

“not despise;” i. e. God is more delighted with such a heart, than with all the sacrifices in the world; one groan, one tear, flowing from faith, and the spirit of adoption, are more to him, than the cattle upon a thousand hills. And to the same sense he speaks again, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is “my throne, and the earth is my footstool: Where is the house “that ye build to me? And where is the place of my rest?—But “to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a con- “trite spirit, and trembleth at my word;” q. d. All the magnificent temples and glorious structures in the world, give me no pleasure in comparison of such a broken heart as this.

O then, for ever bless the Lord, that hath done that for you, which none else could do, and which he has done but for few besides you.

SERMON XXVI.

Of the Nature and Quality of CHRIST'S Death.

ACTS ii. 23.

Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified, and slain.

HAVING considered, in order, the preparative acts for the death of Christ, both on his own part, and on his enemies part, we now come to consider the * death of Christ itself, which was the principal part of his humiliation, and is the chief pillar of our consolation. Here we shall in order consider,

First, The kind and nature of the death he died.

Secondly, The manner in which he bare it, viz. patiently, solitarily, and instructively; dropping divers holy and instructive lessons upon all that were about him, in his seven last words upon the cross.

Thirdly, The funeral solemnities at his burial.

Fourthly, and lastly, The weighty ends and great designs of his death. In all which particulars, as we proceed to discuss and open them, you will have an account of the deep debasement and humiliation of the Son of God.

In this text, we have an account of the kind and nature of that

* The death of Christ was the last step of his humiliation; by which he underwent the most grievous, the most dreadful, and the greatest punishment for the sins of men. *Ames.*

death which Christ died : as also of the causes of it, both principal and instrumental.

First, The kind and nature of the death Christ died, which is here described more generally, as a violent death, *Ye have slain him* : and more particularly, as a most ignominious, cursed, dishonourable death ; *ye have crucified him*.

Secondly, The causes of it are here likewise expressed : and that both principal and instrumental. The principal cause, permitting, ordering, and disposing all things about it, was the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God. There was not an action or circumstance but came under this most wise and holy counsel and determination of God.

The instruments effecting it were their wicked hands. * This fore-knowledge and counsel of God, as it did no way necessitate or enforce them to it ; so neither doth it excuse their fact from the least aggravation of its sinfulness. It did no more compel or force their wicked hands to do what they did, than the mariner's hoisting up his sails, to take the wind to serve his design, compels the wind. And it cannot excuse their action from one circumstance of sin ; because God's end and manner of acting was one thing, their end and manner of acting another. His, most pure and holy ; theirs, most malicious and daringly wicked. *Idem quod duo faciunt, non est idem*. To this purpose a grave divine well expresses it.

In respect of God, Christ's death was justice and mercy. In respect of man, it was murder and cruelty. In respect of himself, it was obedience and humility †. Hence our note is,

Doct. That our Lord Jesus Christ was not only put to death, but to the worst of deaths, even the death of the cross.

To this the apostle gives a plain testimony, Phil. ii. 8. " He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross ;" where his humiliation is both specified ; he was humbled to death ; and aggravated by a most emphatical reduplication, even the death of the cross. So Acts v. 30. " Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree : " *q. d.* it did not suffice you to put him to a violent death, but you also put him to the most base, vile and ignominious death ; " you hanged him on a tree."

On this point we will discuss these three particulars, viz. The

* The Jews cannot be excusable, for they acted not in obedience to the secret purpose of God ; but, being excited by hatred and corrupt affections, they slew the innocent Jesus, contrary to the law. *Pareus*.

† Morning Exercises at St. Giles's, p. 289.

nature or kind, the manner and reasons of Christ's death upon the tree.

I. I shall open the kind or nature of his death, by shewing you that it was a *violent, painful, shameful, cursed, slow, and succourless* death.

First, It was a violent death that Christ died. Violent in itself; though voluntary on his part. "He was cut off out of the land of "the living," Isa. liii. 8. And yet "he laid down his life of himself; no man took it from him," John x. 17. I call his death violent, because he died not a natural death, i. e. he lived not till nature was consumed with age, as it is in many who live till their, *balsamum radicale*, "radical moisture," like the oil in the lamp, be quite consumed, and then go out like an expiring lamp. It was not so with Christ: for he was but in the flower and prime of his time when he died: And indeed, he must either die a violent death, or not die at all; partly, because there was no sin in him, to open a door to natural death; as it doth in all others. Partly, because else his death had not been a sacrifice acceptable and satisfactory to God for us. That which died of itself was never offered up to God; but that which was slain; when it was in its full strength and health. The temple was a type of the body of Christ, John ii. 19. Now, when the temple was destroyed, it did not drop down as an ancient structure decayed by time, but was pulled down by violence, when it was standing in its full strength! Therefore he is said to *suffer death*, and to be *put to death* for us in the flesh, 1 Pet. iii. 18. That is the first thing. It was a violent; though a voluntary death. For violent is not opposed to voluntary, but to natural.

Secondly, The death of the cross was a most painful death. Indeed in this death were many deaths, contrived in one. The cross was a rack as well as a gibbet. The pains which Christ suffered upon the cross, are by the apostle emphatically stiled *τας ωδυνας τας θανατου*, Acts ii. 24. "The pains of death:" but properly they signify the pangs of travail: yea, the birth-pangs, the most acute sorrows of a travailing woman. His soul was in travail, Isa. liii. his body in bitter pangs; and being as Aquinas speaks, *optime complexionatus*, of the most excellent crasis, exact and just temperament; his senses were more acute and delicate than ordinary; and all the time of his suffering, so they continued; not in the least blunted, dulled, or rebated, by the pains he suffered.

"The death of Christ, doubtless, contained the greatest and "acutest pains imaginable*: because these pains of Christ alone,

* *Continebat penas maximas, quia miseriam illam totam aequabat, qua hominum peccata merebantur. Ames, meditat.*

“ were intended to equalize all that misery which the sin of men “ deserved,” all that pain which the damned shall, and the elect deserve to feel. Now, to have pains meeting at once upon one person, equivalent to all the pains of the damned ; judge you what a plight Christ was in.

Thirdly, The death of the cross was a shameful death : not only because the crucified were stripped quite naked, and so exposed as spectacles of shame ; but mainly, because it was a kind of death which was appointed for the basest, and vilest of men.

The free-men when they committed capital crimes, were not condemned to the cross. No, that was looked upon as the death appointed for slaves *. Tacitus calls it *servile supplicium*, the punishment of a slave : and to the same sense Juvenal speaks, *pone crucem servo*, put the cross upon the back of a slave. As they had a great esteem of a free-man, so they manifested it, even when they had forfeited their lives, in cutting them off by more honourable kinds of death. This, by hanging on the tree, was always accounted most ignominious. To this day we say of him that is hanged, He dies the death of a dog : and yet it is said of our Lord Jesus, Heb. xii. 2. He not only endured the cross, but also despised the shame. Obedience to his Father’s will, and zeal for our salvation, made him digest the shame of it, and despise the baseness that was in it.

Fourthly, The death of the cross was a cursed death. Upon that account he is said to be “ made *καταρα*, a curse for us ; For it is “ written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,” Gal. iii. 13. “ His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but “ thou shalt in any wise bury him that day ; for he that is hang- “ ed is accursed of God †.” The very symbol of lifting them up betwixt heaven and earth carried much shame in it. For it implieth this in it, that the person so used, was so execrable, base, and vile, that he deserved not to tread upon the earth or touch the surface of the ground any more. And the command for burying them that day, doth not at all mitigate, but rather aggravates this curse : speaking the person to be so abominable, that as he is lifted up into the air, and hanging between heaven and earth, as unworthy ever to set foot more upon the earth ; so when dead, they were to hasten to bury him, that such an abominable sight

* *Vide Ilypsium de cruce, l. 1. c. 11. Ingenui hominis nulla est estimatio.*

Homer in his 21st *Odysse*, calls this death *μη καθαρον*, i. e. impure ; and Eustathius *μιαρον*, i. e. base.

† This is appointed, not in honour of the burial of the dead body, but to the end that such a body, which was accursed, might be quickly removed from the surface of the earth, that so the earth might not be defiled. *Thus Bonfrerius.*

might be removed as soon as might be, from before the eyes of men; and that the earth might not be defiled, by his lying on the surface of it, when taken down.

However, as the learned Junius hath judiciously observed, this curse is only a ceremonial curse; for otherwise it is neither in itself, nor by the law of nature, or by civil law, more execrable than any other death. And the main reason why the ceremonial law affixed the curse to this, rather than to any other death, was principally with respect to the death Christ was to die. And therefore, reader, see and admire the providence of God, that Christ should die by a Roman, and not by a Judaic law. For crucifying, or hanging on a tree, was a Roman punishment, and not in use among the Jews. But the scriptures cannot be broken.

Fifthly, The death of the cross was a very slow and lingering death. They died leisurely. Which still increaseth and aggravateth the misery of it. If a man must die a violent death, it is a favour to be dispatched: as they that are pressed to death, beg for more weight. And it is a favour to those that are hanged, to be smitten on the breast, or plucked by the heels by their friends. On the contrary, to hang long in the midst of tortures, to have death coming upon us with a slow pace, that we may feel every tread of it, as it comes on, is a misery.

The tyrant that heard the poor martyr was dead under his first torments, said, as one disappointed, *Evasit*, "He hath escaped me." For he intended to have kept him much longer under torments. And it was the cruel counsel of another to his executioner; "Let him die so as he may feel himself how he dies*." And surely in this respect it was worse for Christ, than any other that ever was nailed to the tree. For all the while he hanged there, he remained full of life and acute sense. His life departed not gradually, but was whole in him to the last. Other men die gradually, and, towards their end, their sense of pain is much blunted. They falter, and expire by degrees, but Christ stood under the pains of death in his full strength. † His life was whole in him. This was evident by the mighty out-cry he made when he gave up the ghost, which argued him to be full of strength, contrary to the experience of all other men. Which made the centurion when he heard it, to conclude, "Surely this was the "Son of God," Mark xv. 37, 39.

Sixthly, It was a succourless and helpless death to Christ. Sometimes they gave to malefactors amidst their torments, vinegar and

* *Moriatur, ut sentiat se mori.*

† Christ retained life and strength so long as he pleased, and laid them down when he pleased. *Ames.*

myrrh, to blunt, dull, and stupify their senses. And if they hanged long, would break their bones to dispatch them out of their pains. Christ had none of this favour. Instead of vinegar and myrrh, they gave him vinegar and gall to drink, to aggravate his torments. And for the breaking of his bones he prevented it, by dying before they came to break his legs. For the scriptures must be fulfilled, which say, *Not a bone of him shall be broken.*

This now was the kind and nature of that death he died. Even the violent, painful, shameful, cursed, slow, and succourless death of the cross. An ancient punishment both among the Romans and Carthaginians*. But in honour of Christ, who died this death, Constanstine the Great abrogated it by law, ordaining that none should ever be crucified any more, because Christ died that death.

Secondly, As to the manner of the execution. They that were condemned to the death of the cross, (saith † a learned Antiquary of our own) bare their cross upon their own shoulders, to the place of execution. They were stripped of all their clothes, for they suffered naked. And then were fastened to the cross with nails.

The manner how that was done ‡, one gives us in these words, They stretched him out (meaning Christ) like another Isaac upon his own burden, the cross; that so they might take measure of the holes. And though the print of his blood upon it, gave them the true length of his body; yet how strictly do they take it longer than the truth. Thereby at once to crucify and rack him. Then being nailed, like as Moses lifted up the serpent, so was the Son of man lifted up. And when the cross, with the Lord fastened on it, fell into its socket, or basis, it jerked the whole, and every part of his sacred body. And the whole weight hanging upon his nailed hands, the wounds by degrees grew wider and wider: till at last he expired in the midst of those tortures.

And that the equity of their proceedings might the better appear to the people, the cause of the punishment was written in capital letters, and fixed to the tree over the head of the malefactor. Of this appendant to this kind of death, I shall speak distinctly in the next sermon, before I come to handle the manner of his death: there being so much of providence in that circumstance, as invites us to spend more than a few transient thoughts upon it. Meanwhile, in the next place,

Thirdly, We will enquire briefly into the reasons why Christ

* Sozom, lib. 1. cap. 8.

† Godwin's Antiq. l. 3. sect. 3. p. 192.

‡ Herles' Contemplat. of Christ's passion.

died this, rather than any other kind of death. And amongst others, these three are obvious.

First, Because Christ must bear the curse in his death, and a curse by law was affixed to no other kind of death, as it was to this.

The learned Masius upon Joshua ii. 29. commenting upon the death of king Ai, who was hanged upon the tree, until the evening, tells us, “ * That the principal reason of the malediction and execrableness of his death was, because the death of Christ was prefigured in that mystery.” Christ came to take away the curse from us by this death; and so must be made a curse. On him must all the curses of the moral law lie, which were due to us. And that nothing might be wanting to make it a full curse, the very death he died, must also have a ceremonial curse upon it.

Secondly, Christ died this, rather than any other kind of death; to fulfil the types, and prefigurations that of old were made with respect to it. All the sacrifices were lifted up from the earth, upon the altar. But especially the brazen serpent prefigured this death, Numb. xix. 9. Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole. And, saith Christ, John iii. 14. “ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up,” that so he might correspond with that lively type, made of him in the wilderness.

Thirdly, Christ died this, rather than any other death, because it was predicted of him, and in him must all the predictions, as well as types, be fully accomplished. The psalmist spake in the person of Christ, of this death, as plainly as if he had rather been writing the history of what was done, than a prophecy of what was to be done, so many years afterwards, Psal. xxii. 16, 17. “ For dogs have compassed me about, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and feet; I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me.” Which hath a manifest reference to the distension of all his members upon the tree, which was a rack to him. So Zech. xii. 10. “ They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced.” Yea, Christ himself had foretold the death he should die, in the forecited, John iii. 14. saying, “ He must be lifted up,” i. e. hanged between heaven and earth. And the scriptures must be fulfilled.

Thus you have a brief account both of the kind, manner, and reasons of this death of Christ. The improvement of it, you have in the following inferences of truth, deducible from it.

* *Potissima causa maledictionis hujus est, quia Christus in mysterio præsignabatur.*
Masius.

Inference 1. Is Christ dead? and did he die the violent, painful, shameful, cursed, slow, and succourless death of the cross? *Then surely there is forgiveness with God, and plenteous redemption for the greatest of sinners, that by faith apply the blood of the cross to their poor guilty souls.* So speaks the apostle, Col. i. 14. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” And 1 John i. 7. “The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” Two things will make this demonstrable.

A demonstration of pardon for the greatest of sinners.

First, That there is a sufficient efficacy in this blood of the cross, to expiate the greatest sins.

Secondly, That the efficacy of it is designed and intended by God for believing sinners. How clearly do both these propositions lie in the word?

First, That there is sufficient efficacy in the blood of the cross, to expiate and wash away the greatest sins. This is manifest, for it is *precious blood*, as it is called, 1 Pet. i. 18. “Ye were not re-deemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of the Son of God.” This preciousness of the blood of Christ riseth from the union it hath with that person, who is over all, God blessed for ever. And on that account is stiled the blood of God, Acts xx. 28: and so it becomes royal, princely blood: Yea, such for the dignity, and efficacy of it, as never was created, or shall ever run in any other veins but his. The blood of all the creatures in the world, even a sea of human blood bears no more proportion to the precious and excellent blood of Christ, than a dish of common water, to a river of liquid gold. On the account of its invaluable preciousness, it becomes satisfying and reconciling blood to God. So the apostle speaks, Col. i. 20. “And (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” The same blood which is *redemption* to them that dwell on earth, is *confirmation* to them that dwell in heaven. Before the efficacy of this blood, guilt vanishes, and shrinks away as the shadow before the glorious sun. Every drop of it hath a voice, and speaks to the soul that sits trembling under its guilt better things than the blood of Abel, Heb. x. 24. It sprinkles us from all evil, i. e. an unquiet and accusing conscience, Heb. x. 22. For having enough in it to satisfy God, it must needs have enough in it to satisfy conscience.

Conscience can demand no more for its satisfaction, nor will it take less than God demands for his satisfaction. And in this blood is enough to give both satisfaction.

Secondly, As there is sufficient efficacy in this blood to expiate the greatest guilt; so it is as manifest, that the virtue and efficacy of it, is intended and designed by God for the use of believing sinners. Such blood as this was shed, without doubt, for some weighty end, that some might be the better for it. Who they are for whom it is intended, is plain enough from Acts xiii. 39. "And by him all that believe, are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

That the remission of the sins of believers was the great thing designed in the pouring out of this precious blood of Christ, appears from all the sacrifices that figured it to the ancient church. The shedding of that typical blood, spake a design of pardon. And the putting of their hands upon the head of the sacrifice, spake the way and method of believing, by which that blood was then applied to them in that way; and is still applied to us in a more excellent way. Had no pardon been intended, no sacrifices had been appointed.

Moreover, let it be considered, this blood of the cross is the blood of a surety; that came under the same obligations with us, and in our name or stead shed it: and so of course frees and discharges the principal offender, or debtor, Heb. vii. 22. Can God exact satisfaction from the blood and death of his own Son, the surety of believers, and yet still demand it from believers? It cannot be. "Who (saith the apostle) shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 33, 34. And why are faith and repentance prescribed as the *means* of pardon? Why doth God every where in his word, call upon sinners to repent, and believe in this blood? encouraging them so to do, by so many precious promises of remission; and declaring the inevitable and eternal ruin, of all impenitent, and unbelieving ones, who despise and reject this blood? What, I say, doth all this speak, but the possibility of a pardon for the greatest of sinners; and the certainty of a free, full, and final pardon for all believing sinners? O what a joyful sound is this! What ravishing voices of peace, pardon, grace, and acceptance, come to our ears from the blood of the cross?

The greatest guilt that ever was contracted upon a trembling, shaking conscience, can stand before the efficacy of the blood of Christ no more, than the sinner himself can stand before the justice of the Lord, with all that guilt upon him.

Reader, the word assures thee, whatever thou hast been, or art, that sins of as deep a dye as thine, have been washed away in this blood. "I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious; but "I obtained mercy," saith Paul, 1 Tim. i. 13. But it may be

thou wilt object; this was a rare and singular instance, and it is a great question whether any other sinner shall find the like grace that he did. No question of it at all, if you believe in Christ as he did; for he tells us, ver. 16. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." So that upon the same grounds he obtained mercy, you may obtain it also.

Those very men who had a hand in the shedding of Christ's blood, had the benefit of that blood afterwards pardoning them, Acts ii. 36. There is nothing but unbelief and impenitency of heart can bar thy soul from the blessings of this blood.

Inf. 2. Did Christ die the cursed death of the cross for believers, then though there be much of pain, there is nothing of curse in the death of the saints. It still wears its dart, by which it strikes; but hath lost its sting, by which it hurts and destroys. A serpent that hath no sting, may hiss and affright, but we may take him in our hand, without danger. Death poured out all its poison, and lost its sting in Christ's side, when he became a curse for us.

But what speak I of the innocency and harmlessness of death to believers? It is certainly their friend and great benefactor. As there is no curse, so there are many blessings in it. "Death is yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. Yours as a special privilege and favour. Christ hath not only conquered it, but is more than a conqueror; for he hath made it beneficial, and very serviceable to the saints. When Christ was nailed to the tree, then he said as it were to death, which came to grapple with him there, "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction:" and so he was; for he swallowed up death in victory, spoiled it of its power. So that, though it may now affright some weak believers, yet cannot hurt them at all.

Inf. 3. If Christ died the cursed death of the cross for us, how cheerfully should we submit to, and bear any cross for Jesus Christ? He had his cross, and we have ours*; but what feathers are ours compared with his? His cross was a heavy cross indeed, yet how patiently and meekly did he support it! "he endured his cross," we cannot endure or bear ours, though they be not to be named with his. Three things would marvellously strengthen us to bear the cross of Christ, and bring up a good report upon it in the world.

First, That we shall carry it but a little way. *Secondly,* Christ bears the heaviest end of it. *Thirdly,* Innumerable blessings and mercies grow upon the cross of Christ.

* *Omnis Christianus est crucianus, i. e.* Every Christian is a cross-bearer.

First, We shall bear it but a little way. It should be enough to me (saith * a holy one) that Christ will have joy and sorrow halfers of the life of the saints. And that each of them should have a share of our days, as the night and day are kindly partners of time, and take it up betwixt them. But if sorrow be the greediest halfer of our days here, I know joy's day shall dawn, and do more than recompense all our sad hours.

Let my Lord Jesus, (since he will do so) weave my bit-and-span length of time with white and black; well and woe.—Let the rose be neighbour with the thorn.—“When we are over the water, Christ shall cry, down crosses, and up heaven for evermore; down hell, and down death, and down sin, and down sorrow; and up glory, up life, up joy for evermore. It is true, Christ and his cross are not separable in this life; howbeit Christ and his cross part at heaven's door: for there is no house-room for crosses in heaven. One tear, one sigh, one sad heart, one fear, one loss, one thought of trouble cannot find lodging there.”—Sorrow and the saints are not married together! or suppose it was so, heaven shall make a divorce. Life is but short, and therefore crosses cannot be long. Our sufferings are but for a while, 1 Pet. v. 10. They are but the sufferings of the present time, Rom. viii. 18.

Secondly, As we shall carry the cross of Christ but a little way, so Christ himself bears the heaviest end of it. And as one happily expresses, he saith of their crosses, *half mine*. He divideth sufferings with them, and takes the largest share to himself.—“O how sweet a sight (saith one sweetly) is it to see a cross betwixt Christ and us. To hear our Redeemer say, at every sigh, at every blow, and every loss of a believer, *half mine*. For they are called the sufferings of Christ, and the reproach of Christ, Col. ii. 24. Heb. xi. 26. As when two are partners or owners of a ship, half of the gain, and half of the loss, belongeth to either of the two. So Christ in our sufferings, is half gainer, and half loser, with us: yea, the heaviest end of the black tree lieth on your Lord. It falleth first upon him, and but rebounds from him upon you:” “The reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me,” Psal. lxiv. 9. Nay, so speak as the thing is, Christ doth not only bear half, or the better part, but the whole of our cross and burden. Yea, he bears all, and more than all; for he bears us and our burden too, or else we would quickly sink, and faint under it.

* If twenty crosses be written for you in God's book, they will come at last to nineteen, and after that to nothing. Put your head betwixt Christ's breasts for evermore, and his own soft hand shall dry your face, and wipe away your tears.

Thirdly, As we have not far to carry it, and Christ carries the heaviest part; yea, all the burden for us; yea, us and our burden too; so, in the last place, it is reviving to think what an innumerable multitude of blessings and mercies are the fruit and offspring of a sanctified cross. Since that tree was so richly watered with the blood of Christ; what store of choice, and rich fruits doth it bear to believers?

Our sufferings (saith one) are washed in the blood of Christ, as well as our souls. “For Christ’s merits bought a blessing to the crosses of the sons of God. Our troubles owe us a free passage through him. Devils, and men, and crosses, are our debtors; and death, and all storms are our debtors, to blow our poor tossed bark over the water freight-free: and to set the travellers in their own known ground. Therefore we shall die, and yet live.—I know no man hath a velvet cross, but the cross is made of what God will have it; but verily, howbeit, it be no warrantable market to buy a cross, yet I dare not say, O that I had liberty to sell Christ’s cross, lest therewith also I should sell joy, comfort, sense of love, patience, and the kind visits of a bridegroom.—I have but small experience of sufferings for Christ, but let my Judge and witness in heaven, lay my soul in the balance of justice; if I find not a young heaven, and a little paradise of glorious comforts, and soul-delighting love-kisses of Christ in suffering for him and his truth.—My prison is my palace, my sorrow is with child of joy; my losses are rich losses, my pain easy pain, my heavy days are holy days and happy days. I may tell a new tale of Christ to my friends.—O what owe I to the file, and to the hammer, and to the furnace of my Lord Jesus! who hath now let me see how good the wheat of Christ is, that goes through his mill, and his oven, to be made bread for his own table. Grace tried is better than grace, and more than grace. It is glory in its infancy.

“Who knows the truth of grace without a trial.—O how little getteth Christ of us, but what he winneth (to speak so) with much toil and pains? And how soon would faith freeze without a cross? Bear your cross therefore with joy.”

Inf. 4. Did Christ die the death, yea, the worst of deaths for us? Then it follows, that *our mercies are brought forth with great difficulty; and that which is sweet to us in the fruition, was costly, and hard to Christ in the acquisition.* Surely, upon every mercy we have this motto written, *The price of Blood*, Col. i. 14. “In whom we have redemption through his blood:” Upon which a late neat * writer delivers himself thus. “The way of grace is here

* Locker on Col.

“considerable; life comes through death; God comes in Christ; and Christ comes in blood: the choicest mercies come through the greatest miseries; prime favours come swimming in blood to us. Through a red sea Israel came to Canaan. Many a man lost his life, and much blood shed; the very land flowing with milk and honey was first made to flow with blood, ere Israel could inherit the promise. Seven nations were destroyed, ere the land of Canaan was divided to the Israelites, Acts xiii. 19.—Sin makes mercy so deadly hard to bring forth. To christen every precious child, every *Benjamin*, *Benoni*, every son of God’s right-hand, a son of sorrow and death to her that brings him forth. Adam’s sweets had no bitter till he transgressed God’s will: one mercy did not die to bring forth another, till he died. But oh! how should this raise the value of our mercies? What, the price of blood, the price of precious blood, the blood of the cross! O what an esteem should this raise!

“Things (as the same ingenious author adds) are prized rather as they come, than as they are. Far fetched and dear bought makes all the price, and gives all the worth with us weak creatures. Upon this ground the scripture, when it speaks of our great fortune, tells the great price it cost, as eyeing our weakness, who look more at what things cost, than at what they are. And as knowing if any thing will take with us, this will, *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5.

“Man is a legal creature, and looks much at what is given for a thing. What did this cost? Why, it cost Christ’s own blood. Colour is more than the cloth with us, and scarlet colour is a general taking colour with us: and therefore is Christ’s garment dipped in blood, and he admired in this habit. *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with garments dyed red from Bozra?*”

Beware then you abuse not any of the mercies that Christ brought forth with so many bitter pangs and throes. And let all this endear Christ more than ever to you, and make you in a deep sense of his grace and love, to say,

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.