

A Discourse of the Cleansing Virtue of Christ's Blood

by Stephen Charnock

And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John 1. 7.

The apostle, in the beginning of the chapter, puts the saints to whom he writes in mind of the Gospel he had writ, wherein he had declared to them that Word of life which had been with the Father, and was manifested to the world, and which he now declares again, that they might have a fellowship with the apostles in the truth, and not with the false teachers in their errors; and for an incentive, assures them that the fellowship of those that kept the truth as it is in Jesus was with the Father and with the Son: ver. 3, 1 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ: with the Father, as the source and spring of eternal life and happiness; with the Son, as mediator, who has opened the way to us, removed the bars, and given us an access to and a communion with the Father. For by sin we were alienated from God, our sin had caused justice to lock up the gates of paradise, and forbid such guilty and polluted offenders to approach to the pure majesty of God. The apostle, to encourage them to cleave to the gospel, proposes to them a fellowship with God by the means of Jesus Christ, his Son and our Mediator, as the chief happiness and felicity of man, and that which can only afford them a full and complete joy. And afterwards, ver. 5, 1 'This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all;' he prescribes to them the means whereby they may keep up a communion with God, which he infers from the transcendent excellency of the divine nature, who is light: light, in regard of the clearness of his knowledge; light, in regard of his unstained purity, not tainted with the least spot or dust of evil, not having anything unworthy in his nature, nor doing anything unbecoming in his actions. If, therefore, our conversations be in darkness, if we wallow in the mire of any untamed, unmortified lust, what soever our evangelical professions may be, or howsoever we may fancy ourselves entered into a fellowship with the Father by the means of the mediator, it is but a lying imagination; for how can there be a communion between two natures so different, between light and darkness, purity and impurity, heaven and hell, God and the devil? But if our conversation be agreeable to gospel precepts, we have then a fellowship with him: ver. 7, 'if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,' i.e. God has a fellowship with us in affection and delight, and we have a fellowship with God in salvation and happiness; God gives himself to us, and we give ourselves to God. He bestows grace and pardon on us, and we resign up our hearts and affections to him. And this is a certain proof that we are interested in the expiatory virtue of the blood of Christ. Or else those latter words may be a prevention of an objection which might result from the apprehension of the relics of corruption in the best man in this life. Since God is infinitely pure light, without darkness, and we have so much darkness mixed with our best light, we must for ever despair of having any fellowship with God; the infinite

distance, by reason of our indwelling corruption, will put us out of all hopes of ever attaining such a sovereign felicity. But this reply is prevented by this clause of the apostle: 'And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' Let not the sense of your daily infirmities animate any desponding fears. If you square your hearts and lives in all sincerity according to the gospel rule, there is a provision made for your security in the blood of Christ. God will wipe off the guilt of your defects by the virtue of that precious blood which has been shed for your reparation. The apostle here supposes remainders of sin in those that have the privilege of walking with God, and interest in the blessings of the covenant.

The blood of Jesus Christ. By this is meant the last act in the tragedy of his life, his blood being the ransom of our souls, the price of our redemption, and the expiation of our sin. The shedding his blood was the highest and most excellent part of his obedience, Philip. ii. 8, His whole life was a continual suffering, but his death was the top and complement of his obedience, for in that he manifested the greatest love to God and the highest charity to man. The expiatory sacrifices under the law were always bloody, death was to be endured for sin, and blood was the life of the creature; the blood or death of Christ is the cause of our justification.

His Son. His sonship makes his blood valuable. It is blood, and so agreeable to the law in the penalty; it is the blood of the Son of God, and therefore acceptable to the lawgiver in its value. Though it was the blood of the humanity, yet the merit of it was derived from the divinity. It is not his blood as he was the son of the virgin, but his blood as he was the Son of God, which had this sovereign virtue. It is no wonder, therefore, that it should have such a mighty efficacy to cleanse the believers in it, in all ages of the world, from such vast heaps of guilt, since it is the blood of Christ, who was God; and valuable, not so much for the greatness of the punishment whereby it was shed, as the dignity of the person from whom it flowed. One Son of God weighs more than millions of worlds of angels.

Cleanseth. Cleansing and purging are terms used in Scripture for justifying as well as sanctifying. The apostle interprets washing of both those acts: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' The latter words are exegetical of the former; they both are the fruits of the merit of the blood of Christ. The one is the act of the Father as a judge appeased by that blood, the other the act of the Spirit as a sanctifier purchased by that blood. And so the 'washing of us in the blood of Christ,' spoken of Rev. i. 5, is to be understood of justification. Sanctification is expressed, ver. 6, by 'making us kings and priests to God,' giving us royal and holy natures, to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God; and several times the word "chafar", which signifies to expiate, appease, is translated to sanctify, Exod. xxix. 33, 36, and to cleanse, ver. 37; and a word that signifies cleansing is sometimes put for justifying, as in the third commandment, Exod. xx. 7, 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain,' "lo yenakeh", will not cleanse or purge them. But it must be understood of cleansing from guilt, because it refers to the penalty of the law. It is here used in this sense; it is spoken to them that are sanctified and have a

fellowship with God, that if they walk in the light, God will impute to them the blood of his Son for their absolution from the guilt of all their infirmities.

The blood of Christ cleanseth.

1. It has a virtue to cleanse. It does not actually cleanse all, but only those that believe. Nor does it cleanse them from new sins, but upon renewed acts of faith. There is a sufficiency in it to cleanse all, and there is an efficacy in it to cleanse those that have recourse to it. As when we say a medicine purges such a humour, we understand it of the virtue and quality of the medicine, not that it purges unless it be taken in, or otherwise applied to the distempered person.

2. The blood of Christ *cleanseth*, not *has cleansed*, or *shall cleanse*. This notes a continued act. There is a perpetual pleading of it for us, a continual flowing of it to us. It is a fountain set open for sin, Zech. xiii. 1. There is a constant streaming of virtue from this blood, as there is of corruption from our nature. It was shed but once, it is applied often, and the virtue of it is as durable as the person whose blood it is.

3. The blood of Christ cleanseth. The apostle joins nothing with this blood. It has the sole and the sovereign virtue. There is no need of tainted merits, unbloody sacrifices, and terrifying purgatories. The whole of cleansing is ascribed to this blood, not anything to our own righteousness or works. It admits no partner with it, not the blood of martyrs nor the intercessions of saints.

4. The blood of Christ cleanseth us from *all sin*. It is an universal remedy. Whatsoever has the nature of sin, sins against the law and sins against the gospel. It absolves from the guilt of sin, and shelters from the wrath of God. The distinction of venial and mortal sins has no footing here; no sin but is mortal without it, no sin so venial but needs it. This blood purges not some sort of sins, and leaves the rest to be expiated by a purgatory fire. This expression of the apostle, of *all sin*, is water enough to quench all the flames of purgatory that Rome has kindled; what sins are not expiated by it are left not to a temporary, but an eternal death; not to a refining, but a consuming fire. So that we see these words are an antidote against fears arising by reason of our infirmities, a cordial against faintings, an encouragement to a holy walk with God. It is a short but a full panegyric of the virtue of the blood of Christ.

1. In regard of the effect, *cleansing*.

2. In regard of the cause of its efficacy. It is the blood of *Jesus*, a saviour; the blood of Christ, one appointed, anointed by God to be a *Jesus*; the blood of the *Son of God*, of one in a special relation to the Father, as his only begotten, beloved Son.

3. In regard of the extensiveness of it, *all sin*. No guilt so high but it can master, no stain so deep but it can purge; being the blood of the Son of God, and therefore of infinite virtue, it has as much force to demolish mountains of guilt as level mole-hills of iniquity.

The words are a plain doctrine in themselves:

Doct. The blood of Christ has a perpetual virtue, and does actually and perfectly cleanse believers from all guilt. This blood is the expiation of our sin and the unlocking our chains, the price of our liberty and of the purity of our souls. The redemption we have through it is expressly called the forgiveness of sin, Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin,' - by a *metonymy* of the effect for the cause; remission was an act of redemption. When the apostle, Heb. x. 14, tells, 'That by one offering he has for ever perfected them that are sanctified,' he places this perfection in the remission of sin, ver. 17, 18. He did in the offering himself so transact our affairs, and settle our concerns with God, that there was no need of any other offerings to eke it out or patch it up. As the blood of the typical sacrifices purified from ceremonial, so the blood of the anti-typical offering purifies from moral uncleanness. The Scripture places remission wholly in this blood of the Redeemer. When Christ makes his will and institutes his supper, he commends this as our righteousness: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,' according to the title and end given it in the prophet, Zech. ix. 11. 'By this blood of the covenant the prisoners are delivered from the pit of corruption, wherein there was no water; no water to quench our thirst, no water to cleanse our souls, but mud and mire to defile them. This was the design of his death, as himself speaks: Luke xxiv. 46, 47, 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name amongst all nations.' And Peter, in his discourse at Cornelius his house, comprises in this the intent of the whole Scripture: 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins,' Acts x. 43. As this was the justifying blood in the time of the prophets, so it will be the justifying blood to the end of the world. By this blood only the robes of any are made white, Rev. vii. 14; by this blood the accuser of the brethren is overcome and cast in his suit, Rev. xii. 10, 11. The maintaining of justification by this blood seems to be the great contest between the true church and the anti-Christian state.

(1.) The blood of Christ is to be considered morally in this act. The natural end of blood in the veins is a reparation of the substance of the body by a conversion of the blood into it. And the proper use of blood is not to cleanse, for it defiles and bespots anything whereon it is dropped; but morally considered, as the shedding of blood implies loss of life and punishment for a crime, so blood is an expiation of the crime, and a satisfaction to the law for the offence committed against it. As the shedding innocent blood does morally pollute a land, so the shedding the blood of the malefactor and murderer does morally cleanse a land: Numb. xxxv. 33, 'Blood defiles the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein but by the blood of him that shed it'. Had not this blood of Christ been shed, our sins had not been pardoned, our souls had not been secured, our chains had continued, and our terrors had been increased; the strokes of justice had been felt, and the face of mercy had been veiled; we had wholly been the vassals of the one, and foreigners to the other.

(2.) The cleansing is to be doubly considered. There is a cleansing from guilt, and a cleansing from filth, both are the fruits of this blood: the guilt is removed by remission,

the filth by purification. Christ does both: he cleanses us from our guilt as he is our righteousness, from our spot as he is our sanctification; for he is both to us, 1 Cor. i. 80, the one upon the account of his merit, the other by his efficacy, which he exerts by his Spirit. The proper intendment of the blood of Christ was to take off the curse of the law, and free us from our guilt; the washing off our stains is the proper work of the Spirit, upon that account signified to us by water in the prophets. The blood and water flowing from the side of Christ upon the cross were distinct, John xix. 34, 35, as appears by the great seriousness wherewith John affirms the relation: 'He that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knows that he saith true.' These two liquors flowed from his side distinctly, and do not mingle in their streams; and this seems to be so disposed by the providence of God, to signify that from the death of Christ there flow two sorts of benefits of a different nature, and which ought to be differently considered; viz., sanctification, represented by water destined to washing; and justification, which arises from satisfaction, represented by the blood shed for remission of sin. These both spring up from the death of Christ, yet they belong to two distinct offices of Christ. He justifies us as a surety, a sacrifice by suffering, as a priest by merit; but he sanctifies us as a king, by sending his Spirit to work efficaciously in our hearts. When we consider the blood of Christ, we consider Christ as a sacrifice; and sacrifices were called purifications, καθαρμοι, not in regard of washing away the filth, but expiating the guilt of sin; yet indeed the justifying virtue of this blood is never exerted without a sanctifying virtue accompanying it. As blood and water flowed out of the side of Christ together, so blood and water flow into the heart of a sinner together. The typical blood of the covenant, when sprinkled by Moses upon the book and people, was mixed with water, Heb. ix. 19, 20, to signify that holiness, signified by water, accompanies the application of propitiation, signified by blood. All the force of sin consisted in condemnation, to which it had subjected men as it was a transgression of the law, and in conjunction therewith it had defiled the soul as it was loathsome, and filthy. Now Christ shed his blood to make an expiation of sin, and sent his Spirit to make a destruction of sin. By virtue of his death there is no condemnation for sin, Rom. viii. 1, 3; by virtue of the grace of his Spirit there is no dominion of sin. Rom. vi. 4, 14.

(3.) This cleansing from guilt may be considered as meritorious or applicative. As the blood of Christ was offered to God, this purification was meritoriously wrought; as particularly pleaded for a person, it is actually wrought; as sprinkled upon the conscience, it is sensibly wrought. The first merits the removal of guilt, the second solicits it, the third ensures it; the one was wrought upon the cross, the other is acted upon his throne, and the third pronounced in the conscience. The first is expressed, Rom. iii. 26, his blood rendered God propitious; the second, Heb. ix. 12, as he is entered into the holy of holies; the third, Heb. ix. 14, Christ justifies as a sacrifice in a way of merit; and when this is pleaded, God justifies as a judge in a way of authority. Christ laid the foundation of a discharge from all guilt upon the cross, and procures an actual discharge upon the first look of a sincere faith towards him; and when this blood is sprinkled upon the conscience, it 'purgeth it from dead works,' Heb. ix. 14, from the guilt of death we contracted by sinful works, and from the sentence of death which the law pronounced by reason of those works, that thereby we may have a liberty to appear before God, and be fit to serve him. The sprinkling the tabernacle and the vessels of the sanctuary, and the

person officiating in it, was the applying of the propitiation made by the sacrifice to those things for the special consecration of them unto God. No blood was sprinkled but the blood of the victim, solemnly offered unto God upon the altar, according to his own appointment; no blood applied to the conscience can cleanse it but the blood of this great sacrifice, which is peculiarly called 'the blood of sprinkling,' as it is the blood of the covenant, Heb. xii. 24. The virtue of it conveyed as sprinkled is from the propitiation it made as shed. A *not guilty* is entered into the court of God when this blood is pleaded, and a not guilty inscribed upon the roll of conscience when this blood is sprinkled. It appeases God's justice and quenches wrath. As it is pleaded before his tribunal, it silences the accusations of sin; and quells tumults in a wrangling conscience, as it is sprinkled upon the soul.

2. The evidence of this truth well appears;-

(1.) From the credit it had for the expiation and cleansing of guilt, before it was actually shed, and the reliance of believers in all ages on it. The blood of Christ was applied from the foundation of the world, though it was not shed till the fullness of time. They had the benefit of the promise of redemption before the accomplishment of the sacrifice for redemption. The cleansing we have now is upon the account of the blood of Christ already shed; the cleansing they had then was upon the account of the blood of Christ in time to be shed: the one respects it as past, the other as future. We must distinguish the virtue from the work of redemption. The work was appointed in a certain time, but the virtue was not restrained to a certain time, but was communicated to believers from the foundation of the world, as well as extended to the last ages of the world.

Several considerations will clear this.

[I.] The Scripture speaks but of one person designed for this great work. John Baptist speaks of 'the Lamb of God,' pointing to one lamb appointed to 'take away the sins of the world,' John i. 29. The world is to be understood $\chi\rho\nu\nu\kappa\kappa\omega\varsigma$, for all ages, all times of the world; as the same is meant, I John ii. 2, 'He is a propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins, of the whole world;' and he, and only he, is the propitiation, by once offering of himself. Not for the sins of us only that live in the dregs of time, and the declining age of the world, but of those that went before in all ages of the world, from its youth till his appearance in the flesh and expiring upon the cross. Christ is said to be the one mediator, in the same sense that God is said to be the one God: 1 Tim. ii. 5, 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' As there is but one creator of man, so there is but one mediator for men. As God is the God of all that died before Christ came, as well as of those that lived after, so Christ is the mediator of all that died before his coming, as well as of those that saw his day. They had Christ for their mediator, or some other; some other they could not have, because there is but one. They might as well have had another creator besides God, as another mediator besides the man Christ Jesus. In regard of the antiquity of his mediation from the foundation of the world, he is represented, when he walks as mediator in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, with 'hair as white as wool,' a character of age, Rev. i. 14. As God is described so in regard of his eternity, Dan. vii. 9. There is but one God from

eternity, but one mediator, whose mediation has the same date as the foundation of the world, and runs parallel with it; but one captain of salvation also for many sons, Heb. ii. 10, that were brought to glory. All that were brought to glory were brought into that happy state by this captain of salvation, as made perfect by sufferings; so that either none were brought to glory before the sufferings of Christ, which is not true, or they were brought to glory by virtue of the sufferings of that captain of salvation. If that one captain were not a perfect head of salvation but by shedding his blood, then those that were under his conduct from the beginning of the world could not be perfect, but upon the account of his passion. For they had no perfection but in and by their head; the same way that he was justified for them, they were justified by him.

[2.] This one mediator was set forth ever since the fall of man as the foundation of pardon and recovery. The covenant of grace commencing from the time of the fall of man, the virtue of this blood, which is the blood of the covenant, bore the same date; and, indeed, the blood of the Redeemer, as the way of procuring restoration, was signified in that first promise, which was the first dawning of the covenant of grace after that black night of obscurity the revolt of man had drawn upon the world, Gen. iii. 15. The recovery of man from that gulf of misery the head or subtle brains of the serpent had cast them into, is promised there to be by a man (for that must be signified by the seed of the woman), and some great and worthy person able for so great an undertaking, and to be effected by suffering, intimated by bruising his heel, which could not be without something of blood in the case. Satan would not cease, but express his enmity against the dissolver of his works, and the deliverer of his captives. It must also signify a deliverance from that which he was reduced to by the subtilty of the serpent, and that was sin and destruction. It could not be meant of a freedom from a bodily death, because this promise being made before, the pronouncing the sentence of a bodily death, which was not till ver. 19, was a bar to any such thought, for it had been a mockery, a falsity in God to promise Adam a redemption for that, and afterward overturn his promise by threatening that which he had promised before to redeem him from. This bruise, therefore, that the seed of the woman was to receive from the devil, at what time soever it should be inflicted, was to extend in the virtue of it to Adam, and his believing posterity that should come upon and go off the stage of the world before the revolution of that time wherein it was to be transacted; otherwise, the making of this promise to him, which should not distil any gracious dews upon him, had been to feed him with mere smoke, a thing unbecoming the Creator of the world. Besides, it was declared in types and figures. As the ceremonial uncleanness, which the legal sacrifices were appointed to purge, was an image of the moral impurity which needed expiation, so the blood of beasts, shed for the cleansing of it, was a shadow of that blood which was designed in the fullness of time for the expiation of the other. Nay, there were not only types of it, but plain prophecies concerning it. The righteousness whereby all believers are justified is witnessed in the whole current of Scripture, both by the law and the prophets, to be without the works of the law: 'Even that righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ,' Rom. iii. 21, 22. And therefore when there was a conference between Moses and Elias on the one part, and Christ on the other, the subject of it is not anything but that of his decease, Luke ix. 81: the declaration of that being the chief intent of the types of the law, instituted by the ministry of Moses; and of the prophets, whereof Elias was the chief, though not in the publishing of the

mediator, yet in the peculiar mark of the favour of God in his translation to heaven. But Isaiah is the plainest and most illustrious in the proclamations of the coming, the design and methods of the Redeemer. And particularly the pardon of sin by virtue of his suffering is discovered: Isa. xliii. 24, 25, 'Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, then hast wearied me with thine iniquities.' Then it follows, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgression for my own sake.' Christ is said to serve with their sins; and Isa. liii. is a comment upon this, showing what kind of servitude it was that the Redeemer endured, and what that weariness was which he sustained for our iniquity, viz. that he was wounded, bruised, and offered up. The whole scope of the chapter proves this, for it is spent in numbering up the benefits of the Messiah, the calling of the Gentiles, and gathering a church from all parts of the world, vers. 5, 6, &c., and vers. 19, 20; and in the last part describes the chiefest benefit by the Messiah, viz. propitiation and remission of sin; and to show that pardon was wholly free, he removes all false causes of pardon, human merit, and legal sacrifices: ver. 22, 23, 'Thou hast not called upon me, thou hast not filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices;' and then publishes the merit of the Messiah, serving with, or in their sins, upon which account out of mere grace the sins of men are blotted out, ver. 24, 25; as much as to say, Not thou, O Jacob, by thy duties and offerings hast merited the blotting out of thy sins. That glory is only due to me, who served with thy sins in dying and suffering, and paid the price of redemption, that by this means, without thy merit, thy sins might be wiped out; and, ver. 27, 28, he declares the rejection of the Jewish church, the giving Jacob to a curse and Israel to reproach, for their refusal of this way of redemption.

[8.] Though these promises and prophecies of the expiation and cleansing of sin were something obscure to them, and though they did not exactly know the method how it would be accomplished, yet that sin should be pardoned was fully revealed, and something of the method of it might be known unto them.

First, That sin should be pardoned was fully revealed to them, and their faith had something clear for their support. It was sufficient that he had published a time wherein and a seed whereby Satan's head should be bruised, and afterwards bad proclaimed his name in text letters, to be 'a God pardoning iniquities, transgressions, and sins,' Exod. xxxiv. 6. How could Jacob without the knowledge of this say at his expiring hour that he had waited for God's salvation? Gen. xlix. 18; how could David else so earnestly have begged for a purging hyssop? how could he be confident that there was a grace to make him as white as the unspotted snow, and his bloody soul as pure as unstained wool? Ps. li. 7; how could Manasseh have with so much confidence laid himself at the feet of God in his prison, had he looked upon him only as a revenging and not a pitying God? The promise of God's being their God was often inculcated to them, assuring them thereby that the thing should be done, that nothing of pardon and the fruit of it should be wanting to them, though the manner was not declared in that promise; for the promise of God's being their God included all spiritual blessings, particularly this of cleansing from sin, without which he could not be their God in a way of grace, but their judge in a way of wrath.

Secondly, They might know something of the method and manner of it. The mercy of God was revealed, the pardon of sin assured, and sacrifices instituted among the Jews to keep up their faith in the expectation of this promised expiation; but the manner how, and the merit whereby, was not so clearly drawn out to their view, which is fully opened to us in the gospel, Eph. iii. 5. The types indeed were obscure; it is a hard matter to understand them now since the revelation of the gospel, much harder to spell them out by that moonlight before the sun was risen. Yet the believers then could not be ignorant, but there was some excellent thing wrapped up in them, that they were not appointed for any excellency they had in themselves, or any power to propitiate God and appease his anger, which God's disdainful speaking of them many times, when they rested upon their external sacrifices, might inform them of. They might collect from thence that they all had reference to some richer blood, and were images of some nobler sacrifice, besides what the foundation promise would mind them of, that some great person in our nature was designed for the bruising the serpent's head, by suffering the bruising of his heel by the force of the serpent. They could not read that glorious and comfortable name of God, Exod. xxxiv. 6, but that clause, ver. 7, that he would 'by no means clear the guilty,' (which belongs to his name as well as the other of pardoning, and is uttered in the same breath), might startle them, and would seem to be an exception to dash out the comfort of all the foregoing titles. How they could reconcile such distant terms of a God pardoning, and yet not clearing the guilty, without a reflection upon some grand expiatory sacrifice, which might render to justice what was due for their crimes, and draw forth from mercy what was necessary for their misery, I understand not. No doubt but some of them saw something of the Messiah's work wrapped up in the typical sacrifices and ceremonies; for it is not likely that they should all be wholly ignorant of the intendment of them. It is very likely that Job, who was not a Jew, but an Edomite, and, as some think, died that year the Israelites came out of Egypt, had the knowledge of redemption by the Messiah, and why might not the Israelites also have some knowledge of it as early? No question but they had; the place in Job is remarkable: Job xix. 25, 'I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.' Most, both of Protestants and papists, understand it of Christ. The word is "go'el" a Redeemer by right of affinity, as Christ was, being our brother by the assumption of our nature; and he seems to speak not only of one that was a redeemer in act, but a redeemer by office, and his appearance to be in the latter day refers to his incarnation in the latter age of the world, whom himself also should behold with his eyes at the resurrection. It is some extraordinary and remarkable thing that he would have so noted, for ver. 23, 24, he speaks: 'Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book, that they were graven with an iron pen, and lead in the rock for ever.' He would have it perpetually preserved and marked; and the comfort he took in the consideration of this his Redeemer to be incarnate so possesses him that it is observed that he does not utter such heavy complaints to the end of the book as he had done before. Christ was as much Job's Redeemer before his incarnation and passion as ours since; yet as to the manner how he was to redeem, the price he was to pay, there was a veil upon him, till it was cleared up by the prophets, upon a nearer approach of the dawning of the fullness of time; for though they had some revelation of the Messiah as a great person, a great priest after the order of Melchisedec, a great king, a special favourite of God, yet how was he to cleanse sin they were ignorant of. As they did not know what new doctrines he would reveal as a prophet, or what kind of kingdom he

should have as a monarch, so they did not fully know what kind of sacrifice he should offer as a priest. They had some kind of knowledge, but not a distinct one.

[4.] The ancient patriarchs had faith, and were actually pardoned. They had the same spirit of faith as those had which lived in the times of the gospel, 2 Cor. iv. 13. Noah is said to be 'a just man, and perfect in his generations,' Gen. vi. 9, when he was young and when he was old; but how? 'He found grace in the eyes of the Lord,' ver. 8. He denied his own righteousness, and fled to the grace of God, which could not be exhibited to him but in Christ; for no grace without contented justice. The ground of all the comfort and joy Abraham had was the sight of the appearance of this bleeding Redeemer, though afar off, John viii. 56. To what purpose was that sight, without a benefit redounding to him from it? And that great patriarch was justified by faith in him; which the apostle discourses of, Rom. iv.; and hereupon he was called 'the father of the faithful,' as being the first express pattern of justification set down in Scripture. For he was not the father of the faithful by carnal procreation, but upon the account of religion; the father, as he was the teacher by his example, the name of fathers being given to instructors. If he were not therefore cleansed and counted righteous upon the account of his blood, he could not be set forth as a pattern of justification unto others, the pattern being written one way and the copies another. It was the sole promise of the blessed seed which was the cause of his justification, not sacrifices or circumcision. The same righteousness is imputed to the father as is to the children, and the same to the children that was to the father. He and we have the same faith, the same object of faith; and by what we are justified, by the same he was justified. It was the same blessedness he and we have, the same gospel he and we heard, Gal. iii. 8. The grace conferred upon David was from Christ: how could his sin else have been remitted, for which no sacrifice was appointed under the law? Ps. li. 16, 17, 'Thou desiredst not sacrifice, else would I give it.' Supposing the legal sacrifices were sufficient, without any relation to something else to expiate the sin for which they were appointed, how should those sins of presumption which David was guilty of be expiated, since there was no institution of any legal victim for them? Surely the Israelites were not left destitute of help in this case. And God, by providing no sacrifice for those sins, intimated that there was a nobler sacrifice yet behind. The Messiah as a priest was in David's eye, whom he calls his Lord, though he was to proceed out of his loins, Ps. cx. 1, 4. David's Lord by another right than as God, for he does distinguish him from the Father as Lord, and therefore David's Lord by another right, a right of redemption. The Jews had a sufficient account that the sacrifices of the law could not purge sin, in the sacrifice of the red heifer, Num. xix. 2, which could not expiate their sins. If it had a virtue to this purpose, why should the priest who sacrificed her and sprinkled the blood before the tabernacle, and the person that burnt her, and the person that gathered up the ashes, wash their clothes afterwards, and be unclean till the evening, ver. 7, 8, 9, who were more likely than the rest to be expiated by it? Their sins were pardoned, but impossible to be so by the blood of bulls and goats, Heb. x. 4, yet not without the interposition of a bloody sacrifice; for 'without blood there is no remission,' Heb. ix. 22, whereby the apostle proves the necessity of the sacrifice of Christ. And could sin be pardoned without a sacrifice, the apostle's argument to evince the unpardonableness of the sin against the Holy Ghost, or of those that refused the sacrifice of Christ, would be invalid, for his reason to prove it unpardonable is because there is no more sacrifice for it; all which

supposes the necessity of a satisfaction to justice by blood, to open the way to the throne of grace, and put any man into the favour of God. It was this blood, therefore, shed upon the cross, whereby the transgressions under the first testament were purged, and upon the account of which the promised inheritance was received, Heb. ix. 15. Christ could not else have pronounced a blessedness upon faith without the vision of him, as he does, John xx. 19, 'Blessed are they that have believed, and have not seen,' meaning those that died in faith in the time of the law. And the apostle is express in it, that Christ 'by that one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' Heb. x. 14, understanding those that were sanctified, or cleansed, or pardoned before the actual offering, as appears by the ground of this his inference, which was the insufficiency of all other sacrifices to take away sin. There was never but one God that justifies, never but one way of justification, and that by faith, as the apostle argues, Rom. iii. 80, and therefore but one cause of the justification of all them that went before, because but one object of faith, the blood of the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world. In him only all things were gathered and summed up into blessedness, Eph. i. 12, and men are blessed in him, Ps. lxxii. 17. In his merit, says the Chaldee paraphrase, understanding it of the Messiah.

[5.] And this might well be, on account of the compact between the Father, the Judge, and the Son, the Redeemer. Had he not promised the shedding of his blood, justice had dislodged the sinner from the world. All hopes of regaining paradise had been lost, without it the authority of the law had not been preserved, the sacredness of divine truth had been violated, and the rectitude of his government laid in the dust by an easy indulgence, and passing over the sin. Christ therefore stood up, and promised his soul as a sacrifice for sin. He was before Abraham was: John viii. 58, 'Before Abraham was, I am;' *I am*, I was what I am now, a Mediator; by promise, by constitution, by acceptance; and therefore 'Abraham saw my day, and was glad,' as it is before, ver. 56. I was a Lamb slain, accepted as a Lamb slain, as Mediator, upon credit. His office was of a more ancient date than his incarnation; and he was the same in the function of a Mediator before as he was after his taking our flesh, the same for them in his compact as he was for us in the performance. A man may be freed from prison upon the promise of a surety worthy of credit, though the debt be not actually paid till some time after, according to agreement; and the possession of a purchase may be delivered, though a time afterwards be set for the payment of the price. The payment of the ransom is not of absolute necessity before the deliverance of the captive. Many were delivered from their bonds by God before the payment made by Christ, but not before the payment promised by him. The blood of this sacrifice as shed reaches us though sixteen hundred years since it was poured out; but the blood of this sacrifice promised by the Redeemer, and receiving credit with God, reached Adam four thousand years before it was shed. God imparted the virtue before Christ actually merited, and freed the captive before the ransom was paid; yet upon the account of the promised merit and contracted ransom, natural causes must be before the effect, moral causes may be after the effect. The blood of Christ cleanses not as a natural, but as a moral cause. He was in this respect a 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8: slain federally, though not actually; imputatively, though not really; sententially in the acceptance of the judge, though not executively in the enduring the passion; and therefore he was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the

world efficaciously, by whose blood the ancient believers were sprinkled, as well as those of a later date.

And though some refer those words, *from the foundation of the world*, not to the word *slain*, but to the writing of the names in the book of life of the Lamb, 'whose names were written from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain,' it will not much alter the thing. The slaying of the Lamb was agreed, as well as the writing the names in the book; and it will also follow, that no man had any place in the book, but had also an interest in the Lamb slain, and the benefits he enjoyed by virtue of the register were to flow to him through the blood of the covenanting Redeemer, and their names were writ there upon the credit of the Lamb to be slain; for in him was the choice made before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. 4, and through him were the blessings of pardon given out from the foundation of the world. Had not this Lamb offered himself to be slain, man had been cast into everlasting chains as well as the devils, who had no mediator, no lamb to be slain for them. Well, then, it follows from hence, that the blood of Christ is of a full credit with God. Christ was the same to the patriarchs as to the apostles: Heb. xiii. 8, 'He was the same yesterday, today, and forever;' yesterday, to Adam, four thousand years since. *Yesterday*, in the Hebrew phrase, often signifies all the time past; *today*, now in the time of his appearance *forever*, to the generations that follow, not only in regard of his person and deity, but in regard of his office and benefits. It is not meant of his deity, but of his mediation, as will appear by the following verse, where the apostle designs the alienating their judgments from too high an opinion of the ceremonial rites and sacrifices. They never purged sin, but Christ was the cause of the purgation of them under the law as well as under the gospel, though he were not so distinctly known by them as by us. The blood of Christ extended to believers in all ages; he was a seed for Abraham as well as Abraham's seed: Gen. xxi. 12, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called;' "zera' lecha", a seed for thee, it may be rendered, a seed for thy good, and eternal deliverance; not only a seed out of his loins, but a seed for his benefit. As a flash of lightning out of a cloud in the night enlightens all things both before and behind it, so the righteousness and blood of Christ is imputed not only to men that come after him, but to those that went before him. If the credit of it were so great then, the merit of it is as great now, since the actual effusion of the blood. It is therefore rightly a blood that cleanses from all sin.

(2.) This was the true and sole end of his incarnation and death. All the ends mentioned by the angel Gabriel to Daniel centre in this and refer to it: chap. ix. 24, 'To finish the transgression, make an end of sin, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,' and thereby should all the visions and prophecies concerning the Messiah and his work be fulfilled. And to this purpose would 'the Most Holy' be 'anointed,' as the cause and foundation of all that removal of sin mentioned before. All the words which signify sin, and contain in them all sorts of sin, are here expressed, to show the completeness of the design in regard of the subject the Messiah was to remove out of the way. The word translated to *finish*, "chala", signifies also to *shut up* or *restrain*; and the word translated to *make an end*, "chatam", signifies to seal up. Sin was to be restrained from ravaging about at pleasure like a devouring monster, or shut up and stopped from being an accuser to condemnation; and sealed up, not for confirmation of sin, but for concealment of it, as things sealed are not to be looked into but by persons

authorised thereunto. It is a breach of trust, and an invasion of another's right, to do it. So God is said to cover sin, and Christ here to seal up sin by his blood, and for ever hide it from the face of God, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, or expiate it. Since it was sin only that was the cause of the enmity, and which separated us from communion with God, wherein the happiness of a creature is placed, there was a necessity, for our rescue from misery, to remove our guilt, that that which tore us might be muzzled, that that which accused us might be silenced, that that which was a bar to our happiness might be demolished, that so the misery we endured might fly from us, and the blessings we wanted might flow down to us. For this cause the Messiah was anointed, and for this end he undertook his employment on earth, to remove the obstacle which hindered our access to God. Hence we find that the covenant of grace, when spoken of in the Old Testament to be fully revealed in the latter days, contains chiefly those promises of 'blotting out transgressions, and remembering sin no more.'

[1.] This is the fundamental doctrine of the gospel. The apostle therefore, with a particular emphasis, tells them this is a thing to be known and acknowledged by all that own Christianity: I John iii. 5, 'And you know that he was manifested to take away our sins.' You know nothing of Christianity if you know not and believe not this, that Christ appeared to take away the guilt of sin by a non-imputation, and to quell the power of sin by a mortification of it; to remove the punishment it had merited, and the corruption it had established in the hearts of men. Sin therefore will perfectly be cleansed both by remission and sanctification, else Christ would fall short of the end of his manifestation. This was the doctrine the apostles were first charged to publish, both as the reason of Christ's suffering and of his resurrection, that 'remission of sins might be preached in his name among all nations,' Luke xxiv. 46, 47; remission of sin, as purchased by his death, and assured by his resurrection. The foundation of pardon was in his passion, and the manifestation of the efficacy of his passion was by his resurrection; both of them therefore were to be declared in order to this end. And though Paul was not then present at this first commission (as being one born out of due time, and summoned into the office of apostleship afterward), yet his instructions were of the same nature, and observed by him in the same order: I Cor. xv. 3, 'For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received,' viz. first, 'How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.' Set aside this end, what attractive can there be in a crucified man, one made the derision and reproach of his nation, to cause any to believe in him? Faith particularly pitches upon the death of Christ, and particularly eyes in that passion the intent both of the sender and of him that is sent. The first thing himself published when he exercised his office was this jubilee: Luke iv. 18, 19, 'The acceptable year of the Lord,' wherein captives were to be delivered, debts to be remitted, and bonds to be cancelled. That was the main end of his coming to die, which, when done, was the sole reason of his advancement; the purging sin, and our sin, was the ground of his glorious sitting at the right hand of God, Heb. i. 3.

[2.] There could be no other end of his shedding his blood but this. Since his death is called a 'sacrifice,' Eph. v. 2; a 'propitiation,' 1 John ii. 2, Rom. iii. 25, it can be for no other end but the cleansing of sin; for this was the reason of the institution of sacrifices. Blood shed in a sacrifice way implied blood criminal, and deserving to be shed. Had he come upon the earth in a stately grandeur, to rout armies of men, batter down the walls of

cities and demolish empires, the rooting out of tyranny and monsters might have been thought his design. But this was no way for the expiation of sin, but the destruction of the sinner. But coming to shed his blood, to be a sacrifice, to be the reproach of men, and to be God's servant in this office, which he was not by nature, what end can be imagined but somewhat in relation to sin, and that both to the expiation and destruction of it? For dying and shedding his blood for it was not the way to maintain sin, but to abolish it; not a means to render iniquity lovely, but odious. If this were not the issue of his death, it would be useless, his blood would be shed in vain. His death, being a punishment and by way of sacrifice, must be for some end, it could not be for anything relating to himself, or to merit anything for himself; for, being God, there could be no accession of happiness to him; he needed not to merit anything, because he wanted nothing. All merit is a desert of something which is not at present possessed, but desired to be possessed. He had not, nor could, commit any sin for which he should become a sacrifice. The Deity is incapable of unrighteousness and crime. The punishment was not therefore upon any account of his own. No crime was committed by him in his humanity that might merit the infliction of such a punishment; this was impossible, for whatsoever crime had been committed in his humanity had been the crime of his person, and so had been a spot upon his deity, united in one person with his humanity. Besides, he took human nature to suffer in it; his incarnation had an *ought to suffer* linked to it, so that his shedding his blood was resolved on before any crime could be committed, if it were to be supposed that in his humanity he were capable of any error or miscarriage. His blood must be shed for some other, and the punishment inflicted upon him which was merited by some other persons. It could not be for the holy angels; they were innocent, and not criminally indebted, and therefore obnoxious to no penalty. It being for the taking away of sin, the word sin excludes the good angels, who never sinned, but always obeyed God, Ps. ciii. 21; nor could it be for the evil angels, for the Scripture excludes them from any redemption, and binds them for ever in chains of darkness, to bear the punishment in their own persons. Besides that, this punishment could not properly be borne in any other nature specifically distinct from their sinning nature, as it was. It must be for the sin of men, or for nothing. And consequently the death of Christ would be an insignificant thing; but it is utterly inconsistent with the wisdom and holiness of God to appoint, and the wisdom and honour of Christ to agree, to a task for nothing and to no purpose. Now since Christ offered his life to God (which he did not owe upon his own account), a reward was due to him upon the account of justice, which must consist in remitting something which he owed, or imparting something which he wanted. No debt for himself could he be charged with, no indigence could be in his humanity upon his own account, since all happiness was due to that by virtue of its union with the deity; nothing could be bestowed upon him for himself, because he wanted nothing; nothing could be remitted to him, because he owed nothing. Since therefore he so deeply humbled himself, not for himself but for others, and that there was a merit on his part, and consequently a just retribution on God's part due, it was necessary it should be given to some others upon his account, that what they owed might be remitted, and what they wanted might be bestowed. These could be no other than men whom he came to justify, and to whom the debt owing to God might be discounted, upon the account of Christ's payment.

3. This cleansing sin is wrought solely by his own worth, as he is the Son of God. It is therefore said in the text, the blood not only of Jesus Christ, but of the Son of God. The blood of Jesus received its value from his Sonship, the eternal relation he stood in to his Father. Since sin is an infinite evil, as being committed against an infinite God, no mere creature can satisfy for it, nor can all the holy works of all the creatures be a compensation for one act of sin, because the vastest heap of all the holy actions of men and angels would never amount to an infinite goodness, which is necessary for the satisfaction of an infinite wrong. One sin, containing in it an infinite malice, is greater in the rank of evils than all good works heaped together can be in the rank of goods. But this blood was not only the blood of Jesus, a man, but the blood of that person that was the Son of God; of him who was our surety as the Son of God before he was our surety as the Son of man; who interposed as a surety four thousand years before his incarnation and shedding his blood, though he could not act the part of a surety without his incarnation and shedding his blood. Either we had no surety before he was incarnate, or else the Son of God in his own person was our surety. The shedding his blood was pursuant to that interposition he made as the Son of God in our stead before he was the Son of man; and it was truly the blood of that person who had offered himself to be our surety, and been accepted in that relation, so many ages before a created nature was assumed by him; so that, though his humanity was a creature, and was necessary as a subject wherein the satisfaction was to be performed, yet it added no worth to the satisfaction of itself. The value which his blood had was from his deity, his being the Son of God, in which condition he entered into his relation of a mediator for us. It was the same person that was the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person; the same person that upheld all things by the word of his power, who did by himself, in that glorious person, 'purge our sins,' Heb. i. 3. The priests under the law purged the sins of the people by the sacrifices of beasts; this was an infinitely nobler victim, a beam of brightness streaming from the eternal Father while he was purging our sins in his eclipse; the express image of his person, while he was made a curse upon the cross, upholding all things by the word of his power; while he bowed his head under the weight of his sufferings, he was all this while making an atonement for our sins, whence redounded an inconceivable efficacy to his blood. The nature of man died, but he had another nature as immortal as the person whose brightness he was, that lived to add value to his sufferings. This divine person, by his own strength and in this glorious relation, wrestled with the flames of wrath, and took hold of the tribunal of justice, and by the value of his sufferings, smoothed the face of a frowning God, assuaged the tempests of a provoked justice, and placed before the tribunal of judgment a strong and everlasting righteousness of his own composure, as a veil between the piercing eye of divine holiness and the guilty and filthy state of a sinner. So great a person, one equal with God, was necessary for the restoring his honour and Sanctifying his name; so great a person was necessary for the purging the fallen creature from his guilt and filth.

4. Hence it follows that sin is perfectly cleansed by this blood. Since it expiated the sins of former ages, since it was the end of his coming, since he did what he did by his own worth, sin must be perfectly cleansed, else the end of his coming is not attained, and his worth would appear to be but of a finite value. All cleansing is the fruit of this blood: the

cleansing from guilt is wrought immediately by it; the purging from filth is mediately by his Spirit, but as it was the purchase of his blood.

(1.) The blood of Christ does not perfectly cleanse us here from sin, in regard of the sense of it. Some sparks of the fiery law will sometimes flash in our consciences, and the peace of the gospel be put under a veil. The smiles of God's countenance seem to be changed into frowns, and the blood of Christ appears as if it ran low. Evidences may be blurred and guilt revived. Satan may accuse, and conscience knows not how to answer him. The sore may run fresh in the night, and the soul have not only comfort bid from it, but refuse comfort when it stands at the door. There will be startlings of unbelief, distrusts of God, and misty steams from the miry lake of nature. But it has laid a perfect foundation, and the top stone of a full sense and comfort will be laid at last. Peace shall be as an illustrious sunshine without a cloud, a triumphant breaking out of love, without any arrows of wrath sticking fast in the conscience; a sweet calm, without any whisper of a blustering tempest; the guilt of sin shall be for ever wiped out of the conscience, as well as blotted out of God's book. The accuser shall no more accuse us, either to God or ourselves; no new indictment shall be formed by him at the bar of conscience; nay, conscience itself shall be for ever purged, and sing an uninterrupted *requiem*, and hymn of peace, shall not hiss the least accusation of a crime. As God's justice shall read nothing for condemnation, so conscience shall read nothing for accusation. The blood of Christ will be perfect in the effects of it. As it rent the veil between God and us, it will rend the veil between conscience and us; no more frowns from the one, nor any more janglings in the other. As Christ said, when he was giving up the ghost, 'It is finished,' viz., the sense and sufferings under a guilty state, it is then a believer may say his fears are finished, when he is breathing forth his soul into the arms of his sacrificed Saviour. Iniquities shall never more appear in their guilty charge to draw blood from the soul of a penitent believer. The soul shall be without fault before the throne of God, Rev. xiv. 5.

(2.) The blood of Christ does not perfectly cleanse us here from sin, in regard of the stirrings of it. The old serpent will be sometimes stinging us, and sometimes foiling us. The righteous soul will be vexed with corruptions within it, as well as the abominations of others without it. The Canaanite is in the land, and therefore the virtue of the blood of Christ is expressed in our power of wrestling, not yet in the glory of a triumph. It does not here perfectly free us from the remainders of sin, that we may be still sensible that we are fallen creatures, and have every day fresh notices and experiments of its powerful virtue; and that his love might meet with daily valuations in a daily sense of our misery. But this blood shall perfect what it has begun, and the troubled sea of corruption, that sends forth mire and dirt, shall be totally removed. Then shall the soul be as pure as unstained wool, as spotless as the dew from the womb of the morning; no wrinkles upon the face, no bubblings up of corruption in the soul. The blood of Christ shall still the waves, and expel the filth, and crown the soul with an everlasting victory. 'The spirits of just men' are then 'made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23.

(3.) But the blood of Christ perfectly cleanses us from sin here, in regard of condemnation and punishment. Thus it blots it out of the book of God's justice; it is no more to be remembered in a way of legal and judicial sentence against the sinner. Though

the nature of sin does not cease to be sinful, yet the power of sin ceases to be condemning. The sentence of the law is revoked, the right to condemn is removed, and sin is not imputed to them, 1 Cor. v. 19. Where the crime is not imputed, the punishment ought not to be inflicted. It is inconsistent with the righteousness of God to be an appeased, and yet a revenging, judge. When the cause of his anger is removed, the effects of his anger are extinguished. Where there is a cleansing from the guilt, there necessarily follows a removal of the punishment. What is the debt we owe upon sin? Is it not the debt of punishment, which is righteously exacted for the fault committed? When the blood of Christ therefore purifies any from their guilt, it rescues them from the punishment due to that guilt. Herein does the pardon of sin properly consist, in a remission of punishment. The crime cannot be remitted, but only in regard of punishment merited by it. If God should punish a man that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and pleaded for by the blood of Christ it would be contrary both to his justice and mercy: to his *justice*, because he has accepted of the satisfaction made by Christ, who paid the debt, and acquitted the criminal, when he bore his sin in his own body upon the tree; it would be contrary to his *mercy*, for it would be cruelty to adjudge a person to punishment, who is legally discharged, and put into the state of an innocent person, by the imputation of the righteousness of the Redeemer. Though the acts of sin are formally the same that they were, yet the state of a cleansed sinner is not legally the same that it was; for being free from the charge of the law, he is no longer obnoxious to the severity of the law. 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1. No matter left that shall actually condemn, since Christ for sin, or as a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, ver. 3.

(4.) The effect of this blood shall appear perfect at the last, in the final sentence. It cleanses us initially here, completely hereafter. It cleanses us here in law. Its virtue shall be manifest by a final sentence. 'He that believes not is condemned already,' John iii. 18; condemned by the threatening, but not by the pronounced sentence. So he that believes is justified by the plea of this blood, justified in the promise of the gospel, but not yet by public sentence, which is reserved till the last day: 'After death the judgment,' Heb. ix. 27. As Christ was justified after he had presented his blood, was owned to be God's righteous servant by a public declaration in his exaltation, 1 Tim. ii. 16, so those that have an interest in this blood have a sentential justification at their dissolution, by God as a judge, and fully complete, when their persons shall be pronounced just, at the reunion of the soul and body at the resurrection. Whence this time is called the 'day of refreshment,' Acts iii. 19, when sins shall be blotted out, when God shall no more correct, and conscience shall no more reproach for guilt. Sin is cleansed now, but said to be blotted out then, because then all the parts of salvation shall be complete. Election was an act of eternity, but then it shall be declared, in the separation of them for ever from the rest of the world, to be with him in glory. Redemption was purchased by the death of Christ, offered in the gospel, and conferred upon the believer, but then it will be complete in a deliverance from all enemies, and the last enemy, death. And therefore called the 'day of redemption,' Eph. iv. 30. There shall then be an endless repose from all sorrow within, and trouble without. Sanctification is begun to be wrought here by the Spirit, but sin is not abolished; all earthly affections are not completely put off. So it will be with our justification, as it consists in pardon of sin; sins are blotted out now, but then in a more

excellent, full, and visible manner. We need a daily pardon upon daily sin, but then God will absolve us once for all, from all our faults committed in our whole lives, and no more will be committed to need a pardon. There is here a secret grant passed in our consciences; there, a solemn publication of it before men and angels. Here every one receives a pardon in particular, as they come to him. As those under the law had a particular expiation by the means of the sacrifices presented by them, but in the annual day of expiation there was a general propitiation for the sins of the people, and all their iniquities together were carried into the desert, so the pardon that was granted to particular believers shall then resolve into one entire absolution of the whole body; when Christ shall pronounce them all righteous, and present them unblameable, and without spot to his Father. Justification is complete in this world, in regard that the guilt of sin shall never return, and a person counted righteous shall never be counted unrighteous; but not so complete that the sense of sin shall never return. But then neither David's murder shall rise up against him, nor Peter's denial of his master ever stare him in the face. No need of fresh looks upon the brazen serpent for cure, because there shall be no bitings by the fiery ones to grieve and trouble.

(5.) Hence, it cleanses from all sin universally. For since it was the blood of so great a person as the Son of God, it is as powerful to cleanse us from the greatest as the least. Had it been the blood of a sinful creature, it had been so far from expiation, that it would rather have been for pollution. Had it been the blood of an angel, though holy (supposing they had any to shed), yet it had been the blood of a creature, and therefore incapable of mounting to an infinite value; but since it is the blood of the Son of God, it is both the blood of a holy and of an uncreated and infinite person. Is it not therefore able to exceed all the bulk of finite sins, and to equal in dignity the infiniteness of the injury in every transgressor? The particle *all* is but a rational consequent upon the mention of so rich a treasure of blood. The nature of the sins, and the blackness of them, is not regarded, when this blood is set in opposition to them. God only looks what the sinners are, whether they repent and believe. He was 'delivered for our offences,' Rom. iv. 25, not for some few offences, but for all; and as he was delivered for them, so he is accepted for them. The effect, therefore, of it is a cleansing of all, both the original and additional transgressions; the omissions of that good God has righteously commanded, and the commissions of that evil he has holily prohibited. Men have different sins, according to their various dispositions or constitutions. Every man has his 'own way;' and the iniquity of all those various sins of a different stamp and a contrary nature, in regard of the acts and objects, God has 'made to meet' at the cross of Christ, and 'laid them all upon him,' Isa. liii. 6. The sins of all believing persons, in all parts, in all ages of the world, from the first moment of man's sinning, to the last sin committed on the earth. In regard of this extensive virtue, the scapegoat was a type of him; for though there were not particular sacrifices under the law, appointed for some sins, yet in that anniversary one, all the sins of the people were laid upon the head of that devoted goat, to be carried into the wilderness, Lev. xvi. 21, "awonot", "pish'eyhem", "chato'tam". And the same several words, signifying all sorts of sins, are there used, as God uses, Exod. xxxiv. 7, when he proclaims himself a God forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. And the first sin we read of cleansed by this blood, after it was shed, was the most prodigious wickedness that ever was committed in the face of the sun, even the murder of the Son of God, Acts ii. 36, 38. So that, suppose a

man were able to pull heaven and earth to pieces, murder all the rest of mankind, destroy the angels, those superlative parts of the creation, be would not contract so monstrous a guilt as those did in the crucifying the Son of God, whose person was infinitely superior to the whole creation. God then hereby gave an experiment of the inestimable value of Christ's blood, and the inexhaustible virtue of it. Well might the apostle say, 'The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.'

III. Thing; How Christ's blood cleanses from sin. God the Father does actually and efficiently justify; Christ's blood does meritoriously justify. God the Father is considered as judge, Christ is considered as priest and sacrifice. He was a 'Priest in things pertaining to God,' Heb. ii. 17, 'to make reconciliation for the sins of the people,' He is the 'fountain set open for sin and for uncleanness,' Zech. xiii. 1. And 'forgiveness of sin' is a fruit of 'redemption through his blood,' Col. i. 14.

This is done,

1. By taking sin upon himself. God collected all the sins from all parts of the world, in all ages of the world, bound them up together, and 'laid them upon' Christ's shoulders, Isa. liii. 6, alluding to the manner of transferring the sins of the people by Aaron's laying his hands upon the head of the sacrifice; so that, as the scape-goat purged the people, Christ cleanses or justifies men by bearing their iniquities, Isa. liii. 11. Not by bearing the pollution of them inherently, but the guilt of them, or the curse which the sinner had merited; for our sins could no more be transmitted to him, in the filth and defilement of them, than the iniquities of the Israelites could be infused into the scape-goat, but only in their curse and guilt. A beast was not capable of spiritual pollution, because it wanted an intellectual nature; nor Christ, because of the excellency of his person. Christ took our sins upon him, not thereby to become sinful, but to become devoted in a judicial manner, as a curse; and, therefore, his being said to be 'made sin' in one place, 'that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' 2 Cor. v. 21, is to be interpreted by Gal. iii. 13, wherein he is said to be 'made a curse to redeem us from the curse of the law,' i. e. a person exposed to the vengeance of God, to procure impunity for the offenders, that they might be absolved, and treated as if they had never been criminal. He is 'the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,' John i. 29, *αἱρῶν*: the word signifies to *take up*, as well as to *take away*. He took the guilt upon his shoulders, that he might for ever take it away from ours. As we are made righteousness in him, so he was made sin for us. Now we are not righteous before God by an inherent, but by an imputed righteousness, nor was Christ made sin by inherent, but imputed, guilt. The same way that his righteousness is communicated to us, our sin was communicated to him. Righteousness was inherent in him, but imputed to us; sin was inherent in us, but imputed to him. He received our evils to bestow his good, and submitted to our curse to impart to us his blessings; sustained the extremity of that wrath we had deserved, to confer upon us the grace he had purchased. The sin in us, which he was free from, was by divine estimation transferred upon him, as if he were guilty, that the righteousness he has, which we were destitute of, might be transferred upon us, as if we were innocent. He was made sin, as if he had sinned all the sins of men, and we are made righteousness, as if we had not sinned at all.

2. By accounting the righteousness and sufficiency of his sufferings to us. If we stand upon our own bottom, we are lost; our own rags cannot cover us, nor our own imperfections relieve us. 'The whole world lies in wickedness,' 1 John v. 19. God is a consuming fire, and we are combustible matter; the holiness of God, and the soul of the most righteous fallen creature, cannot meet without abhorrence on the part of God, and terror on the part of man. Divine holiness cannot but hate us, divine justice cannot but consume us, if we have no other righteousness than our own imperfect one, to please the one, and be a bar to the other. There is no justification by the law, but upon a perfect righteousness, and we must be justified by the performance of the law, or we can never be justified; for the law of God was not abrogated upon the fall of man: it is the authority of the lawgiver, and not the offence of the malefactor, which does abolish a law; but we cannot perform the law ourselves. Alas! 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,' Rom. iii. 23, of that righteousness which glorifies God; and having once broken the law, we can never be said perfectly to keep it; for if we had grace given us to perform it for the future, it nulls not the breach of it for the time past. Since the law is not abrogated, it must be exactly obeyed, the honour of it must be preserved; it cannot be observed by us, it was Christ only who kept it, and never broke it, and endured the penalty of it for us, not for himself; for the law requires obedience of a creature, but demands not punishment but upon default of obedience. The punishment was not inflicted on him for himself, but for us; the 'Virtue of that must be transferred to us, which cannot be any other way than by imputation, or reckoning it ours, as we are one body with him. Besides, justification cannot be by any thing inherent in us, for we are ungodly before the first instant of justification, Rom. v. 5, and sinners and enemies, Rom. v. 10. Since there is nothing but unrighteousness in us, a righteousness must be fetched from something without us. If it be without us, it is not inherent in us. What righteousness is in us after justification, cannot be the cause of the justification which preceded that righteousness. The effect never precedes the cause. If the righteousness whereby we are justified be not inherent in us, but in another, how can it be our righteousness, but by some way of counting it to us? God intended Christ's suffering as the way of bearing iniquity for us, and accepted him as one that bore our iniquities, and made this bearing iniquity the ground of the justification of many: Isa. liii. 11, 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' In his bearing our iniquities, there was the imputation of our sins; in our justification, there must be the imputation of his suffering. The counting another's righteousness to us is as reasonable and easy to conceive as the counting our sins to another. Without this way of reckoning it to us, we cannot conceive of the intercession of Christ, or what pleas he can use. He is an advocate by virtue of his propitiation, and his righteousness in it, 1 John ii. 1, 2. The plea, then, must be of this nature: Father, I took flesh by thy order, and suffered death according to thy pleasure; I gave my soul a ransom for many, and the shedding of my blood was a sweet-smelling sacrifice. Thou wouldst have me made a curse to free others from the curse, and to receive wounds, that others might receive health. Let those, therefore, that plead the merit of my suffering, be absolved from their guilt. I have borne their sins, their iniquities thou didst cause to meet on me, condemn them not to bear those iniquities I have borne already. To what purpose did I bear them, if they must bear them too? And to what purpose should they believe in me, if they must sink under the same condemnation with those that refuse me? How this plea can be made without accepting those sufferings for

us, and counting the righteousness of them to us, is not to be understood. Some compare this way of imputation to the sun shining upon the wall, through a green or blue glass, whereby the true colour of the wall is indiscernible while the colour communicated by the glass is upon it; yet this colour is not the colour of the wall, but the colour of the glass, and inherent in the glass, only reflected upon the wall; so the righteousness whereby we are justified, and which covers our iniquities from the sight of God, is inherent in Christ, but transferred to us. The ground of this imputation is community of nature. Because he 'took not the nature of angels,' it is not reckoned to them, Heb. ii. 16, 17. If he had taken the nature of angels, it could not have been reckoned to us, because he had not been akin to us. Had he taken the nature of angels, it could no more have been imputed to us than the fall of angels can be imputed to us; which cannot be, because we have not an agreement in the same nature with them; and, next to that, the ground of it is his resurrection from the grave. Had he lain in the grave, his righteousness could not have been imputed to us, because it had not been declared sufficient in itself; and the sufficiency of the price, and the accepting it for a ransom, must precede the accounting of it to another for his deliverance. That which is the evidence of the perfection, and agreeableness of it to the judgment of God, is the ground of the imputation of it to us; but his going to the Father, whereof his resurrection was the first step, and his ascension the next, is the convincing argument the Comforter makes use of to persuade men of the fullness and exactness of it, John xvi. 10.

(1) This cleansing of us by imputing this blood to us, is by virtue of union and communion with him. The apostle before the text speaks of a fellowship with God and Christ, which implies union with Christ, and then the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. What Christ did as a common person, is accepted for us, but the actual imputation of it to us depends upon our becoming one body with him. If we had not had a union with Adam in nature, and been seminally in him, his sin could no more have been imputed to us than the sin of the fallen angels could be counted ours; so if we have not a union with Christ, his righteousness can no more be reckoned to us than the righteousness of the standing angels can be imputed to us. We must therefore be in Christ as really as we were in Adam, though not in the same manner of reality. We were in Adam seminally, we are in Christ legally; yet so that it is counted in the judgment of God as much as if there were a seminal union. Believers are therefore called the seed of Christ, Isa. liii. 10, Ps. xxii. 30. And they are called Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12; and 'the body of Christ,' ver. 27. It is, says one, not numerically, but legally such. If we had been in him seminally, as we were in Adam, righteousness would have been communicated to all descending from him; but God has appointed a higher way of communication by spiritual union. As those who were in Adam by natural propagation are made guilty by his transgression to condemnation, so all that are spiritually united to Christ are cleansed from their many offences to justification, Rom. v. 16. As there was a necessity of his union with us in our nature for our redemption, since he could not be the Redeemer of mankind by death, as he was the Son of God, unless he were also the Son of man, so there is a necessity of our union with him in his Spirit. As there could be no expiation without a satisfaction, no satisfaction to be made by Christ, unless there were an imputation of our sins to him; and no imputation can be supposed, unless he were united to us in our nature; so there can be no imputation of anything in him to us, unless there be a strait union, whereby he becomes our head and

we his members. What does the apostle mean in that wish of being 'found in Christ,' but this union, whereby he might have a share in his righteousness? Philip. iii. 9. Not his own righteousness, but the righteousness of God communicated through or by faith. And where is our completeness, but in him? Col. ii. 10. As we are reckoned one lump and mass with him, and being joined to him, are counted one spirit with him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Union with him goes first in order of nature before justification; we are first united to him as our sponsor, and being in him we are counted righteous. This is the apostle's assertion: I Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness,' &c. And so 'the righteousness of the law,' Rom. viii. 4, δικαιομα του νομου, or the just judgment of the law, 'is fulfilled in us,' saith Cocceius. We are judged to have in him a perfect obedience, or we are judged not out of Christ as sinners, but in Christ as his members.

(2.) This union is made by faith, and upon this account we are said to be justified by faith. This is our willingness to receive Christ upon the terms he is offered. Since a mediator is not a mediator of one, but supposes in the notion of it two parties, there must be a consent on both sides. God's consent is manifested by giving, our consent is by receiving, which is a title given to faith, John i. 12; God's consent in appointing and accepting the atonement, and ours in receiving the atonement, which is all one with 'receiving forgiveness of sin,' Rom. v. 11. God's consent in the typical administration was evident in appointing sacrifices, and the sending down fire from heaven for consuming them. The sinner's consent was to be signified by laying his hands upon the head of the sacrifice, intimating his union with that sacrifice, and so by the sacrificing of it he was counted as quitted of that guilt for which the sacrifice was offered. We must be as willing to accept of this sacrifice as Christ was to offer this sacrifice, with a willingness of the same kind; but, alas, what creature can mount to a willingness of the same degree! God might have required many sharp conditions of us, many years' troubles and sorrows, but he requires only a willingness of us to receive and acknowledge the depths of his wisdom and grace, and conform to his will in the new covenant. This makes up the marriage knot between the sinner and the Redeemer. By this the soul empties itself and clasps about a Saviour, and then Christ and the believer are counted as one person legally; therefore, Christ dwelling in us, and our having faith, are linked together as if they were the same thing, Eph. iii. 17. By God's acceptance of this blood we are rendered cleansable and justifiable. By our acceptance of it, it is actually imputed to us, and we actually justified. However, when it was shed by Christ, and received as a sweet-smelling sacrifice by God, it made us pardonable; yet actual pardon is not bestowed without believing. His blood avails none but those that he pleads it for, and he pleads it not for those that come to God, but that 'come to God by him,' Heb. vii. 25, those that plead in his name for the benefits which are the purchase of his blood. Without him, we are combustible matter before a consuming fire, and cannot approach to the throne of God with any success. This faith must go in order before cleansing or justification. The righteousness of God is only 'upon them that believe,' Rom. iii. 22. 'We have believed that we might be justified,' Gal. ii. 16. This faith is not our righteousness, nor is it ever called so, but we have a righteousness by the means of faith. By faith, or *through* faith, is the language of the apostle: Rom. iii. 22, 25, 'Faith in his blood,' faith reaching out to his blood, embracing his blood, sucking up his propitiating blood and pleading it. Though faith is the eye and hand of the soul, looking

up and reaching out to whole Christ as offered in the promise, yet in this act of it to be freed from the guilt of sin, it grasps Christ as a sacrifice, it hangs upon him as paying a price, and takes this blood as a blood shed for the soul, and insists upon the sufficient value of it with God. Faith respects the subject wherein it is as guilty, for it is a grace divesting a man of his own righteousness, and emptying a man of his own strength and sufficiency, and accusing the soul of guilt, and therefore eyes that which stands in direct opposition to this guilt, the free grace of God accepting Christ as a propitiation. It eyes that in craving justification, which God eyes in bestowing it, which is the Redeemer's bearing iniquity, Isa. liii. 11. It has no efficacy of itself, but as it is the band of our union with Christ. The whole virtue of cleansing proceeds from Christ the object. We receive the water with our hands, but the cleansing virtue is not in our hands, but in the water, yet the water cannot cleanse us without our receiving it; our receiving it unites the water to us, and is a means whereby we are cleansed. And therefore it is observed that our justification by faith is always expressed in the passive, not in the active; as we are *justified by faith*, not that *faith justifies us*. The efficacy is in Christ's blood, the reception of it in our faith. Though we are justified by faith, yet all our peace, and all those blessings which are bundled up in peace with God, come in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

IV. The use.

If the blood of Christ has the only and perpetual virtue, and does actually and perfectly cleanse believers from all sin, then it affords us,

1. A use of instruction.

(1) Every man, uninterested by faith in the blood of Christ, is hopeless of a freedom from guilt while he continues in that state. Without faith we are at a distance from God, by contracting in our natural state a guilt that subjected us to the curses of the law, and we remain under that wrath the state of nature put us into, till we are interested by faith in the expiating blood of the Redeemer. All the indictments that our own consciences, and, which is incomprehensibly more, the omniscience of God, can charge upon us, remain in their full force, are unanswerable by us, and we must inevitably sink under them, till the blood of Christ, apprehended by faith, cancel the bond and raze out the accusation. The blood of Christ is so far from cleansing an unbeliever from all sin, that it rather binds his sins the faster on him. Unbelief locks the sins on more strongly, so that the violations of the law stick closer to him, and the wrath of God hangs over him. Those that have no communion with Christ, have no interest in the blood of Christ; for they are such as 'have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,' to whom John in the text appropriates this privilege of being cleansed from all sin by the blood of Christ. Those that slight the blood of Christ, render themselves incapable of cleansing, because no other sacrifice can be offered, no other blood can be presented to God of a value equal to it: 'No more sacrifice remains for sin,' Heb. x. 26. There was but one bloody sacrifice appointed for expiation, and there can be no less required of us for the enjoying the benefit of it, than the receiving the atonement, Rom. v. 11. It is not consistent with the honour of God

to discharge men upon the account of the sufferings of the surety, who will persist in that sin for which the surety suffered, and make use of a Saviour to be freed from suffering, but not freed from offending. It would be contrary to the end of our Saviour's death to sprinkle that blood upon those that tread it under their feet, which was shed for the gathering together the sons of God, John xi. 52, to let the despisers of it have an equal share in the benefits of it with those that receive it. It cannot be imagined that God will ever make it a savour of life, as much to them that will not value it, as to those that do.

(2.) No freedom from the guilt of sin is to be expected from mere mercy. The figure of this was notable in the legal economy. The mercy-seat was not to be approached by the high priest without blood, Dent. ix. 7. Christ himself, typified by the high priest, expects no mercy for any of his followers, but by the merit of his blood. What reason have any then to expect remission upon the account of mere compassion, without pleading his blood? Mercy is brought to us only by the smoke of this sacrifice. The very title of justification implies not only mercy, but justice, and more justice than mercy; for justification is not upon a bare petition, but a propitiation. To be pardoned indeed implies mercy. Pardon is an act of favour, whereby the criminal is graced and gratified, but to be justified is to be discharged in a legal way, or by way of compensation. A man may be pardoned as a suppliant, but not pronounced righteous but upon the merits of his cause. He that employs mercy, acknowledges guilt, but insists not upon a righteousness. Justification or pardon is not the act of God as Creator, for then it had been mere mercy; nor as a lawgiver, according to the terms of the first covenant, for then no man after his revolted state could be justified; but as a judge, according to the laws of redemption, and that in a way of righteousness and justice, 2 Tim. iv. 8. God is not to be sought to for this concern, but in Christ; nor mere mercy implored without the Redeemer's merit, because God does not forgive our sins, or reconcile our persons to himself, but for the propitiating blood of his Son. To expect pardon only upon the account of mercy, is to honour one attribute with the denial of, or overlooking the other. Though God be merciful, yet he is just; his mercy is made known in remission, his justice manifested in justification. Forget not the great demonstration of his justice when you come to plead for mercy. Plead both in the blood of Christ, God is merciful to none out of Christ; he is merciful to none but to whom he is just: merciful to them in regard of themselves, and their own demerits; just and righteous to them in regard of the blood and merit of his Son.

(3.) There is no ground for the merits of the saints, or a cleansing purgatory. The apostle saith not you have a treasure of the merits of the departed saints; or you must expect a purgatory hereafter to cleanse you from all your sins. He mentions only the blood of Christ as fully sufficient and efficacious for this end. To set up other mediations, atonements, satisfactions, is a contempt of the wisdom of God in his ordination of this only one of his Son; of the holiness and justice of God in accepting this, as if God had mistaken himself, when he cheerfully received this as completely satisfactory to him, and answering his ends; as if, notwithstanding his full pleasure with it, it needed some addition from creatures to eke it out to a completeness. It is a dishonour to Christ, accusing him of an imperfect satisfaction, of an insufficient and infirm blood, a stripping it of its infinite value. How can that be infinite which needs a finite thing to strengthen it, and render it efficacious? He that goes to a muddy stream to wash himself, disgraces the

pure fountain he has in his own dwelling. This the Romanists use in the form of absolution: 'Let the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the blessed virgin, and of all the saints, and whatsoever good thou hast done, and whatsoever thou hast sustained, be to thee,' i. e. accounted to thee, or accepted for thee, 'for the remission of thy sins, the increase of thy grace, and the reward of eternal life.' (Cajetan sum. p. 2. The first head, Absolution) Nor is purgatory a small disparagement to the extensive virtue of this cleansing blood. If the blood of Christ cleanses, what interpretation can common reason and sense make of it, but that the person so cleansed is exempted from any punishment for his crime? Is the blood of the Son of God of so weak an efficacy, that it needs a cleansing fire in another world to purge out the relics of guilt left behind by it in this? If there must be such a penal satisfaction, where is the uncontrollable virtue of this blood? If this blood, which is the blood of God, has not a sufficient virtue, what finite fire can lay claim to it? What in reason can be supposed to have it? And if it be perfectly purgative, what need of anything else, that can never deserve the name of satisfaction? Shall that God, who is goodness and righteousness itself, punish a man for that crime which he has remitted upon so great a compensation? If he be pardoned, with what justice can he be punished? If he be punished by the severity of fire, with what mercy, or by what merit, was he pardoned and justified? It is no friendship to the perfection of God's justice to allege that he will punish that which he has remitted, and as little right is done to the perfection of Christ's meritorious blood, to make it of a half validity, a lame propitiation, which requires something to be done or suffered by the sinner to render it complete in the sight of God. With what face could Christ tell sinners that came believingly to him in the world, that their 'faith had saved them,' and they might 'go in peace,' if a purgatory satisfaction were to be exacted of them after this life, and his own passion had been unable to make their peace?

(4.) No mere creature can cleanse from sin. No finite thing can satisfy an infinite justice; no finite thing can remit or purchase the remission of an injury against an infinite being. A finite compensation can bear no proportion to an infinite wrong. If pardon as well as regeneration be a work of omnipotence, as we have lately heard, no creature but is as unable to remove guilt from the soul as it had been unable to remove deformity from the first matter and chaos. A creature can no more cleanse a soul, than it can frame and govern a world, and redeem a captived sinner.

(5.) There is no righteousness of our own, no services we can do, are sufficient for so great a concern. To depend upon any, or all of them, or anything in ourselves, is injurious to the value and worth of this blood; it is injurious also to ourselves; it is like the setting up a paper wall to keep off a dreadful fire, even that consuming one of God's justice. The apostle does more than once complain of the seducers that crept into the Galatian church, and would sow the tares of justification by the law, and their own works, so that they made the death of Christ in vain, Gal. ii. 2, and his work of no effect, Gal. v. 4; and tells them there plainly, that the expectation of a justification upon such an account was a falling from grace. If we are justified from our guilt by works, they must be works before faith or after faith; not before faith, for the corruption of nature remaining in its full force, without any amendment, any alteration, or subduing by renewing grace, will check men that understand anything of the woeful and deplorable, the weak and impotent, condition

of man by nature, from such a thought; and indeed those that hold justification by works make faith in Christ necessary to the acceptance of those works. Nor do works after faith justify, for then a believer is not justified upon his believing, but upon his working after his believing; so that faith then is not the justifying grace, but a preparation to those works which justify, which is quite contrary to the strain of the great apostle in his epistles, who ascribes justification to faith in the blood of Christ, and to faith without works. It is by faith we are united to Christ as the great undertaker for us; by that we receive the atonement, and accept of the infinite satisfaction made by the Redeemer to the justice of God. The acceptance of this, and embracing this as done for us, and accepted by God for us, cannot be an act of our works, but of our faith. All works are excluded by the apostle, Rom. iv. 5, 6, without restraining them to the works of the law, as he does sometimes in other places. Faith alone is opposed to works in general, and therefore to all sorts of works; and works after grace he does plainly exclude: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: not of works, lest any man should boast.' What works are those? Works after regeneration; for they are those works to which they were 'created in Jesus Christ,' which indeed, saith he, 'God ordained that we should walk in them,' not that we should be saved or justified by them. And so, when he desires not to be 'found in his own righteousness, which is of the law,' Philip. iii. 8, 9, can he understand only those works and that righteousness which he had before his conversion to Christ? As though works after faith were not more conformable to the law than works before faith; but let them be works flowing from what principle soever, he renounces them all, accounts them loss for Christ, and places no confidence in them. He did not renounce the privileges of his birth, or strip himself of a love to holy works, but of the opinion of any value they had with God of themselves to justification. Whatsoever might come under the title of his own righteousness he does cast away, as to any dependence on it, or pleading of it before God. And may not his works, after his giving up his name to Christ, be called his own righteousness, as well as those in a state of nature? Though the principle was altered, yet the acts from that principle were his own acts, and his own righteousness. So Abraham was not justified by his works after believing, no more than by those before: Rom. iv. 3, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' For those words, cited out of Gen. xv. 6, were spoken of Abraham, several years after his call and compliance with it by faith, and here singled out as the cause of his justification, without any concomitance of his own works flowing from that faith, or any mixture of them, or consideration of them by God in this justifying act. And David, though he was a great prophet, yet had not so distinct a knowledge of the gospel as those that live in the times of the gospel, yet under that legal administration wherein he was born, and bred, and lived all his days, had no confidence in his own works, not in those which he wrought as God's servant, out of love to him, fear of him, trust in him; he refuses all venturing his soul upon them, before the tribunal of God, when he desires God not to enter into judgment with him: Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant;' 'Answer me in thy righteousness,' ver. 1, not according to my own. Enter not into judgment with thy servant; though I be thy servant, and mine own conscience tells me I have an upright heart towards thee, yet I dare not enter into a plea with thee upon my service, or stand before thy judgment-seat in the strength of my works; and the reason he renders shows that he understood it of justification, and is inclusive of all men that ever drew breath, for it is as generally expressed as anything can

be: 'For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' Not an apostle, martyr, prophet, can stand before God when he compares his action with the rule. David was far from any confident sentiment of his own works, or the strength of the blood of legal sacrifices. How often does he aggravate his crimes, and debase the value of his services, and speak of the sacrifices, as unable to render a satisfaction to God! We see the father of the faithful, the greatest type of Christ, and he that seems the most rational among the apostles, disclaiming any justification by their own works, even by those wrought by them after they were really listed in the service of God.

And there is good reason for it.

[1.] No righteousness of man is perfect, and therefore no righteousness of man is justifying. Whatsoever works do justify, must be, in the extent of them, and all the circumstances, fully conformed unto that precept that enjoins them. What man has a righteousness commensurate with the rule of the law, whereby his works are to be tried? Again, every man, the moment before his justification, is ungodly, Rom. iv. 5. He is in that state just before his justification. If he be justified by his own works, he is then justified by ungodly works, and then a contradiction will follow, that a man is justified by his merit of condemnation, and pronounced righteous upon the account of his unrighteousness. It is as much as to say, a man shall be justified by his sinfulness, and be judged an observer of the law by his transgressing it.

First, The mixture of one sinful act among a multitude of good works, renders a man imperfect, and consequently incapable of justification by them. Suppose a man had only one sin, and all his other works clear without a flaw, the law could not pronounce him righteous, because he fell short of that universal and perpetual rectitude which the law requires in all things: Gal. iii. 10, 'Cursed is he that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' If he fails but in one thing, and that but once in his whole life, and that but in the omission of any one circumstance it requires, he sinks under the curse. But since a man never performed in his whole life a duty entirely exact, with what face can he expect a justification from that law, which he never observed with that exactness due to it in any one action that ever he did? Works are debts; unless a debt be fully paid, a man cannot be said to be a righteous person. If a man owes a thousand pound, and pays nine hundred ninety-nine pound nineteen shillings, and pays not that one shilling, which is as much due as the whole, he is unrighteous in withholding that, and the bond may be put in suit against him for that if the creditor please. What man ever paid the full debt of works he owed to God by virtue of the law? How far is any man from paying all the parts of his debt but one only? Suppose we had not only a perfect work, but many perfect works, all perfect works but one the works might justify themselves, but not justify the person that has a stain upon him in the account of the law. But the case is more deplorable for if God will contend with man, he 'cannot answer him one of a thousand,' Job ix. 2, 3. Some of the Jews interpret it thus: that the arguments and pleas men can bring from their own works, for their defence before his tribunal, are so weak and trifling, that God in scorn would not vouchsafe to give a reply to one plea of theirs among a thousand. But rather it is to be understood, that

man cannot render one little reason among a thousand pleas for his own justification, on any one of a thousand of those charges God can bring against him.

Secondly, There is not one act a man does, but there is matter of condemnation in it. As the Scripture excepts every man from doing good, as considered in his natural corruption, Rom. iii. 12, so it excepts every man from doing any one pure good action: Eccles. vii. 20, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sins not,' i. e. he does not do any good work without a mixture of sin; and therefore the Scripture pronounces a man's 'own righteousness as filthy rags,' Isa. lxiv. 6. Righteousness in the whole extent of it, whatsoever he does that is righteous in a way of eminency, is but a filthy rag, it is but a shred, and that filthy too. And to think it is able to purge the soul from sin, is as much as to think to wash away one mud by another. That which is condemning cannot be justifying, that which falls short of the holiness of the law cannot free us from the condemning sentence of the law. But there is nothing that a man does but is defective, if compared with the law, which requires an exactness of obedience in every act, without any stain. It requires perfection in the person, and perfection in every service; it allows no blemish, nor pronounces a man righteous, where it does not find a completeness both for parts and time. It is so far therefore from justifying, that it must needs condemn. 'For the righteousness of the law must be fulfilled in every one of us,' Rom. viii. 4. Whatsoever plea we can raise from our own works, will represent us guilty, and that can never be the matter of our absolution, which has sufficient matter of condemnation in it. Tainted work is never able to maintain its standing before the infinite holiness of God.

Thirdly, All the works after grace fall short of the perfection required in them by the law. I do not say they fall altogether short of the perfection required in them by the gospel, i. e. fall short of that integrity and sincerity which is our evangelical perfection; but they fall short of that perfection which is required by the law. There is no grace in any renewed man in this life in that perfect degree it ought to be. Corruption of nature remains in every man, with regeneration of nature. It is true there is a new principle put in, but not so powerful as to abolish that principle which possessed us before, though it does overmaster it. There is a 'flesh lusting against the spirit,' as well as a 'spirit lusting against the flesh,' Gal. v. 17. And Paul, that was renewed as much as any man we ever knew renewed, had a flesh that served the law of sin, with a mind that served the law of God, Rom. vii. 25. No grace is wrought to its full growth. There is staggering in our faith, and coldness in our love, and hardness in our melting; and therefore it was a good speech of Luther's, We can never be saved, if God does not turn his eyes from our virtues as well as our sins. How can that, the unrighteousness whereof was our burden before the throne of God, be our righteousness before him? How can that heal us, which stands in need of cure, and renders us sick? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Or the highest righteousness out of an unclean newness, and an imperfect regeneration? If our duties after grace be so corrupt that they need something to render them acceptable, and accepted in the sight of God, they can never be of that worth as to render our persons righteous; for that which needs something to make itself valid, can never make any other thing valid. If our duties want a pardon, and something to cover the defects, and wipe off the blemishes of them, they can never, upon any bottom of their own, plead themselves to be a sufficient righteousness for a guilty sinner, guilty in the acting that which is pleaded

as a righteousness. No flesh can be justified in the sight of God, and nothing that comes from flesh can be our righteousness. The best man being in part flesh, all his works are in part fleshly. Where the nature is wholly corrupt, the fruit cannot be good; where the nature is in part corrupt, the fruit of the new nature must be tainted by the steams of the old, and therefore is too defective to bottom our happiness upon.

And consider but these two things:

First, Men's own consciences cannot but accuse them of coming short of the glory of God, in everything they do. Can any man upon earth say he ever did a perfect action, that he dares venture his soul upon it, in the presence of God? There is no man's conscience but must needs accuse him of sin: 1 John i. 8, 'He that saith he has no sin, has nothing of the truth in him;' and what man's conscience ever bore that testimony to him, that he was perfect in all his works? Does it not rather witness that he has numberless times violated the divine precepts? Who can say he did perfectly exert an act of faith, so entire, fixed, steady, as might suit the divine holiness, or that his love had such an intense flame in any service he presented to God? No man yet, upon serious consideration, did ever judge any one of his big works perfect before God. He must have very mean thoughts of the holiness of God, or be very inconsiderate of his own actions, and not dive into all the matter and circumstances of them, if he so judged. Indeed, Paul says, he knew nothing by himself, i. e. of unfaithfulness in declaring the mysteries of God, as to the matter and substance of them, yet would he not venture his justification upon that bottom, 1 Cor. iv. 4. A self-justification in this would be a self-condemnation: Job ix. 20, 'If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.'

Secondly, But, suppose there be no accusations of conscience, durst we stand to God's trial of our works? The omniscience of God pierces further than our knowledge; for 'who can understand the errors of his ways?' Pg. xix. 12. If any action might be perfect in our account, shall we therefore think it so in the account of God's unspotted holiness, who is greater than our hearts, and knows more than our hearts? 'Who can stand before so holy a God?' 1 Sam. vi. 20. Job, therefore, chap. ix. 21, would not know his own soul, though he were perfect, he would not approve or boast of himself in the presence of God; for he might be ignorant of something in his own spirit which never yet reached his notice, but was not unknown to God, that knew all things; he would despise his life, i. e. overlook all his upright course, and bury it in silence, when he comes to appear before God.

Fourthly, Since, therefore, all our own righteousness is of this hue, it would be contrary to the justice and holiness of God to justify a man for imperfect works. His judgment is always according to truth, Rom. ii. 2. If he should judge and accept that for a perfect righteousness which is notoriously imperfect in itself, it would imply a defect in the understanding of the judge, whereby he is changed, and judges that to be exact holiness now which he judged not so before. But certainly, if it be an imperfect righteousness, the infinite understanding of God can never imagine it perfect, and the holiness of God would never deceive itself in accepting that as perfect which is not in its own nature so. If imperfect works of grace can justify now, what reason can be rendered for the strictness God required of the first man in the first covenant, and his severe dealing with him upon

the transgression of it? The best reason, and most becoming the majesty of God, is the holiness of his nature, which is as infinite now as when he made the first covenant. If that holiness can now content itself with an imperfect righteousness, and pronounce us justified persons without a full conformity to the law, it might take a little further step, and pronounce us righteous without any conformity at all to it. If he could deny his holiness and truth in one thing, he might upon the same account deny it in all, and so lay it aside by degrees till it came to nothing. If we rightly understand the infiniteness of God's holiness, we cannot conceive that anything imperfect can justify us before so exact and strict a tribunal, where sits the omniscience of God to see, the holiness of God to hate, and the justice of God to punish, every defect and deviation from his law..

[2.] The design of God was to justify us in such a way as to strip us of all matter of glorying in ourselves, and therefore it is not by any righteousness of our own. This the apostle in many places asserts, Rom. iii. 26, 27. He justifies by the law of faith, to exclude boasting, which would not have been excluded by the law of works; and Eph. ii. 9, 'Not of works, lest any man should boast.' He had before spoken of salvation or justification by grace, ver. 5; and to strike men's bands off from resting on anything in themselves, and put our own righteousness out of countenance, he repeats it again, ver. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, and that not of yourselves; not of works,' because God will have all boasting excluded. The apostle's argument holds as strong against the works of grace as those of nature, the works after the receiving of the gospel as those of the law; it would else be invalid, for if we were justified by our own works, wrought by us after the grace of redemption communicated to us, it would but little more exclude boasting than the works of Adam wrought by him in the rectitude of his nature, which was the gift of God to him. The natural principle of his actions, as well as the gracious principle of a believer's, were bestowed on them by God. That was an act of God's goodness, this of his grace. And they are our works by grace, as well as the acts of Adam in innocence would have been his works by nature. For though the works of grace are wrought from a principle implanted by the Spirit of God, yet they are not the works of that Spirit, no more than Adam's works could be said to be the works of God, because they were from a principle implanted in him by God. The works would have been Adam's, by the concurrence of God as Creator, and those works are a believer's by the concurrence of God as Redeemer. And if we were justified by them, there would be as well matter of boasting as there would have been in Adam had he stood and been efficiently justified or pronounced righteous upon his innocent works. God hates any glorying before him. The pharisee, therefore, that displayed his righteousness in the temple before God, with some kind of reflection upon his own worth, Luke xviii. 10-12, with some kind of exaltation of himself and contempt of the publican, went away unjustified, though he did thankfully acknowledge his eminency in morality above the publican to stream to him from the goodness of God. And no good man in Scripture ever pleaded his own works in prayer to God for his justification, though sometimes they have appealed to God concerning their integrity in a particular action. Daniel disowns his own righteousness, Dan. ix. 18; and the famous cardinal and champion of the Romish church, upon his deathbed, would rely on the merits of Christ, though he had disputed for the merit of works. So sensible are men of the little matter they have to glory of in themselves, when they are ready to stand before the tribunal of God. God in justification will have the entire glory of his grace to

himself; but if any work of ours, though never so gracious, were the cause but in part of our justification, we had whereof to glory. If we divided it between Christ and ourselves, Christ would have but half the glory, and the other half would be due to us.

To conclude, no man can be justified but by a covenant of grace, and by the righteousness of God, not his own; since all men have been under the corruption of original sin, no man has arrived to happiness by any righteousness of his own. Every man being a sinner is under the curse of the law, and being accursed by it, cannot be justified by it. The law does not frown and smile upon a man at one and the same time. It proposes no recompense but to those that entirely observe it, and denounces a curse upon those that in the least do violate it; it accuses, does not justify, and fills the conscience with darkness and despair, not with comfort and peace.

6. We are therefore justified by a righteousness imputed to us. 'The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' It is not inherent in us, but in the veins of Christ; it is not physically or corporally applied to us, but juridical, in a judicial way, and therefore imputed to us, and that for justification. Hence we are said to be justified by his blood, Rom. v. 9. If justified by his blood, then meritoriously; the merit of that blood must then be imputed to us, and we upon the account of it pronounced righteous by God, since this blood was never inherent in us. Hence forgiveness of sins and justification is often ascribed unto it, Rom. iii. 23-25, Col. i. 14. As our iniquities were charged upon him, so his righteousness is derived to us. Our iniquities were never inherent in him, but imputed to him; so his blood never was inherent in us, but imputed to us for the satisfaction of the law, and so for our justification from the penalty and curse of it. If it were our righteousness that were imputed to us, it would be an imputation of debt, not of grace, Rom. iv. 4. It cannot be inherent righteousness, because it is a righteousness imputed without works, ver. 6; but no inherent righteousness is without works. Again, ver. 5, the object of justification is an ungodly person, one that has no righteousness of his own. But since there must be a complete righteousness to justify him, it must be the righteousness of another, for being ungodly, it cannot be his own. It is therefore by the righteousness of one man, Christ: Rom. v. 19, 'As we are made sinners by one man's disobedience, so we are made righteous by one man's obedience.' Our being made sinners by one man's disobedience, was no personal act of our own, but a personal act of Adam's; so we are made righteous, not by a personal obedience of our own, but by the perpetual obedience of Christ, which cannot be of advantage to us, unless some way or other counted to us.

Use 2; of comfort. The comfort of a a believer has a strong and lasting foundation in the blood of Christ. All our sins met upon Christ as they did upon the scape-goat, and were carried away with the streams of his blood. A cleansing blood was not the language of the first covenant. It required blood to be poured out in a way of revenge, not to be poured out and applied for the pardon of others. What can relieve us, if this blood, shed by a holy Saviour, and accepted by a righteous judge, cannot? This blood has removed the curse, purchased our liberty, and may therefore calm every believing conscience. What expression can be more stored with comfort than this, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

1. The title is cheering. 'The blood of *Jesus Christ his Son*.' The titles of the blood of God, and the righteousness of God, are enough to answer all objections, and testify a virtue in it as incomprehensible as that of his Godhead, which elevated it to an infinite value. What wounds are so deep that they cannot be healed by the sovereign balsam of so rich a blood? What sins are too great to be expiated, and what diseases too desperate to be cured, by the blood of him that created the world? How great is that blood, that must have more of value, since it is the blood of the Son of God, than all sins can have of guilt, since they are the sins of the sons of men! The blood of Christ is as much above the guilt of our Sins, as the excellency of his person is above the meanness of ours.

2. And who can fathom the comfort that is in the extensiveness of the object? *All sin*. As we are not limited in the Lord's prayer to pray for the forgiveness of some debts only, and not for others, but pray for the forgiving of trespasses indefinitely, so there is no stint set to the virtue of this cleansing blood. All transgressions to it are like a grain of sand, or the drop of a bucket to the ocean, no more seen or distinguished when it is swallowed up by that mass of waters. It is a 'plenteous redemption,' since it redeems Israel, and all the Israel of God, from all their iniquities, Ps. cxxx. 7, 8. His blood can cleanse as many sins as his Godhead can create worlds, and those are numberless; since there is no limits to his power there can be none to his blood. Though our sins have weakened the law, and made it unable to save us, yet they cannot weaken the omnipotent satisfaction of the Redeemer. The multitude of sins in the sinner enhance the vastness of the payment made by the surety. Let not any believing soul be dejected, or any soul that would cordially believe and resign himself up to the conduct of Christ. That blood that has cleansed so many from sin, and from such multitudes of sins, in their several capacities, can cleanse you from all your sins, were they as great as all those jointly that have been cleansed by it from the beginning of the world. For what hindrance is there but that it can do the same in one person that it has done in many? When we look upon the multitude of our sins, our pride and vain imaginations, our omissions of service, our carelessness in the ways of God, there cannot but be a hanging down the head, till we lift up our eyes to the cross and see all balanced by the blood of the Son of God, which cannot be overtopped by the guilt of a believing person.

3. And does not the word *cleanse* deserve a particular consideration? What does that note but,

(1.) *Perfection*. It cleanses their guilt so that it 'shall not be found,' Jer. 1. 20. What can justice demand more of us, more of our Saviour, than what has been already paid? The everlasting death of a believing sinner cannot be challenged by it, since the blood of a redeeming Saviour has been shed for it. It were injustice to put the creature upon an imperfect satisfaction, since the surety has given a complete one; and injustice to punish him that is no longer guilty of a crime in the judgment of the law of redemption, since by faith he relies upon the blood of the Redeemer. Justice can no more condemn any that are objects of mercy by receiving the blood of the second covenant, than mere mercy can save any one that remains an object of revenging justice under the first covenant. By this means we do not stand before God only as innocent persons, but as those that have fulfilled the law, both as to precept and penalty, Rom. viii. 4.

(2.) Continuance of justification; the present tense implies a continued act. Christ's blood is never lost and congealed, as the blood of the legal sacrifices. His blood is called a 'new way,' Heb. x. 19, 20, *προσφατος*; the word rendered *new* signifies a thing newly slain or sacrificed. His blood is as new and fresh for the work it was appointed to as when it was shed upon the cross, as full of vigour as if it had been shed but this moment; it is a blood that was not drunk up by the earth, but gathered up again into his body to be a living, pleading, cleansing blood in the presence of God for ever. He did not leave his body and blood putrefying in the grave, the sacrifice had then ceased and corrupted, it had not been of everlasting efficacy, as now it is. The justification of a believer stands upon as certain terms as the justification of Christ himself before God. His was upon the account of shedding his blood, ours upon the account of embracing his blood. He was justified by God after his bleeding, Isa. 1. 6, 8, and brought in triumph, and sending a challenge to any to condemn him, since God had justified him, ver. 9; which words the apostle alludes to, Rom. viii. 33, 34, to show the unrepeatableness of justification, and applies them to believers, though they were spoken by Christ in his own case. Christ was justified by his resurrection: 1 Tim. in. 16, 'Justified in the Spirit,' which is no other than what Peter expresses by being 'quickened in the Spirit,' 1 Peter iii. 18. As Christ was justified by his resurrection from all the sins which met upon him on the cross, and that for ever, so are believers cleansed from all their guilt, and that for ever, by virtue of this blood. The meritorious plea of this blood continuing for ever, is not without the perpetual act of the righteous Judge justifying those for whom it is pleaded.

Hence will follow security at the last judgment. His blood cleanses from all sin here, and his voice shall absolve from all sin hereafter. He that has been a propitiation for your guilt, and an advocate against your accusers, shall never as a judge condemn you for your sins. He does not indeed judge as a priest, but as a king; but his kingly power is but subservient to his priestly office, since he was more solemnly confirmed in that, viz. by an oath, than in the other; and therefore his royal authority shall never ruin any whom his priestly sacrifice has restored to their lost inheritance. Let no believing soul therefore despond, let him draw this blood over his fears to stifle them, as God has done over his sins to cancel them, and drown them in this same ocean into which God has hurled his transgressions.

Use 3; of exhortation.

Have recourse only to this blood upon all occasions, since it only is able to cleanse us from all our guilt. We have treasured up wrath, and wounded conscience; nothing can pacify a severe wrath, and calm a tempestuous conscience, but this blood. Had we but the guilt of one sin upon us, we stood in need of an expiation by it as well as if we had ten thousand. Every infinite wrong must have an infinite satisfaction. Entertain no disparaging and little thoughts of this blood, which the Scripture pronounces of so plenteous, unsearchable, and great a virtue. It was God's intent to cleanse sin by it, when he agreed with the Redeemer about shedding his blood: Isa. liii. 11, 'My righteous servant shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' It was set out by him to this end, when it was shed. Zech. xiii. 1, 'In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David,' the stronger spirits, and men most according to God's heart, 'and for the

inhabitants of Jerusalem,' the weaker sort; for all a fountain to fill every private cistern. Make not the covenant of God with his Son in vain; slight not his grace by refusing to drink of his open fountain. The glory of purging iniquity was reserved by God for this blood, it is committed to no other; the blood of bulls and goats never had, never could, have the honour of so great a work. It is the glorious title of his blood to cleanse from all sins, as it is the honourable signification of his name Jesus to save from all sins. We cannot please God more than by coming to him for the pardon of our sins, upon the account of this blood he has so delighted to honour. If we do not, we deny it the glory of its cleansing virtue; we undervalue the efficacy of it, and would have it without any subject to exercise its power on. We need not fear to approach to it, since God has manifested it highly acceptable to him, and available for us. The unsearchable riches of it should more encourage us than the greatness of our guilt discourage our address. Have recourse to it by faith, resting on the power of this blood, as the means appointed by God, and intended by Christ, for the expiation of sin. Faith as accepting Christ as a king does not justify, but faith as accepting Christ as a priest and sacrifice, as shedding his blood, for we must accept him in that office wherein he made the atonement; and that was not as he was a prophet or a king, but as he was a priest and a sacrifice; and therefore it is called, 'faith in his blood,' Rom. iii. 25, though indeed a faith in his blood is not without receiving him as a king, and submitting to his precepts, as well as relying on his sacrifice. He that receives the blood of Christ, as well as he that names the name of Christ, must depart from iniquity, and avoid those things which break the covenant. Mingle not any thing with his satisfaction; let no muddy waters of your own be mixed with this gospel wine. If we look for a justification by anything else, we forfeit all right of justification by him: Gal. v. 2, 'Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing;' take it for a certain truth, for I as an apostle speak it, that if you have an opinion that you shall be justified by circumcision, or anything of the law, or of your own works, or would make them partakers with Christ in this matter, Christ shall profit you nothing, you had as good never have had a Christ made known to you, for any virtue you are like to derive from him. As none died with him to expiate your guilt, so he will suffer none to be joined with him in justifying your persons. Christ bears this blood only in his hand, when he pleads for us; we should carry this blood only in our hearts when we plead for ourselves. It is not his blood only as shed does justify, but his blood pleaded in the court of heaven by himself, and pleaded before the throne of God by the believing sinner; without it we have no more plea than the apostate angels have, whom God has cast out of his favour for ever. And since we contract guilt every day, let us daily apply the medicine. The pleas of this blood are renewed according to the necessity of our persons. As often as an Israelite had been bitten by the fiery serpents, he must have looked up to the brazen one, if he would not have been destitute of a cure; and we, upon every sting of conscience, must look up to him who has been lifted up upon the cross for our remedy. This blood is appointed for sins after conversion, for those, that walk in the light. Since the fountain is open every day, and we contract guilt every day, let not a day pass without fresh applications of this blood upon any defects in our walking with him; since, 'if we walk in the light,' and are industrious to observe the will of God, 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

End

