

Tobias Crisp {1600-1643}

His Complete Works: 1643 – 1646

Christ Alone Exalted

SELECT EXTRACTS FROM THE BOOK

A New Creation in Christ

Most men think that this phrase, new creature, is a renewed, sanctified man, so as he becomes new in his own conversation, when his life is changed; I do not deny the truth of the thing, all that are in Christ, he renews them, sanctifies them, and subdues iniquity in them; but, under favour, let me tell you, the apostle's meaning here by new creature is, not that they are sanctified; but that they are new creatures, that is, they are reconciled unto God; this is his meaning; "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" that is, he is brought into a new condition that he was not in before; and this new condition is, he is now reconciled unto God; whereas, before, he was an alien and stranger to him.

Arminianism: Exploded by the Sovereign Grace of God in Christ

We are to walk in every way that God hath chalked out unto us; but if we think our righteousness, deep humiliation, large relents of spirits, sorrow for sin, and our confession thereof, must make our way to the bowels of Christ, take heed lest you set up a false Christ. When you bring anything to Christ, you deprive him of that which is his greatest prerogative, and give it to your fasting and humiliations; it is the prerogative of Christ alone to bring you to himself. But, you will say, all the promises of pardon run with this proviso, in case men humble themselves, and do this and that, then pardon is theirs; but otherwise it is none of theirs. Take heed of such doctrine. We have bad Arminianism exceedingly exploded among us hitherto, and there hath been much complaint against it; but if we conceive that God, in pardoning sin, hath an eye to confession of it, here is the doing of works for pardon of sin; and how far short this comes of Arminianism, let all the world judge.

Assurance in Christ Alone

The truth is, it is not possible that any person can truly believe his iniquities are laid upon Christ, except there be a previous act of the Lord's laying them on him; the Lord's act of laying must go before our act of applying it to ourselves. It is not possible for any man to act anything, but there must be an object in being, about which it is conversant. Suppose a man believe his sins are laid upon Christ, I would fain know, whether his believing be true or false; if he believe indeed, he hath a foundation for this faith of his, and what is that? He hath a grant from the Lord, that is the very being of his faith; a grant, I say, he finds out, that is a stirring up of his believing. Now suppose I am to believe the forgiveness of my sins, what must be the ground of this my believing? The Lord must make his grant to me, and finding that, I have ground to believe it; then whensoever this grant was made, the

thing that I am to believe, was done in respect of God's act. Now we can find no grant, but as the Lord reveals the same in the word of his grace to us; when, therefore, that which is the foundation of my faith was made, then the act of God was made to me, which I apply to myself.

Assurance in Christ Alone

The Spirit of the Lord must first reveal the gracious mind of the Lord to our spirits, and give to us faith to receive that testimony of the Spirit, and to sit down as satisfied with his testimony, before ever any work of sanctification can possibly give any evidence; but when the testimony of the Spirit of the Lord is received by faith, and the soul sits down satisfied with that testimony of the Lord, then also all the gifts of God's Spirit do bear witness together with the Spirit of the Lord, and the faith of a believer.

Assurance in Christ Alone

But many are apt to think, if I were sure he were my God, I might trust in him without sense. Now though this be a very common objection, yet who sees not the vanity of it? What is it to be sure, but to have the sense of his favour? Now the case we have in hand, supposeth this sense removed and gone, and no appearance of it; so that the objection is but this, if I had sense, I might believe without it, which is either nonsense, or a contradiction. But it will be further objected, that if men must believe that have no experience, then wicked and unregenerate persons may believe the promises. I answer: That whilst they are such, they neither will, nor care to believe them one with another; indeed, they cannot believe them, (whilst such) for it is not yet given them to believe or mind them. But, I answer, that wicked men may, if they can, believe the promises before they have experience; nay, I say further, that no man shall ever have experiences, until he believe without experiences. Doth not God justify the ungodly, even whilst he is so? Doth he not find him so, and at that time cast his love on him? If God doth so, what impropriety or incongruity it is to believe he doth so? You will say this is at first conversion; but I answer, is not God's love as free afterwards to rise anew after some setting? Doth not God return for his own name sake only? And if he do, must not our faith be on that name only? The truth is, man's nature is apt to look after some loveliness or beauty in himself to win God, and therefore, when he can find no such thing, he is out of heart. This popery is natural, the fine-spun distinctions to evade it are mere fig-leaves, not able to cover the nakedness of it; he that comes to God and his promises with a blind-folded faith, (I mean a faith that takes notice of nothing in himself, whether good or evil) is God's welcomest guest.

Assurance in Christ Alone

You may easily perceive how mightily people are mistaken, and, therefore, no marvel they live so uncomfortably; that they are in fear of death, and thereby in bondage all their life long, while they run for the refreshment of their spirits, to their own righteousness, to the plea of their own works, and will have their hearts eased upon that that they themselves do; whereas, nothing gets a gracious discharge from their Father, but only Christ, and his righteousness. Therefore, beloved, however it may, with some, be a harsh thing, to take men off from their own righteousness, in respect of speaking comfort unto them, and to lead them to the righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel, as that from which they

may draw all their comfort; though this may sound harsh to some people, that have not been trained up in the way of the grace of God, and in the freeness of it, revealed in the gospel; yet, I doubt not, but in time, the Lord will be pleased to reveal to us, that running to Christ out of ourselves, and disclaiming our own righteousness and comfort from it; that leaving our own actions, and all that can be imagined to be in us, or can be done by us, will be the thing that, in the end, will establish our own hearts and spirits, yea, and "fill them with joy and peace in believing."

Assurance in Christ Alone

Let us now see what kind of evidence believing gives; as I said before, it is not a revealing, nor an affecting, but it is a receiving evidence; or it is an evidence as it receives that testimony which the Spirit holds out, applying it unto the heart; it is an evidence, as an officer in court is one upon trial of a case, that speaks nothing of his own knowledge, but produceth records, and testifieth the authenticity of them. The life of evidence is materially in the records themselves, but the officer is an evidence, as he asserts the truth of them. It is even so with faith; the Spirit of the Lord makes the records, and speaks them to the heart; faith comes in, and receives the truth of them. In brief, faith is an evidence as it takes possession of that which the Spirit of the Lord reveals and manifests to a person. I say, as it takes possession, or as it enters upon the deed of gift, the Spirit of the Lord brings to the heart. Possession is a good evidence in hand; let a man prove he had lawful possession given him, and that proves his title to be good. The Spirit, indeed, makes the title good, but faith makes good the entry and possession, and so clears the title to us, though good in itself before; faith is nothing else but the receiving of Christ that enters upon the possession of him.

Christ: The Infallible Teacher

Men are but bunglers, that are taught by any other but God. We that are the ministers of the gospel, leave you dunces in Christianity, in matters of practice, until the Lord Jesus Christ come into that ministry, and, by his Spirit, teach your spirits; and then when he comes, you shall be exact in skillfulness; "I am wiser than my teachers," saith David. So when Christ comes to teach you, you shall be wise as your school-master. Now if a school-master cannot make true Latin, the scholar will hardly do it; if the scrivener cannot write well, the scholar will make but crow's-claws, as we used to say; learn this truth, if you will be exact in the christian scholarship, in the mysteries of Christ; go to school to Christ; that is, take Christ for your Christ; wait upon him to instruct you, to direct you, to make you skilful; then shall you be infinitely more exact, than by running to any other teacher in the world. Christ, then you see, is such a way, by which we attain to a quicker riddance of all the business we have to do in this way, than any other course besides.

Christ: The Life of the Believer

Mark what the apostle saith, "Our life is hid with Christ in God." It is true, there is a natural life, that may be destroyed as well as the life of a wicked man; but yet the soul of a believer is not destroyed; it is cannon proof, all the devils in hell cannot destroy it; "Christ himself is our life; now, when he shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory." So that Christ himself must be killed, before our lives shall be destroyed by the enemies. You that are

believers have this advantage of your enemies, the unbelievers; you may take away their lives, but they cannot take away yours; they have but one life, a natural life but they that are believers, have a life in Christ; nay he is their life. Beloved, the Lord intends only your good in all your changes, and that which is best, he provides for you; though your life be taken away from you, where is the hurt or loss? Consider it well, beloved, death is but the opening of the prison doors to let you out; it is but the arrival of a vessel into the haven of rest. What doth the sword do when it enters into a believer? It makes but a change of immortality for mortality, of life for death, of strength for weakness, of glory for shame, of holiness for sin; it doth but pull down a rotten house of clay, to give possession of mansions of glory; it doth but take persons from a cottage at will, to enter into a lordship of inheritance; for it gives full possession of an eternal one. The sword that enters into the breast of a believer, doth but put him into the chamber of the bridegroom, and consummates the marriage of the Lamb to him; it is the fulfilling of the great cry of the saints, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" and, "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." It takes the bride into communion with her long looked-for beloved, and gives her possession of those things she longed for.

Christ: The Life of the Believer

Mistake me not, I speak not all this while against holiness and righteousness, that becomes a people to whom Christ is a way; for holy and righteous they shall be; Christ will make them holy, and put his spirit into them, to change their hearts and to work upon their spirits; but this is not the condition required to partake of Christ. Christ himself gives himself, and then he bestows these things when he is given. I say, Christ is given to men first, before they do anything in the world; and all they do, they do by Christ present in them; "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God." We do not so much live, but by the life of Christ, which is life in us. All the actions of life proceed from the soul, now present; how then comes the actions of the soul to be a condition to partake of the soul, that gives life, and, by its presence, works such actions? Christ is the soul of every believer, that animates, and acts the believer in all things whatsoever. Must not this life, Christ, be put into a believer, before he can actuate life, which is a stream springs from that life? How then can this be a condition to receive, to have Christ. When Christ is first come, by whom these things, that are called conditions, are afterwards wrought, he himself being present to work them? So, say I, God bestows Christ upon men to be a way to bring them to the Father; he is an absolute and free gift. There is no other motive that Christ should be any one's saviour, than merely the good pleasure of the Father, the bowels of God himself; "Not for thy sake, but for my own sake; not for thy sake, thou art a rebellious and stubborn people, but for my own sake." Here is the freeness of Christ, to a person coming to him, when he comes merely for God's sake; and God merely upon his good pleasure will do it, because he will; "He hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth; it is not in him that willeth, (saith Paul, Romans 9.) nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy." So that Christ becomes a way unto them, not out of their will, not out of their disposition, not out of their holy walkings, but out of that mercy that proceeds out of the mere will of God; his own good pleasure is the only fountain and spring of it.

Deity of Christ

In Christ there is the one only divine nature; there is no God, but the God that Christ is. This is worth your consideration, for the minds of men are apt frequently to distinguish so between God and Christ, as if God were one, and Christ distinctly another, and not God; when, the truth is, there is no other God, but what Christ himself is; "My Lord, and my God," said Thomas. And, Colossians 2:9, the apostle saith, that "in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," John 1:1. Christ is God; there is but one God; therefore you are never to separate in your thoughts God from Christ; always as you look upon Christ, so look upon God; or, as you look upon God, look upon him no otherwise than as he is in Christ, not as if there were another God, besides what Christ is; for there is no such thing.

Faith in Christ

"What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" Naturally, men are upon doing to get; when we talk upon matters of religion, it is doing gets everything; therefore, they will be doing, that they may have something. Now, though Christ doth not answer the question they made, being a silly one, yet he gives them another answer that was to the purpose; "This is the work of God, to believe in him whom he hath sent." Never look to get it by doing; look to get it from him, and not from yourselves, and your own doings.

Faith in Christ

You must not imagine, that our motion of coming is the primum mobile that gives motion to Christ to open and entertain; as if our coming did stir him up to set open, and give entrance. Christ hath not any such thought in him that we must come, and therefore will own us for his own; for it is certainly true, the very motion of our coming to Christ, is from himself, and from his coming to us, before we do so much as move. It is a common principle known to all divines, and most people; we are first acted, and then we act, *acti agimus*. First, Christ gives to us to come, and then, by his gift, we come to him; we must not imagine, by coming to Christ, he is moved and invited towards us, and is stirred up to open to us, and give entertainment to us; but his first coming to us, and living in us, stirs us up to motion: "You that were dead in sins and trespasses, (Ephesians 2:1,) hath he quickened?" Beloved, is there death till Christ quickens? Where then can there be this motion of ours, before he himself be come with his life? Where there is no life, you know there is no motion; and till the fountain of life communicates it, there can be none; therefore it is Christ that gives this coming unto men, and he having given it, they come to him.

Faith in Christ

Believing is, in sum and substance, but a yielding to the mind of the Lord revealed; while persons are contradicting, they are not believing, in respect of those things that they contradict. To believe and to contradict the same thing, is a contradiction; for to believe, is to sit down satisfied with the thing that is related. Finally, suppose it should be, that coming is believing, and that this life, spoken of here, is not in persons till they believe. What is meant by life here? The apostle tells us, "Our life is hid with Christ in God; and Christ is the

life of the world," that is, of the elect. It seems then, that the life of every elect person hath a being in Christ, before he believes; believing, therefore, doth not produce a new life that was not before, only it manifests that which was before; and it makes that life, which was before, an active life; or is an instrument by which that life that is hid in Christ, after believing, becomes an active and appearing life in this person. So that all that can be made of it, is but this; till believing, there is no activeness of the life of Christ in the person that is elected; his life is in Christ, and was reserved in him till the time of believing for him; and then doth he, the elect person, become active in life, when Christ gives him to believe actually: but to say, that this believing should give the first being of that life in persons, is to say, there is not that life of the elect in Christ, before they believe.

Faith in Christ

Elect persons have a participation and share in Christ himself, even before they believe; and let none conceive that this takes away, or diminisheth from the prerogative of believing neither. For there are glorious things done by faith unto believers; God hath honoured it above all mere creatures in the world; he hath made it the conduit-pipe for the conveyance of all that peace and comfort; nay, of all that strength which believers have all their lives; no faith, no comfort, no peace of conscience, no pleasure to walk with God. Through faith, Christ conveys himself in speaking peace to the soul, in bidding the soul be of good cheer; the soul lies in darkness, while it lies in unbelief. But still that which is proper and peculiar to Christ alone, is not to be ascribed unto believing.

Faith in Christ

Christ nor his promises must be divided, for men to pick and choose what they list, and leave the rest; men must take him and them one with another. I know licentious persons would be glad of salvation from wrath by Christ, and of temporal good; and they are apt to assume a liberty from this point, that their faith is good, and the promises shall be performed to them, though they have no goodness; but have they any heart to believe other promises as well as these, those of mortification of sin, and holiness of life, that God in the attendance on his ordinances will subdue their iniquities, and cause them to walk in his testimonies? These are no bits for their palate. How they that truly believe, having no spiritual sense, embrace all sorts of promises, and as eagerly pursue mortification and holiness promised, as deliverance from wrath. They would as gladly have Christ to reign in and over them, as to blot out their transgressions. The text imports so much in the generality of the expression, not believing some few culled things out of Christ and his promises, leaving the rest, but believing in whole Christ, and all sorts of his promises.

Faith in Christ

Suppose two persons believe God's goodness to restore liberty to his church; the one hath his eye too busy on the means, suppose the parliament; the other only on Christ's love to it, and the faithfulness of his promises of this nature. Now see the difference of the quiet rest of these two; the first, how anxiously solicitous is he for daily news! How disquieted if he cannot hear! How dejected and daunted if suspicions be but whispered! And how dead his heart, even as Nabal's, if such a hopeful means be frustrated and dissolved! Like David, as you heard before, when Saul had hunted him out of all his holes, there is no hope left then,

he shall perish. But he that hath both feet on Christ, hath as much joy as the other in the prosperous success' of fair means, and is moderate in his enquiry; his copyhold is not touched if the means fail; his footing is fast still, and therefore his heart stands fast.

Glory of God in Christ

In paradise the Lord made a large grant to the sons of men in Adam; "Of all the trees in the garden thou shalt eat, save only the tree of knowledge of good and evil." He reserved that one tree to himself, and but that one; he gave him of his bounty to eat of every one besides; and yet such was his itching humor, that of all others, fain would he be meddling there, till he brought ruin on his own head. In the gospel, all our grants are large; "All are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's: God spared not his own Son, but gave him up to death for us all;" nay more, "I am your God, and you are my people." He thinks not much to give his Son, nor himself, to his people; there is but one thing he keeps to himself, Isaiah 43:8; "My glory will I not give to another, nor my praise to graven images;" all that the Lord reserves to himself; is but "the praise and glory of his own grace." Oh! pilfer not that from God, which, when you have it, will do you no good in the world; and seeing he will have only this, do not grudge it him. It is not out of niggardliness that God keeps this to himself, for in Isaiah 42:6, you shall find that he is bountiful enough, for all that; "I will give thee for a covenant to the people, to open the blind eyes, and to bring the prisoners out of prison." That will do us more good; and, that he may do us good, his own Son shall be given for a covenant; but "my glory, that shall not be given to another," as it follows presently after. Oh! therefore, let not your performances, be they ever so exact, aspire so high, as to usurp that glory that is due to the Lord alone!

God's Wrath Removed in Christ

This seems to be a kind of paradox, that God should, from all eternity, look with eyes of love upon his people, and yet there should be a time in which there should be an alienation or enmity between God and them. For the reconciliation of this difference, you must know, it is one thing for God to recollect all future things that shall come in all the several times of the world, into one thought of his own; and it is another thing for these things to come to pass in their several times, according to their own nature. You must know, it is true, that in God's eternal thoughts, according to the infinite vastness of his own comprehension, he did sum up, from first to last, all the occurrences and passages which in succession of time should come to pass. As for example: — he had at once in his eye man in his innocency, in his fall, and in his restoration by Christ; he had in his eye man committing sin against him from time to time; and, at the same instant, had in his eye Christ dying for these sins of men, and so satisfying his own justice for their transgressions. Now, because God had all things at once in his eye, which, in respect of their actual being, are in succession of time; therefore, it comes to pass, that God, from all eternity, had everlasting love unto his own people, though in time they do those actions which, in their own nature, are enmity against God. As God from all eternity had the present sins we now commit, in his eye, and at the same moment had the satisfaction in his eye; from hence it comes to pass, there was not a time in which God actually stood at enmity with our persons: but, in respect of the nature of things coming successively to pass, man's condition may be considered as a condition of enmity; and again, it may be considered as a condition of reconciliation to God. That you

and I were born in sin is true, and that this our being born in sin was a state of enmity against God, is as true; that in the fulness of time Christ came into the world, and then actually did bear our sins, by which God became reconciled unto us again, is also most certainly true. There is a great distance of time between sin committed, and that satisfaction actually made; but in respect of God's eye looking upon all things at once, there is no distance of time between that enmity which sin did produce, and that reconciliation which the blood of Christ hath wrought, to take away this enmity.

Gospel of Christ

Mark it well, here is the power of God to salvation revealed; in what is the power of God to salvation? It is in the gospel, of which he was not ashamed; so that though the power of God to salvation, is to everyone that believeth, that is not in believing, but in the gospel. And what is the gospel there? Certainty not faith, but the object of it; for it is said to be revealed from faith to faith. Luke 2:10, you will see plainly what the gospel of Christ is: An angel came from heaven to the shepherds, and speaks thus: "Behold, I bring you glad tidings," that is, I evangelize, so the word is in the original; "I bring you glad tidings of exceeding great joy; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, that is Christ, the Lord." The word gospel, in Romans, is the very same word drawn from the same theme with that in Luke; it is as much as to say, the gospel is glad tidings of great joy; and what are these glad tidings? "A Saviour is born unto you." So Christ, Saviour, born to men; is the gospel; and, saith the apostle, "I am not ashamed of it;" that is, I am not ashamed of Christ, born a Saviour, for this reason; Christ "is the power of God to salvation, to everyone that believeth."

Gospel of Christ

The gospel of Christ being the great and invaluable treasure of the church, for which it should contend, yea, its sanctuary and refuge; it hath pleased the Holy Ghost, to present and hold forth this in change of raiment, as I may so speak; sometimes presenting it, as it were, in a cloud, more darkly by visions and dreams, when deep sleep was fallen upon God's people. Thus the Lord, in former ages, frequently held out the gospel, especially in that notable example of Jacob, who while he slept, had it preached unto him in the vision of a ladder, that reached from earth to heaven, by which the angels ascended and descended; which ladder was nothing else but Christ, by whom alone the sons of men rise from the lowest condition of sin and misery, to the highest of grace and glory. Though not with so dark masks, yet with a veil over the face of it, that though some of the beauty of it might be seen, yet in respect of the glory of it, in an obscure way; and thus it was exhibited unto the Jews in types and shadows, and held forth in their sacrifices, temples, tabernacles, altars, mercy-seat, incense, and the like; in all of which there was a general darkness; namely, a putting over the face of Moses a veil, who in that represented Christ, the mediator, as he was to be exhibited unto the people in those times; and yet, although for royalty and honour's sake, the gospel was veiled. Sometimes the Holy Ghost was pleased to lift up the veil for a moment, as it were, that there might some glance of the beauty of it appear; even in those times, now and then a prophet would out with some admirable expression of the gospel; but this was but as the breaking forth of light in a dark night. Sometimes, again, the gospel was presented in a prophetic habit, and so it was held out, as it were, at a remote

distance, that even an elevated and supernatural eye had as much as it could do to see it in proportion; and this was the dispensation of the gospel in the prophets. Sometimes also, it was presented under a parabolic habit; and thus it pleased our Saviour to exhibit it in his time, delighting much to see it in this dress; insomuch, that all the gospel he spake, almost, was clothed in it; and so the kingdom of heaven was likened unto leaven, hid in three measures of meal, and to mustard seed, and treasure hid in a field; and so he goeth on, setting of it forth under all sorts of comparisons to illustrate it. Finally; the gospel is presented sometimes without either veil or mask over it, in its own proper beauty, shining forth from the face of it, nothing at all hindering the prospect, in its own proportion; and thus was the gospel presented unto the disciples, when they said unto Christ, "Now thou speakest unto us plainly, and not by parables." Unto us that live now, the gospel of Christ is represented in all these varieties of dresses together, to administer the more delight.

Imputation

Christ was "made sin" by imputation. Imputation of sin to Christ is the clear teaching of Scripture. Imputation was real and not merely general and ineffectual. Imputation is sufficient for the justification of God's elect. Sin did not corrupt or defile the nature of Christ, He was the spotless Lamb of God. Believers are made righteous by imputation. Christ being made sin did not affect His two natures. Negatively; there is not any righteousness of a believer which he acts, which can possibly have any force in plea with the Father for his discharge that hath committed sin; I mention that righteousness which he acts, because the very righteousness of Christ itself, is indeed the righteousness of a believer; for he is, "The Lord our righteousness," as you have heard. As he was made sin by imputation, so we are made the righteousness of God in him; that is, Christ's righteousness is as much become ours, as our sins became Christ's: and as Christ bore the whole fruit of our sins, by being made sin for us, so we enjoy the whole fruit of Christ's righteousness.

Incarnation of Christ

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. The truth is, it pleased the divine nature to unite the human nature to itself, and so to manage the affairs of the church in those two natures so united; not as if God gave out some of himself to the human nature, and reserved some of itself to itself; but the whole divine nature gave up itself, though only in the second person; "God was in Christ," as much as to say, whole God; the divine nature assumed a human nature, and so makes up a Christ; and thus God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

Iniquities Laid Upon Christ

When we believe our iniquities are laid on Christ, is one time; when God lays them, is another. God, long before we believed, laid them upon Christ; and, when we believe, the foundation of it is an ancient grant that we find upon record, enacted and entered long ago. Faith hath a word of truth, if it be true faith, whereupon it builds; it looks not for present revelation of things not extant before, but takes them as it finds them upon record. When the record is first entered, nay, when the act was first made, from whence it was entered, then was the grant; then God did his part in laying iniquity upon Christ; and we, in time, by

the grace of the Lord given to us, to believe, find out his ancient grant, which now at believing, becomes apparent, and so comes our application.

Iniquities Laid Upon Christ

The Lord is not now to do this, nor is it reserved till hereafter; but he hath laid them on Christ already; the act is past long before. And from hence ye may perceive, that there is not now a new thing to be done by the Lord in the transferring the sins of believers to Christ; as if, when they begin to be called out of darkness into marvelous light, just then God begins to transfer sin from them, and lay it upon Christ; so that the act of God's laying sin upon him, is not a continued act, but what he hath done long before. In which point, it will be considerable to find out the time when the Lord laid the iniquity of his people upon Christ. And it will be further worth consideration, seeing the Lord hath laid them, what is become of them? Where do they remain? As for the person whose sins are transferred, he is acquitted and discharged. And likewise Christ is acquitted of them too - hath laid, imports them both. If he hath taken them off from him, that was the committer of them, and laid them upon Christ, they are gone from him too; if they were not gone from him too, the words would have been, the Lord lays, in the present tense; but they are in the perfect tense - hath laid. And this will be very clear, if you consider Hebrews 9:26, "He hath borne the sins of many, and to them that look for him, he shall appear the second time without sin."

Iniquities Laid Upon Christ

"The Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all upon him." Let that be the proposition, putting the emphasis upon the word laid. If ever there be joy, peace, and rest of spirit, or thou wilt be of good cheer, as having knowledge of thy sins being forgiven, it must be fetched out of this, "The Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all upon Christ." Men may suppose comfort and joy, and, in the strength of their fancy, peradventure, be at some kind of rest out of some other apprehensions; but there is no solid rest to any, but as it is founded on this, that iniquity is laid upon Christ. Satan knows this well enough, and therefore he raiseth a cloud of dust (as I may so say) to obscure the glorious light of the sun of righteousness shining forth in this truth. There is such a stir to shift on the plain genuine meaning of the Holy Ghost, that the truth is, persons scarce know where to find rest for the sole of their feet, in respect of peace, through the forgiveness of sins. And indeed, beloved, as the covenant of God is peculiar only to those that shall partake of the fulness of Christ; so none shall truly and thoroughly understand such truths as these, but those that are taught of God himself; which is one branch of the covenant, "They shall be taught of me."

Iniquities Laid Upon Christ

"He was made sin for us," 2 Corinthians 5:21. The Lord laid our very iniquities themselves upon him: this is the greatest grace the soul can have comfort in, in this life, that iniquity is done away; and, therefore, it concerns all that hear such admirable tidings, to know from whence it comes, who undertakes this great work, to discharge a poor sinner, and to lay all its iniquities on Christ. If Christ himself doth not lay iniquity upon himself, much less doth the righteousness of man lay it on him. It is not all the prayers, the tears, the fasting, the repentance, though ever so perfect and complete, that lays any one iniquity upon Christ; it

is the Lord alone that does it; nay, none of those performances have the least moving power in them to persuade him to it; the Lord moves himself to do it: all our services are for other purposes; they have no prevalency with him at all, no, our faith itself lays not our iniquities on Christ; but, as I said, the Lord lays, Christ bears, our faith doth but see and make evident that, in time, which before was hid and not seen. Beloved, it may be the just complaint of the Lord to the sons of men; I have laid the iniquities of you all upon Christ, and everything almost runs away with the honour of it; as if something else did ease you of the burthen of them, and I am neglected. Now so long as you have these vain conceits in you, that any thing you do becomes your case, and the lightening of the burden of your sins, they will go away with the praise that is due to God. To whomsoever we apprehend ourselves beholding, as we say, for such a courtesy, such a one shall go away with the praise of it. And so it is most true, beloved, as long as we reckon our own holy duties, repentance, and enlargement in prayer, etc. as the bringers of refreshment to our spirits, and the unloaders of our hearts from our transgressions, that are the burden of the soul; so long these are exalted above measure. Hence these strange epithets and expressions are fixed to them: "Oh; the omnipotency of repentance; and of meeting with God in fasting and humiliation! Oh; the prevalency of tears to wash away sin!" They supposing that these ease us of the weight of sin, go away with the glory. Oh! who is omnipotent but the God of heaven! What washes away the sins of men but the blood of Christ? It was the sin of the Jews, when they had gotten a prey, they presently thought it was their own nets and drags that got it; and therefore (saith the prophet) "They sacrifice to their own nets, and offer incense to their drags." Beloved, you will offer incense to your performances, as long as you go to them to be your deliverers. The deliverance from the weight of your sin, is not from the virtue of any thing you do; it is the Lord alone that lays iniquity upon Christ; and, therefore, let him alone carry away the praise and glory of it; let nothing rob him of it.

Iniquities Laid Upon Christ

It is not in the power of any righteousness we do, though ever so complete, no nor of our faith, to lay iniquity upon Christ. The Lord lays, Christ bears, and faith beholds this iniquity thus laid by him, and borne by Christ; and so the soul receives comfort upon the apprehension of it. None but the Lord can possibly lay iniquity upon Christ, because none hath to do with the disposing of it but he; "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight." If the debt be God's, who hath power to dispose of it, either to take it off the principal, or transfer it to a surety, but he that is the creditor? What hath any man to do with another man's debt?

Irresistible Grace

Beloved, you must either establish the rotten principle of free will, that is, a previous principle of a man's own spirit to come to Christ, or you must confess that persons, at their first coming unto him, are merely passive. It is a known principle, we are first acted, or actuated, before we do, or can act; there is not only a weakness simply before calling, but a deadness, and therefore there cannot be coming; and if there be, it is merely passive, and the whole business must be the Father's own drawing. Psalm 110:3. The Lord speaks to Christ thus; "Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power." There is no willingness till the overcoming power of Christ comes in to make it, even contrary to the

natural will. The sum then is briefly this, and so to apply to the text objected, "You will not come to me, that you might have life;" that is, it hath not pleased the Father to draw you unto me, that you might have life. I cannot conceive how there can be any other sense given to it, but that it is the Father's sole and only power to bring to Christ, that there may be life; or there is no principle of life from Christ, till the Father, by his over-mastering power, brings, unruly and cross spirits unto him.

Justification by Christ Alone

But, you will say; the apostle Paul saith (Romans 5:1,) "That being justified by faith, we have peace with God;" and since the Holy Ghost saith, "we are justified by faith," we must not dispute against it. I will answer in brief, and desire one thing of you, and that is to consult Beza upon this place; he renders the words out of the original, "Being justified by faith we have, peace with God," without any stop from the first to the last. Our translators render the words thus, "Being justified by faith," and then put a comma; but as Beza renders them (who is accounted a most sincere renderer of the original) he makes no stop: and, if that be true, why may not they be as well rendered thus; "Being justified, by faith we have peace with God?" And so ascribe justification to Christ, as a thing done before, let faith have reference to our peace; being justified by Christ, by faith we come to have peace with God, which stands current with the analogy of faith, and truth of the gospel: "For it is God that justifieth," Romans 8:34. Justification is truly and properly the work of God himself, and cannot be the work of faith. But, Secondly, suppose the words to run as they are commonly rendered; I answer, then are we to distinguish in faith two things; there is the act of believing, and the object on which we believe; and so the words may be understood thus, "Being justified" by the righteousness of faith, or by the righteousness of Christ which we believe, "we have peace with God;" and so ascribe our justification to the object of our believing, the righteousness of Christ, and not to the act of believing. The truth is, beloved, the act of believing is a work, and as much ours, as our fear, prayer, and love are; and the apostle should contradict himself when he saith, "We are saved by grace, through faith, not of works," if he mean the act of faith; he might as well have said, we are not justified by works, but we are justified by them.

Justification by Christ Alone

An ungodly person, after he is justified, believes; but you must understand it, it is not the faith of the man that simply and properly justifies, but it is that Christ in whom he believes; believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly: it is he that justifieth, that is Christ. It is not believing that justifies. Mark well that phrase; him that justifieth. Justification is an act of Christ, it is not an act of faith. But you will say, It is an act of Christ by faith. I answer, Then Christ justifies not alone. Is faith Christ himself? If not, then Christ must have a partner to justify, or else faith doth not justify, but Christ alone doth it. Nay, I say more, Christ justifies a person before he believes; for, he that believes is justified before he believes; for I ask you, whether in justification a man must believe a truth or a falsehood? You will say, he must believe a truth; then say I, it is a truth that he is justified before he believes it; he cannot believe that which is not, and if he be not justified, that he may believe it, he then believes that which is false. But he is first justified before he believes, then he believes that he is justified. But what then serves faith for? I answer, It serves for the manifestation of

that justification which Christ puts upon a person by himself alone: that you by believing on him, may have the declaration, and manifestation of your justification. Faith is the evidence of things, it is not the being of things; and it is the evidence of things not seen. A man is justified, and that by Christ alone. "Faith is an evidence;" faith gives evidence to this thing, faith makes it known; by faith we come to apprehend it; by faith we come to rejoice in it, as we apprehend it to be our own.

Justification by Christ Alone

You may consider justification in a double sense, and that, according to the opinion of our divines, there is justification in heaven, and in a man's conscience. Justification in heaven is God's act alone; justification in the consciences of men, is the manifestation of that act of God to them, by which a man comes to know, and consequently rejoice in it; and so you may read the words thus, "Being justified by faith," that is, through faith having the justification of God evidenced and manifested to our spirits, "we have peace with him." And, beloved, you shall find this to be a very solid and genuine interpretation of the words, and agreeable to the scriptures; for peace and joy are always appropriated to persons believing; as much as to say, the act of justification in heaven, though perfectly done, is yet secret in the breast of God alone, till he gives persons faith, that beholds the grace of God, that brings the glad tidings of justification to the soul, and so it rejoiceth in it; therefore the apostle prays after this manner, "The Lord fill you with all joy and peace in believing." So that it is true, we have not the comfort; we cannot say particularly to our spirits, God hath justified me, and I rejoice in this, till we believe; because faith is made, by the Lord, to be the "evidence of things not seen," as in Hebrews 11:1. And that is the proper work that God hath given to believing, not to effect anything to the good of a man, but only to be the witness of that good to his spirit; and so give light to that which was secret before. So that still it remains, that the laying of iniquity itself upon Christ, is the Lord's act, and his only; our faith seeth what the Lord hath done; and, when God gives us to believe, faith manifests it to us, and so our souls come to have peace, in sum, therefore, beloved, God lays, Christ bears, and faith sees iniquity laid upon him. God, through Christ, perfect this work in us, that so, faith seeing, "we may have all joy and peace in believing."

Knowledge of Christ

The excellency of the knowledge, or the knowledge of the excellency of Christ; (for the knowledge itself hath no excellency but in reference to him known) as if he should say: I could never come to know how excellent Christ Jesus the Lord is, till all I was and am, plainly appear to be loss and dung; my own righteousness was a thick film over my eyes, that I could not see Christ's worth.

Mortification of Sin by the Spirit

The main teaching therefore of the Spirit, is to instill so much into a vessel of mercy, as shall win him to a willingness to deny ungodliness; so as not to be able to say nay, through the resolute bent of the will thereto. The Spirit makes manifest to the soul, partly by restoring sight, partly with the clearness of light, what horrid loathsomeness there is in ungodliness; and that not with some obscure glimmerings, but with a full delineation and anatomizing of its hidden ugliness; not with an itching, rhetorical strain to captivate the

fancy, as man's wisdom sometimes may do, which the apostle calls enticing words, but with such an evidence as is attended with demonstration and power; so that though he leave the heart without an absolute necessary compulsion (for so a man cannot deny ungodliness) yet he so convinceth, as that all whatsoever pleads for ungodliness is silenced, and the pleadings of the Spirit against ungodliness, with the decipherings of it, are so prevalent, and carry such a weight along with them, that the soul thus taught by the Spirit, cannot choose but be overruled freely to agree with it; which is such a drawing of the Spirit, as sets the soul a running upon ungodliness with a holy violence. Such a necessary, yet voluntary tractibleness, by the prevalency of the Spirit, was fore-propheesied and promised by Christ; "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; they shall be all taught of God." This latter passage, our Saviour established by his own mouth. In brief, the Spirit of Christ, hath such a prevailing power on such as it teacheth, with the clear light and conviction it brings to the heart, as that it stirs up such a necessary, yet voluntary antipathy and indignation against ungodliness, as there is in men naturally against poison, or desperate mischief; who are not by any compulsion forced to shun them, and yet of necessity they cannot choose, but shun and fly from them; and yet it is as voluntary and free as eschewing thereof, as any free choice a man can make.

Mortification of Sin by the Spirit

The shield of faith quencheth the fiery darts of ungodliness, and purifieth the heart from it. Godly sorrow works up a zeal against it, and stirs up indignation and vehement desire to be rid of it. The word of God is "quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged sword," to pare it from the soul, and to rip up the odious poison of it, being applied by faith against it. These are infallible principles, taught by the Spirit of God; and he that will learn this lesson, must not dispute the certain efficacy of them, much less contradict or reject them as vain and frivolous. If learners will take upon them to control, or teach their teacher, the Spirit of God, they may be ever learning, but shall never come to the knowledge of the truth, or be skilful in divine practice. The loose despising atheist shall remain an atheist still; and the proud deviser of new, though more rigid courses, leaving the principles of the Spirit, may rack his brain, and lacerate his body, but ungodliness shall dwell with him still. The humble learners of the Spirit of God are the greatest proficient; "The meek are they he will teach his way," Psalm 25:9. "He resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble." Doubtless our Saviour, when he tells us, "That except we become as little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," principally means an uncontradicting teachableness; with whom all go for unquestionable maxims taught; they never dispute whether they be right or no. I say not this, as if every word ministers speak must go for an oracle, but what the Spirit of God speaks out of the word of God.

Mortification of Sin by the Spirit

They that are taught of God cannot be cozened with all the cunning insinuations and fair glosses lust covers itself with; they appear through the thickest mists, what they truly are. The lambskin shall not be able to hide the wolfishness in lust. The Spirit discovers, that unclean lusts have strength from excess of meat or drink, too much familiarity with loose persons, filthy discourse, wanton dalliance, obscene books; this will make a spark grow to a flame, and a hunger-starved lust grow fat and mighty; and that the filthy heart by musing,

the lustful eye by prying, the wanton ear by listening, bring in this fuel. I say, the Spirit of grace makes a full discovery, that by these means lust comes to be so strong, and in so full flight; some glimmering fancies men may have hereof, without the effectual work of the Spirit, but a convincing and affecting discovery is only by that. But he stays not in discovering where the strength lies, but teaches how to weaken it; namely, by cutting off this provision, and shortening lust of his allowance, and keeping a strict guard and watch over these treacherous favourers of it. Nothing can avail to the weakening of lust, except the effectual operation of the Spirit strike the stroke.

Mortification of Sin by the Spirit

Others are so confident of their power to contain, that though they let their eyes loose to look on a maid, their tongues loose to obscene filthy ribaldry, their ears to lascivious discourse and solicitations, to bewitching dalliances, and their thoughts to contemplative uncleanness; yet they have such a strength of contingency, that no such pitch can defile them; they are not so weak or so silly as to be trapped in the snare; and, therefore, they will not abridge themselves of such liberty. In a word, others are confident of the strength of their brain, that none can fox them; but let such consider, that to live soberly is not in man's power, but only of grace; and, therefore, it is just with God to give up such to be overtaken for neglecting his aid, as he served Noah, David, and others. Hence the apostle Paul adviseth to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his (not our) might." And when he speaks of his ability in moderation, namely, that he is "able to do all things," he concludes that it is not by his own strength, but Christ's that strengthened him. Blessed is the man "that feareth always," that is, himself; suspecting his own shallowness and weakness, considering the bewitching insinuations that are in temptations of this nature. Know, therefore, that whoever is endued with a sober mind and behaviour, it comes with all other good gifts from above, and he is kept herein by the power of God, and the sufficiency of his grace, without which he is as impotent as the weakest; therefore in this, and in all other matters, let every man commit himself to the custody of God, and the power of his grace, and not lean to his own strength.

Obedience of Christ unto Salvation

Compare these things together, as they stand in Romans 5:18, 19, you will perceive, that the obedience, the doing of the will of God, is one branch of righteousness requisite in Christ towards the discharge of persons from their sins; "As by the offence of one man, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, (saith the apostle) so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all to justification of life;" here is a comparison, or rather an opposition, set between Adam's offence, and Christ's righteousness; as the one brought judgment, so the other brings justification and life to men; yea, but what is that righteousness, that is there spoken of, you say? The apostle tells you plainly: "For, as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, many are made righteous." Observe it well, we are made righteous; how? by the obedience of one; that one is Christ. Well, but what is this obedience? It is an obedience set up in opposition to Adam's disobedience. What was Adam's disobedience? The breach of the law. What must Christ's obedience be then, but the fulfilling of it? So it must be certainly true, it is directly against the gospel of Christ to exclude the active obedience of Christ, from power and share

to plead out. The cause of those that believe; I say, the active obedience of Christ comes in to make the plea for this discharge; and, as the active, so likewise the passive obedience of Christ; the scripture is more full in this, than in the other, because it is the complement of all, the last thing Christ went through for the discharge of the sins of men; you shall see there is no fruit that illustrates the discharge of a person from sin; hence it is appropriated unto Christ's sufferings. If you speak of reconciliation, which consists of God's acceptance of persons, and his agreeing with them in the death of all controversy, between him and them; for that is reconciliation, when persons, that were at variance, are now made friends, and all things that were objected between them are answered, and no more for one to say against another; I say, if you speak of this reconciliation to God, it is appropriated to the blood of Christ; as Romans 5:10, "if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son; how much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?" So that reconciliation is attributed unto the death of Christ; that was the last act of the Son of God for man. Again, "You, who were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Here you see the same thing in substance, given unto the blood of Christ, though in other words: men that were afar off, that God, was at controversy with, who were at great distance from him, by the blood of Christ are made nigh again. So likewise, the satisfaction that God takes for the discharge of sin which he hath acknowledged is said to be the travail of the soul of Christ: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." The apostle speaks in general, in his epistle to the Hebrews, without blood there is no remission of sins; "Christ entered with his blood once, into the holy of holies; and thereby he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Infinite it were to quote scripture for the illustration of this, that to the sufferings of Christ, (which are indeed all summed up in the shedding of his blood, because that was the last, and chief of all) all blessings are attributed, as reconciliation, adoption, etc.

Old Testament Sacrifices: Fulfilled in Christ

And that Christ was the main subject of their ministry is plain, because the apostle saith in the verse before my text, that all that administration was but a shadow of him, and a figure for the present to represent him, as he expresses it in chap. 9; and the truth is, the usual gospel that all the Jews had, was in their sacrifices and priestly observations; it is true, the prophets prophesied of a glorious gospel, but mostly you shall find that the most excellent gospel they preached, was always preached with reference to the future. The prophet Jeremiah hath an excellent passage in Jeremiah 50:20, "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none:" but mark it, it is in those days, and at that time, it shall be sought for, and not found; he doth not speak this of the present, but of future times; therefore St. Peter observes, that when they prophesied concerning the fulness of grace, they did not prophesy unto themselves but unto us, 1 Peter 1:12, the main gospel they had was to be fetched out of those trivial observations, ceremonies, sacrifices, and gifts which they were to attend upon, whence they were to fetch their pardon through Christ.

Oneness of Christ with the Father

"Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the

foundation of the world." This expression may seem to some, to import a difference between God and Christ, or something distinct one from the other, as if Christ were the subject in whom, and God the author by whom, persons are chosen; but, beloved, properly there is no such thing as Christ distinct from God, so as if he were not God; if God be in Christ, then it is Christ himself, as he is God, that doth it. Therefore, if you mark the expression well, you will see that it is Christ himself that hath chosen us; I confess, the words may have a double reference, either to the Father, or to Christ; and according to this second reference, Christ may be conceived both the object and the fountain too, in whom you are chosen; and the expression, perhaps, will bear both; "According as he hath chosen us in him;" that is, according as he in him chose us; but, however, all comes to one effect, the Father and the Son being one God.

Pardon of Sin by the Blood of Christ

Whose cause it is that Christ pleads with the Father; or, for whom the value and virtue of his blood pleads. I remember the disciples, when Christ spake generally concerning his betraying, were very inquisitive; "Is it I?" saith one; "Is it I?" saith another. I doubt not, but in regard of the prevalency of the plea of the blood of Christ, many persons present will fall upon this enquiry - Is it I that he means? Is he my advocate? Am I his client? Christ is the advocate of the cause of every person for whom he paid the price of redemption, whether they be already called, or not yet acquainted with the grace of God; for every elect person, as well unconverted, as converted, Christ equally, in respect of the substance of his plea, interposes; but, when I say, he pleads as well for the unconverted, as for the converted, I mean for such unconverted persons as belong unto the election of grace, and have their portion in the price of his blood. Beloved, for my own part, I cannot yet conceive any other considerable difference, between the plea of Christ for converted persons, and the elect unconverted, but this circumstantial one; namely, that the value of his blood is equally of force, to believers and unbelievers, being elected; saying that believers have this privilege, that Christ pleads for the manifestation of this discharge unto them, but not for the present unto the unconverted, till such time as they shall be called to the faith; and, by that faith, that thing be made evident, which before was hid. I say, the pardon of sin, by the blood of Christ, is as full for the unconverted, as fully passed over in grant, I mean, as to the believer himself. God adds never a tittle of pardon itself more to him, that is a believer, than to him not yet converted to the faith, in regard of the substance of it.

Pardon of Sin by the Blood of Christ

All the pardon, in respect of the substance of it, that God passed over unto men, is before their conversion. Look, I say, upon the rise, or original, of the pardon of sin, it is the gracious grant of God, upon the blood of Christ shed; this is the only foundation of pardon; there is no pardon applicable to any person, but what is to be found in the word of grace. Thou, that art a believer at present, hast the pardon of thy sins in thy spirit, thou art assured of it; where hadst thou this pardon? Didst thou not fetch it out of the word of grace? Then, as soon as that was first published, this grace of pardon was held forth. If thou foundest it not here, then somewhere else; but where will you have this grant to build upon, if you have it not in the word of grace? You will say, the Spirit of God will reveal it unto you. It is true indeed; but if he reveals a grant of grace, it is according to his word. The Spirit

speaking out of the word of grace to men, speaks no otherwise, but according to it, in men; and if there be a contradiction between the inward voice, and this word of grace, it is enough to give you cause of suspicion; yea, you may be confident, that that voice within you, being a contradiction, is false; I say, Christ sends us unto his word, and from that we take out the pardon of sin. Is there no pardon till thou art converted? Then it is not to be found in this word of grace, because this was written before thy conversion; so that either you must deny the pardon that is property and truly revealed in the word, and must seek out some newer than is revealed; or you must acknowledge that that is granted unto men, is, in regard of the substance of it, as soon as it was in the volume of his book. Hence it is plain, that as believers coming to believe, fetch out of this word of grace their pardon; so unconverted persons elected, have their grace equally in it, only the Lord hides the publication of it to them, till such time as he is pleased to call them, and give them faith to read their portion here as other believers have before.

Pardon of Sin in Christ

A believer in confession of sin gives glory to the great God of heaven and earth; and that must be the glorious end of the confession of his sin, that God may be owned, as the sole and only Saviour. Except we acknowledge sin, we cannot acknowledge salvation. We cannot acknowledge any virtue in the works and sufferings of Christ; he might have saved his labour, and never come into the world; all that he did could not be acknowledged to be of worth to us, if there had not been sin from which he should save us. He that indeed confesses his sin, confesses he had perished if Christ had not died for him; nay, he confesseth, that nothing in the world, but Christ, could save him. What is the ground of the pardon of sin "I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own name's sake:" Here is pardon, and the fountain of it is in God himself. What is it that discharges a believer? The rise of it is God's own sake. If this be the ground of pardon, then this being held out, a believer may be assured of pardon as soon as he commits any sin, and may close with it. Pardon of sin depends upon the unchangeableness of God, and not on the stability of the creature: all the pardon in the world that any person shall enjoy, is revealed in this word of grace; and it is the most absurd thing in the world to think that the soul may fetch out a pardon anywhere, but in the word of grace. Is pardon held out in it, and held out to sinners, as they are sinners?

Prayer in Christ

Let him not think that he shall obtain anything at the hand of the Lord that wavers; he must ask in faith, that is, he must ask in Christ, for faith rests not upon itself, but upon him. It is Christ gets everything, for men; it is not they themselves, nor their prayers, but it is Christ that prevails.

Predestination

Though, unhappily to this church, the everlasting decree, and doctrine of God's election of men, hath been, and is still, suppressed as a dangerous truth; yet you must know, beloved, that the foundation of all the gracious acts of God, was laid in this decree of election; the Lord sat down, as a man may speak with reverence, by himself, and drew out a draught of all the particular passages, especially concerning his own people, how he would order and

dispose everything in its season; and, in this eternal council, he set down his fiat, It should be so; and this fiat of the Lord, from all eternity, did make the thing itself an irrevocable act.

Pre-eminence of Christ

Christ is the first, "As all things were made for him," as the apostle tells us, Colossians 1:16, that is, for his sake, as well as use; so that all creatures are beholden to Christ for their being. Had it not been for him, nothing had been made. God's love is primarily fixed on Christ, and secondarily on the creature; as through Christ he takes content therein, and gives content to him thereby; especially his love to man originally runs through Christ, not only to create him such as he is, above all other creatures, but also from all eternity to elect him to eternal glory. The apostle tells us, that we are elected in Christ, all Christ's delights being with the sons of men. Proverbs 8:30, 31.

Pre-eminence of Christ

If Christ be the chiefest of all God's mercies, then let Christ himself be chiefest in your pursuit. Men usually aim at the best of things, as near as they can reach; the best wives, servants, grounds; if anything be better than other, that is meat for their mouths; he that contents himself with the refuse of things, it is because he can go no higher. Christ, as you have heard, is the chiefest and best of all God's mercies, therefore single him out from other things, and press hard after him. The prophet Isaiah 4:2, 3, hath a notable expostulation to this purpose; "Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfies not? Hearken diligently to me, and eat you that which is good, and let your soul delight itself with fatness." All other things are not bread, in comparison of Christ; they are lean, dry things to him, who is oily fatness: O you that "cumber yourselves about many things," like Martha, that waste and tire yourselves, that set thoughts and cares on tender hooks, to compass a little muck, or spot of earth, you labour for that which satisfies not; (say, are you satisfied?) Mary hath chosen the better part in sticking close to Christ. Paul saw so much pre-eminence in Christ, that, as learned as he was, he "desired to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" nay, he desires to be dissolved to be with him; and so would you, if so be you could but taste, that is, believe, how good the Lord is. None but Christ, none but Christ, wouldst thou then say He is the treasure hid in the field, the jewel above price. Wilt thou then sweat and melt thy grease in following a vein of clay, when a mine of the richest gold, and of diamonds, is in thine eye?

Pre-Eminence of Christ

God grant that our rhetoric may advance him, that is to be advanced, and keep all other things in their own places, that are to be kept low, that nothing may have the pre-eminence of Christ, he being the head and beginning of all things; that the people of God may go with their buckets to the wells of salvation, and draw waters of life from thence, and not run to muddy puddles. The zeal of the Lord Christ, who hath so magnified the riches of his grace to the sons of men, should eat up your spirits, and raise up your souls against everything that raises itself up, to exalt itself above him.

Pre-Eminence of Christ

Whither should a creature go for water, but unto the spring? Whither should the creature go for strength, but unto the fountain of strength? Is it not a derogation unto Christ, that all fulness should be in him alone, and we forsake this fountain of fulness to go unto broken cisterns that will hold no water? Mark it well, as often as ever you run to any creature in any necessity or exigence, either before you go to Christ, or instead of going to Christ; so often you rob Christ of that pre-eminence that God hath given unto him, and you should give unto him.

Pre-Eminence of Christ

The main drift of this apostle in the whole course of his ministry, is not only to set out Christ, but also to set him alone; stripping man, and all things else, stark naked; leaving not a rag to cover, or a plaster to ease, or heal any jot of that universal leprosy overspreading man; that Christ alone may be all in all.

Prerogative of Christ in the Salvation of His People

Oh! that the order of Christ may be established with you; namely, his beginning to close with men in blood, and the power of Christ thus beginning with them, framing their spirits to himself, in such a manner, that neither men, nor angels, nor any other creature, can frame any spirit for him, till he come himself. It is certain, without him you can do nothing; as he saith of himself, John 15:5, and as the apostle confesseth of him, Romans 7:18. How will you, therefore, have gracious or previous dispositions and qualifications, as you call them, before Christ can own you; when as it must be Christ, and he given, that must frame these dispositions in you?

Receiving Christ

If Christ hath given a heart to a sinner, to set footing into himself; that is, to receive, to take him for his Christ; if Christ hath given him a heart to take him for his Christ in reality, to take him truly and unfeignedly; Christ is a way for such a person to the Father, though he be the vilest person under heaven. And he is to him a way unto the Father, even while he is ungodly, before he is amended; and he may take his part in this Christ, as an ungodly person, as well as when he is righteous. In this regard I say, Christ is a free way; God looks for nothing in the world from the sons of men, be they what kind of men soever, he looks for nothing from them, to have a right to Christ; but he did freely give Christ unto them, without considering of anything that they might bring along with them.

Righteousness of Christ

Suppose a man comes and patcheth up the righteousness of man, with the righteousness of Christ, for justification; what shall we do then? The apostle saith, "Bid him not God-speed." To withdraw from such is God's ordinance; that they may be ashamed. It is a duty to abhor and hate such doctrines. I do not say I hate their persons, I pray for them, and that God would pluck up every plant that is not of our heavenly Father's planting. O! but is it not better for men to be quiet? What! must men poison the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and

ministers hold their tongues for fear of being counted contentious? Shall a man be called a bawler because he cries, Fire, fire?

Righteousness of Christ

The sum is, the righteousness of Christ is such, that there is a complete fulness in it to serve for every purpose, to extend itself to the utmost of every transgression; there is not so large a spreading of sinfulness, but this righteousness spreads itself perfectly over all, that none of it appears. But all the difficulty still lies, what righteousness this is of Christ, that is expressed to be so full, large, and pure? For answer, there are two distinct natures in Christ; he is perfect God, and complete man, and answerably, there are two distinct righteousnesses in Christ; there is the essential righteousness of Christ, inseparable to his Godhead; and there is also the righteousness of the humanity. Now, though it be true, that in respect of the ineffable union of these two natures, both are inseparable to the person of Christ; yet it is as true, there is no more confounding of them, than there is of the natures in the person; but we must consider as distinctly the one as the other. Now the question lieth mainly in this, which of them it is, which pleads the discharge of a sinner, whether the righteousness of God, simply as God, or the righteousness of the human nature? I answer, it is the righteousness of Jesus Christ; God simply considered, nor the human nature in Christ; but it is God and man, ineffably united in one, that makes up Christ. Accordingly, I say, as Christ consists of God and man jointly, so the righteousness that becomes the righteousness of Christ's people, is the righteousness of both united, and not of each severally. The simple righteousness of the humanity of Christ alone, is too short and narrow to cover all the filth of all the sins of all the members of Christ; the simple essential righteousness of the Godhead alone, is not communicable to the persons of men; but, it is a righteousness of God-man that carries the strength of plea for the discharge of a sinner, and something from both natures must necessarily concur to the discharge of sin.

Righteousness of Christ

Faith, as it lays hold upon the righteousness of Christ, doth not bring this righteousness of Christ to the soul, but only declares the presence of it in the soul that was there, even before faith.

Sacrificial Death of Christ

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Heb.10:26. There is now one perfect sacrifice once offered by Christ himself, that perfectly doth all things to be done, and, therefore, must be offered no more; and that all the sacrifices that were to be offered, are now vanished; and, in the interim, he comes to this conclusion. Now that you have received the knowledge of this truth, that all sacrifices must now cease, if you sin wilfully, that is, if you will reject this truth I have delivered unto you; if you think that this one sacrifice is not enough to serve your turn, but you will look to others, there remains no more sacrifice for your sin; as if he should say, You will but deceive yourselves to look in any other way for pardon; you may think such and such services, confessions, prayers, fastings, will do something towards the remission of sins; but deceive not yourselves in this, there remains no more sacrifice for sin. Christ was but once offered; if you will not conclude to adhere to that one sacrifice once

offered; nor have that to bring perfect remission of sins, you will certainly miscarry; there will be no other remedy, but indignation and wrath will fall upon you; everything else will fail.

Satisfaction of Christ

I could wish, I were able to speak to you in so full and clear language, that not one dram of this glorious mystery of this gospel of Christ might be hid, for the comforting and refreshing of your spirits; the thing I drive at, being, that all the people of Christ might know wherein lies their strong consolation, not in themselves, as if they did not sin, or could make amends for their sins; but in him who hath made perfect amends for them, and in whom they are accepted with the Father, (as if they themselves in their own persons had made this amends) who hath presented them so complete in himself unto him, that he is pleased to look upon them as upon his own innocent Son, and to take pleasure in them, with the same pleasure that he takes in his beloved. And, if ever you mean to have your consciences, and your consolations established, and well grounded, concerning the pardon of your sins, you must see that Christ hath only pleaded, and doth plead out your acquittance and discharge, and this your indemnity, even to the satisfying of justice itself. For if justice be not yet satisfied; if the Lord hath yet a plea against your souls, and Christ hath not fully answered it, but left this plea with God, who shall stand up before him, Christ being silent to plead for you? God's justice comes in, and pleads terribly against you, and will exact satisfaction of you; therefore you must receive this principle, if you will be established in consolation; that as there is mercy in respect of us, who bring nothing in consideration of our sins; so there is justice in forgiving sin, in respect of Christ our advocate, that manages his office, and makes it known for this very end, that we might have the stronger consolation.

Sealing of the Spirit

You may find the like expression, Ephesians 1:13, 14, where the apostle saith, "Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, that is the earnest of our inheritance, till the redemption of the purchased possession." The Spirit is said to be a seal and an earnest given before-hand; but what is it for a person to be sealed, or to receive an earnest? To be sealed, is no more but that whereas the Lord, in his own secret council from eternity, singled out in his own thoughts, such a particular person, and said, he shall be saved; afterwards he comes and sets a mark, as it were, upon him, that so he may be known; as when a man goeth to buy sheep, (bear with the comparison) he looks upon twenty in a flock, it may be, and he thinks within himself they shall be his; after he hath thus chosen them, by and by he comes and sets his special mark upon every one of them, that they may be known to be his. So the Lord deals with his people; first, in his thoughts he calls out such a number, and afterwards he comes and sets an evident mark upon them, and seals them; and this sealing is everywhere appropriated to the Spirit of God.

Sin

It is but an ignorant imagination in the hearts of some men, that God will grow more remiss, in respect of the sins of his own people; that he is not so much offended with sin, after Christ died, as before; for he hath all the abhorring, detesting thoughts of sin in the nature of it, since Christ is dead, as he had before; it is altogether as abominable unto him,

as before; Christ did not come to make sin less filthy to the Lord, or to make a person, where sin is, more lovely, or less hateful to him, but rather declares, and sets forth the wrath of God against sin in the highest degree. Where-ever the Lord seeth sin, and not Christ upon the person taking away that sin, he cannot but hate both the sin, and the sinner. All the pleasure the Lord takes in the sons of men, proceeds from a purity Christ puts upon them; and the taking away of that sinfulness from them, which otherwise could not but stir up indignation and wrath in him against them, where he finds it, is the ground upon which Christ pleads justice, that so it might appear there is no violation of it; but the Lord is as well satisfied, as if the person transgressing had laid under the wrath deserved, in his own person.

Sober Mindedness According to the Revelation of Christ

Sobriety of mind consists in the moderation of its inquisition; that is, the mind in its search or enquiry into things keeps itself within due limits, and wades not deeper than its reach. As the eye is not satisfied with seeing, so (many times) the mind is not contented or satisfied with prying into hidden or concealed secrets; but it is a good rule, *Noli altum sapere*. The Holy Ghost gives a good reason of it, "Secret things belong to God, but revealed things to us." A man may be too saucy, and go beyond sobriety, in attempting to uncover either the things of God, which he hath locked up in the hidden closet of his own breast; or the things of men, which are fit to be reserved to themselves. For example; the unity of the divine nature, and trinity of persons; the generation of the Son, and procession of the Holy Ghost; the conception of Christ by the Holy Ghost; the election and reprobation of particular persons, clasped and sealed up in the reserved books of life and death; these, and many the like, are secrets, wherein the sobriety of the mind, as an awful bridle, should hold in the career of man's inquisitiveness, and bound his itching humour which would be prying. The setting bounds to the mount where God descended, and the charge to the people not to dare to make an approach, was a type of this sober mindedness. Howbeit many will not be satisfied, but are so given to enquiry, that faith must be jostled out by sense and reason; nothing is true with them but what by rational search they can find out to be so; but let this then be the first branch of sobriety of mind, to be moderate in our enquiries, and be content to search only into things allowed to be known, being what is revealed.

Sufferings of Christ

This was the thing Christ so much longed for, and was so much straitened in his Spirit about that he could not be at rest till it was accomplished; and, in Luke 22:15, you shall further see, how he was set upon it, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover before I suffer." The passover, you know, was nothing else but the paschal lamb slain and eaten, and a type of Christ, and his bearing and suffering for sin - Christ is that paschal lamb, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Now, "with desire have I desired to eat it;" what is that he means? That his heart was so eager of being the paschal lamb, to bear iniquity, that he could hardly stay, but must be acting it in every type; he had such a mind to bear the sins of his people, that, for the sake of it, he desires with desire to act the thing in the type of it. The phrase expresseth largeness of bowels, that he could not contain himself.

Suretyship of Christ

The whole punishment, due to his sins, has been borne by Christ, his surety for him; and to inflict punishment twice for the same sins, once upon the surety, and again upon the believer, is contrary to the justice of God, as well as derogatory to the satisfaction of Christ; for either he has borne the whole of punishment, or only a part; if the whole, which is the truth, then none can be laid upon the believer; but, if only a part, Christ's satisfaction is not complete, and then the believer must be a co-bearer and co-saviour with Christ.

Transgressions: Blotted out by Christ

First; Concerning the grace that the Lord is pleased to hold forth to his people here, namely, "The blotting out their transgressions and not remembering their sins." First, let us consider what it is for the Lord to blot out transgressions; it is an usual phrase in the scripture, and imports much comfort in it. It is an allusion, or an allegorical expression; wherein the Lord is pleased to hold forth his love to man, after the manner of men; to set forth his carriage to men, according to theirs one to another. It is a phrase borrowed from the practice of men, that keep their debt-books, wherein they cuter, and record the several debts men owe them; that so, for the better helping of their memory, they may find what is due, and know what to demand and call for; I say, the Lord here speaking of "blotting out of transgressions," hath reference to such debt books, wherein he hath recorded the several debts, or sins, which he enters as men commit them; now the blotting out is nothing else, but that, whereas there were such and such transgressions in the record of God, he draws a blot over them. And that he here hath reference to such kind of dealing, in blotting out transgressions, you may see clearly manifested unto you, in Colossians 2:14, where this phrase of blotting out, is explained: "You being dead in your sins, hath he quickened, together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses;" now, mark what follows: "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, and was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;" what "the hand-writing of ordinances" there is, you may plainly perceive by the words going before, namely, "All our trespasses, and all our sins." Now the taking away of sin, is called a "blotting it out," and expressed thus; "The blotting out of the hand-writing that was against us," because they were, as it were, written down; but the Lord hath razed and blotted them out. You are not to conceive that there are really such things with God, that he did indeed keep a book, and enter down in it all the several actions of men, and so calling men to account, will open it, and will read out the several firings there written; but the phrase is only an allusion spoken for our better capacity. And, for this cause, you shall find the scripture frequently makes mention of such books God hath. When the seventy disciples came to Christ, rejoicing that the devils were made subject unto them, he replies, "Rejoice not that the devils are made subject unto you, but rejoice, rather, that your names are written in the book of life." Here is a book, and the names of the disciples written in it; but, if you will mark Revelation 20:12, you will find, there is not only the book of life, but other books besides, out of which the dead, both small and great, were judged, according to their works that they had done; as if he had said, besides the book of life, there is the book of works, wherein the several actions of men are recorded, by which, at the great day, men are to be judged as they are found in them; according to the several debts that are therein, they are to receive their sentence. Mark, now, for the better apprehension of our weak capacity, the Lord hath taken up such a kind

of illustration of his dealing with men; namely, by recording our debts in books; yet, he tells us for our comfort, that, though there be such books, we need not fear; though they shall be opened, yet whatsoever was written in them, in reference to us, is all crossed and blotted out; and, when we come to account, there shall be nothing reckoned unto us, as a fault (Jude 1:24.).

Trinity

Now, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are not all one personally, but the Son is the Son, and the Father is the Father; but the Godhead of the Father and of the Son is one, that is the true meaning; there is a difference between the person of the Father, and of the Son; but this matter is not to be pried into by human wit; for this, of all the mysteries in scripture, is the pure object of mere faith; there is no human way to illustrate the difference between the eternal Fatherhood and the eternal Sonship.

Unchangeableness of the Love of God in Christ

The consideration of the unchangeableness of the grace of God and his love; there is no other means in the world to keep men from sin, but this stands firm forever. As things are the gift of God, so they are unchangeable to them, to whom they are given; and the Lord give you wisdom, and understanding, and his Spirit, to hold fast a truth of such infinite concern to the joy and peace of your spirits; and till you receive such unchangeable principles, whereupon the stability of your peace is founded, you will be like waves of the sea tossed to and fro with every wind of temptation; you will have every little thing raise suspicions and jealousies in your spirits. But, beloved, "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent: shall he say, and shall it not come to pass?" Numbers 23:19. Shall God assent to a thing, and how much more shall not he make good that word that he assents to? Certainly, when men give a thing, they will not take it away, seeing the thing is given; I say, the things of God are given, and he cannot take them away: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against you."

Unconditional Free Grace of God in Christ

But, without respect to good or evil, as I said before, the Lord hath everlastingly established all that ever he meant to do; and no more will he do to the end of the world to any people he hath chosen in his Son. The Lord in Christ from everlasting hath set down peremptorily what he will (Ecclesiastes 3:14, 15; James 1:17.) do for you; and there are no intervening acts and carriages of yours that make any alteration in him at all to cross out what he hath written, and to put in what he had left out; he doth nothing to his people upon conditions in them, as if he referred himself still to those conditions, and suspended what he meant to do to them, till he perceived how they would carry themselves to him.

Union in Christ

In brief, there is a kind of triune-union in Christ; the divine union, which makes the Father and the Son one: the personal union, which makes the divine nature and the human nature one; the mystical union, which makes Christ, the mediator, God and man, one with all his members. In respect of the last consideration, Christ as he is collectively considered,

consists of his own person as head, and of all the elect as members; so that in some sense he cannot be said to be separated, but hath his members knit unto him; a headless body, or a bodiless head, are equally imperfect; if the church be separated from Christ, or Christ from the church, he should, in the last consideration be imperfect.