

# It is finished - John 19:30

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BY THOMAS MANTON

*He said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.—JOHN 19:30.*

THIS is one of the seven words which Christ uttered upon the cross, the last save one; for before his bowing of the head, and giving up the ghost, those words must come in which are mentioned Luke 23:46, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.'

To make way for these words, we need go no further back than the 28th verse. It is said there, 'After this Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst;' where we may observe—

1. The exact knowledge which Christ had of all his sufferings: 'He knew that all things were accomplished;' namely, all the preparative sufferings which were to usher in his death. All these bitter sorrows were numbered out to him by the divine decrees, and pre-signified in the prophecies; Jesus knew all the exact tale and account of them; a circumstance that doth much commend his love to us. Christ knew how dear the bargain of souls would be to him, and yet he would show his obedience to the Father and his love to mankind. He long since sat down and counted the charges, and yet he came to do his Father's will. When a business proveth hazardous and inconvenient, we are apt to say, If I had known it would have cost me so much, I should never have undertaken it. Christ went not to the cross blindfold; he knew the work of our redemption would be troublesome and painful; that he was to give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to the nippers; that he was to be hurried from the garden to the courts of men, from the courts of men to the cross, and there to endure acute pains and torments: Jesus knew that all these things were to be fulfilled.

2. Observe, it is said he knew 'they were accomplished.' Christ had a lively feeling of every part of his sorrows, and his senses remained in full vigour to the last, and without any stupefaction. He knew what hour the clock of the divine decree would next strike, or what was the next circumstance whereby he was to discover himself to be the true Messiah. David saith, 'Died Abner as a fool dieth?' 2 Sam. 3:32. We may say so, Died the Lord Jesus as a fool dieth, in a stupid senseless way, or as one merely passive? Extremity of pain had now surprised the thieves which were crucified with him; we hear no more of them; but Christ's reason and senses are still exercised, and his sorrows made more active by his own apprehension.

3. Observe, 'That the scriptures might be fulfilled, he said, I thirst.' By fulfilling another prophecy God discovereth another note whereby the Messiah might be known. All the passages of Christ's death were appointed with infinite wisdom and love; either they were such as were necessary parts of redemption, or some indications whereby the Messiah fore-propheesied of might be discovered. Here is another prophecy fulfilled in Christ's thirst. The prophecies alluded to are two: one is Ps. 22:15, 'My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; thou hast brought me to the dust of death.' The other prophecy hinteth the act of the Jewish malice: Ps. 69:21, 'They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.' Here was light enough, or conviction sufficient for any but those who resolved to shut their eyes.

4. He said, 'I thirst.' He had spent much time in watching, lost much blood, his body was tortured with extreme pain, and his soul scorched with a sense of God's wrath; and therefore well might he cry out,

'I thirst.' It is notable that Christ would not declare his thirst till he knew that all things were accomplished; that is, every sad accident except his death. Certainly if we consider the agonies of the garden, where he excerned blood instead of sweat, his scourging, his being buffeted with the soldiers, his bearing the cross, all this might make him thirst before; but when wine mingled with myrrh, a stupefying potion, was tendered to him before, he refused it: Mark 15:23, 'And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but he received it not.' But now, when all was accomplished, he saith, 'I thirst.' He would take no natural refreshment till he had borne all our griefs and sorrows, and every sad passage by which he might promote our comfort was accomplished. He was so mindful of us that he forgot himself. He saith that it was meat to him to do his Father's will: John 4:34, 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.' Though the cross-work was sad work, yet that was as drink to Christ. After he had sweltered under the torment of so many hours' drouth, he crieth out, 'I thirst.' Christ would make his sufferings as full of merit as possibly he could, and therefore would not receive the least draught of comfort till he had paid our whole debt. We 'do evil with both hands earnestly,' Micah 7:3, and fill our actions with as much disobedience and rebellion as we can possibly put into them: 'Behold thou hast spoken, and done evil things as thou couldst,' Jer. 3:5. Sin hath not been cheap to us; we have bought the pleasure of it at a dear rate, with much loss and self-denial; and therefore Christ's sufferings were made as high and extreme as possibly they could be.

Let us now see what they did to Christ when he had declared the extremity of his thirst: 'Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar; and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth,' ver. 29. This fact of theirs is diversely construed; some say, they did it out of kindness, and that it was usual to provide a vessel of vinegar, and to have it at hand under the cross of those that were executed; this is probable: others think it an act of spite and malice, partly because it is made an exaggeration of calamity: Ps. 69:21, 'In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink;' and partly because their courtesy to the dying was to give wine and myrrh, and therefore it is said: Prov. 31:6, 'It is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink;' and ver. 6, 'Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of an heavy heart;' that is to say, it is not for the judge, but the condemned; and they mingled it with myrrh and hot spices, partly to attenuate the blood, and so to despatch them the sooner, and partly to cause giddiness, that their senses might be the sooner gone. But now, instead of wine and myrrh they gave Christ vinegar and gall to increase his misery; and they prepared it in readiness in case he called for the usual refreshment. And the conjecture of the Carthusian is not amiss, who imputeth it to the malice of the soldiers to change the wine prepared by the charitable women into vinegar, for the greater spite and mockage. And it is said, 'They filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop.' The other evangelists say, 'They put it upon a reed;' and it is hard to conceive then how they could put it upon hyssop. It is probable that hyssop in these countries was tall, as mustard-seed is said to grow up into a tree; and Pliny saith they made staves of mallows in Arabia, which with us is but a slender herb; but hyssop is put for a shrub. Solomon wrote of all herbs, from the cedar to the hyssop, but that is wall-hyssop, which is dwarfish and tender, as ours is.

Observe, when Christ stood in our stead, no comfort was granted to him but what was devised to augment his grief. When his strength was dried up like a potsherd, and his tongue cleaved to his jaws, 'They gave him vinegar to drink,' when he was providing for us a cup of blessings, a torrent and a river of pleasure, of which we might drink: ver. 30, 'When he had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed the head, and gave up the ghost.' When he had received it, that is, tasted it, for they put it into his mouth with a sponge on the top of a reed, then he said, 'It is finished;' that is, as much as was necessary for his humiliation, God's glory, and man's salvation; as much as was decreed, as much as was foretold. And he saith, 'It is finished,' because he was now upon the last work, death, which was coming upon him; and therefore foldeth it in the expression with what is past, 'It is finished,' because the last act was at hand: Mat. 26:28, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed;' that is, which is about to be shed: John 17:4, 'I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.' All the sufferings were now completed at death, which he was to suffer for our sins.

Doct. Christ closed not his sufferings till all was finished which he had to do for us.

1. In what sense it is said, 'It is finished.'

2. The evidences and reasons thereof.

3. What comfort this is to the faithful.

I. In what sense it is said, 'It is finished.'

1. All the scripture prophecies which spake of Christ's death and sufferings were now fulfilled and accomplished; as that he should make his entrance into Jerusalem upon an ass in all humility; this was prophesied of the Messiah: Zech. 9:9, 'Behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass;' and fulfilled by Christ, Mat. 21:4, 5, 'All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold the king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.' That he should be betrayed by one of his familiars, his own disciple: Ps. 55:12, 13, 'It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me: but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and my acquaintance.' So Ps. 41:9, 'Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his head against me;' which was fulfilled, Mat. 26:23, 'He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me;' and accordingly Judas came to attack him, Mat. 26:47. That he should be sold for thirty pieces of silver: Zech. 11:12, 'So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.' Fulfilled, Mat. 26:15. That with these thirty pieces of silver there should be bought afterwards a field of potsherd: Zech. 11:13, 'And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: and I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.' Fulfilled, Mat. 27:7, 'And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.' That being apprehended, he should be most barbarously entreated by the Jews, and be beaten and buffeted, and his face defiled with spitting, according to that of Isaiah the prophet: Isa. 50:6, 'I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.' Fulfilled, Mat. 26:67, 'Then did they spit in his face, and buffet him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands.' That they would wound, rend, and tear his body with scourges before they put him to death: Isa. 53:5, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Fulfilled, Mat. 27:26, 'When he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.' And they did at length put him to death according to the prophecy: 'The Messiah was to be cut off, but not for himself,' Dan. 9:26. That the death that he should die was the death of the cross, unto which he was nailed hand and foot according to that of David: Ps. 22:16, 'They pierced my hands and my feet;' and that of Zech. 12:10, 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.' Fulfilled, Luke 23:33, 'And when they were come to Mount Calvary, there they crucified him.' That he was crucified between two malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left, according to that of Isa. 53:12, 'He was numbered with the transgressors;' Luke 22:37, 'For I say unto you, that this which is written must yet be accomplished in me; And he was reckoned among transgressors, for the things concerning me have an end.' He was to pray for his enemies and persecutors, according to that of Isa. 53:12, 'He made intercession for the transgressors;' and this was fulfilled in that prayer, Luke 23:34, 'Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' So Ps. 69:21, 'In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.' Fulfilled as before. That they should divide his apparel, and cast lots for his upper garment: Ps. 22:18, 'They part my garment among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.' Fulfilled, Mat. 27:35, 'And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots.' Well, then, all these particulars foretold of the Messiah were exactly fulfilled in our Saviour, and so conduce to settle our hearts in believing his person and office. Well, then, might he say now, 'It is finished.'

2. That the substance of the types were accomplished in him, as that of the brazen serpent, the paschal lamb, the daily and yearly sacrifices, the offering of Isaac; all which prefigured that Christ should die for the sins of the world. As Abraham offered his only son Isaac to God as a proof and demonstration of his faith and obedience: 'Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me,' Gen. 22:12; so God gave his Son as a proof and demonstration of his love: 1 John 4:10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' Isaac carried the wood to the sacrifice of himself, so did Christ his cross. The lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that whosoever looked upon it should be healed: Num. 21:9, 'And Moses made a serpent, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass that if any serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived;' this figured Christ lifted up upon the cross, that all those bitten by the old serpent might by looking be cured: John 3:14, 15, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.' The paschal lamb was slain just at the time when Christ died, and his flesh eaten, not a bone broken, John 19:33; his blood sprinkled on the door-posts; all which were accomplished in Christ, who is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,' John 1:29. The daily sacrifice was offered morning and evening, to show our daily use of Christ, who was 'a lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter 1:19. The anniversary sacrifice of the two goats on the day of expiation, Num. 16, when there was a live goat to be sent into the wilderness, and the other was slain, and Aaron was to put both his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, confessing the sins of the people, and that scape-goat was to carry all their sins into the land of forgetfulness; all which signified the expiation of all our sins by Christ dying for our offences, and rising again for our justification. For the scape-goat was sent into the wilderness far from the sanctuary, to show that all our sins are put far away out of God's sight; the other goat is said to be kept for the Lord, that it might be slain, and be offered to him for sacrifice upon the altar. Well, now, these and all other types were finished, that is, obtained their end and accomplishment.

3. All was finished that was necessary to make him a fit pattern of patience to us; for he had borne the extremity of his enemies' malice, all that man or devils could by the permission of God execute upon him; for he saith, Luke 22:53, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' Yea, he had drunk up the cup which the Father had put into his hands, to the very dregs. One end of Christ's death was to give us an example: 1 Peter 2:21, 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.' Now here is a full copy and pattern of the right way of suffering for all his own to imitate.

[1.] From the matter. Are you tempted and opposed by Satan and his instruments? so was Christ. Have you discountenance from men? Christ had much more. Doth God seem to forsake you? so he did by Christ. Are you fain to lie on your knees crying for mercy? Christ 'in the days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears, to him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared,' Heb. 5:7. Are you mocked, reviled, buffeted, contumeliously used? so was Christ. Are you scourged, put to death by violence? so was Christ.

[2.] From the manner; with meekness and constancy. With meekness, not as swine, but as sheep: Isa. 53:7, 'As a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;' 1 Peter 2:23, 'Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' Though he had not in the least kind offended either God or man, yet he was handled as a sinner; and when foul crimes were laid to his charge, he did not repay his slanderers in their own coin, but resigned himself to God to deal with him and his persecutors as he saw fitting; he vented no carnal passion. So for constancy; he continued till all was finished, and 'became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. 2:8. When he was tempted to descend from the cross, he would not, but stayed there as long as it was necessary; to show us that we should not descend from our cross, and free ourselves from tribulation by sin till all be finished. If God keepeth us long in an oppressed state without relief or deliverance, do not make haste, but tarry

his leisure. If by providence you are unequally yoked, bear your cross as long as God seeth fit to continue it to you. If it be a long imprisonment, a long tedious sickness, or any other affliction, do not descend from your cross till God take it off, and help not yourselves by sin out of affliction.

[3.] From the end; the bitterest trouble will at length have an end. Christ was a man of sorrows all his days, tempted, despised, persecuted, censured, scourged, crucified, but at length the τετέλεσται, 'It is finished,' cometh, and there is a kind of triumph over all his enemies and calamities; to teach us to finish our course with perseverance and patience, that at the last we may say we are come to the end of our sorrows. His laborious pilgrimage was now over, and there will a time come when ours shall be over also. Christ's life was a continual cross and constant affliction, but at length all was finished, and the sorrows of thirty-three years recompensed with glory and honour, and great fruit and success in the affairs of his kingdom. What is a little momentary suffering to the rest of eternity? For a little while he was the despising of men, and the leaving-off of the people; but afterwards God exalted him, and gave him a name above all names. The perfidious Jews rejoiced for a while, but a sad reckoning came afterwards. Judas had small time to enjoy his thirty pieces; Pilate within a while rued his facility and yielding to the importunity of the Jews. But as to afflictions holily suffered, stay a little, and all the bitter part will be over.

4. All was fulfilled which God determined to be done for the expiation of sin; so that no more ransom is to be paid; our debt is satisfied; divine justice hath no more demand to us; sin, Satan, and death are spoiled and disarmed, and way is made for our salvation to be owned, as coming from Christ alone, This is the main circumstance, and therefore I shall explain it a little—(1.) Negatively; (2.) Positively.

[1.] Negatively; and there—(1.) In regard of Christ himself; and (2.) In respect of us.

(1.) In regard of Christ himself. Not as if all the necessary acts of his mediation were now past. Death was just at hand, and was comprised in the expression; his lying in the grave was but the continuation of his abasement, till the time of his exaltation should come. But in the way of satisfying justice he had no more to do; whatever was done afterwards was by way of reward, not to satisfy justice, but to satisfy the world of the dignity of his person. He was to rise from the dead, and ascend into glory; that is, for our more abundant comfort. His resurrection was his solemn acquittance; our surety was let out of prison: Rom. 4:25, 'Who was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification.' His ascension was that we might have a friend at God's right hand to appear for us: Heb. 8:1, 'We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens;' Heb. 9:24, 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;' that being in a glorified and exalted condition, he might powerfully apply his purchase, and by his Spirit communicate the fruits thereof to believers. And he is to come to judgment, to bless and reward his people and to punish his enemies. But all the sufferings are now completed, or about to be completed, which he was to suffer for our sins.

(2.) In respect of us. It is not so finished but that something is to be done by the creature. Though the satisfaction be never so perfect, yet there is a necessity of application. The sacrifice and atonement is sufficient, but it must be applied in the way appointed by God. The means of applying are partly internal, which qualify the subject, and make us capable of the benefit of this atonement and satisfaction, which are faith and repentance, and also new obedience as the consequent of both; for repentance is a returning to our duty to God, and faith a thankful owning of our Redeemer, by whom we return; and if we are serious and real, all will end in new obedience and holiness, or else we are liable to wrath still. Faith is necessary: Rom. 3:25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Repentance is necessary: Acts 3:19, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' New obedience is necessary: Heb. 5:9, 'He is become



the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.' And partly external, by the word and sacraments. The word: John 17:19, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' The word calleth upon us to accept of Christ, and that life and mercy which is offered to us in him; the sacraments, which are baptism and the Lord's supper. By baptism we profess and are obliged to put on Christ: Gal. 3:27, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ;' or to apply him to ourselves as a garment to the body, that he may communicate to us his righteousness, life, and Spirit; and by the Lord's supper we come more abundantly to take part in this consolation: 1 Cor. 10:16, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?' that is, hereby we are solemnly made partakers of the body and blood of Christ, and the benefits purchased thereby.

[2.] Positively; that the work of our redemption, so far as related to sufferings, was now about to be consummated. Christ's sacrifice, which he was about to offer for us, was no imperfect sacrifice. This appeareth by his message to Herod: Luke 13:32, 'I do cures to-day and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected;' that is, the work of his office was then fully to be accomplished: Heb. 2:10, 'The captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings.' Christ as mediator seemed to lack something till the full number of his sorrows was accomplished; then he was perfectly fitted to do us good. So Heb. 10:14, 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' As to an offering, there needeth no more. A patched salvation, of half of Christ and of half of the creature, will not do good; as if Christ must do a part and we must merit the rest; this is inconsistent with God's design. We must not part stakes with God; this is neither for our comfort, God's glory, nor our Redeemer's welcome to heaven. No; Christ is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; he could avouch his work before the tribunal of God; all is finished. Now he can plead his right at the bar of justice: Ps. 2:8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'

## II. The evidences and reasons of this complete satisfaction.

1. From the dignity of the person satisfying. Two things are required in our mediator that he might be a sufficient undertaker for us. One is, that he should be perfectly holy and righteous; for how could he redeem us from sin, who, being defiled with sin, had needed to be redeemed himself? The second was, that he should be a divine and infinite person; for sin being committed against an infinite majesty, therefore the suffering by which it must be expiated must be of an infinite value. Now both these do perfectly concur in Christ; for as man, 'He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,' Heb. 7:26; and died, 'The just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,' 1 Peter 3:18. He was perfectly holy, even holiness itself: Luke 1:35, 'That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' As he was God over all, blessed for ever, he was capable to give a value to his sufferings; to which purpose God is said to purchase the church with his own blood: Acts 20:28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' In short, God was resolved to lose no glory by the fall; and therefore, whosoever was the redeemer, he was to restore what Adam took away by the fall. God's authority was violated by the creatures' transgression, whose command was just, and our obedience reasonable. Now it was meet that God should keep up the authority of his law. His majesty also was despised in slighting the threatening, and his holiness wronged, as if he did not hate sin; and his justice and truth, as if he would not punish it; his power lessened, for sin is an act of presumption, and implieth a contest with God. Now in all these respects it was necessary that God should vindicate his glory, and be no loser; which was fully brought to pass by Christ, to whom there is in scripture a double fulness and sufficiency attributed. A fulness of grace or holiness: 'For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to himself,' Col. 1:19, 20. And therefore he is said, 'To be full of grace and truth, that of his fulness we may all receive, and grace for grace,' John 1:14, 16. Besides this, there is a 'fulness of the godhead that dwelt in him bodily,' Col. 2:9. Not mystically and spiritually, as in believers; not symbolically, as in the sacraments; not typically, as in the law; but bodily, that is, really

and personally, as body is opposed to shadow, or noteth a person. Well, then, the argument is strong. If the person satisfying were not only holy and undefiled, but also infinite, the satisfaction also must be infinite, and therefore most perfect and sufficient; for what can be greater and more perfect than what is infinite? And therefore all is finished; if such a person will take a body, and die for us, there needeth no other satisfaction.

2. I reason from the unity of the mediatory office, and that oblation or sacrifice which was made by Christ by virtue of that office: 2 Cor. 5:14, 'If one died for all, then were all dead;' 1 Tim. 2:5, 'There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.' And as these places prove that there is but one mediator, so there is but one sacrifice: Heb. 10:10, 'By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;' and ver. 14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;' Rom. 5:18, 'By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all to justification of life;' Heb. 9:26, 'But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;' ver. 28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' The scripture so emphatically insisting upon this term, 'once;' certainly all is finished; there needeth no more to be done by us to satisfy God's justice; that is sufficiently done already.

3. From the greatness of the punishment imposed upon Christ; for if he suffered all the punishments due to us, it cannot be that anything more should be done to pacify God; all is finished. Now Christ omitted none of those things which divine justice required: he 'fulfilled all righteousness,' Mat. 3:15; 'Was obedient to death, even the death of the cross,' Phil. 2:8. Yea, and suffered all those things which the law did put upon sinners, either as to loss or sense, as to desertion or as to the curse; and therefore he is said, 'To bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows, and to be wounded for our transgressions, and to be bruised for our iniquities,' Isa. 53:4, 5; 'To be made a curse for us,' Gal. 3:15; 'To be made sin for us,' 2 Cor. 5:21. God spared him not, but put him to grief, not out of hatred to his Son, but love to our salvation. Hence those agonies of Christ, and prayers, and tears, and strong cries.

4. From God's approbation of the person and sacrifice of Christ. If God did so far approve the sacrifice of Christ as willingly to accept it for our redemption, that upon it he grounded a covenant, and made offers of terms of grace to us, and reconciliation with us, there is no question but that upon Christ's death all was finished. No more was necessary for paying the price and ransom, for God, the most just judge, would not accept of an imperfect satisfaction, or give testimony that he was well pleased with it. But that Christ's person and sacrifice was approved of God is evident, not only as he appointed it; and surely he will accept what he hath appointed; not only also by the miracles which he wrought when alive, which evidenced his commission: Acts 2:22, 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you;' but chiefly by the resurrection of Christ, which was not only a testimony of the truth and dignity of his person: Rom. 1:4, 'And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;' but it was a clear argument of the perfectness of his satisfaction; for unless he had abundantly satisfied God, how could God, who, as a just judge, had appointed him to die for our sins, raise him up from the dead? Would an upright judge deliver a debtor or his surety from prison unless first full payment had been made? Would God show himself willing to be reconciled to us if yet there remained any wrath to be appeased, any farther ransom necessary to be paid for us? Now in the scripture Christ is sometimes said to rise from the dead to show his divine power; sometimes to be raised by God to show the fulness of his satisfaction: Acts 2:24, 'Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of them.' When Christ was raised, our surety was let out of prison; and the scripture hath delivered it to us under that notion: Isa. 53:8, 'He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.' The Lord sent an angel to remove his gravestone, not to supply any lack of power in Christ, but to show he was fully appeased and satisfied. Therefore it is said, Heb. 13:20, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great

shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.' Mark, through the blood of the everlasting covenant he is become the God of peace; through the blood of the everlasting covenant he brought Christ from the dead. He doth not only do us good, but lets go our surety through the virtue of that blood. The phrase of 'bringing again from the dead,' is emphatical. Christ did not break prison, but was brought forth as the apostles, Acts 16:39; the magistrates came to the prison 'and brought them out.' Christ rose not only by his own power, but by the Father's authority. If our surety had perished in prison, we could have no assurance; or if he had continued still under death, the world could have no discharge; but Christ rose again, and is not only taken out of prison, but carried up to God in glory and honour: 1 Tim. 3:16, 'Received up into glory.' It is not ἀνέθη, actively he ascended, but ἀναλήφθη, passively he was raised up. God hath rewarded him; and therefore he hath perfectly done his work. God hath not only taken him out of the grave, but taken him up to glory. Certainly God is well pleased since he hath given him not only a discharge, but a reward. Christ undertaking for us is somewhat like that of Reuben for Benjamin: Gen. 43:9, 'I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.' 'Let me see thy face no more.' Christ undertook to carry it through, and failed not in the enterprise.

III. What comfort is this to poor sinners, since, though there be a full satisfaction, conditions are required which we are not able to perform, ere we can have benefit; and we find sin remaining in us, so that it is finished, and unfinished as to us?

I answer—There is great comfort in God's general grace, before it be particularly applied and exhibited to us in the effects and sense thereof. A sufficient sacrifice and ransom given for you is the foundation of all solid peace, for it is the foundation of the gospel, or of the covenant of grace. I shall prove it by these reasons—

1. Because this answereth the grand scruple which haunteth the creature, and is at the bottom of all our fears; namely, how God's justice shall be appeased: Micah 6:6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' The way of appeasing God's anger hath been an old controversy, that hath troubled all nations; and till it be answered and fully determined, man is not 'perfect as appertaining to the conscience,' Heb. 9:9. Though God be infinitely merciful, yet he is infinitely just; and we can expect no more from his mercy than we may fear from his justice. Guilty nature still presageth evil to us, till there be something penal endured, and something of price and value given to appease justice.

2. That God now looketh for no satisfaction at your hand; it is all done perfectly by Christ; all is finished. He satisfied for us that we might not be obliged to satisfy in our own persons: Heb. 1:3, 'When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high;' Isa. 53:5, 'By his stripes we are healed.' It was at his cost that our recovery was brought about.

3. In this provision we see the will of God putting forth itself for our help in the most astonishing way that could be imagined: 1 Tim. 3:16, 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh;' 1 John 4:10, 'Herein is love; not that we loved God, but God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' This is such an unusual expression of love, such an engaging instance, so much surpassing our thoughts, that we cannot sufficiently admire it. When God laid such a broad foundation, surely he intended some notable grace to us.

4. Here is a full answer to those usual objections which are raised by broken hearts, as the number, and greatness, and heinousness of our sins; for as such they shall not be your ruin. As great as they are, God can with honour pardon them; for barely to plead the number of sins or greatness of sins, is



to lessen the price. The Messiah came, Dan. 9:24, 'To finish transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.' There is no sin so great but the Redeemer's merit can countervail it. And no man shall perish for the want of the payment of his ransom, or an expiatory sacrifice for his sins. He may perish for his impenitency and unbelief, but not merely for the greatness of his sin; for what sin is so great that it is not or cannot be expiated by the blood of Christ? Christ's satisfaction maketh the salvation of the worst possible; you may have peace with God if you will.

5. It bindeth our duty the closer upon us. No man shall perish but for want of a willing heart to accept of the Redeemer, who hath paid our ransom, and of the grace which he hath brought to us, by which we may be interested and instated in the benefits of this ransom. All things are ready if we are ready: Luke 14:17, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' God's fatlings are killed, his wines are mingled; if we will not come to the feast, we perish through our own default. We need confer nothing; all is but to receive the benefits propounded and offered; victory over death, hell, sin, Satan, is ready; yea, heaven is ready, and all spiritual blessings are ready, if we are ready; for the merit and satisfaction of Christ is the great cause of all that blessedness which is offered to the creature. God hath opened the way to all; if they will not enter into it, they perish by their own default. He hath sent preachers into all the world: Mark 16:15, 16, 'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;' Titus 2:11, 'For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.' Let us not refuse our cure, though we must take a bitter potion, though we must enter in by the strait gate of faith and repentance, and walk in the narrow way of self-denial, and all holy conversation, and godliness; yet because it is to life, and the legal exclusion is taken off, let us enter and walk in it. Indeed, if the door were shut against us by the sentence of the law, and there was no way to remove the bars and bolts, our excuse were more just, because then our condition would be hopeless. But now all is finished, salvation rendered possible; now God hath taken away the bars and bolts by which his law shut us out from all hope; let us not set up bars and bolts by our own unbelief and by our own cowardly fears. If man were not man, but a beast, a fool, or a madman, it might more excusably be allowed to them to be led by sense and appetite, and then it were an intolerable thing to crucify the flesh, with the affections thereof; but man, having reason, doth know, or may know, that this command of God is equal; that God doth not only require, but help us to perform it, and prevent us by his grace.

6. It doth not only bind our duty upon us, but it encourages us to repent and believe and obey; for Christ is 'able to save to the utmost all those that come to God by him,' Heb. 7:25; and he is 'the author and finisher of our faith,' Heb. 12:2; and doth 'give repentance as well as remission of sins,' Acts 5:31; 'For to you it is given, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake,' Phil. 1:29. The first grace is his gift, and his resolved gift to the elect, but all are to take their lot. If it were said to us alone that we should strive to enter in at the strait gate, or that we alone should deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow him, it were hard; but when the same terms are propounded to all, and when many, young and old, rich and poor, have received them, and have tried God's ways, and it hath succeeded well with them upon trial, why should we fear it? If nobody had done it, or could do it, then we might stick at God's terms. This argument Austin used to himself in his conflicts of conscience, lib. viii. Confess, chap. 11. When he had long withstood offers of grace, he would then propound to himself the example of others: *Cur non poteris quod isti, et istæ? Isti et istæ non in se pouterunt, sed in Domino Deo suo*—Why may not I, as well as those holy men and those good women? They did it not in themselves, but in the strength of their God, and the power of his grace. The yoke of Christ will be more easy than we think of, especially when it is lined with grace.

7. When we have once accepted the condition, cleared up our title, then we shall have cause to glory in the Lord, and be sensible indeed that all things are finished which are necessary to our comfort and peace, and that this was a full merit; as Paul would glory in the cross of Christ: Gal. 6:14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;' Rom. 8:1, 'There is now no

condemnation to them which are in Christ.' Then we shall make the bold challenge of faith: Rom. 8:33, 34, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' If Christ had not made a full expiation of all our sins, we were under condemnation still. He doth not say, There is nothing worthy of condemnation in believers; for as long as sin and the flesh remaineth in us (which doth as long as we live in the world), there is a potential guilt of damnation, an intrinsic merit in our actions of death and condemnation; yet the actual guilt or obligation is taken away, because Christ is made a curse for us. Well, then, our solid rejoicing to the last is in this complete satisfaction: Rom. 5:11, 'We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement; it is καυχώμενοι, we glory in God.

Use. Let this raise in us—

1. An hearty thankfulness and admiration of the love of Christ, who would not give over suffering till he could say, 'It is finished;' till he had done enough to glorify God and save the creature; enough for the destruction of sin, as well as the abolition of the curse. Christ did not compound, but paid the utmost farthing. Oh, let us raise our thoughts in the consideration of this love. His enemies interrupted him, and tempted him to give over: 'Save thyself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross,' Mat. 27:40, 42; 'If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.' But because he was the Son of God and the king of Israel, he would not come down till he was taken down, and all was done that was necessary: 'All God's works are perfect,' Deut. 32:4. The Father ceased not till, upon the sixth day, he had perfected the work of the creation, and upon the seventh day he rested; so Christ will not come down till he had finished the work of redemption on the sixth day, and on the seventh he rested in the grave, and rose early in the morning on the first day of the week, to show the truth of his satisfaction. And the Holy Ghost's work is perfect; all the time of this life he continueth increasing our graces, but in the everlasting sabbatism, when sin shall be no more, his work is brought to an end; and then he shall 'present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy,' Jude 24.

But what were the reasons why Christ would not give over till all was perfected?

[1.] Love to his Father: John 18:11, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' Christ loved the Father with unspeakable love, and was in like manner beloved by him. Therefore when this cup was put into his hands by his Father, he would drink it off to the very bottom.

[2.] Love to the church: Eph. 5:25, 26, 'Even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word,' &c.; and Rev. 1:5, 6, 'To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' The church was given for a spouse to Christ, but we were polluted and defiled with sin; he would not only cleanse it, but make it a 'glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,' Eph. 5:27. Christ loved the church, and therefore it was not grievous to him to wash it with his blood. Because Jacob loved Rachel, he served seven years for her in heats and frosts by night and day, and 'they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her,' Gen. 29:20; so the Son of God loved the church, and therefore endured all these indignities and grievous passions.

[3.] He had respect to that eminent glory set before him: Heb. 12:2, 'Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Though the way was rough, the prize was excellent; and so he ran through all the pain and shame, and attained the eternal crown of glory. He endured cruel pains in his body, and bitter sorrows in his soul, such as never any man did suffer, never any angel could have borne as he did; so dear did it cost our Saviour to make a propitiation for

our sins. That which in all this did strengthen and encourage him was the joy set before him, namely, that happy and glorious estate which followed upon his sufferings, so that his burden was made the lighter, and his sorrows much abated. Oh, let us think of this! It is not a lessening his love to us, for he needed not to put himself into this condition. Herein he was our example, to teach us how to sweeten the cross; and as our Mediator he is gone to heaven to prepare a place for us: John 14:2, 3, 'I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.'

2. Let it raise in us a confidence of the benefits purchased. For Christ expresseth himself as a conqueror, and in a kind of triumph over the devil and all the enemies of our salvation. The wrath of God is appeased: Rom. 5:9, 'Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.' The law is satisfied: Gal. 4:4, 5, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.' Satan is vanquished: John 12:31, 'Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.' Guilt is removed: Eph. 1:7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.' Sin is subdued: Rom. 6:6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' Death is unstinged: 1 Cor. 15:55–57, 'O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' The curse is removed: Gal. 3:13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Surely where Christ beginneth he will make an end. We cannot have too high thoughts of the blood of Christ: Heb. 9:13, 14, 'For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God.' Let us stand still now, and behold the salvation of God, and echo to Christ's cry, 'It is finished! it is finished!' What can the law crave more than the blood of the Son of God? What will make us perfect as appertaining to the conscience if this will not? Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. Christ hath so far obtained pardon and acceptance for us, that he hath made an end of sin for all that are willing to accept of his grace upon God's terms.

3. Let it quicken us to perseverance in our duty, notwithstanding sufferings, till all be ended; that, when we come to die, we may be able to say, John 17:4, 'I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do;' 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' If Christ out of love to us would finish the work of our redemption, 'What shall separate us from the love of Christ?' Rom. 8:39.

4. It teacheth us how to comfort ourselves in death. It finisheth all our labours and sorrows, as Christ showeth when he was about to give up the ghost: Isa. 57:2, 'He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds.' Believers have a joy set before them as well as Christ. The wicked cannot say, 'It is finished;' their evils are then begun.

5. Let us believe things to come. The event showeth that all those things were true which the prophets had so long before foretold. The Holy Ghost cannot be deceived, nor can God lie. We are certain that things yet to come shall be fulfilled as well as these which are past. Those who lived before Christ's time had not such an experiment of God's truth as we have. We have seen the coming of Christ; let us so fix our minds on future things, as to draw them off from earthly.

He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.—I come to the latter part of the text. Some read it that first he died, and then bowed the head, there being no spirit left to support it; but Christ first bowed the head, and then died; he did as it were beckon to death to come and do its office: 'He yielded up

the ghost;' his soul was truly separated from his body. The form of resignation we have, Luke 23:46, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' Wicked men, because they die against their wills, their souls are said to be taken away: Luke 12:20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee;' Job 27:8, 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' But Christ yieldeth it up; and for a godly man to give up the ghost noteth his faith, submission, and willingness to depart out of the body. As the prophet saith of Christ, Isa. 53:12, 'He hath poured out his soul unto death.' Death did not surprise him.

Doct. When all things were finished, Christ freely and willingly gave up the ghost.

His life was not taken away, but resigned; there was much of violence, but no coercion. The term, giving up the ghost, doth not imply the bare death of Christ, but that he died willingly and freely. *Nihil in hoc Christo est, nisi profusa liberalitas misericordiæ, et remissionis peccatorum*—I can see nothing in this Christ but a prodigality of love and mercy. He had freely emptied his veins in the garden; every pore became an eye, and wept blood for your sakes; and now he cometh to pour out his soul.

Reasons why Christ was so willing to die.

1. Out of obedience to his Father. The divine decrees had laid a necessity upon him, and where the Father saith, Must, Christ saith, I will: Mat. 26:54, 55, 'Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' (which was the just number of a Roman army); 'But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?' Christ willingly took this necessity upon him; it was but *necessitas ex hypothesi*. Had it not been for his eternal consent it would never have been said, 'Thus it must be;' Luke 22:37, 'This that is written must be accomplished;' Luke 24:46, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoveth Christ to suffer.' It was a necessity of his own making; he was not compelled to accept of the conditions from God, nor forced by the violence of man to yield up his life: John 10:18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father.'

2. Out of love to us. The Jews crucified him, but love made him die; we had else perished for ever. The law laid it upon us, but love made Christ take it upon himself: Isa. 53:4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' Justice demanded it of us, but Christ said, I will be responsible; exact it of me: Mat. 20:28, 'Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' He took life to lay it down at the demand of justice. Justice said, I must have a ransom; Christ said, Take it of me; let these go: Job 33:24, 'Then he is gracious unto them, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.' The Father received it, and Christ paid it; as the angel said to Abraham, Gen. 22:12, 'Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him.' Justice would have reached forth a deadly stroke to us, but Christ caught the blow.

3. This would finish his labours. Death was Christ's last enemy, of his person, as well as of his kingdom. He had been harassed and worn out with sorrows; the grave was a place of rest; it was finished as to him: Isa. 57:2, 'He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds.' Death was the end of Christ's journey, and all his labours in the flesh. The grave was a dark dismal place till Christ went into it; ever since it is but a chamber of rest, and Christ keepeth the key of it: Isa. 26:20, 'Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment.'

4. This furthered his triumph, and made it every way more complete. By dying, Christ carried the war into his enemies' land, and foiled death in its own territory, and made death itself mortal by lying in the grave. The cross and the grave were the means of Christ's triumph; by these the devil thought to foil him, and by these he triumphed: he conquered Satan and sin when they seemed to have most

power upon him; like angry bees, they stung him, and disarmed themselves: Heb. 2:14, 'That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;' Col. 2:15, 'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it,' ἐν αὐτῷ, i.e., σταυρῷ. On the cross: Eph. 2:16, 'Having slain the enmity thereby;' that is, by his cross, formerly spoken of. When he was slain himself, then he slew death and the law. Christ's crucifying was his exaltation and preferment. It is twice expressed by lifting up: John 3:14, 'So shall the Son of man be lifted up;' John 12:32, 33, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men after me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.' The grave was consecrated and sanctified by Christ's lying there. Duo in cruce affixi intelliguntur, saith Origen; Christus visibiliter sponte sua ad tempus, diabolus invisibiliter invitus in perpetuum—There were two crucified at once; Christ visibly of his own accord, for a time only; the devil invisibly, against his will for ever. Christ received a slight hurt in his heel, but he bruised Satan's head.

5. He was hastening to his own glory: Heb. 12:2, 'For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' He was thinking of his welcome to heaven. Oh, what sweet embraces there would be between the Father and him! Ps. 110:1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool;' Dan. 7:13, 14, 'I saw in the night-visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' How the angels should usher him into glory, though there were two left with shining garments to give satisfaction to his disciples! Acts 1:10, 11, 'While they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which said, Ye men of Galilee! why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so return in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' Christ was thinking how his Father would embrace him, put the crown upon his head, bid him sit down at his right hand, and how there he was to be royally attended. And this doth not derogate from his love to us, for he went to prepare a place for us, and, as our forerunner, is entered into glory, and because he lives, we shall live also.

Use 1. To commend the love of Christ to us.

1. That he should die, this was an incomparable condescension of his love. Simeon suffered himself to be bound for his brethren, Gen. 42:24; Lot proffers his daughters to save his guests, Gen. 19:8; but Christ would lay down his life. If it were in our choice, who would die? Who would be tumbled into a pit of darkness, a cold hole, where he should see the sun no more? We would live for ever. It is not put to our choice, but it is in our wishes. But Christ might have chosen whether he would die or no, and yet he died.

2. Christ had more reason to love his life than we have. He had a delicate body, and the social presence of the Godhead. The poorest worm in the world desires to keep its life: Job 2:4, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life;' that is, a man would part with all, for skins were the barter of those days. And the more excellent the life is, the more desire men have to keep it; as young men, whose marrow is in their bones, to them life is life indeed. The woman that was broken and spent with old age yet spent ὅλον τὸν βίον, 'all her living on physicians,' Luke 8:43. Christ had reason to love life upon a natural respect; he was about thirty-three years old; and upon a spiritual respect, his human nature enjoyed the near presence of the godhead; but when he was in his full vigour and strength, he willingly died.

3. That death which he died was a sad bloody death, the saddest death that any man could die. He was weakened with the agonies in the garden: 'They pierced his hands and his feet,' Ps. 22:16. The



sinewy parts of his body were pierced with nails, his life dropping out by degrees; the irons opened a passage for his soul. And, which was more than all, he suffered under the wrath of God: Mat. 27:46, 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?'

4. It was a shameful death; he suffered as a malefactor: Isa. 53:12, 'He was numbered with the transgressors.' He was crucified between two thieves, in medio latronum, tanquam latronum maximus, as if he were the greatest of them. He was treated as a sinner; we are made the sons of God. Job was called hypocrite by his friends, but he would maintain his righteousness till death: Job 27:6, 'My righteousness will I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' Eusebius Vercellensis chose rather to starve in prison than that it should be said he had eaten with the Arians. Christ takes it patiently to die as a thief, an impostor, a traitor: John 18:30, 'If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.' The high priest charged him with blasphemy: Mat. 26:65, 'Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold now ye have heard his blasphemy.' The disciples began to doubt of him, and to look on him as an impostor: Luke 24:21, 'We trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel.' By God himself, when he had taken our sins upon him, he was dealt with as a transgressor: 1 Peter 4:1, 'He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' He was as a sinner before: Heb. 9:28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' An ingenuous man valueth his good name above all enjoyments; there was enough to clear Christ's innocency, yet in the repute of the world he suffered as a malefactor. Oh, how unlike is Christ to the men of the world! Christ is innocent, and accounted a transgressor; they are transgressors, yet would fain be accounted innocent; as Saul said to Samuel, 1 Sam. 15:30, 'I have sinned, yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel.' We are more careful of credit than conscience, and would not be accounted sinners, yet do not fear to be so. What a comfort is this to believers, that Satan cannot lay more to your charge than his instruments did to Jesus Christ.

5. He submitted to this death most willingly. He thirsted, and longed to pay the ransom for us; here was not so much pain and shame as there was willingness: Gal. 1:4, 'Who gave himself for our sins.' There was not only the acts of the Father in giving Christ, but a peculiar act of Christ: 'He gave himself.' How freely did Christ empty his veins, and let out his soul! It was no more to Christ to pour out his soul than for the minister to pour out the wine. We pray as if we were afraid to be heard; we hear as if we were loath to be saved; we serve God as if we were loath to please him; there is a grudging in our acts of duty; but Christ was free, and willing to die for us.

6. His blood was spilt in malice; it might have cried for vengeance, yet it crieth for pardon; it had the perfume of an infinite merit: Heb. 12:24, 'The blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel.' As to Abel's blood, that crieth for vengeance: Gen. 4:10, 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.' Christ's blood cries for pardon. As to the actors, his blood would not have been a curse to them if they had hearkened to the voice of the gospel. But to speak of ourselves; we by our sins had made our Lord to serve and die, yet doth not his blood speak against us, as Abel's did against Cain; but it speaks to God, to pacify his wrath and to pardon us. Our sins cry, Lord, forgive not: Isa. 2:9, 'The mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself; therefore forgive them not.' They speak in our conscience, Ye deserve death; but Christ's blood speaketh words of peace and comfort to cleanse it, and make it quiet. When wrath is ready to break out from justice, it still crieth, Father, it is finished; Christ's blood yet speaketh. When the awakened conscience lies in fear of the offended judge, and is vexed with the restless accusations of Satan, the blood of Christ speaketh better things, viz., It is all forgiven; it is all expiated by my merit.

Use 2. This affords much comfort to humbled sinners. Take Christ as freely as he freely offereth himself for you. He resigned up himself to death, and will not you resign up yourselves by faith? He poured out his soul to death, and will not you pour out your souls into his bosom? Consider, all the persons of the Trinity are willing, and will not you? The Father gave him: John 3:16, 'God so loved

the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' Christ gave himself: Gal. 2:20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' The Spirit is willing; he is grieved with your neglect and refusal: Mat. 23:37, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!' Oh, pour out your souls in faith and prayer, as Christ did his upon the cross.

Use 3. Let us learn to imitate Christ. At the close of his life he said, 'It is finished,' and so 'bowed the head, and gave up the ghost.' Believers have a joy set before them as well as Christ. It is not so with wicked men; they cannot say that with them it is begun; their heaven endeth when they come to die; but God's people should take death cheerfully, if they can say, as Christ, John 17:4, 'Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do.' Let the death be violent or natural, it is all one whether we are a peace-offering or a burnt-offering; there is more of man's malice in a violent death, but it cannot hurt us. But alas! men generally do not live as if they did look to die, and therefore they do not die as if they did look to live; and so here they would not die, and there they would not live.