

SERMON UPON 1 JOHN I. 7.

And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—
1 JOHN i. 7.

IN the context the apostle speaketh of communion with God. Now communion with God we cannot have till we be reconciled to him by Christ, and none can be looked upon as reconciled to him by Christ, but those that endeavour conformity to God in purity and holiness; for the manner of speech is hypothetical and continual: 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

In the words observe—

1. A privilege or benefit; to be cleansed from all sin.
2. The extent, 'From all sin.' Original, actual, small, great, omissions and commissions, past sins, present infirmities.
3. The meritorious cause of it, 'The blood of Jesus Christ.'
4. The subject to which it is applied, or the parties interested; they that 'walk in the light, as he is in the light.'

Doct. That remission of sins which is promised in the new covenant to the sanctified is procured by the blood of Jesus Christ.

I. The privilege or benefit is to be cleansed from sin. The phrase importeth both justification and sanctification. Where cleansing from sin is spoken of as a duty required of us, it always importeth sanctification: Isa. i. 16, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings before mine eyes, cease to do evil.' But where it is spoken of as a mercy received from God, there it implieth sometimes both benefits; for both go together: as Eph. v. 26, 'He gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' It implieth there our whole translation from the state of sin and death to an estate of grace and life: both justification, or doing away the guilt of sin, and sanctification, or the renovation of our natures. Sometimes it implieth one benefit only or principally, which sense must be determined by the context. As, for instance, when both benefits are mentioned together, and one of them in other terms: as 1 John i. 9, 'To forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' There cleansing intendeth sanctification, which, with pardon, is made a distinct branch of our recovery.

When this cleansing is ascribed to the blood of Christ, it principally

noteth justification; when to the Spirit, sanctification. So they are distributed, 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' As to give instances: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean.' That water signifieth the sanctifying Spirit; and his cleansing work is sanctification. So Titus iii. 5, 'But according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' But when it is ascribed to the blood of Christ, it principally signifieth justification, as in the text: and Rev. i. 5, 'And washed us from our sins in his own blood;' and in many other places. Well, then, when the blood of Christ is said to be beneficial to cleanse us, it is meant of his taking off the guilt of sin, and our obligation to wrath. Sin is the whole cause of God's displeasure against us, and that which maketh us odious in his sight, as a filthy thing is to us. Therefore when we are freed from sin by the death of Christ, we are said to be cleansed. Guilt is not a quality, but a relation, or an obligation to punishment, which the law of God hath made the sinner's due, which relation and obligation ceaseth when that is done which our supreme Lord and Judge requireth. For man is bound to God no further than God will have him bound. And when the obligation is dissolved, the punishment is no more in force.

To understand this distinctly, we may, with respect to justification, consider three things in sin—(1.) The fault; (2.) The guilt; and (3.) The punishment.

1. The fault is a criminal action. This is not taken away, either as a natural action or a faulty action, contrary to the law of God; for that is impossible. Not as a natural action; for such a fault we committed, either by omitting good, or doing evil. *Factum infectum fieri nequit*; that which is done cannot be undone. Nor as it is a faulty action contrary to the law of God. This Christ taketh not away neither; for that were to disannul the obliging force or authority of the law. The sins we committed are sins still. Christ came not to make the law less holy, or the fault to be no fault. What shall we say then to this first thing in sin? The fault is not taken away; but it is passed by as it is the foundation of our guilt. The scripture sets it forth by the metaphor of removing it out of God's sight: Ps. ciii. 12, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us;' that we may not be objects displeasing to him. And it is expressed, 'Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back,' Isa. xxxviii. 17; as men cast behind their backs such things as they list not to look on, or remember. In humiliation we set them before our face; but in pardoning, God casts them behind his back. So in a like expression he is said 'to pass by the transgression of the covenant of his heritage,' Micah vii. 18. Pardon is a passing over, a seeing and not seeing the faults of his people. God quits the plea, doth not call to an account for them. It may further be represented by taking off the filthy garment where-with the high priest was clothed when he stood before the Lord: Zech. iii. 4, 'Take away the filthy garments from him, and unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' Whilst we are clothed with filthy

garments, we are displeasing objects in God's sight, therefore they are removed, that we may be accepted.

2. The guilt. There is a twofold guilt, *reatus culpæ* and *reatus pœnæ*; the guilt of sin and the guilt of punishment. The *reatus culpæ*, or guilt of sin, is seen by applying the law to the fact, and both to the person that hath committed it: 1 John iii. 4, 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.' Such a fact is sin, because the law forbiddeth it, and I am a sinner because I have done it. Now this is not taken away; my faulty act is an offence, and I am an offender, and none of us can be reputed as those that never 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 when we come to God as our offended governor, we plead not as innocent, but as sinners, desiring that in the behalf of Christ our sins may be forgiven to us. There is also *reatus pœnæ*, or guilt of punishment, which resulteth from the sanction of the law, binding us to suffer such penalties as the law hath determined. Now this may be considered, *quoad meritum, vel quoad eventum*, according to the merit, or according to the event; according to the merit of the action, what the action in itself deserveth, which is condemnation to punishment; this Christ hath not taken away, nor ever intended to take away. Every sinful action is *in se, et merito operis*, in itself, and by the desert of the work, damnable or deserving 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 new covenant we are discharged from the obligation to punishment, and so are said to be cleansed, purged, pardoned. This will be more clear and plain to you by considering what is required of us in suing out our pardon. We must not deny the fault or sin, but confess it: 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.' And we must acknowledge the guilt and desert of God's righteous law: 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'If we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord.' There must be self-accusing and self-judging. In self-accusing we confess *reatum culpæ*, the guilt of sin, our breach of the law. In self-judging we confess *reatum pœnæ*, that we deserve condemnation; without either of which there would be no due recourse to God for pardon, or that humiliation and brokenness of heart which the scripture calleth for, or else these would be performed perfunctorily and formally, if there were 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 things before the Lord? Or if the guilt of punishment were so far dissolved that my actions did not in their own nature, and by God's righteous law, deserve such condemnation and punishment, how can I broken-heartedly acknowledge myself to have deserved the greatest evil which his law threatened? So that this cleansing of us is not a vacating the action, as if it had never been done, or a denial of the fault, as if it were no fault, nor a disannulling of the desert of punishment, but a remission of the punishment itself, or a discharge from the penalty which sin hath made our due debt.

3. The punishment. Where sin is pardoned, there is a discharge

from the punishment due upon the guilt. Sin is not imputed to condemnation; nay, the man is dealt with before the tribunal of the judge as if he were pure and clean from all sin. He deserves indeed to be accursed, but the penitent, broken-hearted sinner is accepted to pardon, and shall be exempted from eternal punishment: John v. 29, 'He hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation;' that is, he hath escaped eternal death and shall enjoy everlasting life.

But now for the question, whether all sins be forgiven at once; past, present, and to come? I must answer negatively; sins to come cannot properly be said to be pardoned, for till they are committed we are not guilty of them, and this would be not so much a pardon, as an indulgence and licence to sin; such as the man of sin is wont to give to his superstitious adherents, indulgences for so many years to come. Then a man once converted could no otherwise than frivolously pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses.' It would take away care of avoiding sin to come, and repentance for what is past. Daily sins displease God, and deserve death. Forgiveness of sin sometimes is spoken of with respect to the purchase: Heb. x. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' There needeth no more sacrifice. Sometimes with respect to the offer in the new covenant: Acts xiii. 38, 39, 'Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.' The same covenant pardoneth all; there needeth no other covenant. Sometimes it may be considered as applied as soon as we do believe: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ;' Eph. i. 6, 'Wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.' By pardon we partake of a threefold benefit.

[1.] The state of the person is altered: from a child of wrath he is put into a state of grace; from a child of the devil, made a child of God: John i. 12, 'But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.'

[2.] There is an actual remission of all past sins till that day.

[3.] There is a right to sue out pardon for daily failings: John xiii. 10, 'Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet.' We contract new defilement every day by going up and down in a dirty world. Well, then, the certain remedy is provided, which will pardon our sins as soon as we are capable.

II. The extent of this benefit, 'All sin.' This showeth how perfect this deliverance is. If we should be freed from some sins only, and left under the guilt of others, we could never be upon sure terms. Though the self-judging sinner seeth multitudes of sins in himself, yet that will not hinder his free and full pardon; nor need it to obstruct the peaceable estate of it in his conscience. For where God forgiveth one sin, he forgiveth all: Ps. ciii. 3, 'Who pardoneth all thy sins,' Micah vii. 18, 'Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' Sins are of several kinds, original, actual; of omission, commission; small, great; secret, open; past enormities, and present infirmities. Look into thy bill; what owest thou? A christian is amazed when

he cometh to a serious account with God. But he needeth not be discouraged, since upon sincere and unfeigned repentance God pardoneth all that is past, and will not be severe, notwithstanding present failings and imperfections. All sins are mortal, all of them damnable: wherefore, if all sins be not pardoned, we remain in danger of the curse. Any one sin let alone is sufficient to exclude us out of heaven. Therefore, first or last, all is pardoned. Justice hath no more to seek of Christ, and we have full leave to sue out our pardon in his name.

III. The meritorious cause of it, 'The blood of Christ.'

Here let us see—(1.) What the blood of Christ doth; (2.) Whence it hath this power to cleanse us from all our sins.

1. What the blood of Christ doth. It may be considered three ways—as shed, pleaded, sprinkled.

[1.] As shed. This is necessary by way of merit and satisfaction, to obtain for us the pardon of sins. After the entrance of sin into the world, God, that is inclined to do good to his creatures, would have it manifestly appear that he hated sin, and loved righteousness: therefore, sin being already committed, and the punishment of eternal death incurred, he would show the hatred of his justice and holiness against sin, and yet spare the sinner: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' Heb. ix. 22, 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.' And in the gospel, Christ is the true sacrifice for sin, accepted by God for sinful man, that he may be cleansed and purified, or freed from the wrath and punishment which sin had made his due. Hereby is enough done to signify God's purest holiness, and his utter hatred and detestation of sin, and to declare his love of justice, and to keep up the authority of his law, and instruct the world that it is a dangerous thing to transgress it.

[2.] As pleaded—(1.) By Christ in heaven, (2.) By us in prayer.

(1.) By Christ in heaven; for Heb. ix. 12, 'But by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' It is that which is presented to God as the full price and ransom of souls.

(2.) By us in prayer; for the apostle saith, Heb. x. 19, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.' When we beg any blessing, especially this necessary benefit, the pardon of our sins, that which supporteth our confidence of audience and acceptance with God is the blood of Christ.

[3.] As sprinkled or applied, for so we are told: Heb. xii. 24, 'You are come to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' It is not enough that his blood be shed, or pleaded, but it must be sprinkled. In itself it hath a cleansing power and virtue; but being sprinkled, it doth actually cleanse and purify from sin. The sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb saved the house from the stroke of the destroying angel, Exod. xii. 11, Heb. xi. 28. The destroying angel passed by all those whose door-posts are sprinkled. And all the elect are said to be saved 'by the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus,' 1 Peter i. 2. And the apostle reasoneth it: Heb. ix. 13, 14, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats,

and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 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.' In the type of the red heifer there was a solemn sprinkling to the purifying of the unclean, which answereth the purging of our consciences by the blood of Christ: the one purifieth the flesh, the other the conscience: the one freed from such penalties as the law imposed for legal and ceremonial offences, the other from dead works, which are pollutions before God; and so are spiritual evils, and eternal penalties, that unfit us for communion with God. Well, then, we see there must be application; therefore let us consider how it is to be applied, or the means of sprinkling, both on God's and our part.

(1.) On God's part, the means of applying are, external or internal: for the external means we have an account of them, Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word:' that is, by the word and sacraments; so he applieth to us the virtue of his death.

(1st.) By the preaching of the word. The great duty of the ministers of the gospel is to sprinkle the hearts of the people with the blood of Christ, by the preaching of the new covenant: not only to assure them that pardon of sins may be obtained: Acts x. 43, 'To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins;' but to instruct them how it may be had; that such as repent and believe, and do what becometh either duty, shall be assuredly cleansed from sin and accepted with God. The apostle telleth us the sum and substance of his preaching was, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts xx. 21. Repentance towards God is necessary, that we may acknowledge our obligation to his law, bemoaning our former sin and misery, and devoting ourselves anew to him, that we may do his will, and walk in his ways. Faith in Jesus Christ is necessary, that those that have benefit by him may own the author of their deliverance, and put their cause into his hands, that he may reconcile them unto God. Repentance is our turning to God, as faith is a thankful owning of our Redeemer. Thus the word giveth both instruction and assurance; for it is both a doctrine, and a grant or charter.

(2d.) The sacraments are the means of this sprinkling, or applying the cleansing virtue of Christ's blood. These are two; baptism: Acts ii. 38, 'Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins;' the Lord's supper: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' Both excite and assure us of the participation of this benefit by Christ. They excite as they are applied to every one; for every one that submitteth to these ordinances bindeth himself to seek after this benefit in the way wherein Christ will dispense it; and this they do assure us as they work, increase, and strengthen faith in us, and are a solemn investiture to Christ and his benefits.

(3d.) Internal; by the effectual operation of the Spirit, as the fruit of Christ's intercession. Therefore it is said, 1 John iii. 8, 'There are

three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood ; and these three agree in one. The *τὸ κρινόμενον*, or thing to be proved, is that Jesus is the Son of God. The Spirit beareth witness to this, applying the blood of Christ to the conscience, and purifying and sanctifying them as with clean water. These are not one, as the first ; but these agree in one, as they do establish the same conclusion, as they do concurringly establish it : neither simply nor apart ; not water apart, nor blood apart, nor Spirit apart, but they all concur ; the Spirit, by water and blood, appeasing our guilty consciences, and washing away the guilt of sin. And it is said, 1 John v. 10, ‘ He that believeth on the Son of God hath his witness in himself ; ’ the Spirit by the blood of Christ pacifying his conscience, and sanctifying his heart : Rom. v. 5, ‘ The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.’ The business is, what is meant here by the love of God ? I take it for the great instance of his love, the reconciling the world to himself by Jesus Christ ; for it immediately followeth, ‘ For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.’ Surely it is not taken for our love to God, but his love to us, which was chiefly seen in that great instance. We have the effect and feeling, the sense and comfort of it, by the Spirit.

(2.) The means of sprinkling on our part ; for until we believe, the blood of Christ produceth not its effect upon our souls : Rom. iii. 25, ‘ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.’ Faith believeth the great love of Christ in the shedding of his blood for the expiation of our sins, and doth excite us to live in a constant course of obedience to him who died for us : 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ‘ For 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.’ All that sincerely believe in Christ, and embrace the gospel, have their sins pardoned, are accepted with God in Christ, and live in amity with him : Rom. viii. 1, ‘ There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.’ They are now actually admitted into communion with God, and the privileges of Christ’s death. But these who thus believe, how far obedience concurrerth I will not now debate ; it is enough to say, that sincere believers are freed from sin, and the direful consequences of it.

2. Whence hath the blood of Christ such a cleansing virtue ? Partly from the institution of God, and partly from its own intrinsic worth and value.

[1.] From the institution of God : Col. i. 19, 20, ‘ It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. And having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.’ It pleased the Father to make use of the blood of his cross to reconcile the world to himself. Divine institution puts a value upon things ; for surely God accepts what he hath appointed, let it be otherwise never so considerable, anything is of force unto that whereunto God hath ordained it. God’s will is the reason and cause of all things. If God will appoint bread and wine to be the mysterious instruments of his grace, who can contradict his will ? Well, then, this is one ground of our

confidence, that Christ is not a mediator of our choosing. If we had offered God a satisfaction, or Christ had interposed of his own accord, we might have met with a like answer as Moses had : Exod. xxxii. 32, 33, 'If thou wilt, forgive their sin : and if not, blot me out of thy book. And the Lord said, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.' But God will not refuse what he hath appointed himself.

[2.] From its own intrinsic worth and value. There is more in Christ than what an institution puts upon him.

(1.) The dignity of the person ; who is not only perfectly holy, and separate from sinners, but hath also a divine virtue and power. Both concur in Christ, who was that holy thing born of the virgin, and was also a person subsisting in the Godhead. Who had a fulness of all grace, Col. i. 19. 'And the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily,' Col. ii. 9. Not mystically, as in believers ; not symbolically, as in the sacraments ; nor typically, and by way of shadow, as in the types of the law ; but really and personally. And therefore it is said in the text, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son ;' and elsewhere : 'Redeemed by the blood of God,' Acts xx. 28. If the person satisfying be an infinite person, so is his satisfaction. The scripture improveth this notion, both in opposition to the sin of Adam ; there is a *πολλῷ μᾶλλον*, a much more, put upon Christ : Rom. v. 15-17, 'But not as the offence, so also is the free gift ; for if through the offence of one man many were made sinners ; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift ; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences to justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one ; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.' The value of the first Adam did merely arise from God's institution ; yet one act of the first Adam was enough to ruin millions of souls, because God instituted him to be a public head and common root to all his seed. God hath also instituted Christ, but his acts were much more of an unlimited influence, because without any institution he was really better worth than all the world. So in opposition to the ceremonies of the law, there is a *πολλῷ μᾶλλον*, a much more, put upon Christ : Heb. ix. 13, 14, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God ?' The rites of old were able to work that for which they were ordained, cleanse from all uncleanness, and so stand before God in his worship ; but besides, there is an infinite worth in Christ to purge the conscience from sin. His person gave a value to his suffering, so that one serveth for all. He is worth millions of us. His temporary sufferings are enough to take off the penalty of eternal punishment due for the disobedience of the whole world.

(2.) The nature of the work. It was a glorious act of obedience. Do not think God is cruel, and standeth upon a little blood. No ; he standeth upon his honour. He hath made a law, and his law must have satisfaction ; the debt of obedience must be paid : Rom. v. 19,

‘As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;’ Phil. ii. 8, ‘He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.’ The authority of the lawgiver was to be salved by obedience; and the dread of the penalty, by an obedience to the death. It standeth, the Mediator, in no less than his blood, before God will make friendship with us. The law said, ‘In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die the death.’ Therefore Christ must lay down his life, by a most shameful, painful, cursed death. He that is above all law taketh the yoke of obedience upon him. His suffering death for the sin of man at the command of his Father, was the highest degree of obedience that ever was performed to God. So much love showed to God and man, so much self-denial, so much humility and patience, such resignation of himself to God, as cannot be paralleled.

(3.) The grievousness of the sufferings which Christ endured. He suffered the punishment due to us, in his agonies and desertion; and so ‘carried our griefs, and bear our sorrows,’ Isa. liii. 4. His bloody sweat, his prayers and strong cries, his troubles of soul, show it; he was made sin, and made a curse, for us. What can be expected more? He not only bore our sins on his body on the tree, but we read also of his soul sufferings: John xii. 27, ‘Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?’ His desertion: Mat. xxvii. 46, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ He was forsaken for a while, that we might be received for ever. All these things give hope to penitent believers that there is a sure ground laid whereby they may be cleansed from their sins.

IV. The persons that have this benefit are such as ‘walk in the light, as he is in the light.’ They propound no lower pattern to themselves than the perfection and excellences of God. Here it is disputed by divines what respect this qualification hath to the benefit? Whether merely as a sign, or as a condition. The form is conditional. The generality determine that this is propounded as a sign of our communion with God. But others urge against them, that then there may be communion with God while we are in our sins; for *omne signum est posterius signato*; the sign is after the thing signified. Be it a natural sign, as the smoke of fire; or an arbitrary sign, as a tavern by a bush, or a servant by his badge and cognisance. Therefore, for some time at least, a man hath communion with God before he is holy. But this argument may be answered thus, that sanctification is the first gift. We are first sanctified, and then justified; when a man sanctified walketh in the light, it is a sign of his sanctification and justification. But they further urge that the apostle discourseth not of the evidence, but means; therefore it is best to say, It is both a sign and a condition without which we cannot have benefit by Christ’s death; but the first condition is faith; next, love and holiness to continue our interest in this privilege. Those that walk in the light do in some sort resemble God, and endeavour to be more like him every day in goodness or holiness.

Use 1. For information in sundry particulars.

1. It showeth us the heinous nature of sin. A deep stain it is that could not be washed off but by the blood of Christ. All in their natural

estate are become filthy and odious to God: Ps. xiv. 3, 'They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy;' objects displeasing in the eye of holiness, therefore we need to be cleansed. The leper cried out, 'Unclean;' so must we.

2. It showeth us the great love of Christ: Rev. i. 5, 'Who hath loved us, and washed us in his own blood.' That he would die an accursed, shameful death, to recover us to God, our hearts should be deeply possessed with a sense of his love. There are three things set it forth to us—(1.) The way he took to cleanse us; (2.) The fulness of the benefit; (3.) The daily application.

[1.] The way he took to cleanse us. It was by his blood: 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein was love; not that we loved God, but God loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.'

[2.] The fulness of the benefit: 'His blood cleanseth from all sin.' There needeth no other sacrifice, no other covenant. It is done perfectly: Heb. x. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.'

[3.] The daily application. This fountain is always open. We sin daily, and every day we sue out our discharge in Christ's name. The best of God's children make but too much work for pardoning mercy. We contract new filth by walking up and down in a dirty, defiling world: John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' Now where much is forgiven, there should be the more love, Luke vii. 47.

Use 2. To persuade you to make use of Christ's death for this effect. If the price be paid by Christ, and accepted by God for the ransom of souls, and the liberty proclaimed to us, surely it is our own fault if we remain yet in bonds. Either you are senseless of your spiritual condition, and so despise the fruits of Christ's death, or else you have not that esteem of the blood of Christ as you ought to have, as if he had not made full satisfaction. Both are great crimes.

1. Consider your misery by reason of sin. The Redeemer hath no work to do in stupid and senseless souls. They that know not their misery regard not their remedy. The offers of the gospel are always made to the sensible, the broken-hearted, the weary, the thirsty, the heavy-laden. Many are welcome to Christ that know not themselves penitent believers; but never any welcome that knew not themselves condemned sinners: Luke xviii. 13, 14, 'And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'

2. Be firmly persuaded of the sufficiency of what Christ hath done for man's redemption, that you may not have slight thoughts of the blood of Christ. It is that blood by which Christ entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb. ix. 12. It is the blood of the 'everlasting covenant, which maketh us perfect in every good work,' Heb. xiii. 20, 21; that precious blood by which we are redeemed from our vain conversations, 1 Peter i. 18; that blood which purges our conscience from dead works, Heb. ix. 14.

3. Make hearty application of it. Lay the plaster upon the sore. In the word, when you hear the offers of grace in the gospel, that God desireth not the death of a sinner, that he is willing to save those that believe in Jesus Christ, put in for a share: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a true and faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;' Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?' Job v. 27, 'Hear it, and know it for thy good.' Bring it home to thine heart. So in the Lord's supper, where we solemnly remember his death; there we hear of the blood of the new testament which was shed for the remission of sins. Now apply it: 1 Cor. x. 16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?'

4. Labour to make your claim more sure. Walk in the light. The ground of comfort is the blood of Christ; the matter of comfort is the covenant; but we must look to our claim and title, or else this grace is not brought home to us, nor we sanctified and enabled to live to God: John xvii. 19, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth;' 1 John iii. 7, 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.'
