

and gratulation. O how many knowing men are ignorant ! They are not taught of God ; they have Christ's word to enlighten them, but not his Spirit to sanctify them. But that you should have the inward as well as the outward teaching, that Christ should anoint you with the heavenly unctiōn of his Spirit, that you can say as he, John ix. 25. ' One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see : ' O how thankful should you be to Christ, who hath revealed his Father's bosom-secrets unto you ! John i. 18. ' No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' · If Alexander thought himself so much obliged to Aristotle, for the philosophical instructions he learned from him ; O how are we bound to Jesus Christ, this great prophet, for opening to us the eternal purposes of his love, and revealing to us the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven !



CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

Q. XXXV. HOW doth Christ execute the office of a priest ?

Ans. In his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

HEB. ix. 26. ' Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.'

Q. What are the parts of Christ's priestly office ?

Ans. Christ's priestly office hath two parts, his satisfaction and intercession.

1. His SATISFACTION, and this consists of two branches :
1. His active obedience, Mat. iii. 15. ' He fulfilled all righteousness.' Christ did every thing which the law required ; his holy life was a perfect commentary upon the law of God ; and he obeyed the law for us.

2. His passive obedience. Our guilt being transferred and imputed to him, he did undergo the penalty which was due to us ; ' he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' The paschal lamb slain, was a type of Christ who was offered up in sacrifice for us. Sin could not be done away without blood, Heb. ix. 22. ' Without blood is no remission.' Christ was not only a lamb without spot, but a lamb slain.

Q. Why was it requisite there should be a priest ?

Ans. There needed a priest to be an umpire, to mediate between a guilty creature, and an holy God.

Q. How could Christ suffer, being God ?

Ans. Christ suffered only in the human nature.

Q. But if only Christ's humanity suffered, how could this suffering satisfy for sin?

Ans. The human nature being united to the divine, the human nature did suffer, the divine, did satisfy. Christ's Godhead, as it did support the human nature that it did not faint, so it did give virtue to his sufferings. The altar sanctifies the thing offered on it, Matth. xxiii. 19. so the altar of Christ's divine nature sanctified the sacrifice of his death, and made it of infinite value.

Q. Wherein doth the greatness of Christ's sufferings appear?

Ans. In the sufferings of his body. He suffered truly, not only in appearance; the apostle calls it *mors crucis*, the death of the cross, Phil. ii. 8. Tully, when he speaks of this kind of death, *quid dicam in crucem tollere?* Though he was a great orator he wanted words to express it. The thoughts of this made Christ sweat great drops of blood in the garden, Luke xxii. 44. It was an ignominious, painful, cursed death; Christ suffered in all his senses: 1. In his eyes; they beheld two sad objects, he saw his enemies insulting, and his mother weeping. 2. In his ears; his ears were filled with the revilings of the people, Mat. xxvii. 49. 'He saved others, himself he cannot save.' 3. In his smell; when their drivel fell upon his face. 4. In his taste; when they gave him gall and vinegar to drink, bitterness and sharpness. 5. In his feeling; his head suffered with thorns, his hands and feet with the nails,—*Totum pro vulnere corpus*: now was this white lily died of a purple colour. (2.) In the sufferings of his soul. He was pressed in the winepress of his Father's wrath. This caused that vociferation and out-cry on the cross, 'My God, my God,' *cur deseruisti?* Christ suffered a double eclipse upon the cross, an eclipse of the sun, and an eclipse of the light of God's countenance. How bitter was this agony! the evangelists use three words to express it, 'he began to be amazed,' Mark xiv. 33. 'He began to be faint.' 'To be exceeding sorrowful,' Mat. xxvi. 37. Christ felt the pains of hell in his soul, though not locally, yet equivalently.

Q. Why did Christ suffer?

Ans. Surely not for any desert of his own, Dan. ix. 26. 'The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;' it was for us, Isa. liii. 6. *Unus peccat alius plectitur*; he suffered, that he might satisfy God's justice for us. We, by our sins, had infinitely wronged God; and, could we have shed rivers of tears, offered up millions of holocausts and burnt-offerings, we could never have pacified an angry Deity: therefore Christ must die, that God's justice may be satisfied.

It is hotly debated among divines, whether God could not have forgiven sin freely without a sacrifice. Not to dispute

what God could have done, but when we consider God was resolved to have the law satisfied, and to have men saved in a way of justice as well as mercy; then, I say, it was necessary that Christ should lay down his life as a sacrifice.

1. To fulfil the predictions of scripture, Luke xxiv. 46. 'Thus it behoved Christ to suffer.'

2. To bring us into favour with God; It is one thing for a traitor to be pardoned, and another thing to be made a favourite. Christ's blood is not only called a sacrifice whereby God is appeased, but a propitiation whereby God becomes gracious and friendly to us. Christ is our mercy-seat, from which God gives answers of peace to us.

3. Christ died, that he might make good his last-will and testament with his blood: there were many legacies which Christ bequeathed to believers, which had been all null and void, had not he died, and by his death confirmed the will, Heb. ix. 17. A testament is in force after men are dead: the mission of the Spirit, the promises, those legacies, were not in force till Christ's death; but Christ by his blood hath sealed them, and believers may lay claim to them.

4. He died, that he might purchase for us glorious mansions; therefore heaven is called not only a promised, but a 'purchased possession,' Eph. i. 14. Christ died for our preferment; he suffered that we might reign; he hung upon the cross that we might sit upon the throne. Heaven was shut, &c. *crux Christi clavis Paradisi*: the cross of Christ is the ladder by which we ascend to heaven. His crucifixion is our coronation.

Use 1. In the bloody sacrifice of Christ, see the horrid nature of sin; sin, it is true, is odious, as it banished Adam out of paradise, and threw the angels into hell; but that which doth most of all make it appear horrid, is this, that it made Christ veil his glory, and lose his blood. We should look upon sin with indignation, and pursue it with an holy malice; and shed the blood of those sins which shed Christ's blood. The sight of Cæsar's bloody robe, incensed the Romans against them that slew him. The sight of Christ's bleeding body should incense us against sin: let us not parley with it; let not that be our joy, which made Christ a man of sorrow.

Use 2. Is Christ our priest sacrificed? See God's mercy and justice displayed. I may say as the apostle, Rom. xi. 27. 'Behold the goodness and severity of God.' 1. The goodness of God in providing a sacrifice: had not Christ suffered upon the cross, we must have lain in hell for ever satisfying God's justice.

2. The severity of God: though it were his own Son, the Son of his love, and our sins were but imputed to him, yet God did not spare him, Rom. viii. 32. but his wrath did flame against

him. And if God were thus severe to his own Son, how dreadful will he be one day to his enemies? Such as die in wilful impenitency, must feel the same wrath as Christ did; and because they cannot bear it at once, therefore they must be enduring it for ever.

Uſe 3. Is Christ our priest, who was sacrificed for us? Then see the endeared affection of Christ to us sinners. “The cross (saith Austin) was a pulpit, in which Christ preached his love to the world.” That Christ should die, was more than if all the angels had been turned to dust; and that Christ should die as a malefactor, having the weight of all mens sins laid upon him; that he should die for his enemies, Rom. v. 10. The balm-tree weeps out its precious balm, to heal those that cut and mangle it: Christ shed his blood, to heal those that crucified him. And that he should die freely; it is called the ‘offering of the body of Jesus,’ Heb. x. 10. And though his sufferings were so great, that they made him sigh and weep, and bleed; yet they could not make him repent, Isa. liii. 11. ‘He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied.’ Christ had hard travail upon the cross, yet he doth not repent of it, but thinks his sweat and blood well bestowed, because he sees redemption brought forth to the world. O infinite, amazing love of Christ! a love that passeth knowledge! Eph. iii. 19. that neither man nor angel can parallel. How should we be affected with this love? If Saul was so affected with David’s kindness in sparing his life, how should we be affected with Christ’s kindness in parting with his life for us? At Christ’s death and passion, the very stones did cleave asunder, Matth. xxvii. 5. ‘The rocks rent.’ Not to be affected with Christ’s love, in dying, is to have hearts harder than rocks.

Uſe 4. Is Christ our sacrifice? then see the excellency of his sacrifice: It is perfect, Heb. x. 4. ‘By one offering he hath perfected them that are sanctified.’ Therefore, how impious are the Papists, in joining their merits, and the prayers of saints with Christ’s sacrifice? They offer him up daily in the mass, as if Christ’s sacrifice on the cross were imperfect: this is a blasphemy against Christ’s priestly office.

2. Christ’s sacrifice is meritorious; he not only died for our example, but to merit salvation; the person who suffered being God as well as man, did put virtue into his sufferings; and now our sins are expiated, and God appeased. No sooner did the messengers say, ‘Uriah is dead,’ but David’s anger was pacified, 2 Sam. xi. 21. No sooner did Christ die, but God’s anger was pacified.

3. This sacrifice is beneficial. Out of the dead lion Samson had honey: it procures justification of our persons, acceptance of our service, access to God with boldness, entrance into the holy place of heaven, Heb. x. 19. *Per latus Christi patejcit*

nobis in cælum, Israel passed through the Red-sea to Canaan; so through the Red-sea of Christ's blood, we enter into the heavenly Canaan.

2. *Use Of Exhortation. Branch 1.* Let us fiducially apply this blood of Christ; all the virtue of a medicine is in the applying; though the medicine be made of the blood of God, it will not heal, unless by faith applied. As fire is to the chymist, so is faith to the Christian, the chymist can do nothing without fire, so there is nothing done without faith. Faith makes Christ's sacrifice ours, Phil. iii. 8. 'Christ Jesus my Lord.' It is not gold in the mine, that enricheth, but gold in the hand: faith is the hand that receives Christ's golden merits. It is not a cordial in the flesh, refresheth the spirit, but a cordial drunk down. *Per fidem Christi sanguinem fugimus*, Cypr. Faith opens the orifice of Christ's wounds, and drinks the precious cordial of his blood. Without faith Christ himself will not avail us.

Branch 2. Let us love a bleeding Saviour, and let us show our love to Christ, by being ready to suffer for him. Many rejoice at Christ's suffering for them, but dream not of their suffering for him: Joseph dreamed of his preferment, but not of his imprisonment. Was Christ a sacrifice? Did he bear God's wrath for us? We should bear man's wrath for him. Christ's death was voluntary, Psal. xl. 7. 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' Luke xii. 50. 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?' Christ calls his sufferings a baptism: he was to be (as it were) baptized in his own blood; and how did he thirst for that time? 'How am I straitened!' O then, let us be willing to suffer for Christ! Christ hath taken away the venom and sting of the saints sufferings: there is no wrath in their cup. Our sufferings Christ can make sweet. As there was oil mixed in the peace-offering, so God can mix the oil of gladness with our sufferings. "The ringing of my chain is sweet music in my ears," *Langreve of Hesse*. Life must be parted with shortly; what is it to part with it a little sooner, as a sacrifice to Christ, as a seal of sincerity, and a pledge of thankfulness?

3d *Use of Consolation.* This sacrifice of Christ's blood may infinitely comfort us. This is the blood of atonement: Christ's cross is *cardo salutis*, Calv. "The hinge and fountain of our comfort."

1st, This blood comforts in case of guilt: O, faith the soul, my sins trouble me! why, Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sin, Mat. xxvi. 28. Let us see our sins laid on Christ, and then they are no more ours, but his.

2dly, In case of pollution: Christ's blood is an healing and cleansing blood: 1. It is healing, Isa. liii. 5. 'With his stripes

we are healed.' It is the best weapon-salve, it heals at a distance: Though Christ be in heaven, we may feel the virtue of his blood healing our bloody issue. 2. And it is cleansing: It is therefore compared to fountain-water, Zech. xiii. 1. 'The word is a glass to show us our spots, and Christ's blood is a fountain to wash them away; it turns leprosy into purity, 1 John i. 7. 'The blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all our sin.' There is indeed one spot so black, that Christ's blood doth not wash away, viz. the sin against the Holy Ghost. Not but that there is virtue enough in Christ's blood to wash it away; but he who hath sinned that sin will not be washed, he contemns Christ's blood, and tramples it under foot, Heb. x. 29. Thus we see what a strong cordial Christ's blood is; it is the anchor-hold of our faith, the spring of our joy, the crown of our desires, and the only support both in life and death. In all our fears let us comfort ourselves with the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood: Christ died both as a purchaser and as a conqueror: 1. As a purchaser, in regard of God, having by his blood obtained our salvation. 2. And as a conqueror, in regard of Satan, the cross being his triumphant chariot, wherein he hath led hell and death captive.

Use ult. Bless God for this precious sacrifice of Christ's death, Ps. ciii. 1. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul.' And for what doth David bless him? 'Who redeemeth thy life from destruction?' Christ gave himself a sin-offering for us, let us give ourselves a thank-offering to him. If a man redeem another out of debt, will not he be grateful? How deeply do we stand obliged to Christ, who hath redeemed us from hell and damnation? Rev. v. 9. 'And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' Let our hearts and tongues join in concert to bless God, and let us shew thankfulness to Christ by fruitfulness; let us bring forth (as spice trees) the fruits of humility, zeal, good works. This is to live unto him who died for us, 2 Cor. v. 15. The wise men did not only worship Christ, but presented him with gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, Mat. ii. 11. Let us present Christ, with the fruits of righteousness, which are unto the glory and praise of God.