

SERMONS UPON JOHN I. 29.

SERMON I.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

JOHN i. 29.

THE words are spoken upon occasion of John's meeting with Christ. Before his temptations in the desert Christ had honoured John's baptism; after his return from the desert he cometh to honour his ministry. Christ himself was one of John's auditors. It fell out happily by the divine providence, that so John might give him a solemn testimony before the people, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' &c.

In the words we have—

1. A note of demonstration or ostension, as pointing at him with the finger, 'Behold.'

2. The person demonstrated, set forth here under the notion of 'the Lamb of God.'

3. His work and office, from whence the title is given him, 'Which taketh away the sin of the world.'

The text is full of matter; every word and title is emphatical.

Two doctrines I shall observe from the words—(1.) That Jesus Christ was the true Lamb of God; (2.) The great work of Christ the Lamb of God is to take away the sin of the world.

Doct. 1. That Jesus Christ was the true Lamb of God.

1. I shall show that Christ was the true Lamb of God.

2. How we are to behold him.

1. That Christ is the true Lamb of God. He may be called so either with allusion to the common lamb, or else to the holy lamb, which, *διακριτικῶς*, is here called 'the lamb of God,' the lamb appointed by him for sacrifice, or else to the paschal lamb.

First, There are many fit resemblances between him and the common lamb. I shall instance only in three—(1.) Innocency; (2.) Liableness to injuries; and (3.) Meekness and patience.

1. For innocency. Of all creatures the lamb is the most harmless, the true emblem of innocency. So was Christ without wrong and without guile: Isa. liii. 9, 'He hath done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.' All wrong and harm is there reduced to two heads—violence and deceit; the one the fruit of wicked cunning, the other the fruit of abused power; both are far removed from Christ, for he was holy and harmless.

2. So for liableness to injuries. Sheep are not ravenous creatures,

but easily exposed to the prey of others, and can use no forcible means to defend themselves : Mat. x. 16, ' Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' So was Christ himself, that in him might be exemplified the spirit and genius of that religion which he would establish. Ever since there hath been sin in the world, man hath been grasping at power, to use it, not in acts of mercy, but violence ; but the great God, who hath all power in his hands, would come into the world as a lamb to the slaughter, and redeem the world that was lost, not by grasping at power and greatness, but by meekness and sufferings ; and so establish a kingdom of patience, not of power.

3. For meekness and patience. For patience in his death he was a lamb : Isa. liii. 7, ' He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' Swine will howl and whine when they are touched, but sheep are dumb before the shearers. Christ did not open his mouth unless it were to instruct, and bless, and pray for those that crucified him, but went patiently to the cross. It was anciently observed among the heathens, that if the beast struggled, or did run away from the altar, that it was counted an unlucky sacrifice. If we should go by this rule in judging concerning the success of our sin-offering, his carriage at his death promiseth an happy issue ; for ' He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' He died not as the beasts in the temple, against their will ; if he complained of the bitter cup, it was to show that he was not without sense, not that he was without patience.

Secondly, The sacrifice lamb, therefore called ' the lamb of God.' All lambs were God's creatures, and therefore might be called his ; but the lamb appointed for sacrifice was God's in a peculiar manner, as set apart for this use by his special appointment. And yet that lamb was not God's so much as Christ is ; for there man had his choice, and was to interpose his judgment what lamb he would single out of the flock ; and therefore the sacrifices and offerings were called theirs who presented them, not God's who appointed them ; but Christ was both appointed by God : 1 Peter i. 20, ' Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world ;' and offered by God : ' Heb. ix. 14, ' Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God ;' and accepted by God, in token whereof he hath set him forth in the gospel as a propitiation for sin : Rom. iii. 25, ' Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' And in the text he is said to be *ὁ ἄμνος*, not *a* lamb, but *the* lamb, that lamb of God ; which is said partly by way of dignity and distinction, to put a difference between him and the typical lamb ; and partly by way of ostension and demonstration, that lamb figured in the sacrifices, and spoken of by the prophets ; this is he, ' the Lamb of God ' indeed. Now lambs were often used in sacrifices. In the purification of women : Lev. xii. 6, ' She shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering.' In the cleansing of the leper : Lev. xiv. 10, ' On the eighth day he shall bring two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb without blemish ;' both which figured the cleansing of our defiled natures by Christ, and the doing away the defilement and leprosy of sin. But the

most frequent and constant use of the lamb was in the daily sacrifice : Exod. xxix. 38, 39, ' Now this is that thou shalt offer upon the altar, two lambs of the first year, day by day continually ; the one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even ; ' which was to be done with meal and wine, the two great supports of the natural life ; all which figured Christ. God is every day pleased and propitiated for our sins, and by virtue of his daily mediation we and all our actions are accepted of the Lord. The Lord Jesus is our daily lamb, which must be represented to God's justice, as the only means of our atonement, every morning and every evening. We need it as much as they, and are more obliged than they, because all is clear and open to us. Now upon the sabbath-day this offering was double : Num. xxviii. 9, 10, ' And on the sabbath-day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth-deals of flour for a meat-offering mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof. This is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.' Then God requireth a more solemn remembrance of Christ, our lamb slain for us.

Thirdly, But the most solemn figure and type of Christ was the paschal lamb, and most frequently interpreted of him in the new testament : 1 Cor. v. 7, ' Christ our passover is sacrificed for us ; ' and John xix. 36, ' A bone of him shall not be broken.' This was originally spoken of the paschal lamb : Exod. xii. 46, ' Neither shall ye break a bone thereof.' Now the evangelist bringeth this as a prophecy ; this which was ordained concerning the paschal lamb is said to be fulfilled in Christ ; it is brought as a reason why the divine providence permitted not his legs to be broken. This is the type to which John here alludeth, and saith, ' Behold the Lamb of God.' Therefore here my work must be fixed, to state the resemblance between the paschal lamb and Jesus Christ. Certainly the use of that ordinance was typical, as well as historical ; it was ordained not only as a memorial of their redemption from Egypt, but as a figure of our redemption by Christ. To the first use it is supposed David hath respect when he said, Ps. cxi. 4, 5, ' He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion. He hath given meat to them that fear him ; he will ever be mindful of his covenant.' The meat there mentioned is supposed to respect the paschal lamb, when they were to remember the works of God. But the chief use was to type out Christ, who hath so taken away sin that he hath freed us from eternal death. He was the truth and substance of that type, and the true passover sacrificed for us, in whose person, and in whose sufferings and benefits, all that is really to be found which is pointed out and typified by that shadow.

That this may more clearly appear to you, I shall show you that the paschal lamb figured—(1.) The person of Christ ; (2.) His death on the cross ; (3.) The fruits of his death ; (4.) The manner how we are made partakers of them.

1. The paschal lamb figured the person of Christ. The prophets and apostles do often set forth the person of Christ under the notion of a lamb. Isaiah calleth him a lamb : Isa. liii. 7, ' He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.' And Philip, instructing the eunuch, applieth

that prophecy to Christ, Acts viii. 35. And among the apostles, Peter telleth you that we are redeemed 'with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter i. 19. And John the evangelist calleth him often 'The Lamb that was slain,' Rev. v. 6, 9. And here John the Baptist, who was *fibula legis et evangelii*, in the middle between the prophets and apostles, calleth him 'The Lamb of God,' in the text; and ver. 36, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' And fitly, for Christ was a lamb in regard of his meekness, patience, and humble innocence. For his meekness he was a lamb, for he saith, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' Mat. xi. 29; and for his innocency, for 'there was no guile found in his mouth,' 1 Peter ii. 22. But chiefly for his patience; for 'as a lamb before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth,' Acts viii. 32; 'He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets,' Isa. xlii. 2; 'Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously,' 1 Peter ii. 23. Not that he wanted strength and power, 'for all power was given him both in heaven and earth;' and if he would have made use of them, he had more than twelve legions of angels at his command: Mat. xxvi. 53, 'Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' one of which was able enough easily to dissipate and destroy all his enemies. But 'he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,' Mat. xx. 28; and therefore he humbled himself, being made 'obedient to death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. ii. 8. Thus the lion of the tribe of Judah, by a strange metamorphosis, of a lion was made a lamb, that out of the eater might come forth meat, and out of the strong might come forth sweetness; for this lamb feedeth us with his flesh, and giveth us to drink of his blood: John vi. 55, 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' No dish so savoury as that to an hungry conscience, no draught so comfortable to a thirsty soul. And besides this, he clotheth us with the fleece of his own righteousness, and therefore we are said to put on Christ: Gal. iii. 29, 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ;' and Rom. xiii. 14, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.' And to receive white garments from him, by which the shame of our nakedness may be covered: Rev. iii. 18, 'I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed.' I remember it is said, Gen. iii. 21, that 'God clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins;' most probably of the skins of the sacrifices, for as yet they did not eat flesh; and so it would fitly imply the Redeemer's righteousness to clothe our nakedness:

'Nudatus tegmine vitæ
Pellibus ut tegetetur homo suspenditur Agnus.'—TERTUL.

But I must more expressly make good the resemblance between Christ and the paschal lamb.

[1.] The lamb was taken from among the rest of the flock: Exod. xii. 5, 'Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats.' So Christ from his brethren: Deut. xviii. 15, 'I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren.' The paschal lamb was a lamb

as other lambs ; so Christ had the same common nature with other believers ; he was a man as we are : ‘ Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same,’ Heb. ii. 14 ; and ‘ in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren,’ ver. 17 ; sin only excepted : Heb. iv. 15, ‘ He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.’

[2.] The lamb chosen was to be without blemish ; so was Christ ‘ a lamb without spot and blemish,’ 1 Peter i. 19 ; that is, free from sin, for sins are the spots and blemishes of the soul ; from these Christ was free : ‘ Which of you convinceth me of sin?’ John viii. 46. Pilate, that condemned him, pronounced him innocent, and professed before the Jews that ‘ he found no fault in him,’ Luke xxiii. 14 ; Heb. vii. 26, 27, ‘ For such an high priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners ; who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s ;’ for then how could he satisfy for us who had sins of his own to expiate ? And then the Jews would not without reason have objected to him : Mark xxvii. 42, ‘ He saveth others, himself he cannot save.’ No ; John joineth these two as inseparable : 1 John iii. 5, ‘ And we know that he was manifested to take away our sins ; and in him is no sin.’

[3.] This lamb also was to be a male ; as also Christ, that he might be the Son of God, and king, and priest, and prophet to the church. Therefore Luke ii. 23, that law is applied to Christ, that ‘ every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.’

[4.] The lamb was to be a year old, of competent age ; as Christ also was to have some experience of human life before he died, that he might be acquainted with our griefs and sorrows, and tried in all points like us ; but in his flower, when he had most reason to love his life, then he laid it down for his people’s sake.

[5.] The lamb, being separated, was to be kept four days, from the tenth day of the first month till the fourteenth of the same, Exod. xii. 6 ; which was a rite which had not only a moral use, but a mystical signification. A moral use : Fagius saith he was *ad cubitium obligatus*, tied to their bedposts, that, hearing the bleatings of the lamb, they might remember the sorrows of Egypt, and be the more thankful for their redemption. And it had a mystical use, for it signifieth the time between Christ’s consecration at his baptism and his death, after three years and a half spent in his ministry ; as also Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem on the tenth day of the same month by the sheep-gate, which was the gate by which the sheep and lambs were led to be sacrificed in the temple, John xii. 1, 12.

2. His death on the cross was figured by the paschal lamb, for this lamb was to be slain, as the Messiah was to be cut off by a violent death : Dan. ix. 26, ‘ And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.’ The lamb was to be slain at the middle of the month Nisan, at the full moon, between the two evenings. Christ’s death was just at the same time, when they were killing the paschal lamb ; for the paschal lamb was to be killed between the two evenings ; that is, as Josephus interpreteth it, *ἀπὸ ἐννάτης ὥρας μέχρι ἐνδεκάτης*, from the ninth hour unto the eleventh, that is, between three and five o’clock in our account ; and about that time Christ died : Mat. xxvii. 45, 46, ‘ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all

the land till the ninth hour: and about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice;’ and ver. 50, ‘Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, gave up the ghost.’ And the place was the same; for ever since David’s time the paschal lambs were killed at Jerusalem in the porch of the temple, where Christ also suffered. And it is said, Exod. xii. 6, that ‘the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening;’ which was in a manner fulfilled in Christ, against whom the scribes and pharisees, and all the people conspired: and therefore, when Pilate would have released him, ‘they all said unto him, Let him be crucified,’ Mat. xxvii. 22; and Luke xxiii. 18, ‘They cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas;’ *παμπληθει*, all the multitude together. And the kind of the death agreeth; for as the lamb’s blood was shed, so was Christ’s for the people of God. The blood of the paschal lamb was not spilt on the ground, but carried away in basins, Exod. xii. 22, because it signified the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without spot and blemish. God would not have it spilt upon the ground; that blood is the true treasure of the church, which the Son of God still representeth unto the Father on our behalf. Again, the roasting of the lamb; the lamb was not to be eaten raw, nor sodden, nor baked, nor boiled, but roasted by fire. The fire represents the wrath of God: Mal. iv. 1, ‘Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven;’ and Heb. xii. 29, ‘Our God is a consuming fire.’ In this fire it behoved the Lamb of God to be roasted, when he offered himself a surety for sinners, and was substituted into their room and place. This was that which made him sweat drops of blood, and for this cause did he complain, Ps. xxii. 14, 15, ‘My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels: my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws.’ And their manner of roasting it is very notable, which was (as Maimonides telleth us) not by a spit of iron turned round about, as we do, but by hanging the flesh on a broach of wood in the midst of the fire, which had some shadow of Christ’s crucifixion; especially if that be true which Justin Martyn in his dialogue with Tryphon the Jew telleth him, that their broach was fashioned to the shape of a cross, a transverse piece of wood thrust through the shoulders of the lamb. And why should we not believe this holy man, who was well acquainted with the Jewish affairs, being born at Sychem? Besides the notable providence of God that Christ’s legs should not be broken.

3. The fruits and benefits of this sacrifice.

[1.] By the sprinkling the blood of the lamb, he that destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians could not touch them, Heb. xi. 28. This secured them against the destroying angel; to teach us that the justice of God doth only spare them whose consciences are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. The blood of the lamb and the blood of Christ was shed for this end, that it might be sprinkled, and being sprinkled, might exempt, and free us from death. So the apostle St Peter speaketh of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, by which the elect are sanctified and saved: 1 Peter i. 2, ‘Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus

Christ.' There was not only blood shed, but blood sprinkled; so Heb. xii. 24, 'And to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' God said of the blood of the paschal lamb, Exod. xii. 23, 'For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you.' So when wrath maketh inquisition for sinners, God beholding his Son's blood, wherewith the elect are sprinkled, they are exempted from the curse wherein others have entangled and involved themselves; for saith the apostle Paul, Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' So that we need not fear the sword of the destroying angel, whether he be an angel of darkness or an evil angel, for God hath 'delivered us from the power of darkness' by the blood of his Son, Col. i. 13, or an heavenly angel. By the same blood he hath 'reconciled all things unto himself both in heaven and in earth,' Col. i. 20. Those angels which were heretofore set as a guard upon the earthly paradise, with a flaming sword, to keep us out from thence, do carry us into the heavenly paradise: Luke xvi. 22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;' and are ministering spirits sent forth for the heirs of promise, not to destroy them, but to keep them and preserve them: Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?'

[2.] In that very night in which the paschal lamb was slain, the Israelites obtained their freedom and deliverance out of Egypt. So hath Christ by his blood freed us from the slavery of sin, the devil, and the world, and called us into the glorious liberty of the children of God: 1 Cor. vii. 23, 'Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.' So Heb. ii. 15, 'That he might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage;' and John viii. 36, 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' We are redeemed unto God as they went into the wilderness to worship God.

[3.] In that very night God exercised judgments on the gods of the Egyptians. So it is said, Exod. xii. 12, 'Against all the gods of the Egyptians will I exercise judgment;' and it is repeated, Num. xxxiii. 4, 'For the Egyptians buried all their first-born, which the Lord had smitten among them; upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments.' Some say by slaying the beasts which the Egyptians worshipped, as the ox. Jonathan in his paraphrase saith that all their idols of metal melted, and their idols of stone and earth were broken in pieces, and their idols of wood were burned to ashes. Whether this or that we cannot tell, because the scripture is silent; but surely these threatenings were not in vain, and wanted not their certain effect. Certain we are that by the blood of Christ the devil's kingdom goeth down: John xii. 31, 32, 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' As Christ's kingdom goeth up, 'The idols are thrown to the moles and to the bats,' Isa. ii. 20; and God will 'famish all the gods of the earth,' Zeph. ii. 11; and in the 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Ye were not

redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversations, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' The blood of Christ fetcheth over men from their inveterate customs and superstitions. And Rev. xii. 11, 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb;' and 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.'

How shall we be partakers of those good things which come to us from the Lamb of God. Two things were required of these Israelites—that they should sprinkle the blood of this lamb upon the lintel and the two side-posts, and than eat his flesh in an holy and religious manner; and if any of the Israelites had neglected either of these, he had refused the grace annexed to this ordinance, and so lost the benefit of it. So if we neglect the means by which Christ is to be applied, we lose our benefit by him.

(1.) They were to sprinkle the lintel and the two side-posts of their doors. At another time God gave them direction to write his law on the door-posts: Deut. xi. 20, 'Thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates;' which I mention that we may the better understand what is meant by them. By these door-posts are meant our hearts, for these God sprinkleth with the blood of his Son: Heb. x. 22, 'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' And upon these hearts of ours doth he write his laws: Jer. xxxi. 32, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;' for the hearts of men are as open to God as the doors of our houses are to ourselves. Now our hearts are sprinkled with the blood of Christ when we firmly believe that God is propitiated by the blood of Christ, and will spare all those who in a broken-hearted manner sue out their pardon in Christ's name, unfeignedly devoting themselves to God. Oh, then, let every one of us get out hearts sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and apply it to our consciences, and say, with the apostle, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;' and again, Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world;' and again, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them.' These are true workings of heart; only remember, the same place that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, on the same place must the law be written, that we may love God, and keep his law, and entirely give up ourselves to do his will, and be subject to him. And remember also, that it is the lintel and side-posts that must be sprinkled, and the law was written upon the door-posts, not inscribed upon the threshold. There are some which tread the blood of the covenant underfoot: Heb. x. 29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?' These are swine and dogs, before whom we must not 'cast holy things, lest they tread them under feet,' Mat. vii. 6. These

prefer their carnal satisfaction before the fruits of Christ's death, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage.

(2.) By the same faith by which the blood of the Lamb of God is sprinkled on the doors of our hearts, by the same faith is his flesh eaten. The Lamb of God was given, not only as a ransom to divine justice, but as food for our souls. The eating of the sacrifice noteth the manner of our fruition of Christ, for eating implieth an intimate union. Those things which are eaten are turned into our substance, and become one with us: John vi. 53, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.' Christ is as truly meat as the paschal lamb was, but meat, not for the body, but the soul; and therefore he is eaten not with the mouth of the body, which receiveth bodily food, but the mouth of the soul, which is faith. The appetite is spiritual, so is the food; it is a spiritual hunger and a spiritual thirst that must be satisfied. Now a corporeal thing beareth no proportion with it; there is no satisfying this hunger nor quenching this thirst but by coming to Christ, that is, believing in him; for it is said, John vi. 35, 'I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.' In that manner we receive Christ in that manner he dwelleth in us. Now he dwelleth in us by faith: Eph. iii. 17, 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.' Christ dwelleth in us, not by his infinite presence as God, so he is everywhere; nor by his corporeal presence as man, so the heavens must contain him; but by his gracious presence, and special influence as our head, whereby he quickeneth us; therefore we are to receive him by faith, and not by the mouth and stomach, and give him a hearty welcome into our souls. The Israelites in the wilderness 'did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ,' 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. As they did eat Christ and drink Christ before ever his body was formed in the Virgin's womb, so do we now he is ascended into heaven. The passover lamb was not to be eaten raw or half-roasted, but thoroughly roasted; so is the Lamb of God; he is not digested, and turned into strength and nourishment by a few crude, cold, cursory, and careless thoughts; but this mystery must be much concocted by deep, serious, pressing, and ponderous meditation; for meditation is that to the mind which concoction and digestion is to the stomach. An unattentive mind gets no warmth, no strength, no comfort from the Lamb of God. In short, we must so mind these things as to choose them, and so choose them as to be determined and governed by our choice in our whole course. The lamb was to be eaten whole; there was nothing to be left of him: Exod. xii. 10, 'And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning;' to show that Christ must not be divided, not nature from nature, nor office from office, nor benefit from benefit; this is to eat part of Christ and leave the rest. If we would have his glory, we must be partakers of his sufferings, and take up his cross; if we will have him for our redeemer and saviour, we must own him for our Lord and lawgiver; if we would be feasted with privileges, we must not neglect duties; his Spirit must renew us, as well as his merit justify us. The paschal lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs; it is

our misery giveth Christ a relish. God casts us into sufferings, or puts us under a cloud, that we may not be gospel-gluttled, or cloyed with doctrines of grace. He must be eaten with unleavened bread, simple plain bread without mixture: 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened; for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' Christ, in whose mouth there is no guile, cannot endure hypocrisy. At first they were to eat the passover with their loins girt, their staff in their hands, and shoes on their feet. So Luke xii. 35, 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;' 1 Peter i. 13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds;' Eph. vi. 14, 15, 'Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' We are strangers here, and must put on for heaven, and be ready for a remove for the heavenly journey.

II. How we are to behold him, or how he is to be considered by us. This *ecce*, behold, doth not only point at Christ as personally and corporally present as an object of the senses, but doth excite their mind and faith to get a spiritual sight of him, to behold him in the quality of his office. He is not personally present with us, as he was when these words were said, yet that doth not hinder the sight of faith. Whenever we are conversant about these holy mysteries, it may be said to us, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.'

1. Behold him with seriousness and reverence. This mystery must not be passed over with a few hasty and running thoughts. It is μέγα μυστήριον, the greatest wonder that ever was in the world, that God should die, and for such forlorn creatures. How should we be swallowed up of admiration whenever we think of it! When this Lamb of God was killing, the creatures were all in amazement, the earth trembled, the rocks rent, the sun was eclipsed. Oh, how great is the stupidity and dulness of our hearts, that we can no more seriously think of it! Heb. iii. 1, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.' Serious meditation is like the concoction of meat in the stomach.

2. Behold him with application: Job v. 27, 'Hear it, and know thou it for thy good;' Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we then say to these things?' Excite thine own heart: Surely this was for my sins, if I have an heart to receive Christ, and make use of him for this end and purpose: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' and 1 Peter i. 20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.'

3. Behold him with an eye of faith: Isa. xlv. 22, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;' Heb. xii. 2, 'Looking unto Jesus;' Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.' Faith gets such a clear sight of things, as if we had been by when he suffered and paid this ransom.

4. Behold him with an eye of repentance, and brokenness of heart: Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and

shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for his only son ; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' It was thy sins that pierced him, therefore behold him and mourn.

5. Behold him with an eye of thankfulness, as the great instance of God's love, who would by so costly a remedy procure our pardon and happiness : 1 John iv. 9, 10, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love ; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

6. Behold your suffering and crucified Saviour with an eye of love, so as to love him the more. *Ὁ ἔρωσ ἐμοῦ ἐσταυρώτημ*, my love is crucified. Ignatius : *Quo vilior, eo charior*. The more vile and humble he was, the more dear he should be to you. Let it persuade us to a real love, to allow him a dominion and lordship in our hearts ; that is real love, to obey God : Rom. v. 8, 'God commended his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' This love must beget love.

Use 1. To press you to behold the Lamb of God ; behold him as a sacrifice for sin, whose blood applied doth quiet the conscience and turn away the curse. These words present the more glorious spectacle and object, not to your sight, but to your faith ; not to your senses, but to your most serious and intimate consideration. The object is Christ crucified, the only true propitiatory sacrifice for sin, the chief point of christian knowledge, and the most powerful means of the creature's good. Oh, behold him ! look not at bread and wine in the Lord's supper, but at the Lamb of God.

Use 2. To press you to take and eat Christ, and receive him out of God's hands by faith. He is the Lamb of God. God designed him for this work, when man had no way to help himself : 1 Peter i. 20, 'Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.' God tendereth him to you ; now take and eat. God, the party offended, hath authorised Christ to be a mediator ; say, then, Lord, thou hast appointed thy Son, and sent him into the world to be a ransom for our souls : he is now offered to me ; Lord, I come to eat his flesh and drink his blood. We must eat him so as to feel the virtue of both, changing our hearts, and comforting our consciences. Changing our hearts ; other food is changed into our substance, this changeth us : 2 Cor. v. 17, 'He that is in Christ is a new creature.' Comforting our consciences : Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?' Is God unwilling to give Christ ? or is Christ unable to do his work ?

SERMON II.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

JOHN i. 29.

DOCT. 2. The great work of Christ, the Lamb of God, is to take away the sins of the world.

1. What is meant by 'the world.'

2. In what manner Christ taketh away the sins of the world.

3. That this is the great end, work, and scope of Christ's coming into the world.

I. What is meant by 'the world'? Why is there such a capacious and comprehensive word used, since it is clear that all the world have not benefit by Christ, for many of them die in their sins?

Ans. 1. To show the difference between the Lamb of God and the sacrifices of the law. The old sacrifices were only offered for the people of Israel, but Christ's death hath a larger extent, to people of all places, Jews and gentiles: 1 John ii. 2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' And in all ages, from the beginning of the world to the end: Rev. xiii. 8, 'He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' The Lamb of God is of an universal and perpetual use.

2. To show the sufficiency of this mediatorial sacrifice, it is of such a full and overflowing merit that it becometh a foundation for a tender of grace to every creature. Here is a groundwork and foundation laid for the truth of this proposition: Mark xvi. 16, that 'whosoever believeth shall be saved.' So that here is a great invitation and encouragement for every oppressed soul; if Christ taketh away the sins of the world, put in for a share; thou art a member of the world. Paul creepeth in at the back-door of the promise: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Christ would not have sinners exclude themselves, but attend upon him for this benefit. Therefore he would have his grace set forth in the most comprehensive terms, that all that find themselves sinners may stir up themselves to find benefit by him.

3. Those elect ones, who have actual benefit by this sacrifice, may be called 'the world;' partly because of their number; take them altogether, and they are many, and therefore called 'world;' Rev. vii. 9, 'I beheld a great multitude, which no man could number,' &c.; and partly in regard of God's estimation; though they are few, they are as good as all the world to him; and partly because they will one day be set apart from the rest of mankind, and make a peculiar world of themselves.

II. In what manner doth Christ take away the sins of the world? I shall give my answer in these propositions—

1. The whole world in its natural estate lieth under sin and wrath. The scripture in one place telleth us, 1 John v. 19, 'The whole world lieth in wickedness;' and in another, that 'all the world is become guilty before God,' Rom. iii. 19. Both together speak this much, that the sin and misery of the world was such that it groaned for a saviour,

even as a man sick of a mortal disease, and almost at his last gasp, hath need of a physician. In the corruption of nature all are involved: Rom. iii. 23, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' and so by consequence all are under the wrath of God: Eph. ii. 3, 'We are by nature the children of wrath, even as others.' Which abideth upon us while we remain unbelieving and impenitent: John iii. 36, 'He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' And besides this, there is the dominion of actual sin, Rom. vi. 14. All which show the miserable state of the world, and the high need of a saviour. Sin liveth with men from the birth to the grave; and all are become abominable and filthy; they are all gone out of the way; there is none that seeketh after God; there is none that doeth good, no not one, Ps. xiv. 1-3. They are all gone out of the way of holiness and happiness; they are all become vile and loathsome to God, all guilty of a careless neglect of God, and of their duty, and of the service they owe to him; all are given to please the flesh: John iii. 6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.' So general a wickedness and defection from God is there throughout the world, as if they had cast off all fear, and care, and love of God and his service; though they speak honourably of him in words, yet in their deeds they deny him, and disobey his authority, and wholly abandon themselves to please the flesh.

2. To lie under sin, and the consequences thereof, is a burden too heavy for us to bear, and miserable are they who have it lying upon their own shoulders. How light soever sins may seem to be when they are committed, yet they will not be found to be light when we come to reckon with God for them. Sin to a waking conscience is one of the heaviest burdens that ever was felt: Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'My iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.' If you do but taste of this cup, if a spark of God's wrath light upon the conscience, what a weight and pressure is this upon the soul! You will find the little finger of sin to be heavier than the loins of any other sorrow. You may know it in part by what Christ suffered. If his soul was heavy unto death, if he felt such strange agonies, sweated drops of curdled blood, lost the actual sensible comforts of his godhead when he bore the burden of sin, what shall any one of us do, if he were to bear his own burden? If this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? You may also know it by the complaints of the saints, when the finger of God hath but touched them. All life and power is gone if God should set home one sin upon the conscience: Ps. xl. 12, 'Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.' So Job complaineth that the arrows of the Almighty are within him, the poison whereof did drink up his spirits, Job vi. 4. If you will know what it is to bear sin, ask a tender conscience or a troubled conscience. What disquiets of soul do wicked men feel when their consciences are a little awakened! how uneasy do their hearts sit within them! Prov. xxviii. 14, 'He that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.' Cain crieth out, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear,' Gen. iv. 13. What large offers do men then make to get rid of their burden! 'Thousands

of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; yea, their first-born for their transgressions, the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls,' Micah vi. 6, 7. Lastly, what it is to live and die in sin, the other world will show us. Christ useth no other expression of the misery of the unbelieving Jews but this, 'Ye shall die in your sins,' John viii. 24. That is enough, for that speaketh all manner of horror and torment. And the threatenings of the word show their case is miserable enough: 'They fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31. And 'the worm' that feedeth upon them 'shall never die;' and 'the fire' wherewith they are scorched 'shall never be quenched,' Mark ix. 44. Sins that now lie like sleepy lions then awaken, and take them by the throat, and feed and gnaw upon them to all eternity. Miserable questionless is the state of them who bear their own burden and their own transgression. Now the sense of this should make a crucified Saviour sweet to us.

3. None can take off this burden of sin but Jesus Christ; this is a work proper to the Lamb of God. None else could preserve the honour of God's justice, which was necessary before we could be intrusted with a new stock of grace: Rom. iii. 24, 25, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' None else could secure the honour of God's government; punishments are inflicted, not only for the reformation and correction of the offenders, but for a warning to others, to secure the ends of government, that none may presume upon impunity. The same is necessary in the government of the world by God. If God should wholly release the law, all awe and sense of it would be lost, sin would not be counted so grievous a thing; therefore there is a brand put upon sin by the sufferings of Christ; the odiousness of it is represented in the agonies and sorrows of his cross. The apostle saith, 'That God for sin condemned sin in the flesh,' Rom. viii. 3; or by a sacrifice given for sin he hath showed his hatred and displeasure against it. When we look upon sin through Satan's spectacles, or the cloud of our own passions or carnal affections, we make nothing of it; but it is a terrible spectacle to see the fruits of it in the agonies and sufferings of Jesus Christ, which are represented to us in the word and sacraments, as if he were crucified before our eyes. Once more, none could bear this burden of punishment but Jesus Christ, who was man to undertake it in our name, and also God to get through it in his own strength. His human nature did put a price into his hands to lay down for the ransom of our souls, and his divine nature did put a value upon that price, and made it sufficient and responsible to all God's ends. Therefore it is said, Ps. lxxxix. 19, 'Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.' It best befitted the divine wisdom to choose such a person as might undertake the work, and not miscarry in it; otherwise we could have no assurance that full satisfaction was given.

4. Jesus Christ taketh away sin by bearing it in his own person. 'O *ἀρῶν* signifieth both to take it away and carry it away; and it is said, Isa. liii. 6, 'The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all.'

God laid it on him, and he willingly took it upon himself: 1 Peter ii. 24, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree;' which signifieth his voluntary susception, as well as the Father's ordination and appointment.

I must a little explain two things—(1.) How sin was laid upon Christ; (2.) That being transferred and laid upon Christ, it is taken off from the creature.

[1.] How sin was laid upon Christ, for so the scripture speaketh. There is in sin, *culpa*, the fault; *macula*, the stain; *reatus*, the guilt, and *pœna*, the punishment. We cannot say the fault was laid on him, for that is the blame which ariseth or groweth out of sin inherent; we cannot say the stain, for Christ was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26; therefore we must understand it of the other two, the guilt and the punishment. The guilt is imputed as he stood in our stead; for he is said to 'bear the sins of many,' Isa. liii. 12, and to 'be made sin for us,' 2 Cor. v. 21. As he offered himself, and obliged himself to make satisfaction to his Father's justice, his soul and body was a ransom in our souls' stead: 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself' *ἀντίλτρον*, a ransom for all.' He not only died *in bonum nostrum*, for our good, but *loco et vice omnium nostrum*, he stood before the Father's tribunal in our room and stead. Then for the punishment, as he was 'made sin for us,' so he was 'made a curse for us,' Gal. iii. 13; that is, to undergo the curse of the law due to us. He was no more spared than if we ourselves, who had sinned, had been in his room and place at that time; and therefore he is said to 'carry our sorrows and bear our griefs,' Isa. liii. 4. He was the object of sin-pursuing justice, and at his hands did God demand satisfaction for all our wrongs. He had all the sins of the elect upon him by imputation and voluntary susception, and was handled by divine justice as if he had been guilty of them all.

[2.] The guilt and punishment being transferred and transacted upon Christ, it is taken off from the creature; and all who upon God's terms do thankfully accept of this atonement are acquitted and reconciled to God, and taken into grace and favour through Christ: Job xxxiii. 24, 'Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' When the surety hath paid the debt, the debtor is let out of prison; when the ram was taken, Isaac was let go, Gen. xxii. As Christ told his persecutors, John xviii. 8, 'If therefore you seek me, let these go their way.' In that action of his there was a pledge, an illustration, at least, of his offering himself to the curse of the law and the punishment due to sin, to exempt us from it: Take me, and let these go. The fault is forgiven, the guilt expiated, the blot more and more done away, and the sentence of condemnation and punishment disannulled, so that 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1.

5. Christ, having borne the burden and weight of our sins, hath undertaken to take away all that may be called sin; he hath taken away the guilt, and he hath taken away the stain, the obligation to punishment, and the power of corruption; or, in short, he hath procured both justification and sanctification for us.

[1.] Justification is a fruit of his bearing sin: Isa. liii. 11, 'By his

knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' To bear the sin is to bear the punishment, the wrath due to it. Now God will not exact it twice, of Christ and of us too. Christ doth so bear it for us that he takes it away from us, that we are discharged from the guilt, and 'delivered from wrath to come,' 2 Thes. i. 10, and are brought into a justifiable condition before God; 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He was made sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

[2.] Sanctification, that is one taking away of sin, and a fruit of Christ's bearing our iniquities: 1 Peter ii. 24, 'He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might be alive unto righteousness.' Naturally we are alive to sin, love it, delight in it, and are active in it, but we are dead to righteousness; not only sick and wounded, but dead to it. But Christ came to purchase grace, to subdue our love and delight in sin, and to turn our hearts towards God. We need a saviour to help us to repentance as well as to pardon. The loss of God's image was part of our punishment, and the renovation of our nature is a part, yea, a principal part, of our deliverance by Jesus Christ.

6. This work of taking away sin is not done all at an instant, but accomplished by degrees. *O αἰρων*; the participle noteth a continued act; it is a thing Christ is always a-doing till sin be no more. Here we must distinguish between impetration and application. As to purchase and impetration, Christ hath done it once for all; there needed no repeating of this act: Heb. x. 14, 'For by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.' As to the merit, nothing is wanting; no other oblation and sacrifice needeth to be offered to God. But as to application, so he is every day taking away sin. What is his business now in heaven but to sit at the right hand of God, and to see the fruits of his mediation accomplished? yea, and as to the same persons, Christ doth not destroy sin all at once. Narrow-mouthed vessels cannot be filled in an instant, though cast into an ocean. Therefore taking away sin is a continual act, which Christ is ever a-doing. Some blessings are dispensed presently, upon the first day of our entering into the state of grace and favour with God, as adoption into God's family, pardon of sins past, a renewing of the image of God in us, redemption or exemption from the curse of the law; which things increase more and more unto their final perfection in eternal glory. Adoption then shall be complete: Rom. viii. 23, 'Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.' When we shall know more fully what honour and blessedness belongeth to the children of God; now it doth not appear what we shall be. So pardon of sin shall be then complete: Acts iii. 19, 'Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' All pardoned sins shall never be remembered more; our absolution shall be solemnly pronounced by the Judge upon the bench; that is the great regeneration: Mat. xix. 28, 'You that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' So for redemption: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption;' when

all the effects of sin shall cease, for death remaineth on the body till that day.

7. This work of taking away sin is carried on with respect to Christ's threefold office of king, priest, and prophet.

[1.] As a priest; so he taketh away sin by his merit, having purchased a power and a virtue whereby our natures may be healed and cleansed, and our peace made with God. In this sense it is said, 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

[2.] As a prophet; so he taketh away sin by his doctrine, which is fit for such a purpose, as it commandeth and requireth purity and holiness, and inviteth us to it by notable promises, and encourageth us by blessed examples, especially of Jesus Christ himself, and the perfect pattern of his holy obedience and heavenly life: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.'

[3.] As a king; so he taketh away sin by his Spirit. So backward are our minds, so bad our hearts, so strong our lusts, so manifold our temptations, that bare teaching will not serve the turn without a spirit of light, life, and love, to open our eyes, and change our hearts, and incline us, and bring us back again to God. Therefore it is said, Titus iii. 5, 6, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' His merit giveth us confidence, his word, means and helps, and his sanctifying Spirit maketh all effectual to the soul.

III. That this is the great end and scope of Christ's coming into the world appeareth by sundry scriptures: 1 John iii. 5, 'And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.' He was manifested in the flesh, and manifested in the gospel for this end. He came as an holy innocent saviour to take away sin: Mat. i. 21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' Not to ease them of their trouble only, but chiefly to destroy sin, with the mischievous effects of it. He is a saviour that saves us from sin, not in sin.' Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.' Not only from the curse of the law, but from all iniquity. The Mediator's blessing was not to free us from the Roman yoke, but from the slavery and bondage of sin: Acts iii. 26, 'Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.'

Reasons.

1. Sin is the great makebate between God and us. The first breach was by sin, and still it continueth the distance: Isa. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.' Till sin be taken out of the way, there can be no perfect communion between God and the creature. The purity of God is irreconcilable to sin, though not to the sinner, and therefore, though the sinner be pardoned, the sin must be taken away.

2. Sin is the great disease of mankind, and the cause of all misery; therefore Christ came to stop mischief at the fountain-head. Take away sin, and you take away wrath; for when the cause is gone, the

effect ceaseth. Those who are most sensible of their true evil do mainly desire the taking away of sin. Pharaoh said, 'Take away this plague;' but the church saith, 'Take away all iniquity,' Hosea xiv. 2. Many seek to get rid of trouble and temporal afflictions, but not of sin; because they have a gross sense of things, and measure their happiness and misery by their outward condition: Hosea vii. 14, 'They assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.' They sought not God's favour, but corn, and wine, and oil. Others, if they mind spiritual things, they mind only pardon of sins and ease of conscience, but not to be freed from the power of it; as if a man that had broken his leg should only desire to be eased of the smart, but not to have it set again. But the true penitent is troubled with the stain as well as the guilt, therefore the promise is suited to such: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Others, if they would be freed from sin, they respect only the preventing the outward act, but you must abstain from the lust: 2 Peter ii. 11, 'I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' If they look after the heart and inward man, it is some branch of sin, not the root, or the change of the heart, and so die impenitent. Evil practices do not flow from a present temptation, but an evil nature. All these lose their labour; they neither get rid of trouble nor prevent the act, nor are free from the breach of God's law, but Christ would make a thorough cure.

3. Taking away of sin is a greater benefit than impunity, or taking away the punishment. Those means which have a more immediate connection with the last end are more noble than those which are more remote. The last end is the glory of God. Now the holiness and subjection of the creature is a nearer means to it than our comfort and pardon. Christ's end was to fit us for God's use, and therefore his end was to sanctify us and free us from sin.

Use 1. Is caution. Let us renounce all sin, that we may not make Christ's coming into the world in vain. You go about to frustrate your Redeemer's end, and so to put him to shame, if you cherish sin, for then you cherish that which he came to destroy: 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;' that is, dissolve, untie, and loose this knot. The work of the devil is to bring us into sin and misery, and will you tie the knot the faster? If you go about to frustrate his undertaking, you renounce all benefit by him, and slight the price of your redemption.

Use 2. Hath Christ taken upon him to carry away sin; then here is instruction—

1. To the careless. Certainly he that seeketh after benefit by Christ must be one that is not a stranger to himself, one that knoweth and is acquainted with the case of his own heart and life, one that is sensible of his sins and corrupt inclinations, and the guilt and burden that lieth upon him, one that mourneth under the fears of God's displeasure. Will Christ ease a man of a burden that he feeleth not? A senseless sleepy soul hath not work for Christ to do. He inviteth those that see

a need of mercy: Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

2. To those who are afflicted in conscience for sin. Remember, you must be not only sensible of the guilt of sin, but the stain of it, and look after not only peace, but healing: Isa. liii. 5, 'With his stripes we are healed.' It is not a sound cure that aimeth only at the assuaging of the grief, but the distemper must be removed. Mountebanks only stop the pain, but let alone the cause; such a cure would they have who are more earnest for ease and comfort than for grace. Sin in some sense is worse than damnation. Remember, then, this is the undertaking of our blessed Redeemer; will he come in vain, and miss of his end? Consider the merit of his humiliation, what a price he hath paid for sanctifying grace: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' This price was not given only to heighten our esteem of the privilege, but to increase our confidence. And consider the power of his exaltation: Acts iii. 26, 'God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.' Having paid our ransom, he is gone into heaven fully furnished and empowered to free from sin all that consent to receive this benefit.

But what shall we do that we may have the actual benefit?

[1.] Seek the pardon of sin in the way of repentance, confessing your sins with brokenness of heart: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Sue out his grace, and turn to the Lord. Repentance lieth not in a feigned wish only that sin had not been done, but in a change of mind, heart, and life; in a hatred to sin repented of, and a love to God and holiness. Man's fall was specially in point of love, and his recovery must be a recovery of love to God again. Your love to sin must be turned into an hatred of sin; the soul must be not only turned from sin, but against it. Repentance is most seen in our love and hatred.

[2.] Seek the subduing of sin in a diligent use of means. There is a spirit purchased by Christ to begin the life of grace and to carry it on with success, to heal and renew our natures, and to strengthen them, being healed and renewed. Now we must not by our carelessness, negligence, or other sin, provoke the Lord to withdraw from us and suspend his grace, but humbly implore his favour, wait for his approaches, and attend and obey his sanctifying motions. God is willing to give the Spirit to them that ask him, as a father is to give an hungry child bread: Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' We make ourselves incapable of this help by grieving the Spirit: Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' When we are so easy to the requests of sin, and so deaf to his motions, he ceaseth to give us warning. There are

certain ordinances whereby this grace is conveyed to us, and Christ died to sanctify them to us: Eph. v. 25, 26, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' These ordinances are the word and sacraments, by the use of which sin receiveth a new wound. The word is for cleansing the soul: John xv. 3, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.' Baptism must be improved for the washing away of sin: Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.' A man forgetteth his baptism, that is, neglecteth it, if he be not purged from sin: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins;' that is, he hath made no use and received no benefit by his baptism. In the Lord's supper we remember the death of Christ as the price given for the life of our souls, as a spectacle that may affect us with the odiousness of sin, as an occasion of renewing our covenant with God, and binding ourselves afresh to his service, and as a means to stir up our love to God, and so by consequence our hatred of sin: Ps. xcvi. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord hate evil;' and to awaken our hopes, and so of purifying the soul: 1 John iii. 3, 'And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' Here is delivered to the believing soul a sealed pardon of all sin: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins;' and we wait for the application of his mortifying and renewing grace.

[3.] If the first attempt succeed not, yet afterwards sin may be subdued and broken. In natural things we do not sit down with one trial and one endeavour; a man that will be rich pierceth himself through with many sorrows, 1 Tim. iv. 10; and after many miscarriages pursues his designs till he complete them; and shall we give over our waiting and striving because we cannot presently find success? That showeth our will is not fully bent and set upon the thing we seem to desire. In the face of discouragements we must venture again: Luke v. 5, 'Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy command I will let down the net.' God's grace is free, and his holy leisure must be waited for. It was long ere God got us to this pass, to be sensible of our burden, or anxiously solicitous about our soul distempers. We must lie at the pool for cure. The Spirit bloweth when and where it listeth: John iii. 8, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' He that began the work to make us serious will carry it on to a further degree if we be not impatient: Mat. xii. 20, 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.' He is not wont to be strange to such as bemoan themselves to him: Jer. xxxi. 18, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.' It may be he will not do it so sensibly by ordinances as by or not without sharp providences, which usually subtract the fuel of our lusts, and awaken seriousness: Isa. xxvii. 9, 'By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin;' and 2 Cor. xii. 7, 'There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of

Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' We must leave God to his own way.

Use 3. Let it put us on thankfulness to our Redeemer. Sin is a great mischief. Now that he should fetch us up from the gates of hell, and recover us, when the sentence of condemnation was passed upon us, and there was nothing but the slender thread of a frail life between us and execution, and was content to do it at so dear a rate, as to be made sin, and to be made a curse for us, and that he should put us into the way of salvation to obtain eternal life, how should our hearts be enlarged in thanksgiving to such a Redeemer?

END OF VOL. XVIII.