

A DISCOURSE OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
—1 JOHN II. 1.

THE apostle having, in the latter verses of the former chapter, spoken of the extensiveness of pardon, ver. 7, 9, subjoins, ver. 8, 10, that yet the relics of sin do remain in God's people. But though all sin that was pardoned, was pardoned upon the account of the blood of Christ, which had a property to cleanse from all sin, and that confession of sin was a means to attain this forgiveness purchased by our Saviour's blood, yet men might suck in the poisonous doctrine of licentiousness, believing that upon their confession they should presently have forgiveness, though they walked on in the ways of their own hearts. And, on the other side, many good men might be dejected at the consideration of the relics of sin in them, which the apostle asserts, 1 John i. 8, 10, that no man was free from in this life. In this verse, therefore, the apostle prevents those two mistakes, which men might infer from the former doctrine, that we may not presume by the news of grace, nor despond by a reflection on our sin.

I. Presumption, on the one hand, in these words, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not.' Though I have told you that forgiveness of sin is to be had upon confession, yet the intent of my writing is not to encourage a voluntary commission.

II. Dejection and despair, in these words, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.' If you do commit sin, you must not be so much cast down, as if the door of mercy were clapped against you; no, there is an agent above to keep it open for every one that repents and believes. Here, then, the apostle treats of the remedy God had provided for the sins of believers, viz., the advocacy of Christ, who having laid the foundation of our redemption in the satisfaction made to God by his blood, resides in heaven as an advocate to plead it on our behalf. This, saith one,* is the sum and scope of the whole gospel; he that believes this can never despair; he that believes it not, is ignorant of Christ, though he hath the whole doctrine of the gospel in his memory. The word Παράκλητος signifies an *advocate*, *comforter*, or *exhorter*; it is only in this place used of Christ, but of the Spirit it is used, John xiv. 16, John xvi. 7, and in both places rendered

* Ferus in loc.

Comforter. And παράκλησις, a word of affinity to this from the same root, is rendered, 1 Thes. ii. 3, *exhortation*. Some* tell us, that because the advocates among the Romans and Greeks were the most eloquent orators, therefore the Jews commonly called the most eminent doctors among them paracletes. The word is used by the Jews,† who derived it from the Greeks, for one that intercedes with a prince, either to introduce or restore a person to his favour. The Syriac uses the same word פִּרְקָלִיטָא, derived from the Greek word, though it seems to have some affinity with the word פֶּרַק, which signifies to redeem or deliver. The word is used to express an advocate by another author,‡ where he tells us, that it is necessary for him that would be consecrated to the Father of the world, to make use of his Son, the most perfect advocate, both for the remission of our sins, and the communication of happiness to us; where the word παράκλησις cannot be taken for a comforter, but an advocate or solicitor, because the Son of God procures the not remembering of sins, as well as the supplying of us with all good. And the same author, in another place, ascribes the purging of sin to the λόγος θεῶν, a term whereby Christ is signified in Scripture. § The same word which, when serving to express the Holy Ghost, is translated *comforter*, is here, when used of Christ, translated *advocate*. The Spirit is a persuasive advocate for God among men, as Christ is an eloquent advocate by the rhetoric of his wounds with God for men. Christ is both an advocate and a comforter. He owns himself a comforter, as well as the Spirit: John xiv. 16, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another* Comforter,' implying that he was a comforter as well as the Spirit. He is a comforter of man in the name of God, and advocate with God in the behalf of man.

Let us consider the words distinctly; *we*, we apostles, we believers.

1. *Not only we apostles.* The intercession of Christ is not so narrowed. He sits not in heaven only to plead the cause of twelve men; he doth indeed manage their concern; and if they which are specially commissioned by him, and are to judge the world, need him in this relation, much more do others.

2. *But we believers.* It is the same *we* he speaks of in the first chapter; *we* that have our sins pardoned, *we* that have fellowship with God, *we*, as distinguished from all the world: ver. 2, 'Who is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world;' where the *we* (the apostle speaks of) that have an interest in this advocate, are differentiated from the world. His propitiation belongs in some sort to the world, his intercession to his church, to those that are children new begotten by the Spirit. Upon the cross as a man he prayed for his murderers; but in his mediatory prayer, John xvii. 9, he prays 'not for the world,' but those given him out of it.

3. *We in particular.* Every one who hath the like precious faith hath the like powerful advocate; he means the children he writes to, and every one of them. It had not been any preservative against dejection, had not this advocate belonged to them, and every one of them. 'If any man sin,' let him be what he will, rich or poor, high or low, one as well as another belongs to this advocate. Every believer is his client; he makes intercession for them 'that come unto God by him,' Heb. vii. 25, and therefore for every one of those comers.

We have, not had, as if it were only a thing past; nor *shall have*, as if it were a thing to come, and expected, but *have*, ἔχομεν, in the present tense, which notes duration and a continued act. *We have* an advocate, i. e. we

* Mede, Fragment. Sacra, p. 104.

† Philo Judæ, vitâ Mosis.

‡ Camero. p. 179.

§ Critica, p. 158, Christus, λόγος.

constantly have; we have him as long as his life endures. And another apostle tell us, 'he ever lives to make intercession.' He is at present an advocate, always an advocate; and in particular, for every one that comes to God by him; and for every one of them, he is an advocate as long as he lives, which is for ever; we have him not to seek, but we have him this instant in the court, with the Judge, before the tribunal where we are to be tried.

An advocate. It is a metaphor taken from the Romans and Greeks. The proper office of an advocate is to defend the innocency of an accused person against his adversary.* In that notion doth the apostle take it here; he mentions Christ as an advocate in the cause of sin, which is a charge of the law. An advocate stands in opposition to an accuser, and his work is in opposition to the charge of the accuser. Satan is the accuser, sin the charge. Christ stands by to answer the accusation, and wipe off the charge by way of plea, as the office of an advocate is to do.

Advocate. It is not *advocates*. It seems John was ignorant of the intercession of saints and angels. This was a doctrine unknown in the primitive time. John knew but one, but the Romanists have made a new discovery of many more. Multitudes of saints and angels in this office for them; and they never canonise a saint but they give him his commission for an advocate, as if they mistrusted themselves since their apostasy, or feared the affection or the skill of him the primitive Christians trusted their cause to. It had been as easy a matter for the apostle to have wrote *advocates* as *advocate*; it had been but the change of a letter or two, and the cause had been carried. This apostle, to whose care Christ bequeathed the blessed virgin when he was upon the cross, would not have waived her right had there been a just claim for her. We find them urging the distinction of mediators of *redemption* and mediators of *intercession*; they acknowledge the sole honour of the first to belong to Christ, but link colleagues with him in the second. The Holy Ghost here nulls any title but his to either, since the same person who is called our *Advocate* in the text is called our *Propitiation* in the next verse. As there is but one Redeemer, so there is but one Intercessor; and the right of his intercessory power flows from the sufficiency of his propitiatory passion. The intercession of this one advocate, Jesus Christ, brought all the glorified saints to heaven; and he can by the same office secure every believer to the end of the world, without needing the interposition of any that he hath introduced before them. He is not yet tired in his office, nor are the multitude of his clients too numerous for his memory to carry, so that he should need to turn any of them over to weaker heads.

With the Father. As the first person in order, and the conservator of the rights of the Deity, not only with God, where God is, but with God as the object of his intercession, and with God as a Father. 'With the Father.'

(1.) Not with an enemy. Little hopes then that he should succeed in his suit. An enemy may lay aside his anger, and he may retain it. The pressing an enemy with importunities many times makes his fury seven times hotter. But it is with the Father, one reconciled to us by the price of the Redeemer's blood. No, nor with a judge, a term as affrighting as that of a father is refreshing. Thus Christ phrased it before his departure: John xiv. 16, 'I will pray the Father;' not I will pray the Judge. The apostle puts it in the same term Christ had done before him.

(2.) It is not said with *his Father*. It is no mean advantage for the son of an offended prince to espouse the suit of a rebel. The affection of the father might encourage the solicitation of the son; but this had not been a

* Tertullian, Apolog. cap. ii. p. 23.

sufficient cordial. The relation of a son might make him acceptable to his father for himself, but not for the criminal. Christ might have been dear to God in the place of a Son, but we might have still been hateful to him upon the account of our rebellions.

(3.) Nor is it said, with *your Father*. Had God been only our Father, and an angry Father, and standing in no such relation to the advocate, we might have had reason to hang the wing. The title of a father is often without the bowels of a father.

(4.) But with *the Father*, a father both to the advocate and client. To the advocate, by an unspeakable generation; to the client, by an evangelical creation; a Father in all respects, not only by general creation, but special adoption and spiritual regeneration; one of paternal tenderness as well as title, and possessing the compassions as well as the relation of a father. *The Father* respects both. As Christ ascended to God as his Father and our Father, John xx. 17, so he intercedes with him as standing in such a capacity both to him and us. Christ treats not with him as a Judge only, but as a Father. As a Judge, God's justice was satisfied by the death of Christ; but the end of his advocacy is upon the account of this satisfaction, to excite the paternal bowels of God towards his people. The object of the oblation was God as a judge or governor; the object of intercession is God as a Father, an advocate with the Father. The first was a payment to justice, and the other is the solicitation of mercy. This title of Father assures us of the success of his intercession.

Jesus Christ the righteous. Now he specifies this advocate, together with his necessary qualification. The words righteous and righteousness, both in the Hebrew and Greek (*Δίκαιος*, *Δικαιοσύνη*; צַדִּיק, צְדָקָה), are sometimes taken for mercy and charitableness. The words following may favour the interpretation of righteous in this sense, for it was the compassion of Christ that moved him to be our propitiation, and his charitable temper is not diminished by the things that he suffered; but I would rather take *δικαιος* in the proper sense, for *just*. Mercy without righteousness in the world is but a foolish pity, and may support a world of unrighteousness. The honesty and righteousness of an advocate upon earth is of more value and efficacy for his client with a just judge than all his compassion. In this sense of holy or righteous doth Peter use the word: Acts iii. 14, 'You have denied the Holy One and the Just,' where *just* is opposite to an unrighteous murderer; and 1 Peter iii. 18, 'Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust,' where the righteousness of the surety is opposed to the unrighteousness of the criminal for whom he suffered. This is the comfort, that he is as righteous for an advocate as the Father is for a judge, that he is as holy as we are unholy. Our sin rendered us hateful, but the righteousness of the advocate renders him such as it became him to be for us, whose advocate he is, Heb. vii. 26.

He may be said to be righteous;—

(1.) In regard of his admission to this office. He was righteously settled in it. Every man cannot thrust himself into a court to be an advocate in another's cause; it is not enough to be entertained by the client, but there must be a legal admission to that station in the court. Christ was legally admitted into this office; he had God's order for it: Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me.'

(2.) In regard of the ground of his admission, which was his loving righteousness: Heb. i. 9, 'Thou hast loved righteousness,' &c., 'therefore God, even thy God;' thy God and thy Father, whom thou didst serve, and rely upon in the office of mediation, 'hath anointed thee,' or inaugurated thee in the chief office of trust 'above thy fellows.' Unction was a solemn

investiture of the high priests among the Jews in that honour and function. This anointing of Christ to the perpetual office of high priest (whereof this of his intercession is a considerable part, and the top-stone) was upon the account of the vindicating the rights of God, the honour of his law by his death. He loved righteousness above his fellows, and therefore is advanced to the highest office above his fellows. He is such an one who hath made a complete satisfaction, and hath upon that account been entertained by God, and settled 'an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.' He was anointed as being most holy in finishing transgression, making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness,' Dan. ix. 24. His holiness, manifested in all these, preceded his unction to that unchangeable priesthood which is exercised in heaven solely in his intercession, Heb. vii. 24, 25, 28.

(3.) In regard of his person. No exception against his person or his carriage, to weaken any motion he should make. The known unrighteousness of an earthly advocate is rather a ruin than support to the client's cause managed by him. Christ is righteous, therefore the Father cannot be jealous of his intruding upon his honour, or presenting any unbecoming suit to him; and because righteous, therefore fit to be trusted by us with our concerns. He can neither wrong the Father nor his people; righteous towards God in preserving his honour, righteous towards us in managing our cause: And this righteousness was manifested in his being a propitiation for sin, whereby the righteousness of God was glorified, and the righteousness of the creature restored. This being without sin rendered him fit to be a sacrifice, 1 John iii. 5, which also renders him fit to be an intercessor. A guilty person is not a proper advocate for a criminal, nor can he well sue for another who needs one to sue for himself.

(4.) In respect of the cause he pleads, viz. the pardon of sin; which, upon the account of his being a propitiation for sin, he may rightly lay claim to. It is a just thing for him to plead, and a just thing for God to grant: 1 John i. 9, he is 'just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Remission and sanctification, the great matters of Christ's plea, are righteous suits. He hath a sufficient price with him, whereby he may claim what he desires; and a price so large, that is not only a sufficient compensation to God for what he doth desire for his people, but is equivalent to a world of sins.

(5.) Upon the account of his righteousness in all these respects, he must needs prevail with God. This the apostle implies; he represents him as an Advocate, and as righteous, for the comfort of believers that through a temptation fall into sin, which could be none at all if the efficacy of his intercession were not included in this of his righteousness. Because he is righteous in his admission, in the foundation of his office, in his person, and the matter of his plea, he is worthy to be heard by God in his pleas; and since he wants nothing to qualify him for this office, he will not want entertainment with the Father in any suit he makes. And since his propitiation is sufficient for the sins of the whole world, we need not question the prevalency of his intercession for them that believe. If it hath a sufficiency for such multitudes, it must have an efficacy for those few that do comply with the terms of enjoying the benefit of it. The righteousness of the person of our Advocate, renders his intercession grateful to God and successful for us.

The foundation of this discourse, or the reason of it, is, ver. 2, 'He is the propitiation for our sins; not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.' He hath expiated our sins, and appeased the wrath of God which flamed against us.

[1.] Not only for our sins who now live, but for the sins of all believers in the past and succeeding ages of the world, as well as the present. His propitiation, in the virtue and efficacy of it, looks back upon all believers, in every age since the foundation of the world; and looks forward to every believer to the last period of time. The apostle's following discourse in this chapter evinceth that he restrains the efficacy of this expiation to believers, that manifest their faith by their holiness, and walk in his commands.

[2.] Or he is the propitiation, not only for the sins of us Jews, but for the Gentiles also.

[3.] Or he is a propitiation for the whole world in point of the sufficiency of the sacrifice and infinite value of his blood. The malignity of them that refuse it doth not diminish the value of the price, nor the bounty and grace that offers to them the benefits of it upon believing.

We may now thus paraphrase the whole :

These things I write to you, not that you should sin upon a presumption of pardon after the confession of your crimes, and from God's readiness to forgive imagine you have a grant of liberty to offend him with the greater security. No; but that you should, out of an ingenuous principle, fly from all occasions of offending a God of such boundless mercy. Yet if any of you that walk in communion with God do fall through the infirmities of the flesh, and the strength of a temptation, be not so dejected as to despair, no, though the sin may happen to be very heinous; but let them consider that they have a gracious and righteous Advocate with the Father in heaven, even with that Father whom they have offended, to plead their cause, and sue out a pardon for them. And remember also that this Advocate is the very same person who, in the days of his flesh, did expiate sin and reconcile God by his bloody passion, and made so full an atonement as that it was sufficient not only for the sins of the present age, but of the whole world; and hath been efficacious for the blotting out the sins of all former believers before his coming. And to this Advocate you must address yourselves by faith, for you must know him, *i.e.* believe in him, which is implied in verse the third.

We see here a description of the office of Christ in heaven :

1. The office itself, an office of *advocacy*.

2. The officer, *Jesus Christ the righteous*, described,

(1.) In his person and inauguration, *Jesus Christ*. The Messiah, the Anointed, to this as well as any other part of his work.

(2.) Qualification, *righteous*. Righteous in his person, office, actions, cause.

3. The court wherein he exerciseth this office, in heaven *with the Father*. His Father, our Father, a Father by affection as well as creation.

4. The persons for whom, *we*. Us believers, us sinners after believing, every one of us : if *any man* sin.

5. The plea itself, *propitiation*.

6. The efficacy of this plea, from the extensiveness of this propitiation, *for the whole world*.

Several observations may be drawn hence :

1. The doctrine of the gospel indulgeth no liberty to sin : 'These things write I unto you, that you sin not.' Not that sin should not reign in you, but that sin should not be committed by you. Some understand that not the act of sin, but the dominion of sin, is here chiefly intended by the apostle.* But the contrary is manifest; the term *sin* must be taken in the same sense in the whole sentence. But when he saith, 'if any man sin,' he means it of an *act* of sin, or a fall into sin; and therefore the former words, 'I write unto you, that you sin not,' must be understood in the same sense. For if

* Mestrezat, 1 Jean ii. 1, 2, p. 237.

any man be under the empire of sin, and gives the reins to lusts of his own heart, he is not the subject of Christ's intercession. Christ is an advocate for none but those that are in communion with him, and walk in the light, as appears by the connection of this with the former chapter. If any such person fall into a sin, Christ is an advocate for him: 'if any man sin,' *i.e.* any man of these I have before described, 1 John i. 7. No sin must be indulged; it is the breath of the devil, the filth of the man. One sin brought death upon mankind, violated the divine law, deformed the face of the creation, wrecked the soul, inflamed the wrath of God; every sin is of this nature, and therefore must not be practised by us. Not to hate sin, not to resolve against it, not to exercise ourselves in an endeavour to avoid every act of it, is inconsistent with a believer. It is not to receive, but to abuse and profane, the gospel.

2. Believers, while in the world, are liable to acts of sin. *If any man*; he supposeth that grace may be so weak, temptation so strong, that a believer may fall into a grievous sin. While men are in the flesh, there are indwelling sins and invading temptations; there is a body of death within them, and snares about them. The apostle excludes not himself; for putting himself, by the term *we*, into the number of those that want the remedy, he supposeth himself liable to the disease: 'We have an advocate with the Father.'

3. Though believers do, through the strength of the flesh, subtlety of the tempter, power of a temptation, and weakness of grace, fall into sin, yet they should not despair of succour and pardon: 'If any man sin, we have an advocate.' Such a total despondency would utterly ruin them; despair would bind their sins upon them. Be not only cast down under the consideration of the curses and threatenings of the law, but be erected by the promises of the gospel, and the standing office of Christ in heaven.

4. Faith in Christ must be exercised as often as we sin: 'If any man sin, we have an advocate.' What is it to us there is an advocate, unless we put our cause into his hand? Though we have a faithful attorney in our worldly affairs, yet upon any emergency we must entertain him, let him know our cause, if we expect relief. Though Christ, being omniscient, knows and compassionates our case, yet he will be solicited; as, though God knows our wants, he will be supplicated to for the supplies of our necessities. Though he understands our case, he would have us understand it too, that we may value his office. Faith ought therefore to be exercised, because by reason of our daily sins we stand in need of a daily intercession. *If any man sin*; it implies that every man ought to make reflections on his conscience, lament his condition, turn his eye to his great Advocate, acquaint him with his state, and entertain him afresh in his cause. Though he lives for ever to make intercession, it is only for 'those that come to God by him' as their agent and solicitor, for those that come to the judge, but first come to him as their attorney.

5. Christ is not an advocate for all men, but only for them that believe, and strive, and watch against sin; for those that are invaded by it, not for those that are affected to it; for those that slip and stumble into sin, not for those that lie wallowing in the mire. He doth not say simply, 'If any man sin,' as holding up in that expression every man in the world; but 'And if any man sin,' by that copulative particle linking the present sentence with the former chapter, signifying that he intends not this comfort for all, but for those that are in fellowship with God, and strive against temptation. Intercession, being the application of the propitiation, implies the accepting

the propitiation first. Christ in his mediatory prayer excludes all unbelievers : John xvii. 9, 'I pray for them; I pray not for the world.' For them! For whom? For those that 'have believed that thou didst send me,' ver. 8. He 'lives for ever to make intercession for those that come to God by him;' so that the coming to God by him is previous to the intercession he makes for them.

6. The proper intendment of this office of Christ is for sins after a state of faith. He was a priest in his propitiation to bring God and man together; he is a priest in his intercession, to keep God and man together. His propitiation is the foundation of his intercession, but his intercession is an act distinct from the other. That was done by his death; this is managed in his life. His death was for our reconciliation, but his life is for the perpetuating that reconciliation: Rom. v. 10, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate.' If any man sin that hath entered into a state of communion with God, let him know that this office was erected in heaven to keep him right in the favour of the Judge of all the world. We should quickly mar all, and be as miserable the next minute after regeneration and justification as before, if provision were not in this way made for us. In the first acts, faith eyes the propitiation of Christ, and pitches upon his death. Christ, as dying, is the great support of a soul new come out of the gulf of misery and terrors of conscience. In after acts, it eyes the life of Christ, as well as the death, taking in both his propitiation and intercession together.

7. No man can possibly be justified by his own works. We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous. He directs them not to any pleas from their former walking in the light. If our justification be not continued by virtue of our own works after conversion (for though they are works proceeding from renewed principles, and are the fruits of the operation of the Holy Ghost, spring from a root of faith and love, and are directed in the aim of them to the glory of God, yet one flaw spoils the efficacy of all in the matter of justification); I say, if our justification be not continued by works after conversion, which have so rich a tincture on them, much less is it procured by works before conversion, wherein there is not a mite of grace. Our justification, in the first sentence of it, and also in the securing and perpetuating our standing before God, depends not in the least upon ourselves, but upon the mediation of Christ for us. If justification and pardon owe their continuance to Christ, they much more owe their first grant solely to the mediation of Christ.

8. Therefore observe further, that nothing of our own righteousness, or graces, or privileges, are to be set up by us as joint advocates with Christ before the tribunal of God in case of sin. The apostle saith not, If any man sin, let him plead his former obedience, let him plead his habitual grace, let him plead his adoption, and by that challenge the renewing of God's paternal affection. Let him plead his present repentance. He strikes off our hands from all these by that one word, 'We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous.' We must enter no plea but what Christ doth enter, and that is only his propitiation. The apostle hints not any matter of the plea of this advocate but this one. Those that set up their own satisfactions, penitential acts, their humiliation, remorse, or their other glittering graces, mightily intrench upon the honour of Christ, and his standing office in heaven. They may be of some use in the accusations of our own consciences, but not before God's tribunal. It is certain our own righteousness sticks as close to us as our enmity to God. Nay, a secret confidence in it is the great citadel and chiefest fort and strength wherein our enmity against God and his righteousness lies. There is no man but is more willing to part with his sin than to

part with his righteousness; and there is nothing we find more starting up in us in the actings of grace than the motions of spiritual pride. We would be eking out the merits of Christ, and be our own advocates. We would not let him manage the cause upon his own account, and by this we spiritually injure Christ in the work of mediation, as much as the papists do in setting up glorified saints and angels with him; may I not say, worse, since an unspotted angel and a perfected saint is a more meet mate for him than a spotted righteousness and grace?

9. Christ is a person in the Godhead distinct from the Father: *advocate with the Father*. The Father and the advocate are here distinct. A judge and an advocate are different persons, have different offices, are exercised in different acts. The Father is considered as the governor, and the advocate as a pleader.

10. How divine is the gospel! 'Sin not.' 'If any man sin.' It gives us comfort against the demerit of sin, without encouraging the acts of sin. It teaches us an exact conformity to God in holiness, and provides for our full security in Christ, a powerful advocate. No religion is so pure for the honour of God, nor any so cordial for the refreshment of the creature.

The doctrine I shall handle is this: Christ is an advocate with the Father in heaven, continually managing the concerns of believers, and effectually prevailing for their full remission and salvation upon the account of the propitiation made by his death. We shall see,

- I. That Christ is an advocate, in some general propositions.
- II. What kind of advocate he is.
- III. How he doth manage this advocacy and intercession.
- IV. That he doth perpetually manage it.
- V. That he doth effectually manage it.
- VI. That he doth manage it for every believer.
- VII. The use.

I. In general, Christ is as much an advocate as he is a sacrifice, as God is as much a governor as he was a creator. As we say of providence, it is a continued creation, so of intercession, it is a continued oblation. As providence is a maintaining the creation, so this intercession is a maintaining the expiation, and therefore is by some called a presentative oblation. The heathens had some notice of the necessity of some mediator or intercessor, either by tradition from Adam, from whom the notion of a mediator might as well be transmitted as the notion of expiation of guilt by bloody sacrifices. But while they retained the carcase, they lost the spirit of it; and while they preserved the sentiment of the necessity of an advocate, they framed many wrong and unserviceable ones. They dubbed their heroes, and men that had been benefactors to them in the world, with this title after their death, and elevated them to be intermediate powers between God and them. Some of those demons are fancied to carry up their prayers to God, and back their prayers with new supplications;* others brought gifts from God. Some handed their petitions and pleaded for them; others brought the answers of their prayers and relieved them, which the apostle alludes to: 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, 'For though there be that are called gods, as there be gods many, and lords many; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' As they had many gods, so they had many mediators between themselves and those particular gods; but, saith he, 'To us there is but one God,' the principal cause, 'and one Lord Jesus Christ,' the procuring cause

* Apuleius de Deo Socratis, p. 426.

of all things, by whose suit we are what we are, and enjoy what we have. This intercession of Christ was ancient; it is as ancient as his first undertaking our suretyship, by virtue of which the vengeance the sinner had merited was deferred. He 'upholds all things by the word of his power,' Heb. i. 3, or his powerful or prevailing word, when they were ready to sink; not only as God by the word of providence, but as mediator by his word of intercession, that the guilty sinner might not be dealt with by the rigours of justice, but in the tenderness of mercy. As he was fore-ordained a sacrifice, so he was fore-ordained an advocate; as he was a lamb slain, so he was an advocate entertained, from the foundation of the world. His sacrifice, though not performed, could not have a credit with God, as it had, but his pleas upon the credit of that sacrifice must be admitted also. Thus were believers of old saved by him, and redeemed in his pity, as he was 'the angel of the presence' of God, Isa. lxiii. 9, *i. e.* in the phrase of the New Testament, 'appearing in the presence of God for them,' Heb. ix. 24, noting the manner of his intercession. He did, as an undertaker for them, interpose for their salvation; he 'bare them, and carried them all the days of old,' alluding, I guess, to Aaron the high priest bearing the names of the twelve tribes in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart when he went into the holy place to intercede for the people, Exod. xxviii. 29. He was an advocate for them to whom the credit of his propitiation did extend; but that did extend to those that believed before his coming in the flesh; to them therefore his intercession extended also. It was then indeed an intercession upon credit; it is now an intercession by demand, since the actual offering himself a victim.

1. This office of advocacy belongs to him as a priest, and it is a part of his priestly office. The high priest 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, to shew the perfection of that expiating blood which was figured by it, Lev. xvi. 14. In the blood was the expiatory virtue: Lev. xvii. 11, 'It is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul;' yet the high priest did not perform his office complete, till he had sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice with his finger on the mercy seat; he was also to bring a censer full of burning coals from off the altar, and incense in his hands, and put it upon the fire before the Lord, within the veil, that the cloud in the incense might cover the mercy seat, Lev. xvi. 12, 13. As the high priest going into the holy of holies after the sacrifice, was a type of Christ's ascension after his passion on the cross; so the blood he was to sprinkle was a type of that blood, and the incense he was to kindle, a figure of the prayers of Christ after his entering into heaven.* Incense in Scripture frequently signifies prayer, and prayer is compared to incense. As the high priest's office was to enter into the sanctuary with this blood and incense to intercede for the people, and obtain a blessing for them, so it pertained to the office of Christ, as a priest, not only to enter with his own blood, but with the incense of his prayers, as a cloud about the mercy-seat, to preserve by his life the salvation he had merited by his death. Christ entered into heaven as a priest, and in that capacity 'sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,' Heb. viii. 1, and was settled 'an high priest for ever,' by a solemn oath, Ps. cx. 4. There is therefore some priestly act, which he hath a capacity and an obligation, by virtue of his office, to perform for ever, all the time he stays in heaven, till his second appearing (as the high priest, all the time he was in the holy of holies, was performing a sacerdotal act), which is not the act of sacrificing, that was done by him on earth (as the sacrifice was slain

* Amyraut sur Heb. ix. p. 74.

without the veil). Nothing but intercession can answer to that type, which is called an appearing for us, as a proxy or attorney, in the presence of God, Heb. ix. 24, otherwise there is no priestly act for him to do; and so his being a priest would be an empty title, a name without an office. God's oath would be insignificant, if there were not some priestly act to be performed by him, as well as a priestly office vested in him. Being a priest, therefore, he must have something to offer, even in heaven; which cannot be a new sacrifice, for that was but once to be done. It must be therefore the presenting his old, his body wounded, which is nothing else but this which we call intercession; a presenting to God this sacrifice of himself, and pleading the virtue of it in every time of need. The apostle tells us our salvation depends upon his intercession, and his intercession upon his priesthood, Heb. vii. 24, 25. Our salvation depends not simply upon his living for ever, for that he had done if he had never come upon the earth to redeem us, but upon his living for ever in an unchangeable priesthood; the end of which unchangeable and everlasting priesthood is intercession. As our salvation depends not upon God's living for ever, for God had lived for ever had we been damned; but upon God's living for ever as a reconciled God, and entered into covenant. As he was a priest upon the cross to make an expiation for us, so he is our priest in the court of heaven, to plead this atonement, both before the tribunal of justice and the throne of mercy, against the curses of the law, the accusations of Satan, the indictments of sin, and to keep off the punishment which our guilt had merited.

2. This, therefore, was the end of his ascension, and sitting down at the right hand of God. In his incarnation, he came from the Father to acquaint us with his gracious purposes, and how far he had agreed with God on our behalf; and at his ascension he went from us to the Father, to sue out the benefits 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 rejoin to all the replies against it. When his offering was accepted, he went to heaven to the supreme Judge, to improve this acceptance of his sacrifice, by a negotiation which holds and continues to this day. Heb. ix. 24, 'Christ is entered into heaven;' for what end? 'To appear in the presence of God for us;' but may he not appear for us at first, and afterwards cease from it? No: *now* to appear for us. He entered into heaven long since, but he appears for us this instant. *Now*, as if the apostle should have said, while I am writing, and you are reading, in this, in that instant, *Νῦν*, is he appearing for us as a public person. Though there be a change in his condition, from a state of humiliation to a state of exaltation, yet there is no change in his office: Heb. viii. 1, 2, 'He is set down as a priest on the right hand of God,' 'a minister of the sanctuary,' or of holy things, *λαϊτουρῆς ἁγίων*, as a performer of a divine office for men. As Moses, forty days after his conducting the Israelites out of Egypt (the type of our redemption), ascended the mount, while his redeemed people were in a conflict with Amalek, to pray for them as a type of Christ, so Christ himself, forty days after his resurrection, which was an evidence of our deliverance from spiritual slavery, ascended up into heaven, to lift up his head there as our advocate, for assistance to be granted to us against our spiritual enemies. As this intercession is the true design of his eternal life as a priest; and since the apostle lays it down as a manifest truth, witnessed by all the prophets, Acts iii. 21, that there is to be a restitution of all things, and that the heavens receive Christ till that restitution; it will follow that he sits there in order to that restitution; not as an idle spectator, but a promoter of it by

the efficacy of his mediation; and no other order did he receive from his Father after his resurrection, being declared the begotten Son by his resurrection, but to ask, for that follows just upon the declaration of his being his Son, Ps. ii. 7, 8, which is interpreted in the New Testament of his resurrection. Asking was all required of him for the enjoying his reward, of which the advantage of his people in enjoying the fruits of his death, is none of the meanest part in his own account, since it was 'the joy set before him.' His mediation kept the world from ruin after man's fall, and his intercession promotes the world's restoration after his own passion.

3. This advocacy is founded upon his oblation. He is our advocate, because he was our propitiation; the efficacy of his plea depends upon the value and purity of his sacrifice. He is an intercessor in the virtue of his blood. The apostle, therefore, speaking of his intercession, Heb. vii. 24, considers it with a respect to his sacrifice: ver. 27, he could not have interceded as a priest, if he had not offered. As the high priest could not enter into the holy of holies, till, by the slaying of the sacrifice, he had blood to carry with him, so the true High Priest was not to be admitted to solicit at the throne of grace, till he had satisfied the tribunal of justice; so that a propitiation and his advocacy are not one and the same thing (as the Socinians affirm), but distinct: the one is the payment, the other the plea; one was made on earth, the other is managed in heaven; the one was by his death, the other by his life; the one was done but once, the other performed perpetually; the first is the foundation of the second. Because he paid the debt as our surety, he was fit to plead the payment as our attorney; what he finished on earth, he continually presents in heaven. By shedding his blood, he makes expiation; by presenting his blood, he makes intercession; in the one he prepares the remedy, and in the other he applies it. They are not the same acts, but the first act is the foundation of the second, and the second hath a connection with the first.

4. The nature of this advocacy differs from that intercession or advocacy which is ascribed to the Spirit. The Spirit is said to 'make intercession for us,' Rom. viii. 26; and he is in a way of excellency called the Comforter, which we heard is the same word in the Greek with this word which is here translated advocate. Christ is an advocate with God *for us*, and the Spirit is an advocate with God *in us*, John xiv. 17. Christ is our advocate, pleading for us in his own name; the Spirit is an advocate, assisting us to plead for ourselves in Christ's name. Christ pleads for us in the presence of God, the Spirit directs us to such arguments as may be used for pleas for ourselves. The Spirit doth not groan himself, but excites in us strong groans, by affecting us with our condition, and putting an edge upon our petitions, and strengthening us in the inward man, Eph. iii. 16. The Spirit is an advocate to indite our petitions, and Christ is an advocate to present them. Some distinguish them that Christ is an advocate by way of office, and the Spirit by way of assistance; but certainly the Spirit is an advocate by way of office to counsel us, as Christ is an advocate by way of office to plead for us; and the Spirit is as much sent to do the one in our hearts, as Christ was called back to heaven to do the other for our persons. The Spirit is an intercessor on earth, and Christ is an intercessor in heaven. Again, as there are two courts we are summoned to appear in, the court of the supreme Judge and the court of the Judge's deputy, our own consciences, Christ clears us by his plea at God's bar, and sets us right with the offended Father. The Spirit, as Christ's deputy, being sent in his name, clears us at the bar of our own consciences. Christ answers the charge of the law in the court of God's justice, and the Spirit answers the accusations of sin in the court of God's

deputy. The one pleads for our discharge above, the other pleads for our peace below; and the voice of God's Spirit is as mighty in us, as the voice of Christ's blood is mighty for us.

II. Thing. What kind of advocate Christ is.

1. An authoritative advocate. He intercedes not without a commission and without a command. God owns himself as the cause of his drawing near and approach to him: Jer. xxx. 21, 'I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me,' both in his first mediation and his following intercessions. He manages not an intercession merely in a way of charity, but in a way of authority, as a person entrusted by God, and dignified to this end; not only as our friend, but as a divine officer; as an attorney may manage the suit of his kinsman, but not only as being related to his client, but as being admitted by the court into such an office. Christ is not only admitted as one of kin to us, but commissioned as mediator for us. This was promised, that he should be 'a priest upon his throne,' Zech. vi. 13. The commission takes date from the day of his resurrection; when he was declared to be the begotten Son of God, he had an order to ask, Ps. ii. 8. This charge was given him at his solemn inauguration, and was to precede all the magnificent fruits of it. God settles Christ a priest and intercessor, while he commands him to ask the heathen for his inheritance; which connection the apostle confirms: Heb. v. 5, 'Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son.' But the priesthood doth not appear to be settled upon Christ by any other expression than this, 'Ask of me.'* The psalm speaks of his investiture in his kingly office; the apostle refers this to his priesthood, his commission, for both took date at the same time; both bestowed, both confirmed, by the same authority. The office of asking is grounded upon the same authority, as the honour of king. Ruling belonged to his royal office, asking to his priestly. After his resurrection, the Father gives him a power and command of asking, and obligeth himself to a grant of what he should ask. The same power that admits him to be an advocate, assures him he should be a prevailing one; the obligation to give is as strong as his order to ask. As his death was the end of his incarnation, so his intercession was the end of his ascension: his dignity in heaven was given him for the exercise of this particular office, Heb. vii. 25. As he had his life from God, so he had it for this end, to make intercession. He had a command to be a sufferer, and a body prepared him for that purpose; so he had likewise a command to be an advocate, and a life given him, and a throne prepared for him at the right hand of God to that end. The like commission is mentioned Ps. lxxxix. 26, 'He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation;' and this after his exaltation, ver. 24, 25. Yet for the full completing of it, ver. 27, the matter of his plea is there mentioned, 'Thou art the rock of my salvation,' the foundation, the first cause, of all thy salvation I have wrought in the world, being the first mover of it, and promising the acceptance of me in the performance of what was necessary for it. As he hath authority to cry to God, so he hath an assurance of the prevalency of his cry, in regard of the stability of the covenant, the covenant of mediation, which shall stand fast with him, or be faithful to him: 'and my mercy I will keep for him for evermore,' ver. 27. The treasures of my mercy are reserved only to be opened and dispensed by him; and the enjoying of his spiritual seed for ever, and the establishing of his own throne thereby, is the promised fruit of this cry, ver. 28. Christ indeed was a surety by authority, but by a greater right

* Rivet. in Ps. ii. 8.

an advocate. That he was accepted in the capacity of a surety, was pure mercy; it was at God's liberty whether he would accept a surety for us, or accept Christ for our surety; but after he had accepted him, upon the doing of his part in the work of redemption, he hath a right to the application of redemption, and consequently to the office of advocate, to see right done us, to see our debts discharged, and to put justice in mind of the full payment he hath made. He hath a right to it, a commission for it, a command to discharge it; he is as much bound to intercede as he was to sacrifice, for it is as much belonging to his priestly office as the other.

2. He is a wise and skilful advocate. Every advocate must understand the law of the state and the cause of his client, that he may manage it to the best advantage. This advocate hath an infinite knowledge as God, and a full and sufficient knowledge as man. His deity communicates the knowledge of our cause to his humanity, and excites the compassion of his nature. He knows the sincerity of his clients' hearts, their inward groans and breathings which cannot be expressed. He knows our cause better than we do ourselves, he needs not the representing our own cause from ourselves: 'He needs not that any should testify of man, he knows what is in man,' John ii. 25. He understands the best and the worst of our cause; he hath a clear view of all the flaws in it better than they are visible to ourselves. If he had no more skill and knowledge of us than what our outward expressions might furnish him with, he might mistake the business of a stammering spirit, and on the other side be imposed upon by the voluble expressions and flourishing gifts of others; he might be cheated by the hypocrisy of some, and mistake the concerns of his own people, who often mistake themselves, and are not able to express their own wants; but it cannot be so with him; 'he knows all things,' he knows those that love him and those that hate him, John xxi. 17. He understands our cause, he understands the law according to which he is to plead, the articles of agreement between the Father and himself, and he understands the fulness and redundancy of his own merit. He uses arguments proper to the cause he pleads, and drawn from the nature of the person he applies himself to. When he meets with the church in weakness and distress by potent adversaries, and would have the Jews delivered and the temple rebuilt, he solicits God as *the Lord of hosts*, Zech. i. 12. When he finds his people in danger of sin and temptation, he petitions God under the title of *holy*, John xvii. 11. When he would have promises performed to them, he appeals to the *righteousness* of the Father, John xvii. 25; it being part of his righteousness to fulfil that word which he hath passed, and make good the grant which so great a redeemer merited. He pleads the respects he had to the divine will in the exercise of every part of his office, both of priest and prophet: Ps. xl. 9, 10, a prophetic psalm of Christ, 'I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.' The adding *thy* to every one of them is emphatical: it was *thy* righteousness I had commission to declare, *thy* faithfulness I had order to proclaim, *thy* mercy I had a charge to publish; *thou* wert as much interested in all that I did as I myself was. I shall be counted false and a liar, thou wilt be counted unjust and cruel, if all be not fulfilled as I have spoken. Since it was thy rule I observed, and thy glory I aimed at in declaring it, disgrace not thyself and me in refusing the petition of such a supplicant, who believes in my word which I gave out by thy authority. Surely as Christ observed the will of God upon earth, so he is wise to intercede for nothing but according to those rules he observed in his humiliation, which was whatsoever might honour and manifest the righteous-

ness, faithfulness, salvation, truth, and loving-kindness of the Father. This is a part of his wisdom, to plead for nothing but what he hath the nature of God to subscribe to his petitions, and back him in them. It is not for the honour of an advocate to undertake a cause he cannot bring to pass, nor will any wise man engage in a suit which he hath not some strong probability to effect. Our Lord, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, stands more upon his honour than to undertake a cause he cannot accomplish.

3. He is a righteous and faithful advocate. He is as righteous in his advocacy as he was in his suffering. His being without sin rendered him fit to bear our sins on the cross: 1 John iii. 5, 'He was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin;' and it renders him fit to plead for the pardon of our sins upon his throne. As he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, so he is exalted to perfect the conquest by his intercession. If he had sin, he could not be in heaven, much less a pleader there. God tried him, and found him faithful in all his house, in all his own concerns, and the concerns of his people, which are his spiritual temple. The altar of incense, which was overlaid with pure gold all about the sides of it, Exod. xxxvii. 26, and set before the ark of the testimony, Exod. xl. 5, signified the purity of his soul, and his freedom from any kind of corruption in those pleas he makes in the holy of holies above, where 'he ever lives to make intercession for those that come to God,' Heb. vii. 25. But in what state? Ver. 26, an high priest, 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.' He lives in heaven a pure person, fitted by his purity to such an office. The words refer not to Christ's life in the world,* but to his life in heaven; 'separate from sinners' in regard of communion in their sins, but not in regard of compassion to their miseries. He hath nothing of his own concerns to divert him from our business; as he had no sin of his own to suffer for in the world, so he hath no sin of his own to solicit the pardon of in heaven. He having an incomparably righteous nature, will be exactly righteous in his office. After Christ's resurrection, when he had finished his work on earth, and was to begin it in heaven, God saluted him with a great deal of kindness: Ps. ii. 7, 'This day have I begotten thee.†' God regarded him as his only begotten Son, of the same holy and righteous nature with himself; justified him as his righteous servant, and thereupon gives him a power of asking; so that the prevalency of his intercession depends upon the righteousness of his person, and the righteousness of his cause; he pleadeth his own righteousness, which carries with it a necessity of having sin pardoned; which the righteousness of God is as ready to remit, as the righteousness of Christ was to purchase the remission of it. Whatsoever Christ intercedes for is righteous; if it were unrighteous, it were not fit to be moved to God; this would be to endeavour to persuade him to an unworthy act, contrary to his nature. If any proposal of his were unrighteous, Christ would be false to God, and his own principles, in making and defending such a motion. This would be to destroy all the ends of his coming, and design of his death, which was to declare the righteousness of God, advance it in the world, and in the souls of men. If Christ should undertake an unrighteous cause, what ground of confidence and security could any righteous man have in him?

4. He is a compassionate advocate. His compassion to us is joined with his faithfulness to God in his priestly office, Heb. ii. 17; so that, if he be not tender to believers in misery, he is not faithful to God in the exercise of

* As Crellius well notes.

† Upon which the Chaldee hath this note, *Purus es acsi hac die crexvissem te.*

his office. His intercession springs from the same tenderness towards us as his oblation, and both are but the displaying of his excessive charity. His compassion to us was a lesson he learned, together with obedience to God, by his sufferings, Heb. v. 8. He learned how necessary obedience was to God, and how grievous the misery of man was ; and being instructed in one as well as the other, his pity to us had as deep an impression as his sense of obedience to the divine will. And since one part of his obedience was to make way for the opening the treasures of his mercy, he cannot be obedient to his Father without being merciful to us. He was exposed to such a condition as wrested from him strong cries for himself, that he might send up strong cries for us in our misery. He was a man of sorrows, that he might be a man of compassions. He indeed had pity of old ; for with such an affection he redeemed the Israelites, Isa. lxiii. 9. His compassions are not lessened by an assumption of our humanity, but an experimental compassion gained in his human nature, which the divine was not capable of, because of the perfection of impassibility. By a reflection upon his own condition in the world, he is able to move our cause with such a tender feeling of it, as if he had the smart of it present in his own heart and bowels. The greatest pity must reside in him, since the greatest misery was endured by him in our nature ; what he had a real feeling of on earth, he must have a memorative feeling of in heaven. He cannot forget above what he experimented below, since one part of his priestly office, in suffering, was to fit him for a more faithful and merciful exercise of the other part in his intercession ; not an affliction was laid upon him but was intended to compose his heart to a sympathising frame with his people : Heb. iv. 15, ' We have not an high priest which cannot be touched ' ; (two negatives affirm it strongly). Not a taste of bitterness in any temptation he endured, but was more deeply to engrave in his heart a tenderness to us ; nor can those compassions in him be equalled by any creature ; no angel nor man can be touched with such a sense as he is, because no angel nor man ever smarted under such extremity as he did. Our pity to ourselves cannot enter into comparison with his pity to us. With what a sense of his disciples' condition did he pray for them upon earth ! John xvii. The glory of heaven hath made no change in his judgment and affections ; he hath the same will in heaven that he had on earth ; the same human will, and therefore the same human compassions in league with his divine. He was God-man on earth, man to suffer for us, and God to render that suffering valuable ; he is God-man in heaven, man to pity us, and God to render that compassion efficacious for us. This fits him for a zealous prosecution of our cause in heaven. His intercession receives a sharper edge from the things which he suffered ; the taste that he had of the infirmities of men, and the wrath they are obnoxious unto, warms his heart, and strengthens his pleas, and makes him a more zealous solicitor at the throne of divine grace ; as an earthly advocate that had drank deep of the same cup, and had had the same suit for himself as he hath for his client, better understands the cause, and is able to manage it with a deeper sense, than if he had never felt the like misery. Our advocate was framed in the same mould with us in regard of his nature, and was cast into the same furnace of wrath which we had merited ; and thus knowing the miseries of man, not by a bare report, but experience of the heaviness of the burden, is more careful to solicit the liberty and absolution of every comer to God by him from the sentence that hangs over them ; and the greater their miseries are, the more are his compassions exercised. The more deplorable the misery is, the greater object of pity the person is that feels it ; and to exercise compassion, when the object stands most in need

of it, is very agreeable to a compassionate nature, such as Christ's is ; and therefore, if he had so much pity to procure the redemption of the Israelites from a temporal and bodily captivity, much more will he be careful to free believers from the spiritual captivity they groan under, since in that condition they are more suitable objects of compassion than any man can be under a mere bodily and temporal affliction. And therefore, whenever the knowledge of our condition comes to his humanity by the assistance of his divinity, we cannot have a more powerful solicitor than the experimental sense he hath in his own breast and bowels. To conclude, he is a compassionate intercessor, because he was a great sufferer, as compassionate to us as he is valuable with God ; his merit for us is not greater than his pity to us.

5. He is ready and diligent. He is never out of the way when the cause should be heard ; he always sits at the right hand of the Father, who is the judge of the world, and is never out of his presence. When Stephen, Acts vii. 55, 'saw the heavens opened, he saw Christ standing at the right hand of God,' in the posture of an advocate and protector, as sitting is the posture of a prince and a judge. He times his intercession for the church according to the providential state of the world, Zech. i. 11, 12. He had sent out his messengers to view the state of the earth, who, upon their return, brought him word that it was in peace and rest ; upon which news he petitions for the restoring of Jerusalem. He would not let slip the opportunity of such an argument, that the church, the seat of the divine glory on earth, should be in misery, when the world, wherein God did less concern himself, flourished in peace and prosperity. Shall the enemies of the church be in a better condition than the people thou hast entrusted with thy law ? His messengers brought him an exact account of things, and he is diligent to take hold of the first occasion to solicit the security or restoration of his people. Now that the princes of the earth have nothing of war to hinder them, put it into their hearts to deliver thy people and rebuild thy temple. It is one property of Christ to be 'of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord,' Isa. xi. 3 ; to be sensible of anything that may promote the honour and worship of God, or may obstruct and lessen it. His sense is as quick as his understanding, and readily interposeth for whatsoever may conduce to the manifestation of the attributes of God, which is the foundation of his fear in the world. He is ready to put in a plea for us to the Father, and is more studious of our welfare, and to bring us off, than we are ourselves. In the midst of his dolours he gave us an evidence of it. Though his disciples were so careless and senseless of his present condition that they fell asleep, when they had most need to watch both for him and themselves ; yet, after his reproof for their negligence, he frames an excuse for them from the consideration of their weakness, before they could apologise for themselves : Mat. xxvi. 41, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' He lays it upon the infirmities of their flesh, though it was also the security of their spirits, as appears by his reproof. Is he not as ready to plead the same for us in his glory ? He is always ready at the throne of grace to give out grace and mercy in a time of need, Heb. iv. 16. We have no reason to fear his absence from that throne of grace we solicit in our necessities. He is passed into the heaven, seated there in a perpetual exercise of this office, to entertain all comers at all times ; and can no more be sleepy than he can be cruel, no more cease to be diligent than he can be bereaved of his compassions.

6. He is an earnest and pressing advocate. When an advocate hath much business for himself, it will cool him in the affairs of his client : Christ hath once offered up himself, and being thereupon advanced, has no need to offer up himself again. He is secure from any further suffering in his per-

son. He hath nothing to do for himself; but all his ardency is employed for his people, which is the reason rendered why he 'lives to make intercession for the comers to God by him,' Heb. vii. 25, compared with ver. 27, 'He needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sin, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself.' He needs not any solicitousness for himself, as before the time of his death; he hath nothing now to blemish his happiness, and divert his affections from the concerns of his people. He hath no strong cries now to put up for himself. All his affections run in another channel. His whole soul is put to pawn in the business, as the word signifies in Jer. xxx. 21, 'He hath engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord.' He hath undertaken it with the greatest cordialness of spirit. His expostulation speaks his earnestness of old: Zech. i. 12, 'O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem?' Like an expression we use when we would rouse a drowsy person in a time of danger, and snatch him out of the fire; as if Christ thought the mercy of God too sleepy, and earnestly jogs it to awaken it, and spurs it on to manifest itself. 'How long wilt thou;' thou who hast an affection to the captives, an affection to me, their solicitor; thou who hast mercy to pity them, and power to rescue them; thou who knowest that the set time of their captivity is at an end, and hast faithfulness to be as good as thy word? The seventeenth of John is a map of his carriage in heaven, how he presses his Father for his people. When he prayed for himself, it is 'Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me.' It is then '*Not as I will, but as thou wilt;*' but for his disciples' glory and salvation it is, *I will*, ver. 24, as though he were more a judge than an advocate, and had more a right to a sovereign dominion than that of a plea. What did the censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar,* which the high priest was to carry within the veil, into the holy of holies, Lev. xvi. 12, 13, represent, but the ardency of the affections in the soul of Christ, when he presents the incense of our prayers to his Father in heaven? The names of the tribes of Israel were to be not only upon the high priest's shoulders, Exod. xxviii. 12, but also upon his breastplate, ver. 29; near his heart when his face is towards them, and as near his heart when, in desertion, his back is turned upon them. They are next his heart all the time he is in the holy of holies. Great affections cannot be without earnestness in their cause. He desired not more earnestly to be baptized with his bloody baptism on earth than to complete all the fruits of it in heaven. He was not more vehement to shed his blood than he is to plead it. No man is more solicitous to increase the honour and grandeur of his family, than Christ is to secure the happiness of his people. Our prayers for ourselves, when tintured with the greatest affection, cannot be so fervent as his pleas for our souls are at the right hand of his Father; for to what purpose did he carry up those human affections to heaven, but to express and act them in their liveness and vigour for us and to us?

7. He is a joyful and cheerful advocate. He hath not a sour kind of earnestness, as is common among men; but an earnestness with a joy, as being the delight of his heart. When he prayed in the garden for himself, he was in an agony; but in his mediatory prayer, a model of his intercession in heaven, he was in a cheerful frame, John xvii.; for it was his prayer after the most comfortable sermon he ever preached to his disciples, wherein he had heaped up all the considerations that might be capable to elevate their hearts; and he makes this use of it in the end, John xvi. 33, that they should 'be of good cheer' at his victory, because he hath 'overcome the world.'

* Amyraut sur Heb. ix. p. 83.

And in this frame he puts up this mediatory prayer immediately, to signify to them both the matter and manner of his intercessions in heaven for them, and that he doth rejoice in putting up these requests above, as well as he did when he presented them at times before, as is intimated: ver. 13, 'These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves;' that they might have such a joy in the considerations of it, and in the receiving thy favour, as I have in the petitioning for them. Certainly he doth as well rejoice in the habitable parts of the earth, since he hath laid so great an obligation upon it, as he did formerly in the prospect of what he was to do for it. His death was sweet to him after his resurrection; the very remembrance of it was a pleasure, in which sense some understand that: Jer. xxxi. 25, 26, 'I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul. Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.' It is certain some passages in that chapter are applied to Christ's time, as ver. 15, the weeping at Ramah was a prediction of the slaying of infants by Herod, Mat. ii. 17, 18; and ver. 22, the 'creating a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man,' is generally understood of the conception and incarnation of Christ. And the expression in ver. 25 seems to be too magnificent to be understood of any other prophet than that in whom the weary find rest; and the consideration of the success of his incarnation and passion make his sleep, *i. e.* his death, pleasant to him at his awaking or resurrection. His pleading, therefore, for the fruit of his death cannot be bitter or distasteful to him; he delights as much in the exercise of this office as he did in the first undertaking of it and consecration to it. Since he accounted his priesthood an honour when God called him to it, he will not think it disgraceful when his people own it, and desire the exercise of it in their behalf.

8. He is an acceptable advocate. He hath an active joy in his intercession, a passive joy in his acceptance. He is the favourite of the court wherein he pleads, acceptable to the judge in his person, acceptable to him in his office, acceptable to him in the suits he manages. His intercession is nothing else but the presenting to God the sacrifice which restored to him the pleasure of his creation, gave him a rest, and continues it. The savour of that sacrifice in heaven which was offered on earth is grateful to the judge of the world. It is as sweet to God as the Levitical incense, the type of it, can be to man, mentioned Exod. xxx. 34-36, and reserved for the service of the temple, a composition of the sweetest and most aromatic simples. How much sweeter is the advocacy of Christ to God than the most fragrant scents can be to us! In the presence of God he meets with a fulness of joy: Ps. xvi. 11, 'Thou wilt shew me the paths of life, and shew me in thy presence a fulness of joy, and pleasures at thy right hand for evermore.' So Cocceius reads it. It is to be understood of his mediatory pleasure he hath in his being in the presence of God, or appearing in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. You know that psalm is to be understood of Christ, which is evidenced by ver. 10, applied to him Acts ii. 31, Acts xiii. 35. 'Thou wilt shew me the path of life;' thou wilt bring me into glory, as the head of the believing world, of those saints and excellent ones in whom my delight hath been; in this presence I shall have fulness of joy, in the reflections upon my obedience, and the plentiful effusions of thy grace upon the account of it. Pleasures flow with a full and perpetual torrent from the right hand of God by the mediation of Christ. It is as if he should have said, I shall have a fulness of joy after my bitter passion, in the contemplation of thy pleased countenance to the sons of men; and thy right hand shall communicate spiritual blessings upon the account of this passion, which shall be the delight

of my soul. All this thou wilt shew me after my resurrection, to testify how acceptable my mediation hath been to thee. Since God constituted him a priest by an irreversible oath, an oath he would never repent of, Heb. vii. 21, and thereby confirmed him in an 'unchangeable priesthood,' ver. 24, as he hath an unchangeable office, so he hath an endless acceptance. He that never will repent of fixing him in it, will never repent of his exercising of it. As God is infinitely pleased with this office, so he is infinitely pleased with the execution of the charge; and the presenting his death for any soul is inexpressibly grateful to the reconciled judge. His deity adds a value and efficacy to his intercessions in heaven, as it did to his passion on earth.

9. He is the sole advocate. Those of Rome distinguish between mediators of redemption and mediators of intercession; the first they appropriate to Christ, in the other they make angels and saints his companions, and thereby snatch the glory from Christ to confer it upon a creature. But since our High Priest alone hath the honour to sit at the right hand of God, he alone hath the honour of this office of advocacy. 'To which of the angels,' or saints, 'did he at any time say, Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance?' The office and power of asking belongs to him who is the begotten Son. Since Christ trod the wine-press alone, he solicits our cause alone, intercession being founded upon propitiation; he, therefore, that is the sole propitiator, is the sole intercessor. He only hath the right to plead for us, who had the right to purchase us. As God never gave any commission to redeem us to any other, so he never gave a commission to any other to appear for us in that court. The entering into the holy of holies with the perfuming incense, was annexed to the honour of the chief priesthood, which had any of the inferior priests, or any soul alive, usurped, they had incurred the pains of death. It is a disparagement to Christ to interest any creature in it, as though he wanted some other favourite to give him a full credit with the Father, and some monitors to excite his affections to us; or as though the suits he had to manage were so numerous, that he wanted a multitude of clerks to draw up for him the petitions he had to present. It is our Saviour's prerogative to be 'the first and the last,' Rev. i. 11; as he was the first that stepped up to keep the world from perishing by the hand of justice, so he will be the last in securing it; as he was the first in purchasing, so he will be the last in completing, that the whole work of redemption may be ascribed to him alone. As he is the sole author of it by his passion, so he will be the sole finisher of it by his intercession.

III. Thing. How Christ doth manage this advocacy and intercession.

In general. Christ as God, essentially considered, doth not intercede in heaven. He that intercedes by way of petition, wants the blessing of that person he intercedes with, and in that respect is inferior to him. He no more intercedes in heaven as God, than he prayed on earth as God. His intercession as well as his passion belongs indeed to his person; and as his Deity is in personal union with his humanity, so his prayers and intercessions may be called the intercessions of God, as well as his blood was called the blood of God. As the human nature suffered, and the divine nature made it valuable, so the human nature intercedes by way of motion, and the divine nature makes it prevalent. The person of the Son of God suffered, but only in the human nature, the divine not being passible; so may we not say the person of the Son of God intercedes, but the human nature only supplicates? He is our advocate, as he was our propitiation.

1. Christ is not an advocate in heaven in such a supplicating manner as he prayed in the world. This servile way of praying, as they call it, because

it was performed by Christ in the form of a servant, is not agreeable to his present glorious estate. It is as unsuitable to his state in heaven, as his prayers with strong cries were suitable to his condition on earth. Such 'prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears,' belong only to 'the days of his flesh,' Heb. v. 7, *i. e.* the state of humiliation, wherein he was encompassed with the infirmities of the flesh; but such a posture becomes him not in heaven, where he is stripped of all those natural infirmities and marks of indigence. Though such a kind of petitioning is not inconsistent with his humanity as joined to his divinity, and making one person (if it were, he could not then have supplicated in the world, as he did in the garden; for his humanity was joined to his divinity in that humbled, as well as in his exalted state. He was God in the days of his flesh when he lived amongst mortals, as well as now in the days of his glory); yet his praying with so deep a humiliation as he did in this lower region of the earth, is inconsistent with his glorified state in heaven; for if the glory of heaven wipes tears from the eyes of his members, it doth certainly from the eyes of the Head. Nor is it a supplication in the gesture of kneeling, for he is an advocate at the right hand of God, where he is always expressed as *sitting*, and but once (as I remember) as *standing*, and that was in the case of Stephen, Acts vii. 55. This some of the fathers and others call a servile manner of praying, and say that it was not convenient for the Father to require it of Christ in his elevated state, nor for the Son to perform it.

2. Yet it may be a kind of petition, an expressing his desires in a supplicatory manner. Though he be a king upon his throne, yet being settled in that royal authority by his Father, as his delegate, he is in regard of that inferior to the Father, and likewise in the economy of mediator. And also as his human nature is a creature, he may be a petitioner without any debasement to himself, to that power, by whose authority he is settled in his dignity, constituted in his mediatory office, and was both made and continues a creature. Though God 'hath put all things under him,' yet he did not put himself under him, but remains in his full authority, 1 Cor. xv. 27. His divine nature in union with his human, is no argument against it, for then he should not have petitioned on earth. He was then the same person in his disguise that he is now in glory. There are promises made to him which are not yet accomplished; enemies to be made his footstool, which are not yet brought into that lowest degree of subjection. Divine promises are to be turned into petitions; the heathen are promised to be his inheritance, but asking was ordered to precede the performance. Ps. ii. 8, לִשְׁאֹל signifies to desire and wish, as well as to ask. There are some things still of want, though not in Christ personal, yet in Christ mystical, till the church be fully completed. He is an high priest in heaven, and it is the office of a high priest to pray for those for whom he hath offered the sacrifice. Why should asking, by way of desire or petition, be more uncomely when there is yet something of indigence, than praising after supplies, which Christ doth in heaven; if we understand those words of Christ, Ps. lxxix. 30, 'I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving,' after he should be set on high? And Ps. xxii. 25, 'My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation, and I will pay my vows before them that fear him.' Both which psalms, upon perusal, you will find prophetic of Christ. And himself expresseth, that what he was to do in heaven for the accomplishment of the promise of the Spirit which he had made to them, was to be by way of prayer: John xiv. 16, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.' He speaks of an asking or praying (for the word signifies both the one and the other), not in this life, but after his ascension, for

the first and necessary fruit of his death, viz., the Comforter. He evidenceth hereby, that his glory should not cloud his mercy, and the cares of their concerns; his love should be stronger than death or glory, and he would not rest till he had obtained of infinite goodness what was necessary for them. This he would do by way of asking, which inclines to a petitionary way when a boon is desired.

3. It is such a petition as is in the nature of a claim or demand. It is not a petition for that which is at the liberty of the petitioned person to grant or refuse, but for that which the petitioner hath a right to by way of purchase, and the person petitioned to cannot in justice deny. An advocate is an officer in a court of judicature, demanding audience and sentence in a judicial way. So that this intercession of Christ is not a bare precarious intercession; * for as when he was in the world he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes, Mat. vii. 29, so in heaven he intercedes as one having authority by virtue of his mediatory power, and not as an ordinary supplicant. He hath a right to demand. On earth, indeed, he had only promises of assistance to put in suit; but in heaven he pleads the conditions performed on his part, upon which the promises made to Christ become due to him. It is now, 'Father, I have glorified thee upon the earth; now glorify me with thy own self,' John xvii. 4, 5. He pleads for his people as they are the gift of his Father, and as they have received his words, ver. 8. He pleads his own commission as one sent, ver. 23. He minds the Father of the covenant between them both, as God gave him a command what he should do in the world, which was no other but an injunction to perform those conditions which had been agreed upon, and that will of God expressed in the covenant of redemption, which is called the will of God, Heb. x. 7. Christ, having done this will, mediates for the performance of the conditions God was bound to by this covenant, and claims the performance of them *jure pacti*, as a debt due to his meritorious obedience on the cross; so that it is not a *desire* only in a way of charity, but a *claim* in a way of justice, by virtue of meriting, and a demand of the performance of the promise. There were promises made by God to Christ as our head and representative 'before the world began,' Tit. i. 1, 2, and 2 Tim. i. 9, when he was fore-ordained to suffering, 1 Pet. i. 20. Eternal life was 'promised before the world began.' To whom could this promise of so long a date be made? Not to any creature, since it was before any creature had a being. Therefore to Christ; not for himself, who was the eternal Son of God. This promise and this grace, given us in Christ, he sues out by his intercession as a feeoffee in trust for us; and it being added, 'which God, that cannot lie, promised,' gives us an intimation of the manner of Christ's pleading, in calling the truth of God to witness the validity of the promise which he pleads. It seems to be in an expostulatory manner, as we find it before his incarnation: Zech. i. 12, 'How long, Lord?' which was upon the account of his future incarnation; for which reason he that is called the angel, ver. 12, who was the angel of the covenant, is called 'the man,' ver. 10. So the expostulation of Elias with God is called particularly intercession, Rom. xi. 2; and Rev. iii. 5 intimates it by way of claim, 'He that overcomes, I will confess (ἐξομολογήσομαι) his name before my Father;' I will confess him plainly and clearly, and claim him as one that belongs to me. His advocacy for us is a confession of our interest in him, our owning of him, by virtue of which confession or claim we are set right in the court of God, as those for whom he hath shed his blood.

4. This intercessory demand or asking is accompanied with a presenting

* Mares. contra Volkel, lib. iii. cap. xxxviii. p. 378.

the memorials of his death. It is a commemoration of the sacrifice which he offered on earth for our expiation; and the whole power of intercession, with the prevalency of it, is wholly upon this foundation. It is a presenting the efficacy of his death, the virtue of his blood, the pleasure of God in the sacrifice offered by him. It is by the displaying the whole merit of his passion that he doth solicit for us. Intercession is not properly a sacerdotal act, without respect to the sacrifice. It was with the blood of the sacrifice that the high priest was to enter into the holy of holies, and sprinkle it there. The same blood that had been shed without on the day of expiation was to be carried within the veil. What was done typically, Christ doth really: first give himself a sacrifice, and then present himself as the sacrifice for us. The apostle shews us the manner of it, Heb. xii. 24. The blood of Christ is a speaking blood, as well as the blood of Abel; it speaks in the same manner as Abel's blood did, though not for the same end.* As the blood of Abel, presenting itself before the eyes of God, was as powerful to draw down the vengeance of God as if it had uttered a cry as loud as to reach to heaven; so the blood of Christ, being presented before the throne of God, powerfully excites the favour of God by the loudness of its cry. He speaks by his blood, and his blood speaks by its merit. The petitions of his lips had done us no good without the voice of his blood. He stands as a lamb slain when he presents the prayers of the saints, Rev. v. 6, 8, with his bleeding wounds open, as so many mouths full of pleas for us; and every one of them is the memorial and mark of the things which he suffered, and for what end he suffered them, as the wounds of a soldier received in the defence, and for the honour of his country, displayed to persons sensible of them, are the loudest and best pleas for the grant of his request. If the party-coloured rainbow, being looked upon by God, minds him of his covenant not to destroy the world again by a deluge, Gen. ix. 14-16, much more are the wounds which Christ bears, both in his hands, feet, and side, remembrancers to him of the covenant of grace made with repenting and believing sinners. The look of God upon those wounds, whereby so great an oblation is remembered, doth as efficaciously move him to look kindly upon us, as the look upon the rainbow disposeth him to the continuance of the world. If our Saviour had not a mouth to speak, he had blood to plead; and his blood cries louder in heaven for us than his voice did in any of the prayers he uttered upon earth; for by this his performance of the articles on his part is manifested, and the performance of the promises on God's part solicited. When he sees what the Redeemer hath done, he reflects upon what himself is to do. The blood of Christ speaks the tenor of the covenant of redemption made with Christ on the behalf of sinners.

5. It is a presenting our persons to God, together with his blood, in an affectionate manner; as the high priest, when he went into the holy of holies, was to bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, Exod. xxviii. 29, to which the church alludes in her desire that she might be 'set as a seal upon the heart' of her beloved, Cant. viii. 6; and perhaps an allusion may be also in Rev. iii. 5, confessing the names of the victorious sufferers before his Father, bearing their names visibly before him. The persons of believers are his jewels, locked up in the cabinet of his own breast, and shewed to his Father in the exercise of his priestly office.

IV. The fourth thing. That Christ doth perpetually manage this office.

* Daillé sur le Descent d'Esprit, serm. i. 461.

The first evidence is in the text, 'We *have* an advocate;' we have at this present; we have an advocate actually remembering us in his thoughts, and presenting us to his Father; we in this age, we in all ages, till the dissolution of the world, without any faintness in the degrees of his intercession, without any interruption in time. He never ceases the exercise of this office, so far as it is agreeable to that high and elevated state wherein he is. As there are continual sins of believers in all ages of the world, so there are constant pleas of the advocate. This epistle was written many years after the ascension of Christ; some think in the time of John's banishment in the isle of Patmos, some think after; yet at that time he owns himself to have a share in the benefit of this intercession. The term *we* is inclusive of himself. Christ is an intercessor for us in the whole course of our pilgrimage. All the time that we have any need of him, his voice is the same still, 'I will that they behold my glory which thou hast given me,' till they are wafted from hence to a full vision of it. This is the true end of his heavenly life, and his living for ever there: Heb. vii. 25, 'Seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them.' He lives solely to this purpose, to discharge this part of his priesthood for us. His advocacy is, like his life, without end. As he died once to merit our redemption, so he lives always to make application of redemption. He would not answer the end of his life if he did not exercise the office of his priesthood. It would not be a love like that of a God, if he did not bear his people continually upon his heart. He was the author of our faith by enduring the cross, and the finisher of our faith by sitting down at the right hand of God, Heb. xii. 2. He will be exercised in it as long as there is any faith to be finished and completed in the world. His oblation was a transient act; but his appearance in heaven for us is a permanent act, and continues for ever. His mediatory glory is not consummate, though his personal be. He hath yet a mystical self to be perfected, a fulness to be enriched with. He cannot be intent upon this without minding the concerns of, and putting up pleas for, his people; for they are one with him, 'the fulness of him that fills all in all,' Eph. i. 23. There can be no cessation of his work till his enemies be conquered, and his whole mystical body wrapped up in glory. If he had finished this part of his function, we should have had him here again before this time, with all his train of angels, to put an end to the present state of things, as the high priest stayed no longer in the holy of holies than was necessary for the atoning their sins, expecting the felicity of an acceptance, that he might bring the welcome news of it to the people that waited without. As soon as he hath reduced all the elect to an happy state, he will come again, for 'the heavens receive him' only till 'the restitution of all things' is completed, Acts iii. 21; and then 'he shall come with a shout,' 1 Thes. iv. 16, all the angels in heaven triumphing and applauding the accomplishment of redemption.

It is necessary it should be so.

1. Because it is founded upon his death. As his oblation is of eternal efficacy, so his advocacy hath an everlasting virtue. It is an 'eternal redemption,' Heb. ix. 12, and therefore an eternal intercession. This the apostle signifies in the text by arguing from his propitiation to his advocacy; he is at present an advocate with an uninterrupted plea, because he is at present a propitiation in the efficacy of his passion. There was an end of his actual suffering when he expired, but no end of the virtue of his sacrifice; and therefore no end of his intercession, which depended not upon his death simply considered, but upon the value of it. It is in the virtue of this he pleads; since the virtue of his blood is perpetual, the plea grounded upon that virtue, and which is nothing but the voice of his blood, is of the same duration.

There can be no end of the intercession of his person till there be an exhausting of the merits of his death ; the one must fail in its strength before the other cease in its plea ; his blood must be a speechless blood before he can be a silent advocate. As the continual sacrifice typified the continual virtue of the Redeemer's death, so the perpetual burning incense signified the perpetuity of his intercession ; and no less was signified by the sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice upon the mercy-seat, which was not wiped off, but stuck there, as a visible mark, and remained as a continual solicitor for the continuance of grace and favour to the people.

2. The exercise of this office must be as durable as the office itself. His priesthood is for ever, therefore the act belonging to his priesthood is for ever: He was more particularly constituted an high priest 'after the order of Melchisedec' when he entered into heaven 'as a forerunner for us,' Heb. vi. 20; where he abides an high priest continually, Heb. vii. 3 ; made so 'not after the law of a carnal command,' or a command to be abrogated, but 'after the power of endless life,' ver. 15, 16 ; and 'confirmed by the oath of God a priest for ever,' ver. 21 ; and therefore exerciseth his function of a priest for ever. Not of sacrificing himself, because he lives for ever, and cannot die again, but of interceding, since no other act belonging to the priesthood can be exercised in that glorious and endless state he hath in heaven but this of intercession, which must be without intermission, because it is the only act of that office which he can perform. It is not said he is a man for ever, but a priest for ever, which is a name of an office, and implies an exercise of the office. He is not called a priest for ever in regard of his life, but in regard of his function for which he lives. His mouth cannot be stopped by God, because he was constituted by the irreversible oath of God. God cannot deny himself, and destroy his own solemn act. He is a priest for ever, without repentance on God's part ; he must therefore perpetually mind his office, the neglect of it else would cause repentance in God for exalting him to so high a dignity, and be a reflection upon divine wisdom, to settle one in this excellent place that were too weak for it, or too careless in it, that should bear only the title, and neglect the work ; it would be a cause of repentance in God at the expending so much grace to no purpose. This advocate, as he bears the name of priest, so he appeared clothed with a priestly robe : Rev. i. 13, 'He had a garment down to the feet, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle,' which was the habit of the high priest under the law. As he is an everlasting priest, so he manages an everlasting intercession. He was too faithful in discharging his part on earth, to be negligent of performing his office in heaven ; he did not embrace so great an honour to be idle in it, and neglect the work and duty that his place called for.

3. This was both the reason and end of his advancement. The intercession he made for transgressors was one reason why God would 'divide him a portion with the great,' Isa. liii. 12 ; 'because he made intercession for the transgressors.' This is alleged as one reason, among others there mentioned, of his glorious exaltation, which intercession is most evident to us in his last prayer, John xvii., wherein he prays for all that should believe on him. And also upon the cross, when he prays for his murderers : 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' Luke xxiii. 34. An act so pleasing to God as to be the motive to give him the division of the spoil of the strong, cannot but be perpetual. Will Christ, who always did what was pleasing to God on earth, discontinue that which is so delightful to the bowels of his mercy ? He cannot look upon his own glory, the robe he wears, the throne he sits on, the enemies prostrate at his feet, but he must reflect upon the reason of his present state, and be excited to a redoubling his solicitations for his people.

He would be no longer glorious than he were an advocate. The superstructure cannot stand when the foundation moulders. Since he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, he cannot be unmindful of promoting the destruction of the one and the perfection of the other. A perpetual action will be the result of these perpetual qualities; and being anointed a priest for these qualities, he will act as a priest for the glory of them, which can be no other way but by intercession. It was the end of his advancement: Heb. x. 12, 'But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.' The antithesis is made between him and the legal priests; they stood at the altar every day offering the same sacrifices, but this (not *man* as it is in our translation, but rather to be supplied with *priest*) this priest, having finished his work on earth, sat down for ever, viz. as a priest, on the right hand of God, and never leaves the place. Other priests stood, as not having finished their sacrificing work, but were to repeat it again; this priest sits, as having finished his sacrificing function, and having attained the glory due to his person. His sitting down is not mentioned only as a point of honour, but of office; he sat down as one that had offered a complete sacrifice in the nature of a priest, and sat down for ever to exercise his priesthood at the right hand of God. This verse, compared with the other, would not else have a full sense; and the words following second it, ver. 13, he sat down 'expecting till his enemies be made his footstool,' expecting the full fruits of that sacrifice in the complete subjection of his enemies, and consequently the full felicity of himself and his friends; and all this time of expectation he is suing out the promise of God to him, asking that inheritance which was assured him in the covenant between them, Ps. ii. 8. This is the reason of his sitting down for ever to exercise his priesthood for ever in the presence of the King and Judge of all the earth. He is always in the presence of his Father in the dignity of his person and fulness of his merit, continually spreading every part of his meritorious sacrifice in the view of God. The high priest entered into the holy of holies but once a year, but this high priest sits for ever in the court in a perpetual exercise of his function, both as a priest and a sacrifice. And since his own sacrifice for sins offered on earth was sufficient, he hath nothing to do perpetually in heaven but to sprinkle the blood of that sacrifice upon the mercy-seat. He is never out of the presence of God; and the infiniteness of his compassions may hinder us from imagining a silence in him when any accusations are brought in against us. The accusations might succeed well were he out of the way; but being always present, he is always active in his solicitations. No clamour can come against us but he hears it, as being on the right hand of his Father, and appears as our attorney there in the presence of God to answer it, as the high priest appeared in the holy of holies for all the people.

V. Thing is, the efficacy of this intercession. The efficacy of it is implied in the text, both in the person of our advocate, *Jesus Christ*; in his quality, *righteous*; in regard of the work he had wrought on earth, *propitiation*; in the object of his intercession, and the place, *with the Father*. He is an advocate to the Father; not only to him at a distance, but *with him*. The constant presence of a favourite with a king, of a princely son with a royal father, is a means to make his intercessions of force with him. He is an advocate, and he is constantly with the Father in that capacity. A letter from a friend is not so successful as a personal appearance for gaining a suit. If his death were meritorious, his prayer must be so too, as being put up in virtue of his meritorious blood; and though we are reconciled by his death,

yet we are saved by his life, with a *much more*, Rom. v. 10; not formally in regard of merit, for that was the effect of his death, but in regard of application of that merit, the end for which he lives, to render it efficacious to us, as it had been in his passion valuable for us. If he separated himself to death to procure it, he will employ the authority and dignity of his life to finish and apply it. As none offered so noble a sacrifice, so none lives a more powerful life. As when he was on earth never man spake as he spake, so, now he is in heaven, never did any man or angel plead as he pleads. If 'whatsoever we ask in his name' we shall receive, John xvi. 23, surely whatsoever he asks in his own name will not be refused.

1. This was typified.* The strength of his mediation was signified by the horns, ordered by a special precept to be made upon the four corners of the altar of burnt-offerings, Exod. xxvii. 2, and also upon the altar of incense, Exod. xxx. 2. As the brazen altar signified the strength of his death, so the golden altar signified the excellency of his intercession, horns in Scripture being an emblem of strength, power, and dignity. And perhaps his feet of brass wherewith he is described, Rev. i. 15, when he appears to John in a priestly garb, signifies his irresistible standing before God in the exercise of that office. Much more may be said of him, as it was of Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 28, 'As a prince he hath power with God,' by his death and intercession, as well as power with men by his Spirit, and prevails in all when he pleases.

2. It was prophesied of Christ, Ps. xxi. 2, 'Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips.' This psalm seems to be a comment upon part of the second psalm, or rather a dialogue between Christ and the Father, Christ speaking ver. 1, and the Father promising him a full victory, ver. 8, which is a prophetic triumph of the church after the victory gained by the passion of Christ. And of the Messiah, the Chaldee and some of the Jews understand it. The expressions in the psalm are many of them too illustrious to be meant of David, as ver. 4, 'length of days for ever and ever,' which cannot be understood of David in his royalty as a mortal man. God had given Christ the right of asking, and grants him whatsoever he asks; he bestows upon him whatsoever he desires, and refuseth nothing that he sues for. The good of his people is the desire of his heart, and the request of his lips, and nothing is refused that his heart wishes, and his lips move for. This, of the efficacy of his intercession, is the salvation he rejoices in. The pleasing and favourable countenance of God is that which makes him exceeding glad. He would have little content in the rest of his glory without this power of prevalency with his Father. Since his intercession for his church is for his own mystical glory, it must be successful, or his own glory would be in part defective, since it is linked with that of his church, which is yet behind. As Christ glorified the Father, so the Father is reciprocally to glorify the Son, John xvii. 4, 5, which is by giving him a power of asking, and engaging himself to a facility of granting. A promise of granting was annexed to the command of asking: Ps. ii. 8, 'I will give.' He should not be so ready to request as the Father would be liberal to bestow. He was promised a mighty encouragement till he had set judgment in the earth, and wrought a perfect deliverance for his people, Isa. xlii. 4. It is to this contrite person that he would look perpetually favourably, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. It is that person by whom the ceremonial law was to be torn in pieces to whom God promised to look.

3. God never denied him any request which he put up upon the earth for the divine glory and his people's good, and Christ himself acknowledges its

* Lightfoot, Temple, cap. xxxiv. p. 198, 199.

John xi. 42, 'I know that thou hearest me always.' He did but groan in his spirit without moving his lips, ver. 38; and how soon did his groans rise into hallelujahs: ver. 41, 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.' As soon as ever he sighed, he had an occasion of praise. He was heard in all his petitions in the world, Heb. v. 7, *εἰσακουσθεῖς*, heard to purpose; while he was in the days of his flesh encompassed and pressed with the infirmities of our nature, much more will he be heard in the days of his glory. He was not indeed heard for himself at the time of his suffering, so as to have what he begged formally granted; for in that prophetic psalm, Ps. xxii. 3, he complains that he had cried all the day, and God heard him not. His prayer that the cup might pass from him was *in specie* denied him. That prayer proceeded from a natural fear and horror of an accursed death as he was man, and is therefore said to be in the days of his flesh, when he had our natural infirmities about him, which was not also an absolute desire, but conditional. 'If it were possible,' *i. e.* if it were not prejudicial to the glory of God and the salvation of his people; yet in this also he was heard; for though he was not delivered from death, he was supported in it. The death was to be suffered, and yet to be conquered; and afterwards his bloody passion was changed into a spiritual and glorious life by a resurrection. He was heard *ἀπὸ ἐνλαΐας*; a deliverance from his fears and horrors was granted, that he might with courage proceed on in his suffering. Christ sometimes prayed as mediator, and for things in order to his mediatory work, as when he prayed for the raising of Lazarus, that by so great a miracle his doctrine might be propagated, and the faith of his disciples strengthened: John xi. 40, 42, It was for the glory of God, and that they might believe that God had sent him. In this Christ was never in the least denied, and to this that speech of his success, 'Thou hearest me always,' refers. He utters this confidence and assurance in the hearing of the people, 'that they may believe that thou hast sent me.' Thou hearest me always, when what I desire tends to the propagation of the gospel doctrine, and the faith and advantage of that people to whom and for whom thou hast sent me. But in those prayers he puts up from human affections, and the innocent inclinations of nature, as that in the garden which he put up from a human sense, yet with a condition; and that upon the cross, which he puts up as a man subject to the laws of charity; though he was not formally answered, yet he was not absolutely denied, because he did not absolutely beg, but with a condition expressed or implied. It was not possible that cup should pass away from him according to the determination of things and the predictions of the prophets, without a manifest alteration of purpose in God, breach of his word, and the utter ruin and devastation of mankind. And for that prayer upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 34, 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do,' a condition is implied, *viz.* if they did repent and believe. It cannot be supposed that he prayed for their pardon without their repentance, whether they repented and believed or no; and indeed the motive that he urgeth implies a condition, 'they know not what they do,' implying that when they came to be sensible, and to know with an inward penitent practical knowledge what they had done, that they had crucified the Lord of life, God would pardon them, which without doubt he would, according to the tenor of his own promise. But to consider rightly that petition of his in the garden, the refusing his request upon the account of the impossibility of the passing away of the cup, doth strongly conclude the efficacy of his intercession in heaven. The reason why he was not answered was because such a grant had been inconsistent with the redemption of his people; and upon the same reason he will be answered in every suit in heaven, because he doth everything pursuant to the redemp-

tion and full felicity of believers. He intercedes not there, "as he prayed sometimes on earth, as a man, but as a mediator. If anything were denied him on earth because the refusal conduced to the advantage of his elect, it necessarily follows that he will have all things granted him in heaven which are for the glory of God, the happiness of his people, and the fulness of their redemption. The same reason God hath now to allow his pleas, which before he had to refuse them. The necessity of his death for redemption was the cause of the refusal. The accomplishment of redemption, which is that he now intercedes for, cannot be denied him upon the same account, but he will always carry the cause he sues for. As to that petition upon the cross, he was answered in it. Many of those whose hands were red with his blood, had their hearts afterwards filled with repentance, and their heads crowned with pardon; and if his prayer upon the cross was so efficacious for some of his bloody persecutors, shall it have less force in heaven for his affectionate friends, since it is for those that believe, and not for the world, that he there intercedes? John xvii. 9. If he were heard always, as himself asserts, before he had offered that sacrifice, much more in heaven, since he had completed it, and is now suing out his own right after he had paid God his. If his prayers were so prevalent here before he had accomplished his task of suffering, his intercession is much more prevalent above, since his sufferings are at an end, which are the ground of his intercession.

Now this intercession must needs be efficacious, if you consider,

(1.) His person.

[1.] The greatness of it. A person in the form of God, infinitely more excellent than all the tribes of angels; a person so great, that all the creatures in heaven and earth, and millions of worlds cannot equal him, they being less to him than a grain of sand to the glorious sun. It cannot be said of all creatures that ever were made, or of all that ever God can make, that in them all dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily; as it is said of Christ, Col. ii. 9, he is not as the highest angel, that must cover his face, and stand before the throne, but the man, God's fellow, sitting upon the throne with him, Zech. xiii. 17; applied to Christ, Mat. xxvi. 31. He is equal with God, and therefore cannot be refused by God. As his divine nature gave value to his satisfaction, so it gives efficacy to his intercession. His agonies in the garden, and his gaspings upon the cross, were rendered by the greatness of his person mighty to reconcile us, and by the same, his pleas in heaven are rendered successful to save us. His humanity being in conjunction with his divinity, is the instrument, that receives all its virtue from the Deity. Though he doth not intercede with God, as himself is God, because in that respect he is equal with God, but as mediator in his human nature, yet his intercession as man receives a power and dignity from him as God, which causes the prevalency of it. What there was of humility and supplication in his prayers upon earth, proceeded from his human nature; what there was of authority and efficacy in his mediatory interpositions, proceeded from his divine nature. He was bound to die as he was man, taking upon him our sins; he had a right to have his death accepted, as he was God assuming and sustaining our nature. It is a privilege due to the greatness of his person to have his suit granted, as it is his duty, as the high priest of his church, to present it in the holy of holies. The infinite worth of his prayers results from his divine nature, as well as the infinite worth of his passion; and being the intercessions of a divine person, they are as powerful as his sufferings were meritorious. In regard of this greatness of his person, God seems to stand in an admiring posture at the approach of Christ to him: Jer. xxx. 21, 'Who is this that

hath engaged his heart to approach unto me?' and presently the decree passes out for the confirming the fruits of his mediation in the fullest manner: ver. 22, and 'ye shall be my people, and I will be your God,' taking them as his own propriety, and giving himself to them as their portion. Nothing can be denied to so great a person. We know the suits of princes meet with greater success than those of peasants. In the same capacity that Christ performed his oblation, he manages his intercession; it was 'through the eternal Spirit,' the strength of his deity, he offered up himself to God; and so through the eternal Spirit, the strength of his deity, he presents his supplications to God.

[2.] His near relation to the Father. As there was to be a respect to him in regard of the greatness of his person, so there was an affection due to him in regard of the nearness of his relation. It is against the rules of justice to deny him his requests, because of his obedience, and against the rules of goodness to deny him his respects,* because of his alliance. As he was from eternity begotten by the Father, and his particular delight, his person cannot but be very acceptable to God. It is upon this relation his consecration to his eternal priesthood is founded, which he exerciseth in this administration: Heb. vii. 28, 'The word of the oath makes the Son,' *i.e.* priest, 'who is consecrated for evermore.' Upon the account of this relation he had the power of asking, and the privilege of obtaining: Ps. ii. 7, 8, 'Thou art my Son, ask of me.' It is this relation enters thee into this honour and glory; this prerogative had not been granted but as thou art my Son; and when he went into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us, he was entertained as a Son-priest, not only as a priest in relation to us, but as a Son in relation to his Father: Heb. iv. 14, 'We have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God;' and the text implies that he manages his advocacy in heaven with God as a Father, rather than with God as a Judge: 'advocate with the Father.' He appeals to God in heaven under the title of a Father, as God considered him in all his expressions to him in the world as his Son: 'This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased; this is my Son, hear him;' carrying himself in all ways of paternal tenderness to him while he was upon earth, which cannot but be as strong now he is in heaven. He always considered him in the capacity of his Son, as well as our surety. As Christ was placed in this office as a Son, so he doth manage it as a Son; in the same capacity he was placed in this function, he doth exercise this office. Now what can render his intercession more efficacious than his relation? If Moses, a man, could screen a people from divine anger, and cool the wrath of a provoked God, by interposing between God and the offenders, so that God should say to him, 'Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against this people, and I may consume them at once,' Exod. xxxii. 10; and when Moses would not silence his cry, God at length would silence his wrath, ver. 14;—if Moses, who was dignified only with a glorious title of his friend, with whom he spake face to face, had so great a power, how forcible must be the interposition of that person, who hath the more illustrious title of that of his Son? What suit can be cast out of the court that is presented by a beloved Son, of whom he hath signally pronounced that in him he is well pleased, and well pleased with whatsoever he doeth? Denials would be an argument of displeasure, not of a well-pleasedness; it would then be a Son with whom I am displeased, if any plea he makes be rejected as invalid. To whom should he grant anything if he refused his Son, and his Son upon the same throne with himself, and put a slur upon him in the face of the whole host of

* Qu. 'requests'?—Ed.

heaven? If an earthly father knows how to give good gifts to his children that ask him, a heavenly Father doth much more, and most of all to an only-begotten and only beloved Son, for whose sake he loves all his other children. It is a consideration that discovers the sincerity and tenderness of divine mercy. Had not God intended to hear him in all his requests for us, he would never have appointed one so nearly allied to him to plead our cause; one that he could not deny without some dishonour to so near a relation, and a reflection upon his own affection, as he might have done to some inferior person. God would not love his Son according to his own greatness, if he did not express it in the most signal marks of his favour.

[3.] The special love God bears to his person for what he hath done in the earth, and doth yet in heaven. Could there have been any increase of the Fatherly affections to him, his person had been more endeared to God after he had performed so exact an obedience. After he had triumphed over the enemies of his Father's honour, he might challenge as a reward the most sprightly sparklings of his Father's affection. What could hinder the grant of his suit, when the flames of that wrath in his Father's breast, which was an hindrance to any request, were quenched? Since justice was silenced, no other voice could be heard but that of tenderness and love, which was the spring of that power he gave him after his conflict; power in heaven as well as in earth, Mat. xxviii. 18, which may comprehend a power with God as well as power over angels; a power with God, not over God. Though the relation of a son be endearing, yet, when the quality of obedience is added to the dearness of that relation, it enlarges and inflames paternal affection, and renders the Father more inclinable to grant any request that is made to him by such a person; as a king will listen more to the petitions of a son who had done him signal service, and brought by his achievements a renown and honour to his name and government, than to a son barely in the relation of a child, without testifying the same affection and obedience in such eminent enterprises. If the Father had so special a care of Christ in the management of his office in the world, as to uphold him in his arms, as Sanctius saith the word *סמך* signifies, Isa. xlii. 1, and support him in the depth of his misery; much more delight hath he in him now in heaven, since he hath brought that honour to him, that no created men or angels were ever capable to offer him. He will not be insensible of so great an obedience, or stain that glory he hath given him for it, by denying anything he presents to him. How can God express a greater affection to him, than by committing the government of the world into his hands? And as the apostle argues in our case, Rom. viii. 32, from his delivery of his Son up for us to an assurance of the free gift of all things else, so it may in this, since he hath put the sceptre for a time into his hands, and from a boundless affection invested him in the government of the world, how shall he refuse him anything in the confines of it, since he hath during this state of things committed all judgment and power or rule to him? John v. 22. If his intercession upon earth for transgressors was a motive to God to clothe him with so great a glory, as hath been before mentioned from Isaiah liii. 12, his intercession in heaven (every way as delightful to him) would excite him to confer a greater glory on him, were it possible for him to be elevated to a throne of a higher pitch. The one hath as mighty an influence upon his affections as the other, and there is the same reason of both. There is an intimate union and an affectionate communion between the Father and the Son in heaven in regard of this advocacy: 'Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me,' John xiv. 11, which he speaks upon a discourse of his ascension, ver. 2, 3, and to encourage them to ask

in his name after his going to the Father, ver. 13. Believers have not only an advocate with the Father for them, but the person that was offended is now united to them in their advocate by an indissoluble league and communion, and unalterable affection. And as whatsoever we ask in his name should be, 'that the Father might be glorified in the Son,' ver. 13, so whatsoever Christ sues for is for the same end, which must needs in the very act of it fix him more strongly in that affection, which was due to him upon the account of his eternal alliance and his unspotted obedience.

2. It must needs be efficacious in regard of the pleas themselves, the matter of them.

(1.) The matter of his plea is holy. It is, as was said, that the Father might be glorified in the Son in regard of his holiness and righteousness, and it is included in the text, by the epithet *righteous*, 'Jesus Christ the righteous'; righteous in his person, righteous in his office as an advocate, both in the pleas he makes, and the manner of managing them. He is 'holy, and harmless, and undefiled,' as an high priest, Heb. vii. 26. All his petitions are as himself, unspotted, his suit is as holy as his nature; if there be no guile in his mouth, there can be no iniquity in his plea. Our prayers are of themselves rejected because of their impurity, Christ's intercession is accepted because of its perfection. If a sinful Jacob prevailed with God, much more must a perfectly holy Jesus, presenting nothing to God but what is becoming the purity and mercifulness of his own nature to grant. If his blood were 'without blemish,' 1 Peter i. 19, his intercession must be without spot, because the one is the sole foundation of the other.

(2.) It is nothing but what he hath merited. He doth not desire as a bare supplicant, but pleads in a way of right and justice. What he sues for is due to him from God's truth, because of his promise, and from God's righteousness, because of his merit. So that his suit is put up *ratione meriti*, *ratione juris*, he intercedes for no more than he hath purchased, and may demand as a due debt. It is necessary God should render what he owes unto that person that hath merited of him; he would be unrighteous if he did not, or put a note of insufficiency upon the sufferings of his Son. What he pleads for in heaven, is nothing but what he sued for on earth, John xvii. 4, 5, upon the account of his glorifying his Father, *i. e.* rendering to him what was due by agreement between them; no doubt but the same argument is used by him in heaven; the matter of his plea is what he hath merited, viz., pardon of sin, sanctification, continuance of justification, all which he sued for in that chapter. The Father hath acknowledged it already a just demand, for by his raising him from the dead, he hath given his approbation of all the acts of his life, not only to his death, whereby he merited, but to his prayers, whereby he supplicated for those things which he now solicits for in heaven, upon the account of the glory he did by his incarnation and passion bring to God. No plea can prevail against him, since he hath conquered his enemies, wiped out the guilt of sin by his sacrifice, condemned sin in the flesh, led captivity captive; and all this not by a mere strength, but by a legal right; having satisfied the rigours of the law, prevailed at the tribunal of justice (which was the sharpest tug and hardest conquest), all which God hath subscribed to, by setting him 'at his right hand, far above principalities and powers,' Eph. iv. 8. Yet, in as legal a way as he merited it, he might sue out the fruits of his merit. Shall he not much more prevail at the throne of grace by his intercession, since the mouth of justice, which gave life and strength to all suits against us, is perfectly stopped by the merit of his death? It hath nothing to except against the issues of mercy upon the perpetual pleading of that merit; what he doth sue for is rather short of,

than outweighs his merit. An infinite merit deserves infinite blessings, but all the blessings he solicits for are finite in themselves, though proceeding from infinite grace, and purchased by a payment of infinite value. God cannot be unjust to detain the goods and the price paid for them; Christ must have his death and sufferings given back again and uneffected, which is impossible, or else have the fruits of his death given to him and to those for whom he suffered.

(3.) Whatsoever he pleads for is agreeable to the will of his Father. The will of Christ whereby he intercedes, is the same with the will of the Father with whom he intercedes; and when the will of an eternal mercy and the will of an infinite merit meet together, what will not be the fruit of such a glorious conjunction? As on earth he did nothing but what he saw the Father do, John v. 19, 20, so he intercedes for nothing but what he knows the Father wills. What he did on earth was not without, but with, his Father's will; what he doth in heaven hath the same rule. As they were joint in the counsel of reconciliation and peace, which was 'between them both,' Zech. vi. 13, so they are joint in the counsel of advocacy and intercession, which is between them both, the one as the director, the other as the solicitor. Their wills are in the highest manner conformable to one another, and the will of the Father as much known by the soul of Christ in heaven as it was on earth. He asks nothing but he first reads in the copy of his Father's instructions, and considers what his will was. He reads over the annals of his Father's decrees and records; he does nothing but what he sees the Father do; he takes the copy of all from his Father, and whatsoever Christ doth, the same doth the Father also. They have but one will in the whole current of redemption, so that he can plead nothing in regard of the persons for whom he appears, and the good things he desires for them, but it is according to the will of God. When he came into the world, he came 'not to do his own will,' *i. e.* only his own will, 'but the will of him that sent him;' and when he returned, he went up, not to do his own will, but the will of him that accepted him. The persons were given him by God for the ends which he intercedes for; the words Christ gave them were first given him by God; and this will of God, and his people receiving his words, he urgeth all along as an argument for the grant of his prayer, John xvii. 8, 9. His intercession is in some sort a part of his obedience as well as his passion; by his obedient suffering he learned a further act of obedience, Heb. v. 8, which could not be practised here but in heaven. The apostle seems to refer this obedience to that part of his office as high priest in heaven after the order of Melchisedec, which he discourseth of in that chapter. His whole advocacy is but pursuant to that command given him by his Father, of losing none of those that God had given him, but 'raising them up at the last day,' John vi. 39. What he doth in heaven is in a way of obedience to this obligation, and conducing to this end. There is not an answer of prayer which is the fruit of his advocacy, but the design of it is 'that the Father may be glorified in the Son,' John xiv. 13. As he glorified his Father on earth by his suffering, so he glorifies the same attributes by his intercession in heaven; it is for the glory of divine grace that the one purposed and the other acted, Eph. i. 5, 6. If he gives blessings for the glory of his Father, he then in his suit urgeth the glory of his Father as an argument to obtain them. God must then be an enemy to his own glory, if he be deaf to his Son's suit; and since the Advocate's plea is suitable to the Father's will, he cannot reject the will of his Son without offering violence to his own will. They are both one in will and one in affection. His human will cannot desire anything in opposition to the divine. Though he desired the passing away of the cup

here, which was not agreeable to the divine will, yet it was without any sin, because with submission to the divine will ; but since he is stripped of our infirmities, and hath no furnace of wrath any more to suffer in, there cannot in his intercession be so much as a conditional dissent from the divine will. What Christ acts now is upon that foundation which he laid here according to God's instructions. Christ had not come had not God sent him ; the world had not been reconciled had not God employed him upon that errand. The whole plot was laid by him ; it was his own purpose. Should God deny anything which was founded upon this his will, he would be mutable and deny himself ; deny his own act and deed in denying the fruits of that work which was designed and cut out by himself. The intercession of Christ concurring with the eternal design of God, with his will, with the good pleasure of it, and being for the glory of his grace, he must be beloved in and for that very act of mediation, and consequently prevalent in it. To conclude : it was God's will to make any of you children, and he took a pleasure in purposing and effecting it, Eph. i. 5 ; and will he stop his ears when the wants of those children are presented to him for supplies by their mighty Advocate, who acts nothing but what is agreeable to the eternal pleasure of his Father's will ?

(3.) In regard of the foundation of his intercession, his death. His intercession must be as powerful as his satisfaction. As he was a mighty surety for the discharge of men's debts, so he is a mighty intercessor for the salvation of men's souls, because his intercession is in the virtue of his satisfaction : he is an advocate, but by his propitiation ; both are linked together in the text. His intercession being founded upon his death, his death may as soon want its virtue as his intercession its efficacy. If his blood is incorruptible, which must be concluded from the antithesis, 1 Peter i. 18, ' We are not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ.' If his blood be incorruptible, as being precious in the eyes of God, his intercessions are undeniable, as having an equal value in God's account. If his blood hath the same virtue now, which it had when it was first presented to God, his pleas must have the same virtue with his blood ; as the one was owned, the other cannot be refused. There is a necessary connection between the perfection of the one and prevalence of the other. If his sacrifice be perfect, his plea upon it must be prevalent ; if his plea be not prevalent, it must conclude the imperfection of his sacrifice. A *fiat* must be set upon all his petitions, since he hath finished his passive obedience. What greater rhetoric can there be in the tongues of men and angels than in the tongue of Christ ? Yet all his eloquence cannot be so powerful as that of his gaping wounds. His blood hath the same efficacy in heaven that it had on earth ; it speaks the same things, and must meet with the same success. His merit must be deficient before his intercession can be successful ; and his blood will not want a voice while his death retains a satisfactory sufficiency. Having by his bloody obedience silenced justice, that it cannot put in any exception, he hath nothing to do but to solicit mercy, prone enough to bestow all good upon those that love him and believe in him.

(4.) In regard of the persons he intercedes for. They are those that are the special gift of God to him, as dear to the Father as to Christ : John xvii. 9, ' They are thine ;' thine as well as mine ; thine before they were mine ; thine in purpose, mine by donation. There is a likeness in the love the Father bears to his people to that love which he bears to Christ. It is the argument Christ himself uses for the grant of what he desired in that intercessory model : John xvii. 23, ' That the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me ;' not that the Father might have a

rise for his affection, but an occasion for the manifestation of his affection in the view of the world. And though Christ doth pray the Father, yet he intimates how easily his prayer for them would be granted; because, saith he, 'the Father himself loves you': John xvi. 26, 27, 'At that day you shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me.' Do not think the Father is so full of revenge that he must be earnestly pressed to be merciful to you. I do not say I will pray the Father for you, he of himself is inclinable to embrace you with the tenderest affection; he hath, for your love to me, a particular kindness for you. It is as if a favourite should say, I will entreat the king for you, but I need not; for he bears you such an affection because you are my friend, and belong to me, that he will, from his own inclination, be ready to do you all good. Christ doth not here deny his intercession for them, which before he had promised them, but would have them in their dependence consider not only his suing for them, but fix their mind upon the Father's love to them, and assure themselves there is nothing but they may expect from his immense bounty and infinite affection. The Father himself loves you in the greatness of his majesty; he hath as deep a stamp of affection to you as I myself have, and as you know I have manifested to you. The persons he intercedes for are those whom the Father loves, those whom the Father hath given him, those whom God hath justified, those for whom himself is a propitiation, those for whom he 'died and rose again;' for, Rom. viii. 33, 34, since they were the persons for whom he was intended as a sacrifice, and for whose good his glorious resurrection and exaltation were designed, there is no doubt but his intercession shall be accepted for them. When the love of the Father to the advocate, and his love to his clients, meet together, what a glorious success must be expected from such an intercession!

(5.) It is evidenced by the fruit of it.

[1.] Before his sacrifice. The text intimates it; as he was 'a propitiation for the whole world,' *i. e.* for all ages of the world, so he is an *advocate* in all ages of the world. How could the execution of God's vengeance upon the world for sin, at the first commission of it, have been prevented, but by the interposition of the Son of God? He interposed then by virtue of a promise to offer himself a sacrifice, he interposeth now by virtue of his actual performance. If it were so prevalent as to support the world for so many ages, in the midst of that abundance of mire and dirt which should overflow it, and to save those that should believe in a promised Messiah, it is much more powerful to save those that believe in a sacrificed and conquering Messiah. For as he was a lamb slain from the foundation of the world, so by the same reason he was an advocate pleading from the foundation of the world. The credit of his plea is the same with that of his passion; as he was a sufferer by promise from the foundation of the world, so he was an intercessor by virtue of that promise.* There is the same reason of his intercession upon the credit of his future suffering, as there was for the pardon of sin upon the credit of his future passion. Those that were saved before, were saved upon the account of his life as well as we; as they were reconciled by his death as well as we. For God made not several ways of salvation, one for them and another for us, Acts xv. 8, 9, 11. They were 'saved by faith;' by the same grace, by the same grace of Christ. And his future death being a sufficient ground from the foundation of the world for the pardon and salvation of those that believed in him, because it was not possible, in regard of the greatness of his person, and faithfulness to his trust,

* Ursin.

that he could fail in the performance of the condition required of him, and God knew he could not; and besides his own stedfast resolution, and his ability to accomplish his undertaking, God having given him promises of his omnipotent assistance; upon those accounts, Christ might with confidence be, even before his coming, a powerful advocate for those that laid hold upon the promise by faith. Though he was not actually installed in all his offices, yet he exercised them, if I may so speak, as a candidate; as a king he ruled his church; as an angel he guided his Israel; as a prophet he sent the prophets of the Old Testament, and revealed his will to them. So though he was not a perfect priest till he was a propitiation for sin by the oblation of himself as a grateful victim to God, because propitiation could not be made without blood, yet upon the account of the promise of his suffering he did exercise that part of his priesthood, whereupon the sins of many were pardoned. God was then a pardoning God, and a God blotting out iniquity; and whenever Christ interposed himself for his people, he was answered with 'comfortable words,' Zech. i. 13. And though it be said, that Christ upon his ascension went 'to appear in the presence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24, this excludes not his former intercession in heaven. He tells the disciples that he went to heaven to prepare a place for them, yet the place is said to be 'prepared before the foundation of the world,' Mat. xxv. 34. He interceded before as a promiser, he intercedes now as a performer; and if his intercession then was graciously answered with comfortable words, his intercession now hath a ground to meet with a no less acceptable entertainment.

[2.] After his sacrifice, in the first fruit of it, the mission of the Holy Ghost. God gave a full proof and public testimony of the vigour of his interposition, in that abundance of the Spirit which he poured forth upon the apostles at the day of pentecost; and his sending the same Spirit to dwell in the hearts of believers, and the gracious operations of this Spirit in the hearts of men, are infallible evidences that his intercession is still of the same force and efficacy. He had acquainted his disciples before that he 'would pray the Father, and he should give them another Comforter,' John xiv. 16. We find not any prayer of Christ for the Spirit upon record while he remained upon the earth. He prayed for this Spirit after he went to heaven; for he seems to speak of it as that which was to be acted by him after his going from them; and, saith he, the Father will 'send the Comforter in my name,' ver. 26, *i. e.* as a fruit, and a manifestation of the great interest I have in him. This was so great a pledge of the prevalency of this advocacy, that a greater could not be given. As soon as ever he was at God's right hand, and had put up his petition for it, before he could be well warm in his throne, he received 'the promise of the Holy Ghost,' Acts ii. 23, *i. e.* that Holy Ghost which had been promised, the richest gift, next to that of his Son, that could be presented to man. As the apostles had but little hopes after his death of his being a redeemer, till they saw the truth of his resurrection, so they might have as little expectations of his mighty power in heaven after his ascension, till he gave them this token of it in the mission of his Spirit. The Spirit, indeed, was in some measure sent before, when he was an advocate designed (the live coal, which seems to be an emblem of the Spirit, was taken from the altar, a type of Christ, Isa. vi. 6), but much more richly poured out when he was an advocate installed. The Old Testament had some drops, and the New Testament full effusions and showers. Though all the blessings of the new covenant are the fruits of Christ's death and intercession, yet the first fruit of it was the Holy Ghost, as the person who by office was to convey to us, and work in us, the blessings of the covenant sealed and settled by the blood of the Redeemer; and therefore the promise

of the Spirit is the first promise of the new covenant: Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, a new spirit will I put within you, and I will put my Spirit within you.' This was the first thing Christ solicited for when he came to heaven, as the first blessing of the new covenant. And though he gave his disciples in his prayer, John xvii. an essay whereby they might well imagine what should be the substance of his petitions in his state of glory, yet he tells them not positively of any particular thing, but of this of the Comforter, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.' This was the first boon he begged after his ascension; this was granted him, and with this the riches of heaven and the blessings of eternity to pour down upon us, which the apostle notes, Titus iii. 6, when he speaks of the shedding of the Holy Ghost abundantly and richly by the Father, but through Jesus Christ our Saviour, as the choicest witness of the irreversible validity of our Saviour's intercession with the Father; so that we may as well conclude in this case as the apostle doth in a like case of the love of God, Rom. viii. 32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' So, since the intercession of Christ hath been so efficacious for a gift of so great a value as the Holy Ghost, wherein the gift of whatsoever was great in heaven was virtually contained, should it not be a warrant of assurance to us that nothing will be denied to the solicitation of one that, in his very first request, hath been so inexpressibly successful?

VI. Thing is the particularity of this intercession. Christ is an advocate for believers only, and for every one in particular.

1. For believers only. It is their peculiar privilege. It is not every name he takes into his lips, Ps. xvi. 4. The names of those that hasten after another God, that own another God and another mediator, he would not offer their drink-offerings, or back them by any solicitation of his own for acceptance. He would deny them, and not assert them for his clients, nor be an high priest for them, to offer any of their sacrifices; for those that believe not in him as mediator, disown that God by whom he was sent for the redemption of the world; and therefore he disowns, in his mediatory prayer, the whole unbelieving impenitent world: John xvii. 9, 'I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.' It is not agreeable to his wisdom to intercede for those that reject him. He is an advocate, but only for those that entertain him. He manages no man's cause that is not desirous to put it into his hands. Advocates manage the business only of those that enter themselves their clients. As he prayed not for the world on earth, so much less doth he in heaven. No person hath an interest in his intercession, but he that, by faith, hath an interest in his satisfaction. Though his death was the remedy of our evils in a way of satisfaction to divine justice, yet the application of this remedy by the act of his priesthood in heaven is only to those that repent and believe; in the text, 'We have an advocate with the Father,' *we* that walk in communion with God. Though he be a propitiation for the world, if any should take it extensively, yet he is not an advocate for the whole world, but for those that separate themselves from the world by believing on him.

2. For every believer particularly. The text intimates, 'We have an advocate,' every one of us, 'if *any man* sin.' Sin is a particular act of a person, and this advocacy is for every particular sin that the accuser can charge the criminal with. Advocates answer every particular charge against every particular person that is in the roll of their clients.

There is, indeed, an intercession for the church in general in the time of

its sufferings. So he interceded for mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah in the time of the Babylonish captivity, Zech. i. 12. What the high priest did in a shadow, that doth our high priest in the substance ; when he went into the holy place, he bore the names of ' all the tribes of Israel upon his breast,' Exod. xxviii. 29 ; and when our Saviour was preparing to sacrifice himself, and afterwards to ascend into the heavenly sanctuary, he prayed not only for those that were then with him, the whole church at that time, but the whole lump, even to the end of the world, were then presented to God by him : John xvii. 20, ' Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word,' comprehending them all in one mass in that intercessory prayer. And though he did not particularly name every one of them, yet since his divine understanding was furnished with omniscience, he knew them all distinctly in their successive appearances and varieties of conditions in the world. But his pleas in heaven are particular, according to the particular persons he solicits for, and the particular necessities wherewith they are encumbered. It was for Peter's person in particular he prayed when he was on earth, and for preservation of that particular grace of faith to recover from under the temptation that was ready to invade him : Luke xxii. 31, 32, ' But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ; ' thee,' his person, and ' thy faith,' his case. He is an high priest over the house of God, Heb. x. 21, and therefore over every member of the house and family ; upon which the apostle founds his exhortation to every one to draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith. Men pray in particular for themselves and others, and Christ hears in particular : 1 John v. 14, ' And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.' The Son of God, of whom he was speaking, hears us in particular what we request in particular ; and as he hears us he pleads for us ; he offers ' the prayers of all saints,' Rev. viii. 3, and therefore of every saint upon every occasion with a particular plea and incense of his own. There is not one but he keeps in his remembrance, nor one request but he presents to his Father, though not by an oral expression of every man's name and cause, yet by some distinct way of representation of them and their wants to God, not so easily conceivable by us in this state of obscurity and darkness. As the devil is an accuser in particular, and cannot well be supposed to accuse all in the gross, so Christ stands particularly to excuse them, and frustrate the indictment. They were given to him in particular, and he pleads for them as given to him, and as they were the propriety of his Father, John xvii. 6, 9, 10, 11. God knows all his own in particular, and Christ hath a care of them in particular. Christ hath a charge of every one's person ; he is to raise every one of them at the last day ; he is to give an account of every one's case. Again, he intercedes for those that ' come to God by him,' Heb. vii. 25 ; but those that believe come not in the gross to God by Christ, but by a particular act of faith in every one ; and for every such comer, Christ lives for ever to make intercession for them. As he saves every comer to God by him in particular, so he doth particularly use the means of salvation for them, *i. e.* his intercession. He hath his life for ever, and his standing office of advocacy for ever, to make a distinct suit for every one upon his application to God by him in the methods of that court where he exerciseth this function. And as every believer owns Christ in particular, so Christ will confess them by name plainly and clearly : Rev. iii. 5, ' I will confess his name before my Father ; ' every individual person will be named by him at last in his final sentence, and every individual person is named by him in his intercessory office ; the name is confessed, the grace owned, and the merit of the Redeemer pleaded

by him as an advocate before his Father. He is entered into the holy of holies, with all the names of those that belong to him upon his breast.

VII. Thing. What doth Christ intercede for? In general, his intercession for believers is as large as the intent of his death for them. Whatsoever privilege he purchased for them upon the cross, he sues for upon his throne. His intercession is the plea, upon the account of his satisfaction, which was the payment.

He intercedes for the church in all its states and conditions. As soon as ever the news of the state of the world, and the condition of his church in it, is brought to him by the angels, his messengers, Zech. i. 11, 12, and the seventy years of captivity in Babylon were expired, he presently expostulates with God for the withdrawing his hand, and restoring their freedom. There is not any weapon formed against the church blunted, any design hatched against his people abortive, any seasonable rescue, any discovery and defeat of clandestine and hellish works of darkness, but they are fruits of the diligence and industry of our Advocate, and the benefits of his intercession. Let the profane world look upon them as products of chance; let natural religion regard them as works of common providence; let us look upon them in their true spring and their proper channel. Since God grants all things upon the account, and acts all things by the hands, of a mediator, all things flow to us through the intercession of Christ. Since all things were purchased for us by the sacrifice of Christ, he is an advocate to sue out what he merited for us as a surety; and since the mission of the Spirit was the first fruit of this office after his taking possession of heaven, it must needs follow that all the works which the Spirit began and doth accomplish in the soul, are fruits of it also. Therefore Christ said, John xvi. 14, 'He shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you.' He shall take of *mine*, what is mine by purchase, what is mine by plea, what is mine by possession, and shew it unto you. The casting out the accusations of Satan from the court of justice, the casting them out of our own consciences, the pardon of our transgressions, the healing of our natures, our support against temptations, perseverance in that grace any have, and perfection of that grace any want, and at last the perpetual residence of our souls with him, are procured by him as an advocate, as well as purchased by him as our surety.

1. Justification.

(1.) He is an advocate in opposition to an accuser.

In the matter of justification, the Scripture represents God as a judge and Christ as an advocate, pleading his blood and death; and when we come for justification, we come 'to God as the judge of all,' listening to the voice of that blood of Jesus, 'the mediator of the new covenant:' Heb. xii. 23, 24, 'Ye are come to God, the judge of all, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel.' We come to God as a judge, and also 'to the blood of sprinkling,' whereby he was appeased, of which 'the spirits of just men made perfect' are a full testimony. To this blood we come, as it is a blood of sprinkling, in regard of its imputation to us; and as it is a speaking blood in regard of its solicitation for us. Our triumphant justification by God, the apostle places upon this as the top-stone in the foundation. He first lays it upon the death of Christ; next, with a *rather* on the resurrection of Christ; and lastly, with an *also* upon his intercession: Rom. viii. 33, 34, 'It is God that justifies, who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.' Justification by God, as opposed to condem-

nation, is ascribed to Christ and to his intercession as completing it, and putting the last hand to it. In the title of an advocate, there is respect to judicial proceedings.* In the method of this proceeding, God is considered as a judge, man as the arraigned criminal; Satan is the accuser: Rev. xii. 10, 'The accuser of the brethren,' who brings in the indictments of sin, pleads the righteousness of the law, solicits for judgment upon his accusation, and the execution of the curse due to the crime. Our own consciences may be considered as the witness, and the law as the rule, both of the accusation brought in, and of the judgment demanded. Christ is considered as an advocate in opposition to Satan the accuser, pleading the efficacy of his merit against the greatness of our crimes, and his satisfaction to justice by the blood of his cross against the demands of the law, whereby the sentence of condemnation due to us as considered in ourselves is averted, and a sentence of absolution upon the merit and plea of our advocate is pronounced, and Satan cast out, and this upon an universal rule of righteousness, which suffers not that which is either a criminal or pecuniary debt to be twice paid. And in the text, wherein it is said, 'we have an advocate with the Father,' in case of sin, the Father is implied to be the sovereign judge, sin to be the crime, and Satan, though not mentioned, to be the accuser; and this advocacy is there expressed to be, not for preventing sin, to which Satan excites us, but the pardoning sins committed, for which Satan accuses us, procuring an acquitting sentence for us from the Judge of all the earth, and indemnity from the punishment merited by our crimes, but stopped by his plea. As Christ appeared as an advocate against Satan when he would be Peter's winnow, — Luke xxii. 31, 32, 'I have prayed for thee,' — so he appears as an advocate against Satan when he steps up as our accuser. Now, the intercession of Christ being opposite to the accusations of the devil, as one would reduce us under the actual execution of the legal sentence, so the other hath a contrary effect, pleading for our justification by the application of his righteousness to us, and the acceptance of it for us, that we may stand clear before the tribunal of God.

(2.) Besides, Christ's blood speaks contrary, or puts up contrary demands to what Abel's blood laid claim to. The blood of Abel pierced heaven with its cries, and solicited a condemning vengeance on the head of Cain; the blood of Christ, on the contrary, must then cry for justifying grace on the person of every believer, otherwise it would not speak better things than Abel's blood did, but the same things: that called for punishment, this for pardon; that desired the death of the murderer, and this sues out the life of the rebel.

(3.) And further consider, since this blood is a speaking blood, it shews that the intercession of Christ is managed in the virtue of his blood. The same thing therefore which was the end of the effusion of his blood, is the end of the solicitation or elocution of his blood. His blood was shed for the expiation of sin, and 'bringing in an everlasting righteousness,' that sinners might not be condemned, Dan. ix. 24; his intercession is for the application of this propitiation, that believers might be justified. Christ pleads the propitiation made by his blood, and accepted, according to the rule of application, by the faith of the repenting sinner.

(4.) Again, if Christ prayed for this on earth when he prayed for his glory, he solicits for it also in heaven when he prays for his glory: John xvii. 1, 'Father, glorify thy Son.' He prays for his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of God; not only as it was his own personal concern, but as it was terminative for his believing people, as verse 2 intimates; and, ver. 10, he expresses himself to be glorified in them. Now, as he died for

* Mares. contra Volkel, lib. v. cap. iv. pp. 8, 9.

the pardon of our sins, so he rose again for our justification ; as he therefore desired his resurrection, so he desired it for the same end for which it was intended and promised, viz. our justification, and therefore virtually begged our justification in the petition for his glory. Now, since he hath gained the request as to his own person, and as to a fundamental justification in his resurrection, and exaltation in heaven, yet it not being perfectly accomplished in all the ends of it, he moves still by his intercession for the actual justification of every one that comes, furnished with the gospel condition, to God by him.

Upon the whole we must consider, that though our propitiation made on the cross by the blood of Christ be the meritorious cause of our justification, yet the intercession upon the throne made by the same blood of Christ, as a speaking blood, is the immediate moving cause, or the *causa applicans*, of our justification, as Illyricus phraseth it. The propitiation Christ made on the cross, made God capable of justifying us in an honourable way ; but the intercession of Christ, as pleading that propitiation for us, procures our actual justification. The death of Christ accepted made justification possible, and the death of Christ, pleaded by him, makes justification actual. Righteousness to justify was brought in by him on the cross, and righteousness justifying is applied by him on his throne. Our justification was merited of God by his death, the merit of it acknowledged by God at his resurrection ; and is conferred on us, when we believe, by his intercession. When a soul believes, Christ recommends him to God as a performer of the condition of the new covenant, and thereupon pleads his death for him, and demands his actual admission into that favour which was purchased. And thus by him as our living Advocate, exercising his priesthood in heaven, we ‘ receive the atonement,’ Rom. v. 10, 11.

2. Daily pardon. This is principally intended in the text : ‘ If any man sin ’—if any one of those that walk in the light, in communion with God and Christ, which cannot be without justification—‘ If any man sin, we have an advocate,’ i. e. in case of sin after justification. We contract daily debts by committing daily sins, and there is not a day but we merit the total removal of justifying grace, that God should revive the memory of his former justice, and cancel the grants of his lately conferred mercy. And how could we avoid it, if Christ did not renew the memory of his propitiation before his Father, which first procured our admission, and is only able to maintain our standing ? Every sin brings in its own nature an obligation to punishment, that is guilt. Sin and guilt are inseparable ; that which hath no guilt is no transgression. This intercession of Christ answers the obligation which every sin brings upon us, as well as it did answer all the obligations at our first coming into the presence of God. It is upon every sin he doth exercise this office, and by his interposition procures our pardon thousands of times, and preserves us from coming short of the full fruits of reconciliation at first obtained by him, and accepted by us. He that had been stung a second time by the fiery serpent, must have had a fresh influence of the brazen one for his cure, as well as the first time he was wounded. As sin daily accuseth us by virtue of the law, so Christ daily pleads for us by virtue of his cross ; sin charges us before the tribunal of justice, and Christ by his intercession procures our discharge from the chancery of mercy.

3. Sanctification. As he is a priest set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high, he preserves the stability of the better covenant, the new covenant, and perpetuates the fruits of it : justification, in blotting out the memory of our sins ; and sanctification, in writing the law in our hearts, Heb. viii. 1, 6, 10, 12. He is the author of our first sanctification

by his intercession, as the first fruits of it was the sending that Spirit by whose powerful operations the soul is reformed according to the divine image; and he is the author of our repeated sanctification by the exercise of his advocacy. He is an advocate in case of sin, in regard of the guilt, that it should not remain upon our persons; in regard of the power, that the contagion of it should not seize upon our vitals; in regard of the filth, that it might not remain to unfit us for a fellowship with the Father and himself. His intercession in heaven is a continuation of that intercession on earth, whereby he testified his desire that we might be 'kept from the evil' while we resided in an infectious world: John xvii. 15, 'Keep them from the evil,' and 'sanctified through his truth,' while we are upon an earth full of lying vanities, ver. 17. The end of his intercession is not for sharpness of wit, a pompous wealth, a luxurious prosperity, or a lazy peace; such things may be hurtful; but for faith, holiness, growth, wherein we can never be culpable. His intercession is not employed for low things, but for such as may fit us for an honour in another world. Mortification of sin, and holiness of conversation, are therefore called 'things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God,' Col. iii. 1 compared with ver. 5, &c.: things which come from above by virtue of that session of Christ at the right hand of God, and the office he doth there exercise, which the apostle explains to be a mortification of our members which are upon the earth; and since the great reason of his exaltation is his hating iniquity and loving righteousness, the end of his exaltation and of his intercession in that state, is to manifest the same disposition in the perfect expulsion of sin, and the full implantation of righteousness in us. The same dispositions which animated him to a dying on the cross here, do animate him to his intercession above, which is nothing else but a presenting his death, and a presenting not only his death, but all the motives which moved him to it, and the ends he aimed at in it. He is 'manifested to take away sin,' 1 John iii. 5; manifested in his humiliation on earth, manifested in his exaltation in heaven, to take away sin, sin in the filth as well as sin in the guilt. What he designed in the one, he designs in the other; the same end he aimed at in dying, he aims at in interceding. Since he is an advocate in the virtue of his blood, he is an advocate for the ends of his blood. He will not let sin continue in his members, which he came to wash off by his blood. As long as his love to righteousness and his aversion from sin continues in him, so long will he be acting in heaven, till he hath in the highest manner manifested to the full his affections to the one and disaffection to the other, by utterly dispossessing out of the hearts of his people what he hates, both root and branch, and perfecting what he loves, in all the dimensions of it. He doth not only sue out our pardon, but sue out a grant of those graces which are necessary preparatories and concomitants of pardon. The end of his intercession is no doubt the same with that of his exaltation, which is not only for forgiveness of sin, but repentance, Acts v. 31, which includes the whole of sanctification. All the holiness believers have here is a fruit of this advocacy; the communication of that power which subdues corruption flows from it. Christ, by his intercession, receives all from his Father, that, as a king, he may convey all necessary supplies to us. But we must consider, that though Christ doth intercede for the sanctification of his people, yet it will not follow that any of them are at present perfect, and totally free from the relics of corruption. This is not intended by him in this life, any more than when he prayed for Peter, he desired not that he should be kept wholly from falling, but that his faith should be kept from totally failing. Sin is likewise suffered to continue in the best here, that men should not think that the acceptance of their persons doth arise

from their own works and holiness, but from the sweet savour of the Mediator's sacrifice continually presented in heaven. Yet perfection in grace will be the final issue of this advocacy. If grace should never be perfected. Christ would never be fully answered in his intercession, and so this office of his in heaven would want a manifestation of its true power and value.

4. Strength against temptation. We have an enemy industrious to entrap us, and we have an Advocate as industrious to protect us, who will either solicit for a reasonable strength to resist his invasion, or strength to improve it to our spiritual advantage, if he suffers the temptation to meet with some success in its attempt. Satan desires to sift us: Luke xxii. 31, *ἐξήρῳατο*, he hath desired, or asked and begged with earnestness, for so *ἐξ*, being added to *αἰτέω*, signifies; and our Advocate is ready to stop the full proceedings of so fierce a solicitor. The seed of the woman, the mystical seed, shall overcome their enemies 'by the blood of the Lamb,' Rev. xii. 11; by his blood shed upon the cross, by his blood presented in heaven, which cries for vengeance against the great seducer of mankind, and prevails to the casting him down. If strength against temptations were not procured by it, Christ's office of advocacy would lose a great part of its end. It was in kindness to us he was so advanced, not an advocate for himself personal, but for himself mystical, *i. e.* for believers; in the text, 'we have an advocate.' It were little kindness to us, if we should lie grovelling in the dust, upon every inroad our enemy makes against us, and sink under every shot that comes from the mount of his battery. It is this intercession that renders us either immoveable against his assaults, or after a foil victorious in the issue of the combat. Christ doth not solicit for such a strength whereby a temptation may be wholly successful, but whereby it may not be wholly victorious. He prayed for Peter against Satan, that his faith might not fail, but he did not pray positively that the temptation might wholly fail. He implies by that expression, Luke xxii. 32, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren,' that he should fall so foully as that not a grain of grace should be visible in him; but he should appear like one in an unregenerate state, so that his return should be as a new conversion. So that though he prayed not for a prevention of his fall, yet he prayed for a recovery of him after his fall, by implying that he should be converted. His intercession is not always for keeping off a temptation from us, for he many times suffers fierce ones to invade us for gracious ends, both for his own glory and our good; but he solicits that a temptation may not utterly sink us, and mortify our grace. So that, according to that model in the case of Peter, Christ sues not so much against a temptation, as for your faith; for if that keep up, a temptation will fall like a bullet against a brazen wall. He is content we should be in an evil world, but not satisfied unless we be preserved from the evil, or rescued from it after it hath assaulted us; and therefore a believer's courage hath a support in the greatest temptation. Christ opposes his petition against the demands of Satan; the first-born of every creature sets himself against the head of the wicked world; the seed of the woman against the seed of the serpent, and the serpent himself; as he defends us against his accusations before God, so he succours us in his temptations of our own persons.

5. Perseverance in grace. This follows upon the other. His prayer for the not failing of Peter's faith, is an earnest that the same petition is continually put up by him for all that believe in him. For since the Scripture is written for our comfort, this part of it would be little for our comfort, if he were not as well concerned in the standing of every believer as of Peter; why should he wish him, when he was converted, to strengthen his brethren, if he had not intended it for a standing example of comfort to his

church? The objection, that Christ did not intend to pray for the perseverance of any but Peter, would have split all the arguments Peter could have used from this carriage of Christ to him for the strengthening of others. How could he strengthen his brethren in faith, if they had not been his brethren in Christ's prayer, for their perseverance, as well as he in his faith? It is principally for the continuance of our standing, that his intercession is intended, if we may judge of what he doth in heaven by that prayer on earth, which was the model of his intercession in heaven, in which this petition for his Father's keeping us 'through his own name,' and keeping us 'from the evil,' and furthering our progress in sanctification, takes up much of the time, John xvii. 11, &c. Certainly he hath the same language in heaven as he had then on earth; he would else leave out a main head in his petitions above, which this prayer below was intended to present us with a pattern of, and so there would be no agreement between his carriage in heaven and the pledge he gave us on earth. It would have been but a fawning and dissembling affection, to desire this in his disciples' hearing, and never solicit the same cause when he went out of their ken. No; our Saviour hath given evidence of a choicer and more durable affection than to give occasion to any to think, that he should be regardless of that in his glory, which he was so mindful of at the time of his approaching misery. What he was earnest for then, he is as desirous not to be defeated of now; and for him to desire that his people should be kept from evil, and yet that they should sink under the greatest evil of a total apostasy, would argue the small credit his suit hath with the Father, and would shew that his advocacy is as impotent to secure us as our inability to preserve ourselves. Since Christ doth therefore concern himself for the perseverance of his own, his intercession is as powerful in that as in any other thing. If it meet with a failure in any one part, we are not sure of its successfulness in any at all. If his merit be of an infinite value, his advocacy is of a sovereign efficacy. There is no question to be made, but those for whom he formerly merited, and those for whom he at present solicits, shall endure to the end: the gates of hell are as unable to prevail against the latter as they were to weaken the power of the former. Did he by his propitiation procure our admission into God's favour, in spite of the enemies of our salvation? and shall he not, by his intercession, maintain our standing in that favour, in spite of the enviers of our first admission? This is a choice fruit of the intercession of Christ. Upon this score he lays Peter's preservation from a total and final apostasy: 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 32. He doth not say, Peter, there is such a principle in thee that is able to stand; thy own free will and the strength of thy grace shall bring thee off, and preserve thee from that precipice. No; 'I have prayed': there lies our security. The least grain of true grace, though as small as a mustard seed, stands better settled by the support of Christ's intercession against the most boisterous winds of Satan than the strongest grace can of itself, by the power of free will, against the least puff of hell. The instability of our minds would shake it, and the relics of our corruption extinguish it, without this.

6. Acceptation of our services. As this advocate preserves our graces, so he presents our services, and by his intercession maintains life in the one and procures credit for the other. He is as powerful a solicitor for the acceptance of our duties as he was a grateful sacrifice for the expiation of our sins, and a mighty redeemer for the liberty of our persons. Our prayers are both imperfect and blemished, but his merit applied by his intercession both purifies and perfects them. Our Advocate, by his skill, puts them into form and language according to the methods of the court of heaven, as an

attorney doth the petition and cause of his client, and by his interest procures a speedy hearing. Our works are no more the cause of the recording our petitions than they are of the justification of our persons. Though our prayers are not entertained without some holiness in them, yet they are not entertained without a greater holiness than ours to present them. When Christ tells his disciples that he had ordained them to bring forth fruit, he adds a clause to prevent their imaginations of meriting the answer of their prayers by the present of their fruits, that whatsoever they asked they must expect only to obtain in his name, John xv. 16. As they are ours, though attended with never so much fruit, they may be rejected; as he makes them his by his intercession, they cannot be non-suited. He is the altar upon which our sacrifices ascend with a grateful fume before the God of the whole world: Isa. lvi. 7, 'They shall be accepted upon my altar.' He is the altar, that hath much incense to add or bestow upon the prayers of the saints, Rev. viii. 3, *i. e.* a mighty quantity of merit and power of intercession, to give a sweet savour to our spiritual sacrifices, that they may be acceptable to God, not by themselves, but by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5, alluding to the office of the high priest under the law, who, after he had offered the sacrifice without the veil, took both his hands full of those aromatic drugs, of which the incense was composed without the veil, and put them in a censer of gold full of fire, and covered the propitiatory or mercy-seat with the fume of it. Nothing that we can offer is agreeable to God, without it comes through the hands, and with the recommendation of, our powerful advocate so beloved by him. The fire he fetches from the golden altar makes them to fume up, and render a pleasing scent before the mercy-seat. He is our Aaron in this part of his priesthood in heaven, bearing the iniquity of our holy things, Exod. xxviii. 38, when he presents himself in the sanctuary on high for the interest of his people. This he implies in the prophetic psalm, Ps. xvi. 4, when he declares he 'will not offer the offerings of those that hasten after another God, nor take their names into his mouth;' he intimates thereby that he doth present the offerings of those that believe in him as the only mediator, and pronounces their names with a recommendation of them before God, as such as are parts of his mystical body, such as have owned him and performed the condition of faith, such persons 'in whom is all his delight.' It is from this consideration of Christ's being passed into heaven as a high priest that the apostle exhorts the Hebrews not only to 'hold fast their profession,' but to 'come boldly to the throne of grace,' with an assurance of acceptance and obtaining grace in their necessity, Heb. iv. 14, 16. And indeed, having such a lieger in heaven, we may boldly venture to that throne which his propitiation on earth, and his appearance in heaven, render a throne of grace.

7. Salvation. This is the main end of his intercession, Heb. vii. 25; he saves us 'to the uttermost,' or to all kind of perfection, noting the kind of salvation as well as the perpetuity of time, and this by interceding. Thus the apostle's argument runs; he is able to save, because the end of his life is to intercede, and the end of his intercession is to save. The immediate end of his death was satisfaction respecting God; the immediate end of his intercession is salvation respecting us. He lives there to sue out for us the possession of that which he died here to purchase. We are therefore said to be 'saved by his life,' as we are said to be reconciled by his death, Rom. v. 10; not simply by his life, for no man is said to preserve another merely as he is a living man, but as his life is active for another in managing some means of preservation for him. Christ saves us by his life, *i. e.* by that life

which he lives, which is a life of intercession. As he did not reconcile us simply by his death, but by his death as a sacrifice, so he doth not save us simply by his life, but by his life as an accepted advocate. The expiation of our sins was made by him on the cross, and the happiness of our souls is perfected by him on his throne. He took our nature that he might die for us, and possesses a throne above that he might live to save us. This part he managed in that model of his intercession on earth, John xvii. ; after he had prayed for what was necessary for them during the length of their pilgrimage, viz., sanctifying grace and preservation from evil, he puts forward in the upshot for the happy entertainment of them in heaven: verse 24, 'Father, I will that they be with me where I am.' When he comes to this period, he demands it in a way of more authority than what he had sued for before, to shew that his desire would be utterly unsatisfied without the grant of this. All that which he had sued for before was with respect to this top-stone of salvation and glory. After this demand he concludes his prayer, as having no more after the completing of their happiness to beg for them. As, after he had finished the task of his humiliation, and had ascended to heaven, he had no more need to pray for himself, so when he hath brought all his people to the possession of that happiness with him, he leaves off any further pleading for them, because they are in the fullest ocean of felicity. Christ would be an unsuccessful advocate, and consequently an impotent propitiator, if any believer, after all his wading through the mire of this world, should fall short of a comfortable reception and mansion above.

Use 1. Of information.

(1.) Here is an argument for the deity of Christ. If he be a prevailing advocate for such multitudes of believers, preserving them in the favour of God by his intercession, it evidenceth his person to be infinitely valued by God, which would not be if his person were not worthy of an infinite love; and he could not be worthy of an infinite love were not his passion of an infinite value; and his passion could not mount to so high a value were not his person infinitely valuable, for the worth of his death depends upon the eminency of his person.

Besides, as an advocate, he presents every man's cause before the Father, and puts in for every one a memorial of his death, to preserve them in a justified state, and maintain that grace which would else be destroyed by a deluge of corruption. He must needs be God, that knows every person in that multitude of those that sincerely believe in him, that hears all their petitions, and understands all their more numerous griefs and burdens, inward and outward sins, those inward agonies of spirit, those mental as well as oral prayers, and all those in those distant places where every one of those persons reside, and knows whether their supplications be in sincerity or hypocrisy. He that knows all those is endued with omniscience, and must needs be God. He could not be a sufficient advocate if he did not understand every man's cause, to present it before the Judge of the world; and without omniscience he could understand little or nothing. He could only understand what is outwardly declared, not what really the cause is. He must depend upon the declaration of his client, as advocates do, and so be often deluded by false representations, as they are. He could not, without omniscience, take care of all his clients; to have so many clients whose cases to present every day would be his burden and perplexity, and render heaven a place of trouble to him, not of glory. Were he a mere man, it could not be conceived how it were possible for him: but how easy is all this to one possessed of a deity!

(2.) Hence is a ground to conclude the efficacy of his death. His intercession is an argument for the perfection of his sacrifice. The virtue of his passion is the ground of his plea; and therefore, if he had not perfectly satisfied God, he must have offered himself again (Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified'), and repeated the sacrifice before he could have begun his advocacy. Had his death been destitute of merit, there had been no room for his appearance as a justifier of our cause at the throne of grace. He could not have been a prevailing pleader if he had not first been an appeasing propitiator. His standing up as a solicitor for us had been of little efficacy, if the atonement he made on the cross had not been first judged sufficient. The high priest must be punctual to the prescriptions of the law in the sacrifice without, before he could enter with the blood of it into the holy of holies. If our faith be shaken at any time with the doubt of the validity of his death, let us settle it by a reflecting upon his advocacy. This verifies the virtue of his passion more than all miracles that can be wrought in his name.

(3.) See the infinite love of God in Christ; of God, that he should appoint an advocate for us. If we were left to ourselves and our own pleas, our least sins would ruin us. There are daily sins would sink us to hell, were it not for this daily intercession. And this love is further enhanced in appointing, not an angel, or one of the highest cherubims most dear to him, but his own Son, the best and noblest person he had in all the world, to this office of advocacy for a company of worms; one that is equal with himself in glory, and is equal with himself in the distinct knowledge of all our cases, better acquainted with them than we ourselves; and one equal to us in our nature, experimentally acquainted with all our burdens and grievances. How great also is the love of Christ, who, when he was properly our judge, takes upon him to be our advocate; when he hath a mouth to condemn us, and a wrath to consume us, he binds the arms of his wrath, and employs his tongue to solicit our cause and procure our mercy! He is not only an advocate for himself and the glory promised him, but for an unworthy sinner, for those penitents he hath yet left behind him in the world. He remembers them as well as himself. As Satan never appears before God but he hath some to accuse, so Christ never appears before God but he hath some to defend.

(4.) How little ground is there to dream of such a thing as perfection in this life! If we stand in need of a perpetual intercession of Christ in this life, we have not then a perfection in this life. Intercession supposeth imperfection. Those that pretend to a state here totally free from sin, conclude themselves mounted above the need of any to interpose for them. It is in the case of sin that this advocacy is appointed; not in the case of sin unjustly, but justly charged; for it is not *if any man be accused of sin*, but *if any man sin* really. The interposition of an advocate always implies a charge against the client, but in the text it implies a charge that hath a true, and not a mistaken, foundation. Sin is as durable as this world, because Christ's intercession endures to the end of the world. 'He ever lives to make intercession,' *i. e.* till the end of this state of things. If believers did not sin after they were united to Christ and justified, an advocacy for them would be of no necessity. The settling Christ in this office implies that God had no intention to render men perfect in this life. If we were arrived to such a state, we had no more need of Christ's further mediating for us than the blessed angels have. After the restitution of all things, and the consummation of the elect, Christ no longer acts the part of a mediator, but God shall be all in all. Nor can it be said that some may be perfect in this life, though all are not; and for those that are short of such a state, indeed, the advocacy

of Christ is necessary. There is little probability for this from the text. The apostle puts himself in the number, 'If any man sin, *we* have an advocate'; not *you*, as excluding himself from having any need of it. The consideration of what apostle it was that speaks thus would damp any presumptions of perfection. Was it not he that had the honour to lie in his master's bosom, and to be blessed with the greatest share in the Redeemer's affections? that disciple whom he appointed to be the host and guardian of his own mother, the dearest thing to him as man he left behind him in the world; and the apostle to whom he was resolved, and did afterwards make known, the various revolutions in the church to the end of the world in the book of the Revelations? If any could be supposed to be settled in a sinless and perfect state in this life, he might; but he disowns any such eminency, and looks upon himself in that state as to have need of entertaining this common advocate in his cause.

(5.) Hence it follows that the church is as durable as the world. *We have*, is the time present, but it takes in the future ages. 'He ever lives to make intercession for those that come to God by him.' There will always then, as long as the world doth endure, be some comers to God. If his intercession run parallel with the duration of the world, there will always be some in the world, whose necessities are to be represented by him to his Father.

(6.) If Christ be an advocate, the contempt or abuse of his intercession is very unworthy. It is an abuse of it when men presume upon it to sin wilfully against knowledge, and then to run to him to interpose for their pardon. This is a profanation of the holiness of this advocate, as though he were settled in this office to beg a licence for our crimes, to sue for impunity to impotence; when, indeed, they are sins of infirmity, not sins of contempt, without remorse, that he interposeth for: 'If any man sin.' And his interposition is to comfort us under our burdens, not to encourage us in our iniquities.

Unbelief is also a denial of the sufficiency or necessity of his intercession, since it is a slighting of that propitiation which is the ground of it.

A total neglect of prayer is also a contempt of it. If there should be no service, he would have no matter to perfume by his obedience. We should frustrate that part of his priesthood which consists in intercession, and render him an empty-handed priest, to be full of merit to no purpose. An unreasonable dejectedness in good men is no honouring of it; to walk disconsolately, as though there were none in the upper region to take care of us and mind our cause. Hath Christ lost his power, his eloquence, his interest in his Father? Is the value of his sufferings abated, the market fallen? Hath God utterly discarded the righteousness of his Son? Hath God repented of sending his Son to suffer? Are our Saviour's pleas distasteful to him? Is Christ, that was carried triumphantly to heaven, now of no account there? or hath the Redeemer thrown off all thoughts of us, all care for us? One would think some of those things are happened, since Christians walk so feebly, with heads hanging down, as if no person concerned himself above in their affairs. At least a stranger would admire to hear them talk of an advocate, and walk as dejectedly as if there were none at all. It is a dishonour also to it when men, after sin, betake themselves to vows or alms for their solicitors, and not to the sacrifice and advocacy of Christ.

(7.) If Christ be our advocate, it is a dishonourable thing to yoke saints as mediators of intercession with him. The Romanists tell us that Christ is the mediator of redemption, but the saints are also mediators of intercession; though, to give them their due, they say that the prayers of saints and angels prevail not by the sole virtue of their own merit, but receive their spiritual validity from the merit of Christ. What need,

then, of invoking saints, since their intercessions for us will do us no good without the intercession of Christ, and his pleading his merit for us? None had authority to offer the incense upon the altar of gold but he that offered the sacrifice upon the altar of brass. When the high priest went to burn incense in the holy place, he was attended with none of the people, nor any of the priests; not a man nor angel appears with Christ in heaven as an intercessor to present the services of any. As they shed none of their blood for us, so have they no blood to sprinkle in heaven. Those that have no merit to purchase for themselves, have no merit to apply to others. He only that hath satisfied for us, hath the authority to intercede for us. Christ only that is our Redeemer can be our advocate. The glorified saints have been brought into heaven by his grace, not to receive our services, but rejoice in his salvation. They are co-heirs with him in his inheritance, not co-officers with him in his function. To yoke him with saints is to apprehend him very unmindful of his office or lazy in his solicitations, that he needs a spur from those that are about him. It is to strip him of his priestly garments, and put them upon his inferiors; and it is as great a sacrilege to rob him of the honour of his advocacy as to deny him the glory of his death.

The text strikes off men's hands from such an invasion; it intimates that the right of intercession belongs only to him who hath made the propitiation; but that was made by Christ alone, without any saints to tread the winepress with him; and therefore the advocacy is managed by Christ alone, without any saints to assist with him at the throne of grace. Since they shed no blood to pacify the wrath of God for our sins, they have no right to present our prayers for acceptance at his throne. The apostle, Heb. xiii. 7, when he speaks to them to follow their faith, had a fair occasion, had he had a knowledge of the truth of it, to mention it; he adviseth them to imitate the saints, not to invoke them. He proposeth their example to them on earth, when he might as well have added also their intercessions in heaven. He had had as good a ground to wish them to present their prayers to them which were glorified, if those spirits had been in a capacity to do them such a kindness. He would not have been guilty of such an omission, as not to have minded them of their duty, and increased their comfort, had such a thing been known to him. And whence the assertors of this doctrine had the revelation we may easily conclude, since those that were enlightened from heaven never mentioned a syllable of anything so dishonourable to the Redeemer.

(8.) If Christ be our advocate, how miserable are those that have no interest in him! He is an advocate for all that walk in communion with God, that walk in the light; those that walk otherwise are under the condemnation of the law, not under the propitiation and intercession of Christ; they have the injured attributes of God, and slighted blood of Christ, to plead against them, not for them. If Christ did not pray for the world here, he will not plead for the world in heaven, John xvii. 9. He is introduced in those prophetic psalms, praying that those that wish him evil may be 'confounded, and put to shame,' Ps. xl. 14; and that the indignation of God might be poured out upon them, and his 'wrathful anger take hold of them,' Ps. lxi. 21, 24; and indeed, at his first settlement in this office, the power of asking was conferred upon him, as well for the ruin of his enemies, as for the security of his believing friends: Ps. ii. 8, 9, 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance;' and what follows? 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron.' Breaking his enemies is a fruit of his asking. Impenitent men are so far from having an interest in his intercessions for mercy, that they have a terrible share in his pleas for wrath.

And himself doth solemnly publish in his speech to his Father, Ps. xvi. 4, that he will 'not take their names into his lips that hasten after another god' by idolatrous services. If it be a misery to want the prayers of a Noah, Daniel, Job, or a Jeremiah, Jer. xi. 14, what a horrible misery it is to want the prayers of the Saviour of the world, and to have the pleas of Christ directed against them? As the blood of Christ speaks better things than the blood of Abel, for those on whom it is sprinkled, so it speaks bitterer things for all such as by unbelief and impenitence trample upon it. It is a mighty misery to want so powerful a patronage.

Use 2 is of comfort. His design in uttering his prayer on earth, the model of his intercession, was for the joy of his people: John xvii. 13, 'These things speak I in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves;' that they might have a joy in his absence, in the assurance of his faithful managing their cause above, by remembering how earnest he was for them below, that this joy might be fulfilled in them, *i. e.* that they might have a full and permanent joy; as much joy proportionably in having me their advocate, as I have in undertaking and managing the office for them. We should draw forth the comfort of this function he exerciseth. As a propitiation, he turned the court of justice into a court of mercy; and as an advocate he keeps it firm in that change he made by his passion. To this we may ascribe the firmness of the divine reconciliation, and the fruit of it, the non-imputation of our daily sins. It is the top of our comfort that he is in heaven a pleader, as it was the foundation of our comfort that he was once on earth a sufferer. There is not the meanest beggar that is a believer, but he hath a greater favourite to manage his cause with God than any man can have with an earthly prince. It is a thousand times more comfort that he is an advocate in heaven than if he were a king visibly upon earth. He is above, to prevent all evils, which can there only receive their commission, to procure all blessings, which there only find their spring. What reason of discouragement, when we have one in heaven to be our advocate, one so acceptable to the Father, one that hath given such proofs of his affections to us, one that is both faithful and earnest in our cause, and one that it is no disparagement for the Father to listen to? What could comfort itself, saith one,* wish more for her children, had she been our mother, than to have so great a person our perpetual advocate at the right hand of God? His death is not such a ground of assurance as this, because that is past; but when we consider how the merit of his death lives continually in his intercession, all the weights of doubts and despondency lose their heaviness; faith finds in it an unquestionable support.

(1.) There is comfort in the perpetuity of this intercession. He is as much a perpetual advocate as he is a perpetual propitiation. Till there be a failure in the merits of the one, there can be no interruption in the pleas of the other. The blood that was sprinkled on the mercy-seat in the holy of holies was not to be wiped off, but to remain there as a visible mark of the atonement. As the high priest went not into the holy of holies to look about him, and feast his eyes with the rarities of the place, but to perform an office for the people that stayed without all the time he remained before the mercy-seat, so is Christ entered to 'appear in the presence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24, to appear all the time of his residence there. He is not silent, but is always pleading in the strength of his sacrifice for the benefits purchased by it. He hath (that I may so say) little else to do where he is but to intercede. When he was in the world, and had a glory due to him to petition for, he doth it not without intermixing more suits for his people than for himself,

* Dr Jackson.

John xvii. His love is not cooled by his being in heaven. There is little of his own glory behind to solicit for. His zeal and earnestness runs in one channel for his people, and is more united. He was dead, but his love did not die with him; he now lives, and his affections live with him, and he lives for evermore: Rev. i. 18, 'I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I live for evermore.' His life had been little comfort without the end of his life. He lives in that nature wherein he died; he lives for ever, as well as he died once in the office of a redeemer. He interceded for all believers when he was alive, John xvii. 19. If it be a great comfort to have a stock of prayers going for us among our friends, it is a greater to have Christ praying for us, and to consider he prayed 1600 years ago, and hath never left pleading one moment since he sat down on his throne. Christ's power cannot be weakened, his eloquence cannot grow dull and flat; his interest is not decayed; the righteousness of God endures for ever; he repents not of his contrivances for man's salvation; he is to this day pleased with the interposition of his Son on our behalf; the laws of heaven are unchangeable; our Advocate is in high esteem there, and his thoughts of us the same as ever they were.

(2.) There is comfort in the prevalency of it. The perpetuity assures us of the prevalency of it. If the appearance of the rainbow in the cloud be a memorial to God to withhold his hand from ever drowning the world, as he promised Noah, Gen. ix. 16, the suffering person of his Son being perpetually before him every moment of an endless eternity, will not suffer him to be forgetful of the covenant of grace sealed by the blood of so great a person. He that remembered Abraham in the case of Lot, some time after Abraham had done praying, Gen. xix. 29, cannot be unmindful of those for whom he hath a perpetual solicitor before his eyes. Can any man lose his cause that hath so powerful an advocate as a deserving Son with a gracious Father, who hath affection to us to edge his plea, and interest enough in the Father to prevail for our good? His prayers above are not less, but rather more prevalent (if any difference may be supposed) than they were here below. As there were no sinful infirmities in his nature, so there were none in his prayers on earth; but there were natural infirmities, as hunger, thirst, sleep, which might give some interruption to the constancy of actual prayer; but there can be none in his intercession, since all his natural infirmities were dropped at his resurrection. He is the watchman and advocate of Israel, that 'never slumbers nor sleeps.' He pleads not as Moses for the Israelites, or as an Israelite for himself, but as the angel and head of the covenant. As by his sacrifice, so by his plea, he frees them from a state of condemnation: Rom. viii. 34, 'Who is he that condemns? it is Christ that died, yea rather, that makes intercession for us.' No blessing he pleads for but we shall obtain. The Father can refuse him nothing; we cannot want help till the Father has discarded all affection to his Son, and declares himself mistaken in the judgment he discovered of the greatness of his merit at his resurrection and ascension. Certainly, if we shall have whatsoever we ask in his name for ourselves, John xvi. 23, he will obtain whatsoever he asks in his own name for us.

(3.) Hence ariseth comfort to us in our prayers. We cannot doubt of success as long as Christ hath faithfulness. The office of the priests under the law was to receive every man's sacrifice that was capable of presenting one, and refuse none. Christ, as an advocate, hath it incumbent upon him to receive our spiritual sacrifices, and he doth receive them, and present them with more mercy, because he transcends them in faithfulness and compassion.

We are many times dejected at the remembrance of our prayers, but the concern that Christ hath in them is a ground to raise us. We have an advocate that knows how to separate the impertinences and follies which fall from the mouths of his clients; he knows how to rectify and purify our bills of requests, and present them otherwise than we do. How happy a thing is it to have one to offer up our prayers in his golden censer, and perfume our weak performances by applying his merit to them! Satan distracts our prayers, but cannot blemish Christ's intercession. When we cannot present our own case by reason of diseases and indispositions, we have one to present our cause for us that can never be distempered, who is more quick to present our groans than we are to utter them. Besides, all prayer put up in his name shall be successful, John xvi. 23. The arguments we use from Christ's merits are the same fundamentally upon which the plea of Christ in heaven is grounded; and if God should deny us, it were to deny his Son, and cast off that delight he expressed himself to have in the merit of his death; but God loves that mediation of his Son, and that this work of his should be honoured and acknowledged. And though we had no promise to have our own prayers heard, yet there is no doubt but he will hear the prayers of Christ for us, for them he hears always, John xi. 42.

(4.) Hence ariseth comfort against all the attempts and accusations of Satan, and the rebellion of our own corruption. He foresees all the ambushments of Satan, searcheth into his intention, understands his stratagems, and is as ready to speak to the Father for us, as he was to turn his back and look Peter into a recovery at the crowing of the cock. The devil accuseth us when we fall, but he hath not so much on his side as we have. All his strength lies in our sinful acts, but the strength of our advocate lies in his own infinite merit. Satan hath no merit of his own to enter as plea for vengeance. When he pleads against us with our sins, Christ pleads for us by his sufferings, and if our adversary never cease to accuse us, our advocate never ceaseth to defend us. How comfortable is it to have one day and night before the throne to control the charge of our enemy, and the despondencies of our souls, that Satan can no sooner open his mouth, but he hath one to stop and rebuke him, who hath more favour in the court than that malicious spirit, and employs all his life and glory for our spiritual advantage, who will not upon such occasions want a good word for us. And as to our corruptions, he is in heaven to make up all breaches. His blood hath the same design in his plea that it had in the sacrifice, which was to purify us, Titus ii. 4. The difficulty of any cause doth not discourage him, but honours both his skill in bringing us off, and the merit of his blood, which is the cause of our restoration. Upon every occasion he steps in to plead with the holiness of God, and pacify the justice of God for our greater as well as lighter crimes. While therefore we feelingly groan under our spiritual burdens, let us not be so dejected by them, as cheered by the advocacy of our Saviour.

Use 3, of exhortation.

(1.) Endeavour for an interest in this advocacy. It is natural for men to look after some intercessor with God for them. When the Israelites were sensible of their sin in speaking against God, they desired Moses to be their mediator: Num. xxi. 7, 'Pray unto the Lord for us.' Behold here a greater than Moses to be the patron of our cause.

To this purpose,

[1.] We must have a sincere faith. This is absolutely necessary for an interest in Christ's priesthood, Heb. vii. 24. It is only for 'those that come to God by him.' He hath not a moral ability to save or intercede for any but such. That is clearly implied. If 'able to save those that come unto

God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them,' then able to save none else : it is restrained only to such. It is a foolish imagination to think Christ prays for unbelievers, because he prayed on the cross for those that murdered him. There is a great difference between his prayer then and his intercession in heaven.* That upon the cross was as he was a holy man, and would both shew his own charity to his enemies, and set us a pattern of it to ours; but in his mediatory prayer put up by him as God-man, John xvii., a copy of what he doth to this day in heaven, he doth not pray for the world, but for those that believe on him, ver. 19, 20, and therefore it is plain that he doth not pray for them that will not believe on him. Faith only gives an interest in the prayers Christ made on earth, or suits he ureth in heaven.

[2.] We must have a sincere resolution of obedience. Such are the subjects of Christ's intercession. The apostle had prefaced it so in the chapter before the text, and applies the cordial to such only as wallowed not in a course of gross sins. Those that 'walk in darkness' he excludes from any fellowship with him in any of his offices, 1 John i. 6. It is a fellowship with the Son as well as with the Father that he understands it of, ver. 3. The comfort of this intercession belongs not to those that wilfully defile themselves, but to those that abhor sin, and yet may fall through the violence of a surprising temptation. And after he had laid down this comfortable doctrine in the text, he closes it with a limitation to strike off the hands of any bold and undue claim to it: ver. 3, 'Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.' Hereby we know that we know him to be both our propitiation and our advocate, if we bear a sincere respect to all the discoveries of his will. Christ did not offer himself as a sacrifice, nor stand up as an advocate to countenance our sins, and free us from the debt of obedience, but to excite and encourage us the more, and that in a comfortable way, assuring us of pardon for our defects through him. Trust in him and obedience to him are the sole fee he requires of us for his care and pains.

(2.) Have a daily recourse to this advocate and advocacy. It is necessary because of our daily infirmities, and our imperfect services. We know not how to plead our own cause, nor do we understand the aggravations of those accusations that may be brought in against us. It is necessary that we should fly to one who always is present in the court to appear for us. Every man is ready to engage any person that hath the ear and interest of the judge on his side. Every man is to lift up his eye to this advocate: 'If any man sin, we have an advocate.' The *having* is little without employing. The more we exercise faith in his intercession, the more communion we have with the advocate, and the more sanctification will increase in us: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth.' His prayer there for sanctification is a standing notice to us whence sanctification is to be fetched, viz. from heaven by virtue of this intercession. In our shortest ejaculations, as well as our extended petitions, let us implore him under this title. No man under the law was to offer the meanest offering, though a pigeon, by his own hand, but the hand of the priest appointed to it by divine order. In all distresses, infirmities, and darkness in this world, we should get up to that mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense, Cant. iv. 6 (which is, as some understand it, a speech of the church), to the passion of Christ, which was bitter like myrrh, to the intercession of Christ, which is sweet like incense. Our whole life, till everlasting glory be ready to receive us, should be a life of faith in his death and intercession.

(3.) Let our affections be in heaven with our advocate. Though the

* Camero de Ecclesia, p. 229.

people of Israel were barred from entering into the holy of holies with the high priest when he went to sprinkle the blood on the mercy-seat, yet they attended him with their hearts, continued their wishes for his success, and expected his return with the notice of his acceptance. Since Christ is entered into the holy place, and acts our business in the midst of his glory, we should raise our hearts to him where he is, and link our spirits with him, and rejoice in the assured success of his negotiation. Though a man be not personally present with his advocate in the court, yet his heart and soul is with him. The heart is where the chief business is. Let us not keep our hearts from him, who employs himself in so great a concern for us.

(4.) Glorify and love this advocate. If Christ presents our persons and prayers in heaven, it is reason we should live to his glory upon earth. If he carries our names on his breast near his heart as a signal of his affection to us, we should carry his name upon our hearts in a way of ingenuous return. We should empty ourselves of all unworthy affections, be inflamed with an ardent love to him, and behave ourselves towards him as the most amiable object. This is but due to him, as he is our advocate.