

Intercession of Christ

**An Answer to several Passages in a Treatise,
entitled, the Triumph of Faith; by T.G.**

Samuel Richardson 1649

In which T. G. endeavoureth to maintain that the work of our Salvation is not yet effected, but Christ is a doing of it by his Intercession, &c. I thought it necessary for the clearing the truth, {namely, that we are justified by his blood} to remove these objections by giving a brief Answer to what he there saith.

Concerning the Intercession of Christ; he saith, Intercession is an act; {pg. 204;} in his intercession he entreats the Father on our behalf. {pg. 194} It's Christ praying for us in heaven; {pgs. 176, 179, 185 & 189;} intercession is asking; {pg. 339;} Christ by his own prayers seconds the cry of his blood. {pg. 253} Jesus shall intercede for the pardon of them. {pg. 246} The 17th chapter of John is a pattern and instance of his intercession for us in heaven. {pg. 24}

Answer: The 17th of John declares Christ spake words in his own Person; and then the sum of that you say, is this; that Christ in his person, now he is glorified, speaks words to God for us, &c.

1. If it be so, then there is no perfection in glory, for where perfection is, there needs no words; God is perfect, so is Christ in glory, and must Christ speak words to God, that God might know his mind, and so prevail; is this suitable to a condition of glory, in which is perfection?

2. Your words imply that God the Father loveth us less than Christ; that he needs to be prayed and entreated, &c. But Christ is so far from needing any to pray and entreat him, that he prayeth and entreateth God for us; which cannot be, because they are one; {I Jn.5:7;} therefore equal in love. God the Father is said to elect us, give us to Christ, and send Christ to die for us; God is as well pleased with us as Christ is, and he loveth us as well as he loveth Christ. Christ saith, "and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me --- for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." {Jn.16:26,27} He of himself without entreaty loveth us; God cannot love us more nor less than he doth, for his love is infinite, without beginning or end; and that which is infinite, is not capable of being greater or lesser; and its the more glorious, because it is so; his knowledge cannot be greater nor less than it is; and the same may be said of his love, he never began to know, to will, to love, they are one in God. God is love; it's his Being. {I Jn.4:16} I can say in a holy reverence and confidence, in the Satisfaction of Christ, in admiration and thankfulness; if God can condemn me let him, he cannot deny himself; the eternity and certainty of the Saints happy estate, lessneth not his love; when we conceive of him in the highest eminency we can, still we come short, we cannot reach it; "such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." {Psal.139:6} "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

{Rom.11:33} Christ's blood speaketh; "and to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." {Heb.12:24} It speaketh peace to the conscience.

But he saith; Intercession is a praying for us in heaven. {pg. 180}

Answer: There be many heavens, {Deut.10:14;} the kingdom of heaven is within you; {Lk.17:21;} the Church is called Heaven; {Rev.12:7; Mt.11:12;} and the air is called heaven. {I Kg.18:45} The heaven of heavens cannot contain God; "in him we live, move, and have our being."

2. Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us, {in us;} the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us; {Rom.8:26,27;} Christ, the Father, and Spirit are ONE; the Spirit of Christ which was in them; {I Pet.1:11;} now the Lord is that Spirit; {II Cor.3:17;} the Spirit of your Father speaketh in you. {Mat.10:20} "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." {Rom.8:34}

3. Christ is our Advocate and Intercessor, in respect of that which he did for us in his own Person when he was upon the earth before he suffered; when he poured out his soul unto death, and made intercession for us. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." {Isa.53:12} "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." {Jn.17:11} "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." {vs.9} "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." {vs.20} "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; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." {vs.24}

4. Christ's intercession holds forth the continuation of the efficacy of the virtue and fruit of Christ's sacrifice; that it doth forever remain in force a full satisfaction for all the sins of the Elect. This is very sweet, and full of divine consolation, to satisfy the discouraged soul, which is the main thing intended by such expressions. It is a figurative speech, as the Scripture ascribes to God, eyes, hand, arm, &c., the Anthropomorphites conclude that God the Father hath a body, with eyes like unto us; and so the Papists picture him to be an old man, &c., as if one should say, God is capable of forgetfulness, because he saith, he will remember our sins no more. These conclusions are unreasonable, and so is your position that Christ speaks words now in his Person, &c.

But he saith; Christ doth as much work for us in heaven at this instant, as ever he did on the earth. {pg.214}

Answer: You confess that a Surety is more than an Intercessor; and is it not more to die for one, than to speak for him; if so, Intercession is not so much; see you not how you contradict yourself in your discourse. Christ is said to be set down at the right hand of God, to declare to us that his work is accomplished; while the Priest was executing his offices, he was to stand, {Heb.10:11,} which declared that Christ the substance of those Priests, was not to sit until he had finished in his Person his offices of Priesthood. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." {Heb.10:12}

He saith; that none of his offices should lie idle, he appoints this full and perpetual work in heaven, that as a Priest by praying and interceding God would have Christ never to be out of offices, or out of work forever.

Answer: If the end of Christ's praying and interceding is that he might not be out of offices, or out of work, then it's not because of our sins. That he doth execute any offices in his Person in glory, or that he doth any work there, is still to prove; do the Angels pray for us, &c., or are they idle and out of work.

He saith; Christ lives but to intercede. {pg. 208}

Answer: Then it seems after this life when all the Saints are gloried, Christ must continue praying and interceding for us, or else he must cease to live. I hope you will not say, when we are in glory, that he shall need then to intercede for us; if so, then it seems he shall be out of office, or out of work; by your exposition you have run yourself upon a rock, I shall be glad to see you get off again, I have afforded you my help.

He saith; Christ living to intercede, is said to keep God and us friends, that we may never fall out more, though pardoned by his death. Intercession is principally intended for sins after conversion; {pg. 208;} God says to him, now do you look to them, that they and I fall out no more; not but sins after conversion are taken away by his death, and sins before it by intercession also. {pg. 209}

Answer: God saith no such thing, you vent your vain conceits, and father them upon God, and say he says so; I wonder at your boldness; sure you either know not what you say, or think you may say anything that was not belched forth before. When you write again, tell us in what place we may read that God says so; it is better to say less, and prove more.

2. Can you tell that ever God fell out with his Elect, and was not their friend, or that it is possible for God not to love us, or not to be a friend to us, for you insinuate both, but are able to prove neither.

3. Tell me, what is God liable to fall out with us for? If for sin, you confess that sin is pardoned by his death, and those sins after conversion taken away by his death; to what purpose is it for Christ to pray and entreat for that which he knows is pardoned before; and what hath God granted Christ, in granting the pardon of that which was pardoned before? Suppose I pay to one all that I owe him, all that he can desire and require, need I pray and entreat him to forgive me the debt; but if I do, and he grant my desire, he forgives me nothing, because I owe him nothing; is not this the case also? How are our sins pardoned, if we be liable to suffer for them?

4. You present God to be a friend, but a very uncertain one, in that he need to have one to be continually praying and entreating him, to keep him friends with us, that we may not suffer for that which is pardoned; hath God pardoned us, and is he now ready to destroy us? He said, that he would remember our sins no more. "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." {Heb.10:17,18} And doth he now remember them? You present God to be changeable, who is immutable and changeth not.

5. You present God to be an angry God, yet God saith that anger is not in him. {Isa.27:4} How can I, or Christ say, "thy will be done," if his will be to fall out with us; it seems he hath a great will to it, if he must be continually prayed and entreated to forbear, and to be pacified, and not to fall out with us.

6. The Father needs no more entreating than Christ doth, and that is none at all, for these Reasons:

A. There is no place for Intercession; for Satisfaction is made for the sins of the Elect, for them it was that Christ suffered death; it is an act of injustice for to suffer for that which is satisfied for, or to require anything of me, for that which before full satisfaction hath been made.

B. We are reconciled, therefore need none to reconcile us; also his death is that which reconciled us, therefore not his praying and entreaty. {Rom.5:10} Before Christ suffered, he made intercession; also there is no place for intercession for that which is pardoned by his death.

C. If Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin, praying and intercession cleanseth us not from any sin.

D. If Christ blessing his Disciples, blessed all those that shall believe to the end of the world, as you confess, {pg. 42,} and that the offering of himself once, made so full a satisfaction, as he needed to do it but once, {pg. 242,} why may not this intercession when he was upon the earth, though if it were but once, be as effectual to serve forever, as the rest, especially when we consider that in the 17th of John, Christ prayed for all that were given him that shall believe. Christ's prayer was granted. "Father, I know thou hearest me always." What benefit have we to the end of the world by that prayer in John 17, if it was not sufficient and effectual for us; and if it was sufficient and granted, there is no need of his continued praying for it. If Christ had intended in his Person to pray and entreat for us now, what needed Christ to have prayed for us when he was upon the earth, so many hundred years before we were born; if he prays so for us now, would not they be sufficient for us, seeing they are continually, as you say. If all that Christ can ask, is less, yea far less than the service he hath done to God comes to; our lives, pardon, salvation, if these be not enough, but too small a requital, as you affirm, {pg. 244,} there is no ground, or reason, justice or equity, that Christ should forever ask and pray, before he or we can have it; especially if we consider God teacheth us to give to others their due without a continual asking, yea before they ask; to pay and pray comes not freely off.

E. Because the Father himself loveth us, his heart is as much for our happiness as Christ's is; therefore Christ need not pray to God to love us, the reason is rendered by Christ. {Jn.16:26,27; Jn.3:16; Eph.1:3,5,9 & 11} The Spirit of the Lord doth not, nor need not help us to make requests, to be loved, to be justified, saved from the punishment of sin; these things are already done, only to know it not, or more fully to know it; Christ's prayer {Jn.17,} is to keep us from evil; and we are to pray for many things, though not to be loved &c.

F. If Christ by his death had fully satisfied for our sins, as you confess, and that at Christ's Resurrection, God gave Christ an acquittance for all our sins, a discharge, {pgs. 103-107,} and that Justification gives title to eternal life, {Rom.5:18,} and that by Christ's Resurrection our Justification is made irrevocable forever, {pg. 103,} then there is no need of any intercession, for it is safe and sure, there is no danger, there needs no care or fear, because it's done and past recalling; he died as a public person, {as a Covenant Surety,} he rose as a public person, and there is a formal, legal, irrevocable act of Justification of us passed and enrolled in the Court of Heaven between Christ and God, in his being justified, we were justified in him; so that thereby our Justification is made past recalling, {pg. 286;} and if so, there is no need of Christ's praying and entreating in his Person in glory for us.

He saith that Intercession is a praying for us in heaven, otherwise the salvation by his death were not perfect, the performance of that part in heaven is the perfection of it; {pg. 189;} and that the virtue of his blood with his prayers in the heavens, makes atonement by both. {pg. 180} Blood hath the loudest cry of all things else in the ears of the Lord; {Gen.4:10;} Christ's blood crieth louder than the blood of Abel, {pg. 218,} Christ's blood crieth for pardon; {pg. 250;} and if his righteousness be put into the opposite balance with all our sins, will carry it by mere righteousness and equity. {pg. 246}

Answer: Then that cry is enough, and another needless; then his righteousness is enough, and there is no need of more; you answer and contradict yourself, for you deny the Sufficiency and Perfection of Christ's Righteousness, and add something to it to make atonement, and so deny Christ's death to be sufficient to perfect us, contrary to Heb.10:10,14; and so piece it out to make it up, but if it be by both, one is not sufficient to do it, nor is it by the offering of himself; and in another place ye extoll it beyond all bounds.

Moreover he saith; God hath two attributes, Justice and Free Grace; the first is satisfied by blood, the latter by entreaty; {pg. 192;} free grace must be sought too and entreated by Christ's favor and entreaty to effect it. {pg. 175}

Answer: If Justice be satisfied, there is no more required. You lessen the glory and freedom of free love. That love itself need to be satisfied, or was ever unsatisfied, that it ever needed any entreaty, I remain unconvinced; tell me in what place in the Bible may I read, that free grace, the free love of God was ever to be satisfied, or to be entreated; or that entreaty is any satisfaction at all?

He saith, that the greater the Person Christ, the sooner he will prevail; {pg. 15;} all matters of intercession are carried by way of favor, if he should deny him anything, he should deny himself, which God can never do. {pg. 335}

Answer: If Christ and the Elect are one, tell me which is the greatest, the Elect are a piece of himself; "flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone." We are not only in favor, and so shall ever be, but we are in union with God, and one with him; "thy Maker is thy Husband;" {Isa.54:5;} Christ saith, "I go to my Father, and to your Father, and to my God and your God." "Ye are of God, little children;" {I Jn.4:4;} they are one with God, and God is one with them. We have favor and interest with God, and "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." {Heb.10:19} We are well; we are healed, and delivered from the curse. Christ hath destroyed him that had the power of death; that is, the Devil, {Heb.2:14,15;} he brought "many sons unto glory," {Heb.2:10,} and "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." {Jn.13:1} The Elect are his own, and God loves them in Christ.

Furthermore he saith that Salvation is as free as if Justice had not been satisfied. {pg. 193}

Answer: It is so to us, but not to Christ, for he paid a great price for it.

Objection: Christ's favor with the Father, and intercession alone, might have procured pardon for us, but it was God's will to have Justice satisfied.

Answer: If it had not been his will to make a Law, and to have it satisfied, we should never have needed neither favor, nor a Saviour.

But you say, those words of Christ, "I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you;" {Jn.16:26;} is such a speech as Christ used, "I will not accuse you to the Father;" {Jn.5:45;} he insinuates that he will; as we say, I do not love you. {pg. 279}

Answer: This your exposition teacheth us not to believe what Christ saith, and that his words are not truth, and that he doth not mean as he saith, but the quite contrary; and that Christ would not have us think that he meaneth as he saith. Christ saith; "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father;" {Jn.5:45;} yet; you say, he insinuated that he will. By this rule I may say, when God saith, "thou shalt not commit adultery," he would not have us think he meaneth so; these words insinuate that we may; for is not this the same? I wonder at your rashness, vanity, and boldness.