

***Joseph and Benjamin:***  
***A Series of Letters on the Controversy between Jews and Christians***  
**Volume II**

by  
**Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey**

**Letter VII**  
**"The Intercession of the Messiah"**

*Dear Brother Benjamin,*

Permit me to invite your attention to the intercession of the Messiah as the third step of his exaltation.

1. That the Messiah was to make intercession for his people was taught emblematically, typically, and prophetically. Abel's blood speaking after his death, Melchizedek blessing Abraham, Abraham interceding for Sodom, Joseph for his brethren, and Moses for Israel, were so many emblems of Messiah interceding for his people.

The entrance of the high priest into the most holy place on the day of atonement was an eminent type of the Messiah's entering into heaven to intercede for his people. As the high priest was to kill the sacrifice, then enter the most holy place with its blood and sprinkle it on the mercy-seat, and kindle the incense, so the Messiah was first to offer himself a sacrifice, then to enter heaven to present his precious blood, and kindle the incense of his prayer as our intercessor and thus complete the atonement. With respect to the high priest, thus saith the Lord: *"Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goes in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation"* (Lev. 16:15,17).

It was also taught prophetically, for thus it is written, *"Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession"* (Ps. 2:8). And Isaiah saith, *"He made intercession for the transgressors"* (Is. 53:12).

2. That Jesus Christ also made intercession is declared by the apostles in many places. Two or three may suffice. *"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"* (Rom. 8:34). *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Heb. 7:25). *"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous"* (1 John 2:1).

3. With respect to the nature of Christ's intercession, I would observe,

(1) That he appears in heaven *for us* (Heb. 9:24) as a *public* person, in his own nature and in ours; as Mediator and surety, as Judah did for Benjamin, and Paul for Onesimus. His very presence in heaven as our *Head* and *Redeemer* is a strong plea in our behalf. It shows that God is fully satisfied with his performance and therefore has exalted him to the honor and reward promised in the covenant of redemption.

(2) He presents himself before God as Mediator, with body and soul which he offered upon the cross; with the marks in his hands, feet, and side (Heb. 12:24; Rev. 5:6). His blood is of constant efficacy, a continual intercession. Our fathers were obliged to renew their sacrifices continually, to obtain fresh blood to present it to God. But the blood of Christ is ever the same, ever fresh and new, and will never lose its value and efficacy (Heb. 9:25,26; 10:10-12).

(3) Christ declares it to be his will that the blessings of his purchase shall be conferred on his people. Of this he has given us a specimen and pledge in his prayer, recorded [in] John 17:24: "*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.*" Christ here pleads that his people may be put in full possession of all the blessings which were purchased for them by the shedding of his blood. He reminds his Father, as it were, of the mutual covenant agreement--of his having performed the condition required on his part, and claims the performance of his Father's promise as a debt due to his meritorious obedience even unto death.

4. The foundation of Christ's intercession is the atonement which he made for sin. As the high priest went into the most holy place with the blood of the sacrifice, so Christ first offered the sacrifice, then pleads it. There could be no intercession without a sacrifice going before. The condition of his covenant was his death. By it the blessings were procured, and now he pleads that they may be conferred. Propitiation is the payment, intercession is the plea; the one by his death, the other by his life; the one on earth, the other in heaven. The connection of the intercession and death of Christ, like that of the superstructure and the foundation, is beautifully described by the apostle Paul: "*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heaven; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people<sup>©</sup> for this he did once, when he offered up himself*" (Heb. 7:25-27).

5. The objects of Christ's intercession are the same for whom he made satisfaction. He intercedes for all his people, for all who do now believe in him, and love him, and all that shall believe in him hereafter: "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:9,20).

6. The blessings for which Christ intercedes are the same that he has procured by his obedience and sufferings even unto death, that their persons and services might be accepted: "*accepted in the beloved*" (Eph. 1:6); "*God had respect unto Abel*" (Gen. 4:4). To be justified freely, i.e. to be *treated* as if they had never sinned, and therefore not punished; and as if they had kept the whole law, and therefore receive eternal life as the "*free gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Jer. 23:6; Rom. 6:31; 8:33,34; 2 Cor. 5:21). As if Christ had

said, "Lord, these are the persons for whom I lived and died. Deal with them as if they had not sinned but obeyed." He also intercedes that their services may be accepted and their prayers heard. While the high priest was offering incense, the people prayed without (Luke 1:10).

This was typical of Christ's intercession. His pleading gives efficacy to his people's prayers (John 16:26,27; 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 8:3). Those who made their addresses to king Admetus brought the prince with them in their arms. As Joseph charged his brethren that they should not see his face unless they brought Benjamin their brother with them, so we cannot see God's face unless we bring Jesus, our elder brother, with us. When Herod was displeased with the men of Tyre, they made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend (Acts 12:20).

My dear Benjamin, I wish I could make you feel the importance of this particular. Prayer is to the soul what food is to the body. Christ's intercession is our greatest encouragement to come to a throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16). Christ not only presents his own prayer, but as it were prays over our prayers. *"Another angel came, having a golden censer,"* &c (Rev. 8:3). This angel was Christ. He takes the golden censer of his merits and puts our prayers into it, and with incense of his intercession makes our prayers ascend into heaven as a sweet perfume. It is said, *"Aaron shall make atonement for the holy place"* (Lev. 16:16). This was typical, to show that our holy duties need an atonement. Our best services, as they come from us, are mixed with corruption, as wine that tastes of the cask (Is. 64:6). But Christ purifies and sweetens them, mixing the sweet odor of his intercession with them, and thus God accepts and crowns them. As the fan winnows the chaff from the wheat, so Christ's intercession separates the chaff that mixes with our prayers. As the mother that takes from her child the nosegay [bouquet] designed for the father and separates the nettles from the flowers, so Christ separates the imperfections from our prayers and services.

7. Another part of Christ's intercession is that all necessary blessings may be bestowed, such as pardon and peace (John 14:13). We often think it too much boldness to approach God. "What! Such sinners as we to come for pardon? We shall be denied." This is a sinful modesty. Did we come in our own name, it would indeed be presumption. But Christ intercedes for us in the force and efficacy of his own blood. Therefore, now to be afraid to come to God in prayer would be a dishonor to Christ's intercession (Heb. 4:14-16).

He also intercedes for our sanctification. His language in heaven is like his prayer while on earth: *"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). This is the work and fruit of the Spirit, and therefore Christ promised to send him as soon as he should have ascended to the Father. And this unspeakable gift he bestows on all his children. Hence, saith the apostle, *"ye have an unction from the Holy One"* (1 John 2:20). By this unction they are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). What is said falsely of the philosopher's stone, that the metal it touches is changed into gold, is perfectly true of this unction. Every soul it touches is changed and made partaker of the divine nature, becomes holy and resembles God. *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Cor. 5:17).

Comfort and support under affliction are other purchased blessings he pleads for. The Spirit was not promised as a sanctifier only, but also as a comforter (John 14:16). O how refreshing the consolations of the Spirit--sweeter than honey that drops from the comb! It is the manna in the golden pot. A drop of this heavenly comfort is enough to sweeten a sea of

worldly sorrow. It is called *"the earnest of the Spirit"* (2 Cor. 1:22), an earnest to assure us of the whole sum. A taste of heavenly joy and peace is an assurance of the full fruition in glory.

8. Christ further intercedes that their accuser may be silenced, their enemies overcome, and they themselves kept from evil. Christ pleads for the saints as queen Esther did for her people, the Jews, when Haman had determined on their destruction. *"Let my people,"* said she, *"be given me at my request"* (Esther 7:3). When Satan shows the blackness of their sins, Christ shows the redness of his wounds. Many charges are brought against believers by their enemies, but Christ answers all their accusations. If true, he pleads his own merits that they may obtain remission of sin; if false, he vindicates them (Zech. 3:1,5; Rom. 8:33,34). Christ intercedes for *every* sin. Under the law, there were some sins for which the high priest was neither allowed to offer sacrifice nor to intercede. Hence, said David, *"Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offerings"* (Ps. 51:16). But Christ, by his intercession, procures the pardon of every sin. Hence, saith the apostle, *"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7).

9. Christ also intercedes for his people that they may be enabled to persevere unto the end. We can no more keep ourselves in the spiritual life than we can in the natural. It is God that must keep us alive both naturally and spiritually, although we must use the means in both as if all were dependent on us: *"Who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation"* (1 Pet. 1:5). Our perseverance is in answer to Christ's intercession (John 17:24). The prayer of Christ for Peter is a copy of his intercession in heaven for every individual in his flock: *"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not"* (Luke 22:32). The saints persevere in believing because Christ perseveres in interceding. Christ will never cease to intercede till all his chosen people are brought to glory. The immediate end of Christ's death was our reconciliation, and the immediate end of his intercession our glorification (John 17:24; Rom. 5:10).

10. Christ pleads the cause of his people with infinite skill and wisdom. He knows every person's case and all his wants. He knows what blessings they need and how they are to be conveyed. He is perfectly acquainted with the laws and constitution of heaven, and is perfectly familiar with the best arguments to be used.

11. He also pleads with great tenderness and compassion. Aaron had the names of the twelve tribes on the breastplate when he went into the most holy place to plead for the people (Ex. 28:29). But Christ has the name of every individual of his people engraven upon his heart. Hence, saith the apostle, *"In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted"* (Heb. 2:17,18).

Christ pleads feelingly. Not like an ordinary lawyer or advocate who is not influenced so much by feelings of sympathy and affection as by self-interest. But Christ pleads his own cause and interest. He has shed his own blood to purchase life and salvation for his people, and if they should not be saved he would lose his purchase. As a tender-hearted mother would plead with the judge for her son ready to be condemned, so Christ intercedes with the strongest feelings of sympathy and compassion. Christ had compassion on Israel in their temporal bondage, and therefore delivered them (Is. 63:9). And his compassion was not lessened by his assumption of our nature. He became a man of sorrows that he might

be a man of compassion. By a reflection upon his own condition in the world, he is able to move our cause with such a tender feeling of it as if he had the smart of it present in his own heart and bowels. The greatest pity must reside in him, since he endured the greatest misery in our nature (Heb. 4:15-17). With what affection and compassion did he intercede for his disciples while here on earth, and the glory of heaven has made no change in his judgment and affections. As the glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world did not prevent him from pitying our condition in dying in our stead, so the glory which he has received will not prevent him from being a compassionate intercessor.

12. Christ is a righteous and faithful advocate (1 John 2:1). His intercession is founded upon truth and justice. He is righteous in his person and in his cause. As he could not have been a priest or sacrifice if there had been any unrighteousness in his person or life, so there could be no efficacy in his intercession if there were unrighteousness in his cause. He is also true and faithful. He never betrays the cause of his clients, either by sloth or negligence. When Stephen the martyr needed aid, he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55).

13. Christ intercedes with power and authority. It differs from that of one friend for another. It is his office to which he was appointed. He has a commission for it and a command to discharge it. He is as much bound to intercede as he was to sacrifice, for the one belongs as much to his priestly office as the other does (Ps. 2:8; 89:26; Heb. 5:5). Christ is "a priest upon his throne." He has a right to demand. As he taught as one having authority, so he intercedes as one having authority. His intercession in heaven is not properly a begging, but pursuing a right, by arguments drawn from justice and equality. In this sense he is called an advocate, which differs from an orator. An orator uses rhetoric to persuade and entreat the judge to show mercy to another; but an advocate produces the law. Thus, when justice demands the life of the sinner, Christ opens the book of the law which he fulfilled. When divine justice, the holy law, Satan or our own conscience accuses us, Christ shows the merits of his death, or the marks of his crucifixion on his human nature.

14. Christ pleads with great zeal and fervency. The burning coals which the high priest carried into the most holy place denoted the affection and fervor of the intercession of our great High Priest and Advocate. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel were not only to be on the shoulders of the high priest but also on the breastplate. Christ has engaged his heart to approach unto God (Jer. 30:21). His language is, "O Lord, how long!" (Zech. 1:12). When Christ prayed for himself he said, "Father, if it be thy will." But for his people he saith, "Father, I will," more as a judge than an advocate. Christ was not more desirous to suffer than he is to obtain the fruits of his sufferings. No man is more solicitous to increase the honors and grandeur of his family than Christ is to secure the happiness of his people. Our prayers for ourselves, when presented with the greatest affection, cannot be so fervent as his pleas for our souls are at the right hand of his Father.

15. We further observe that Christ's intercession is most prevalent and successful. This may be argued from his dignity and nearness to God, and the perfection of his work. If Jacob, as a prince, had power with God, how much more Christ, the Son of God. Christ never lost any cause he pleaded. He was never non-suited. If the prayer of the righteous avail much with God, how much more must that of God's own Son! When Moses prayed for Israel, God said, "Let me alone," as if his prayer had bound God's hand. By prayer Elijah had power to open and shut heaven. God has commanded us to hear Jesus because he is the Son of God with

whom the Father is well pleased, and for the same reason God will hear him too. If it were possible for God to forget the priestly office of Christ, yet he would not forget the relation in which he stands to him as his Son, "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person." Besides, Christ's will in asking is one and the same as the Father's in giving. Our sanctification is the will of the Father; and Christ prays, "*Holy Father, sanctify them.*" Nor does Christ ask for anything but what he has purchased--what the Father has actually put into his hands--"all power in heaven and on earth."

16. Christ's intercession is constant and perpetual. As soon as Christ entered heaven, his intercession commenced in all its glory, and will continue forever (Heb. 7:17,24). Christ is never out of the way when the cause should be heard. He always sits at the right hand of the Father, who is the Judge of the world, and is never out of his presence (Acts 7:55; Heb. 4:16). The people of God, while here below, need a constant advocate in heaven not only because Satan, the accuser of the brethren, is constantly engaged, but because they give constant occasion for their heavenly Father to be offended with them. This brings guilt upon their conscience, disturbs their peace, darkens their evidences, and lays them open to fatherly chastisement. Under such circumstances our only consolation is, "*If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*" (1 John 2:1). When the wrath of God began to break out upon Israel, Aaron presently steps in with his censer and offers incense; and so the plague was stayed (Num. 16:46). In like manner, when a child of God offends and he [God] is angry, Christ immediately steps in and intercedes: "Father, it is my child that has offended. Though he has forgotten his duty, thou hast not lost thy compassion. O pity him and let thine anger be turned away from him."

17. In closing this part of the subject, I would observe that Christ is the one only mediator and intercessor. As he trod the wine-press alone and none of the people were with him, so he alone intercedes in heaven. As he alone is the propitiation for our sins, so he alone intercedes with the Father (1 Tim. 2:8). Guilt prevents us from pleading our own cause. Nor can one intercede for another, for all have sinned and are condemned, and none can make atonement. As neither saints nor angels could make satisfaction for us, therefore they cannot intercede for us.

18. With respect to the reason or designs of Christ's intercession, I would merely observe that it is not to inform God the Father, for he knows all our wants. Nor [is it] to make him willing to do us all the good we need, for the Father himself loves us. Though there may be many reasons we are ignorant of, yet God never does or appoints anything without reasons perfectly known to himself and perfectly consistent with his nature and government. Thus much we know, that it is exceedingly useful and instructive to us. I will point out a few of these instructions.

19. The intercession of Christ teaches the majesty, holiness and justice of God. Plato says that God has no immediate intercourse with men but by means of demons or angels. When Israel was round Sinai, a boundary was fixed and Moses alone drew near to show his [God's] awful majesty. But by Christ's intercession we are taught that we are utterly unfit to draw near to God, to speak to him but only through Christ as intercessor. The atonement of Christ was but a transient display of God's holiness and justice. But the intercession of Christ is a lasting and constant manifestation of it.

20. A most affecting view of the evil of sin is another important lesson taught by the

intercession of Christ. Hereby God declares that sin is so hateful that the sinner is not allowed to come near to him but by Christ. Our prayers are not received or our persons accepted till hallowed by him. The tears of a penitent will not prevail with God without an intercessor. When God was angry with Job's friends he would not hear them, but Job must intercede for them (Job 42:8).

21. The intercession of Christ displays his dignity and love. The same love which led him to bear our sins in his own body on the tree leads him to intercede for us in heaven. O how constant the love of Christ! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). The same love which led him to groan and sigh, to weep and pray, to bleed and die while on earth constrains him to intercede in heaven. When Christ ceased from suffering and dying, he did not cease loving. And he will never cease praying till his prayer is perfectly answered: "*Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am*" (John 17:24).

22. The penitent sinner is greatly encouraged by the intercession of Christ to come to God. God is seated on a throne of grace, and at his right hand is Christ our advocate. We cannot with much hope approach an offended and highly incensed friend. In such a case we naturally fly to the intercession of others. Christ is an all-powerful intercessor. However loud the cry of our sins is, the cry of his blood and intercession is still louder, and will prevail. Will not God hear his own dear Son? The spirit of *bondage* under the Old Testament was partly owing to the want [lack] of an intercessor. But now we may come with boldness to a throne of grace.

Read carefully, my dear Benjamin, the following encouraging portions of the word of God. "*Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it*" (John 14:13,14). "*In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him*" (Eph. 3:12). "*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. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*" (Heb. 4:14-16). "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh*" (Heb. 10:19,20).

Letter VII, "The Intercession of the Messiah," in Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey, *Joseph and Benjamin: A Series of Letters on the Controversy between Jews and Christians: Comprising the Most Important Doctrines of the Christian Religion*, 7th ed. (New York: Daniel Fanshaw, 1840). Note: The text has not been modified, except that punctuation has been modernized and long paragraphs have been divided.