

SERMONS UPON 1 JOHN III.

(CONTINUED.)

SERMON VIII.

And ye know that he was manifested to take away sin, and in him was no sin.—1 JOHN iii. 5.

THE apostle still pursueth his scope and purpose, which is to persuade christians to take heed of sin, and living in sin. He argueth—

1. From our adoption, and how much that inferreth a likeness to God whose children we are.

2. With respect to the law, or the orders of God's family, not to forfeit the offered privilege.

3. With respect to Christ, he urgeth two things—(1.) The holiness of his design ; (2.) The innocency of his person. Both which dissuade us from living in sin. That which Christ came to destroy, and that which maketh us so unlike Christ, should not be allowed by christians : ' And ye know that he was manifested to take away sin.'

1. In the first argument redemption by Christ is propounded—

[1.] As an evident truth. The sin and misery of the whole world was such, that it groaned for a saviour. Sin was the mortal disease that we were all sick of ; then came the spiritual physician to take it away. The common necessity of mankind showed the misery, and the common light of christianity showed the remedy.

[2.] It is propounded as his great end and scope why he was manifested. Christ is manifested two ways—in the gospel and in the flesh. In the gospel : Titus ii. 11, ' The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men ; ' 1 Peter i. 20, ' But was manifest in these last times for you.' Now the gospel showeth he came to take away sin : 1 Tim. i. 15, ' This is a true and faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came to take away sin.' But here manifested in the flesh : 1 Tim. iii. 16, ' Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh ; ' and 1 John i. 2, ' The life was manifested, and we have seen it.' Christ, who heretofore lay hid in the bosom of God, now appeared, and was discovered to the world as his only-begotten Son.

2. In the second argument the innocency of Christ is propounded : ' In him was no sin.' This clause may be added—

[1.] To show the value of his sacrifice, having no sin of his own to

expiate: 'For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;' who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for their own sins, and then for the people's.

[2.] To show the greatness of his love: 'He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

[3.] To show that while we live in sin we can have no commerce and communion with him, his nature being so opposite to sin; for what communion is there between light and darkness, Christ and Belial?

[4.] To set him forth for an example and pattern to us, which is chiefly to be regarded. To imitate Christ we must abstain from sin, be holy as he is holy, and pure as he is pure.

Doct. That those who are partakers of Christ should by no means allow themselves in a life or course of sin.

I shall prove it by the two arguments of the text: that we must not continue in sin, because Christ came to take away sin, and had no sin in himself. Christ is here propounded, first, as our ransom; secondly, as our pattern. In each I shall open the expressions used, and then consider the force of the argument.

I. As a ransom, 'Ye know that he was manifested to take away sin.' There are three things must be opened—(1.) In what sense Christ is said to take away sin; (2.) By what means he doth accomplish it; (3.) How is this a binding argument.

First, In what sense Christ is said to take away sin. Sin is considerable either as to the guilt of it, or the power, life, and reign of it.

1. The guilt is taken away when the obligation to punishment is dissolved, and we are freed from wrath to come; which is one great benefit we have by our Lord Jesus: 1 Thes. i. 10, 'Which delivered us from the wrath to come.' This is done by a pardon, which relateth to sin: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin.' And by justification, which relateth to the person: Rom. v. 1, 2, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' By sanctification, when the power and reign of it is broken: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'But ye are justified, but ye are sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' So that as Christ came to take away the guilt of sin, so also the stain of it. He was manifested 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 a part of our punishment; and the renovation of our natures is a sure, yea, a principal part of our deliverance by Christ. Now if you ask me, Which of these benefits goeth first? I answer—He regenerateth us that he may pardon us; for justified we are not till we believe, and pardoned we are not till we repent, which are acts of the new nature. And the scripture in many places setteth forth this order; I shall only allege one now: Titus iii. 5-7, 'Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of

regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.'

Secondly, By what means he doth accomplish it. This must be considered both as to impetration and application. As to purchase and impetration, so it relateth to his own merit. As to application to us, and our reception of this double benefit, so it is done by convenient means.

1. As to the impetration, and meritorious purchase, that is done: Christ takes away sin by bearing it in his own person. The word in the text, and those which are commonly used in this matter, signify both to take away and carry away sin: John i. 29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away,' or beareth away, 'the sins of the world;' and Isa. liii. 6, 'The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all.' I know there is some difficulty in explaining how sin was laid upon Christ, or what of sin it was that he took upon himself, that he might take it off from us. There are in sin four things—*culpa*, *macula*, *reatus*, and *pœna*. Not the fault, or criminal action, for that is committed by us, and cannot be transferred upon another. Not the stain; for Christ was holy and undefiled, and that implieth sin inherent. Not the guilt; for that is such an obligation to punishment as doth arise from the merit of some criminal action done by the party himself. It is true there was an obligation on Christ to suffer, and make satisfaction to his Father's justice; but this was by a voluntary susception, or an act of gracious condescension, not imposed upon him by constraint, without his consent, or against his will; none of this was due to him upon his own account. Punishment is a debt which lieth upon us, and is imposed upon us against our will; but Christ voluntarily submitted to bear the sins of many, Isa. liii. 12; and therefore he is said 'to be made sin for us,' 2 Cor. v. 21. Sin there signifieth a punishment of sin, and also a sacrifice for sin, a sin-offering. Sometimes it signifieth a punishment: 'My sin is greater than can be borne;' that is, the punishment of my sin, Gen. iv. 13; and ver. 7, 'Sin lieth at the door;' that is, punishment is at hand, or a sin-offering, or a sacrifice for sin. So the priests are said to eat the sins of the people, Hosea iv. 8; they took care of nothing but to glut themselves with the portion of the sacrifices. So Rom. viii. 3, 'By sin he condemned sin in the flesh;' and he is said to have 'borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;' that is, to bear the punishment. And he is said 'to bear our sins in his own body upon the tree,' 1 Peter ii. 24, that is, to die and suffer for them. This is the way and means by which Christ taketh away sin; and this is done so effectually once for all, that there needeth no repeating of it: Heb. x. 14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' As to the merit, there is nothing wanting; no other merit and sacrifice needeth to be offered to God.

2. As to the application, it is usually said that he taketh away the guilt of sin by his blood, and the filth of sin by his Spirit. But this is not so truly and accurately said; for his blood cleanseth us both from the guilt and stain of sin: 1 John i. 7, 'And the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin;' and Rev. i. 5, 'Who bath loved us, and

washed us in his blood ;' which relateth to the double washing mentioned, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Both are the fruit of his death, by which he merited both remission and sanctification for us ; and in the phrase of the text, 'he beareth it away.' This double benefit is made the fruit of both. 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 curse or wrath due to it. Now Christ beareth it so that it is taken from us. So sanctification is a fruit also of his bearing our iniquities : 1 Peter i. 24, 'He bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin, may be alive unto righteousness.' Christ came to heal our souls, to kill this love unto sin and delight in it. Therefore sanctification is the fruit of his cross as well as justification, and we must not so sever these benefits as that one should be given us by Christ, and the other by the Spirit. No ; both are given us by Christ, but differently applied ; first the pardon of sins by his word and new covenant, which is an act of oblivion, charter, or grant, whereby, upon certain terms, he maketh over this benefit to those who accept of it, 'even to as many as repent and believe in his name.' They are constituted just by the new covenant, which Christ will ratify and confirm by his own sentence at the day of judgment : Acts iii. 19, 'Repent and be baptized, that your sins may be blotted out, when the days of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' When our pardon shall be pronounced by the judge's own mouth, then is the solemn condemning and justifying time. But for the present, by the gospel charter, sin is taken away as to the guilt as soon as we repent and believe : Acts x. 43, 'Through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins ;' and Acts xix. 39, 'By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.' Secondly, sanctification is wrought in us by the Spirit of Christ more and more, taking away sin, and weakening the love of it in our hearts ; for the inner man is renewed day by day, and the cleansing and sanctifying work is perfected by degrees : 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore these precious promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ;' even until sin be wholly gone ; and this the Spirit effecteth by the duties and ordinances appointed to this very end. But the deadly blow is already given : Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.'

Thirdly, Now I must come to the force of the argument. If Christ came to take away sin, then we should take care we do not live in sin.

1. This is expressly to contradict and frustrate the designed end of our Redeemer, and so to put him to shame, and to make his coming into the world in vain ; for you seek to cherish that which he came to destroy. He would dissolve, untie, and loose those cords, and you knit them the faster, and so make void his undertaking. That this was the great end and scope of Christ's coming into the world, or being manifested in the flesh, is evident everywhere in scripture : John i. 29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins

of the world.' All the lambs which were offered to God in sacrifice were to take away sin; and this is the Lamb of God, that is, the true and real substance of all these figures. Now whether the allusion is to the lamb of the daily sacrifice, or the passover lamb, it is all one; the use for which he serveth is to expiate sin and abolish sin, and to bind men to God in a firmer tie of obedience. So Mat. i. 21, 'His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' Not to ease them of their troubles only, but chiefly to destroy sin, with the mischievous effects of it. Not to save them in their sins, but to save them from their sins: Titus ii. 14, 'He hath redeemed us from all iniquity.' Not only from the curse of the law, but from iniquity: Acts iii. 26, 'God hath raised up his Son Jesus, and sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities.' Not from the Roman yoke, but from sin, which was a worse thralldom and captivity: Rom. xi. 26, 'There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' Well, then, this being Christ's end, to sanctify us and free us from sin, we should not go about to disappoint him, for this is to set ourselves directly against him.

2. This is to slight the price of our redemption; for since with so much cost this work of taking away sin is carried on, for you to be indifferent whether sin be taken away or no is to disvalue and put a slight on the wisdom of God, and the wonderful condescension of his love in Christ, as if so much ado were made about a matter of nothing. This argument is urged by the apostle: 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 spot and blemish.' To enhance the benefit, the greatness of the price is mentioned. Spiritual privileges, such as freedom from sin, should be more regarded by us, because they are so dearly bought. We many times neglect them for trifles, forfeit them for trifles, lose that for gold and silver which cannot be bought for gold and silver. They that slight anything bought by Christ's blood are accounted in scripture to slight the blood of Christ itself; as the apostate who revolteth from Christ for the honours, pleasures, and profits of the world is said to 'trample his blood under foot, and to account it a common thing;' as suppose of a malefactor, or any common sufferer. Our respect to Christ's blood is judged according to the respect we have to the benefits purchased thereby. As, to instance in these two great benefits, the favour of God and the image of God. He that despiseth the favour of God, and doth not make it his business to get it and keep it, but preferreth corruptible things before it, hath no esteem of Christ's merit, and the great cost God hath been at in sending his own Son to take away sin, and recover a lost world into his grace and favour. So whosoever doth not esteem the image of God, which standeth in righteousness and true holiness, doth not esteem the blood of Christ, but hath lessening thoughts of the mystery of his incarnation and passion, as if his blood were shed for trifles.

3. It is in effect to renounce all benefit by Christ; for this way he saveth us, by taking away sin. The scripture everywhere insists upon

redemption from sin as the only way to redemption from the curse. Sin brought in the curse, therefore Christ would go to the bottom and fountain-head, and cure us of sin, that he might take off the curse, and cure us: he doth it not only by the remission of sin, but by sanctifying and healing our natures. You seek but a half cure if you seek pardon only. You neglect and despise the chiefest part of his work; yea, you cannot have pardon unless you be sanctified; and so in effect you have no benefit by Christ at all. For this let me give you these reasons—

[1.] Sin is the great makebate between God and his creatures. The first breach was by sin, and still it continueth the distance: Isa. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between me and you.' Therefore, till that be taken out of the way, there can be no perfect reconciliation, no communion between God and the creatures; though the sinner may be pardoned on God's terms, yet the purity of God is irreconcilable to sins; and therefore, if you live in sin and continue in sin, there can be no commerce between God and you.

[2.] Sin is the great disease of mankind, which disableth us for the service of our Creator. Therefore the Redeemer came to take away sin, for he considered God's interest as well as ours: Heb. ix. 14, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?' Christ's end was to fit us for God's use, and therefore to sanctify and free us from sin, that we might be in a capacity to love and please God again. This is the great work of the physician of souls.

[3.] The taking away of sin is a greater benefit than impunity, or the taking away of punishment, as sin in some sense is worse than damnation. Those means which have a more immediate connection with the last end are more noble than those which are more remote. The last end in respect to us is the vision and fruition of God, or to see him and be like him. Now the taking away of sin hath a nearer connection than pardon and impunity; they both concur. The sentence of death must be taken off, which maketh us incapable; but holiness is a part and an introduction into the blessed estate; it doth dispositively prepare us for it. On God's part the pleasing and glorifying of God is the last end. Now he is more pleased with us as holy than as pardoned, for his complacency and delight is in the reflection of his image on us; and he is more glorified in our passive reception of his grace, but objectively more glorified in us in our being sanctified and purified, and made like him. Now this is to be minded, partly because men seek to get rid of trouble and temporal affliction, but not of sin. Pharaoh could say, 'Take away this plague;' but the church saith, 'Take away all iniquity,' Hosea xiv. 2. Those who are sensible of the true evil do mainly desire the taking away of sin; that is their chief care and solicitude how to get rid of it; that is it they complain of in the first place as their chief burden. This is necessary to be showed, partly because some, if they mind spiritual things, they mind only pardon of sin and ease of conscience, not to be freed from the power of sin; as if a man that had broken his leg should only desire to be eased of his smart, but not to have it set again. No; the true penitent is troubled with the stain as well as the guilt. Therefore the promise is suited:

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.' This is a thorough cure.

[4.] There is no taking away guilt and punishment till we be sanctified, till sin itself be taken away. The one part of the cure maketh way for the other. First he doth regenerate that he may pardon. As we were first sinners and then obnoxious to punishment, so first holy and then pardoned, first brought into the kingdom of Christ and made subjects, then enjoy the privileges as subjects: Col. i. 13, 14, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' We are first turned to God: Acts xxvi. 20, 'That they should repent, and turn to God.' We cannot have the one without the other. So you stick at the order, though you know no cause; so that you despise all benefit by Christ if you do not look after the taking away of sin.

[5.] It is a manifest contradiction to our faith to live in sin and to believe that Christ came to take away sin. I gather that from the words 'ye know.' Christians are supposed to know and believe the end of their redemption. If we know it, why do not we deal with him about it? Speculative knowledge and practical are frequently contradictory in the same man. We speak from our convictions, but we live from the innate dispositions and inclinations of our own hearts. Religion doth far more easily tip men's tongues, and run into their heads, than change their hearts. But though their knowledge and practice be contrary, yet thus far we have gained an argument, that their faith condemns their practice; and however we make a shift to match them, the faith of christians and the life of sin are in themselves incompatible. And they that know Christ came to take away sin, and yet live in sin, though they do not show the falsehood of their religion, yet they show their own insincerity in it; though they speak honourably of their Redeemer in words, yet in deeds they dislike him, and deny him, which is not to be charged upon the religion, but themselves, as an art is not disparaged because one that professeth it is a bungler.

[6.] The manner of Christ's taking away sin doth represent the heinousness of it, and is a sufficient warning to the world not to continue in it: 'For if these things were done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?' When we look upon sin through Satan's spectacles, and the cloud of our own passions and carnal affections, we make nothing of it; but in the agonies of Christ, and the sorrows and sufferings of his cross, we see the odiousness of it, that it may become more hateful to us. No less remedy would serve the turn than the agonies, bloodshed, and accursed death of the Son of God, to procure the pardon and destruction of sin. By this sin-offering and ransom for souls we may see what sin is. I showed you before the odiousness of sin, as it is a transgression of the law; that should render it odious to you; but now I bring you to another argument. In Golgotha is the truest spectacle of sin, and how much God hateth it and loveth purity, that it may be seen in its proper colours. We make light of sin, but Christ found it not so light a matter to expiate

it. Do but consider his fears and tears and strong cries when he stood in the place of sinners before God's tribunal, when God 'laid upon him the iniquities of us all.'

[7.] The acceptableness of his sacrifice still further helpeth us against sin: 'He came to take away sin,' and was accepted in what he did. Why? Christ's suffering death for the sin of man was the noblest piece of service, and the highest degree of obedience that ever could be performed to God by man or angels, there being in it so much love to God, pity to man, so much self-denial, so much humility and patience, and such a resignation of himself to God, who appointed him to be the Redeemer of the world. That which was eminent and upmost in it was obedience: Rom. v. 19, 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous;' Phil. ii. 7, 8, 'He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' God doth not delight in the shedding of blood; you must not draw an ill picture of God in your minds. That which God looked after, and accepted was the eminent obedience of Christ in our nature; so his holy and righteous life, his painful and cursed death, make but one entire piece of obedience. The value of his merit was from the God-head, but the formal reason of his merit was that Christ came to fulfil the will of God, 'by which will we are sanctified,' Heb. x. 9, 10. Now what a notable check is this to sin, and living impenitently in a course of disobedience unto God!

II. As Christ is propounded by way of pattern and example, 'In him was no sin.' I shall first speak a little of the innocency of Christ; secondly, show how he is set forth as a pattern and example of holiness unto us.

1. The scripture sets forth the Lord Jesus as an eminently holy and innocent person, that he had no sin, and did no sin. He had no sin, being by his miraculous conception exempted from the contagion of original sin: Luke i. 35, 'The Holy Ghost shall overshadow thee, and that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' Thus was our Redeemer fitted to be completely lovely in the eyes of God, and to be a pattern of holiness to all his followers. Not only free from actual sin, but as having a perfect holy nature in him; to show that we should not only prevent the outward act, but be free from the lust; and not only lop the branches of sin, but destroy the root by a thorough change of heart. Evil practices in us do not flow from a present temptation, but an evil nature; therefore we should get the divine nature. It is true it cannot be said of us that we have no sin, but yet the carnal nature should not be predominant in us; we should have another spirit. Secondly, He did no sin: 2 Peter ii. 22, 'He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.' Christ did not in the least offend either God or man; as guilty of no transgression, so of no defect in his obedience or conformity to the law of God. It is true he was accused of sin, but who could convince him of sin? John viii. 46, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' Though his name was buried under many calumnies and reproaches, yet none of his malicious

adversaries could ever make it good that he was guilty of one sin. It is true he was tempted to sin, and the most venomous of Satan's fiery darts were shot at him, as you may see, Mat. iv. ; but though he was tempted in all other points like us, yet sin is excepted, Heb. iv. 15. He was spotless and free from sin, there was nothing in him to befriend a temptation, John xiv. 30. This, Christians, is our glorious Lord and chief; he had no sin, nor did no sin. When shall it be said so of us? We wait the time, but it will be so at length; ere Christ hath done with us it must be so.

2. That he is set forth as a pattern and example of holiness in our nature. Christ, that did open heaven by his merit, would also teach us the way thither, and teach us as a good teacher should, not only by his doctrine, but by his example. In moral things his example is to be imitated by us; these reasons enforce it—

[1.] The scriptures do everywhere call for this imitation and suitable walking: Phil. ii. 5, 'Let the same mind be in you that was in Jesus;' Mat. xi. 29, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.' So 1 Peter ii. 21, 'He hath left us an example, that we should follow his steps;' 1 John ii. 6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought also himself to walk even as he walked.' I have brought these places to show how binding the example of Christ is.

[2.] That the Spirit is sent and given us to change us into his likeness: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the same Spirit of the Lord.' We can no more follow his example than obey his doctrine without the same spirit. Here one part helpeth another; in living as he did, we come to be like him.

[3.] What advantage we have by this example. First, all example hath an alluring power and great force in moving; but this is an example of examples, not of equals or ordinary superiors, but of our glorious head and chief. Now this example should be more cogent. First, Because it is a perfect and unerring pattern. Christ's life is religion exemplified, a visible commentary on God's will and word: 2 Cor. xi. 1, 'Be ye followers of me, as I am also of Christ.' Here you cannot err if you follow Christ's submission in his imitable examples and actions. Secondly, It is an engaging pattern. Submission to any duty should make it lovely unto us: 'The disciple is not above his lord, nor the servant above his master;' John xiii. 14, 'If I then, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet.' Shall we decline to follow such a leader? Thirdly, It is an effectual pattern. Christ's steps drop sweetness; he hath left a blessing behind in all the way that he hath trodden before us, and sanctified it to us that we may follow it with comfort. Fourthly, It is a very encouraging pattern, for he sympathiseth with us in all our difficulties, having entended his own heart by experience: Heb. ii. 18, 'For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted;' Heb. iv. 15, 'For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' He knoweth the weaknesses and reluctances of nature in our hardest duties, and will surely pity and pardon our infirmities, and cover them with his own perfect righteousness.

[4.] Christ's example, and unsinning obedience to God, is a notable check to sin, and all the temptations, occasions, and inducements which lead to it. Nothing should be of such value with a christian as to hire him to commit wilful sin. Christ obeyed at the dearest rates and terms, and repented not of his engagement: John xiii. 1, 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' A christian should have the same mind, and then it will be armour of proof against all temptations: 1 Peter iv. 1, 'Arm yourselves with the same mind, for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' In one place it is said, 'Let the same mind be in you;' in another, 'Arm yourselves with the same mind.' Temptations will have little force upon you when you resolve to obey God whatever it cost you. The frowns of the world, yea, life itself, will be as nothing. Secondly, Is it the pomp and pleasure and honour of the world wherewith the flesh is gratified? Christ hath put a disgrace upon these things by his own choice. He was mean, poor, a man of sorrows; and shall we look to be maintained in pomp and pleasure? We cannot be poorer than Christ, and taste less of the world than he did. Thirdly, A love to our private interests hinders us from seeking the glory of God: Rom. xv. 3, 'For even Christ pleased not himself;' John xii. 27, 28, 'For this cause came I to this hour: Father, glorify thy name.' Every christian should be thus affected; let Christ dispose of him and his interests as it seemeth good to him.

SERMON IX.

And ye know that he was manifested to take away sin, and in him was no sin.—1 JOHN iii. 5.

FROM these words I have observed this doctrine, that those who are partakers of Christ should by no means allow themselves in a life or course of sin.

The uses now follow.

First, It bindeth our duty upon us.

Secondly, It assureth and sealeth our comfort when we are afflicted either with the guilt of sin or the power of sin.

First, It bindeth our duty upon us. They that do not break off a life of sin make Christ's coming in vain. But because men's interest will quicken them, therefore consider, Christ must take away sin, or else you must at last bear your own sin. But alas! that is a burden too heavy for us to bear; and miserable are they that have it lying upon their backs. It will not be light when we reckon with God. Sin to a waking conscience is one of the heaviest burdens that ever was felt: Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head, they are a burden too heavy for me.' You will find the little finger of sin heavier than the loins of any other sorrow. What a weight and pressure will it be to the soul! If you do but taste of this cup, it filleth

you with trembling. If a spark of God's wrath light on the conscience, how terribly doth it scorch? You may know it in part by what Christ suffered. His soul was heavy unto death. If his soul were heavy to death, if he felt such strange agonies, sweat drops of blood, lost the actual sensible comforts of his Godhead, when he bore the burden of sin, oh, what shall every one of us do if we were to bear our own burden? You may also know it by the complaints of the saints, when the finger of God hath but touched them: Ps. xl. 12, 'Mine iniquities take hold on me, therefore mine heart fainteth.' So Job complaineth, chap. vi. 4, 'For the arrows of the Almighty are within me; the poison thereof drinketh up my spirit;' the arrows of the Almighty, though shot out of Satan's bow; he permitted those venomous arrows to be shot at him. Yea, if ye will know what it is to bear sin, ask not only a tender conscience, but a troubled conscience. What disquiets of soul do wicked men feel when God sets sin home upon the conscience, and they are awakened! How uneasy have their hearts sat within them! Cain crieth out, 'My sin is greater than can be borne,' Gen. iv. 13; 'And a wounded spirit who can bear?' Prov. xxviii. 13. What large offers do men make to get rid of their burden! 'Thousands of rams, rivers of oil, their first-born for the sin of their souls,' Micah vi. 7, 8. Lastly, what it is to live and die in sin, the other world will show us. Christ useth no other expression to set forth the misery of the unbelieving Jews but this, that 'ye shall die in your sins,' John viii. 21, 24. 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 on them shall never die, and the fire wherein they are scorched is never quenched, Mark ix. 44. Miserable, questionless, is the state of them who bear their own burden and transgression. Now is it not better we should yield up ourselves to Christ, that he should take it away, and do the work of a Redeemer; and that we should not by our carelessness, negligence, and other sins, provoke the Lord to withhold his healing grace? Oh, let us be sensible of our burden. Will Christ ease a man of his burden which he feelth not? A senseless sleepy soul hath no work for him to do. He inviteth the weary and heavy-laden, Mat. xi. 28. Being sensible of our burden, let us implore his favour; he is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than a father is to give a hungry child bread, Luke xi. 13. Let us wait for his approaches in the diligent use of the means. Our duty is to lie at the pool for cure till the waters be stirred, John v. His Spirit bloweth when and where he listeth, John iii. 8; let us attend and obey his sanctifying motions, for we make ourselves incapable of this help by grieving the Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. When we become so easy to the requests of sin and so deaf to his motions, he ceaseth to give us warning.

Again, let us consider his example. Will you be so unlike Christ? 'In him was no sin,' and you are all overspread with sin. He learned obedience by the things he suffered, Heb. v. 8, 9. He came to be the leader to everlasting happiness of an obeying people; his stamp and character should be upon all his followers. He is Christ, you are christians; and you should not be polluted members of his body. How will you look him in the face at the last day if you are so unlike

him? 1 John iv. 17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is so are we in the world;' if we be holy as he, spotless as he. Of polluted sinners he will say, Are these my people? How will you then be ashamed? But it will give us a bold confidence when we have written after his copy. We shall never be like him in glory unless we be first like him in holiness. Christ will own his image. Boldness is opposite to fear and shame; we shall neither be afraid nor ashamed at the day of judgment, if we bear his image upon us.

Secondly, It assureth and sealeth our comfort when we are afflicted either with the guilt or power of sin. To this end I shall discuss this argument more at large, and show you—

1. How sin is taken away—(1.) By justification; (2.) By sanctification.

2. What grounds we have to expect that Christ will do this for us.

3. What we must do that this effect may be accomplished in us.

First, How sin is taken away; but first we must determine what sin is. It is usually said there are in sin four things—*culpa*, *reatus*, *pœna*, *macula*, the blot or stain. The three first belong to sin as it respects the law; the last, as it respects the rectitude of human nature in innocency. The three first do more concern justification, the last sanctification.

[1.] Sin may be considered with respect to the law; for so the nature of it will best be found out; for we are told in the verse before the text, that 'sin is a transgression of the law.' In the law there is the precept and the sanction. The precept showeth what obedience is due from us to God; the sanction or threatening what punishment is due to us in a state of disobedience. Accordingly, in sin, with respect to the precept, there is *culpa*, the fault, or criminal action; with respect to the sanction or threatening, there are two things considerable—sentence and execution. As the commination importeth a sentence and respecteth a sentence, so there is guilt: 'Because sentence is not speedily executed,' Eccles. viii. 11. The sentence is passed in the threatenings of the law, but execution is deferred. But with respect to execution it is called *pœna*, punishment.

[2.] Sin may be considered with respect to that rectitude of our heart and mind which God gave us at first to enable and incline us to keep his law; and so cometh in *macula*, the stain or blot, as it defaced God's image in our hearts: Rom. iii. 23, 'We have all sinned, and are come short of the glory of God;' meaning thereby his glorious image, which was lost and forfeited by the fall of Adam; and actually, because in the day of God's patience, as he continueth other forfeited mercies to us, so some relics of his image in that knowledge and conscience that is left. Therefore when we rebel against the light, and live in a course of heinous sin, we lose more and more of that goodness of human nature that is yet left, and bear the character of such as are given up to vile affections, Rom. i. 26; and Eph. iv. 19, 'And being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work uncleanness with greediness.' God leaveth them to their own lusts without restraint, withholdeth the good Spirit that was wont to counsel and warn them. *Macula*, then, the blot or stain, is the inclination to

sin again; as a brand that hath been once in the fire, is more apt to take fire again. This is the fruit of sin, and we pray God to free us from it yet more and more, by giving us more of his Spirit. It is the heaviest judgment that can befall us, to be given over to our own heart's counsels, Ps. li. 11; and David prayeth, after heinous sin, that God would not take his Holy Spirit from him.

But let us now consider how sin is taken away: therein what is to be done by Christ, and what is to be done by us, that this effect may be accomplished in us.

And first, as to what is to be done by Christ, and there how sin is taken away, both as to justification and sanctification.

1. With respect to justification; so that *culpa*, *reatus*, *pœna*, the fault or criminal action, cannot be said to be taken away, but only it is passed by as it is the foundation of our guilt, as it is a natural action; such a fact we did, or such a duty we omitted to do. As it is a faulty action, contrary to the law of God, Christ taketh it not away, for that were to disannul the law, or the obliging force and authority of it, as it is a rule of perpetual equity. The sins we have committed are sins still; therefore Christ came not to make the law less holy, or a fault to be no fault.

Let us come to the second thing, *reatus*, the guilt of sin. There is *reatus culpæ*, the guilt of sin; and *reatus pœnæ*, the guilt of punishment. *Reatus culpæ*, is the applying the law to the fact, and both to the person that hath committed it. Suppose that such a fact is a sin, because such a law forbiddeth it, and that I am guilty of such a transgression against the law of God; sure it is that this is not taken away; my faulty act is an offence, and I am an offender. We cannot be reputed never culpable, to have omitted any duty, or committed any sin; for the new covenant is not set up to make us innocent, but pardonable upon certain terms; and we come to God as to our offended governor, pleading not as innocent, but as sinners, desiring that, in the behalf of Christ, our sins may be forgiven to us. Then there is *reatus pœnæ*, which resulteth from the sanction of the law, binding us over to suffer such penalties as the law hath determined. Now this may be understood, *quoad meritum*, *vel quoad eventum*; according to the merit of the action, what the action in itself deserveth, which is condemnation to punishment. This Christ hath not taken away, and never intended to take away; for every sinful action is *in se et merito operis damnabilis* in itself, and by the desert of the work damnable; it doth deserve damnation; but *quoad eventum*, as to the event and effect: 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1. By the law of grace there is a discharge from the sentence of the law, and so from an obligation to punishment. This will be made clear and plain to you by considering what is required of us in suing out our pardon. We must confess the sin: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and righteous to forgive us our sins.' We must confess the guilt and desert of sin by God's righteous law: 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.' There must be a self-accusing and self-judging. In self-accusing we confess *reatum culpæ*; in self-judging we confess *reatum pœnæ*; without either of which there would not be that humiliation and

brokenness of heart which the scripture calleth for, and is necessary for us in our entrance into the gospel covenant, and in our whole dealing with God about pardon. Or else these acts must be performed very perfunctorily, and not in reality and truth, if there be not a ground in the nature of the thing; for if the guilt of the fault were utterly dissolved, how can I heartily accuse myself of such and such sins before the Lord? or if the guilt of punishment were so far dissolved that my actions did not in their own nature, and by the righteous law of the Lord, deserve such condemnation and punishment, how could I broken-heartedly confess myself as deserving the greatest evil which his law hath threatened? Well, then, pardon is not a vacating the action, or making a thing not done which is done, or a denial of the fault as if it were no fault, nor an annulling of the desert of punishment, but a remission of the punishment itself due to us by the law of nature. This is that, then, which the law of grace or new covenant doth; every penitent believer is actually and really pardoned and discharged from the penalty, which the law of nature maketh his due debt: Mat. vi. 12, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Our debt is the obligation actually to suffer the full punishment of the law.

Now we will consider the third thing in sin, that is *pœna*, the punishment, and that is either temporal or eternal.

[1.] To begin with the last, eternal punishment. We are discharged from that as soon as we have an interest in Christ; for then our state is altered, and God doth pardon all our past sins, and make us heirs of eternal life: Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' The curse of the law may be taken actively or passively. Actively, it is nothing else but the sentence of the law, or of God the judge, condemning the transgressors of the law, and pronouncing them accursed: 'For cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,' Gal. iii. 10; which curse must not fall to the ground, but be taken off by some valuable compensation, that the honour of God's government may be secured, and that is done by Christ in being made a curse for us. Passively, it signifieth all those punishments which are, or have been, or shall be, or may be inflicted on the transgressors of the law; but chiefly the final curse, which is called 'Wrath to come,' from which Christ hath delivered us, 2 Thes. i. 10; which consists in two things, *pœna damni* and *pœna sensus*; the loss of God's eternal and blessed presence, and of the vision and fruition of him in glory: Mat. xxv. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed.' They are banished from the presence of the Lord, and cast into utter torment. The pain, when we fall immediately into the hands of an angry offended God: Heb. x. 31, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' Now sin is remitted to all them that take sanctuary at the Lord's grace. We deserve it, but he hath actually discharged us from it by his new covenant; such is his mercy and grace to us in Christ.

[2.] For the temporal punishment: while we have sin in us, and are making out our claim, and our sanctification is imperfect, God hath reserved a liberty for his corrective discipline, and to punish and chastise his children as it shall seem meet to his wisdom and justice:

Ps. lxxxix. 32, 33, 'Then will I visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.' Now the temporal punishments are of two sorts—

(1.) Such afflictive evils as belong to his external government. It is hard to reckon up all of them to you, but the consummate evil is death, and the intermediate evils are of different kinds. It is said in one place, Dent. xxv. 20, 'All the curses which are written in this book shall light upon him;' but in another, Deut. xxviii. 61, 'Every curse which is not written in this book will the Lord bring upon thee,' whether written or not written, committed to record in the word, or dispensed in his providence. God hath reserved this liberty to himself, to correct his sinning children in what way he pleaseth. To reduce it in short; all good is from God, and all evil is from sin; and in pursuance of his eternal love, and to keep them from damnation, he will sometimes chastise them sorely: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'For when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world;' and Jer. v. 25, 'Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things from you;' Micah i. 5, 'For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel.' So Amos iii. 2, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.' A rod dipped in guilt may smart sorely upon the backs of God's people. God's displeasure is felt in their chastisements and judgments. Surely their author is God, their cause is sin, their end is repentance. We are in danger to despise the calamities which befall us and our families if we do not own this truth. It is true it turneth to good, but still it is a natural evil. If we were without sin, he would give us the good without the evil; you greatly mistake if you think there is no displeasure of God in all this.

(2.) There are certain afflictions which belong to his internal government, as when God manifesteth his displeasure to the party sinning by withdrawing his Spirit, the evil which David was so much afraid of: Ps. li. 10–12, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.' He desireth that God would not withdraw his grace, and the influence and comfort of his Holy Spirit, which he had so justly forfeited by his heinous sin. This is the sorest judgment on this side hell, to be deprived of inward communion with God. It is not a total separation from his favour and presence, but yet it is a degree of it; when God is strange to us, and suspendeth all the acts of his complacential love, leaving us dull and senseless, having no heart or life to anything that is spiritually good. And if we repent not, God may go further, and deliver us up to brutish lusts. The evils are greater or less, according to the rate of our sins or neglects of grace. These penal withdrawals of the Spirit should therefore be observed; for God showeth much of his pleasure or displeasure by giving or withholding the Spirit. His blessing and favour is showed this way: Prov. i. 23, 'Turn at my reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit to you.' But when God is refused, or neglected,

or highly provoked, he then departs : Ps. lxxxii. 11, 12, 'Israel would none of me ; so I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts.' This is more than all the calamities in the world.

2. In a way of sanctification. So Christ taketh away sin by giving us his Spirit, whereby the stains of our nature are cleansed. We are renewed in righteousness and holiness, according to his image : Eph. iv. 24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness ;' 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into his image and likeness.'

Now concerning this way of taking away sin, let me observe four things—

[1.] That the Spirit is given us as the fruit of Christ's merit and sacrifice : 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 ;' Gal. iii. 14, 'That the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles, through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' He was the rock that was smitten by the rod of Moses : 1 Cor. x. 4, 'And they did all drink of the same spiritual drink ; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.' If Christ were the rock, the water that flowed from the rock was the Spirit : John iv. 14, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life ;' John vii. 38, 39, 'He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.' Well, then, upon the account of Christ's merit and sacrifice, God doth by the Spirit create a clean heart within us, and a right spirit, that we may live in obedience to his holy will.

[2.] That the gift of the Spirit is a kind of executive pardon, or a receiving the atonement ; for this grace was forfeited by sin, as man brought death spiritual upon himself, as well as temporal and eternal, and we made the stain of sin to consist in the loss of the Spirit, or an inclination to sin again ; therefore by sanctification, or the gift of the Spirit, is our pardon executed upon us or applied to us. As the withdrawing or withholding the Spirit is a great part of our punishment, so the gift of the Spirit is the great and first act of God's pardoning mercy, and a means to qualify us for the other parts of God's pardon ; for before men are converted, they are unpardoned : 'Turn you from all your transgressions, and iniquity shall not be your ruin,' Ezek. xviii. 30 ; and Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' Therefore till there be a turning from the life of sin to God by faith in Christ, there is no actual justification nor forgiveness.

[3.] That when repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is begun in us by the Spirit, there is promised a further degree of the Spirit to be given to us to dwell in us : Acts ii. 38, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the re-

mission of sins ; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ; ' Prov. i. 23, ' Turn ye at my reproof : behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you : ' Eph. i. 13, ' After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise ; ' and that for a durable use, to be in us a Spirit of sanctification and adoption. First, To be a Spirit of sanctification : 2 Thes. ii. 13, ' God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification and belief of the truth. ' As he converted us to God, so he is a ' Spirit of regeneration ; ' but as he doth further sanctify and cleanse us, and fit us for God, and make us amiable in his sight, so he is called a ' Spirit of sanctification, ' properly so taken. It is by the Spirit dwelling in us that we mortify and subdue sin, Rom. viii. 13. It is by the Spirit we exert and put forth all acts of holiness : Gal. v. 25, ' If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit ; ' and perform all duties to God in the Spirit. In short, the grace of the Spirit is given us to subdue the power of sin, and strengthen us against temptations, and that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God. Secondly, A Spirit of adoption : Gal. iv. 6, ' Because ye are sons, he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. ' The same Spirit that maketh us holy possesseth us with a filial love of God, and a dependence on him ; so that childlike love, with a pleasing obedience and dependence, are the great effects and tokens of his dwelling in us as a Spirit of adoption.

[4.] This Spirit doth by degrees fit us for our everlasting estate : 2 Cor. v. 5, ' He that formeth us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit ; ' and therefore he must not be obstructed in his work, while he is preparing the heirs of promise aforehand unto glory, lest we lose not only the comfort of our future hopes, but be set back in the spiritual life, and so grieve the Holy Spirit of promise, who is both our sanctifier and comforter. Thus we have seen what Christ doth to take away sin ; he freeth us from the everlasting miseries of the damned in hell, and will surely free us from the miseries of this life, if we be obedient, and hearken to his counsel. But in the midst of weaknesses our title to impunity and life eternal remaineth unreversed, though it be often obscured by our sin and folly.

Secondly, What must we do that sin may be thus taken away ? For I observe, first, that those things which God worketh in us, and bestoweth upon us by his grace, he also requireth of us by his command : Ezek. xxxvi. 26, ' A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit I will put into you. ' Yet Ezek. xviii. 31, ' Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit ; ' and in many other places. Sometimes he promiseth to turn us, sometimes he commandeth us to turn to him ; sometimes he biddeth us to put away sin, sometimes he promiseth to take it away from us ; in the one showing what is our duty, in the other where is our help ; the one inferreth regeneration, which is the work of the Spirit, the other, repentance, which is our duty. Again, the death of Christ must be considered either as it respecteth God or us. As it respecteth God, it is a price paid to provoked justice to purchase grace for us : Isa. liiii. 5, ' He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. ' As it respects us, it layeth an obligation upon

us to do what is proper to us: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.'

What then are we to do?—(1.) As to our entrance into christianity ; (2.) As to our recovery out of our falls.

1. As to our entrance into the grace of the gospel, there is required repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts xx. 21.

[1.] Repentance towards God, which consists in a serious purpose and willingness to let sin go, and a fixed resolution to love, serve, and please God, bewailing and bemoaning ourselves to God with grief and shame: Jer. xxxi. 18, 'I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.'

[2.] Faith, or an acceptance of Christ as the only physician of our souls, who alone can cure and change our hearts; therefore, depending upon the universal offer of his grace, we are resolved to use the means which he hath appointed, that this cure may be wrought in us, Rom. vii. 24, 25.

2. For our recovery out of particular falls, something is to be done with respect to those four things which are in sin.

[1.] As to the fault; be sure the fault be not continued, which is when the criminal acts are repeated. Relapses are very dangerous. A bone often broken in the same place is with the more difficulty set again. God's children are in danger of this before the breach be well made up, or the orifice of the wound well closed; as Lot doubleth his incest, and Sampson goeth again and again to Delilah, Judges xvi. 2, 4. But wicked men sin frequently, as that king who would venture fifty after fifty; nothing will stop them in the way of their sins.

[2.] The guilt continueth till serious and solemn repentance, and suing out our pardon in the name of Christ: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Though a man should forbear the act, and never commit it more, yet unless retracted by serious remorse, and humbling ourselves before God, it avails not. This self-accusing is necessary, that we may know how much we are indebted to grace. Look into thy bill, what owest thou? Luke vii. 47, 'She wept much, because she loved much; and she loved much, because much was forgiven her.' She had a greater measure of love to God and Christ. This self-judging is that which makes us the more earnest for pardon, Luke xviii. 13, and grief and shame in both, to strengthen us against relapses, that we may forsake the sins we confess: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy.' Slight acknowledgments do not mortify sin.

[3.] The blot or evil inclination to sin again. The evil influence of sin continueth till we mortify the root of it; it is not enough to mortify the sin, but we must pull out the core of the distemper before all will be well. Jonah repented of forsaking his call; yet, not mortifying the root, it brake forth again. He stood upon his credit, Jonah iv. 1, 2. Christ trieth Peter: John xxi. 15, 'Lovest thou me more than these?' He had boasted before, 'Though all men forsake thee, I will never forsake thee,' Mat. xxvi. 33. Though Peter had wept bitterly for the fact, yet Christ would try if the cause were removed. Peter is grown

more modest now than to make any comparisons. We must use means to get the sinning disposition checked.

[4.] As to *pœna*, we must deprecate the eternal punishment as deserved by us, through the merit of our actions, still 'looking to Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.' But as to temporal evils which God may inflict upon us partly for the increase of our repentance, when we smart under the fruits of sin; for the evil of punishment doth much help us to judge of the evil of sin: Jer. ii. 19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee: know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, that his fear is not in thee.' Partly to make us a warning to others, that they do not displease God as we have done: 2 Sam. xii. 14, 'Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme; the child also that is born unto thee, shall surely die.' For these reasons, I say, God may punish us in our persons, or in our families and relations; wherefore we should humbly deprecate the judgment: Ps. vi. 12, 'Lord, correct me not in thine anger, nor chasten me in thy hot displeasure.' That we may stop the judgment, and get it mitigated; or, if it come, we may patiently bear it with humble submission to the will of God: Micah vii. 9, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.' Not mourning as without hope, yet humbling ourselves, and putting our mouths in the dust.

Secondly, Now what grounds have we that Christ will do this for us?

1. Christ's office and undertaking, which he cannot possibly neglect; for this end was he manifested, and sent by the Father, to take away sin: Acts v. 31, 'God hath exalted him to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance and remission of sin.' Will he come in vain, and miss of his ends, or fail a serious soul that expecteth and waiteth for the benefit of his office? The generality of the christian world prize his memory but neglect his offices; but now, those that depend on his name, and seek the fruits of his office, will he frustrate their expectations?

2. Consider how able he is to make good his offices, the merit of his humiliation, and the power of his exaltation. First, The merit of his humiliation: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that 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.' What a price hath he given for sanctifying and healing grace! which should not only heighten our esteem of the privilege, but increase our confidence. So Isa. liii. 5, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Such is the perfection and merit of his sacrifice, that we may depend upon it; he will not lose the fruit of his obedience and suffering. Secondly, 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.' Christ having paid our ransom, is gone to heaven, and hath full

power to free us from sin, even all those that heartily consent to his terms.

3. He is willing to do this for you. Why else did he purchase it at so dear a rate? Why doth he offer it so freely in the promises of the gospel, and in that covenant which was made, stated, and sworn unto? Heb. vi. 17, 18. Why else has he been so kind to all that are now in glory? There is none in heaven by the first covenant; all that are there come thither as justified and sanctified by Jesus Christ, and in the way of his pardoning grace. Surely he will not be strange to them that bemoan themselves. Consider his merciful nature, his appearing in our flesh, that we might have this confidence: Heb. ii. 17, 'Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.' Well, then, Christ is willing if we are willing; there you will find it sticketh. He came to take away sin, but we will not give way to his Spirit; we are neither sensible of our burden, nor earnest for a cure, at least a sound cure. We seek ease and comfort more than the removing of the distemper.

SERMON X.

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.—1 JOHN iii. 6.

HERE is a double argument against an evil and sinful life, which is drawn from our union and communion with Christ by faith, or our knowledge of him. It is delivered in a copulate axiom, where there is a comparison of contraries. These two contrary parties are set forth in two propositions, the one asserting the property and disposition of the true believer, the other refuting the claim of the pretender. In the one an argument from union with Christ, the other from the knowledge of him.

1st Proposition, 'Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not;' where we have the subject and the predicate.

1. The subject, 'Abideth in him;' that is, he who is united to Christ by a true and lively faith, and perseveres in this union, abideth in him. In effect, whosoever is a true christian, for they are often expressed by this character: 1 John ii. 6, 'He that abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' This is the great duty pressed upon us: 1 John ii. 27, 28, 'But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as he hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and may not be ashamed before him at his coming;' and John xv. 4-7, 'Abide in me, and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine,