

S E R M O N V.

MESSIAH'S FINISHED WORK.

DANIEL, Chap. ix. Ver. 24.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

IN this chapter, we have an account of the prophet Daniel, how he, being sensibly affected with the desolation brought upon Jerusalem, and the temple, and upon the people of the Jews, on account of their sins and transgressions, was thereby led to seek unto the Lord, by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. He had, by reading and searching the prophecy of Jeremiah, and by seeking the face of God in prayer, been led by the Holy Ghost to understand the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. The prophet Daniel, having been led to the understanding of this, humbles himself before the Lord, and ac-

knowledges, with shame and confusion of face, his own sins, and the sins of his people. His confession of sin, in verses 5, 6, is very particular: he there vindicates God's justice, acknowledging the sins of his people, as the just cause and reason of the judgments the Lord had righteously inflicted upon them. In verse 9, he begins to plead God's mercies; and at last concludes, in begging that God *would cause his face to shine upon his sanctuary*, that is, upon his church, *for the Lord's sake*, that is, for the Messiah's sake. And having mentioned this as a most prevailing motive, he is drawn out to pray with very great importunity in verses 18, 19. And we have the remarkable answer which the Lord was pleased to give this his servant in the twentieth and following verses. *And while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God*, (that is, for the church called the holy mountain, because it was built upon mount Zion, and it was holy, because it was God's habitation). *Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel*, (it was not a man, but an angel who appeared in the form of a man) *whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation*. There were two lambs offered every day, one in the morning, and the other in the evening, and they were typical of the lamb of God, which hath taken away the sin of the world. And Daniel had this vision about the time of the evening sacrifice, which might be an item to him, and ought to be so to us, that our

prayers are accepted and answered, only upon the account of the sacrifice and intercession of Jesus Christ. *And he informed me, that is, the angel informed Daniel, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth.* Very likely the commandment of Cyrus, to give the Jews leave to return to their own land, and to build the temple of the Lord, had that very morning been given forth. *And, I am come to shew thee, for thou art greatly beloved, therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.* The angel had addressed Daniel under the title of *greatly beloved*, and by the message he brought him, he appeared to be greatly beloved indeed: for how could the Lord's love be more clearly manifested unto him than by hearing his prayer, and sending him an immediate answer, and such an one as contained a cluster of inestimable mercies, mercies of a spiritual, and of an eternal nature and duration, the blessings of which would be felt upon earth, and enjoyed in heaven. The words of our text may be considered as a confirmation of the promise of the Messiah's coming, of the time of his coming, and the work to be performed by him. He was to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righ-

teousness. Jesus Christ was the great and grand subject and end of all prophecy. To him gave all the prophets witness. They bore testimony concerning him, as the Son of God—as one of the coeternal persons in the Godhead, who had covenanted with his Father to be the surety of his people, and who was to become incarnate, and to be cut off by the sword of divine justice for the sins of his people. They gave witness unto his sufferings and death, and spoke of the glory that should follow, as the consequence thereof; how, that the Messiah being wounded for the transgressions of his people, and having made his soul an offering for sin, he should be raised from the grave, and be exalted as Mediator at God's right hand; from whence he should shed abroad abundantly the Holy Ghost upon his apostles, and render his gospel, and the preaching of it, effectual to the pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan, and bringing his own people to the knowledge and acknowledgment of him. The prophets with one voice bear their testimony, that through his most precious blood-shedding, the pardon of sin would be obtained and bestowed, as the fruit of it; and, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, should receive, as the gift of God's free grace, remission of sins. Indeed, the words of our text contain the sum and substance of the glad-tidings of the everlasting gospel. And here we have first, the time marked out for the Messiah's coming. The Lord had been pleased to promise to send his people a Saviour, a great one, who should deliver them. He had made known by his servant

Isaiah, that Christ should be born of a virgin, and that he should come from Jesse's withered stock; by the prophet Micah, that Bethlehem should be the place of his birth; and by the prophet Daniel, he is pleased to declare the exact time of his coming. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city.* By these seventy weeks, we are not to understand weeks of days, but weeks of years, and these seventy weeks make 490 years; during this space of time, the Jews, through the liberty given them by Cyrus, were to return unto their own land. They were now in Babylon, and God had foretold by the prophet Isaiah, that he would raise up Cyrus, whom he calls his shepherd, Isa. xliv. 28. who was to build the city of Jerusalem; that is, cause it to be builded, and he, says JEHOVAH, *shall let go my captives, (that is, the Jews, who were at that time captives in Babylon, and this was to be done freely) not for price, nor reward, saith the Lord of Hosts.* And this prophecy concerning Cyrus, was given out, and he was prophesied of by name more than 200 years before his birth. The Jews were to return unto their own land, build the city and temple at Jerusalem; and from the going forth of the decree granted by Cyrus to do this, to the Messiah's coming, was to be about the space of 490 years: at which time Christ was to assume man's nature, appear in the second temple as was prophesied of by Haggai, perform the great work of man's salvation, and fulfil all the types and prophecies concerning himself. We will next consider the great work which the Messiah was to do, and this our text tells us was

to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. In the council of the Eternal Trinity, it was decreed and appointed that Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself. And Jesus, who is JEHOVAH, and, in the Godhead, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, was graciously pleased to engage on the behalf of his people for their salvation. He who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth substantially, was pleased, in the fulness of time, to take hold of the nature of his people, and, by the assumption of it, to come into the world in order to save his people from their sins. The Eternal Father prepared a body for him; the Holy Ghost formed it in the virgin's womb; Christ, the Eternal Son of God, assumed it into personal union with his own person; and in our nature, which Christ assumed, he was pleased to fulfil and perform all that was written concerning him. Behold this wonder of wonders! The great God, glorious in holiness: born of a sinful virgin, born in the likeness of sinful flesh, made under the law, and taking upon him to fulfil and perform the whole, and the utmost demands of it! Jesus Christ, as to his human nature, was perfectly holy; and as our great high priest, he was *holiness unto the Lord*. There was nothing in his heart but was perfectly agreeable to the law of God. And this divine Saviour and surety, who was God and man, in the person of one Christ, was pleased to perform the following work—*to finish the transgression*. Now here

let us inquire how Christ did this? He did it in the following way: he was the surety of his people, put himself in their law place, room, and stead; and, as their priest, he presented himself before the Lord, and the Father laid their iniquities, transgressions, and sins upon him. He, the Lord Jesus Christ, bore them in his body upon the tree. And, as on the great day of atonement, observed by the Lord's command among the Jews once a year, the high priest laid both his hands on the head of the scape goat, and confessed over him *all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat*: (see Levit. xvi. ver. 21.) so God the Father laid help upon one that is mighty to bear the sins of his people; and upon our Lord Jesus Christ, he laid the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of his people. He took off from their persons all their original guilt and actual transgressions, and laid them upon Christ, the antitype of the scape goat. And as the goat carried away their sins into a land not inhabited, so Christ, by his death, removed the sins of his people, and bore them away by his sacrifice out of the sight of God. He has, says the apostle, Hebrews ix. ver. 26. *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*; and, in consequence of Christ's bearing the transgression of his people, and finishing it by his life and death, the Psalmist, in the 103d Psalm, saith, *As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us*. Jesus Christ himself alone upon the cross finished transgression. He made a full satisfaction unto divine justice for it. He endured the curse and

wrath of God due unto it; and he said, *It is finished.* The whole will of his Divine Father was fulfilled and finished by him. All the types and prophecies received their perfect accomplishment in him. The transgression of his people was finished in him, he bearing it, and enduring the curse due unto it; so that hereby he for ever delivered his people from condemnation. He was likewise to make an end of sins. This he did, and how he did it, the apostle tells us, it was *by the sacrifice of himself.* *Christ, says he, once in the end of the world hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* His eternal Godhead was the altar—his human nature was the sacrifice, and his Deity gave an infinite and everlasting virtue and efficacy to the sacrifice, so that it was a sacrifice of a sweet smelling favour. The perfume of it filled all heaven with its divine odour. It refreshed the heart of God the Father. It gave infinite and everlasting satisfaction; and upon the account of it, JEHOVAH, the Father, says, to all that flee to Jesus for refuge, *I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more. He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Christ died for our sins. He suffered once for sin, the just for the unjust. He was wounded for our transgressions—he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him. He hath washed us from our sins in his own blood.* And by his one offering of himself, he hath perfectly put away the sins of his people, and made an end of them; for Christ's obedience and

blood hide all our transgressions from view. He was likewise *to make reconciliation for iniquity*; and this he did by the shedding of his own most precious blood. The apostle tells us, that Christ *is our peace*: and how our Immanuel, the Prince of Peace, did this, we are informed in the first chapter of the Colossians, and at the 20th verse. It was, *through the blood of his cross*. By means of his blood shed upon the cross; by his blood-shedding, sufferings, and death, the justice of God was perfectly satisfied, and peace was made between God and man *by the blood of the everlasting covenant*. A passage way is hereby made into the holy of holies. God is pleased to take to himself the high style and title of *the God of peace*: and the Holy Spirit, by bringing the poor sinner to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to rest upon his finished work, gives the soul hereby to enjoy peace with God, through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ was likewise *to bring in everlasting righteousness*, and this he did in his holy life, and which he finished in his death. The holy law of God, broken by the sin of man, Christ perfectly obeyed. When he came into the world, he said, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; thy law is within my heart*. And the God-man was in heart perfectly holy—in life, perfectly spotless. He, by his obedience, magnified the law, and made it everlastingly honourable; and by his obedience, he brought more glory to the law, than though all the angels of God, and all mankind had perfectly kept it. He brought more glory to divine justice, by his sufferings and death, than though sin had never entered into the

world. For he that obeyed, and he that suffered, was God in our nature, *God over all blessed for ever*; he, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Here was JEHOVAH's fellow, whose name is the Lord of hosts, obeying, and suffering in our nature, and making his soul an offering for sin. And Christ's righteousness, being the righteousness of him who is God, is hence called *the righteousness of God*, Rom. x. ver. 3. And it is the righteousness of God; forasmuch as God the Father appointed it, and required it—God the Son fulfilled it, and God the Holy Ghost reveals it, and shews the believer the glory thereof, and helps him to trust in Christ as JEHOVAH his righteousness. It is said to be an *everlasting righteousness*; and it is the only garment of salvation, the only robe that can adorn our souls, justify our persons, and present us faultless before the throne of God. It has been thus exhibited by the Lord in the revelation he has been pleased to make of himself ever since the fall. And as it is the only righteousness of the saints, and continues to be the same throughout all ages, it may be justly called an everlasting righteousness; and it may well be called everlasting righteousness, as it was from everlasting prepared and provided in the covenant of the trinity; and as it will continue to the days of eternity. It is a righteousness great and glorious, in which the saints shine, and will for ever shine, with glory, lustre, and brilliancy, before the throne. This is the believer's wedding dress. In this most perfect obedience he is justified from all things. In this robe the Father views him all glorious, all complete, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Here is, as the great Dr. Goodwin expresses it, “ a
“ greater and a more transcendent righteousness, than
“ ever appeared either in the law, or is inherent in the
“ angels. For if all their righteousnesses were put into
“ one, it could but justify themselves, it could not
“ satisfy for the least breach of the law in another.
“ But in Christ, as set forth in the gospel, we see a
“ righteousness of breadth, that it is able to cover the
“ sins of millions of worlds—of that length that it
“ reacheth to eternity; and no sin in God’s people
“ can wear it out, or nullify the virtue of it.”
This righteousness frees the believer from condemna-
tion, and lays a blessed foundation for hope in God.
Christ was likewise *to seal up the vision and prophecy*.
All that God had spoken in vision to his prophets,
concerning the incarnation, life, and death of his co-
equal and coeternal Son, was to receive in Christ its
utmost accomplishment. Now the bright and morn-
ing star appearing in him, and by him, all God’s mind
and will was to be uttered and made known, and
Christ was to be, as it were, the seal of God’s truth
and gracious declarations; and the promises of God
in him would be found faithful and true, *yea and
amen*, which are some of the great words of God.
When he speaks of his love to his people, he says,
Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; and
when he promises, he sets his amen unto them.
And all the promises of God in him, that is in
Christ, are yea and amen; and Christ is God’s amen.
All his love and mercy to his people are trea-
sured up for them in Christ; all his promises are

made unto them in Christ, and have been fulfilled unto Christ. He is in the possession of all the good contained in them; and he is almighty to bestow upon his people every grace and blessing. The Father has sealed Christ as Head and Saviour of his people. He has treasured up in him all fulness; and Christ, as the head, has it to communicate to all his members: and out of his fulness his people receive grace for grace. Christ, as God's holy one, was to be anointed: by which we are to understand the call of Christ, and the setting him apart to the great work and office of salvation. He is in the text called *the most holy*, in allusion to the holy of holies. And indeed he is the most holy, and has been celebrated by the creatures, the seraphims, with a thrice holy—*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.* And the evangelist John, quoting this passage from the prophet, says, *these things said Isaiah, when he saw his (Christ's) glory and spake of him.* He was the most holy; and he, the most holy, in concert with his eternal Father and eternal Spirit, undertook the work of redemption. He, as Man, Mediator, was anointed with all the unmeasurable fulness and unction of the Spirit's grace, and this most holy and infinitely blessed God-man has done all things well; and, having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, he is entered into the most holy place, where he appears before the throne as a lamb newly slain; and where he, as our true high priest, presents himself as the everlasting representative of his chosen ones, wearing their names upon the breastplate of his heart, and appearing in the presence of

God for them. And, as the high priest, on the great day of atonement, entered by means of the blood of the sacrifice into the holy of holies: so Christ, by means of his own blood, entered as our great high priest into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. And, as the high priest carried into the holy of holies some sweet-smelling incense, and fumed it between the Cherubims: so Christ, by his divine intercession for his people within the veil, perfumed their services, and in him, and by him, they are accepted. And, as the high priest, when he came out of the holy of holies, used to bless the people in the name of the Lord: so Jesus Christ, the great high priest of his church and people, blesses his people from heaven with spiritual blessings; and sends down the Holy Ghost to turn them from their iniquities, to convince them in their consciences effectually *of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*; and to shew them what Jesus has done and suffered; and then to take of the things of Christ, and shew them their interest in them. And when our great High Priest shall come out of the holy of holies, then he will lift up his sacred hands, and bless all his people in the name of the Lord, saying unto them, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* On the day of atonement, after the scape goat had carried the sins of the people into the wilderness, and the high priest had performed the services of the day, the jubilee trumpet used to be sounded, and it was a joyful sound: for it proclaimed liberty unto persons in distress. And in consequence

of the eternally efficacious atonement which Christ has made, the trumpet of the gospel sounds, and it is a joyful sound: for it proclaims pardon and peace, life and salvation, freedom and liberty, from sin and Satan, death and hell, through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is supposed by Grotius, that the 32d Psalm was designed to be sung on the great day of atonement; and it must be allowed, that no Psalm could suit the solemnity of that day better: for it begins thus, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* Now, that this was exactly suited to the service of this day, will appear, if we consider that they had seen by faith, in a type and figure, their sins laid on the scape goat and carried away by him, and the iniquity of the land thereby removed: and therefore they might well sing, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin.* Now there is nothing that can cover or hide our sins from the eye of God's justice, but the blood of Christ. He only is our propitiation, which word signifies a covering. The mercy-seat was called a propitiatory, because it covered and hid what was contained in the ark, and the Lord was represented as looking down upon it. And, the ark being a type of Christ, and the law, the two tables of the covenant, being put into the ark, it typified the law written upon Christ's heart, and fulfilled in his life, and the mercy-seat pointed out his expiatory death: so that here, in a figure and type, was clearly set forth how Jesus hides all our transgres-

sions from the Father's view. That his blood is a covering so thick, that God's justice being satisfied with the shedding of it, and God himself having placed it to the account of his people, all their sins are covered. And the apostle Paul will tell us plainly who those persons are unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin. They are those *unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works*, Rom. iv. 6. Now it may be observed for our comfort, that it is not said by the Holy Ghost, blessed is the man that never sinned—or blessed is the man who has no sin in him, or who feels no sin. No, blessed be God! for then we must have been eternally confounded. But it is, *blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin*. And the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin, is he unto whom God imputes the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; whose sins he has laid upon Christ, and which have been already carried away by him, and put away by his sacrifice. Here is the believer's blessed state, he is one with Christ. The Father beholds him in the beloved, all fair and complete. And herein the believer's blessedness consists, to know his union with, and his interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is made known unto him by the Holy Ghost. He is the revealer of it; and he bears his testimony in the heart and conscience to the truth of it. May the Holy Ghost shine upon his own truth, and bless it, and to his name shall be the praise. *Amen.*