

Use 3. If we be free, let us not return to our old slavery again: Gal. v. 1, 'Stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage.' Especially that chief part of freedom from the dominion of sin: Rom. vi. 12, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof;' and the 14th verse, 'For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.'

SERMON IV.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.—ROM. viii. 3.

HERE the apostle explaineth himself, and showeth how 'the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, doth make us free from the law of sin and death.'

In the words observe three things,—

1. The deep necessity of mankind; 'for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.'

2. The means of our deliverance; or God's merciful provision for our relief. The means are two—(1.) Christ's incarnation, in these words; and *God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.* (2.) His passion, *and for sin*, or by a sacrifice for sin.

3. The end or benefit accruing to us thereby, *condemned sin in the flesh.*

Doct. From the whole, that when man could by no means be freed from sin and death, God sent his Son to be a sacrifice for sin, that our liberty might be fully accomplished. The apostle's method is best; I shall therefore follow that.

First. The deep necessity of mankind is argued and made out by this reason, that it was impossible for the law to do away sin, and justify man before God; so he saith, *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh*, that is, through the corruption of our natures, we being sinners, and unable to perform the duty of the law. To understand the force of this reason, take these considerations:—

1. That it was necessary, in respect of God's purpose and decree, that we should be freed from sin and death. For God would not have mankind utterly to perish, having chosen some to salvation and repentance, and so leaving others without excuse; therefore the strict judgment of the law is debated upon this argument: Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified,' and again: Ps. cxxx. 3, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, Lord who shall stand?' According to the first covenant, none can escape condemnation. Now, this consisted not with the purposes of the Lord's grace, who would not lose the whole creation of mankind. God hath showed himself placable and merciful to all men, and hath forbidden despair, and continued many forfeited mercies; and did not

presently upon sinning, put us in our everlasting estate, as he did the fallen angels, but rather is upon a treaty with us.

2. God resolving to restore and recover some of mankind, it must be by the old way of the law, or by some other course. The old way of the law claimeth the first respect and precedence of consideration; for, take away Christ and the gospel, nothing more divine and perfect was given to man than the law. This was first intended by God for that end, as the scriptures every where witness; and God will not depart from his own institutions, without evident necessity; for he doth nothing in vain, or without necessary cause and reason: Gal. iii. 21, 'If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness had been by the law.' God would have gone no further than his first transaction with man. Again, it is said: Gal. ii. 21, 'If righteousness had been by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.' If there had been any other way possible, in heaven or in earth, than the death of Christ, by which the salvation of lost sinners could have been brought about, Christ would not have died; no, our disease was desperate as to any other way of cure, before this great physician took our case in hand. Christ is of no use till our wound be found incurable, and all other help in vain.

3. The law coming first into consideration, as our remedy, its impossibility to justify and give life, needs to be sufficiently demonstrated; for till we are dead to the law, we shall but carelessly seek after the grace of God in Jesus Christ; therefore doth the scripture travail so much in this point, and showeth us, we must not only be dead to sin and dead to the world, but dead to the law, before we can live unto God: Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I may live unto God;' and again: Rom. vii. 4, 'Ye are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye may be married to another, even to him that was raised from the dead, that ye may bring forth fruit to God.' These two places show the means how we become dead to the law, partly through the law requiring a righteousness so exact and full, in order to live, as the corrupt estate of man cannot afford; partly, by the body of Christ introducing a better hope, that is, his crucified body, which is the foundation of the new covenant. Besides Paul argueth this, that the law doth only discover sin, but cannot abolish it, but doth increase it rather; it bindeth over to death, and therefore cannot free from death; and so to fallen man, 'it is a law of sin and death;' and then answereth the objections that might be brought against this; 'Is therefore the law sin? God forbid:' Rom. vii. 7; and verse 10, 'The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death;' and so was a law of death, and working wrath, and all not because of any defect in God's institution, but the weakness of our flesh, that is, the corruption of our nature. Nature being depraved, cannot fulfil it, or yield perfect obedience to it. Once more it is said: Acts xiii. 39, 'By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.' The law of Moses was either the ceremonial law. All the oblations and sacrifices, the washings and the offerings then required, could not take away sin, for they were but shadows and figures of what was to come: Heb. ix. 9, 'They were figures which could not make him that did the service perfect, as appertaining to the conscience;' and again, Heb. x. 1, 4,

they were 'shadows of good things to come, and it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.' They might obtain some temporal blessings, or remove some temporal judgments, as they obeyed God in them; but did little as to the ease of the soul, as it was conscious of sin, or under fears of the eternal punishment. They that looked beyond them, to the Messiah to come, with an humble and penitent heart, might have their consciences cleansed from dead works. Every effect must have a cause sufficient to produce it. The blood of bulls and goats was no such cause, had no such virtue; the effect was far above it; there was a more precious blood signified, and shadowed out thereby, that could do it indeed. Or secondly, the moral law given by Moses; partly, because we cannot keep it of ourselves, and the best works that the regenerate perform, are so imperfect, and mixed with so many infirmities and defects, that they stand in need of pardon: Jam. iii. 2, 'In many things we offend all of us;' 'our righteousnesses are as filthy rags:' Isa. lxiv. 6; and partly, because they cannot satisfy for the least sin, whereby the infinite Majesty of God is provoked. This is only spoken to show why the scriptures do so often speak of the weakness of the law, and how impossible it is the law should give us life, that we may wholly be driven to Christ.

4. The utter impotence of the law to produce this effect, may be known by these two things, which are necessary to salvation, justification and sanctification. The law can give neither of these.

[1.] It cannot give us justification unto life; the law promiseth no good to sinners, but only to those that keep and observe it; he that doth them, shall live in them. Do and live, Sin and die, this is the voice of the law, that was a way whereby an innocent person might be saved, but not how a sinner might be saved. The law considered us as innocent, and required us to continue so; 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the words of the law to do them:' Gal. iii. 20. But alas, all we have broken with God: Rom. iii. 23, 'We have all sinned, and are come short of the glory of God.' The gospel considereth us in this sinful estate, and therefore it promiseth remission, and requireth repentance; both the privilege and the duty concern our recovery to God. Secondly, if the law could be fulfilled for the future, past sins would take away all hope of reward by the law; for the paying of new debts would not quit old scores; what satisfaction shall be given for those transgressions? Let me express it thus, the paying of what we owe, will not make amends for what we have stolen. We have robbed God of his glory and honour; though for the future we should be obedient to him, yet who shall restore that we have taken away, or satisfy for the wrong done to God's justice? Thirdly, the law had no power of taking away of sin, but only of punishing of sin, as it threatened death to the sinner; but how we should escape this death, it told us not. Being all shut up under sin, we are shut up under wrath, and there is no escape but by Jesus Christ.

[2.] It cannot give us sanctification. It calleth for duty, and puts in mind of it, but giveth no strength to perform it; for, being corrupted within, we are little wrought upon by a law without, to which our hearts stand in such enmity and contrariety. But let me prove it by two arguments.

(1.) They that did not keep themselves in innocency, cannot recover their integrity, now it is lost. It is easier to preserve life, than to restore it when once dead. Any fool may open the flood-gates, but when once the waters are broken in, who can recall them? Job. xiv. 4. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one;' that is, who can purify his heart when it is once defiled with sin? This is an evil not to be remedied by instruction, but inclination.

(2.) Suppose they could recover themselves, they would soon lose it again. As Adam gave out at the first assault, so we would be every moment breaking with God; the sure estate, and the everlasting covenant is provided for us by Christ, and our condition by grace is more stable. God by Christ hath engaged his faithfulness, to give us necessary and effectual grace to preserve the new life: 1 Cor. i. 9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called.' Austin compareth the state of Job and Adam: Job was more happy in his misery than Adam in innocency; he was victorious on the dunghill, when the other was defeated on the throne; he received no evil counsel from his wife, when the first woman seduced Adam; he by grace despised the assaults of Satan, when the other suffered himself to be worsted at the first temptation; he preserved his righteousness in the midst of his sorrows, when the other lost his innocency in paradise. So much better is it to stand by the grace of Christ, than our own free will; the broken vessel being cemented again, is strongest in the crack.

Well then, you see that our misery is such, that God only can help us by some new treaty of relief, and therefore let us see what God hath done for us:—

Secondly, the means of our deliverance; they are two, his incarnation and passion.

First, His incarnation,

'He sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.' Let me, first, open the words; secondly, show what benefit we have thereby.

[1.] Christ's coming in the likeness of sinful flesh, implieth that it was the nature of sinful men; that he had a true human nature as other men have, but not a sinful nature. In some places it is said he was made in the likeness of men: Phil. ii. 7, and Heb. ii. 17, 'Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren;' in other places sin is expected; 'tempted in all points like us, except sin:' Heb. iv. 15: and Heb. vii. 26. He assumed the true and real nature of man, with all the same essential properties, which other men have, only sin is excepted; that infection was stopped by his supernatural conception through the power of the Holy Ghost. In short, he came not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh; he took not our nature as in innocency, but when our blood was tainted, and we were rebels to God.

[2.] He took not the human nature as it shall be in glory, fully without sin. There will a time come, when the human nature shall be perfectly glorified; but Christ took our nature as it was clothed with all natural, sinless infirmities, even such as are in us. The punishment of sin as he assumed a mortal body; and death to us is the fruit of sin: Rom. vi. 23, and v. 12; he was hungry, weary, pained, as we are.

[3.] He was counted a sinner, condemned as a sinner, exposed to many afflictions, such as sinners endure; yea, bore the punishment

of our sin. The Jews accused him of sedition and blasphemy, two of the highest crimes against either table; the standers-by looked on him as one 'stricken and smitten of God:' Isa. liii. 4, yea, God made him to be sin: 2 Cor. v. 21. 'He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:' and Heb. ix. 28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' Let us next consider,—

2. What benefit have we thereby. Because Christ's flesh is meat indeed, to feed hungry souls. I shall a little insist upon that; it being so useful to us when we are sacramentally to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God.

[1.] He came in our flesh, that thereby he might be under the law which was given to the whole race of mankind: Gal. iv. 4. 'Made of a woman, made under the law.' His human nature was a creature, and bound to be in subjection to the creator; but then you will say, if Christ obeyed the law for himself, what merit could there be in his obedience? Much every way, because he voluntarily put himself into this condition; as a man that was free before, if he remove his dwelling into another country and dominion, merely for his friends' sake, is bound to the laws of that country, how hard soever they be; and the merit of his love is no way lessened, because he did it voluntarily and for friendship's sake. Well then, there is much in this, that Christ who was a sovereign would become a subject, and obey the same laws that we are bound to keep, not only to be a pattern and example to us, but by his obedience to recover what by our disobedience was lost, and be a fountain of grace and holiness in our nature.

[2.] That in the same nature he might suffer the penalty and curse of the law, as well as fulfil the duty of it: and so make satisfaction for our sins, which, as God, he could not do. We read 'He was made a curse for us:' Gal. iii. 13; and Phil. iii. 8, he was 'obedient to the death, even the death of the cross.' Death was threatened, and a curse denounced against those that obeyed not the law; and we being guilty of sin, could by no means avoid this death; therefore Christ came in the sinner's room to suffer death, and 'bear the curse' for us, to free us 'from the law of sin and death,' and by this means the justice of God is eminently demonstrated, the lawgiver vindicated, and the breach that was made in the frame of government repaired, and God manifested to be holy, and a hater of sin, and yet the sinner saved from destruction.

[3.] That he might cross and counterwork Satan's design; which was double: First, To dishonour God by a false representation, as if he were envious of man's happiness: Gen. iii. 5. 'God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be open, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good or evil;' that is, sufficient to themselves without his direction. Satan's aim was to weaken the esteem of God's goodness in our hearts. Now when Christ will take flesh, and dwell among us, do whatsoever is necessary for our restoration and recovery, his goodness is wonderfully magnified, and he is represented as amiable to man, not envying our knowledge and happiness, but promoting it at the dearest rates. That God should be made man, and die for sinners, is the highest demonstration of his goodness that can be given us: 1 John iv. 9, 'In this was the love of God manifested towards us, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live by him.'

What greater proof can we have that God is not envious, but loving, yea, love itself? Secondly, Satan's other design was to depress the nature of man, who in innocency stood so near unto God, that falling off from our duty we might fall also from that firmament of glory wherein God at our creation had placed us, and upon the breach there might be a great distance between us and God. Now, that human nature so depressed and abased by the malicious suggestion of the devil, should be so elevated and advanced, and set far above the angelical nature, and admitted to dwell with God in a personal union, Oh! how is the design of the devil defeated. The great intent of this mystery, 'God manifested in the flesh,' was to make way for a nearness between God and us. Christ condescended to be nigh to us by taking human nature into the unity of his person, that we might be nigh unto God; not only draw nigh unto him now in the evangelical estate, but be everlastingly nigh unto him in heavenly glory. When we first enter into the gospel-state, we that were afar off, are said to be 'made nigh in Christ,' Eph. ii. 13; but this is but a preparation for a closer communion, conjunction, and nearness to God, when we shall be ever with the Lord, 1 Thes. iv. 17.

[4.] To give us a pledge of the tenderness of his love and compassion towards us. For he that is our kinsman, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, will he be strange to his own flesh? especially, since he is not so by necessity of nature, but by voluntary choice and assumption. We could not have such confident and familiar discourse with one who is of another and different nature from us; nor put our suits into his hands with such trust and assurance: it is a motive to man, 'Thou shalt not hide thyself from thine own flesh,' Isa. lviii. 7. A beggar is our own flesh; men in pride and disdain will not own it, and shut up their bowels against them; but Christ had our nature in perfection. This made Laban, though otherwise a churlish man, kind to Jacob: Gen. xxix. 14, 'Surely thou art bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' But this is not all; Christ assumed human nature, that he might experiment infirmities in his own person; and his heart be more endeared towards us: Heb. ii. 17, 18, 'In all things it behoved him to be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, in making reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' We have more assurance that he will pity us who is not a stranger to our blood, and hath had trial of our nature, and our miseries and temptations. He knoweth the heart of an afflicted, tempted man, and will mind our business as his own.

[5.] Christ by taking our flesh is become a pattern to us of what shall be done both in us and by us.

(1.) His own holy nature is a pledge of the work of grace, and the sanctification of the Spirit whereby we are fitted and prepared for God. For the same holy Spirit that could sanctify the substance that was taken from the virgin, so that that holy thing that was born of her might be called the Son of God, can also sanctify and cleanse our corrupt hearts. The pollution of our natures is so ingrained, that we are troubled to think how it can be wrought off, and these foul hearts of ours made clean; but the same Spirit that separateth our nature in

the person of Christ from all the pollution of his ancestors, can purify our persons and heal our natures, how polluted soever they be: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God.' So many generations as there are reckoned up in the story of Christ's nativity: Mat. i., 'Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob,' etc.; so many intimations there are of the deriving of sinful pollution from one ancestor to another, and though it still run in the blood, yet when Christ was born of the virgin, he sanctified the substance taken from her, there the infection was stopped, he was born a holy thing: Luke i. 35: and Heb. vii. 20, 'Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.'

(2.) His life was a pattern of our obedience; for 'he gave us an example, that we should follow his steps, and walk as he walked:' He submitted to all manner of duties both to God and men; Luke ii. 49, 'Wist ye not that I should be about my Father's business?' There was his duty to his heavenly Father; and for his natural and reputed parents: Luke ii. 51, 'He went down and was subject to them;' and still he 'went about doing good,' Acts x. 38. This was the business of his life. Obedience Christ would commend to us, for he never intended to rob God of a creature, and a subject, when he made man a christian; therefore, he in our nature having the same interest of flesh and blood, the same passions and affections, would teach us to obey God at the dearest rates.

(3.) In the same nature that was foiled, he would teach us also to conquer Satan. He conquered him, hand to hand, in personal conflict, repelling his temptations by scripture, as we should do: Mat. iv. 10. So he conquered him as a tempter. There is another conquest of him as a tormentor, as one that hath the power of death. So he conquered him by his death on the cross, and so his human nature was necessary to that also: Heb. ii. 14, 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same, that he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' Christ would stoop to the greatest indignities to free us from this enemy, and to put mankind again into a condition of safety and happiness.

(4.) That he might take possession of heaven for us in our nature: John xiv. 2, 3, 'I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself.' The devil's design was to depress our nature, but Christ came to exalt it; Satan endeavoured to make us lose paradise, but Christ came to give us heaven; and to assure us of the reality of the gift, he did himself in our nature rise from the dead, and entered into that glory he spake of, to give us, who are strangely haunted with doubts about the other world, a visible demonstration that the glory of the world to come is no fancy. He is entered into it, and hath carried our nature thither, that, in time, if we regard his offers and his promises, ourselves may be translated thither also.

(5.) After he had been a sacrifice for sin, and conquered death by his resurrection, he hath triumphed over the devil, and led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, in the very act of his ascension into heaven: Eph. iv. 8. To teach us, that if we in the same nature continue the conflict, and be faithful unto the death, we shall triumph also,

and 'the God of peace shall tread Satan under our feet shortly' Rom. xvi. 20. These things occur to me for the present as the fruits and benefits of Christ's incarnation; but the chief reason why it is brought here, is 'that God might condemn sin in the flesh,' show the great example of his wrath against it, by the sorrows and sufferings of Christ.

Secondly, by his passion. This is intimated in the terms, for sin, or by a sin-offering, as we have it in the margin; and is confirmed in other scriptures: as Heb. x. 6, 'In burnt-offerings and sacrifices of sin thou hadst no pleasure.' In the original it is only *περὶ ἡμαρτίας* in burnt-offerings, and for sin, thou hadst no pleasure; therefore in the translation we put the word *sacrifices* in another sort of letter, as being supplied. So Isa. liii. 10, 'When he shall make his soul sin,' that is, as we will render it, an offering for sin; so 2 Cor. v. 21, 'Christ was made sin for us,' that is, a sacrifice for sin; so here by sin he 'condemned sin in the flesh,' that is, by a propitiatory sacrifice. All things that were in the sin-offering, agree to Christ's death; for instance:—

1. Sin was the meritorious cause why the beast was slain. The beasts obeyed the law of their creation, but man had sinned against God: Lev. v. 6. 'He shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, for his sin which he hath sinned, and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin.' Here was no other reason the beast an innocent creature should die; so Christ died for our offences: Rom. iv. 25; not his own, he had no sins of his own to expiate; therefore, while the sacrifice was yet alive, the man was to lay his hand on the head of the sacrifice, confessing his sins, Lev. xvi. 21, and putting them on the sacrifice.

2. The sacrifices were substituted into the place of the offender, and the beasts died for him; so did Christ die, not only in *bonum nostrum*—for our good; but *loco et vice omnium nostri*—in our stead and room: Isa. liii. 4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions.'

3. The offerings offered to God in our stead were consumed and destroyed; if things of life, they were killed or slain; other things were either burnt, as frankincense; or spilled and poured out, as wine. There was a destruction of the thing offered to God for sin in man's stead. So Christ was to die, or to shed his blood, to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself: Heb. ix. 26, 'He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' All the offerings typified Christ, but more strictly the sacrifices which were of living beasts; some whereof were killed, flayed, burnt, some roasted and fried on coals; some seethed in pots, all which were shadows of what Christ endured, who is the only true propitiatory sacrifice, wherein provoked justice rests satisfied.

4. The effects of the sacrifices all either respect God, or sin, or the sinner. God was pacified or propitiated, the sin expiated, the sinner reconciled, that is to say justified, sanctified.

[1.] God was pacified, propitiated, or satisfied, the law being obeyed which he had instituted for the doing away of sin; not satisfied or propitiated as to the eternal punishment, by the mere sacrifice; but so far as to prevent many temporal judgments, which otherwise would fall upon them, for the neglect of God's ordinances; but the true propitiation is Christ: 1 John ii. 2, 'Who gave himself to be a propitiation

for our sins.' Propitiation implieth God's being satisfied, pacified, appeased to us, so as to become merciful to us.

[2.] The sin for which the sacrifice was offered was purged, expiated, as to the legal guilt; there was no more fault to be charged on them as to the remedy which that law prescribed; but the true purgation of the conscience from dead works belongeth only to the Son of God: Heb. ix. 14.

[3.] The effect on the sinner himself was, the sinner, coming with his sin offering, according to God's institution, was pardoned, or justified, so far as to quit him from temporal punishment, both before God and man. The magistrate could not cut him off, he having done what the law required for his sin or trespass; nor would God, he having submitted to his ordinance; yea, he was sanctified, so far as to be capable of legal worship: Heb. ix. 13, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh,' etc.; but now as to Christ, the sinner is justified by the free and full remission of all his sins: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,' and sanctified with an eternal and real holiness: Heb. x. 10, 'We are sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ, once for all;' perfectly justified, and perfectly sanctified. Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' that is, with a perfection opposite to the legal institution, not with a perfection opposite to the heavenly estate, that cometh afterwards. The ordinances of the legal covenant did what belonged to them; but as to the removing of the internal guilt, and eternal punishment, they were not perfect without looking to Christ.

Thirdly, I come to the end and benefit. When God sent his own Son, surely he designed some great thing thereby; what was his end and design? 'He condemned sin in the flesh.' Two things must be explained—First, What is meant by condemning of sin; secondly, What is meant by these words, in the flesh.

1. What is meant by condemning of sin. To condemn it is to destroy it, because execution ordinarily followeth the sentence. Therefore the sentence is put for the execution; and the word condemn is used for weighty reasons. The gospel is speaking of justification, or our not being condemned. Christ condemned that which would have condemned us, by bearing the punishment of it in his own person. Sin had conquered the world, or subjected man to condemnation; therefore Christ came to condemn sin, that is, to destroy it. The question then is, whether the apostle doth hereby expound the mystery of sanctification or justification. I answer, both are intended, as they are often in these words which express the great undertaking of the mediator, which is to take away sin. There is a damning power, and a reigning power in sin; now if condemning sin be destroying of sin, or taking away its power by his expiatory sacrifice, then not only the pardon of sin, but the mortification of the flesh is intended.

2. What is the sense of those words, 'in the flesh'? Is it meant of the flesh of Christ, or our flesh? Both make a good sense; I prefer the latter. First, he condemned sin in the flesh, or by the crucified body of Christ, exacting from him the punishment due to sin. Secondly,

in our flesh, that is sin, which by our flesh rendereth us incapable of fulfilling the law of God, or obnoxious to his vengeance. This was destroyed by the death of Christ, 'Our old man was crucified with him,' Rom. vi. 6: and in conversion the virtue is applied to us, when sin received its death's wound by virtue of Christ's death or sacrifice.

Use 1 is, Information. 1. To show the heinous nature of sin. God hath put a brand upon it, and showed how odious it is to him. Nothing short of the death of Christ could expiate such a breach between God and his creatures; Christ must die, or no reconciliation. Christ's death doth lessen and greaten sin; it greatens the nature of it, to all serious beholders; it lesseneth the damning effect of it to the penitent believer.

2. If Christ came to destroy sin, accursed are they that cherish it. These seek to put their Redeemer to shame, tie the cords the which he came to unloose: 1 John iii. 8. Christ 'came to destroy the works of the devil.'

3. Christ did not abrogate the law, but took away the effects and consequents of sin committed against the law. The sinner was obnoxious to the justice of the lawgiver and judge; the law could not help him, but the Son of God came to fit us again for our obedience.

Use 2 is, To exhort us to consider first our misery. How unavoidable our perishing was, had not God found out a remedy for us. In our corrupt estate, we neither could nor would obey the law; the duty became impossible, both as to the tenor of the law, and the temper of our hearts, and then the penalty is intolerable.

2. Our remedy lies in the incarnation and passion of the Son of God, that in so entangled a case he could find out a ransom for us. The goodness of God, that he sent his own Son; the power of God, that by this means the guilt and power of sin, with all the consequents of it, are dissolved.

Use 3 is, Direction in the Lord's Supper. 1. Here is the flesh of Christ, which is food for souls: John vi. 51, 'The bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.' In it he hath purchased grace and pardon of sin, which are the foundations of immortality.

2. The Lord's Supper is a feast on a sacrifice, a commemoration of Christ's sin-offering, or a standing memorial of his passion; a table spread for us in the sight of our enemies. How must we be conversant about it, as the Jews about the sacrifices? First, there is required an humble, broken, and contrite heart, confessing our sins: Ps. xlv. 17, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' Secondly, sensible, thankful, and comfortable, owning of God's love in Christ. When they had eaten the Passover, they were to rejoice before the Lord: Deut. xvi. 11. So should we after this feast prepared by God to feed and nourish our souls to eternal life.