

THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S MAKING SATISFACTION FOR SIN, PROVED AND CONFIRMED

A Sermon,

Preached June 19, 1766, to an Assembly of Ministers and Churches, at
Minister Burford's Meetinghouse, in. Goodman's-Fields.

Heb 2:10. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

IN the preceding verse we have an account of the low estate and condition our Lord was brought into in human nature; he was made a little lower than the angels: so he was with respect to his incarnation in general; for whatever may be said for the likeness or equality of an human soul without sin, to an angelic spirit, both being spiritual substances, rational and intelligent, immaterial and immortal; it is certain, that the corporal part of human nature is inferior to the nature of angels; but what the apostle has respect unto in particular, is Christ's suffering death in human nature; in, and during which, he was made a little, or as it may be rendered, and as it is in the margin of some Bibles, a little while lower than the angels; that is, whilst he was suffering death, and lay under the power and dominion of it; Seeing angels die not: but he tasted death for every man, or rather for every one; that is, for every one of the sons, that he was to bring to glory; for every one of the brethren he was not ashamed to own as such; for every member of the church, in the midst of which he sung praise; and for every one of the children God gave unto him, and for whose sake he partook of flesh and blood, as the context shews. Now, in the words read, a reason is given why Christ was made thus low; and the necessity of his suffering and tasting death for his people is observed, for it became him, &c. It was fitting and necessary that if God would save sinners, and bring them to glory, that the Saviour of them should suffer in their room and stead all that the law and justice of God could require. Hence we read, that Christ must suffer many things, and be killed: and ought not Christ to have suffered these things? **Mt 16:21; Lu 24:26;** There was a necessity for it, by the decree of God, by which it was determined; by the covenant-engagements between the Father and the Son, in which it was agreed to and settled; and by the prophecies of the Old Testament, which spoke of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, and therefore must be endured; or otherwise, how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it

must be? [Mt 26:54](#), and the salvation of sinners made his sufferings necessary, as without which it could not be obtained.

In the words there is a periphrasis of the divine Being, by which he is described; and such a like descriptive circumlocution of him is in [Ro 11:36](#). For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. Here he is described as the final cause or last end of all things, for whom are all things; for he has made all things for himself, for his own glory, for the glorifying of all his perfections; and as the efficient cause of all things; by whom are all things, that is, by whom all things are made; all things in nature, for he has made the heavens, the earth, and the sea, and all that in them are; and all things in providence are done and overruled by him; my father worketh hitherto, says Christ, that is, all things in providence, and I work conjunctly with him, [Joh 5:17](#), and all things in grace, for they all take their rise from him, and are begun by him, being planned by him; All things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ, [2Co 5:18](#). An intimation is likewise given of a gracious design of his to save and bring some persons to glory, who are said to be sons, and these many. Sons by divine predestination, whom God predestinated to the adoption of children by Christ; for whom this blessing is provided and secured in covenant, which runs thus, I will be their father, and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Whom Christ has redeemed from under the law, that they might receive the adoption of children; and to whom, believing in Christ, he gives the power and privilege to become the sons of God; and so they are openly and manifestatively the children of God, by faith in Christ; and to these it is their heavenly Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom: and since they are many, even the many that are chosen of God; the many that Christ gave his life a ransom for; the many, for the remission of whose sins his blood was shed; the many that are made righteous by his obedience; hence many mansions of glory are prepared for them in Christ's Father's house: and there is a way in which they are brought thither. God has chosen them through sanctification of the spirit, and the belief of the truth, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has died for them, and by means of his death, they receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, and the inheritance itself. God calls them by his grace to eternal glory, and makes them meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light: the person by whom they are brought thither is Christ, here called the captain of their salvation: that is, the author of it, as he is said to be in a following chapter, chap. 5:9, {[Heb 5:9](#)} whom God appointed to be the Saviour of men, and who has with his own arm wrought out salvation for them; in whom it is, and in no other: and the way and means

by which he has procured it, is by his perfect sufferings and death; for though he was a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, that is, in suffering, he became the author of eternal salvation, as in the place before referred to; and it was necessary, that he, the surety and Saviour, should suffer, the just for the unjust, in their room and stead, to bring them unto God, into his presence here, and unto eternal glory hereafter. This was necessary for the glorifying of his divine perfections; not only those of grace and mercy, but of justice and holiness. The plain sense of the words is this; that since it was the design and pleasure of the all-wise and all-powerful former and maker of all things, to bring some of the sons of men, and who are made the sons of God, to eternal glory and happiness, by Christ the captain and author of their salvation; it was becoming and fitting, and so necessary, that he should completely and perfectly suffer in their room and stead, all that the law and justice of God could require to make satisfaction for their sins; and so be brought to glory in a way consistent with the divine perfections.

I shall not insist on the various doctrines contained in these words: I shall take no farther notice of those which relate to the being, nature, perfections, ways, and works of God; nor to the adoption of his people, nor to the glory they are brought unto; nor to their salvation, and to Christ, the author of it; nor to the sufferings of Christ, and the completeness of them; only to the satisfaction of Christ by them, and the necessity of that.

The word satisfaction is not syllabically expressed in scripture, as used of that which is made by Christ; but the thing itself is frequently spoken of. What Christ has done and suffered, in the room and stead of sinners, with content, well-pleas'dness, and acceptance to God, is what we call satisfaction; and this is plentifully declared in the word of God; as when God is said to be well-pleas'd for Christ's righteousness sake, and with it; because it answers all the demands of law and justice; and by it the law is magnified and made honourable: and when the sacrifice of Christ, and such his sufferings be, is said to be of a sweet smelling savour to God, because it has expiated and made atonement for sin; that is, made satisfaction for it, and taken it away, which the sacrifices under the law could not do; hence there was a remembrance of sin every year; but by the sacrifice of Christ it is put away for ever, [Isa 42:21](#); [Eph 5:2](#); [Heb 9:26](#) and [Heb 10:3-4,14](#); and there are also terms and phrases used of Christ and his work, which are equivalent and synonymous to satisfaction for sin, and expressive of it; such as propitiation, reconciliation, atonement, &c.

The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction for sin, is the glory of the Christian religion; what distinguishes it from all other religions, and gives it the preference to them; and without which, that itself would be of little worth. It is a doctrine of the utmost importance, for without satisfaction for sin, there can be no salvation from it. The Socinians take a great deal of pains to damn themselves, and every body else, as much as in them lies, by denying and attempting to destroy this doctrine, which only secures salvation: if there are such things as damnable heresies, as the scripture assures us there be, the denial of Christ's satisfaction is certainly one; since without this, sin cannot be pardoned, nor a sinner saved, nor a son brought to glory. Those that set themselves to oppose it, are in dangerous circumstances; and if they do it wilfully, obstinately, and knowingly, which is what the apostle means, when he says, if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, of this truth, the atoning sacrifice of Christ, by denying that; such are inevitably lost and undone; there is no help nor hope for them in heaven or in earth, from angels or men, or from any quarter whatever; for there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; there never will be another atoning sacrifice offered up, another Saviour provided, another Jesus sent to save men from their sins, by making satisfaction for them; there will be nothing else but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries of this truth, or who are contrary, and oppose themselves to it; for if he who despised Moses's law, neglected and broke the moral law, and the precepts of it, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the son of God? denied and rejected the eternal sonship of Christ, as the Socinians do, and hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy or common thing; no other than the blood of a mere creature, as the same persons affirm, and of no more efficacy to take away sin than that? see [Heb 10:26-28](#); how much does it concern us then to receive and embrace this truth, and earnestly contend for it, which is of so much importance in the great affair of our salvation.

I propose not to treat of the doctrine of satisfaction, at large, in all the parts of it, which cannot be comprised in a single discourse, I shall not consider the ground and foundation of it, and on which it proceeds, which are the council and covenant of peace, and the suretiship engagements of Christ therein; nor the causes of it, the efficient and procuring, the impulsive and moving causes of it; nor the matter of it, the fulfilling of the whole law, as to precept and penalty; or Christ's doing and suffering all that the law and justice of God could require; nor the form and manner in which it was made, through

Christ's bearing the sins of his people imputed to him; for this doctrine includes the imputation of their sins to Christ; and through his dying for their sins, thereby making atonement for them; and through his dying for sinners, in their room and stead, as their surety and substitute; nor the ends which were to be answered, and are answered by it: I shall only very briefly treat of the necessity of it; shewing that without it sin cannot be pardoned, nor a sinner saved, nor a son brought to glory. And there are two things I desire may be granted, and which I think may be easily granted, and then satisfaction for sin will appear necessary; and they are, the one, that men are sinners; and the other, that it is the will of God to save sinners, at least some sinners; but if neither of these are facts, a satisfaction is unnecessary, and it is in vain to talk about it.

First, Let it be granted that men are sinners; and, one would think, this would be allowed at once, unless any can work themselves up into such a fancy, that they are an innocent sort of beings, whose natures are not depraved, nor their actions wrong, neither offensive to God, nor injurious to their fellow-creatures; and one would imagine the opposers of Christ's satisfaction have entertained such a conceit of themselves, or they would never set themselves against a doctrine so suitable and salutary to them; but if this is the case with them, scripture, experience, conscience when awakened, and daily facts are against them. The scriptures declare that all men have sinned in Adam, are made, constituted, and accounted sinners by his disobedience; yea, that they are actual sinners, have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God; that they are all under sin, involved in the guilt and pollution of sin, under the power and dominion of it, and liable to punishment for it; and that this is the case of all, not one excepted. Now as men are sinners, they are transgressors of the law of God; for sin is a transgression of the law; and every transgression of that, and disobedience to it, has received, does receive, or will receive a just recompence of reward; that is, righteous punishment: there never was a sin, nor will be one, but what is punished either in the sinner, or in the surety for him, [1Jo 3:4](#); [Heb 2:2](#), the law being broken, it accuses of sin, pronounces guilty for it, proceeds to curse and condemn, passes the sentence of condemnation and death; which, without a satisfaction, must be executed; the sanction of the law is death: the law is never abrogated, nor the sanction of it changed, altered, nor abated; God never relaxes that; though he puts a favourable construction on his law, by admitting a surety in the room of the delinquent, yet punishment is always inflicted.

Men by sin are alienated from the life of God, are estranged from him, are set at a distance from him, and are in a state of separation from him, as to communion; and without reconciliation and satisfaction made for sin, can never be admitted to it. An irreconcilable sinner can never enjoy nearness to God and fellowship with him; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? a righteous God and unrighteous men? and whenever it is had, it is the fruit of Christ's sufferings and death; he suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring them unto God, who were at a distance from him with respect to communion, though not with respect to union; to bring them into his gracious presence, into an open state of favour with him; it is through his blood, making peace for them, that they who were afar off from God, and fellowship with him, are made nigh, and favoured with it, [1Pe 3:18](#); [Eph 2:13-14](#). I do not say that the satisfaction of Christ procures the love of God, it is the fruit and effect of it; but this I say, it opens the way into the embraces of his arms, stopped up by sin, which must be removed, in order to enjoy them.

And here let me observe to you something relating to experience, which you would do well to lay up in your minds; it may be of use to you hereafter, when you may be tempted to doubt of your interest in Christ's satisfaction. Have you any reason to believe that you have, at any time, had communion with God, in private or in public, in your closet, or in the family, or in the house of God, under any ordinance, either the ministry of the word, or prayer, or the supper of the Lord? Then you may be assured Christ has made satisfaction for you; or you would never have enjoyed such communion.

Again; Men by sin are become enemies unto God, and. therefore a reconciliation, or satisfaction for sin is become necessary: they are enemies in their minds, by wicked works; there is an inward enmity in their hearts, which is outwardly discovered by their evil actions; yea, their carnal mind is enmity itself against God; and besides this, there is, on the part of God, a law-enmity, an enmity declared in the law: in the eye of the law, and in the sight of justice: having sinned, they are viewed as enemies to God, and rebels against him, and so are declared in and by the law, and considered as such: not that there is any real enmity in the heart of God to elect sinners; this is inconsistent with his everlasting and unchangeable love to them; but there is a law-enmity which must be slain and removed, and was slain and removed in and by the death of Christ: as when subjects rise up in rebellion against their king, there may be no enmity in his heart to them, yet by the law of the land, they are declared and looked upon as enemies, rebels, and traitors to his crown and government; and are treated as such, and proceeded against in due form of

law, though at length pardoned, at least, some of them; and it is this sort of enmity which makes the satisfaction of Christ for sin necessary. Had there been only an inward enmity in men's minds to God, manifested by their works, that might have been removed, and is removed, by the Spirit of God causing the arrows of the word to be sharp in the hearts of such enemies of the king; whereby the people fall under him, lay down the weapons of their rebellion, and submit unto him; and are reconciled to the righteousness of Christ, to the way of salvation by him, and to his laws and government; and by the grace of God, the enmity of their hearts is overcome, and love is implanted in their souls. To remove this enmity, the sufferings and death of Christ seem not necessary; and though it is said, while God's elect were sinners, Christ died for them; and, when they were enemies, they were reconciled to God by his death; yet this is not to be understood of the inward depravity and enmity of their hearts; for the far greater part of those for whom Christ died, and whom he reconciled, were not then in a state of actual corruption and enmity, for they were not in actual being; but the sense is, that they were then considered as sinners in Adam; and as enemies, rebels, and traitors in the apostate head; when Christ died for them, and reconciled them to God, by making satisfaction for their sins, which this enmity made necessary: there is a twofold reconciliation, with respect to this twofold enmity; the one is the work of Christ, the other the work of the Spirit of Christ; the one was made at Christ's death, and by it; the other, at conversion; and we have them both in one text, [Ro 5:10](#) If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, then the law-enmity was slain, and reconciliation and satisfaction made for sin; much more, being reconciled, that is, by the grace and Spirit of God at conversion, when the inward enmity is removed, and the heart is filled with love to God, and is made willing to serve him; we shall be saved by his life. A text worthy to be written in letters of gold; no such passage is to be found any where but in the word of God; not in all the voluminous writings of the heathens; it contains a thought, a sentiment, which could never have entered into the heart of man to conceive of, had it not been revealed by God himself in the sacred scripture; ENEMIES RECONCILED TO GOD BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON! Thus then it appears, if men are sinners, and so transgressors of the law, and aliens from God, and enemies to him, satisfaction must be made for their sins, if ever they are pardoned, saved, and brought to glory.

Secondly, The other thing to be granted, in order to make satisfaction for sin appear necessary, is, that it is the will of God to save sinners, at least some of them; and this surely will be allowed by such who believe a divine revelation.

God has decreed to save some; he has resolved upon it within himself, and has said, I will save them by the Lord their God. He has appointed some not unto wrath, which they deserve, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ. He has chosen them to it, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. There are some who are ordained unto eternal life, who are vessels of mercy, afore prepared for glory; and there was a provision made for their salvation in the council and covenant of grace, In the council of peace between the Father and the Son, the scheme of salvation was planned; and in the covenant of peace it was settled, and the Son of God was agreed upon to be the author of it; and accordingly, in the fulness of time, he was sent to be the Saviour of men; he came to seek and to save that which was lost, and he has saved his people from their sins. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners; and he has obtained salvation for them; and that by his sufferings and death, by the shedding of his blood, to which it is ascribed; being made perfect in suffering, he is become the author of salvation; he has redeemed men to God by his blood, and reconciled them to him by his death; all which was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God: what Jews and Gentiles did to Christ; and what he suffered by them, were no other than what the hand and counsel of God determined before should be done; and therefore it was necessary they should be done, and that Christ should suffer and die to make satisfaction for the sins of men.

Some have affirmed, that God could forgive sin, and save sinners without a satisfaction: this is said by the Socinians, and by some others, (I am sorry to say it) who own that a satisfaction is made, and that it was fit and expedient it should be demanded and made, at least, some sort of one, as some have expressed it; but to say it was fit and expedient, is giving up the point; for what was fitting and expedient to be done, in the affair of salvation, was necessary: God could not but do, or will to be done, what was proper and fitting to be done. Such a way of talking tends to undermine the doctrine of satisfaction by Christ; and to encourage, and strengthen the hands of the Socinians, the opposers of it; much the same arguments being used by the one as by the other. Indeed, it is not becoming us to limit the holy one of Israel, or to lay a restraint on his power; we should proceed cautiously and warily in this matter. His power is unlimited, power belongs to God; infinite, unlimited, unbounded power; he can do more than we can think or conceive of; with him nothing is impossible; yet it is no ways derogatory to the glory of his power, nor is it any impeachment of it, nor does it argue any imperfection or weakness in him, to say there are some things he cannot do; for not to be able

to do them is his glory, when to do them would be weakness and imperfection; and the scripture warrants us in so saying, which for instance, more than once, says, that God cannot lie; for that is contrary to his veracity and truth; nor can he commit iniquity, that would be contrary to his purity and holiness; nor can he do any act of injustice to his creatures, that would be contrary to his justice and righteousness; nor can he deny himself, that would be against his nature, and the perfections of it; and for the same reason, he cannot forgive sin without a satisfaction; for that would not accord with his perfections, as will be seen presently. After all, it is a vain and fruitless thing to dispute about the power of God, what he can do, or what he cannot do, in a case where he has declared his will, what he will do, or will have done, as in the case before us: for at the same time that he proclaimed his name, a God forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin; it is added, by no means clearing the guilty; that is, without a satisfaction to his justice, or not letting go the guilty unpunished, [Ex 34:7](#); [Nu 14:18](#). Nor is a pardoned sinner left altogether unpunished, as the same phrase is rendered in [Jer 30:11](#), for though he is not punished in himself, he is in his surety. Besides in the everlasting covenant of grace God made with his Son, he declared to him what was his will in this case, and which he agreed unto, and came into the world to do, saying, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; and what was that? to offer up the body prepared for him, together with his soul, an offering for sin, to make atonement and satisfaction for it; and which is farther manifest from our Lord's prayer in the garden; which could there have been another way of pardoning sin, and saving sinners, than through the blood, sufferings, and death of Christ, as a sacrifice and satisfaction for sin, that importunate request would have brought it forth, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: if the persons thou hast given me, and I have undertook to save, can be saved and their sins pardoned, without my drinking this bitter cup of sufferings and death for them, let me be excused drinking it; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt, thy will be done; and what that will was that was done, is notorious.

It may be said, that to affirm that God cannot forgive sin without a satisfaction, is to make God weaker than man; and to represent him as not able to do what men can do: a creditor can forgive a debtor, when he is unable to pay the debts that are owing to him; and an offended person can forgive an offender against him; and, in some cases, should, and is to be commended for the same. But it should be observed, that sins are not pecuniary debts, and to be remitted as they may. They are indeed called debts, not properly, but allusively; if they were proper debts, they might be paid in their kind, one sin

by committing another, which is absurd; but they are called debts, because as debts oblige to payment, so these oblige to punishment; which debt of punishment must be paid, either by the debtor, the sinner, or by a surety for him; sins are criminal debts, and can be remitted no other way. God therefore in this affair, is to be considered not merely as a creditor, but as the rector and governor of the world; as the judge of all the earth, who will do right; as the great lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy, and who will secure his own authority as such; do justice to himself, and honor to his law, and shew a proper concern for the good of the community, or universe, of which he is the moral governor. So, though one man may forgive another a private offence committed against himself, and as it is an injury to him, he cannot forgive one, as it is an injury to the commonwealth, of which he is a part. A private person, as he cannot execute wrath and vengeance, or inflict punishment on an offender of the law; so neither can he let go unpunished one that has offended against the peace and good of the commonwealth: these are things that belong to the civil magistrate, to one in power and authority; and a judge that acts under another, and according to a law which he is obliged to regard, can neither inflict punishment, nor remit it, without the order of his superior. God indeed is not under another, he is of himself, and can do what he pleases; he is the maker and judge of the law; but then he is a law to himself; his nature is his law, and he cannot act contrary to that. Wherefore as Joshua says, chap. 24:19, [{Jos 24:19}](#) he is an holy God: he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins; that is, without a satisfaction to his justice, which is his nature, and to his law, which is his will, the honour of both which he is jealous of; sin is *crimen læsæ majestatis*, " a crime committed against the majesty of God;" it disturbs the universe of which he is the governor, and tends to shake and overthrow his moral government of the world; it introduces atheism into it, and has a tendency to bring it into disorder and confusion; and to withdraw creatures from their dependence on God, and their obedience to him; and therefore requires satisfaction, and an infinite one, it being objectively infinite, as committed against an infinite Being; and therefore satisfaction for it cannot be made by a finite, but by an infinite person, as Christ is; and such a satisfaction the honor of the divine Being, and of his righteous law transgressed by sin, requires; which leads to observe, that to forgive sin without a satisfaction, does not accord with the perfections of God.

1. Not with his justice and holiness: God is naturally and essentially just and holy; all his ways and works proclaim him to be so; he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; all creatures acknowledge his justice and

holiness; angels ascribe the same to him; the angel of the waters said, Thou art righteous, O Lord; devils must confess it; men good and bad own it; wicked Pharaoh said, The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked: the good prophet Jeremiah, and even when distressed about the providences of God, and under a temptation about them, could not but acknowledge the justice of God, Righteous art thou, O Lord-yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. God the righteous Lord loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; he is of purer eyes than to behold it with delight; he is not a God that takes pleasure in sin, but bears an utter hatred to it; he cannot but hate it, and shew his hatred of it, which he does by punishing it; and punitive justice is essential to him, though the Socinians, in order to enervate the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, deny it; but God is a Consuming fire; and as it is natural to fire to burn combustible matter put to it, so it is natural to God to punish sin and consume sinners with the fire of his wrath, comparable to thorns and briars. The righteousness of God is seen and known by the judgments which he executes in the punishment of sin and sinners, for which he is applauded, commended and praised; it is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that trouble his people; his judgments on antichrist and the antichristian states, are pronounced true and righteous by angels and saints, by the angel of the waters, and by the voices of much people in heaven, [Re 16:6-7](#) and [Re 19:1-2](#). And the last judgment will be a righteous one, when sinners will be judged according to their works, and sentenced to everlasting punishment: nor does it comport with the justice of God to let sin and sinners go unpunished.

2. Nor with the truth and veracity of God, with respect to his holy and righteous law. God had a right to give a law to his creatures, and it became him as the Governor of the universe to give a law to them; for where there is no law, there is no transgression; men may live with impunity, no charge can be brought against them: sin is not imputed where there is no law; but God has given a law, which is holy, just, and good, and which shews what is his good and perfect will; and this law has a sanction annexed unto it, as every law should have, or it will be of no force to oblige to an observance of it, and deter from disobedience to it; and the sanction of the law of God is nothing less than death, than death eternal, which is the just wages and proper demerit of sin; and which God has declared he will inflict on the transgressor, in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die; which as it was the sanction of that positive law, is of every moral precept. Now the veracity, truth, and faithfulness of God are engaged to see the sanction established and threatening executed, either upon the transgressor himself, or on a surety for

him; for the judgment of God, is, that such a person is worthy of death; and his judgment is according to truth, and must and will most certainly take place; let God be true and every man a liar.

3. Nor does it agree with the wisdom of God, that sin should be forgiven without a satisfaction for it. It is not the wisdom of any legislature to suffer the law not to take place on a delinquent; it is a weakness whenever it is admitted; and is either through fear of some persons or things, or through favour and affection, and the influence of some about the throne of a prince; it may be called tenderness, lenity, and clemency, but it is not justice: nor is it an act of prudence; the consequences of it are bad; it tends to weaken the authority of the legislature, to bring government into contempt, and to embolden transgressors of the law; in hope of escaping with impunity; the all-wise lawgiver will not act such a part: besides, the scheme of man's reconciliation and redemption by Christ, is represented as the highest act of wisdom known to be formed and brought about by God; for herein he has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence: but where is the consummate wisdom of it, if it could have been done in an easier way, with less expense, without the sufferings and death of his Son? Had there been another and better way of saving sinners, infinite wisdom would have found it out, and divine grace and mercy would have pursued it.

4. Nor does it seem so well to comport with the great love and affection of God to his Son Jesus Christ, called his beloved Son, his dear Son, the Son of his love, to send him into this world in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be vilified and abused by the worst of men; to be buffeted, lashed, and tortured by a set of miscreants; and to put him to the most cruel, painful, and shameful death of the cross, in order to make reconciliation and atonement for sin, if sin could have been forgiven and the sinner saved without all this; even by a hint, a nod, a word speaking to a sinner, telling him his iniquities were forgiven, and he should be saved: nor does it so fully express the love of God to his saved ones, but tends to lessen and lower their sentiments of it. God giving his Son to suffer in the room and stead of sinner's, to die for them while they were sinners, to be the propitiation or propitiatory sacrifice for their sins, is always ascribed to the love of God, and represented as the strongest expression of it; but where is the greatness of this love, if salvation could be effected with less expense, and at an easier rate? and indeed if it could have been done in any other way: the greatness of his love appears in this view, either the sinner must die, or Christ must die for him; now rather than the elect sinner should

die, such was the love of God to him, that he chose His only-begotten Son should die for him.

To evince the necessity of a satisfaction for sin, in order to forgiveness of it, it may be further observed, that there is something of it appears by the light of nature in the sentiments and practices of the heathens, who had nothing else to direct them in this affair; which though it did not provide and direct to a proper satisfaction for sin, yet gave some hint of the necessity of one: by the light of nature they were led to see the evil of sinful actions, at least of some of them; hence accusations of conscience in them upon sinning: they were also sensible by it, that when sin was committed, deity was offended, and even angry with them, and incensed against them; hence those dreadful horrors and terrors of mind in them, lest they should be punished by it; they saw it was necessary that deity should be appeased some way or another; hence the various, though foolish and fruitless methods, they took to appease the anger of God; and some even barbarous and inhuman as to give their first-born for their transgressions, and the fruit of their bodies for the sins of their souls; which shews their sense of a necessity of making some sort of satisfaction for offences committed, and of appeasing justice, or vengeance, as they call their deity; [Ac 28:4](#). As for the Jews, who were favoured with a divine revelation, the case is quite clear with them, that they had knowledge of the doctrine of satisfaction for sin, and pardon upon the foot of it; and were directed by the sacrifices they were instructed to offer, to the proper method of satisfaction for sin and pardon of it, through the sufferings and death of the Messiah: all their sacrifices, especially those of a propitiatory kind, were typical of it, and plainly shewed the necessity of a satisfaction for sin; and plainly pointed out forgiveness as proceeding upon it: how often in the book of Leviticus is it said, that the priest should make atonement for the sins of the people, and their sins should be forgiven them? see [Le 4:20,26,31,35](#), and [Le 5:10,13,16,18](#), and [Le 6:7](#). Indeed these did not and could not really, only typically, expiate sin, and make atonement for it; but if God could forgive sin, without any satisfaction at all, why not forgive it on the foot of such sacrifices? The true reason is, and it is plain, because he could not, consistent with himself and his own perfections, do it without the sacrifice of his Son, typified by them. Wherefore, upon the whole, it may be strongly concluded, that a plenary satisfaction for sin by what Christ has done and suffered, was absolutely necessary to the forgiveness of sin; without shedding of blood is no remission: there was no typical remission under the law, without the shedding of the blood of animals; and there was no real remission or forgiveness of sins then or now, without the

shedding of the blood of Christ, [Heb 9:22](#), there never was, nor never could be, any without it.

There are various objections made to this doctrine; some of the more common and principal ones I shall take notice of, and return a brief answer to.

1. It is suggested, as if the doctrine of satisfaction for sin to the justice of God, and as required and received by that, is inconsistent with the mercy of God, and leaves no room for it. But the attributes of justice and mercy are not contrary to each other, they subsist and accord together in the same divine nature. God is described by them both, gracious is the Lord and righteous; yea, our God is merciful, [Ps 116:5](#); merciful, though righteous; and righteous, though gracious and merciful; see [Ex 34:6-7](#); and, and as they agree as perfections in the divine Being, so in the exercise of them they do not clash with one another, no not in this affair of satisfaction; here mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Justice being satisfied, a way is opened for mercy to display her stores.

2. It is objected, that pardon of sin upon the foot of a full satisfaction for it, cannot be said to free; this, it is suggested, eclipses the glory of God's free grace in the forgiveness of sin: it is certain that remission of sin is through the tender mercy of God, and is owing to the multitude of it; it is according to the riches of free grace, and yet through the blood of Christ, and both are expressed in one verse as agreeing together; in whom (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, [Eph 1:7](#). The free grace of God is so far from being eclipsed in the forgiveness of sin through the satisfaction of Christ, that it shines the brighter for it; for consider, it was the free grace of God which provided Christ to be a sacrifice for sin, to atone for it; as Abraham said to Isaac, when he asked, Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? My son, says he, God will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering, [Ge 22:7-8](#); so God of his rich grace and mercy has provided Christ to be an offering and a sacrifice for sin; and his grace appears the more, in that it is his own Son, his only-begotten Son, he provided to be the atoning sacrifice, the lamb to take away the sin of the world: it was grace that set him forth in the divine purposes and decrees, proposed him in counsel and covenant, and sent him forth in time to be the propitiation for sin; it was grace to us that he spared him not, but delivered him up for us all; and it was grace in God to accept of the satisfaction made by Christ; for though it was so full and complete as nothing could be more so, yet it would have been a refusable one, had he not allowed Christ's name to be

put in the obligation. Had it not been for the compact and covenant agreed to between them, God might in strict justice have marked our iniquities, and insisted on a satisfaction at our hands; he might have declared, and abode by it, that the soul that sinned, that should die; it was therefore owing to the free grace and favour of God, to admit of a surety in our room, to make satisfaction for us; and it was grace to accept of that satisfaction, as if made by ourselves. Besides, though it cost Christ much, his blood, his life, and the suffering of death, to make satisfaction for sin, and procure the forgiveness of it by it; forgiveness costs us nothing, it is all of free grace to us. Moreover, grace in scripture is only opposed to the works of men, and satisfaction by them, but not to the work of Christ, and his satisfaction.

3. It is pretended, that the scheme of pardon, upon a satisfaction, makes the love of Christ to men greater than that of the Father, and so they are more beholden to the one than to the other; it represents the one as tenderly affectionate, compassionate, and kind to sinners; and the other as inexorable, not to be appeased, nor his wrath turned away without satisfaction to his justice: but the love of both is most strongly expressed in this affair of Christ's satisfaction; and he must be a daring man that will take upon him to say, who of them shewed the greatest love, the Father in giving His Son, or the Son in giving himself, to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin; for as it is said of Christ, that he loved the church, and gave himself for her; and loved us and gave himself for us; and loved me, says the apostle, and gave himself for me, [Eph 5:2,25](#); [Ga 2:20](#). So it is said of the Father, that he so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son to suffer and die for men; and that herein his love was manifested, not that we loved God, but he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins; and that he commended his love towards us, in delivering up his Son to death for us, and that while we were yet sinners; [Joh 3:16](#); [1Jo 4:9-10](#); [Ro 5:8](#). Can there be greater love than this expressed by both? and which is greatest is not for us to say.

4. It is said, if Christ is God, a divine person, he must be a party offended by sin; and if he has made satisfaction for it, he must have made satisfaction to himself, which is represented as an absurdity. All this will be allowed, that Christ is truly God, a divine person in the deity, and as such equally offended with sin as his divine Father; and that he made satisfaction, and that in some sense to himself too, and yet no absurdity in it, There are some cases in which men may be said to make satisfaction to themselves, without being charged with absurdity: indeed in case of a private pecuniary loss, it would be a mere farce, and quite absurd for one to repair the loss, and make it up to himself,

and make satisfaction to himself for it; but in case of a public offence to a community, of which he is a part, he may be said, by making satisfaction to the whole body, to make satisfaction to himself, without an absurdity. So a member of parliament, having violated the laws and rules of the house, and is called to the bar to make satisfaction, when he makes satisfaction to the house, he may be said to make it to himself, as a member of it. It is possible for a lawgiver to make satisfaction to his own law broken, and so to himself, as the lawgiver. Thus Zaleucus, "a famous legislator, made a law which punished adultery with the loss of both eyes; his own son was the first that broke this law, and in order that the law might have full satisfaction, and yet mercy be shewn to his son, he ordered one of his own eyes and one of his son's to be put out; and so he might be said to satisfy his own law, and to make satisfaction to himself, the lawgiver." But in the case before us, the satisfaction made by Christ, is not made to God personally considered, that is, to any one person in the Deity singly and separately, but to God essentially considered in all the three persons, or rather to the justice of God subsisting in the divine nature common to the three persons. This perfection subsisting in the divine nature as possessed by the first person, the Father, is offended with sin, resents it, requires satisfaction for it, and it is given by the second person in human nature, or as God-man; the same divine perfection subsisting in the divine nature as possessed by the second person, the Son of God, shews itself in like manner in loving righteousness and hating iniquity, is affronted by sin, and demanding satisfaction for it, it is given it by him as the God-man and mediator; who, though a person offended, could mediate for the offender, and make satisfaction for him, without any absurdity or contradiction, as making satisfaction to himself. The same may be observed concerning the justice of God, as a perfection of the divine nature possessed by the third person, the Spirit, requiring satisfaction, and having it given by Christ, the surety and Saviour of sinners; so that the satisfaction is not made to one person solely and singly, but to the justice of God in all his persons; who is the Lord, Judge, and Governor of the whole world; and who ought to maintain, and does and will maintain the honour of his justice, and of his glorious majesty, and of his righteous law.

5. Once more, it is said, that this doctrine of Christ's satisfaction for sin, weakens men's obligation and regard to duty, and opens a door to licentiousness; but this is so far from being true, that on the contrary it strengthens the obligation, and excites a greater regard to duty, and promotes holiness of life and conversation in those who have reason to believe that Christ has made satisfaction for their sins; for the love of Christ in dying for

them, in being made sin, and a curse for them to satisfy for their sins, constrains them in the most pressing manner to live to him, according to his will and to his glory; being bought with the price of Christ's blood, and redeemed from a vain conversation by it; they are moved the more strongly to glorify God with their bodies and spirit, which are his, and to pass the time of their sojourning here in fear. The grace of God which has appeared in the gift of his Son, and in Christ's gift of himself, to be the Redeemer and Saviour of his people, and to be their atoning sacrifice and reconciler, teaches them most effectually to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this evil world, [2Co 5:14; 1Co 6:20; 1Pe 1:17-18; Tit 2:11-12](#). To close with a word or two:

1. We may learn from hence the vile nature of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of it, what an evil and bitter thing it is; that nothing can make atonement and give satisfaction for it, but the bloodshed, sufferings, and death of Christ.

2. We may observe the strictness of divine justice, that would make no abatement, but insisted upon Christ's doing and suffering all that the law could require to make satisfaction for the sins of his people; and if it spared not the Son of God, standing in their room and stead, but demanded and had full satisfaction at his hands, it will not spare Christless sinners, who have no interest in his satisfaction; and what a fearful thing will it be to fall into the hands of the living God, the judge of the whole earth, who will do right?

3. Let us admire and adore the perfections of God, his wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, as well as his love, grace and mercy, which shine so gloriously in this affair of satisfaction and reconciliation for sin made by the blood of Christ; for it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.