

SERMON XVII

CHRIST THE GREAT PAYMASTER OF ALL THE DEBTS OF HIS PEOPLE

Tobias Crisp

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid {or, made to meet,} on him the iniquity of us all." {Is.53:6}

Of all the chosen vessels to bear the name of Christ prophetically, before the children of Israel, there is none so like the apostles as this our prophet Isaiah, in respect of the solemnity of his call; as appears by comparing both together; both he and they were called by visible fire settling on them. {Isa.6:5-7; Acts 2:3,4} Doubtless, this singular likeness of their calls, foreshadowed {as indeed, in the event it proved} a singular likeness between their ministries, as if he had been singled out to be the forerunner of them. Sure, if prediction be enough to denominate him a prophet, the glorious and precious Gospel he preached, so far beyond the accustomed stream of his times, may well admit him into the fellowship of the evangelists; scarce coming short of any of them, in holding forth the "bright morning star," or the "sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings." It is true, the other prophets now and then met with Christ in their perambulations; but, as they saw him at a remote distance, so they could take but, as it were, a shadow of him, and accordingly represent him to the people; but this prophet seems to prepossess the beloved disciple's place, even the bosom of Christ; therefore you may, with one eye, easily see, by comparing him with the rest, the vast difference. But to leave comparisons, because some think them odious; how admirably he preacheth the free and full grace of God to self-willed sinners, let this chapter serve for a sample; which both Christ himself, and his apostles, took so much notice of, that, of all the prophetic passages, there is none so frequently quoted by them, as these here mentioned, which the quotations in the margin point out unto you, as you may there see. In the prophet's entrance upon his sweet discourse of the unsearchable treasures of God's love in Christ to his people, whispered, as it were, a secret in his ear, he seems to be at a stand; as if he could hardly tell whether to bring it to light, or hold his tongue, out of a probable suspicion he had grounded on former experience, that this kind of doctrine would be rejected. "Who hath believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" {vs.1} Now that this may not seem to be a calumny, but on good ground, in verse 2, he gives an account of the reasons moving him to it, besides what occasioned it from former experience. He knew that the people expected great matters from Christ when he came; {as well they might;} and therefore, that his first appearance should promise much; and that if it should be in a mean low way, which would carry no likelihood of compassing great matters, he should not be believed. Now it was revealed unto him, that Christ must "grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground;" if therefore men judged according to outward appearance, {as probably they will,} it might easily be judged that his labour would be in vain, and that he should spend his strength for naught. Who expects a fair and plentiful crop in a barren heath or wilderness? What else but inconsiderable shrubs? How can men hope better of him, who must "grow up as a root out of a dry ground?" So long as common principles of reason rule and engross conclusions, Christ appearing, as is fore-prophesied, will not be taken for the man he is, but rather be laughed to scorn, as indeed he was, when he did so appear; he was by not only the vulgar, but also by the great doctors, the Pharisees; afterwards the prophet more plainly expounds what he means by growing up as a root out of a dry ground. "He hath no form nor comeliness;" that is, his face will promise little or nothing, so that for lack of outward beauty, no desirableness will appear in him; hereupon, in verse 3, he changeth his suspicion into a peremptory assertion, and concludes, "he

is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Yet, for all this, our prophet was in travail, and could not be at ease till he had brought forth the man child, who was to save his people from their sins; {Mt.1:21;} it seems he was in Elihu's temper, "for I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles;" {Job 32:17-19;} for this ravishing news from heaven must out, or he must burst; speak he will, that he may be refreshed; though the most should put it from them; yet, some few, it be hoped, would gather crumbs of comfort from it; nay, be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of it; as the dawning of the light whereof breaks forth in verse 4, "surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" where he clears up a secret objection, which, unto common principles, ariseth out of the condition he was found in; namely, how can he be the Saviour of others that cannot save himself? If God plunge him in wrath, sure he can have but little power to prevail for the deliverance of others. The answer is touched in verse 4, and more fully amplified and cleared up in verse 5. The sorrows and griefs which he sustained were not his own, but ours; it is true, he was wounded, bruised, and chastised, but not for any faults of his own, or out of any distaste God took against his person, who was his beloved Son; but "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." In verse 6, the prophet describes what those were, for which he was wounded; "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;" now, in my text, he clears up the justice of God in wounding him "for our transgressions;" for it might be objected, that here can be no equity to punish an innocent for a delinquent; but that shows that though the delinquency be not his own act, yet the Lord laid it on him. As to the equity of laying it on him, we shall have a fair opportunity to clear it up in handling of the text; but, before I come to it, let us consider what place these words must have, in order of nature, in this discourse of the prophet. Note, that though according to the order of the word, Christ is first said to bear our sorrows, then to be wounded, and then we receive peace through his chastisements, before our iniquities are laid on him; yet it is not rare to see the precious truths of God out of order in this regard; "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling," saith Paul, {I bring this but as one instance.} Salvation, as all know, in order of nature, and time also, follows our holy calling, yet in the words it hath precedency. It is so in this discourse; the true method of the Gospel supposes the creature's sinfulness, as it is first laid down in this verse, which, gives the occasion of Christ's being a Saviour; and, whereas wounds and stripes are the just wages of sin, this sinfulness of the creature must some way be on Christ, or else he might not in justice be wounded; punitive justice must first find a crime upon a man, before it can smite him; as for Christ, he himself never committed any fault, verse 9, "he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth;" as the Lord himself says; therefore, it follows, that the sins of others must be charged to his account, and he must be responsible for them, before he can justly be wounded; hence, in my text, "the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." Now {as in suretyship} our debt becoming his, the execution goes justly out against him, and so God can give a just account of wounding him; and he being thus wounded, that is, bearing the full indignation and wrath that our sins deserve, and so ending all the quarrel God had against us; it follows, that these wounds of his become the "chastisement of our peace;" God having hereby nothing to say against us; and seeing all is well between him and us, he doth not only lake away the anguish, but also proceeds to make a perfect cure; "by his stripes we are healed." And so I come to the words themselves, which are as the dawning of the day after a sad dark night; holding forth the first glimmerings of comfort to men that have lost themselves in the dark. I confess it is supernatural for a man to see the exceeding horridness of sin, he being naturally blind; but yet many attain this, who come short of reaching the gracious mind of the Lord in acquitting men from their sins {witness Cain and Judas} which is nowhere more fully revealed than in this text.

The truth is, however a careless eye may mind but little extraordinary or admirable in the words; yet I dare be bold to say, they contain well nigh the deepest mysteries of God, manifested in the flesh; even those things whereof our Saviour speaks, when he gave thanks to the Father, for

"hiding them from the wise and prudent, and revealing them to babes." I am persuaded that not any who profess themselves Christians, but will with both hands subscribe to the whole text in general without any contradiction. Oh, that the heart were steadfast in these several particulars! There is not a word in it, but hath its special weight. Satan knows full well that each is a mortal dart to pierce the very heart of his destructive principles; and therefore is very busy with wiles to sophisticate the precious truths held forth herein, and by bitter malice to poison this fountain; as by his instruments he would cozen the world with dross for gold, so would he, if it were possible, deceive the very elect, in making them believe their gold is but dross; or at least, play the thief, and foist dross into their hands instead of this gold.

But, because it is gold tried in the fire, as near as may be, we will not lose a dust of it; and for the better husbanding hereof; let us sift these particulars in the words: 1. What this is which the Holy Ghost tells us is laid on Christ, "the iniquity of us all." 2. How this is disposed of, "the Lord hath laid it on him." 3. At whose disposal it is, "the Lord." 4. On whom he laid it, "him." 5. Whose iniquities the Lord laid on him, "the iniquity of us all." 6. When he laid it on him, for the time is past, "he hath laid it on him." All which particulars offer to our consideration so many several most comfortable propositions; as.

I. God not only inflicted the desert of sin on Christ, in wounding him for it, but also he laid even iniquity itself on him; I mean the iniquity of his elect. ¹

II. God doth not connive at the iniquity of his people, as if indeed, he knew well enough it lay on them, but yet he would overlook it, and be content to suppose it on Christ, whilst it remains indeed on them; but, in express terms, the Lord hath laid them on Christ.

III. This laying of iniquity on Christ, is the sole act of the Lord himself; none, nor anything else can do it but he; Christ himself laid not the sins of his people on himself, but the Lord laid them on him. Christ is but the Mediator between God and them in this business; contentedly, indeed, stooping to the burden, when the Lord agreed, and would have it so; much less doth any act of man, whether it be repentance, or turning from his evil ways, or amendment of life, or his faith in the purest act of it, lay them on him; or hath the least hand therein.

IV. The iniquity of God's people is no otherwise disposed by way of transfer from them, but only on Christ; none can bear or carry away iniquity from them, but he alone.

V. That which was laid on Christ, was the iniquity of us all, even of us who like sheep have gone astray, and turned every one to our own way; that is, the Lord had no other consideration in his thoughts at all, but our going astray, and turning to our own way, when he laid our iniquity on Christ. He did not observe any difference, as if one man were more lovely, or likely to be more serviceable, or were more pliable to his bent than others, which might win his love and pity; but looked only on their pollution in blood, rebellion, and enmity, taking the rise of this grace of his only from within himself, even his own compassion.

VI. The Lord is not now to do this, nor is it reserved till here-after; but he hath laid them on Christ already; the act is past long before. And from hence ye may perceive, that there is not now a new thing to be done by the Lord in the transferring the sins of believers to Christ; as if, when they begin to be called out of darkness into marvelous light, just then God begins to transfer sin from them, and lay it upon Christ; so that the act of God's laying sin upon him, is not a continued act, but what he hath done long before. In which point, it will be considerable to find out the time when the Lord laid the iniquity of his people upon Christ; and it will be further worth consideration, seeing the Lord hath laid them, what is become of them? Where do they remain? As for the person whose sins are transferred, he is acquitted and discharged. And likewise Christ is acquitted of them too. "Hath laid" imports them both. If he hath taken them off from him, that was the committer of them, and laid them upon Christ, they are gone from him too; if they were not gone from him too, the words would have been, the Lord lays, in the present tense; but they are in the past-perfect tense, "hath laid." And

¹ {Note: "Christ was willing to become our Surety, and to answer for our sins, and to bare them imputed to him, so as to be obliged to bear the punishment of them, the wrath and curse, which, if he had not endured them, would have sunk every one or us into the pit of hell." Romaine on the Law and Gospel, page 170, last edition. Gill.}

this will be very clear, if you consider Hebrews 9:26-28. "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Mark it well, there was a time that Christ did not appear without sin; for he bore the sins of many; but there is a second time when he shall appear, and then he shall be without sin; so that believers have no sins upon them, and Christ hath none neither.

Every of these particulars will require time to discuss them fully; yet there is not any one of them, but will give sweet consolation to the most drooping spirit under heaven. We will take them into consideration, and begin, with the first of them.

I. It is iniquity itself, even the sins themselves of those whom God intends shall reap benefit by Christ that are laid on him. Satan hath raised a foul mist to darken the glorious light of this admirable truth. At first looking on it, you may think there is no thing in it more than in other ordinary truths; but you shall find in the close, that all the comfort you can take, concerning your freedom from sin, will hang upon this point, that it is iniquity itself that is laid upon Christ. But, many are ready to think that the guilt {such as they call so} and the punishment of sin lay upon Christ indeed; but simply the very fault that men commit, that is, that the transgression itself is become the transgression of Christ, is somewhat harsh;² but when the text saith, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" the meaning is, that Christ himself becomes the transgressor in the room and stead of the person that had transgressed; so that in respect of the reality of being a transgressor, Christ is really the transgressor;³ as the man that did commit it was, before he took it upon him. Beloved, mistake me not; I say not that Christ ever was, or ever could be, the actor or committer of transgression, for he never committed any; but the Lord laid iniquity upon him; and this act of God's laying it upon him, makes him as really a transgressor, as if he himself had actually committed it; and this I shall endeavour to clear by manifest scripture, that simply, without any equivocation, not in any figure, but plainly sin itself was laid upon Christ; I shall then clear some objections, and show the necessity of the thing.

Look but into Isaiah 53:11,12, for there you shall find three words all expressing this one thing, that it is sin itself, and deviations, that are laid on Christ. "He shall bear their iniquities," verse 11; "he was numbered among the transgressors, and he bare the sins of many;" verse 12; mark it well, I pray. Some have been ready to conceive that the word "iniquity" in the text is spoken figuratively; iniquity, that is, the punishment of it, was laid on him; but see how careful the Spirit of God is to take away all suspicion of a figure in the text; there are iniquity, transgression, and sin, three words, and all spoken to the same purpose, to confirm it; and it is strange, that all these three should still be understood of punishment, and not simply of sin itself without any figure; but, from hence it is clear, that the iniquity itself of the persons for whom Christ suffered is moved from a believer and transferred upon him.

All the difficulty lies in that expression, "he was numbered among the transgressors." Some will be ready to say, he was so indeed, but by whom was he numbered? The Scribes and Pharisees

² {Note: But it should not seem harsh, since transgressions only become Christ's by imputation, or by being in the sinner's stead, as immediately explained; nor that not the guilt and punishment of sin only are laid on Christ, but the fault itself, since that is not to be separated from guilt; and since the Scripture is so express, that sin, or iniquity itself is laid on Christ; hence the learned Witsius observes, "I know not why some should choose to say, the guilt or punishment of our sins are transferred to Christ, rather than sins themselves as to the guilt; since this latter is said by scripture itself, whose most pure, most wise, and very emphatic speeches, to desire to soften, by I know not what milder ones of ours, shows a mind nice and squeamish, and not setting that just value upon the sacred writings due unto them." Gill.}

³ {Note: Not the real actor and committer of the transgression, as is afterwards explained, but as there was a real imputation of it to him, being the Surety of his people who had transgressed; and is the true and only sense in which the Doctor is to be understood; for, as the excellent Witsius, just before quoted, says, "not so, God imputes our sins to Christ, as to judge that he committed the sins that we have committed; as to be drunk with Noah, to commit incest with Lot, or adultery with David; such a thought, so foreign from all reason, could never enter into any man in his senses, much less a Christian, and one that fears God." Gill.}

called him a blasphemer and a seducer; and they said, he had a devil, and was a glutton and wine-bibber; and according to the charge, they crucified him with transgressors, and so he was numbered amongst them; but God did not account him so; and though they did, it doth not therefore follow that he was so. I answer, under favour, beloved, let me tell you, that in this place Christ being numbered with the transgressors was spoken in respect of God's own accounting him among the number of transgressors; for he himself made him one at that time. Bear with the expression; for the Apostle hath one higher than this, though it may seem harsh to you. Look into II Corinthians 5:21. There you shall see that God made him more than a transgressor. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Christ was made sin for us; and there is a great deal of difference between being made sin, and being made a sinner, with any that know how the expression in the abstract goes beyond that in the concrete. I know the word may be spoken hyperbolically; not that Christ simply could be made sin, or his essence be turned into sin; but the Apostle's meaning was that no transgressor in the world was such a one as Christ was.⁴ But still Christ was a transgressor, as our transgressions were laid upon him, not that he was the actor of any; and how could the Lord himself by his own act lay our transgressions and yet not number him among such as were transgressors?⁵ The Apostle Peter speaks very fully to this business, in I Pet.2:24. He tells us, that Christ himself "bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" he bare our sins, and it was he himself that did it, and it was on his own body; one would think that all these words need not; he might have only said, he bare them in his body; but he said more emphatically, "he himself bare our sins in his own body;" he speaks it so punctually, that all the world may see that there is no underhand, but plain dealing with God in this business; that so we may rest satisfied with it, that being made partakers of Christ, our iniquities were laid upon him; and if they ever be looked after, it should be where they are; and this is the main end why there are so many expressions in scripture, that our sins are laid upon Christ, to imply, that when any search is made for them among believers, they may know what is become of them, and so satisfy themselves about it. Do but observe that excellent expression, Jeremiah 50:20; where you will find what the great scope and end is, why the Holy Ghost takes such and so much care to let us know, that it is iniquity itself that is laid upon Christ. "In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve."

Beloved, here is a strange mystery, the world will not receive it except they receive this principle we are now upon, namely, that the iniquity itself of his people is laid upon the back of Christ. What, will some say; what no iniquity at all found in Israel, though it be searched for narrowly? No, saith the prophet, "the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none." Israel commits sins every day, you will say, and cannot the Lord find them? But the prophet saith that he hath laid this iniquity upon Christ, therefore it is gone, it cannot be there, and here too; it cannot be on Israel

⁴ {Note: This is true of Christ, not as the actor of transgression as the Doctor immediately observes, but as he was made so by imputation, in which respect he was the greatest transgressor in the world; for let any man be ever so great a one, he has only his own sins on him; but Christ, though he had none of his own, yet being the Surety of his people, and standing in their place, had all their sins upon him, which he calls his own, and were innumerable, Ps.40:12, and so was, by imputation, what no sinner ever was, or could be; and this is saying no more than what divines, ancient and modern, have not scrupled to affirm. II Cor.5:21. Phrases as strong as any the Doctor has here or elsewhere; and which, though not contrary to the divine judgment concerning Christ as our Surety, nor derogatory to the perfect purity and holiness of our Lord, but are designed to express the most perfect imputation of sin to him, and the security of our salvation by him, as Witsius observes, yet I cannot but be of opinion with that same great man, that it would be better to abstain from the use of such phrases; since they are not scriptural, need much explanation, and may be offensive to tender minds. Gill.}

⁵ {Note: That Christ was numbered by men among transgressors is not denied; he was called and traduced by them as a sinner, and placed between two thieves when crucified, which fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah in part, Mark 14:27,28. But then this being suffered by the Lord, shows that he was accounted so by him, and stood in the eye of justice as among, and in the place of, transgressors; and that this is the sense of the passage appears from what follows; 'and' or 'for he' bore the sins of many, as Junius and Tremellius render it; which could be no reason with men for so numbering him, who knew nothing of his bearing the sins of others; but is a reason with the Lord so to account him, since he himself laid these sins on him. Gill.}

and on Christ. Suppose a thief had stolen goods, and brought them home to his house, a friend comes and takes them away, in favour to save his life; there is a privy search made for them in the house of the thief, in every corner; how can they find these stolen goods there, supposing they are carried away by his friend? They are sought for, but they are not found, because they are carried away. Even so, hence it is, that iniquities are sought for in Israel, and there is none, because they are carried away already, and laid upon Christ. I will tell you by the way, the reason why believers groan so heavily under such bitterness of spirit, disquietness and horror in their consciences; they think they find their transgressions there, and imagine that there is a sting of this poison still behind wounding them; but, beloved, if this be received as a truth, that God hath laid thy iniquities on Christ, how can they, belonging to him, be found in thy heart and conscience, if so be he hath already transferred them unto him?

Is thy conscience Christ? Either that must be Christ, or the Lord hath not laid thine iniquities upon him; or else thy heart must be freed from thy sin. I beseech you consider of it seriously; we know not what times are growing upon us, nor what may abide us; we may be cut off from the land of the living, and be in the Jews condition, subject to bondage all our lives long, through fear of death and hell; and what is the occasion and ground of it? It is to have sin lie close upon your spirits; separate sin from the soul, and it hath rest in the worst condition; being in the Jewish condition you will never have full satisfaction and settled quiet of spirit, in respect of sin, till you have received this principle, "that it is iniquity itself that the Lord hath laid on Christ." Now, when I say with the prophet, it is that itself that the Lord hath laid on him, I mean as he doth; it is the fault of the transgression itself, and to speak more fully, that very erring and straying like sheep;⁶ is passed off from thee, and is laid upon Christ; to speak it more plainly, hast thou been an idolater, a blasphemer, a despiser of God's word; a trampler upon him, a prophaner of his name and ordinances, a despiser of government, and of thy parents; a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, a liar, a drunkard? Reckon up what thou canst against thyself; if thou hast part in the Lord Christ, all these transgressions of thine become actually his, and cease to be thine; and thou ceasest to be a transgressor, from that time they were laid upon him, to the last hour of thy life;⁷ so that now thou art not an idolater, a persecutor, a thief, a murderer, an adulterer, or a sinful person; reckon what sin soever you commit, when as you have part in Christ, you are all that he was, and he is all that you were. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Mark it well, Christ himself is not so completely righteous, but we are as righteous as he was; nor we so completely sinful, but he became, being made sin, as completely sinful as we;⁸ nay more, the righteousness that Christ hath with the Father, we are the same, for "we are made the righteousness of God;" and that very sinfulness that we were, Christ is made before God; so that here is a direct change, Christ takes our persons and condition, and stands in our stead; we take his person and condition and stand in his

⁶ {Note: The sin-offering, which was typical of Christ, is called sin itself, erring, going astray, or missing the mark, as the word signifies. See Mr. Samuel Crisp's - the Doctor's son - "Christ made sin, &c." Not the guilt and punishment of sin, but the lawlessness, the illegality and sinfulness of it were laid on Christ, and satisfied for by him; strip sin of this, and it will be an innocent thing, and deserve no punishment; nor could more be inflicted on Christ than in proportion to sin, or what of sin was laid upon him; and if there is anything in it, or belongs to it, not bore by him, it must be by the sinner himself, and upon this scheme not one of Adam's race can be saved. Gill.}

⁷ {Note: Being Christ's by imputation; and though theirs by commission, and not Christ's; yet, being bore by him, shall not be reckoned to them, or charged upon them, or brought against them to their condemnation. Gill.}

⁸ {Note: But by imputation; Christ having all the sins or his people laid upon him, must, in this sense, be reckoned as completely sinful as they; and they, having his righteousness put on them, must be as completely righteous as he; which is to be understood, not of his essential righteousness as God, nor of the righteousness of his office as Mediator, and the faithful discharge of that; for they are neither made gods nor mediators; but of that which he wrought out for them, in their room and stead, consisting of his active and passive obedience; of which, says Witsius, "seeing all the elect equally partake, all must needs be perfectly righteous, through the same most perfect righteousness of Christ, equally as Christ himself; since the righteousness of the elect is the very righteousness of Christ itself, only with this difference, that it is Christ's, because performed by him; ours, because imputed to us." Gill.}

stead. What the Lord beheld Christ to be, that he beholds his members to be; what he beholds them to be in themselves, that he beholds Christ himself to be.

So that if you would speak of a sinner, supposing him to be a member of Christ, you must not speak of what he manifests, but of what Christ was. If you would speak of one completely righteous, you must speak and know that Christ himself is not more righteous than he is; and that that person is not more sinful than Christ was, when he took his sins on him; so that if you will reckon well, beloved, you must always reckon yourself in another's person, and that other in yours; and until the Lord find out transgressions of Christ's own acting, he will never find one to charge upon you.

Now, we have it professed unto us that "Christ was in all like things like unto us, sin only excepted;" {Heb.2:17;} and for whatever sin you have committed, do, or shall commit, there was one sacrifice once offered by Christ, through which he hath perfected them that are sanctified; that sacrifice of his made the exchange, by virtue of which we became that which Christ was, and he became that which we were; thus the Lord laid iniquity upon him; therefore it is observable, the words in the text are indefinitely spoken, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity;" not this or that iniquity but the whole bulk of it.

And if this seem not enough, that every transgression, first and last, great and small, one with another, are carried away at once, and laid upon Christ; mark that well, in I John 1:7, as it is as clear as the light; "for the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Note; 'all' sin; it is an admirable word though it be never so small; not past sins only, but present sins; the person that belongs to Christ is acquitted of all transgressions, that whatever he commits, it is as if he never committed any in the world.

1. As for that objection about guilt; that the Lord lays, the guilt and punishment, but not simply the sin itself, for ought that I see, it is a simple one; for, you shall never find this distinction in all the scripture, that God laid the guilt of sin upon Christ, and not that itself; as for the guilt of sin, it is not mentioned in all the scripture, that God lays it, or that Christ bears it; nay further, to affirm, that the Lord laid upon Christ the guilt of sin, and not the sin itself, is directly contrary to scripture; for you have many testimonies affirming, that the Lord lays sin upon him; what presumption then it is for a man to say, he lays on Christ the guilt, and not the sin itself!

2. That you may have a little more light concerning this word guilt; for I know many spirits are troubled about it; for my part, I do not think as some do, that guilt differs from sin, as that which is an obligation or a binding over to the punishment of sin, rather than sin itself being past and gone; but that you may have the true nature of it opened, I will give you an instance. When Joseph's brethren were accused for spies, it is said, they spake one to another, "we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear." {Gen.42:21} What is the meaning of guilty here? Reuben expounds it in verse 22. "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear;" and therefore behold we are guilty. What is that? We sinned against the child; to be guilty, therefore, and to commit sin, is all one; they are but two words expressing the same thing; now that you may understand the word guilt better, suppose a malefactor be asked, guilty or not guilty? He answers, not guilty; what doth he mean? He means he hath not done that fact which was laid to his charge. When the jury is asked guilty or not guilty? The jury saith, guilty; what do they mean? Do they mean anything in respect of punishment? No; the jury hath nothing to do with that, but only with matter of fact; that is, whether the fact be done or not; so that to be guilty or not guilty, is to say the fact is done or not; guilt and sin are all one; where lies the difference? The guilt is upon Christ, but the sin itself is laid upon a man's own person; as much as to say, sin is laid upon Christ, but it is not laid upon him; that is just a contradiction, and whereas it is affirmed by some, that the Lord laid the punishment of sin on Christ, and not the sin, that is false; though it be true that he was wounded for our transgressions, yet it doth not follow that he did not bear them; that scripture that warrants us that the punishment was laid upon Christ, warrants us, that sin itself was laid upon him; why do we believe that the punishment was laid upon Christ, but because the Holy Ghost hath revealed it unto us? The same hath revealed to

us, that sin itself is laid upon him, as well as the punishment; he that rejects the one, rejects the other.

But, to sum up all, beloved; the truth is, Satan is very cunning, and for a while, allows Christ the bearing of the guilt and punishment, that so he may take away his bearing iniquity; the truth is, if iniquity be not really transferred to Christ, there is neither guilt nor the punishment of our sins upon him. And observe these things.

I. If iniquity itself had not been laid upon Christ, it had been the extremist injustice in the world for the Lord to have bruised him. That it was the Lord's own act, besides the Jews, is manifest; the apostles jointly concluded that they did nothing but what was by the determinate counsel and purpose of God; nay, in this 53rd of Isaiah, the Holy Ghost saith expressly, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him;" well then, the act of bruising is God's; if he himself will bruise his Son, he hath some reason for it; vindictive justice on a person of necessity implies some fault committed. The Lord complains of his own people, that they should say, "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge;" that is men should be punished without fault; how could the Father possibly thus scourge his own Son, and yet have nothing to lay to his charge? He doth not acquit him from any sin of his own, for "he did no violence" at all; if therefore Christ had not the faults of his own members become his; and, that the Lord did thus bruise him, as having these upon him, he had been bruised for nothing.

Suppose a man should be cast into jail and arraigned, and, though there be nothing found against him, yet the judge will hang him; what justice is there in this? Beloved, if our sins be not transferred to Christ, and found upon him at the arraignment of God, he should have been found complete and absolutely innocent; and then, for the Lord to punish him when he had nothing to lay to his charge, had been injustice to him. That God therefore might be just in punishing Christ, and do no more upon him than what was deserved, he must first have the iniquity laid upon him; that is, the merit of that bruising; that there might be upon him the desert of what he did sustain.

II. Suppose Christ be bruised and our iniquities not laid to his charge, what are we the better for it? Suppose a man dies for a fault, what is this to a thief whose fault he doth not bear in his suffering? He must suffer for his own fault, till it be laid upon the person of another; and being laid upon him, this other suffers for him. Suppose a man be cast into prison for debt, and another after him; what is the casting in of the second to the first, except it be as a surety to the first; then indeed, the first may be acquitted by the imprisonment of the second; but if the second doth not lie in for the debt of the first, the first must suffer, as if the second had not suffered at all. Christ was wounded and bruised; what is that to the person whose iniquities he doth not bear?

If Christ did not suffer for your transgressions, what is that to you if he suffered ten times more than he did? The truth is, beloved, justice, as a blood-hound, follows the scent of blood, and seizes wherever it finds it. If a deer-stealer shall cast off his garment of blood, and another that did not steal, should take it on, the blood-hound would fasten upon him that is not the thief; but, if the thief himself bears the blood of his own garment, the blood-hound will fasten on him; and so will justice do, if Christ doth not take our sins upon himself, justice will pursue us, that have our blood upon ourselves, and so consequently give us up to wrath. But, if Christ take our blood, justice will follow him, and seize upon him, as if he had been the very person acting the sin. If justice do not find the blood upon him, it never pursues him, but it pursues the person; and where this blood remains it will fasten wherever it finds it.

III. Whence should it be, in respect of the event, that the elect and reprobate differ one from the other? The difference lies in this, the elect shall be saved, and the reprobate shall be damned; the immediate cause is this, the reprobate bears his own sin, by reason of which he bears his ensuing damnation; the elect person bears not his own sin, and so there is nothing found against him, for which he should be damned. Now, suppose that Christ leaves iniquity still remaining upon him that is elected, and the sin be found upon him, as well as upon a reprobate, sin would bring the same desert that it doth, upon the reprobate. The first beginning of the difference is in this, Christ takes away the sins of the one, and leaves the sins upon the other still, and they bear the punishment in this and in

the world to come. But, as for the elect, the Lord takes the iniquities of them, and translates them upon Christ, who, in that regard, bears all the wrath due to them for them; and so they become discharged from punishment both in this life and in the life to come. The truth is, wherever sin is, the justice of God will have plenary satisfaction, even for all the sins in the world, either by the sinner himself, or by some surety for him; Christ, seeing he hath taken the sins of the elect upon him, must pay the full value; and his pay must be as full as the reprobates in hell; for God will have the utmost farthing. This is the difference between an elect person and a reprobate; Christ first paid all that for them, which they, with the reprobate, should otherwise have paid in their own persons, in hell; and therefore, you can conceive no real difference between them and you, if Christ doth not bear your sins upon himself.

A word of application, and so I will have done; and that shall be but one. If it be iniquity itself that is laid upon Christ, then beloved, see what cause you have to take up all your time to be his; that being his, and receiving the grace of God administered unto you by him, you may see what cause you have to take up the triumph of the Apostle; "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." It is a sweet song, beloved, and a song of songs indeed and there is mighty strength in the argument. Here is first a question, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Who is it? Some will say, it is God, I fear; I fear not men, they cannot do it; but I fear God will lay something to my charge. If there be sin, it is against him; if there be any wrath, it is he that must pour it out; all that I fear is God. Nay, fear not, saith the Apostle, "it is God that justifieth," therefore never fear that he will lay anything to thy charge. Can God say, I pronounce thee innocent and justify thee from thy sin; and will he, with the same breath say, I have this and that other sin to lay to thy charge? This would be a contradiction. If any man in the world will offer to do it, they have nothing to do in this work; it is God, and he only charges with sin; and if he doth it not, who can do it! Nay, "Christ is dead, nay rather is risen again;" as if he should have said, the Lord laid our iniquities upon him; he made him to bear the burden of all, and it sunk him to death, and he was cast into the jail for the debt; now we see him come out. Seeing God is so exact that he will have the utmost farthing, it is certain he is quit, because he is delivered; he is freed, "he is not dead, but is risen." Oh! Beloved, how comfortably might you walk in all conditions in the world, if you did but carry this in your breast! Well, come what will, I am quit of all my sins, I stand innocent, for Christ himself hath satisfied the Father to the full for them, and he will never remember them again.

Mark but one passage of scripture, and I will conclude. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." {II Cor.5:19,21} Mark, in the business of transferring sin to Christ, God's order; when he will do all with Christ for men's sins, he gives to them a full acquittance; he cancels his bonds, so that he will have nothing in the world to show against him, so it imports. As for the world, {believers I mean,} "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" that is, he will not have a word more to say to them; he will not have a sin more to charge upon them; but, as for Christ, he shall be made sin; that is the reason why God gives them a discharge, because he hath found out one that is mighty to bear it, as you have it in Psalm 89:19, "then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty;" as if he should have said to Christ, I have a company of broken creatures; for a debt that is owing to me I could punish them forever, but I should never pay myself out of them; now I have found thee, a person able to pay; and, seeing I have found thee so, I will take it here, I will pay myself out of thee.

In Hebrews 7:22, you have a notable expression of Christ. "Wherefore," saith the Apostle, "he is the Surety of a better testament." God takes Christ as a surety; look as men will do, so deals God with him. A rich surety is bound for a broken debtor that is not worth a groat; what will the creditor do in this case? He will never look after the beggar; he knows there is nothing to be looked for there; he will look after the rich man; the rich man must stand to it; let him look to it, he shall pay it; and so doth God. Christ is become the Surety of a better covenant; man is a broken debtor, and Christ is a surety, one that is rich, and able to pay; therefore God will look after none but him; for this cause

Christ gives his own single bond, and God is content to take it, and looks for no other payment but him. You know, when a surety becomes bound, instead of the principal, the surety is as much as the principal, after he is bound, as the principal was the debtor before; so Christ, being a surety, not only stands liable to the payment of the debt, but he actually stands the debtor, upon which ground the payment may be exacted; for, except the person be a debtor, there can be no just claim of payment; therefore the surety is a real debtor; nay, Christ being our Surety is become sole debtor; God hath not only taken him to be surety, but, upon Christ's coming and giving his bond, he cancels the bond, that now we are as free as if we never had been bound.