

A Discourse of the Cleansing Virtue of Christ's Blood

by Stephen Charnock

The blood of Christ has a perpetual virtue that cleanses believers from all sin, and it is a universal remedy that has the power to cleanse us from all guilt and filth.

Topics: "Blood Of Christ", "Divine Forgiveness"

Description

Stephen Charnock preaches about the perfect cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ, emphasizing that it expiates sin, removes guilt, and brings reconciliation with God. The fellowship with God through Jesus Christ is highlighted as the chief happiness of man, providing full and complete joy. The blood of Jesus, as the Son of God, holds infinite virtue to cleanse believers from all sin, absolving guilt and sheltering from God's wrath. This cleansing is both justifying and sanctifying, removing guilt and purifying the soul, and is a continual act of faith in the perpetual pleading of Christ's blood for believers.

Transcript

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 reliefs 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. 30, 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, *kaqarmata*, 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.

[1.] 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 cronkkwV, 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 dew 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 had 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 acceptation 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

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