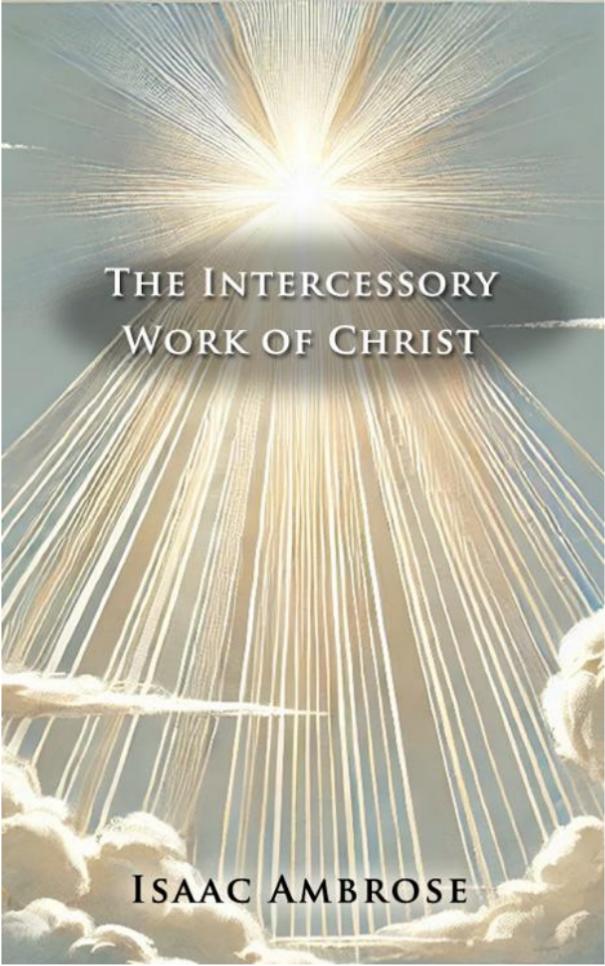


THE INTERCESSORY
WORK OF CHRIST

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The Intercessory Work of Christ

By ISAAC AMBROSE, Minister of the GOSPEL.

Isaiah 45.22. Look unto me, and be ye Saved all the Ends of the Earth.

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Table of Contents

Chap. 1. The Intercession of Christ

-- Sect. 1. What the Intercession of Christ is

-- Sect. 2. According to what Nature Christ doth Intercede

-- Sect. 3. To whom Christ's Intercession is directed

-- Sect. 4. For whom this Intercession is made

-- Sect. 5. What Agreement there is betwixt Christ's Intercessions, and the Intercessions of the High-Priests of Old

-- Sect. 6. What the Difference is betwixt Christ's Intercessions, and the Intercessions of the High-Priests of Old

-- Sect. 7. What the Properties of this Intercession of Christ are

-- Sect. 8. Wherein the Intercession of Christ consists

-- Sect. 9. How powerful and prevailing Christ's Intercession are with His Father

-- Sect. 10. Of the Reasons of Christ's Intercession

Chap. 2. Of Knowing Jesus

-- Sect. 1. Of knowing Jesus, as carrying on the Great Work of our Salvation in His Intercession

-- Sect. 2. Of Considering Jesus in that respect *ibid.*

-- Sect. 3. Of Desiring after Jesus in that respect

-- Sect. 4. Of Hoping in Jesus in that respect

-- Sect. 5. Of Believing in Jesus in that respect

-- Sect. 6. Of Loving Jesus in that respect

-- Sect. 7. Of Joying in Jesus in that respect

-- Sect. 8. Of Praying to, and Praising of Jesus in that respect

-- Sect. 9. Of Conforming to Jesus in that respect

CHAPTER I

The Intercession of Christ

Hebrews 3:1, Romans 8:34. Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus— who also makes intercession for us.

SECTION I.

What the Intercession of Christ is.

We have spoken of Christ's entrance into Heaven and of his immediate actions after his entrance there; the transaction that yet remains, and will remain until his coming again, is his Intercession for the Saints. In these actions of Christ in Heaven (if we will follow him), we must go from glory to glory; no sooner do we come out of one room of glory, but immediately we step into another as glorious as the one before. One would think enough had already been said about the glory of Christ and of our glory in Christ; who would not willingly sit down under the shadow of this happiness and go no further? But yet this is not all; so thick and fast does the glory of Christ break in upon us that no sooner are we out of one, but immediately we are led into the bosom of another. Oh, what a blessed thing it is to be viewing Christ and looking up to Jesus Christ! Saints might do nothing else (if they pleased) but ravish their hearts with the diversity of heavenly light and comfort that breaks forth from the bosom of Jesus Christ. Here is now another mystery as great and amazing as the former, which springs out before our eyes in this transaction of Christ's Intercession.

And in the pursuit of this, as in the former, I shall first state the object, and secondly, instruct you how to regard it. The object is Jesus carrying on the great work of our salvation in his Intercession: in arranging which, I shall examine these particulars; —

1. What is this intercession of Christ?
2. According to what nature does Christ intercede?
3. To whom is Christ's intercession directed?
4. For whom is the intercession made?
5. What agreement exists between Christ's intercessions and the intercessions of the High Priests of old?

6. What is the difference between Christ's intercession and the intercessions of those High Priests?
7. What are the properties of this intercession of Jesus Christ?
8. Wherein, especially, does the intercession of Christ consist?
9. How powerful and prevailing are Christ's intercessions with God his Father.
10. What are the reasons for this great transaction of Christ's intercession for his people?

1. What is the intercession of Christ? Some define it thus: Christ's intercession is that part of his Priestly office, whereby Christ is Advocate and intercessor with God the Father for the faithful. I shall give it thus: Christ's intercession is his gracious will, fervently and immovably desiring that for the perpetual virtue of his sacrifice, all his members might both for their persons and duties be accepted by the Father. I call the intercession of Christ his own gracious will; for we must not imagine that Christ, in his intercession, prostrates himself upon his knees before his Father's Throne, uttering some submissive form of words or prayers; that is not befitting the Majesty of him who sits at God's right hand; when he was yet on Earth, the substance of his requests for his Saints ran thus, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am," and how much more now he is in Heaven, is this the form of his intercessions, "Father, I will this, and I will that."

2. The ground of the foundation of Christ's intercession is the sacrifice or death of Christ; and hence we make two parts of Christ's Priesthood or oblation; the one expiatory, when Christ suffered upon the Cross; the other presentatory, when he does appear in Heaven before God for us; the one was finished on Earth, when Christ suffered without the gate; the other is

performed in Heaven, now Christ is within the City; the first was a sacrifice indeed, the other is not so much a sacrifice as the commemoration of a sacrifice; the first was an act of humiliation, and this latter is an act of glory; the first was performed once for all, this latter is done continually; the first was for obtaining redemption, and this latter is for the application of redemption; so that the ground of this is that; Christ fervently and immovably desires his Father for the sake and virtue of his sacrifice.

3. The subject-matter interceded for is that all the Saints and their service might find acceptance with God; first, Christ's intercession is for our persons, and then Christ's intercession is for our works, for as our persons are but in part regenerate and in part unregenerate, or in part flesh, and in part spirit, so are our duties, part good, and part evil, in part spiritual, and in part sinful; now by Christ's intercession is Christ's satisfaction applied to our persons, and by consequence the defect of our duties is covered and removed, and both we and our works are approved and accepted by God the Father. And thus much for the nature of Christ's intercession, what it is.

SECTION II.

According to what nature Christ does intercede.

2. According to what nature does Christ intercede? I answer, according to both natures: 1. According to his humanity, partly by appearing before his Father in Heaven, and partly by desiring the salvation of the Elect: Christ has entered into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. And I say not unto you that I will pray or desire the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you. 2. According to his Deity, partly by applying

the merit of his death, and partly by willing the salvation of his Saints; and as the effect thereof, by making requests in the hearts of the Saints with sighs unspeakable. Elect, through sanctification of the Spirit and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: this sprinkling is the applying of the blood of Jesus, and that is an act of intercession. Again, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am;" he desires as man, but he wills as God; and as the effect of this he gives the Spirit, "The Spirit itself makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." But what are the intercessions of the Spirit to the intercessions of Christ? I answer, much every way; the Spirit's intercessions are as the effect, and Christ's intercessions are as the cause; the Spirit's intercessions are as the Echo, and Christ's intercessions are as the first voice; the Spirit intercedes for men in and by themselves, but Christ intercedes in his own person; there is a dependence of the Spirit's intercessions in us upon Christ's intercessions in himself. First, Christ by his intercession applies his satisfaction made, and lays the salve to the very sore; and then he sends down his holy spirit into our hearts to help our infirmities; and to teach us what to pray, and how to pray as we ought. Now this he does as God, for who shall give a commission to the spirit of God, but God himself? it is as if Christ should say, "See holy Spirit, how I take upon me the cause of my Saints, I am perpetually representing my sacrifice to God my Father, I am ever pleading for them, and answering all the accusations that sin or Satan can lay against them; and now go thy way to such and such, and take up thy dwelling in their hearts, and assist them by thy energy, to plead their own case; I am their Advocate or Intercessor by office, and therefore be thou their Advocate or Intercessor by operation, instruction, inspiration, and assistance."

SECT. III.

To whom Christ's intercession is directed.

3. To whom is Christ's intercession directed? I answer, immediately to God the Father; "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." In the work of intercession, there are three persons: a party offended, a party offending, and the Intercessor distinct from both; the party offended is God the Father, the party offending is sinful man, and the Intercessor distinct from them both is Jesus Christ, the middle person (as it were) between God the Father and us men. The Father is God and not man, and we who believe in Christ are men and not God. Christ himself is both man and God; therefore, he intercedes and mediates between God and man. If anyone objects that not only the Father is offended, but also the Son and the Holy Ghost, and therefore there must be a Mediator to them also; the solution is easy: Christ's intercession is immediately directed to the Father, but because the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have one indivisible essence and, by consequence, one will, it follows that when the Father is appeased by Christ's intercession, the Son and the Holy Ghost are also appeased with him and in him. I do not deny that Christ's intercession is made to the whole Trinity, but yet immediately and directly to the first person and in him to the rest. But if so, then in some sense (say our adversaries) Christ makes intercession to himself, which cannot be, because in every intercession there must necessarily be three parties. This point has puzzled the Church of Rome, and for the solution of it, they knew no other way than to assert that Christ is our intercessor only as man, and not as God, which is most untrue, for as both natures concur in the work of satisfaction, so likewise they

concur in the work of intercession. It is an ancient and approved rule that names of office given to Christ, such as Mediator, Intercessor, etc., agree with him according to both natures. Can the act of Christ's intercession be the act of Christ's humanity alone? What? To hear and offer up prayers? To receive and present the prayers and praises and other spiritual sacrifices of all believers in the world? To negotiate for them all at once according to the variety and multiplicity of their several occasions? Surely this is and must be the work of an infinite and not of a finite agent. This cannot be effected without the concurrence of the divine nature with the human. But what more answer needs to this objection? Suppose Christ intercedes to himself as God; that is not immediately and directly to the same person, God the Son, though to the same God essentially. Indeed, Christ, as God-man, in respect of his natures agrees with both, being not only God, not only man, but God-man, man-God, blessed forever. But in respect of his person, being the second person in the Trinity, he is distinct from both. 1. From the personality of man, for he has only the personality of God and not of man. 2. From the first person of the Godhead, who is God the Father, for there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one, that is, three persons and but one God.

SECT. IV.

For whom this Intercession is made.

4. For whom is this Intercession made? I answer, 1. Negatively, not for the world. "I pray not for the world," says Christ. While Christ was on Earth, he would not even spend his breath or open his lips for the world. He knew God would not hear him for

them. In like manner, Christ prays now in Heaven. Not for the world; he never had a thought to redeem them or to save their souls, and therefore, they have no share in his intercessions. I know the objection that Christ, upon the Cross, prayed for the bloody Jews, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." But that might be a matter of private duty as man, who in that respect submitted himself to the Law of God, which requires that we forgive our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, and not of his proper office as Mediator. Or if it be referred to the proper mediatory intercession of Jesus Christ (which I rather think), it will not prove that he prayed for them all universally but only indefinitely, that is, only for those who were present at his crucifixion and that in sincerity of heart, not affected ignorance, crucified Christ. Accordingly, this prayer was heard, and many of the Jews were converted at Peter's Sermon, Act. 2:41. What more needs to be said? His own words are clear: Christ's intercessions are not for the world or reprobates. So much negatively.

5. Positively, Christ's intercession is general and particular, for all and every faithful man. "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Just as the High Priest went into the Sanctuary with the names of the twelve tribes on his breast, so Christ entered into the holiest of all with the names of all believers on his heart. He still carries them on his breast and presents his will and desire to his Father for them. He does not only intercede in general, but "Simon, Simon," mark that; whatever your name is, John, Peter, Thomas, Mary, Martha, if you are a believer, Christ prays for you. "I have

prayed, and I will pray for thee," says Christ, "that thy faith fail not."

SECT. V.

What agreement there is between Christ's intercessions and the intercessions of the High Priests of Old.

5. What agreement is there between the intercessions of Christ and the intercessions of the High Priests of Old? Among the Jews in the times of the Old Testament, they had a High Priest who was in all things to stand between God and them. Now, as the Jews had their High Priest to intercede for them, so the Lord Jesus was to be the High Priest of our Christian profession and to intercede for us. It will, therefore, give some light to this doctrine of intercession if we compare these two and first consider what agreement there is between Christ and the High Priests of Old, between Christ's intercession and the High Priests' intercessions.

1. Christ and the High Priests of Old agreed in name. Not only they, but Christ himself is called a High Priest: "We have such an High Priest, who is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ." "Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The Old Priesthood of Aaron was translated into the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, so that he was a Priest as well as they.
2. They agreed in office. That consisted of two parts: oblation and presentation. First, they offered a sacrifice. Secondly, they presented it in the Holy of Holies with prayer and intercession unto God. The one was done outside, the other inside the Holy of Holies. In answer to that, there are two distinct parts of

Christ's Priesthood: 1. The offering of himself as a sacrifice upon the Cross. 2. The carrying of himself and his blood into the Holy of Holies or into the Heaven of Heavens, where he appears and prays in the power of that blood. This was such a necessary part of his Priesthood that without it, he would not have been a complete Priest. For "if he were on earth, he should not be a Priest" — that is, if he had made his abode upon the earth, he would not have been a complete or perfect Priest. This part of his Priesthood, which we call the presentation or intercession, still rested upon him to be acted in heaven. Indeed, this part of his Priesthood is the more eminent of the two, even the pinnacle and apex of his Priesthood. Therefore, it is presented to us in the types of both those two orders of Priesthood that came before him and were figures of him: the Priesthood of Aaron and Melchizedek.

This was Typified in the Levitical Priesthood of Aaron and his associates. The highest duty of that office was going into the Holy of Holies and making an atonement there. This was the height of the High Priest's honour, that he did this alone, and it constituted the difference between him as a High Priest and other Priests. They killed and offered the sacrifices outside as well as he did, but only the High Priest was to approach the Holy of Holies with blood, and that only once a year.

This was Typified by Melchizedek's Priesthood, which the Apostle argues to be much more excellent than that of Aaron's. This was because Levi, Aaron's father, paid tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham's loins. Now, Melchizedek was his Type, not so much in respect of his Oblation or offering of sacrifices, but in respect of his continual presentation and intercession in heaven. Therefore, the same clause, "forever,"

always comes in when Melchizedek is mentioned: "Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Here then is the agreement between Christ and the High Priests of old. In respect of name, both were Priests, and in respect of office, both had their oblations and presentations or intercessions with God in glory.

In the point of Intercession, they agreed in these particulars.

1. The high Priest of old usually went into the most Holy place within the veil once a year. Similarly, Christ our great High Priest has entered into the Heavens within the veil, even into the Holy of Holies. "Christ, by His own blood, entered once into the holy place," not into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us.
2. The high Priests of old had a plate of pure gold on their foreheads, which bore the iniquity of the holy things, so that they might be accepted before the Lord. Likewise, Christ bears the iniquity of our holy things. Spiritual Christians, take comfort! You are not able to perform any duty to God without some sin. Whether you hear, pray, confer, or meditate, there is always some sin involved. However, Christ bears all these sins, even the iniquity of your holy actions. He presents your persons and prayers without the slightest spot to His Father. He is the Angel of the Covenant who stands at the altar with a golden censer and much incense to offer it with the prayers of His Saints, making them acceptable before the Lord.
3. The Jewish high Priests bore the names of the Children of Israel on a breastplate of judgment upon their hearts for a memorial before the Lord continually. Similarly, Christ our great High

Priest bears the names of His people upon His heart before the Lord continually. But how is Christ said to bear the names of the Saints upon His heart? I answer:

1. Continually, in presenting them to His Father as they are in Him. He represents them without blemish, clothed in His own righteousness. "Christ loved the Church, that He might present it to His Father, and in Him to Himself, a glorious Church, without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish."
2. In this continual remembrance of them. "The righteous shall be had in continual remembrance." This is the soul's comfort in times of desertion or in evil days. If anyone cries out, as David did at times, "How long wilt thou forget me, Lord? Forever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" Let such a one remember that Christ's redeemed ones are upon His heart, and He cannot forget them. "But Zion said, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.' Oh no! Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." The Sons of Zion are upon Christ's heart and hands, and they are ever in His sight.
3. In His perpetual love for them. They are near and dear to Him; He has set them as a seal upon His heart. This is the prayer of the Spouse: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm." Then it follows, "For love is as strong as death." Christ has an unwavering love for His Saints; He died for them, and now He intercedes for them. He keeps them close to His heart, and no one can pluck them out of His hands. For whom He loves, He loves unto the end. This concludes the agreement between Christ's intercessions and the intercessions of the high Priests of old.

SECT. VI.

What the Difference is betwixt Christ's Intercessions, and the Intercessions of the High-Priests of Old

6. What is the difference between Christ's Intercessions and the intercessions of the high Priests of old? There is no question that, while they might agree in some respects, Christ officiates in a more transcendent and eminent way than any high Priest did before him. The difference between Christ and them, and between Christ's Intercessions and their Intercessions, can be seen in these particulars:

1. They were called high Priests, but Christ is called the great high Priest. Such a title was never given to anyone but Christ. Hence, the Apostle argues for the steadfastness of our profession: "seeing then that we have a great high Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."
2. The high Priests then were Aaron and his Sons, but Christ our great high Priest is the Son of God. He is styled as such in the same verse: "the great high Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God."
3. The high Priests then served only for a time, but Christ is a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, as the Apostle says, was without Father, without Mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. This means, as far as it is known, and so is Christ without a Father on earth and without a Mother in Heaven. He is without beginning and without end. He remains a Priest perpetually, even to the

end of the World, and the virtue of his Priesthood is infinitely beyond all time, even forever and ever.

4. The high Priests then entered only into that place that was typically holy, but Christ has entered into that place that is properly holy. He has entered into the Heavens, or, if you prefer, into the Holy of Holies, even into the heaven of heavens.
5. The high Priests then did not always intercede for the people. Only once a year did the high Priest enter into the Holy of Holies. After he had sprinkled the mercy-seat with blood and caused a cloud to rise upon the mercy-seat with his prayers and incense, he went out of the Holy of Holies and laid aside his garments. In contrast, our great high Priest has ascended into the Holy of Holies, never to put off his princely-priestly garments. He does not sprinkle the mercy-seat with his sacrifice only once a year but every day. He lives forever to intercede. Oh, what comfort this is to a poor, dejected soul! If he undertakes your cause and includes you in his prayers, he will never leave you out, day or night. He intercedes always until he accomplishes and completes your salvation. The smoke of his incense ascends forever without interruption.
6. The high Priests then did not intercede for sins of greater instances. If a man sinned ignorantly, there was indeed a Sacrifice and Intercession for him. But if a man sinned presumptuously, he was to be cut off from among his people. There was no Sacrifice, no Intercession by the high Priest for such sins. However, we have such a high Priest who makes Intercession for all sins. Every sin, even if it amounts to blasphemy (as long as it is not against the Holy Ghost), shall be forgiven by the virtue of Christ's intercession. In that day, there

shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness, meaning for sins of all sorts. "Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the Sons of Men," including scarlet sins or crimson sins. Sins of the deepest dye shall be done away with through Christ's Intercession. The voice of His blood speaks better things than the blood of Abel; it intercedes for the abolition of bloody sins.

7. The high Priests then did not intercede without all these materials: a Temple, an Altar, a Sacrifice of a young Bullock for a sin-offering, and a Ram for a burnt offering, a Censer full of burning coals of fire taken off the Altar, putting the incense upon the fire so that the cloud of incense might cover the mercy-seat, and sprinkling the mercy-seat with the blood of the Bullock and the Goat seven times with their finger. They had these materials, and they performed these actions, all distinct from themselves. However, Jesus Christ in His Intercessions now needs none of these materials. Rather, He Himself and His own merits are sufficient for all.
8. He is the Temple, either in regard to His Deity, as the gold of the Temple is sanctified by the Temple, or in regard to His human body. When His human body was destroyed, God found it an acceptable Sacrifice and regarded it as a Temple.
9. He is the Altar according to His Deity, for just as the Altar sanctifies the gift, the Godhead sanctifies His humanity. The Altar is of greater dignity than the oblation, symbolizing the Divinity of Jesus Christ.
10. He is the Sacrifice most properly according to His humanity, for even though by communication of properties, the blood of the Sacrifice is called the blood of God, His human Soul and flesh

were properly the Holocaust, or whole burnt-offering, roasted in the fire of His Father's wrath.

11. His merits are the cloud of Incense. The Angel said that Christ is said to have a golden Censer and much Incense, which He offers with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar before the Throne. The smoke of the Incense, which came with the Prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel's hand. Christ's merits are so intertwined with the prayers of His Saints that they perfume their prayers, making them acceptable to God the Father. This illustrates the difference between Christ's Intercessions and the Intercessions of the high Priests of old.

SECT. VII.

What the Properties of this Intercession of Christ are.

What are the properties of this Intercession of Jesus Christ? I answer:

1. It is heavenly and glorious. This is evident in several ways:
 - a. Christ does not kneel before His Father as He did during His earthly humiliation, as it would not be suitable for the glory He has received. Instead, He presents His desires to His Father for His Seal and Consent.
 - b. Christ does not pray out of private charity, as the saints do for each other in this life. He prays out of the public office of mediation, as there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.
 - c. Christ does not pray out of humility, which is the presenting of requests for unmerited things. He prays out of authority,

desiring things with the right to bestow them as well.

d. Christ prays not only as an advocate but also as a propitiation. Christ's Spirit serves as an advocate, but only Christ serves as both advocate and propitiation. While Christ's Spirit advocates for us on earth, it is Christ Himself who applies His merits in heaven and advances the cause of our salvation with His Father in heaven. In each of these respects, we can see that Christ's intercession is heavenly and glorious.

2. It is ever effectual and prevailing. As He has the power to intercede for us, He also has the power to confer upon us what He intercedes for. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." Christ's prayers are always heard in heaven, ensuring that the Father always listens and responds. When Christ, as a man, prayed for Himself, He was heard in His fears. Now, as Mediator, when He prays for us, He is always heard in the specific requests He makes. Unlike sinful humans, who often ask amiss and for selfish reasons, Jesus Christ never asks wrongly or for wrong purposes. Therefore, God the Father, who appointed Him to the office of being the great Master of Requests on behalf of His Church, promises to hear Him in all His requests. As Christ said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know thou hearest me always."
3. It is the most perfective and consummate aspect of Christ's work until the very end of the world. This Intercession is so perfective that without it, all other parts of Christ's Mediatorship would be in vain. Just as the sacrifices under the Law would not have been so effective had the high Priest not entered into the holy place to present the blood, all that Christ did and suffered on earth would have been ineffective without His entry into heaven to

appear in the presence of God for us. This Intercession gives life to the death of Christ. It is the final act in the completion of our souls' salvation during this world and secures all. It is said that there are several steps in Christ's work for us: first, there is sufficiency in His death, as "who shall condemn? It is Christ that died." Second, there is sufficiency in His Resurrection, as "yea rather, that is risen again." Third, there is sufficiency in His life and session at God's right hand, as "for if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of Christ, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Fourth, there is the highest level of sufficiency in His intercession, as "wherefore He is able to save us to the uttermost, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us." If anything was lacking in the former steps, Christ's intercession supplies it all. It is the crowning act that makes everything effective. It saves to the uttermost, for it is the highest and final step. On earth, Christ begins the execution of His office, but in heaven, He concludes it. While His life and death make Him the meritorious cause, His intercession makes Him the applying cause of our souls' salvation. This Intercession is the consummation and perfection of Christ's Priesthood. Thus, it is essential and necessary.

4. It is gracious and full of compassion. Christ's intercession and His Priestly office are established for the relief of distressed sinners. There is no terror mixed with this blessed office of Jesus Christ, which sets it apart from His other offices. Christ rules over the Churches and the World through His Kingly office, but not all receive mercy under His rule. He comes to His own through His prophetic office, yet many do not receive Him. However, when the Priestly office of Jesus Christ is exercised upon a soul, that soul will undoubtedly be saved forever. This Priestly office of Christ is an office of pure love and tender

compassion. It is distinguished by its mercy and compassion, which differentiate it from His other offices. Christ, as the Apostle states, is such a high Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is a merciful and faithful high Priest in matters pertaining to God, making reconciliation for the sins of the People. Christ is exceedingly merciful and compassionate. In all our afflictions, He is afflicted, and in His love and pity, He has redeemed us. In His love and pity, He intercedes for us.

SECT. VIII.

Wherein the Intercession of Christ consists

8. Wherein does the Intercession of Jesus Christ specifically consist? Some suppose that Christ's very presence in heaven and the reminder of His active and passive obedience to God by His very presence are all that Scripture speaks of regarding His intercession. But I would rather answer in these particulars:
9. Christ's intercession consists in the presentation of His Person for us. He Himself ascended to heaven and presented Himself. The Apostle calls this "an appearing for us." Christ did not enter the holy place made with hands but entered into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us. I believe there is an emphasis in the phrase "appearing for us." But how does He appear for us? I answer:
 - a. In a public manner: Whatever He did in this regard, He did openly and publicly. He appears for us in the presence of God the Father, in the presence of His saints and angels. The eyes of heaven are upon Him as He appears for us.

b. He appears for us as a Mediator, standing between God and us. Hence, He is both God and man, so that He can be a Mediator between God and man.

c. He appears for us as a Sponsor and pledge. It is comforting to have a friend at court, by the side of the Prince, who may acknowledge and advocate for us. But if this friend is both a Mediator to request for us and a Surety to engage for us, what great comfort that is! Christ appeared in every respect as such, being both a Mediator to request for us and a Surety to engage for us. Just as Paul was for Onesimus, a mediator saying, "I beseech thee for my Son Onesimus," and a sponsor saying, "If he has wronged thee or owes thee anything, put that on my account, I will repay it." So, Jesus Christ is for His saints. He is the Mediator of a better Covenant (Heb. 8:6) and a Surety of a better Testament (Heb. 7:22).

d. He appears as a Solicitor to present and promote the desires and requests of His saints in a way that they may find acceptance with His Father. He is not idle now that He is in Heaven. Just as on Earth, He went about doing good, so now in glory, He is continually engaged in promoting the good of His people. From the beginning and to the end of the world, it is His concern to solicit His Father on behalf of His poor saints. He tells God about the state of His poor members, whether they are in want, trouble, distress, affliction, or reproach, and then He presents their sighs, sobs, prayers, tears, and groans in such a way that they may be acceptable to His Father.

e. He appears as an Advocate: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." An Advocate is more than a Solicitor. An Advocate is one who

counsels with another and pleads his case in open court. Jesus Christ is such an advocate for His people.

1. He counsels them through His Word and Spirit.
 2. He pleads for them in the high Court of Heaven, at the Bar of God's own Justice. There, He pleads their case and answers all accusations brought by Satan or their own consciences. We will discuss this further shortly.
10. He appears as a public agent or Ledger Ambassador. Some explain this work in these particulars:
- a. His work is to maintain peace, and indeed, this is Christ's work. He is our peace, as the Apostle says. He not only purchased our peace but also maintains our peace with God. To this end, He sits at God's right hand to intercede for us and uphold the peace and union between God and us. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. His work is to maintain communication and correspondence. This is also Christ's work. Through Him, we have access to the Father. In Him, we have boldness and access with confidence by faith in Him. The word "access" signifies not only coming to God in prayer but also all the resort and communion we have with God when united by faith to Jesus Christ. As stated, Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. All believers have this benefit through Christ: they come to God through Him and have free commerce and intercourse in heaven.

c. His work is to reconcile and resolve emerging differences, and this is Christ's work as well. He makes intercession for the transgressors and takes up the differences that our transgressions create between God and us.

d. His work is to procure the welfare of the people or state that He represents. This is also Christ's work. He seeks the welfare of His people and sits at God's right hand to intercede for them. He presents their condition and estate to His Father, requesting that His members may continually receive the Spirit of Jesus Christ, be strengthened in temptations, confirmed in tribulations, delivered from every evil work, enabled for every good duty, and ultimately preserved unto His heavenly Kingdom.

2. Christ's intercession consists in the presentation of His wounds, death, and blood as a public satisfaction for the debt of sin and as a public price for the purchase of our glory.

There is a question among the scholars about whether Christ has taken His wounds, or the signs, scars, and marks of His wounds into heaven with Him. Whether Christ, by representing those wounds, scars, and marks to His Father, intercedes for us. I am certain that some hold the affirmative view. Aquinas distinguishes Christ's intercession as being three-fold: the first before His passion through devout prayer, the second at His Passion through the shedding of His blood, and the third after His Ascension through the representation of His wounds and scars. Regardless of whether this holds true (for I dare not be too confident without Scripture grounding), this I can say with confidence: Christ not only presents Himself but also the sacrifice of Himself and the infinite merit of His sacrifice. When He ascended to heaven, He carried with Him the power, merit, and

virtue of His wounds, death, and blood into the presence of God the Father for us. With His blood, He figuratively sprinkled the Mercy-seat seven times.

In the Law, it is written that when the high priest entered within the veil, he took the blood of the bull and sprinkled it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward, and before the mercy-seat, he sprinkled the blood with his finger seven times. The high priest not only had to slaughter the bull outside the Holy of Holies but also carry the blood inside and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat. Surely these were patterns of things to be done in heaven. Christ, who was slain and crucified outside the gate, brought His own blood into the Holy of Holies or into the heaven of heavens. By His own blood, He entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Once there, He sprinkled it, applying it and obtaining mercy through it. By the blood of Christ, God's mercy and justice are reconciled in themselves and reconciled to us. Christ sprinkles His blood on the mercy-seat seven times, and seven is a symbol of perfection. When Christ's blood is sprinkled on a soul, that soul is truly cleansed from all impurity and ultimately perfected and saved to the utmost.

Christ's blood was shed upon the earth, but now that He is in heaven, His blood is figuratively sprinkled. When a soul is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, it is indeed a heavenly act. The Apostle speaks of it, saying, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and then it follows, 'to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.'" This sprinkling occurs on Mount Zion. There, Jesus is at God's right hand, figuratively standing on the mount, and He sprinkles His blood all around Him. Heaven is thus covered, much like the mercy-seat in the Holy of

Holies. The earth is also covered, similar to the Altar outside the Holy of Holies. Heaven and earth are both figuratively sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. Therefore, the saints and people of God are marked by the blood of the Lamb, slain from the beginning of the world. This is the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. Notice that Christ's blood has a voice; it speaks, cries, prays, and intercedes. There is some agreement and some difference between Christ's blood and Abel's blood.

1. The agreement is in these things: Abel's blood was abundantly shed, as it is said, "the voice of bloods," and Christ's blood was let out with thorns, scourges, nails, and a spear; it was abundantly shed. Furthermore, Abel's blood cried out, and it made a loud cry, so that it was heard from earth to heaven: "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Similarly, Christ's blood also cries out; it makes a loud cry, filling both heaven and earth with its noise. The Lord's ears are so filled with it that it drowns out all other sounds and continually rings in His ears.
2. The difference lies in these things: Abel's blood cried for vengeance against Cain, but Christ's blood speaks for mercy on all believers. Abel's blood was shed because he sacrificed, and he and his sacrifice were accepted. In contrast, Christ's blood was shed so that He might be sacrificed, and through His sacrifice, we might be accepted. Abel's blood cried out, "See, Lord, and revenge." But Christ's blood cried out, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." At this very moment, Christ's blood still cries for remission. Here is our comfort: if God heard the servant, He will surely hear the Son. If He heard the servant for shedding blood, He will much more hear the Son for saving. Yet, to speak properly and not in figures, I will not claim that the

very blood shed by Christ on the Cross is now in heaven or that it speaks in heaven. These cryings are purely metaphorical. However, what I firmly maintain as real and proper is that the power, merit, and virtue of Christ's blood are presented by our Saviour to His Father, both as a public satisfaction for our sin and as a public price for the purchase of our glory.

3. Christ's intercession consists in the presentation of His will, His requests, and His intercession for us, grounded upon the vigour and virtue of His glorious merits. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." This was a part of Christ's prayer while He was still on earth. Some say it is a summary of Christ's intercession that He now makes for us in His glory. He prayed on earth as if He intended to pray for us when He came to heaven. He hints at this in the beginning of His prayer, speaking as if all His work had been completed on earth and as if He were just beginning His work in heaven: "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

I know there is a question about whether Christ, now in heaven, does indeed pray for us in truth and with the right propriety of speech. Some capable divines argue against it, while others affirm it. For my part, leaving room for those who hold different views based on their understanding, I am of the opinion that Christ not only intercedes through interpretative prayer by presenting Himself and His merits to His Father but also through explicit prayer or an express and open representation of His will. To support this view, these texts seem to align: "I will

pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, and at that day ye shall ask in My Name, and I say unto you that I will pray the Father for you." When He says, "I say not that I will pray for you," it is the strongest indication that He intends to pray for them. It is similar to our saying, "I do not say that I will do this or that for you, not at all," when in reality, we will certainly do it and do it effectively. Augustine affirms this: "He prays for us, He prays in us, and He is prayed to by us. He prays for us as our Priest, He prays in us as our Head, and He is prayed to by us as our God." Ambrose tells us that Christ now prays for us just as He prayed for Peter, that his faith should not fail. I imagine as if I hear Christ praying in heaven in this manner: "O My Father, I pray not for the World, I will not open My lips for any Son of perdition. Instead, I expend all My blood, all My prayers, and all My influence with You for My dear, beloved, precious Saints. It is true that You have given Me a personal glory which I had with You before the World existed. Yet, there is another glory I request, and that is the glory of My Saints. I long for them to be saved because they are My joy, and I cannot bear to be separated from them for long. You have set My heart on them, and You have loved them as You have loved Me. You have ordained them to be one in Us, just as We are one, and thus, I cannot live apart from them. I have Your company, but I must have theirs too. I desire that they be with Me where I am. If I possess any glory, they must share in it. This is My prayer: that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me." Christ prayed in a similar manner while He was on Earth, and if this prayer is the essence of Christ's intercession now that He is in heaven, we may imagine Him praying in this way. It would be too intricate to question whether Christ's prayer in heaven is vocal or mental. Certainly, Christ presents His gracious will to His Father in heaven in some way or another. I have no doubt

that He fervently and steadfastly desires that, through the perpetual efficacy of His sacrifice, all His members may be accepted by God and crowned with glory. Not only is there a cry of His blood in heaven, but Christ, through His prayer, supports that cry of His blood. Master Goodwin offers an argument in this regard: "As it was with Abel, so it is with Christ. Abel's blood ascended to heaven, and Abel's soul ascended to heaven. Consequently, the cry of Abel's lifeless blood was echoed by the cry of Abel's living soul. His cause cried out, and his soul cried out." Similarly, it is with Christ. His blood ascended to heaven, His soul ascended to heaven, and indeed, His entire person—body, soul, and all—ascended to heaven. Through this means, His cause cries out, and He Himself supports the cry of His cause. Jesus Christ, in His own person, continually lives to make intercession for us. He exists forever as the great Master of requests, presenting His desires so that those for whom He died may be saved.

4. Christ's Intercession consists in the presentation of our persons in His own person to His Father, so that now God cannot look upon the Son without beholding the Saints in Him. Are they not members of His body, in a close relationship to Himself? And are not all His intercessions on their behalf, and only on their behalf? But how are all the Elect carried up into heaven with Jesus Christ and there set down before His Father in Jesus Christ? I answer, not in actuality, but mystically. When Christ intercedes, He takes our persons and carries them to God the Father in a most imperceptible way to us. Regarding the precise way or manner, I leave it to others, for my part, I dare not be too inquisitive about a secret not revealed by God. Only this we can say: Christ presents our persons to His Father in His own person. This was clearly prefigured by the act or duty of the high

priest, who entered the Holy of Holies with the names of all the Tribes of Israel on his shoulders and breastplate. The Apostle conveys this more explicitly when he says, "By Him we have access unto the Father, and in Him we have boldness and access with confidence." I will provide further explanation for both of these texts, which are given to us for instruction in the Law and the Gospel, in the Old and the New Testament.

Firstly, in the Law, we find that Aaron placed two stones on the shoulders of the Ephod as memorial stones for the children of Israel. Aaron was to bear the names of the tribes before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial. Additionally, Aaron was to carry the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart when he entered the holy place as a continuous memorial before the Lord. In this practice, we see the names of the twelve Tribes of Israel engraved on stones that the high priest regularly took with him into the holy place when he appeared before the Lord. He did this not primarily for his own sake but on behalf of the Tribes, presenting them before the Lord so that they would always be remembered by Him. This is a vivid type of Christ's intercession, who, having entered into heaven, appears on behalf of His Elect. He presents their persons to His Father, bearing them, as it were, upon His shoulders and upon His heart. This is how Christ takes our persons into heaven and represents them in His own person to His Father.

Secondly, in the Gospel, we receive a gracious promise that through Christ, we have access to the Father, and in Christ, we have access with confidence. The word "access," properly signifying being led by the hand to God, implies an introduction or being brought into God's presence. It alludes to the custom in the courts of princes, where no one may enter the presence chamber unless they are led or brought

in by a favoured courtier. Similarly, none may have access to the presence of God except they are brought in by the heavenly favourite, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose very role is to bring people to God. He takes us by the hand and leads us to the Father, saying, "Come, souls, come along with Me, and I will carry you to the Father." It is like how a child who has run away from their Father is taken by the hand of a friend or an older sibling and brought back into the Father's presence. Similarly, all of us, having strayed from God, are taken up by the good hand of Christ and led back into the presence of the Father. Christ is the Ladder that Jacob saw, upon whom we ascend into the bosom of God and into heaven. He is the high priest who takes our persons, bearing them on His shoulders and on His heart, upholding our persons and presenting our conditions to His Father, who is also our Father, and to His God, who is also our God.

5 . Christ's Intercession consists in the presenting of our duties to God. He not only takes our persons and leads and carries them into the presence of God, but along with our persons, He presents all our services in His own person. In this act, He accomplishes two things.

1. He observes the flaws or failures in our duties and removes them before presenting them to God. This is akin to a child who wants to offer a bouquet to their Father. The child gathers both flowers and weeds from the garden. However, upon reaching their Mother, she separates the weeds and binds the flowers together, so only the flowers are presented to the Father. Similarly, we engage in our duties, collecting both the good and the imperfect, but Christ comes and removes the imperfections, presenting nothing but the pure aspects of our service to God the Father. This is exemplified by the ceremony of the high priest, who took away the iniquity of the holy things. The instructions for this ceremony included creating a plate of pure

gold, engraving on it "Holiness to the Lord," and attaching it to a blue cord to be worn on the high priest's forehead. This was done so that Aaron could bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the Children of Israel consecrated in all their holy gifts. The plate was always worn on his forehead to ensure that they would be accepted before the Lord. This ceremony's manner and purpose were to symbolize that Aaron bore and removed the iniquity of their holy things. What was this if not a type of Jesus Christ? He, with His absolute righteousness, covers all the imperfections in our good works, which often carry some defects. Indeed, all our righteousness is as filthy rags, but Christ removes the shortcomings and faults in our duties before presenting them to God.

2. He observes any goodness in our duties or performances, and with that, He mingles His own prayers and intercessions, presenting all as one work interwoven or blended together to God the Father. In the book of Revelation, it is written: "And another angel stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

There is a debate about the identity of this angel who mingles the prayers of all saints with incense. Some speculate that this angel is a created being because the incense is said to be given to him, suggesting it is not his own or from himself. Others argue that this angel can only be the Angel of the Covenant, as no angel but Jesus Christ intercedes or presents our prayers. Regarding the passage mentioning seven angels presenting the

prayers of the saints, it is not part of canonical Scripture and is not supported by any canonical Scripture. Furthermore, it is unlikely that priests were types of angels but rather symbols of Christ.

In any case, regardless of the Greek copies' wording, the ancient Hebrew copy, as translated by Paulus Fagius and Jerome from the Chaldee, reads differently. In Revelations 8:3-4, there is a figurative description of heavenly service corresponding to that performed in the Temple. This is similar to the situation when people prayed outside, and the priest offered incense inside on the altar, as described in Luke 1:9-10. This signifies that believers' prayers always need to be aided and sanctified by Christ's intercession. Even if the incense was given to Him, we know that Christ Himself was given by God, for "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." However, this does not prevent Jesus Christ from giving Himself and offering Himself as incense. The Apostle states, "He hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice unto God for a sweet-smelling savour." In this sense, the incense may have been given to Him, but it was His own. It consisted of Christ's merits, righteousness, and satisfaction, which are the sweet aroma by which God accepts the persons and prayers of His saints. Only Christ presents to God that which He is and has, being both the offering and the Priest. In Gospel times, there is no other priest but Jesus, the forerunner, even Jesus Christ, who became a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, it is Jesus, and only Jesus, who presents our prayers, sanctifies them, blends them with His merits, and makes them pleasing before God.

6. Christ's intercession involves presenting our plea or answer in Heaven to all accusations brought against us. I understand this to be the meaning of the challenge: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Christ intercedes, and who shall condemn? Christ removes all accusations, and who shall charge? If the Law, Sin, or Satan dare to accuse, Jesus is ready at God's right hand to address them all.

An example in Zechariah illustrates this point: "And the angel showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." In this case, Satan, the accuser, stood at Joshua's right hand. It was customary for the accuser to stand on the right side of the accused. Here, Satan accuses Joshua, who is clothed in filthy garments, symbolizing sin's defilement. Joshua, after returning from Babylon, carries the pollution from his time in captivity, and Satan lays this to his charge. However, our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, steps in to remove the accusation. The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan, even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you." This is repeated twice to emphasize Christ's intercession. In essence, Christ says, "My eternal Father rebukes and condemns you, Satan, for opposing my Joshua." Then, Christ pleads on Joshua's behalf, asking, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" In other words, hasn't this one been graciously saved from my indignation? Christ defends Joshua and says, "Take away the filthy garment from him." He tells Joshua, "Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with a change of raiment." Thus, Christ removes the accusation brought by Satan regarding Joshua's filthy garments.

Likewise, our blessed Intercessor does the same when a poor saint falls into sin and defiles their garments. Satan comes to accuse the saint before the Lord, but Christ, our great High Priest, seated at His Father's right hand, intervenes, pleads the case, and answers all the enemy's accusations. He says, "Yes, Lord, this poor soul has filthy garments, but wasn't he recently rescued from the fire of sin? Wasn't he partly regenerated and partly unregenerate? There must be some ashes, dust, and filth upon him. Father, please consider his condition, knowing his frailty and that he is but dust. Though he now wears filthy garments, I will clothe him with my righteousness, and then you shall see no iniquity in him." In this way, the Lord Christ steps in and addresses all accusations brought against us by the Law, Sin, or Satan to God the Father. In this respect, He is truly called our Advocate, as written, "If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We have an Advocate who pleads for us, answers for us, and, through equity and based on His merits, requests the forgiveness of our sins and the salvation of our souls.

SECT IX.

How powerful and prevailing Christ's Intercessions are with God his Father.

9 . HOW powerful and prevailing are Christ's Intercessions with God his Father? I answer, very much, and this will appear if we consider,

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1. That Christ is our great High Priest to God; "We have such an high-Priest, who is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Now, it was God's custom to lend His ear in a special manner to the High Priests. Therefore, people would run to them when they wanted to inquire of God. In ancient Israel, when someone wanted to inquire of God, they would say,

"Come, and let us go to the Seer," for the one now called a Prophet (or High Priest) was previously called a Seer. People would often approach the Priests, and the Priests would go to God. This was for good reason because the Priests mediated for the people, and people experienced that God would listen to the cry of their Priest. Samuel called unto the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day. All the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants unto the Lord your God." Samuel replied, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." Now, Christ is such a High Priest (though with much greater eminence) to God. He intercedes for His people, and may He never cease to pray for His people. He has God's ear in a special way. If God ever lends His ear to anyone, it must be to this High Priest, because of His role in mediating between God and His people. Christ stands in the middle, indeed next to God, as He is our great High Priest in these Gospel times. Therefore, He must prevail with God in every petition He presents on our behalf.

2. Christ was called to this office by God. Christ did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest. No, He was called by God, just as Aaron was. It was God the Father who appointed Him to this role, equipped Him for it, and invested Him with it. "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." Now, for what purpose would God call Him to this office if not primarily to intercede for those to whom God desired to grant salvation? Both God and Christ had the same intention to save the Elect. They agreed that a High Priest should be appointed and an office of intercession established. This way, the purchased salvation could be applied. We often tend to think of God the Father in legal or severe terms, and Christ the Son as more meek and merciful. However,

this cannot be true because there are not two infinite wills or two infinite mercies—one in the Father and another in the Son. Instead, there is one will and one mercy in both. To illustrate this, consider God the Father's readiness to welcome Christ honourably into heaven so that He could perform the work of the High Priest there. No sooner had Christ entered the gates of the City but God said, "Sit thou down at my right hand." But for what purpose? Not only to rule as King (as previously discussed) but also to intercede as our great High Priest. In Scripture, Christ's session and intercession, His Kingly and Priestly offices are often mentioned together. "He is set on the right hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens." It's as if Christ, upon entering heaven, said, "My Father, I have come here as the great High Priest, wearing the breastplate with the names of all the Elect. I have come to intercede for poor sinners. Will I be welcomed on these terms?" To which the Father replied, "Welcome, my son, my only Son, on these very terms. Come, sit down and intercede for whomever you please. I have called you for this very purpose, and you shall prevail." Surely the Father is fully committed to listening to the Son, knowing that He is a High Priest to God, called to this office by God.

3. That Christ is God's Son, and that is more than God's High Priest; He is His natural Son, His beloved Son, His Son who never gave Him the least offense. Surely, when He comes and intercedes for a man, He is most likely to succeed. If a gracious child merely cries, "My Father, my Father," they may prevail greatly, especially with a tender-hearted Father. Jesus Christ is the gracious, precious Son of God the Father, and God the Father is a dear and kind-hearted Father. How, then, should not Christ's intercessions be most powerful with God? Some gather the prevalence of Christ's intercession from many places in

Scripture where this part of Christ's Priesthood or intercession is mentioned, and His Sonship is also expressed or set forth. For example, "We have a great High Priest entered into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," and "Thou art an High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." But immediately before these verses, it says, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." The intercession of such a Son must be very powerful indeed. Was there ever any Son like this Son of God? Was any Son so like His Father or so equal with His Father? He is a begotten Son but never began to be a Son. He is the Son of the Father but never began to have a Father. He is a branch of the King of ages, yet in all ages past was never younger. All earthly relations of Son and Father are but a shadow of the relation between God and Christ. It is so near that, even though they are two, Christ speaks of them as if they were one: "I and my Father are one." Therefore, if the Father were to deny Him anything, He would deny Himself, which can never be. Christ is God's Son, His natural Son, His beloved Son. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," says God. How, then, must not Christ's intercession be powerful with God?

4. That Christ is God Himself, not only God's Son but God Himself. How powerful must His intercessions be to the Father in this respect? It is true that Christ is a distinct subsistence and person from the Father, but Christ is one and the same God as the Father. Christ is the very essential, substantial, and noble representation of God Himself. Christ is the very essence of God, both God sending and God sent. Christ is the fellow of God. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." Moreover, Christ is God, not another God, but one God; "God of God, light of light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by

whom all things were made." Can we imagine that God Himself would be denied anything by God Himself? If God sometimes spoke to His servants, saying, "Ask of me, command ye me concerning all the work of mine hands," will not God much more say to God, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession"? We have brought it so near that if God is God and God is omnipotent, able to do and have whatever He pleases, then Christ, being one God with His Father, must surely prevail. It is but asking, and it shall be given; let Him ask what He will.

5. That Christ is God's darling because He intercedes for His People. "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." I lay it down by suffering, and I take it again by rising, ascending into heaven, and interceding there, and therefore doth my Father love me. Oh, the love of God to Christ and the love of God in Christ to all His Saints! God loved the world so much that He gave His Son, and Christ loved the world so much that He gave Himself. Now, because Christ gave Himself, and His gift is like a sweet-smelling savour unto God, therefore God loves Christ. What a round of love is here! God loves Christ, and Christ loves us, and the Father loves Christ again for loving us. There is not an act of Christ in His work of our redemption that the Father does not view with love and approval. At His baptism, a voice came from Heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." At His death, "He seeth of the travail of His soul, and He is satisfied." At His ascension, He heareth of the intercessions of His soul, and He is delighted. Christ's intercessions are God's music. Therefore, as Christ sometimes spoke to His Spouse, God speaks to Christ, "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Now, Christ's

intercessions must prevail when God loves Christ for the sake of His intercession. If, before the world was made, the Son was the Father's darling, as it is said, "When He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight," then what delights, what variety, what infinite delights has God in Christ now interceding for us? What a dear darling is Christ to God when He not only stands by Him but represents to Him all the Elect from the beginning to the end of the world. "See, Father, look at my breast, read here all the names of those thou hast given me, like Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Twelve Tribes, and the Twelve Apostles, all the Martyrs, Professors, and Confessors of the Law and Gospel. I pray for them; I pray not for the World, but only for them, for they are mine." It is as if God were answering, "What, my Son, the Son of my womb, the Son of my vows! Have you begotten so many Sons? Are they all mine? Then ask what thou wilt and have what thou pleasest. I am as strongly inclined and disposed to grant as thou wouldst have it. It is my joy, my delight, my pleasure to save these souls, and surely the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in thy hands."

6. Christ is not only God's petitioner but also His Commander (I speak with reverence). The phrase "command ye me" is given to the servants of God, and may we not apply it to the Son of God? Christians, God is as ready to serve us as if we had Him at our command. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us." In this sense, we may boldly say that God the Father is as ready to hear Jesus Christ as if He had Him at His command. Not that He truly and literally commands God, but He commands all things beneath God, and He commands all things on behalf of God. This is evident in the voice of God, "I have set my King upon my

holy hill of Zion." Why "my King"? I dare not say that He is God's King in a way that implies God's inferiority or subjection to Christ—God forbid! So why then "my King"? He is God's King because He was appointed by God or because He rules on behalf of God. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." God has delegated all His prerogatives to Jesus Christ, so that now the King of Saints can do as He pleases with God and the entire world. Only one thing follows: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." It's as if the Father is saying, "I cannot deny you, my Son, but I want you to ask. Do as you wish in Heaven, Earth, and Hell. I lack the heart, and indeed the power, to deny you anything. Only acknowledge that this power originally resides in Me, so that all who honour the Son may honour the Father, and all who honour the Father may honour the Son." These are the terms between God the Father and God the Son. Therefore, how powerful and prevailing are Christ's intercessions with His Father? If He asks with the power to command, there is little doubt about the success of His petition.

We have heard of cases where a suit was presented with a petition in one hand and a sword in the other, and the effect is well known to all. Just as a King who seeks peace backed by a mighty army is able to secure what he asks for, Christ, interceding for His Saints with the power to obtain what He requests, must certainly accomplish His desires. It is observed that Christ is first said to sit at God's right hand and then to intercede. He approaches the salvation of sinners like a powerful Prince negotiating the surrender of a town situated under a castle he commands. Or, He approaches it like a Commander dealing with the surrender of someone already in His custody. It is, in all humility, beyond God's power to deny His Son anything

He asks. If the Lord sometimes cried out to Moses as a man whose hands are held, saying, "Let me alone," how much more does Christ's intercession bind God's hands and command all in Heaven, Earth, and Hell? This is why we say that God the Father has divested Himself of His power and entrusted the keys into Christ's own hands. "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." No one goes to Hell without being bound there by Jesus Christ, and no one enters Heaven without being locked in there by Jesus Christ. He holds the keys to everyone's eternity at His side. If He says, "Father, I will that this man and that woman shall inherit Heaven," the Father cannot but respond, "My Son, I have no power to deny Your request. You have the keys to Heaven in Your own hands. Let it be as You wish."

7. I shall only add this on the Father's part: God is Christ's Commander in this office, just as Christ is God's Commander in this office. Why should we have harsh thoughts of God the Father more than of God the Son? Is He not as willing for our salvation as Jesus Christ? Surely it was the oath of God, specifically God the Father: "As I live," saith the Lord, "I would not have the death of a sinner, but that the wicked turn from his sin and live." Wasn't this the first message from God to Christ when He first entered heaven: "Sit thou here on this throne, and ask what thou wilt of thy Father"? Moreover, didn't the Father anticipate the Son by giving Him His commands to ask even before the Son uttered a word of request to God His Father? "Thou art my Son, this day (even this day of thy resurrection, ascension, session) have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions." In other words, "Come, Son, thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee, and though

I have begotten thee from all eternity, yet this day, and every day, I am begetting thee still. I said to thee at thy resurrection, 'this day have I begotten thee,' and I said to thee at thy ascension, 'this day have I begotten thee.' Now, ask, and do not be shy or modestly reserved in your petitions. I command you to this Office. Here, I appoint you the great Master of requests in Heaven. Others may pray out of charity, but none but yourself in a way of justice, authority, and office. Therefore, ask boldly and generously, open your mouth wide, and I will fill it." Oh, what a demonstration of love is this, not only to Christ but to us in Christ! When man had offended his God, broken the covenant with God, and become an enemy to God, it was God the Father who sought peace with man, offered conditions of peace to man, and appointed a Mediator, an Intercessor, and called His Son to that office. Now, with Christ in Heaven, He instructs Him to do His office and to ask freely. So that if the Elect are not saved, it should be attributed to Christ, for the Father is most willing. Surely, here's more than an indication of the Father's inclination to accept Christ's intercessions on our behalf. We can see that the Father's heart is as much towards us as Christ's own heart. He is full of compassion, gentle, and easily entreated. Christ does not need much persuasion to obtain His grant, nor does His intercession add one drop of love to God's heart; it merely draws it out, which would otherwise have remained hidden. Nor does He initiate it until His Father commands Him to. Therefore, how powerful and prevailing must Christ's intercessions be?

SECT. X.

Reasons for Christ's Intercession.

10. What are the reasons for this significant act of Christ's intercession for His people? I answer:

1. It is the Father's will that it should be so. He called Jesus Christ to this office, and the command of God is upon Jesus Christ. "Ask for whatever you desire for your redeemed ones, and I willingly engage myself to grant it. However, it is my pleasure that you should ask." Just as God said to the house of Israel: "I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it. Nevertheless, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." So, God says to Christ, "I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it. Only, my Son, I will be inquired of by you." I consider this to be the primary reason for Christ's intercession; even so, Father, for it seemed good in your sight. It is God's will that Christ should intercede.
2. It is the Father's love to engage His Son for His people. Oh, the comfort of a true Christian in this respect! Are you in temptation or desolation? Surely Christ is engaged by God to petition for you. You have presented many petitions to Christ, and He has presented them all to God. He could do no otherwise, for He serves as an Advocate, mentioning and pleading the cases brought before Him. I envision God speaking to His Son like this: "Son, do good to this poor soul. Here is everything he needs, only ask for what you know will make him happy. Must he have My Spirit? My comforting Spirit? Will nothing less, nothing cheaper suffice for him? Then, here it is." Christ is now deeply engaged to petition for those whom God loves and for whom He gave Himself. Surely, if Christ were to cease interceding for such, He would displease His Father, which, as we know, He would never do. He would go through Hell before abandoning His role.

3. It is Christ's own inclination to fulfil His Office. The power that Christ possesses for the benefit of sinners is necessarily exercised. Just as the Sun shines upon the entire world and cannot do otherwise, so Christ, the Son of righteousness, intercedes for all His saints and can do nothing less. What is the Father's will is also Christ's will (I mean Christ's natural will, not His artificial will in the sense of self-denial, as God's will is said to be our will). Thus, whatever the Father desires, Christ cannot but desire, for the same Spirit is in Christ to the same extent as in the Father. As God is filled with love for all captives, so is Christ. As God desires that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, so does Christ. The same boundless sea of love that surges in my Father's heart flows in mine. "For I and the Father are one."
4. It is Christ's honour to intercede. By doing so, the Crown is placed upon Christ's head, and much honour and glory are conferred upon Jesus in this regard. I believe that all the work done in Heaven involves Christ interceding while the saints and angels praise. Christ intercedes forever, and the four living creatures and twenty-four elders sing forever (Revelation 4:8, 9, 10, 11). An argument for Christ's honour through His intercession is presented by Master Goodwin in this way: if it were not for Christ's intercession, how would the Office of Christ's Priesthood have any work? This reason is more than suggested in Hebrews 7:24, 25: "This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood; and the work of his Priesthood is interpreted to make intercession forever." The meaning is that God would not have Christ continue to be a Priest in name only or based solely on past service, preserving the honour of the priesthood merely through the memory of what He once did. Instead, God desires that Christ's glory be

kept continually fresh and vibrant by this new work of intercession, thus perpetually springing forth. The Apostle's argument essentially states that since Christ Himself is eternal, His work as a Priest should also be eternal, ensuring that His honour is preserved and perpetuated forever.

5. It is Christ's love for His saints; His heart is so enamoured with His saints that He intercedes for them forever. Love is as strong as death, and it never wearies of doing good for the beloved. Now, Christ's saints are the objects of His love. "My sister, my love, my dove." In Christ's reckoning, the saints are like precious jewels. "And they shall be mine," says the Lord of hosts, "in that day when I make up my jewels." The saints are Christ's exclusive choice, the very flower of the Earth. "You have I chosen out of the world," and "You are my people, my chosen." All the world is Christ's domain, and kings are like mortar to Him. But only the saints are Christ's chosen; they are the ones whom the Lord, in His eternal plans, has set apart for Himself. As the Psalmist says, "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is Godly." The saints are also Christ's image, representing Him in His supreme excellence, particularly in His righteousness and holiness. Just as when making a portrait of a person, one wouldn't draw their backside but strive to capture their likeness, their very face and countenance, so are the saints the true picture, the image, the reflection of God in His highest excellence. The saints are in covenant with Jesus Christ and are therefore in a closer relationship than any others. This is why they are called the portion of God, the treasure of God, the peculiar people of God—those whom God and Christ delight in, those whom God and Christ have set their hearts upon. They are the children of God the Father, the very bride and spouse of God the Son, in some respects closer than even the angels, for the

angels are not so mystically united to Christ as God's people are. Is it any wonder then that those who are so precious to Christ should be the object of His prayers? If they were so deeply in His heart that He shed His blood for them, will He not now intercede for them? Indeed, yes! He carries them close to His breast or heart, as near as can be, so that they remain in continuous remembrance before the Lord forever. His very love compels Him to this office of intercession.

6. It is Christ's delight to intercede for His saints. Before the world was, His delights were with the sons of men. And when the fullness of time came, He said, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy Will, O my God." What was that will if not to be with the sons of men? He knew that it was His Father's pleasure, and He Himself had a delight in being with them, in living and dying for them. No sooner had He entered Heaven than He continued to delight in officiating on behalf of the sons of men. He carries their names on His heart there, and although some of them are on Earth while He is bodily present in Heaven, physical distance cannot diminish His delight in remembering them. He constantly reminds His Father about His people in the lower world, telling Him that they are His all in all upon the Earth—His joy, His delight, His portion. Just as people give portions to their children, God, having but one Son through eternal generation, has given the Elect to Him as His portion. Hence, Christ's primary work in Heaven is to prepare mansions for His portion, to draw God's heart toward His portion, and to request favour and love for His portion. In Heaven, it is Christ's joy to approach His Father and say, "Father, I still have a small portion on Earth, and because they are on Earth, they continue to sin against your Majesty. But I have suffered and atoned for their sins, and I have come here to

remind You of it and continuously seek new pardons for their new sins. Come, consider my past satisfaction. Didn't You promise? Isn't it in the Articles of agreement between You and me that I should see the travail of my soul and be satisfied? Didn't You say that because I poured out my soul, You would divide me a portion with the great and the spoil with the strong? O my Father, now I make intercession for the transgressors. Grant me pardons for a hundred thousand million sins. You have said and sworn that You have no pleasure in the death of sinners, and it is my pleasure, my joy, my infinite delight to save sinners. These are my seed, my portion, my redeemed ones, so let them be saved." Thus, Christ intercedes, and His delight in His saints, knowing it to be His Father's will, drives Him to this intercession. This reason is dependent on the first and primary reason: it is God's will that Christ should intercede, just as it is Christ's delight to fulfil the will of His Father in Heaven, as He says, "I delight to do thy Will, O my God."

7. It is Christ's compassion that causes intercession. Christ is such a high priest, as the Apostle says, that He cannot help but be moved by the feeling of our weaknesses. He was tempted in all points just as we are, yet without sin. When He was on Earth, He experienced our infirmities, frailties, and miseries. Just as a person who has experienced kidney stones, gout, or a fever, or especially one who has felt soul-troubles, cannot help but feel compassion for those in a similar condition; likewise, Christ, having gone through the experience of our outward and inward sufferings, cannot help but have compassion on us. It is this very compassion that moves Him to intercede with His Father on our behalf. It is observed that the very duty or function of the High Priest was to sympathize with the people of God, except in the case of the death of his close relatives, where he was not

required to sympathize or mourn. However, Jesus Christ surpasses all the High Priests who came before Him; He fully sympathizes with us, not in some, but in all conditions. "In all our afflictions, He is afflicted." I believe that Christ has brought a human heart with Him to Heaven. Although He has no passions as God, He possesses the essence, the essence, and the excellence of all these passions (which we call compassion) in infinite measure as God. He strikes and tests, yet He pities. When Ephraim bemoans himself, God replies, "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spoke against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore, my bowels are troubled for him." Undoubtedly, there is a heavenly passion in Christ's heart as God-man, which prompts Him to pray to God and show compassion towards humanity. Oh, how tempted souls should consider this! It may be that Christ is giving you a cup of tears and blood to drink, but who knows what feelings, what movements of the heart, what compassion stir within Jesus Christ all the while? Those who have experienced the results of Christ's intercession know this and cannot help but affirm this truth. O you of little faith, why do you doubt Christ's compassion? Is He not our compassionate High Priest? Has the tenderest, meekest, mildest heart of a man that God could form met with the eternal and infinite mercy of God Himself in Jesus Christ? You have heard that Christ, in both His natures, is our High Priest, Mediator, Intercessor, and if either God or Man knows how to show compassion, it must be Christ. Oh, the compassion of Christ! "He is touched," as the Apostle says, "with the feeling of our infirmities." This is an allusion to the moving and stirring compassion of God in Jeremiah 31:20. In Heaven, Christ is burning and aflame with a passion of compassion towards His weak ones. Therefore, He pleads, intercedes, and prays to God for them.

Up to this point, we have presented the subject of Christ's intercession. Our next task is to guide you on how to view Jesus in this regard.

CHAPTER II.

Of Knowing Jesus

SECT. I.

Of knowing Jesus as carrying on the great work of our Salvation in his Intercession.

Let us understand Jesus as He carries on this great work of our salvation in His Intercession. Isn't it a valuable piece of knowledge to understand what Christ is currently doing in Heaven for us on Earth? If I had an important case at Court, upon which my estate and life depended, and I knew that I had a friend there who could intercede effectively and that he was presently advocating on my behalf, wouldn't this knowledge be precious? I can confidently say, on behalf of all believers in the world, that Christ is currently interceding for us at the right hand of God. Since His ascension into Heaven, He has been engaged in this work for over sixteen hundred years. Whether it's summer or winter, day or night, without any weariness of spirit, Christ has been continuously praying and interceding. Christ's love never takes a break, never ceases at all. Even now, as you read this, Christ is acting as an Advocate for you. He has engraved your names as a seal on His heart. Positioned directly before the gaze of His

Father, the first opening of God's eyelids is fixed upon the breast of Jesus Christ. Isn't this knowledge worth having? O my soul, cease your vain studies of natural things! If they do not in some way contribute to a proper understanding of this, they are not worth the effort. What good is it for Aristotle to be praised in places where he is not, and to be condemned where he is? Oh, the excellence of knowing Jesus Christ! Such knowledge, if true, is nothing less than salvation itself. So, study His intercession in all the previous details. I have briefly covered them, for the task has become overwhelming, and I now seek to summarize. But always remember that in Christ's intercession, there are many secrets we must never know on this side of Heaven. Be cautious about entering into this labyrinth without the guidance of the Word. Above all, seek the guidance of the Spirit to illuminate your darkness, and whatever you come to know, know it for yourself.

SECT. II.

Of considering Jesus in that respect.

2. Let us consider Jesus carrying on this work of our salvation in his intercession. Many of God's people have found the benefit, and for my part, I cannot but approve of it as an excellent, quickening, and enlivening duty to engage in frequent meditation or consideration, especially when we encounter such a blessed subject as Christ's intercession. "My meditation of him shall be sweet," says David, "I will be glad in the Lord." It is enough to make a meditation sweet and refreshing when it revolves around such a subject as Christ's intercession. Isn't it like incense, a sweet odor, and perfume to God Himself? Shouldn't each thought of it be sweet to us? Come, let us be earnest in this duty, and to do it thoroughly, let us consider it in several particulars, such as:

1. Consider the nature of Christ's intercession. What is it but the gracious will of Christ fervently desiring that, through the virtue of His death and sacrifice, your person and your deeds might be accepted by God? Just as Christ on Earth gave Himself up to death, even to the death of the Cross, to abolish sin, so now in Heaven, He prays to the Father through His agony and bloody sweat, His cross and passion, His death and sacrifice, so that your sins may be forgiven, your service accepted, and your soul saved. This is the will of Christ—your justification, sanctification, and salvation. Accordingly, He presents His will, saying, "Father, I will that all those privileges flowing from my death be conferred upon this person by name." Such a soul is now meditating and contemplating my intercession, and my will is that even his meditation may find acceptance with God. Oh, what emotions would fill your heart and spirit if you only considered that Christ is speaking His will even now, so that your person and your service may both find acceptance and be pleasing to God.
2. Consider the person who intercedes for you. It is Christ in both natures; He is your Mediator, the middleman between God and man. In this respect, you can think of Him as impartial, equally inclined to either party, like a pair of scales hanging evenly without one side raised or lowered more than the other. "A Mediator is not of one," says the Apostle. Christ partook of both natures, divinity, and humanity, so that He might be suitable to stand in the gap between His Father and us. He is a Priest according to both natures; He is a Daysman entirely for God and a Daysman entirely for us, standing on our side.
3. Consider the person to whom Christ intercedes. Isn't it to His Father? You can be certain of a favourable outcome, O my soul,

for God is your Intercessor's Father. If I had a request to present to some Majesty, and the Prince would mediate for me, I might hope for success. Christ is God's Prince, so to speak, and concerning us, "the first-begotten of many brethren." In this, you can find your joy, that the offended party is Christ's very own Father and, in Christ, your Father as well. Fathers cannot be cruel to their beloved children. "What man among you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?" Especially if Christ Himself is making the request?

4. Consider the persons for whom Christ intercedes; it is for all the Elect, and in particular for you. Oh, the sweetness of this one meditation! If I knew that my name were written in Heaven, wouldn't I, as Christ bids me, rejoice in this? But what is it to have my name written in the most important part of Heaven? What is it to have my name inscribed on the breastplate of Jesus Christ? Come, read, O my soul, isn't it written like this: "Isaac" or "Jacob, I have prayed, and I am praying for you that your faith may not fail?" I am sure I wouldn't part with my hope in this privilege for the entire world. The mere thought of this makes me consider all the world as worthless, like dross and dog's meat. And oh, how could it ever be that the world, or the flesh, or the devil would steal this meditation from my heart? How could I ever forget that Christ has gone to Heaven, entered the Holy of Holies, and that He carries my name into the presence of God the Father? I speak the same to you who are reading this; if you are a Believer, there is no doubt that Christ is speaking a good word to His Father on your behalf. He can no more forget you in His intercessions than a mother with full

breasts can forget her nursing child, so that she wouldn't have compassion on the son of her womb. Now, if ever, look up to Jesus, yes, look, and never stop looking until you see your own name written on His heart. This is enough to anchor your soul and make it abide in the thought of Jesus Christ carrying you on His shoulders and bearing you on His breastplate as a memorial to His Father in Heaven.

5. Consider the agreement and difference between Christ's intercessions and the intercessions of the high priests of old. They both interceded, but Christ's intercessions are far more transcendent and eminent. Christ is more faithful in His office and position than any high priest ever was. Christ is more compassionate and merciful than any high priest ever was, which is why He has the title of "one of many commiserations." All that comes from Christ is mercy, love, sweetness, and more than motherly affection. Oh, my soul, why should you say, like Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over by my God?" as if Jesus Christ had omitted you from the list of His people and excluded you from the roster of those He looks after. No, no, He is a faithful and merciful High Priest, far superior to all the high priests of the Old Testament. If they were so meticulous as to not omit any name of all the twelve tribes from their breastplate, how much more careful is Christ not to leave out your name in His intercession? It is from this very argument of Christ's compassion and faithfulness that the Apostle calls upon us to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, even more faithful than Aaron or Moses, or any of the high priests. Therefore, consider Him, O my soul; this Gospel High Priest is indeed worthy of your consideration.

6. Consider the properties of Christ's intercession; isn't it heavenly and glorious, effectual and prevailing, and, as long as this world lasts, the most perfect and complete among all other aspects of our salvation? Oh, give me the intercessions of Christ above all the intercessions of men or angels. I understand that the saints on Earth pray for one another, but they do not pray in their own names or for their own merits; they pray in the Name and for the merits of Jesus Christ. As for the saints and angels in Heaven, Cyprian and Jerome seem to suggest that they pray for the state of the Church Militant, but if they do so, it is out of charity as brethren, not as mediators in an official capacity. They pray only for the Church in general, not for any specific individual or member of the Militant Church. Such an intercession as this, so heavenly, so effectual, so perfecting of our salvation, so authoritative and public, grounded in the satisfactory merits of the intercessor, is unique to Christ. I would certainly appreciate the prayers of all the churches of Christ. Oh, that there were not a single saint on Earth who did not mention me by name in their morning and evening prayers (whoever you are reading this, I beseech you to pray for me). But above all, let me have a share in those prayers and intercessions that belong exclusively to Christ; I am certain that I would never go astray then. Christ's prayers are heavenly, glorious, and exceedingly effectual.

7. Consider the particulars in which Christ's intercession mainly consists. Isn't it in the presentation of His person, blood, prayers, and intercessions? Isn't it in the presentation of our persons, performances, pleas, or answers to the accusations of Satan? People seldom realize how busy our Mediator, Sponsor, Solicitor, and Advocate is now in Heaven for us. They little think that Christ is appearing, His blood is crying, His prayers are

ascending, His robe of righteousness is covering us, and the iniquity of our holy things. Oh, my soul, look up, consider Jesus, your Savior, in these respects! I am convinced that if you only knew, if you could see, how much work Christ has at hand and how He carries it out for your salvation, it would melt your heart into tears of joy. While Christ was on Earth and His mother had lost Him, He could say, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Now that Christ is in Heaven, He is still about the same business. His entire occupation in Heaven is to intercede for us so that we may be saved. It is very true; there is much in this intercession of Jesus Christ. It is like a tree with many branches, and every branch is fruitful. So, if you wish to expand your meditation in this vast ocean of delights, there is enough room. But here, I must leave you to your duty, for I can only point out the various aspects you may explore. Oh, think about it; Christ, His blood, and His prayers are all at work! Christ plays the Advocate, pleads your case, perfumes your duties with His incense, and invisibly presents your person to God His Father, saying, "O My Father, be merciful to this sinner, pardon his sin, and save his soul for the sake of Jesus." Blessed mediation! Blessed is the person who knows how to meditate on this blessed subject day and night.

8. Consider the power and effectiveness of Christ's intercession with His Father. Isn't He, for this purpose, a Priest to God, called by God Himself? Isn't He the Son of God, even God Himself? Isn't He God's Beloved? God's Commander, as well as Suppliant? Moreover, isn't this design also God's will? Isn't the Father's heart as much inclined toward us and our salvation as Christ's own heart? So, as sure as Christ has ascended to Heaven with your name engraved on His heart, you shall surely follow Him and be with Him where He is. Who can bring any charge

against God's elect? Who can condemn them? When Christ becomes their Patron to defend against the sentence of damnation, it is in vain for Sin, or Law, or Satan to attempt anything. Just as an innocent person is safe as long as they have a learned Advocate to respond to all objections, so it is with Believers, who have Christ Himself both as Judge and Advocate, a trustworthy Advocate. He always prevails in whatever He undertakes. He has never lost a case. For these sixteen hundred years, He has won all the causes of hundreds, thousands, and millions of souls. Why? He is so beloved and close to His Father that He can persuade Him to do anything He wills. O my soul, if you have any connection with Jesus Christ, doesn't this provide comfort? In the name of Christ, I can assure you and give you my guarantee that if Christ prays for you, He will surely save you. He has never failed, and He never will fail in any of His petitions to God. Oh, think about this!

9. Consider the reasons for Christ's intercession. Many reasons are given, but this one may suffice: it is God's own ordinance. God's wisdom devised this way to save our souls, that a High Priest should be appointed who would die for sinners and later present His death to His Father by interceding on their behalf. Some may deem this unnecessary. Couldn't God have pardoned our sins and saved our souls without a Priest? I won't argue against God's power, but if anyone wishes to, let them explain what other way God's wisdom could have found to reconcile His mercy in saving humanity with His justice in condemning sin. Pouring out hell upon sin while bestowing heaven upon the sinner would likely have perplexed all the wisdom in the world, both of men and angels. Now, if God Himself thought it necessary to find this way and declared, "This is My pleasure: that Christ My Son shall be a Priest, offer Himself, present

Himself and His offering, and His prayer to Me on behalf of His People," then, my soul, rest on this as God's own ordinance. Marvel at God's ingenious plan. Say, "Oh, the depth!" Ask no further questions, but meditate, ponder, and consider it until you feel the influence and efficacy of Christ's intercession on your sin-sick soul.

SECT. III.

Of Desiring Jesus in that respect.

3. Let us desire Jesus to continue this work of our salvation in His intercession. I cannot help but wonder at the apathy that has seized my heart and the hearts of all humankind. Why do we not long for Christ, whose heart constantly pants and longs for us? It seems we do not earnestly seek to experientially understand the sweetness found in Christ. If there were no other object of contemplation except Christ's intercession, wouldn't that be enough to ignite our longing souls? Oh, my soul, awaken and set this blessed object before your eyes. Examine it thoroughly until your affections begin to warm, and you cry out, "Oh, I desire to have a part in Christ's heavenly prayers! I would not be excluded from Christ's heavenly prayers for ten thousand worlds! Come, be earnest! This object is exceptionally sweet and precious; long for it, yearn for it! God understands the rhetoric of your breath as well as your cry. But what is there in Christ's intercession that is so desirable? I answer —

1. In Christ's intercession, our souls' salvation is being transacted in the present. The passages we've discussed so far are done and in the past. The transactions of eternity came to an end when time began. The transactions promised by Christ had their culmination when He was incarnate. The transactions of Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension are now over a

thousand and six hundred years old. I understand that the virtue and influence of all these transactions continue and will continue forever and ever. However, the various actions had their moments in time. Only Christ's session, the mission of His Spirit, and His blessed intercession, both were and are the very present occupation of Jesus Christ. If it were possible to see into heaven, if we could look steadfastly as Stephen did and see the heavens opened; if our eyes, through an extraordinary power, were carried through the azure sky, through it all, to the Holy of Holies and to Jesus Christ in His glory, what would we see but Christ interceding, Christ busy with His Father on behalf of His poor saints? Now He prays, now He presents His person, merits, intercession, intercession, i.e., Father, here are a group of rebels justly under Your displeasure. They deserve to be eternally separated from You, but I must have them pardoned and received into Your bosom. Make Your own terms, let justice require the greatest satisfaction. I have paid a sufficient and effective price for all of them. Give them whatever laws You please, and I will ensure they obey them. To this end, Holy Spirit, go to such and such souls. Enable them in their duties and sanctify their souls, bodies, and spirits. Why, this is the current transaction of Jesus Christ and, therefore, most desirable. I long to know what Christ is presently doing in heaven for my soul. Isn't it thus? Isn't all His time spent either reading pardons for His redeemed ones or presenting petitions from them and pleading for them? Surely, He is interceding every day. It is His current work for our souls. Oh, desirable work!

2. In this present transaction lies the application of all Christ's previous actions, whether His habitual righteousness or His active and passive obedience. All those events of Christ's

incarnation, conception, circumcision, birth, life, and death, which we especially regard as the meritorious causes of our salvation, would be nothing to us if they were not applied by Christ. They were the means of impetration, but Christ's intercession is the means of application. Christ acquired salvation through those antecedent acts, but He secures our possession of salvation through this perfect and consummate act of intercession. The Apostle sets forth this order when he says, "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect, He became the Author (or applying cause) of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him." For this purpose, He was called by God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Now, isn't this the most desirable act of all? Alas! What good is a mine of gold in a field in which I have no ownership? I am thoroughly convinced that Christ's merits are exceedingly precious, but oh, I wish they were mine! I wish Christ's intercession would bring the ointment and apply it to my wounds! I wish I could hear that voice from heaven, saying, "My child, I was incarnate for you, conceived for you, born for you, circumcised for you, obeyed the Law for you, and suffered the penalty for you, and now I am interceding that your soul may benefit from all my actions and sufferings." If Christ's intercession is the applying cause, if it brings home to my soul all of Christ's prior actions, saying, "All of these are yours, indeed yours," how desirable must this intercession be?

3. In this application lies that communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son: "I pray for these, that as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Understand this wisely; we cannot think that there should be an equality of oneness between God and us as there is between God and Christ. No, but there is a oneness in likeness and reality, even in this

life. By virtue of Christ's intercession, we have oneness with God and Christ, not only in comforts but also in graces. Pay attention to this: when I speak of communion with God in this life, I mean especially the exchange of grace between God and the soul. On God's part, there is a special outpouring of grace and favor towards man, and on man's part, there is a special return of grace and honor towards God. Some trembling souls tend to believe that all communion with God and Christ consists only in the comforts of the Holy Spirit. However, Christians can just as truly and advantageously have communion with God in secret conveyances of grace, inward support, in a hidden acceptance of service, and in the inner stirrings of the soul towards God as they can in the more open and comforting manifestations of God to the soul. Communion with God is like a close friendship (I say this with holy humility). Don't we usually go to a friend for counsel and advice as well as for comfort and encouragement? We entrust our sorrows as well as our joys to a friend's bosom. Imagine a soul, even one spiritually overwhelmed and on the brink of breaking, turning to God and pouring out its heart before the Lord. Now, if afterward the soul finds no more relief than the mere release of its pain, if God does not pour in any healing balm but only provides support, shall we say that this soul, in this case, has no communion with God? Oh, yes! In God's secret visits to the soul and in the soul's restless pursuit of God, even if nothing but darkness is perceived, that soul lives in the light of God's countenance. The sun shines, even if a cloud intervenes. God smiles, even if the soul does not perceive it. Or surely, you have His strengthening and supporting presence if not His shining presence. Now, this is the result of Christ's blessed intercession, and this is the subject of Christ's intercessions. "O my Father, that these may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me; I in them by the influence and power of

my Spirit, and thou in me by the fullness and power of the Godhead." Isn't this a most desirable thing?

4. In this communion lies the vision and enjoyment of Jesus Christ in glory. Grace leads to glory. If we have communion here, we will have communion in the hereafter. This is also a part of Christ's prayer and intercession: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." Jesus cannot be in heaven for long without His saints; indeed, it is impossible for Christ to be in heaven while bits and pieces of Christ's mystical body are in hell or still on earth. Christ will draw His legs and members on earth up closer to the head. Certainly, Christ and believers must be under one roof soon. Hasn't He gone ahead to prepare a place, yes, many mansions for you? We think people on earth are happy when they have many grand halls and palaces, their summer and winter homes. Oh, Christians, how happy you will be when you become lords and heirs of many stately mansions in the streets of heaven! But why am I talking about mansions when I mention Christ? Mansions are insignificant; many mansions are small compared to the communion we will have with Christ by virtue of His intercession. An eminently learned and holy divine once said, "I would refuse heaven if Christ were not there." Remove Christ from heaven, and it's just a poor, dark, lifeless abode. Heaven without Christ would seem like a dreadful land of death. Therefore, after Christ spoke of many mansions and a place He would prepare for His saints, He added further to increase their joy: "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Mansions are like places of thorns and briars without Jesus Christ. Therefore, I want to have heaven for Christ, and not Christ for heaven. This communion

with Christ is the most desirable of all, and this is the subject of Christ's prayer: "Father, I want the saints to be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Isn't this the communion that the saints will have with Christ? Their eyes will never leave Him; their thoughts will never stray to other objects. Oh, the closeness between Christ and Christians! Oh, what an exchange of glory there will be between them! "They shall walk with me," says Christ, "for they are worthy."

Oh, my soul, if this is the essence of Christ's intercession, if all these details are encompassed within the depths of this single act, why are you not in a fainting swoon? Why are you not gasping, groaning, on the verge of death due to the intense thirst for your share and part in Christ's intercession? If there is such a thing as the passion of desire in this heart of mine, oh, may it burst forth now! May it express itself with mighty longings and boundless aspirations towards this blessed Object! Lord, I desire, but please strengthen my feeble desires. Breathe life into my dying spark; it is but small. And if I understand anything about my heart, I want it to be more. Oh, may my spark ignite! Lord, I desire to desire; infuse it in me, and I will yearn for you.

Let us hope in Jesus, as He carries on the work of our salvation through His intercession. It is good for a person to have hope. However, ensure that our hope is genuine. Even hypocrites can have a kind of hope, but if God's Word is true, "The hope of unjust men shall perish." What is the hope of the hypocrite? Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? No, the hypocrite's hope shall perish. It will be cut off, and their trust will be as fragile as a spider's

web. Oh, my soul, hope in Jesus, but don't rest until you can provide a reason for your hope, until you can demonstrate that it is a hope wrought by Grace and not merely a product of human nature. Ensure that it is grounded in Scripture promises and solid evidence, that it purifies the heart, that the more you hope, the less you sin, and that it relies on sure and infallible causes, such as the truth, power, and mercy of God, as well as the merits, mediation, and intercession of Jesus Christ. Is this last one (I mean the intercession of Christ) the source of your hope? Can you follow the stream until it leads you to this Fountain or Source of hope, and now can you say, "Oh, this intercession is mine"? Come, examine and test it; it is worth the effort. To help you be certain and make the discernment easier, I will provide these signs:

1. If Christ's intercession is yours, then the Spirit's intercession is also yours. Or, if you prefer to argue from the effect to the cause, then do this: if the Spirit's intercession is yours, then Christ's intercession is yours. In this case, we need not ascend to Heaven to discover the truth; instead, let's look within our own hearts and see whether Christ has given us His Spirit, which causes us to cry out to God with unutterable sighs and groans. He who wishes to know whether the Sun shines in the Firmament does not need to climb into the clouds to see it; rather, he should search for its rays upon the earth. When he sees them, he can conclude that the Sun is shining in the Firmament. Come, let us search our own consciences; let's examine whether we feel the Spirit of Christ crying out in us, "Abba Father." Certainly, these two, Christ's intercession in Heaven and His Spirit's intercession on earth, are like twins born together. Or, to put it differently, the connection between these two is so strong that Christ's intercession in Heaven gives birth to another intercession in the hearts of His Saints. It is the same Spirit that dwells in Christ

and in all His Members, moving and prompting them to cry out, "Abba Father." Therefore, here is my argument: if Christ has placed His Spirit in your heart, and if the Spirit has set your heart to incessantly intercede for yourself, then Christ's intercession is yours. There is a kind of circular motion in the execution of this great work of intercession. Firstly, Christ intercedes for His people, saying, "Oh, that My Spirit might go down!" Secondly, God listens to Christ's intercession, saying, "Go, Holy Spirit, descend into the hearts of such and such." Thirdly, the Spirit waits upon the will of both Christ and God, and as soon as it descends, it sends back its intercession. Christ cries to God, and God sends the Spirit, and the Spirit echoes in the hearts of the Saints in response to the cries of Christ. Much of this is contained in that single verse: "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying (as if it merely acted through our tongues), 'Abba Father.'" Here, we have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, all working on the elect people of God. The Son intercedes, saying, "Oh, that My Spirit may be given to these." The Father willingly grants, saying, "Go, Holy Spirit, and as My Son has requested, enter and take possession of these sinful hearts." The Holy Spirit obeys, and as soon as it is in the hearts of His Saints, it cries out, "Abba Father." God hears Christ, and the Spirit hears God, and the Elect hear the Spirit. Because the Spirit speaks through the Elect, God hears them. This is similar to what the prophet said: "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear," says the Lord, "I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil, and they shall hear Jezreel." Oh, my soul, put yourself to the test! Has God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your heart? Do you have the indwelling of the Spirit? Can you now, with the Spirit's help, go to the Father in the name of Christ, just as Christ has gone

before into the Holy of Holies to intercede? Can you, with confidence, follow after and enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus? Can you say that God has given you His Spirit, and His Spirit has revealed Christ to you as your Mediator at the right hand of God? And now, under the wing of such a Mediator, can you, with the Spirit's assistance, boldly go (with an assumed liberty) to speak anything you want in the ears of God? Surely, this is the fruit, the effect of Christ's intercession. Therefore, you may comfortably conclude that Christ's intercession is yours.

SECT. IV.

Of Hoping in Jesus in that respect

4. Let us hope in Jesus, as He carries on the work of our salvation through His intercession. It is good for a person to have hope. However, ensure that our hope is genuine. Even hypocrites can have a kind of hope, but if God's Word is true, "The hope of unjust men shall perish." What is the hope of the hypocrite? Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? No, the hypocrite's hope shall perish. It will be cut off, and their trust will be as fragile as a spider's web. Oh, my soul, hope in Jesus, but don't rest until you can provide a reason for your hope, until you can demonstrate that it is a hope wrought by Grace and not merely a product of human nature. Ensure that it is grounded in Scripture promises and solid evidence, that it purifies the heart, that the more you hope, the less you sin, and that it relies on sure and infallible causes, such as the truth, power, and mercy of God, as well as the merits, mediation, and intercession of Jesus Christ. Is this last one (I mean the intercession of Christ) the source of your hope? Can you follow the stream until it leads you to this Fountain or Source of hope, and now can you say, "Oh, this intercession is mine"? Come, examine and test it; it is worth the

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cries to God, and God sends the Spirit, and the Spirit echoes in the hearts of the Saints in response to the cries of Christ. Much of this is contained in that single verse: "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying (as if it merely acted through our tongues), 'Abba Father.'" Here, we have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, all working on the elect people of God. The Son intercedes, saying, "Oh, that My Spirit may be given to these." The Father willingly grants, saying, "Go, Holy Spirit, and as My Son has requested, enter and take possession of these sinful hearts." The Holy Spirit obeys, and as soon as it is in the hearts of His Saints, it cries out, "Abba Father." God hears Christ, and the Spirit hears God, and the Elect hear the Spirit. Because the Spirit speaks through the Elect, God hears them. This is similar to what the prophet said: "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear," says the Lord, "I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil, and they shall hear Jezreel." Oh, my soul, put yourself to the test! Has God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your heart? Do you have the indwelling of the Spirit? Can you now, with the Spirit's help, go to the Father in the name of Christ, just as Christ has gone before into the Holy of Holies to intercede? Can you, with confidence, follow after and enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus? Can you say that God has given you His Spirit, and His Spirit has revealed Christ to you as your Mediator at the right hand of God? And now, under the wing of such a Mediator, can you, with the Spirit's assistance, boldly go (with an assumed liberty) to speak anything you want in the ears of God? Surely, this is the fruit, the effect of Christ's intercession. Therefore, you may comfortably conclude that Christ's intercession is yours.

2. If, at any time during my duties, I am deeply moved in a saving way, then Christ's intercession is mine. Sometimes, by God's grace, He manifests Himself in His ordinances, and the soul is comforted, quickened, enlarged, and affected. At such moments, I consider this to be the efficacy of Christ's Blood and the power of Christ's intercession. At the very instant when I sense any good in any of Christ's ordinances, even then, Christ is prevailing with God the Father on my behalf. Even then, I can boldly say, "Now the Lord Jesus, who is at God's right hand in heaven, remembers me, a poor worm on earth." Oh, now I feel the fruit of His intercession! What is this spirit, power, grace, comfort, and sweetness I experience but a taste of the honeycomb dropping from the intercessions of Jesus Christ? And if this presence of Christ's Spirit is so sweet, what must He Himself be like? I know we must be cautious in establishing this sign, as an eminent Divine has shown that sweet affections in holy matters are not infallible evidence of grace. The third type of hearers, for instance, received the Word with joy. They found something sweet and powerful in the ordinances of Christ. Herod gladly listened to John, and many rejoiced in John's light and ministry for a season. Certainly, affections in holy services, accompanied by delight and joy, may be present in those who do not possess true grace. These affections might also be a result of the novelty and strangeness of a doctrine or the comforting nature of the doctrine without any regard to spiritual operation. Alternatively, the abilities of the Minister, such as his eloquence, articulation, or emotional delivery, may deeply affect and delight the hearers. Fine intellectual notions may produce some emotional movements in the heart. However, what is the evidence of grace in all of this? Therefore, the sign I propose for my ownership of Christ's intercession is not every sweet movement or every stirred-up affection, but rather that which is

holy, spiritual, heavenly, and saving. You can discern much of this by examining the reasons and effects of your aroused or excited affections. If their basis is from Heaven, and if their effects lead toward Heaven, if they wean your heart from the world, elevate your affections to heavenly things, and shape your conduct toward heaven, then you can be assured that these motions and affections are of the right kind. Such motions are but sparks of the heavenly fire, and their flames are mindful of their origin. They are the fruits of Christ, and they return to Christ. They work toward their center and tend towards their place of origin. O, if only I could hear a sermon without a sweet affection for what I hear! If only I could engage in prayer without some warmth, vitality, and fervency! If only in every duty, I were deeply moved in a saving way, feeling the fragrance of Christ's ointments, whose name and intercession are like poured-out ointment! In the times of the Old Testament, when they offered a sacrifice, and a material fire descended from Heaven, consuming the sacrifice to ashes, it was a sure sign that the sacrifice was accepted. In the time of the Gospel, we should not expect material fire to descend upon our duties. Still, if the Lord has caused an inward and spiritual fire to fall upon your heart, warming your spirit during duty and carrying it heavenward, then surely, you may conclude that these are the very effects of Christ's intercession. His intercession is mine.

3. If in my heart, I feel a holy disposition or inclination to pray, cry out, and intercede for others, especially for the miseries and distresses of the Church of God, then Christ's intercession is mine. We should, as closely as possible, conform to Christ in everything, and this conformity is an evidence or sign of our interest in Christ. Oh, my soul, go deep into the innermost recesses of your heart. Examine the disposition within you

towards the members of Christ, and you can conclude that Christ's heart holds the very same disposition towards you. Do I believe there is love in my heart for the Saints and none in Christ's heart for me? Can I really think that my narrow, sinful heart is more generous than Christ's wide, compassionate, tender heart? Just as a drop of water is to the ocean or a pebble to the sand, so is my heart to Christ's, my love to Christ's, and my compassion to Christ's. Come, and examine by this sign: "Hereby we know that we are translated from death to life if we love the brethren." He who does not love his brother abides in death. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Isn't this clear? If I love the brethren, then Christ loves me. If I feel in my heart a holy disposition to go to God, pray, cry out, and intercede for a Saint in misery, surely the Lord Jesus has as much compassion towards me to intercede for me and present my prayers to God the Father. His intercession is mine.

4. If I am called, justified, and sanctified, then Christ's intercession is mine. Aren't these the subjects of Christ's intercession? He prays, saying, "I pray that you should keep them from the evil... I pray that you would sanctify them through the truth... I pray not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word or preaching... Father, I will that those whom you have given me be with me in glory." He first prays for us to be called and justified, and then he prays for our sanctification and salvation. He holds both ends of this golden chain of our salvation, with one end attached to his breast where the names of all his Saints are written, and the other end in his heart, so that he may be the Author and Finisher, the First and Last, the Beginning and Ending of our souls' salvation. There is

nothing within our reach here below; the first stirrings of grace are in Heaven at the right hand of the Father, and the far end of any gracious thought is as far above us as the heart of Christ is above the earth. Therefore, let us examine ourselves, for everything depends on this great pin of Christ's intercession. Are we called? Do we believe in the Son? Are we sanctified to some extent? Are we kept from evil, so that sin does not dominate us? Has Christ offered these prayers on our behalf, so that now we feel and experience the truth of Christ's prevailing with His Father in our hearts and lives? These are sure signs that Christ's intercession is ours. Cast away all doubt, hesitation, and wavering hopes. A soul grounded in this way may, like Paul, challenge the world, asking, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, and who also makes intercession for us."

SECT. V.

Of Believing in Jesus in that respect

5. Let us believe in Jesus as He carries on this great work of our salvation in His intercession. Wounded spirits often have doubts and cry out, "My sins will never be forgiven. Haven't I sinned against God, Christ, and the Spirit of Christ? Haven't I had my hands stained with the blood of His Son? Have I not trampled underfoot the blood of God? Will that blood, which I have shed and trodden on, intercede for my pardon? If I had gone as far as the Jews did, who indeed killed and crucified Christ, I might have had some hope, for they did not know what they were doing, and Christ prayed, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' But alas, I sinned, and I knew well enough what and how I sinned. The commission of every sin is a

crucifixion of Christ, and yet, against my knowledge, judgment, light, and my own conscience's conviction, I have crucified the Lord of glory. Isn't the Apostle clear when he says, 'It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, if they fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame'? I fear my name is not on the list of those for whom Christ intercedes. I have crucified Him afresh, and will He intercede for such a wretched sinner as I am? I cannot believe."

Unbelief, be silent! Do not be tyrannical to yourself, for Christ will not. Sin shall do you no harm, nor will Satan, nor even God Himself, because Jesus Christ can move Him to anything. If He just opens His wounds in heaven, He will work His Father in such a way that your wounds on earth will close up immediately. "But I have sinned against the light," you say. So what? I hope you haven't sinned willfully, maliciously, and spitefully against the light. The Apostle tells us that if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. These two texts in Hebrews 6:4 and 10:26 are parallel and shed light on each other. Therefore, unless your sin is the unpardonable sin, unless you have crucified Christ willfully, maliciously, and spitefully, as some of the Jews did, never pass a final condemnation on your soul. Isn't there a difference between a sin committed willfully, with malice and delight, and against the dictates of your own conscience, and a sin committed out of mere ignorance, thoughtlessness, weakness, or under a strong temptation, even against the light itself? I know that there is a light given through God's Word and some influence of the Holy Ghost, which may not have penetrated deeply enough to transform and fully regenerate the soul into God's image. In such a case, a person may fall away into a universal apostasy. But do you not

hope better things for yourself than that? I believe you do. So, believe! Believe your share in Christ's intercession, and for guidance in your faith, so you know how or in what manner to believe, observe these particulars in their order.

1. Faith must directly go to Christ.
2. Faith must go to Christ as God in the flesh.
3. Faith must go to Christ as God in the flesh made under the Law.
4. Faith must go to Christ made under the directive part of the Law by His life, and under the penal part of the Law by His death.
5. Faith must go to Christ as put to death in the flesh and as quickened by the Spirit.
6. Faith must go to Christ as quickened by the Spirit and as going up into glory, as sitting down at God's right hand, and as sending the Holy Ghost; of all these before.
7. Faith must go to Christ as interceding for His Saints; this act of Christ is for the application of all the former acts on Christ's part, and our faith, closing with it, is for the application of this, and all other actings of Christ on our part. Now our faith is raised very high; if we can reach this, we may say our faith stands very lofty when it can see both earth and heaven at once; when it can see all that Christ has done for it here and all that Christ does and will do in heaven for it hereafter. It is not an ordinary, single, particular act of faith that can reach this glorious mystery; no, it is a comprehensive, perfecting act; it is an act that puts the soul into a condition of glorious triumph. "Who shall condemn? It is Christ who will save me to the

uttermost, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for me." That word "to the uttermost" is well put; it is a word that reaches so far that you cannot look beyond it. Place your soul on the highest mountain any creature has ever been set on, and from there, take in the most extensive view of sin, misery, and difficulties in being saved that any humbled soul has ever cast upon itself. Add to this all the objections and hindrances to your salvation that the human heart can imagine or invent against itself. Lift up your eyes and look as far as you can see, and Christ, through His intercession, is able to save you beyond the horizon and the farthest extent of your thoughts, even to the uttermost and worst case the human heart can possibly imagine. Whether you have sinned for a long time or dwelt in terror and despair for long periods, or whether you have sinned repeatedly despite many enlightenments, none of this can prevent you from being saved by Christ. Just remember that word "to the uttermost," and then insert any exception you want or can think of. Oh, the holy triumphs of a soul that can place its faith in Christ's intercession! This is the most perfect and consummate act of Christ's Priestly office. This demonstrates that your Christ is a perfect Mediator, and with a perfect Mediator, no condition can be desperate. As the Apostle says, "Being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." Therefore, raise your faith to this blessed object, and you have under consideration the entirety of Christ and the sum total of Christ's actions in this world from beginning to end. In terms of mediation, this is the culmination, the conclusion, the endpoint, the consummation, the perfection of all.

8. Faith in going to Christ as interceding for us is mainly to look at the purpose, end, intent, and design of Christ's intercession. Now, the ends of Christ as they relate to us are these:

1. That we might have communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son. "I pray for these, that as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, they also may be one in us."
2. That we might have the gift of the Holy Ghost. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth."
3. That we might have protection against all evil. "I pray," says Christ, "that You would keep them from the evil." Some may object, "Are not the faithful subject to evils, corruptions, and temptations still? How then is that part of the intercession of Christ made good unto us?" I answer, the intercession of Christ is presently available, only it is conveyed in a manner suitable and convenient to our present condition, so as to leave room for another life. Therefore, we must not conceive that everything is done instantly. It is like Malefactors doomed to death, suppose the Supreme power should grant a pardon to be drawn; although the grant is for the whole thing at once, it cannot be written all at once but word by word and line by line. Similarly, the grant of our protection against all evil is made to Christ at first, but in its execution, there is a gradual unfolding, here a little, and there a little. We know Christ prayed for Peter, saying, "I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not," yet Peter's faith did shake and totter. The prayer was not that there might be no failing at all, but that it might not utterly and completely fail. In that respect, Peter was protected.
4. That we might have free access to the Throne of Grace. So the Apostle says, "Seeing then we have a great high Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession and come boldly to the Throne of grace." And

again, "Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and having a High Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

5. That we might have the inward intercession of the Spirit, which is like the Echo of Christ's intercession in our hearts. "The Spirit makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." It is the same Spirit that groans in us, which more distinctly and fully prays for us in Christ. "These things I speak in the world," says our Savior, "that they might have My joy filled in themselves," meaning that He has made this prayer in the world and left a record and pattern of it in the Church. Those who feel the same heavenly desires kindled in their hearts may be comforted in the workings of that Spirit of prayer in them, which testifies to their souls the quality of that intercession which Christ makes for them in the Heaven of Heavens. Certainly, there is a dependence of our prayer on Christ's prayer, just as it is with the Sun. Though the body of the Sun remains in the Heavens, its beams descend to us here on earth. Similarly, the intercession of Christ, though tied to His person, is made in Heaven, yet the groans and desires of the touched heart, like the beams of the Sun, are here on earth.
6. That we might have the sanctification of our services; the Levitical Priests were a type of this, "For they bear the iniquity of the holy things of the children of Israel, that they might be accepted." Christ, as the Angel of the Covenant, possesses a golden Censer to offer up the prayers of the Saints. Some observe a three-fold evil in man, from each of which we are delivered by Christ: Firstly, an evil of state or condition under the guilt of sin. Secondly, an evil of nature under the corruption of sin. Thirdly, an evil in all our services due to the presence of

sin, for "that which touches an unclean thing is made unclean thereby." Christ, by His righteousness and merits, justifies our persons from the guilt of sin. By His Grace and Spirit, Christ purifies our faculties from the corruption of sin. Christ, through His incense and intercession, cleanses our services from the adherence of sin, so that in them the Lord finds a sweet favour. Both we and our services are accepted by God.

7. That we might have the pardon of all sin. It is through Christ's intercession that a Believer, sinning out of weakness, obtains pardon as a matter of course, for Christ is his Advocate to plead his case. Even if he sins presumptuously and the Lord grants repentance, he receives pardon from God the Father as a matter of justice through this intercession. Christ is more appropriately called an Advocate than a Petitioner. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." The role of an Advocate differs from that of a Petitioner. An Advocate not only petitions but also presents the case to the Judge, outlining what is lawful and what should be done. Christ does the same. He pleads, "O my Father, this soul has indeed sinned, but I have fully satisfied for his sins; I have paid for them in full. Now, in the interests of equity and justice, I call for this man's pardon." Without this, our situation would be most miserable, considering that, for every sin committed after repentance, we deserve to be cast out of God the Father's love and favour forever.
8. That we might continue in a state of grace. "I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not." Some who differ from us on the subject of perseverance object that there was something unique in our Savior's prayer for Peter. However, we assert that there is nothing unique in this prayer that is not common to all the faithful and those given to Christ by the Father. They argue that

this privilege was granted to Peter as an Apostle. Yet, if it was granted to Peter as an Apostle, then it was common to both Peter and Judas, since both were Apostles. Furthermore, they suggest that Christ does not pray for the absolute perseverance of Believers but only in a certain way and conditionally. Nevertheless, Christ's prayer is certain and not contingent. In this prayer, His desire is not for Peter to desire to persevere but for Peter to persevere. The object of the prayer is distinct from the thing itself prayed for.

9. That we might be saved in the day of Jesus. "Father, I will that they also, whom you have given me, be with me where I am, that they might behold my glory." The main end of Christ's intercession with respect to us is our glory. Indeed, the main part of our glory is to behold this glory. To see the Lord Jesus Christ glorified as He shall be is a glorious thing. To behold His glory is to see the radiance of His Divinity through His humanity. In this sense, our very eyes shall see God as much as any creature can. We can be sure that God will appear through the humanity of Christ as much as is possible for Divinity to appear in a creature. Men and Angels will continually behold Christ. There shall be no moment throughout eternity in which Christ will be out of sight for thousands upon thousands of Saints. This is the glory of the Saints above. Just as a queen delights in seeing the prince in his glory because it is her glory, the Church, when she sees Christ her Husband in His glory, rejoices because she views it as her own. Isn't this a blessed end of Christ's intercession? All other ends culminate in this one, and for this above all, Christ intercedes with His Father. "Father, I desire that they may be with me. Oh, may all the daughters of Zion behold King Solomon with the crown with which You have

crowned Him in the day of His Espousals and in the day of the gladness of His heart."

Only one question remains, and then I shall conclude: how should I put my faith into action to rely on Christ's intercession for these purposes? I answer, as follows:

1. Faith must convince itself that there is power in Christ's intercession. Undoubtedly, every aspect and act of Christ possesses its efficacy, and thus, there is power in this intercession. It is brimming with potency and exerts a strong influence.
2. Faith must acknowledge that it is God's intention, and Christ's purpose, that this intercession should bring good to those given to Christ. There is an abundance in Christ and His intercession to bestow communion, the Holy Spirit, protection, unhindered access to the Throne of Grace, a spirit of prayer, forgiveness of sins, perseverance in grace, and the salvation of souls to all the Saints and people of God throughout the world. This is God's design – that Christ's intercession should serve as the source from which all these blessings flow and reach us.
3. Faith must rely on the intercession of Christ for these very purposes. This is the essence of faith – to depend on God in Christ and on all the actions, promises, and intercession of Christ. If there is a desired end in Christ's intercession that we seek, then let our faith dependently act upon it. Let us lean on Christ and abide with Him forever, saying, "O my Christ, there is sufficiency in You and in this glorious intercession of Yours. Therefore, I will cling to it and remain steadfast forever."

4. Faith must continually seek, harness, and wrestle with God, so that the power of Christ's intercession may flow into our hearts. I have heard, Lord, that there is an office in heaven where Christ, as Priest, continuously prays and intercedes for His people. O, may I experience the efficacy of Christ's intercession! Am I in prayer now? O, may I feel in this prayer the warmth, the spiritual fire, and the fervor that usually descend from Christ's intercession into the hearts of His people! Lord, kindle my spirit in this duty, grant me the sweetness of Your presence, bestow Your Spirit upon me, provide Your protection over me! May my pardon be confirmed, my grace strengthened, and my soul saved on the day of Jesus! Follow this approach, O my soul, and who knows, perhaps God may reveal Himself when you least expect it? Regardless, engage in the use of means and entrust the outcome to God.

SECT. VI.

Of loving Jesus in that Respect.

6. Let us love Jesus as He carries on this great work of our salvation in His intercession. Now, two things, in particular, will kindle our love: 1. Christ's love for us. 2. Our ownership of Christ. Regarding the first, many acts of Christ's love have been previously mentioned, and each is sufficient to draw our love towards Him again. Such as—

1. He had an eternal love for humanity; He delighted in thoughts of love, joy, and free grace towards humanity from all eternity. Since God has been God (an endless duration), the Lord Jesus, in a sense, cherished an infinite love for humanity even before the world's creation. Some observe that the first words Christ

ever wrote were "Love to Believers," and these words were inscribed with glory, for they existed before gold and were engraved upon His bosom when other books did not yet exist.

2. At the dawn of time, He loved humanity above all other creatures. After creating all things, He then spoke in a way He never had before, saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth." Even though humanity sinned almost immediately, Christ's love did not waver but continued through a promise until the day of fulfillment: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpent's head, and in your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."
3. His love was fully revealed in due time. At that moment, the seed blossomed, and love's birth was expressed in a remarkable way. The infant, Christ's love, was born and came into the world. "But after that," as the Apostle says, "the kindness and love of God our Savior toward humanity appeared." We need not go into further examples; so far, we have clearly seen that Christ's life was a perfect reflection of His love. Just as there is no beam in the sun without light, there was no act in Christ's life that did not shine with the light of love to the spiritual eye. However, above all, there is Christ's love in His death. Imagine if a criminal, if the Prince's son were to approach his father and say, "Father, I acknowledge that this wretch deserves to die, but I see a willingness in your heart for him to live. However, I perceive that your justice is a hindrance. For that reason, Father, here I am. To satisfy your justice, I am willing to die myself, but let this poor wretch live for your glory and for the sake of my grace." Ask the criminal, what kind of love this would be? Surely, Christ died

for our sins, rose again for our justification, ascended, sat down at God's right hand, sent down His Holy Spirit, all for us. There was not a single event in all of these actions that did not reveal the blazing and ardent fire of love.

4. At this time, there is a burning coal of love in Christ's heart. This fire was indeed eternal, but its flames are as fervent today as ever. Now, Christ loves and lives. Why does He live? Only to love us and intercede for us. Christ makes our salvation His constant calling; He is always at His work. Yesterday, today, and forever, there is not a single hour in the day, a day in the year, or a year in an age when Christ is not occupied with His heavenly task of interceding for us. He loved us before He died for us, and His love was the reason why He died for us. He loves us still, and that's why He intercedes for us. In other words, Christ has loved us, and He does not regret His love. Love compelled Him to die for us, and if necessary, He would willingly die again. Yes, if our sins had required it, Christ would have willingly undergone countless deaths for each elect person. Oh, the love of Christ toward our poor souls! If I could only linger and explore this vast field of love. How many thousands of instances from Scripture could I cite to express Christ's love for us in this regard? Though He is in heaven, by virtue of His intercession, He carries us in His hands. He leads us by the hand and protects us too. "I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them." He dandles us on His knees, carries us on His wings, just as an eagle stirs up her nest, flutters over her young, spreads abroad her wings, takes them, and bears them on her wings. So the Lord alone leads us. He carries us on His shoulders, as the man who found his lost sheep and laid it on his shoulders, rejoicing. Yet, I must come even closer, for Christ, through His intercession, draws us closer still.

His left hand is beneath us, and His right hand embraces us. He wears us in heaven like a bracelet around His arms, which made the bride exclaim, "Set me as a seal upon Your arm." He engraves us on the palms of His hands, saying, "Behold, I have graven you on the palms of My hands," as if our names were written in letters of blood on Christ's flesh. He sets us as a seal upon His heart; the bride also expresses this sentiment: "Set me as a seal upon Your heart." In fact, the saints are so precious to Jesus Christ that they reside in His bowels and in His heart. They dwell in Christ, and "by this we know that we dwell in Him." They also dwell in God and in love, "for God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God." I do not know what more to say. You know that the high priests of old carried the names of the children of Israel into the Holy of Holies on their shoulders and on their breasts. But has it ever been heard that any high priest, besides the great High Priest of our faith, carried the names of thousands and millions on his shoulders, arms, hands, wings, bosom, heart, and even within his bowels as a memorial before the Lord? Oh, incomparable love!

It seems to me that this love of Christ should transform my soul into a sphere or mass of divine love for Christ, by the Spirit of the Lord. A sight of Christ presenting Himself and His sacrifice to the Father for me should so enamour my soul that I would take delight in no other sight. A Christian is sweetly exercised when the golden ball of divine love is tossed back and forth between Christ's bosom and his own. In this regard, it is a wonder that I have not become lovesick and overwhelmed with love before this, ready to cry out with the bride, "Sustain me with flagons; refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me." Oh, I am wounded by the arrows of love in such a way that neither grave nor death, nor hell, nor angels, nor principalities, nor

powers, nor things present, nor things to come can ever heal, balm, or bind up these wounds. Oh, my Christ, my Lord, my Jesus, what should I do but surrender myself as a bride under the power of her husband? What should I do but lose myself in such a deep ocean of love, stronger than wine, hotter than the coals of juniper, with a most vehement flame?

2. Another reason for our love for Christ is our ownership of Christ. As the Apostle said of us, "You are not your own," we may say of Christ, "He is not His own." If anyone asks how this can be, I answer that the soul, in loving Christ, is no longer its own, and in loving us, Christ is no longer His own. Both parties give themselves over to the other, and self-interest or ownership ceases on both sides. The Bride says, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." This does not mean that Christ ceases to be His own or a free God when He becomes ours. No, no. But He behaves in such a way in terms of His love that it is as if He were not His own. He assumes roles and responsibilities that make it seem as though He is entirely for us and nothing for Himself. He is called a Savior, a Redeemer, a King, a Priest, a Prophet, a Friend, a Guide, a Head, a Husband, a Leader, a Ransomer, an Intercessor, and more.

Oh, my soul, come here and add your small candle to this mighty flame. Even if you had ten hearts, or as many hearts in one as there are elected men and angels in heaven and earth, all of them would be too small for Jesus Christ. Just go as far as you can, and love Him with the heart you have. Love Him with all your heart, all your soul, and all your might. Just as Christ, in loving you, is not His own, so let your soul, in loving Christ, not be its own. Come, love your Christ and not yourself. Possess your Christ and not yourself. Enjoy your Christ and not yourself. Live in your Christ and not in yourself.

Console yourself in Jesus Christ, not in yourself. Say with the Apostle, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." Surely, if Christ is mine, if His death is mine, His resurrection is mine, His ascension is mine, His session is mine, His intercession is mine, how can I not love Him with a unique love? Farewell, world, and worldly glory. If Christ takes your place, it's time for you to disappear. I shall care little for a candle when the sun shines brightly upon my head. What if my name is written on the heart of Christ? Does He not wear me as a sign of His favor and love around His arms and neck? At every turn, does He not present me and my deeds to His heavenly Father? "You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; You have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace."

Suppose, O my soul, that you had been with Christ when He washed His disciples' feet, and that He had come to wash your feet. Would your heart not have been filled with love for Jesus Christ? Well, Christ is now in glory, and He takes your filthy soul and dirty deeds and washes them (so to speak) like the feet of all, so that He may present them to His Father. You cannot shed a tear without Him washing it again in His precious blood and perfuming it with His glorious intercessions. Oh, what reason you have to love Jesus Christ! Those who have never loved Christ, come and love Him now. And those who have loved Christ a little, O love Him more. Above all, let me, O my soul, charge you with this duty of love. Go away warmed with the love of Christ and with love for Christ.

SECT. VII.

Rejoicing in Jesus in that respect.

7. Let us rejoice in Jesus as He carries out the work of our salvation in His intercession. Surely this is good news that brings great joy. When the wicked Haman obtained letters from King Ahasuerus for the destruction of all Jews, Queen Esther requested from the King that her people might be saved, and Haman's letters be revoked. The King asked her, "What is your request, Queen Esther, and what is your petition? It shall be granted to you." Oh, the joy of the Jews upon receiving this happy news! The city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. The Jews had light, gladness, joy, and honor. In every province and city, wherever the King's command and decree came, the Jews had joy, gladness, feasting, and a good day. Is this not our very situation? Was there not a law against us, a handwriting of ordinances, a sentence of double death for body and soul? Had not Satan accused us, seeking our condemnation by all means? But behold, not just an earthly Esther, but Jesus, the Son of God, was willing to come down from heaven for our sake. He took away the handwriting of ordinances and cancelled it on the cross. He ascended into heaven, where He intercedes for us. He is the one in whom His Father is well pleased. Whenever He approaches His Father, He obtains grace through the golden sceptre. The moment He says, "I will that these poor souls may be eternally saved," His Father answers, "Amen, so be it, my Son, as you please." May we find joy in this! May we imitate the Jews! May light, gladness, joy, and honor possess our souls! If Christ's birth brought such great joy because a Savior was proclaimed, should our joy not be even greater now that salvation is accomplished? If the first act of Christ's mediation was so joyous, should not the last act of His mediation be much more joyous?

But I hear many objections that hinder joy. They are like bars and obstacles at the doors of many heavy hearts, preventing joy from entering. Let me address some of them.

"Oh, I face so much opposition in this world," says one. "Men are like wolves and devils. Dogs have surrounded me, and the assembly of the wicked has enclosed me. They have no compassion. They persecute, reproach, and revile me, so I feel as though I'm being killed all day long."

And what then? What does it matter that men oppose you when Christ intercedes for you in heaven? Remember Christ's compassion. He may allow men to be merciless on earth so that you can look up and see how merciful He is, seated above. Tell me, have you not experienced this truth? Has not relief come to you in surprising ways at times? Write on the forehead of such favors, "I have a merciful and compassionate Mediator in heaven."

"Oh, I am often tempted," says another, "and I cannot pray. If I had the key to prayer, I could unlock the cabinet where all of God's treasures lie and take out whatever I want. But alas, my prayers are dull, weak, dry, without spirit and life. I cannot pray."

If that's the case, humble yourself for it. But also know this: when you cannot pray, Christ is praying for you, and He prays that you may pray. Tell me, have you not experienced this truth? Have you not at times felt your spirit expand in prayer? Have you not felt your heart warmed or deeply affected in prayer? Have you not been lifted up above yourself and the world in prayer at times? Conclude then that your Intercessor above has given you this gift and Spirit. It is not you but Christ's intercession, through a wonderful and secret operation, that has given you the Spirit to help in your weakness.

These are the intercessions of the Spirit of Christ, and they echo the intercessions of Christ in His own person.

"But I struggle with many corruptions," says another, "and the Devil is exceedingly busy, and he prevails greatly. How I am overcome by these corruptions and sins! I am overwhelmed."

It may be so, but do not despair entirely. Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God, and He will remain there until all His enemies are made His footstool. Are not your sins His enemies? Take heart, for Christ will prevail. Part of His prayer for you is to "keep you from evil." Surely He will either keep you from it or keep you in it so that in the end you will have the victory. Those you have given me I have kept, says Christ, and none of them is lost. If He undertakes for you, you are safe and secure. His covenant is everlasting, even the sure mercies of David. So if you do not feel it yet, rest assured that you will eventually experience the power of Christ's intercession. Sin will be subdued, and the gates of hell will not prevail against you. He will not quench the smoking flax, but will bring forth judgment to victory.

"Oh, but I am in a suffering condition," says another, "and there is no one who regards or takes pity on me. All my friends have dealt treacherously with me, and among all my lovers, there is no one to comfort me. They have heard me sigh, and there is no one to refresh me. I stand for Christ, but there is no one who stands by me. I own Him, but there is no one who owns me."

Bleeding Christian, bear up! Is not Christ's intercession a sufficient answer to this case? Alas, you would like to be pitied for all your weaknesses. Well, know that compassion is natural to Jesus Christ. He is a merciful High Priest and can be nothing else to you. God ordained Him to officiate in such a Tabernacle as you dwell in. He

was in all things like you, sin only excepted. Perhaps you are in need, and so was Christ; He had no house. You are persecuted, and so was Christ. Sin burdens you, and so it did Christ. A Christian's condition calls for compassion, and Christ knows how much. It is His continuous work to lay it open above. He says, "O My Father, thus, and thus, it is with the Militant Church. Not a member in it but is under sin and affliction. See the tears, listen to the sighs, groans, chatterings, and mournings of My doves below. I present their persons and performances here, and I hope they may find acceptance through My merit!"

Some speak of heavenly music, others tell of saints and angels singing and praising Christ in heaven with lively notes. If such a thing exists, it is certainly music that tickles the ears and ravishes the hearts. But of this, I am confident: Heaven itself offers no music like the intercession of Jesus Christ. This, if anything in heaven does, makes melody in the ears of God and all celestial spirits, saints, or angels.

Now, suppose, O my soul, that you are within reach, and if you could hear what your Jesus is saying on your behalf: "Is not this a brand newly plucked out of the fire? Wasn't this poor soul but the other day in a state of nature, defiled with sin, and within a step of hell? Didn't I send My Spirit to call him back? Wasn't this precious blood shed for his redemption? And even though sin still clings to him, haven't I given you charge to take away his filthy garments and clothe him in changes of raiment, even with the shining robes of My own righteousness? O My Father, let this soul live in Your sight! Don't cast him away for whom I have suffered and done all this. I cannot rest satisfied without his company. I am not complete until he is with Me in glory. He is My darling, My purchase, My portion, My delight. Therefore, let him be saved."

Isn't this enough to make your heart leap within your bosom? Bonaventure fondly reports that Francis, upon hearing an angel play the harp for a while, was so moved with extraordinary delight that he thought himself in another world. Now, suppose you should hear the voice of Jesus, your Intercessor, pleading for you like this. Wouldn't you be in ecstasy? Wouldn't this fill you with unspeakable joy and glory?

Come, contemplate this meditation. Certainly, if you belong to Christ, He is interceding for you in this way or some other. As sure as Christ is in heaven, He is pleading with His Father on your behalf. Oh, the joys, the joys, the joys that I should now feel!

Tell me, isn't it a comfort for a poor beggar to be relieved at a rich man's door? We are all beggars when it comes to heaven, and Jesus Christ not only comes forth to serve us but takes us poor beggars by the hand and leads us into His heavenly Father's presence. Oh, what comfort is here!

SECT. VIII.

Of praying to and praising Jesus in that respect.

8. Let us pray and praise our Jesus in this respect.

1. Let us pray or plead our interest in this intercession: There is a question among scholars as to whether we may appropriately pray to Jesus to pray to His Father on our behalf. Thus far, it is agreed that we may pray to Christ to make us partakers of His intercessions and to unite our prayers with His, so that they may find acceptance with God His Father. But to use such a form as

"ora pro nobis," O Christ, pray for us, is considered inappropriate in this context. 1. Because we do not have such a custom, nor do the Churches of God. 2. Because it resembles too much the errors of Arius, Nestorius, and indeed of the Romanists themselves. 3. Because our prayers are mostly directed to Christ in His person or divine essence, whose role is more to give than to ask. However, if they are directed to Christ as Mediator, and not solely as the only begotten Son of God, then I see no incongruity (though there may be some inconvenience in the former case) in praying to Christ to intercede for us. For, in this role, He is both God and man, considered according to both natures. Only the distinction between both natures must be maintained; intercession is the office of the entire person of Christ and of the two natures of Christ. However, He performs this office differently according to His divine nature and His human nature. I do not wish to quarrel over nuances; it is universally agreed, and that is sufficient for our purpose, that we may call on Jesus or on God the Father through Jesus, so that Christ's intercessions may be ours, and that He would make it increasingly clear to us in a way of assurance every day.

2. Let us praise; let us bless God and bless Christ for every action in Heaven on our behalf. It is remarkable to observe the songs of praise that were sung to Christ in Heaven for that single act of opening the Book and breaking its seven Seals: first, the four living creatures, and then the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sang a new song, saying, "You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood." Then the countless angels around the throne, numbering

ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, joined in, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing." Every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea, also declared, "Blessing, honor, glory, and power be to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever." The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped Him who lives forever and ever. I cannot say what other actions may take place in Heaven; we only have hints of them here, and we will not fully or specifically know them until we reach Heaven. However, for this single act of Christ's intercession, we cannot imagine less praise given to Christ than for any other. So, let us perform this duty on earth as it is done in Heaven! What, is Christ praying for us? Then let us engage in the exercise of praising Him. Is Christ interceding for us? Let us give Him the glory of His intercession. Heaven resounds with His praises; why should not the earth echo with the same sound? "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy Name."

SECT. IX.

Of conforming to Jesus in that respect.

9. Let us conform to Jesus in respect of His intercession. I cannot help but think that in every action of Christ, there is something we can imitate. For the present task, I will mention only a few particulars, such as:

1. Christ appears in Heaven for us; let us appear on earth for Him. Is there not fairness, as well as conformity, in this duty? Oh, my

soul, consider what your Christ is doing, consider what the intercession of Jesus Christ entails! Is not this the first part of it? Why, He appears in Heaven before saints and angels, and before God His Father on your behalf; and are you afraid to appear before mere mortals, frail beings, dust, and ashes in His cause or for His truth? Shall Jesus Christ acknowledge you in Heaven? And will you not acknowledge Jesus Christ here in this world? Will Jesus Christ, as your great high Priest, take your very name and bear it on His breast into the presence of God? And will you not take the Name of Christ and hold it forth in profession and practice to all people? What a mighty obligation is this to stand with Christ, to appear for Christ, and to support His cause in these times of apostasy? Christ, who sits at the right hand of God, is willing and ready to appear personally for us as a Mediator, Sponsor, Solicitor, Advocate, and Resident Ambassador.

2. Christ spends all His time for us and our salvation; let us spend all our time for Him and in His service. The Apostle tells us that He ever lives to make intercession for us. It is not for a day, a month, or a year, but He lives forever for this purpose, during all the time from His Ascension until the end of the world. He is always interceding; He expends all that time for us. Shall we think it is too much to spend a few days that we have to live on this earth for Him? One might consider this the most compelling argument to encourage us to walk closely with God in Christ. He spends His eternity for us, and should we not spend our entire time for Him? Perhaps people do not realize what Christ is doing in Heaven for them. If you who are saints would seriously contemplate that Christ, this Sabbath, this day of rest, is engaged in His work without weariness or interruption from morning till evening, and from evening till morning, continually

interceding, how would this motivate you to serve Him? Ah, Christians! If you were to continue praying, praising, reading, hearing without interruption all day long, you might grow weary and think, "When will the day be over? When will the Sabbath come to an end?" Yet, Christ is not weary of serving you. This Sabbath, the last Sabbath, and every Sabbath, after you have completed your duties, He takes your persons and your duties and presents them to His Father. He prays over your prayers and continues praying, saying, "Lord, accept this short, poor, imperfect service performed on earth for My sake and for the sake of those merits I am continuously presenting to You here in heaven." Why do we not conform to this example? Why are we so unlike the actions of Christ? He is preparing mansions for us in Heaven, and are we preoccupied with worldly matters? He is mentioning our names to God, and are we sinning against Him and God? His blood pleads, "Oh, may these souls be saved." Shall our sins plead, "It is just that these souls should be damned?" Look to the example! Christ devotes all His time to you; devote all your time to Him. It is only reasonable that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who lives to make intercession for them.

3. He prays for us and for all believers to His Father; let us pray for ourselves and for all our brethren, even for all sorts of people, even if they are our enemies, for we were no better to Jesus Christ. Learn from me, says Christ, and as far as He is imitable, let us follow Him. Does Christ pray? Let us pray. Does He pray for us and others? Let us pray for ourselves, and then let us pray for one another. I exhort, therefore, says the Apostle, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all people. "Come, lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left," said the King to Isaiah, and "Wrestle together in

prayer for me," said Paul. "Give the Lord no rest until He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth," said the Prophet. Christ intercedes, and there is no question that we should intercede for the living Saints. "Brethren, pray for us," said the Apostle. "Whoever you are that read this, I beseech you, remember me in your prayers. Perhaps you are closer to God and more favoured by Him than such a poor sinner as I am. Just as Mordecai set Esther to intercede for him with the King and for his people, so it is our duty to seek the prayers of those who are possibly in better favour with the Lord than we are at present. I only wish that your prayers would be offered at a time when your heart is closest to God through special stirrings of faith and love. I suppose that you cannot have the spirit and power of prayer without sometimes feeling as though you are in the lap of Christ, upon the Spouse's knee, in the Beloved's bosom. Oh, then, make a request for one who is unworthy. Oh, then, if ever, intercede for me, because at that time I see Christ's own intercession in your intercession. Your prayer is then nothing but an echo of Christ's prayer, the "Amen" to Christ's intercessions, which He makes in heaven. Christians, it is our duty to encourage each other to pray for one another. Christ intercedes for us, and so we should intercede for His, whether called or not, as long as they belong to the election of grace.

4. Christ takes our prayers and mingles them with His own prayers, intercessions, and incense, presenting them as one blended work to God the Father. Oh, let us be diligent in presenting all our prayers to God in the Name of Christ, and let us rely on the intercessions of Christ. When all is said and done, let us beg for the acceptance of our prayers, not for our sake or for the sake of our prayers, but for His sake, who perfumes our prayers by weaving them into His prayers. Many a poor soul is

often afraid to pray to God due to a lack of consideration of this conformity. Such a person goes to prayer, and looks at it as it lies within his own heart or as it comes from himself. Then he exclaims, "What a feeble, weak, sinful, imperfect, and unrepentant prayer this is!" Well, if this feeble prayer of yours is once blended with the glorious and heavenly prayer of Jesus Christ, its weakness will soon vanish, and your prayer will find acceptance with God the Father. It is with your prayers and duties as it is with your fire. Your kitchen fire is troubled by an abundance of smoke, but if it could ascend into the element of fire above, it would smoke no more. So your prayer, while it is on your own hearth, contains much smoke. But once it ascends into the hands of Jesus Christ, it is in its own element and is freed from all its smoke. Thus, its weakness is removed. Conform to Christ in this regard. He will not present your prayers to God without first mingling them with His own prayers. You should not present a prayer to God without doing so in the Name of Christ, considering that all your prayers are accepted in, for, and through the intercession of Jesus Christ. If it were not for this, I confess I would not know how to answer the objections of our immoral adversaries, who dismiss prayers as entirely useless. For us, they argue:

"You cannot pray," they say, "by your own admission, without some defect, imperfection, or sin. If that's the case, you need a new prayer to ask for forgiveness for the defects in that prayer, and then another prayer to correct the flaws in that prayer, and then another, and so on ad infinitum. This way, there would be an infinite progression without stopping at any prayer at all."

I answer, this objection would be valid if there were no intercession of Christ to rely on in our prayers. However, we often grant requests

for the sake of some friends rather than for the party's sake. Similarly, God always grants requests for Christ's sake, never for our sakes alone. You object that there are many defects in our prayers as made by us. Still, I reply that there are no defects in the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, for whose sake alone they are granted by God. Therefore, our prayers, being made in Christ's Name, can rest their heads in Christ's bosom. In this respect, we need not continue to go in circles, as the ultimate resolution is Christ's merits and Christ's intercession. Christ offers up our persons and wooden prayers in His golden censer to His Father; therefore, Christ's intercession is what accomplishes the deed. To say that our prayers are of no use is equivalent to saying that His intercession is of no use. It's not because we are so good that He cannot take exception against us and our prayers, but because Christ is so good, and His intercession for us is so good that He neither can nor will take exception against Him or His intercession for us. In this case, Christ and Christians become one person in the eyes of the law. His intercession for us and our intercessions for ourselves are but one intercession, and He mingles them so that they seem as one. The smoke of the incense and the prayers of the Saints ascend together before God out of the Angel's hand (Revelation 8:4).

5. Christ pleads the cause of His people and answers all the accusations of Satan against them. Let us plead for those for whom Christ pleads and respond to Satan's accusations or his instruments against their persons or their ways. There is a peculiar breed of people abroad whose religion consists of railing, reviling, and reproaching the servants of the living God. Not even the best men or the best ministers under Heaven escape their accusations. They say things like, "Aren't they all wolves, dogs, hirelings, priests of Baal, covetous, carnal, and damned?" Christian, when you hear this language, learn to

conform to Christ. First, go to God with the Lord's own plea: "Now the Lord rebuke you, O Satan, even the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you" (Zechariah 3:2). Then proceed to vindicate their persons and their cause. Are they not precious, gracious, holy, able, shining, and burning lights? Perhaps some of their persons have been faulty, but concerning such, say, "Is not this a brand newly plucked out of the fire?" Failings and human frailties have been found in the best, even in most of the Prophets and Apostles. Shall we, therefore, condemn to hell the generation of God's dear children? Regardless of their persons, isn't their cause and office of Christ's own institution? In this respect, "He that despises you despises me," says Christ, "and he that despises me despises Him that sent me" (Luke 10:16). Are not the Ministers of Christ like stars in His right hand? Those who would do them harm must pluck them from there. Christians, conform to Christ in this matter. You see how Satan stands at the right hand of our Joshua to resist them. Now, plead their cause and answer the accusations of the adversaries.

6. Christ, by His intercession, saves us to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25). Let us, therefore, serve Him to the uttermost. Surely, all we can do is too little to respond to such great love. Oh, Christians! Why should it be considered unnecessary to be most rigorously conscientious and exactly circumspect? Christ paid our debt to the uttermost farthing, drank every drop of our bitter cup, and now presents all to His Father through intercession, saving us thoroughly, to the uttermost. Why should we not labour to perform His service and fulfill every one of His commandments thoroughly and to the uttermost as well? Certainly, there is a duty that concerns us Christians, such as being fervent in religion (Revelation 3:16), zealous for good works (Titus 2:14), walking circumspectly or precisely, as the

word implies (Ephesians 5:15), being fervent in spirit (Romans 12:11), striving to enter through the narrow gate (Luke 13:24), contending for the faith (Jude 3), and with a holy kind of violence, laying hold upon the Kingdom of heaven (Matthew 11:12). Whatever men may fear about taking God's side too much or fighting too valiantly under Christ's banner, or being too diligent about the salvation of their souls, we should observe that people are willing to be singular in anything except the service of God. They desire and strive to be singularly rich, wise, valiant, and proud, but they can hardly endure singularity or eminence in zeal and the Lord's service. In matters of religion, they often choose to follow the majority, even if it means jeopardizing their own souls (Matthew 7:13). Come and learn this lesson from Christ; He saves us to the uttermost, and let us serve Him to the uttermost, with all our hearts, souls, and might.

Now, we have looked at Jesus in His intercession. Our next task is our final one, which is to look at Jesus as He carries on the great work of our salvation when He returns, from the very end of time to all eternity. He has no more to do now but to judge the Saints, lead them into glory, deliver up His Kingdom to His Father, and live with His redeemed ones forever and ever.

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