a full and adequate satisfaction for the sins of the elect world. So the apostle teaches us, Col. i. 20. ‘Having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself.’ 2 Cor. v. 19. ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,’ &c. Reconciliation is the making up of that breach which sin had made between God and us, and restoring us again to the forfeited favour and friendship of Heaven. This was the design and intendment of Christ’s sacrifice, Eph. ii. 16. Now, Christ’s sacrifice, abundantly satisfied these ends. And therefore I proceed,

*Sixthly*, To prove that Christ gave full satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of all the elect. This is clear and evident,

1. From many texts of scripture which merit your perusal, as Eph. v. 2. Heb. vii. 26, 27. x. 14. and ix. 13, 14.

2. Christ’s resurrection from the dead proves the validity and completeness of his satisfaction. As the elect’s Surety, he satisfied the law in his death; and having thereby paid all their debt, he received an acquittance, and the discharge was solemnly published to the world in his resurrection. He was released from the grave, as from prison, by a public sentence; which is an undeniable argument of the validity of the payment made by him in our name. For being under such strong bands as the justice and power of God, God could never have loosed the pains of death, if his sufferings had not been fully satisfactory to God, and received and accepted by him for our discharge. And it is observable to this purpose, that the raising of Christ is ascribed to God as reconciled, Heb. xiii. 20. The divine power was not put forth in loosing the bands of death till God was pacified. Justice incensed exposed him to death, and justice appeased raised him from the dead. If he had not paid all his people’s debt by sacrifice, he had been detained a prisoner for ever in the grave. But God having received full satisfaction, set him free.

3. His ascension into heaven proves the completeness and all-sufficiency of his sacrifice. If he had been excluded from the divine

presence, there had been just cause to suspect, that anger had been still resting in the breast of God; but his admission into heaven is an infallible testimony that God is reconciled. Our Saviour produces this as the convincing argument by which the Holy Ghost will effectually overcome the guilty fears of men, John xvi. 10. ‘He will convince the world of righteousness, because I go to my Father.’ Christ in his sufferings was numbered among transgressors; he died as a guilty person; but having overcome death, and returned to his Father again, he made the innocence of his person manifest and apparent, and shewed that a complete righteousness is acquired by his sufferings, sufficient to justify all those who shall truly accept of it.

4. The many excellent benefits which God reconciled bestows upon his people, prove the completeness of Christ’s satisfaction.

(1.) Justification is a fruit of Christ’s death; for the obligation of the law is made void by it, whereby the sinner was bound over to eternal wrath and punishment; Col. ii. 14. ‘Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.’ The terms are here used which are proper to the cancelling of a civil bond. The killing letter of the law is abolished by the blood of the cross; the nails and the spear, which pierced his sacred body, have rent it in pieces, to intimate that its condemning power is taken away. The forgiveness of sin is the chief part of our redemption, and it is ascribed to Christ’s blood as the procuring cause of it, Eph. i. 7. ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.’ The payment made by the Surety is a discharge of the principal debtor from the pursuit of the creditor. As Christ took away the curse from his people, being made a curse for them; so he takes away sin from his people, being made sin for them.

(2.) The death of Christ procured grace and holiness for men. We made a forfeiture of our original righteousness and sanctity, and were justly deprived of it; and till once divine justice was appeased, all influences of grace were suspended. Now, the sacrifice of Christ opened heaven, and brought down the Spirit, who is the principal and efficient cause of sanctification in men. The whole world lay in wickedness, as a dead carcase in the grave, entirely insensible of its horror and corruption. But the Holy Spirit inspired it with new life, and by a marvellous change hath caused purity to succeed corruption. It had been a great favour indeed to be delivered from the guilt of sin, that bound us over to everlasting wrath and punishment; but it had not been a perfect and complete favour, without our being delivered from the venom and filth of sin,

which had infected and corrupted our whole nature. If our guilt were only removed, we had been freed from punishment; but without the restoration of the divine image we had not been qualified for heaven, and fitted for converse with God. It was necessary that our souls should be washed, and our faculties renewed, to put us in a capacity to serve God and enjoy communion with him. And this is only obtained by Christ's death, Tit. ii. 14.

(3.) The receiving believers into heaven is a convincing proof of the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. The gates of the New Jerusalem were fast shut against sinful man, when he fell from his primitive holiness and felicity. God banished him from his presence, and drove him out of paradise, his native seat, fencing it with cherubims to prevent his re-entry. But Christ hath set open these everlasting doors, that believers may enter freely in, Heb. x. 19, 20. This shews the validity of his satisfaction. For divine justice will not permit that glory and immortality, which are the privileges of innocence and righteousness, should be given to guilty and polluted criminals; and therefore it was Christ's first and greatest work to remove the bar that excluded men from the sanctuary of felicity. Now, what stronger argument can there be, that God is infinitely pleased with what Christ has done and suffered for his people, than the taking of them into his presence to behold his glory? The apostle sets down this order in the work of our redemption, Heb. v. 9. that 'Christ being made perfect through sufferings, became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' In short, it is observable, that the scripture attributes to the death of Christ, not only justification, whereby we are redeemed from wrath and misery, that dreadful punishment which we deserved for sin, but such an abundant merit also, which purchases adoption for us, and all the glorious privileges of the sons of God.

From all which it is evident, that the sacrifice of Christ answered all the ends for which it was designed. It gave full satisfaction to the justice of God, and made up an everlasting peace between God and sinners.

*Quest.* What was it that rendered Christ's sacrifice so acceptable to God, and so efficacious for men?

*Ans.* 1. The quality of his person derived an infinite value to his obedience and sufferings. He was equally God, and as truly infinite in his perfections as the Father who was provoked by our sins. He was the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father in all things. The fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in him; and he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. His person was of as great dignity and honour as the Father's

was, to whom he was offered. Though there be a distinction of order among the persons of the Godhead, yet there is no priority, nor distinction of dignity. This made his sufferings of infinite and eternal value. For though his Deity was impassable, yet he that was a divine person suffered. And it is especially to be observed, that the efficacy of his blood is ascribed to the divine nature. So the apostle declareth, Col. i. 14. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin.' The efficacy of the Deity mingled itself with every groan in his agony, and with every pang and cry upon the cross. And as his blood was the blood of God, as it is called, Acts xx. 28. so his groans were the groans of God, and his cries the cries of God, and therefore of infinite value. What he acted and suffered as man, was dignified and rendered efficacious by his divine nature. From this arises the infinite difference between the sacrifices of the law, and the sacrifice of Christ, both in virtue and value. This is set down by the apostle with admirable emphasis, Heb. ix. 13, 14. 'For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God; by the personal union with the Deity, great dignity was conferred upon the sufferings of the human nature.'

2. The virtue and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice flowed from the infinite holiness and purity of his person. He was holy, harmless, &c. He was as free from blemish, as he was full of the Spirit. The spotlessness of his human nature was necessary to his being a sacrifice, and the union of the divine nature was necessary to his being a valuable sacrifice. He had no sin naturally imputed, and he had no sin personally inherent. He had no sin naturally imputed, because he was not descended from Adam by ordinary generation, who introduced sin into the world, and derived it down to all his progeny. He was holy in all his offices, harmless as a priest, faithful as a prophet, holy in his life and death; no guile was found in his mouth, nor any inordinate motions and desires in his heart. His sacrifice could not have availed us, if he had been tainted with the least sin.

3. The graces exercised in his sufferings rendered his sacrifice fragrant and acceptable to God, Phil. ii. 8. 'He became obedient unto death.' His obedience ran with a cheerful and prevalent strain through the whole course of his life. He submitted to a body, fitted to receive all those strokes of wrath that we should have endured for ever; a body made under the law, subject to the obedience and malediction of it. He delighted to do the will of God in

human nature, Psal. xl. 6, 7. He came not to do his own will, but that of him who sent him. Whatever was ordered him by his Father, that he spake, did, and suffered. He cheerfully laid down his life when the hour appointed by the Father was come. It was not a simple, but an affectionate obedience : ‘ As the Father gave me commandment, (says he), so I do,’ John xiv. 31. His offering himself a sacrifice according to the will of God for our sanctification, was the most significant part of his obedience. This rendered his sacrifice highly acceptable. Again, his admirable humility is joined with his obedience, as the cause of his exaltation, which was an evidence of its fragrance, Phil. ii. 8. That the Lord of glory should stoop so low as to put himself in the room of sinners, eclipsing the bright lustre and splendour of his glory, and shrouding under the disguise of our infirm flesh, submitting himself to a harder piece of service, and to deeper degrees of humiliation, than ever any creature in heaven or earth was capable of ; to descend from the throne of his inaccessible light, and to expose himself to the rage and fury of devils and men, without murmuring or impatience, to submit himself to an infamous death, endure the wrath of an offended God and Father, whom he infinitely loved, shed his precious blood, and descend into the grave ; this was an inexpressible and inimitable act of humility, lower than which he could not stoop. Now, since humility renders men so pleasing to God, that he heaps upon them the greatest testimonies of his favours, and richly dispensed to them the gifts of his grace, it must needs render the Son most acceptable to the Father in these his sufferings, and draw from him the greatest testimonies and distributions of his favours, because it was the greatest act of humility, as well as of obedience, that could possibly be performed. Further, the high exercise of his faith, rendered his sacrifice most acceptable to God. He had not one spark of infidelity, nor any the least grain of distrust in the goodness of God, in the midst of his deepest sorrows. He suffered the torments of hell for a time, without that killing despair that preys upon the inhabitants of that dismal place. He had a working of faith under the sense of his Father’s greatest displeasure and confidence in his love, while he felt the outward and inward force of his frowns. He had a faith of the acceptableness of his death for all his people, and gave clear evidence of his confidence in the promise, for a happy and glorious success, in his acting like a king, while he was hanging as a malefactor upon the cross, distributing his largesses to the poor thief, assuring him that on that very day he should be with him in paradise. Both his obedience to God in not turning his back, and his trust in God for his help and assistance, are joined

together as the ground of his justification, Isa. 1. 5, 7, 8. The light of his faith was to be discovered in opposition to Adam's unbelief, and his great humility in opposition to Adam's pride. By his active and passive obedience, he glorified the holiness and justice of God; by his humility, the power and sovereignty of God; and by his trust and confidence, the divine faithfulness and veracity. All which must needs render his sacrifice a sweet smelling savour to God, and efficacious for men.

4. The completeness of Christ's satisfaction is grounded on the degrees of his sufferings. There was no defect in that payment which he made. We owed a debt of blood to the law of God, and his life was offered up as a sacrifice, otherwise the law had remained in its full force and vigour, and justice had continued unsatisfied. That a divine person hath suffered the punishment that we deserved, is properly the reason of our redemption; as it is not the quality of the surety that releases the debtor out of prison, but the payment which he makes in his name. The blood of Christ shed, and offered up to God, ratifies the New Testament. In short, our Saviour, in his death, suffered the malediction of the law, even all those degrees of divine wrath and vengeance which the elect should have suffered for ever in hell; and his divine nature gave a full value, and put a high price upon the sufferings of his human nature; so that the satisfaction proceeding from them had an intrinsic worth and value; and God, who was infinitely provoked, is thereby infinitely pleased.

5. The sacrifice of Christ was fragrant and efficacious, because of the great glory and honour which he thereby brought unto God. The glory of his Father was what he had in view, as his main scope and aim in all his actions and sufferings, and that which he also actually perfected. The glory of all the divine attributes appeared in him in its highest lustre, 2 Cor. iv. 6. They all centered in him, and shone forth in their greatest splendor, not only in his incarnation, but also and chiefly in his sacrifice. The mercy and justice of God appear in combination here, and set off one another's lustre. Mercy could not be glorified, unless justice had been satisfied; and justice had not been evidently discovered, if the tokens of divine wrath had not been seen upon Christ. Grace had never sailed to us, but in the streams of the Mediator's blood. 'Without the shedding of blood (says the apostle) there is no remission.' Divine justice had not been so fully known in the eternal groans and shrieks of a world of guilty creatures, nor could sin have appeared so odious to the holiness of God by eternal scars upon devils and men, as by a deluge of blood from the heart of this sacrifice. Without the sufferings of Christ, the glory of the divine perfections had lain in the

cabinet of the divine nature without the discovery of their full beams. And though they were active in the designing of it, yet they had not been declared to men or angels, without the bringing of Christ to the altar. By the stroke upon his soul, all the glories of God flashed out to the view of the creature. All the divine perfections were glorified in the sufferings of Christ; his mercy, justice, power, and wisdom. Here the unsearchable depths of manifold wisdom were unfolded. Such a wisdom of God shined in the cross, as the angels never beheld in his face upon his throne; wisdom to cure a desperate disease, by the death of the physician; to turn the greatest evil to the greatest good; to bring forth mercy by the execution of justice, and the shedding of blood: how surprising and astonishing is this! The ultimate end and design of Christ's sacrifice was the honour of God in our redemption. Christ sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him, John viii. 50. He sought the glory of his Father in the salvation of men. Now, that must needs be fragrant and acceptable to God which accomplished the triumph of all his attributes.

*Quest.* But did not those sacrifices which were in use under the law satisfy the justice of God, and take away the sins of the people?

To this I answer in the negative. These sacrifices were but shadows by their institution, and were to have their accomplishment in some other, and therefore could make nothing perfect. See what the apostle Paul saith, who was once very zealous for them, Heb. x. 1. 4. 11. 'For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.' More particularly,

1. It was against common reason, that the sin of a soul should be expiated by the blood of a beast; that the sufferings of a nature so far inferior could be a sufficient compensation for the crime of a nature so much superior to it. The prophet spake the true reason of mankind when he asserted, that the Lord would not be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil; that he would not accept of the first-born of the body as a satisfaction for the sin of the soul, Micah vi. 6. A rational sacrifice was only fit to atone for the sin of a rational being. There was no agreement between the nature of a man and that of a bullock. The nature that sinned was also to suffer, and so to bear the punishment due by the law. 'The soul that sinneth it shall die,' saith the Lord, Ezek.

xviii. 4. If God had been content with the blood of beasts for the sins of men, then there had been no sufficient discovery of the severity of his justice, the purity of his holiness, nor the grandeur of his grace. It was inconsistent with the honour and majesty of God, who had denounced a terrible curse upon all the transgressors of the law, and published it with so much dread and awful solemnity, as thunders and lightnings, fire and smoke, and terrible earthquakes, to make so light of it, as to accept of the blood of a few mangled beasts, in the room of the offender. Would God appear upon mount Sinai with ten thousands of his angels to publish a fiery law, and let all the threatenings of it vanish into smoke? Can any in reason think, that all those fearful curses should be poured out upon a few irrational and innocent creatures, who had never broken that law? Can it ever enter into the heart of man to think, that, after so solemn and terrible a proclamation, he would acquiesce in so slight a compensation as the death of a poor beast? None can possibly entertain so mean and despicable thoughts of the infinite majesty, justice and holiness of God, or of the vile and detestable nature of sin, and the greatness of its provocation, as to imagine that the one could be contented, or the other expiated, by the blood of a lamb or a bullock. Our own consciences will tell us, that if God will have a sacrifice, it must be proportioned to the majesty of him whom they have offended, and to the greatness of the crime which they have committed. If all the cattle upon a thousand hills were sacrificed, and all the cedars in Lebanon were cut down for wood to burn the offering, it could not be a sweet smelling savour to God. There is an infinite disproportion between this kind of sacrifice and the glorious Majesty of Heaven.

2. The repetition of these sacrifices shews their insufficiency for the expiation of sin. For where the conscience is once purged, and the remission of sin obtained, there is no more offering for sin, as the apostle tells us, Heb. x. 18. But the repeating of the sacrifice plainly intimates, that the person for whose sake it is repeated is in the same condition now that he was in at the time of the former oblation. The apostle tells us, that if the law could have made men perfect, then these sacrifices would have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins, but in those sacrifices there was a remembrance again made of sins every year, Heb. x. 2, 3. Had the wrath of God been appeased by them, why should the fire burn perpetually upon the altar? why should it be so fed continually with the carcasses of slain beasts? As often as they were offered, there was a conscience of sin excited in the presenter of them, and iniquity was called to

remembrance. The whole scene of the legal administration loudly proclaimed, that the wrath of God against sin was not appeased and that the guilt of the soul was not wiped off. If a man had presented a sacrifice for his sin one day, and fallen into the same or some other sin before night, he must have repeated his sacrifice for a new expiation. Had there been any efficacy in them to purge away sin, then they had ceased; and there would have been no repetition of them.

3. The great variety of these sacrifices shews their insufficiency to take away sin. There were many gifts and sacrifices, bulls and goats, calves and lambs; which shews that no one thing was fit to typify and represent the full expiation wrought by Christ; whereas he offered but one sacrifice, and by that perfected for ever them that are sanctified. As the application of many medicines shews their insufficiency to cure a disease, so the many sacrifices and purifications under the law, plainly evidence that a full and efficacious propitiation for sin was to be sought elsewhere. If the great annual sacrifice, which was the most solemn one in that whole institution could not effect it, much less could sacrifices of a lower dignity. It is from the repetition of this great sacrifice that the apostle argues the insufficiency of them all, Heb. x.

4. God never intended that these sacrifices should expiate sin by any virtue of their own. The great and glorious Majesty of heaven, who was offended and provoked by sin, is truly infinite; and to satisfy him the sacrifices must be infinite too. But none of those sacrifices under the law were so. Why then were they appointed? Not with any intention to purge away the sin of the soul, but the ceremonial uncleanness of the flesh, as Heb. ix. 13, 14. where you see the blood of bulls and of goats sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh. The apostle compares these and the sacrifice of Christ together, and shews that the one purified only the flesh, and the other the conscience. It was not a moral guilt which they were intended to remove, but only a ceremonial one; as when one was defiled by touching a dead carcase or a leprous person, which was reckoned a defilement of the body, not of the soul. God hath often discovered their weakness and insufficiency, and that they could not give him recompense for the injury done him by sin. So Isa. lxvi. 1. 'Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?' By the house or temple here is meant all the Jewish economy, the whole lump of legal sacrifices. Though all these were appointed by God, and had been used by his people for a long time, yet he had no rest in them: they could neither satisfy his

injustice nor vindicate the honour of his law, nor could they ever take away sin, Heb. x. 11. And therefore God rejected them, and they were abolished and disannulled, for the weakness and unprofitableness of them, Heb. vii. 18. Though they had been practised by the Jews for so many ages, yet not one sin had been expiated by them in all that long tract of time.

5. The insufficiency of these sacrifices for the satisfaction of divine justice, and the expiation of sin, appears from the end and design of their institution, which was to prefigure and represent a more excellent sacrifice, that was able to do it effectually, even the great sacrifice of Christ. They were but shadows of good things to come, as the apostle terms them, and did typically represent a crucified dying Christ as the substance : and whatever virtue they had, it was not in or from themselves, but from their typical relation to him whom they prefigured. They all pointed forth the sacrifice of Christ, by whose precious blood, shed in the fulness of time, the sins of the elect were fully expiated. God had no pleasure in these sacrifices, but only so far as they represented the sacrifice of Christ, which effectually takes away sin, Heb. x. 6, 7, 8.

From what hath been said on this head, you see that those sacrifices which were in use under the law could not satisfy the justice of God, and take away the sins of men.

*Object.* If Christ suffered for the sins of his people, then he that was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, must be accounted a guilty person, yea, even the most guilty of all others, as having charged upon him all the sins of an elect world.

*Ans.* There is a twofold guilt to be considered, namely, a culpable, and a penal guilt. He that commits the offence is under culpable guilt; and he who is obliged to suffer for the offence is under penal guilt, though he did not actually commit it. Now, Christ as our sacrifice was under this penal guilt; the offences committed by us were charged upon him; and by his voluntary undertaking to be a sacrifice for us, he came under an obligation to suffer for us, as if he had really sinned, though we only were the transgressors. This is plain in the case of those legal sacrifices, which were shadows of Christ. It appears from them, that these two sorts of guilt may be separated, so that he who is not culpably guilty may be penally guilty, and may justly suffer though he did not personally sin: for the sins of the people being laid upon these sacrifices, they were under penal guilt, and did justly suffer as if they had sinned; and yet they were not culpably guilty; for they neither had sinned, nor were they capable of sinning.

*Quest.* Seeing Christ offered up his sacrifice to satisfy divine jus-

tice, and he himself is God, how could he die and make satisfaction to himself?

*Ans.* 1. God cannot be said properly to satisfy himself; for that would be the same thing as to pardon sin simply, without any satisfaction.

2. There is a twofold consideration of Christ, one in respect of his divine nature or essence, in which sense he is both the object against which the offence is committed, and to whom for it the satisfaction is made: and there is another consideration of Christ in respect of his person, and economy or office; in which sense he properly satisfied God, seeing he was, in respect of his manhood, another and inferior to God. So he says, John xiv. 28. 'My Father is greater than I.' The blood of the man Christ Jesus is the matter of the satisfaction; the divine nature dignifies it, and makes it of infinite value.

3. It is not inconsistent with reason, that the Son of God, clothed in our nature, should by his death make satisfaction to the Deity, and consequently to himself. For in the according of two different parties, a person that belongs to one of them may interpose for reconciliation, provided that he divests his own interest, and leaves it with the party from which he comes. As for instance, let us suppose two persons, a father and a son, both possessed of the supreme power, and offended by rebellious subjects: It is not inconsistent that the Son interpose as a Mediator to restore them to the favour of the prince his father. And by this he also reconciles them to himself, and procures pardon for that offence, by which his own majesty was wronged. Now, this is a fit illustration of the great work of our redemption, so far as human things can represent divine. For all the persons of the holy Trinity were equally provoked by our sin; and to obtain our pardon, the Son, with the consent of the Father, deposits his interests in his hands, and as a Mediator intervenes between us and his Father, who in this transaction is considered as the guardian of the rights of Heaven; and having performed what divine justice required, he reconciled the world to God, i. e. to the Father, himself, and the eternal Spirit. In this case his person is the same, but his quality is different. He made satisfaction as a Mediator, and received it as God; which is no way inconsistent.

*Quest.* Seeing Christ really suffered for the sins of his people, whether did he suffer the same punishment that they deserved, and which the law threatened, or only something equivalent to it? It would seem that Christ did not suffer the same thing that the law threatened, and which we justly deserved for sin: for then he must

have suffered eternal death. It was not only the first, but the second death that the law threatened. Therefore Christ's temporal death did not satisfy the law and justice of God for us.

There are very learned and pious writers on both sides of this question. Yet I humbly think, that, without any inconvenience, both may be affirmed in different respects. To clear this, you would know, that the punishment which Christ endured in our stead may be considered either as to its substance or essence, or with respect to the accidental circumstances which attend it when inflicted on the damned. Now, if we consider it as to substance or essence, it was the very same which the sinner should have undergone. Man by his fall was liable to death, and to the curse and wrath of God, and Christ hath borne this in the elect's room. But if we consider it with respect to the accidental circumstances which attend it when it is inflicted on the damned, then it was not the very same, but a punishment equivalent to it. The accidental circumstances of this punishment as inflicted on the damned, are, blasphemy, rage, and an impotent fierceness of mind, which are not appointed by the law, but are only accidentals, arising from the wickedness and perverseness of their spirits. Now, our blessed Saviour was not, nor possibly could be, liable to these. The great holiness and sanctity of his person effectually secured him against all these. Besides, the punishment that is inflicted upon the damned is eternal, and attended with final despair, and the intolerable anguish of a guilty stinging conscience. This is the never-dying worm that gnaws upon their vitals. But Christ the Redeemer having no real guilt, was not liable to the worm of conscience ; and his temporary sufferings were equivalent to the eternal punishment of the damned, and fully satisfactory to divine justice, on account of the infinite dignity and excellency of his person ; so that he was not capable of despair.

Thus it evidently appears, that Christ offered himself a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God offended by sin. And in order to confirm your faith in this important article, one of the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion, let me again call your attention to the following particulars, which I shall but barely mention.

1. Consider the necessity of this satisfaction. Without shedding of blood there is no remission, The justice of God, the nature of sin, and the sanction of the law necessarily required it. And the event manifests it; for it is not conceivable, how, if sin could have been taken away, with a bare word, the Lord would have fetched a compass by the blood of his own Son.

2. Consider the truth of it. Christ did really and truly, by the

sacrifice of himself, satisfy the justice of God for us. For he bare the punishment due to our sins, Isa. liii. 5. He died for us, in our room and stead, Rom. v. 6, 7.; and not for our good only, which may be said of all the martyrs. Compare 1 Cor. i. 13. He bought us with his blood and gave himself a ransom for our souls, and so has taken away our sins in the guilt thereof. His sufferings were the sufferings of a divine person; and so, though not infinite in duration, yet infinite in value. He was Lord of his own life.

3. Consider the perfection of it. He satisfied completely for the sins of the people. His satisfaction fully answered the demands of the justice and law of God. This is plain from the excellency of the person suffering, Col i. 19.: this the apostle testifies, Heb. x. 14. forecited; and from the discharge he got in his resurrection, and exaltation to the Father's right hand. Whatever is left to his people to suffer it is not to satisfy the justice of God, but for their correction, that they be made partakers of his holiness.

Having thus shewed that one end for which Christ offered up himself a sacrifice to God, was to satisfy his justice, I proceed,

SECONDLY, To shew that another end, as a native consequence of the other, was to reconcile elect sinners unto God. Here I shall,

1. Explain the nature of Christ's reconciliation.

2. Prove that reconciliation with God is the blessed fruit and effect of Christ's death.

2. Shew what influence the death of Christ has on this.

*First,* As to the nature of reconciliation, several things are implied in it. As,

1. A former friendship and favour. God and man were once in good terms. There was a time wherein they met and lovingly conversed together. When Adam dropt from the fingers of his Creator, he was the friend and favourite of Heaven. He had the law of God written on his heart, and a strong bent and inclination in his will to obey it. In that state there was no place for reconciliation: for then there was no breach between God and his creature.

2. It implies an enmity between God and man. Man fell from his primitive state of favour and friendship with Heaven, and joined issue with the devil, God's greatest enemy. Whereupon the Lord took the forfeiture of his possession, turned him out of paradise, and hindered his re-entrance by a flaming sword. There is now a dreadful war betwixt earth and heaven. Men daily rebel against God's laws, labouring to beat down his interest in the world, and employing all their powers and faculties, mercies and comforts, as weapons of unrighteousness to fight against him. And he is an enemy to them; for he hates all the workers of iniquity, and the foolish cannot stand in his sight. His wisdom, holiness, justice, and

power, stand ready charged against them, and they are liable to his eternal vengeance. This is the state wherein man stands with God on the account of sin.

3. Reconciliation with God lies in his receiving rebels into favour, and issuing forth a gracious act of indemnity for all their sins, and cancelling all those bands of guilt whereby they were bound over to eternal wrath and misery. This great blessing formally consists in his ‘not imputing their trespasses unto them;’ 2 Cor. v. 19. The forfeiture is taken off, and they are admitted into his former friendship and favour. Now, this is twofold; fundamental and actual.—There was a foundation laid for this reconciliation in the death of Christ. This is the mean by which it was purchased, and the chief and only ground why God lays aside his anger. ‘He made peace,’ says the apostle, ‘by the blood of his cross.’ And it is actual, when the offer of reconciliation is complied with by faith. He sends forth his ambassadors, clothed with his authority, to pray them in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God, declaring his great willingness to receive them into favour; and when men embrace the offer of reconciliation, then God actually lays aside his anger, and imputes sin no more to them.

*Secondly,* I proceed to prove that it is only through Christ that sinners can obtain reconciliation with God. This is clear,

1. From the holy scriptures, where this great truth is expressly declared. So it is said, Acts iv. 12. ‘Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.’ And we are elsewhere told, that ‘there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And he is called the Saviour of the world, not only by way of excellency, in respect of the great danger he saves us from, but by way of exclusion also, in regard of the sole designation of his person to this office, exclusive of all others. ‘If ye believe not that I am he,’ says he, ‘ye shall die in your sins,’ John viii. 24. He is the only person that was designed in all the prophecies, promises, and types. He is the only Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He is the promised seed of the woman, that was to break the serpent’s head. The heart of God is fixed upon him alone, and his resolution concerning the duration of his office is immutable and unalterable. He hath summed up all the dispensations of former ages in him, Eph. i. 10. All other things were preparations to and shadows of him; God, who had various ways of communicating himself to men, hath summed up his whole will in his Son, and manifested and declared that all his transactions with men did terminate in him.

2. The truth of this doctrine will appear, that none else was ever fitted for the management of this work. God and men were to be reconciled, and none but he that was God and man in one person could be a fit day's man to lay his hand upon both. Had he been only man, he had been incapable to satisfy offended justice; and had he been only God, he had been incapable of suffering. But being God and man, he is fitted for both. Infinite satisfaction was requisite to appease the anger of God; for without this, guilt would have remained: and none else was capable to give it, but Christ, in regard of the infinite dignity and excellency of his person. It was upon no other person that the Spirit descended like a dove to furnish his human nature with all needful abilities for the discharge of his trust.

3. If we consider that none else ever did that for us which was necessary for our reconciliation with God. It was he that answered the demands of the law, and silenced the roaring of vindictive justice. He only filled up the gap that was between God and sinners. It was only Christ that interposed himself as a shelter between the wrath of God and the souls of men. The prophet Isaiah tells us, that 'he bare our griefs, and carried our sorrows, and that the chastisement of our peace was upon him.' He received into his own bowels the sword of justice that was sharpened and pointed for us. He trod the wine-press alone, and none of the people were with him. He endured the bruises of God, the darts of the devil, and the reproaches of men; and would not desist till he had laid the foundation of an everlasting peace between God and sinners.

4. If ye consider that none else was ever accepted of God but this Mediator. The legal sacrifices were not able to make the comers thereunto perfect, Heb. x. 1. They were only shadows of good things to come; Christ was the substance and complement of them all; and they were no farther regarded of God but as they were types and representations of his Son. The daily repetition of them was an undeniable evidence of their inability to effect the reconciliation of man; but the blood of Christ typified by the blood sprinkled by Moses upon the people, does it effectually. This was a sacrifice wherein God smelt a sweet savour, and was highly accepted of him.

*Thirdly,* It remains to shew you what Christ did in bringing about this reconciliation.

1. He undertook this work in the eternal transaction that was between the Father and him, as I have shown you formerly at large.

2. He purchased reconciliation by his death, and thereby pro-

cured the egress of the divine favour to man. This was the prime article in the covenant of grace, ‘ When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed,’ Isa. liii. 10. God required this sacrifice exclusive of all others, which were entirely useless for the satisfaction of justice, though fit to prefigure the grand sacrifice that God intended. It was by the death of Christ alone that reconciliation was purchased to men, Rom. v. 10. Eph. ii. 13. and Col. i. 21. And when he was upon the cross he cried, ‘ It is finished;’ that is, the work of redemption is accomplished, reconciliation is purchased, I have done all that was appointed for me to do, the articles on my part are now fulfilled, there remain no more deaths for me to suffer.

4. He brings about an actual reconciliation between God and sinners by virtue of his efficacious intercession, Heb. vii. 25. His advocacy in heaven is the gracious spring of all divine communications. It is by this that he deals with God in the behalf of men; he leads every believer by the hand as it were unto the gracious presence of God, bespeaking acceptance for them after this manner: ‘ Father, here is a poor creature that was born in sin, and hath lived in rebellion all his days; he hath broken all thy laws, and deserves all thy wrath; yet he is one of that number that thou gavest me before the world began; and I have made full payment to thy justice by my blood for all his debt; and now I have opened his eyes to see the sinfulness and misery of his condition: I have broken his heart for his rebellions against thee and bowed his will into obedience to the offer of thy grace: I have united him to me by faith, as a living member of my mystical body: and now, since he is mine by regeneration, let him also become thine by a special acceptance: since thy justice is satisfied for his sins, let thine anger also be turned away, and receive him graciously into favour.’ In a word, the reconciliation of every elect person with God, is actually brought about by Christ: He opens their eyes, and lets them see their sin and danger: he beats down the stubbornness and obstinacy of their wills, and brings up their hearts to a full compliance with the offers of peace made in the gospel; and he leads them to God, and makes their persons and duties acceptable to him. Hence it is said, Eph. i. 6. ‘ He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.’

Before I proceed to the consideration of the second part of Christ’s priestly office, namely, his intercession. I shall make some improvement of the doctrine of his satisfaction.

1. Here we may see the horrid and hateful evil of sin, which no other sacrifice could expiate but the blood of the Son of God. As the strength of a disease is known and seen by the quality and force

of the medicine that is made use of to cure it, and the virtue of a commodity by the greatness of the price that it laid down to buy it; so is the matter here. The sufferings and death of Christ express the evil of sin far above the severest judgments that ever were inflicted upon any creature. The dying groans of our blessed Redeemer set forth the horrid nature of sin, and loudly proclaim how hateful it is in the eye of an infinitely pure and holy God. How much evil must there be in sin that made Christ to groan and bleed to death to take it away! It is strange to imagine how rational agents should dare to commit such an evil, so freely and openly, and that for trifles and perishing vanities, which are of no continuance and duration. Can they escape, or can they possibly endure, the wrath and vengeance of an incensed Deity? If God spared not his own Son, when he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, how shall sinners escape, who are deeply and universally defiled? Can they encounter with the fury of the Almighty, the very apprehensions of which made Christ's soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death? Have they patience to endure and bear that for ever, which was intolerable for Christ to bear but for a few hours, who had all the strength of the Deity to support him? If it was so with the green tree, what shall become of the dry, when exposed to the fiery trial? O what prodigious madness is it for men to drink iniquity like water, as a harmless thing, when it is a poison so dangerous and deadly, that the least drop of it brings certain ruin? What desperate and monstrous folly is it to have slight apprehensions of that which is attended with the first and second death; even with all the terrors and torments of hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; where misery will continue in its full extremity, while eternity runs its endless course! Nothing but unreasonable infidelity and want of thought can make men venturesous to provoke the living God, who is infinitely sensible of their sins, and who both can and will most terribly punish them for ever.

2. This lets us see the strictness and inexorable severity of divine justice, that required satisfaction equivalent to the desert of sin. All the other demonstrations of it which God hath given to the world, are nothing to this. God spared not his own Son. The fountain of divine mercy stopt its course, and would not let out one drop to Christ in the day of his extreme sorrow and sufferings. The Father of mercies saw his dear Son sweating great drops of blood in a cold night, and crying out with a mournful accent, 'O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;' and yet he would not grant the request. O the inflexible severity of divine justice! What will ye do, sinners, when it falls upon you in hell? If the blessed

Son of God cried so out, what will become of you? How will impenitent sinners roar and yell for ever under the dreadful strokes of incensed justice! O what a dreadful thing must it be to fall into the hands of the living God!

3. See here the wonderful love of Christ to poor miserable sinners, and his great desire for the salvation of their souls. His love here passeth knowledge. It infinitely transcends the reach of the most illuminated understanding. What Christ suffered from his birth to his death on the accursed tree, affords the most striking instance of his great love to poor sinners. No example of such love can be found among men. This matchless love of Christ should inflame our hearts to sing, as Rev. i. 5, 6. ‘Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.’

4. This doctrine affords us the strongest assurance that can be, that God is willing to pardon our sins, and to be reconciled to us. There is in the natural conscience of man, when opened by a piercing conviction, such a quick sense of guilt, and of God’s avenging justice, that it can never have an entire confidence in his mercy till justice be atoned. From hence the convinced sinner is restlessly inquisitive how to find out the way of reconciliation with a holy and righteous God. Thus he is represented inquiring by the prophet, ‘Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?’ The scripture tells us, that some consumed their children in the fire, to render their idols propitious to them: but all these means were ineffectual, their most costly sacrifices were only food for the fire; nay, instead of expiating their old sins, they committed new ones by them, and were so far from appeasing, that they inflamed the wrath of God by their cruel oblations. But in the gospel there is the most rational and easy way propounded for the satisfaction of divine justice, and the justification of man. Hence says the apostle, Rom. x. 6, 7, 9. ‘The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.’ The apostle here sets forth the care

and anxiety of an awakened conscience. He is at a loss to find out a way to escape deserved judgment: for such things as are on the surface of the earth or floating on the waters are within our view, and may easily be obtained; but those which are above our understandings to discover, or our power to obtain, are proverbially said to be in the heavens above, or in the depths beneath; and it is applied here to the different ways of justification by the law and by the gospel. The law propounds life upon an impossible condition. But the gospel clearly reveals to us, that Christ hath performed all that was necessary to our justification, and that by a true faith we shall have an interest in it. Christ's ascension into heaven is a convincing proof, that the propitiation for our sins is perfect; for otherwise he had not been received into God's sanctuary, and admitted into the sacred place. Therefore to be under anxious and perplexing inquiries how we may be justified, is to deny the value of Christ's righteousness, and the truth of his ascension. By virtue of the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ, the soul is not only freed from the fear of God's wrath, but hath a lively hope of his favour and love. This is expressed by the apostle, Heb. xii. 23. when he reckons among the privileges of believers, that they are *come to God*, &c. The apprehensions of God as the righteous Judge of the world, strike the guilty creature with dread and terror; but is sweetened by Christ the Mediator, we may approach unto him with a humble and holy confidence.

5. We must lay hold on this sacrifice, if we would be saved. This is the only sacrifice that satisfied offended justice, and no other could do it. Therefore we must have recourse to this, if we would have peace with God. Under the law the people were to be sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice; and so must we be with the blood of Christ. It is said, Exod. xxiv. 8. that 'Moses took the blood of the covenant, and sprinkled it on the people.' This signified the sprinkling of their consciences with the blood of Christ, and their obtaining redemption, justification, and access to God, through it alone. Hence our Saviour is described by this part of his office, Isa. lii. 15. 'He shall sprinkle many nations.' Our guilt cannot but look upon God as a consuming fire, without a propitiatory sacrifice. All our services are lame and defective, impure and imperfect, so that they will rather provoke God's justice, than merit his mercy. We must therefore have something to put a stop to a just fury, expiate an infinite guilt, and perfume our unsavoury services, and render them acceptable to a holy and righteous God; and that is only the sacrifice of Christ. This is full of all necessary virtue to save us: but the blood of it must be sprinkled upon our

souls by faith. Without this we shall remain in our sins, under the wrath of God, and exposed to the sword of divine justice; and our misery will be heightened by our having the offers of Christ and his grace. O! it is a fearful thing for men to have this sacrifice pleading against them, and this precious blood crying for vengeance from heaven upon them; as innocent Abel's blood cried to heaven for vengeance against the unnatural cruelty of his wicked and inhumane brother.

6. Hence see that God will never seek satisfaction for sin from those that are in Christ Jesus. He gave full and complete satisfaction to the law and justice of God for all the wrongs and injuries done thereto by the sins of men, the sufferer being God, and his divine nature stamping an infinite value upon them. Now, if the creditor receives full satisfaction for an offence done, or complete payment of a debt due, by a debtor, from the hands of a surety, neither law nor justice will permit him to ask any further satisfaction or payment from the principal debtor. He can raise no suit or action against the debtor, in regard he has fully satisfied him by the action and deed of his surety. Law and justice are fully satisfied by the obedience and satisfaction of Christ substituting himself in the room of sinners, and making his soul an offering for them, so as they can crave no more: therefore there can be no condemnation to those that are in him, and have taken the benefit of his satisfaction, and present it to God, as theirs, performed in their room and stead. Hence the apostle says, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' O seek to have your station in Christ, and so you shall be placed beyond the reach of condemnation. You may indeed, though in Christ, suffer chastisements and corrections; yet these are the corrections and chastisements of a Father, not of a Judge; and intended for your good, to cause you forsake sin, and enhance the value of the sacrifice of Christ, and not for satisfaction to justice, whose highest demands have been fully satisfied by the Surety in your room.

7. Hence see the certainty of salvation to, and that God will bestow all the benefits purchased by Christ on, those who believe. Christ has fully satisfied justice for all those whom he represented as a Mediator; so that it has nothing to demand of the Surety, nor of those whose persons he sustained in that undertaking. Hence their salvation is infallibly secured; and justice is bound to accomplish it. Mercy pleads for it; justice fully satisfied cannot dispute the validity of the claim, and cheerfully consents to their acquittal from guilt and condemnation. Thus righteousness and peace kiss each other in the absolution of the guilty sinner that believeth in Jesus.

8. Bless God for the gospel, that discovers unto us this infallible way of being delivered from condemnation and wrath, this sure way to peace and reconciliation with God, this precious balm for a troubled conscience, and this effectual remedy for appeasing an angry God. O prize the gospel, and the precious discoveries thereof, in which all blessings are contained; and accept of a slain Saviour as your only Redeemer from sin and wrath, from hell and condemnation; and glory in his cross, and what he hath done for your redemption and deliverance.

#### OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

THE second part of our Lord's priestly office is his interceding for his people, viz. all those for whom he satisfied divine justice. As his intercession is founded upon his making satisfaction to law and justice for their sins, and plainly supposes his having offered himself a sacrifice in their name and stead, so the objects thereof must be the same. As he died only for those for whom he intercedes, so he intercedes for none but such as he shed his precious blood for, as has been shewn in the preceding part of this discourse.

In discoursing further from this point, I shall shew,

1. The different periods of our Lord's intercession.
2. Wherein his intercession consists.
3. The necessity of it.
4. Deduce an inference or two.

*First,* We may consider the periods of our Lord's intercession. And this may be taken up in a threefold period of time wherein it was made, viz. before his incarnation, during the state of his humiliation, and now in his exalted state.

1. Christ interceded for his church and people before his manifestation in the flesh. Though this office be most eminently performed since the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, yet it was also effectually performed by him before his assumption of our flesh. He interposed then by virtue of his engagement to make his soul an offering for sin; and he intercedes now by virtue of his actual performance of that engagement. 'As he was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' so by that same reason he was an advocate pleading from the foundation of the world. It was through the merciful interposition of the Son of God, in consequence of the covenant betwixt the Father and him, that deserved vengeance came not upon the world for sin at the first commission of it. We find him in the Old Testament pleading for the church long before he assumed the human nature, Zech. i. 12.

and the saints making use of Christ's name in their prayers to God long before he was born, Dan. ix. 17. Thus his intercession began in heaven thousands of years before his abode on earth.

2. He interceded for his people in his state of abasement and humiliation, Heb. i. 7. 'In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications to God with strong cries and tears.' This manner of intercession was suitable and congruous to his abased state. Though he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; yet his intercession was not less prevalent with God, for 'he was heard in that he feared.' Ye may see with what majesty and authority he prayed on the behalf of all the elect, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' Yea, even when he was under the sharpest agonies, when he was bruised by God, and broken by men, groaning under the wrath of the one, and the wrongs of the other, he forgets not to put up petitions for his crucifiers, Luke xxiii. 34. 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' And many of those who imbrued their hands in his innocent blood, obtained a gracious pardon through his prevalent intercession.

3. He is pleading now for his people in heaven, in his exalted state. When he had offered up himself a sacrifice on the cross, he ascended into the most holy place, and there prosecutes the same suit that he had commenced on the earth. Hence says the apostle, Rom. viii. 34. 'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'

*Secondly, I am to shew wherein Christ's intercession consists.*

1. He does not plead for his people in heaven, in such a supplicatory and humble manner as he prayed for them when he was on the earth. He falls not down upon his knees with a deep prostration of soul, lifting up his eyes with tears and strong cries. Such humble prayers and supplications were suited only to the days of his flesh, when he appeared in the form of a servant, and was found in the likeness of man; but they do not become him now in his state of glory, when he is stript of all those natural infirmities and marks of indigence wherewith he was clothed in the world. But, positively,

2. His intercession lies in the following things.

1st, In his appearing in heaven in his people's nature, and on their account. After he had shed his precious blood on the earth for the expiation of their sin, he rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven as their Advocate and Intercessor, that, by the

virtue of his meritorious sacrifice, he might answer all the charges brought in against them, and sue out all the good things that belonged to them, Heb. ix. 24. ‘Christ is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.’

*2dly*, In presenting the memorials of his death and passion as a moving plea on their account. This was typified and prefigured by the high priest’s carrying the blood of the sacrifice into the most holy place, and presenting it before the Lord. He was not to go in before the mercy-seat without it; and there was no interceding but by virtue of it. So the whole power and efficacy of Christ’s intercession is founded upon his meritorious sufferings. His soul that was bruised and made an offering for sin, and his body that was wounded and broken upon the cross, are daily presented before God, and will remain in the divine presence for ever, as an eternal memorial of his bloody sufferings. This has a powerful efficacy in prevailing with God. Hence, by an usual figure, an interceding voice is attributed to his blood, Heb. xii. 24. ‘It speaketh better things than that of Abel.’ Christ’s blood speaks, though not vocally and with oral expressions, yet powerfully and efficaciously. It speaks in the same manner that Abel’s blood did, though not for the same end; this cried for vengeance upon wicked Cain that shed it; but that pleads for mercy and favour to all believing sinners. We have a rare illustration of the efficacious intercession of Christ in heaven, in the famous story of Amyntas, who appeared as an advocate for his brother *Æschylus*, who was strongly accused, and in great danger of being condemned to die. This Amyntas having performed great services for the state, and merited highly of the commonwealth, in whose service one of his hands was cut off in battle, comes into the court on his brother’s behalf, and said nothing, but only lifted up his arm, and shewed them an arm without a hand; which so moved them, that immediately they acquitted his brother. And thus you have Christ represented visionally, Rev. v. 6. as standing between God and us, ‘And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.’ That is, he was represented as bearing in his glorified body the marks of his death and sacrifice; the wounds which he received for his people’s sins on the earth, are as it were still visible and fresh in heaven, as a prevailing argument with the Father to give forth the mercies that he pleads for to them.

*3dly*, In presenting his will and desire to the Father on their behalf, not in a humble and supplicatory manner, in the way of char-

ity, but by a claim in the way of justice. He now pleads that his people may be put in full possession of all the blessings which were purchased for them by his bloody death. We find him pleading to this purpose immediately before his passion, John xvii. 24. forecited. He minds the Father as it were of the covenant that was between them both, of his performing the condition required on his part, and so claims the performance of God's promise as a debt due to his meritorious obedience even unto death. He hath 'made his soul an offering for sin,' and therefore pleads that he may 'see his seed, prolong his days,' and that 'the pleasure of the Lord may prosper in his hands,' Isa. liii. 10, 11.

*4thly,* In his presenting his people's prayers and petitions unto God and pleading that they may be accepted and granted for his sake. Their prayers and religious performances are both impure and imperfect; but his precious merit, applied by his powerful intercession, purifies and perfects them. This skilful Advocate puts them into form and language suited to the methods of the court of heaven, and by his great interest there procures them a speedy hearing. This was excellently typified by the high priest's going in before the Lord with the blood of the sacrifice, and his hands full of incense. After he had offered the sacrifice, without, he was to take his hands full of those aromatic drngs of which the incense was composed, without the vail, and put them in a censer of gold full of fire, and cover the mercy-seat with the fumes of it. This was a figure of Christ's intercession and offering up his people's sacrifices to God. He is the alone altar upon which our sacrifices must ascend before the Lord with a grateful fume: the incense of his merit must be added to our prayers, to make them ascend before the mercy-seat as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. Hence he is represented, Rev. viii. 3, as an angel standing at the golden altar which was before the throne, with a golden censer in his hand, offering up the prayers of all the saints, perfuming them with the incense that was given him. By the *much incense* mentioned here, we are to understand the mighty quantity of merit and the great power of his intercession, which was a sweet savour to all his people's sacrifices, and renders them acceptable to God.

*5thly,* In his answering all the bills of indictment which are brought in against them. Many times a believer is brought in as an arraigned criminal before the divine tribunal, where Satan appears as the accuser, brings in the charge of sin, pleads the righteousness of the law, solicits for judgment upon his accusations, and for the execution of the curse due to the crime. The justice of God calls for vengeance, and conscience thunders out nothing but hell

and wrath. Now, while the believer is in these dismal circumstances, Christ steps in and answers the charge. He pleads the efficacy of his merit against the greatness of the believing sinner's crimes, and his satisfaction to justice by the death of the cross against all the demands and challenges of the law. And thus the sentence of condemnation due unto the sinner for his sin is averted, and a sentence of absolution is pronounced, upon the merit and plea of this powerful Intercessor. Hence we find the apostle glorying in this, Rom. viii. 33, 34. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Satan may accuse believers; but Christ can soon silence him. Thus, when Joshua the high priest stood before the Lord in filthy garments, Satan stood at his right hand to accuse him; but the angel, namely, the angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ, interposed, saying, 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan,' Zech. iii. 1, 2. Though their garments be filthy, yet Christ can take them away, and clothe them with change of raiment. Though Satan be always ready to resist them, yet Christ stands always at the right-hand of God in heaven, to plead for them, and silence Satan.

*Thirdly*, I shall shew some of the grounds or reasons of our High Priest's intercession.

1. Christ intercedes for his people, because he had a commission, a call, and command from the Father, for this purpose. Is. xlvi. 6. 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness.' So far was our mighty intercessor from engaging in this service as an intruder or usurper, that he entered upon it under the warrant of Heaven's commission. The Lord called him to be a priest. For verily 'he glorified not himself, to be made an High priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee,' Heb. v. 5. And as the Lord called him to be a priest, so to all the acts of the priestly office. He called him to make his soul an offering for sin, to pour out his life unto death, and to shed his blood for the satisfaction of offended justice. In a word, he called him to make intercession for transgressors. For says the Lord, 'I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me.'

2. He intercedes for his people, because they were given him for this end, John xvii. 6. 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.' The elect that the Father gave to Christ were his own three ways. They were creatures, and therefore their life and being were derived from him. They were criminals, and therefore their life and being were forfeited to him. They were chosen, and therefore their liv-

ing and being were designed for him. They were given to Christ that the election of grace might not be frustrated, that none of the little ones might perish. Yea they were given him, that the undertaking of Christ might not be fruitless; for they were given him as his seed, in whom he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, and consequently might not spend his strength and shed his blood in vain. Now, because the elect were thus given to Christ, therefore he intercedes for them, John xvii. 9, 'I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.'

3. He intercedes for his people, because it is a special part of his priestly office to do so. As the high priest under the law was not only to slay and offer the sacrifice in the outer part of the tabernacle, on the anniversary day of expiation, but to enter with the fresh blood into the sanctuary, and sprinkle it seven times; and not only so, but was to bring a censer full of burning coals off the altar, with incense in his hands, to be put upon the fire before the Lord within the vail, that so the cloud in the incense might cover the mercy-seat: in like manner, after our great High Priest had offered himself a sacrifice to God in his bloody death, he entered into heaven, not only with his blood, but with the incense of his prayers, as a cloud about the mercy-seat, to preserve by his life the salvation which he had purchased by his death. Hence the apostle assures us, that our salvation depends upon his intercession, and his intercession upon his priesthood, Heb. vii. 24, 25. 'This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'

4. He intercedes for his people, because he was their propitiation; for the efficacy of his plea depends upon the value and virtue of his sacrifice. As the high priest under the law could not enter into the holy of holies, till by the slaying of the sacrifice he had blood to carry with him: so no more could our Priest be admitted to solicit at the throne of grace, till by his death he had satisfied the tribunal of justice. Thus, because he paid the debt as our Surety, he is fit to plead the payment as our Attorney. What he finished on earth, he continually presents in heaven. By shedding his blood he made expiation, and by presenting it he makes intercession. In the one he prepared the remedy, and in the other he applies it.

5. He intercedes for his people, because his doing so is one of the great ends of his ascension and session at the right hand of God. In his incarnation he came down from the Father to acquaint us with his gracious purposes, and how far he had agreed with God in

our behalf; and at his ascension he went from us to the Father, to sue out the benefits which he had so dearly purchased. He drew up an answer upon the cross to the bill that sin, by virtue of the law, had drawn against us, and ascended to heaven as an Advocate to plead that answer upon his throne, and to rejoin to all the replies against it. And therefore the apostle tells us, that he is ‘entered into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us,’ Heb. ix. 24.

6. He intercedes for his people, because of that matchless and amazing love which he bears to them. He loves them with a love infinitely transcending the reach of human or angelic conception; he loves them with a love that knows neither height nor depth, breadth nor length, but is absolutely incomprehensible. His love to them brought him down from heaven, and made him willingly undergo all those sorrows and sufferings, which like impetuous torrents poured in upon him. And certainly, seeing in his love and in his pity he purchased eternal redemption for them, he will never cease to plead for the application of it to them. Seeing in such plentiful streams he shed his precious blood to save them, it is not to be imagined that he will spare his prayers for them.

7. He intercedes for his people, because this service of love is that wherein he takes the greatest delight and pleasure. Before time existed, his delights were with the sons of men; and when the fulness of time did dawn, he said, ‘Lo, I come,’ &c. He had a delight to live with the sons of men, and to die for them. And no sooner does he enter heaven after his death and resurrection, but there he delights to act on their account, to plead their cause, and to intercede for all the blessings of his purchase to them. This is the will of the Father, and he delights to do it.

I conclude all with an inference or two.

1. How wonderful is the love of God in appointing an Intercessor for us, not an angel, but his own beloved Son! Were we left to ourselves, and to our own pleas, our least sins would ruin us, and all the grounds of intercession we could plead upon would be rejected, as unworthy of acceptance before the throne of God.

2. How wonderful is the love of our Redeemer, in condescending to act so friendly a part to us, notwithstanding all our unworthiness and foul miscarriages against him! How should it fill our hearts with wonder, that he who is our Judge, should take upon him to manage our cause in the court of heaven; that he who has a mouth to condemn us, and wrath to consume us for our sins, should bind the arms of his wrath, and employ his tongue to solicit our cause in the court of heaven; that he who has a mouth to condemn us, and wrath to consume us for our sins, should bind the arms of his

wrath, and employ his tongue to solicit our cause and procure us the richest blessings !

3. Then true believers have a friend in the court of heaven, who is agenting their cause, managing their concerns, and will make all things work together for their good. Whatever their cause be, and however fearful they may be about the issue of it, all shall go right at length, through the interest of their mighty Intercessor.

4. Believers cannot finally miscarry, and utterly fall away : for they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Their Redeemer ever liveth to make intercession for them. So that neither their own sins, nor all the temptations of Satan, nor the frowns or allurements of the world, shall ever prevail to make them fall from their steadfastness, or from the favour of God : for Christ, as their High Priest, hath died for their sins, and will never intermit his suits to God in their behalf till they be safely brought to glory.

5. *Lastly*, Employ the Lord Jesus Christ as your High Priest, to bring you to God, depending on his merit as the ground of the expiation of your guilt, and giving you a title unto eternal life. And make use of him as your Advocate with the Father, to procure you all the blessings you stand in need of for time and eternity.

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#### OF CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE.

PSALM ii. 6.—*Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.*

THE New Testament leaves us no ground to doubt of our Lord Jesus Christ being the person here spoken of, as several passages in this psalm are expressly therein applied to him. The words contain a direct assertion of Christ's being appointed King of Zion, his spiritual kingdom—Therein we have,

1. His office : He is a *King*, invested with all regal power and princely authority : being 'King of kings, and Lord of lords ;' yea 'the Prince of the kings of the earth.' And this name he hath written on his vesture and on his thigh, Rom. xix. 16.

2. His kingdom, over which he rules, the *holy hill of Zion* ; which was an eminent type of the gospel-church, and is called *holy*, because the temple, the house of God was built upon it.

3. His right to this kingdom ; *I have sent him my King*, says Jehovah. The Father hath placed him in that office, giving him, as